

wagons, and remained there as in a fort, while the triumphant allies encamped upon the field.

That night was one of anxiety for Attila. He feared an attack, and knew that the Huns, dismounted and fighting behind a harricade, were in imminent danger of defeat. Their strength lay in their horses. On foot they were but feeble warriors. Dreading utter ruin, Attila prepared a funeral pile of the saddles and rich equipments of the cavalry, resolved, if his camp should be forced, to rush into the flames, and deprive his enemies of the glory of slaying or capturing the great barbarian king.

The attack did not come. The army of Ætius was in no condition for an assault. Nor did it seem safe to them to attempt to storm the camp of their formidable antagonist, who lay behind his wagons, as the historians of the time say, like a lion in his den, encompassed by the hunters, and daring them to the attack. His trumpets sounded defiance. Such troops as advanced to the assault were checked or destroyed by showers of arrows. It was at length determined, in a council of war, to besiege the Huns in their camp, and by dread of starvation to force them into battle on unequal terms, or to a treaty disgraceful to their king.

For this Attila did not wait. Breaking camp he retreated, and by crossing the Rhine acknowledged his defeat. The Roman empire had won its last victory in the west, and saved Gaul for the Franks, whose day of conquest was soon to come.