

heard blowing his horn to summon the household together. No one was left at home but the few needful to watch the house, the fire, the babies, and the cattle of the establishment; the horses were not let out of their inclosure till enough had been caught for those who chose to ride them barebacked. Roswitha and Valhild meant to do so, both astride on one cream-colored shaggy steed; but before mounting Roswitha offered to help Attalus catch a horse, and Valhild called out that he would be afraid to ride and must go afoot with the slaves. This put him on his mettle, and with only a little help from Roswitha he caught the old black mare that she pointed out to him by her long forelock, and vaulted on her successfully, as he had learned to do at the riding-school kept at Autun in the old circus. As he was not riding as a Roman gentleman it concerned him the less that the little foal, with curly forehead and stout legs, would trot after them. Hunderik never troubled himself about his daughters or his slaves, but was proud of his little son, whom he took up, screaming with joy, before him on his horse, a great powerful fiery creature, white and dappled with shaded black, and with heels that would let no other rider come near him.

On they went through the forest paths, trodden in some degree, though impeded by the year's growth of boughs. Once they halted near a river to eat and rest the horses, but soon after noon they reached a great bleak open space, purple with heather, with a few houses like Hunderik's, only smaller, standing round the borders at the edge of the forest, and on a mound in the midst a great tall upright stone, which Roswitha said was the Erman-saul. It really was an old stone of the ancient Celtic druidical worship, but the Franks had adopted it as the Pillar of Erman, though it did not by any means equal in splendor the Erman-saul of Eresburg, where there was a statue within an actual temple. The people of the houses came out to welcome Hunderik, and after some delay and preparation, and while the horses were being fed, one of the colts which had galloped along with the party was captured and led away.

"Black Rana's colt! Oh, the dear thing!" said Roswitha. "I did not think they would have taken him, he was so tame and good!"

"Taken him? What for?" exclaimed Attalus. "Not for a heathen offering!"

"Hush! hush!" said Roswitha, "they will hear you. But I did love that dear soft-nosed colt, and he let me mount him."

The little maid was in tears, and her sister laughed at her. "Soft-hearted Roswitha!" she said.

"I am sorry for my colt," she answered. "O Atti, is it true that Christians never make their horses an offering?"

"No, indeed," he answered. "My grandfather would be shocked and bid you renounce such deeds."

"Then we should have no luck and no victory," cried Valhild. "Mother would beat you if she heard you."

"Demons do not give victory. It is the Almighty God of armies," said Attalus.

Perhaps it was well for him that Valhild's attention was called off by a movement beside the houses, and a song arising which sounded like

Herman sla derman,
Sla piper, sla drummen,
Der krieges is kommen,

accompanied by loud drummings and blasts of wind-instruments. Then Hunderik, in his bright helmet, on his great white steed, at the head of all his warriors fully armed, rode forward, waving the sword that had been the price of Gola. They all galloped with thundering pace on their heavy horses round the mound several times, their armor flashing, and the wild song pealing from every throat to the accompaniment of the beats of the drum, the clang of iron, and the blasts of horns and fifes, and there was something wonderful in the excitement which filled everybody present and seemed to carry them along. The girls danced with their feet and joined in the wild song at the top of their shrill voices, and Attalus caught himself doing the same and shouting "Herman sla derman," before he recollected that it was an idolatrous chant, and, crossing himself, was silent. When the circuit had been made three times, faster and more furiously every time, there was a pause, and then Hunderik dismounted, came forward, and hung on some arrangement for the purpose the bleeding head of the poor colt, the whole ground being strewn with other horses' heads and skulls in various stages of decay.

Roswitha turned back and hid her tearful eyes from the sight of her favorite, but Valhild pressed forward to see better, and Attalus could not help looking, too, while the warriors laid before the pillar the shields, helmets, and axes of the Thuringians they had overcome or despoiled; but he could not help remarking that most of these trophies were composed of broken or dented weapons which could not serve again.

After the solemnity there was a great feast. The caldron in which the colt had been cooked was brought out, and the priest, who acted as host, but whose helmet and breastplate showed him to be himself a warrior, served out the broth and collops of flesh into the bowls or the helmets which every one produced. Valhild went up to claim the share of herself and her sister in the bowl which her mother had caused a slave to bring. The amount dealt out to the