

ascribed by Brunchild to Fredogonde, with excellent reason if we may judge from her subsequent career, and from that day on an undying hatred existed between the two queens. To this the stirring incidents of their after lives were due. War broke out between the two kings, probably inspired by Brunchild's thirst for revenge for her sister's death on the one hand, and the ambition and hatred of Fredogonde on the other. Sigobert was successful in the field, but treachery soon robbed him of the fruits of victory. He was murdered in his tent (in the year 575) by two assassins in the pay of Queen Fredogonde.

This murder gave Chilperic the ascendancy. Sigobert's army disbanded, and Brunchild, as the only means of preserving her life, sought an asylum in the cathedral of Paris. And now the scene becomes one of rapid changes, in which the unscrupulous Fredogonde plays the leading part. Chilperic, not daring to offend the church by slaying the fugitive queen under its protection, sent her to Rouen. Here the widowed lady, her beauty rendered more attractive by her misfortunes, was seen and loved by Merovée, the son of Chilperic by his first wife, then in that town on a mission from his father. Fired with passion for the hapless queen, he married her privately, the Bishop of Rouen sealing their union.

This imprudent action soon became known at the court of Chilperic, and the ambitious Fredogonde hastened to turn it to her advantage. Merovée was heir to the throne of Chilperic. He was in her way, and had now given her a pretext for his removal.