

track of blood which the animal had made, and discovered amid the long grass the point of an ancient sword. This he dug from the earth in which it was buried and presented to Attila. The artful chief claimed that it was a celestial gift, sent to him by the god of war, and giving him a divine claim to the dominion of the earth. Doubtless his sacred gift was consecrated with the Scythian rites,—a lofty heap of fagots, three hundred yards in length and breadth, being raised on a spacious plain, the sword of Mars placed erect on its summit, and the rude altar consecrated by the blood of sheep, horses, and probably of human captives. But Attila soon proved a better claim to a divine commission by leading the hordes of the Huns to victory after victory, until he threatened to subjugate, if not to depopulate, all Europe. It was in pursuance of this conquering career that he was brought, in the year 451, to the banks of the Rhine and the borders of the future realm of France, then still known as Gaul, and held by the feeble hand of the expiring empire of Rome.

The broad Rhine proved but a feeble obstacle to the innumerable cavalry of the Huns. A bridge of boats was quickly built, and across the stream they poured into the fair provinces of Gaul. Universal consternation prevailed. Long peace had made the country rich, and had robbed its people of their ancient valor. As the story goes, the degenerate Gauls trusted for their defence to the prayers of the saints. St. Lupus saved Troyes. The prayers of St. Genevieve turned the march of Attila aside from Paris. Unluckily, most of the cities of the land held neither