

presented, assumed a manly courage, and threw herself among the hostile battalions, crying, 'Stay, warriors; refrain from this wicked deed; persecute not the innocent; engage not, for a single man's sake, in a battle which will desolate the country!' 'Back, woman!' said Ursion to her; 'let it suffice thee to have ruled under thy husband's sway. Now it is thy son that reigns, and his kingdom is under our protection, not thine. Back! if thou wouldst not that the hoofs of our horses trample thee under as the dust of the ground!' After the dispute had lasted some time in this strain, the queen, by her address, at last prevented the battle from taking place."

The words of Ursion were prophetic. To be trampled under horses' hoofs into the dust was the final fate of the queen, though for many years yet she was to retain her power and to keep up her strife with the foes who surrounded her. Far nobler of soul than Fredegonde, she was as strong in all those qualities which go to make a vigorous queen.

But we must hasten on to the end of these royal rivals. Fredegonde died quietly in Paris, in 597, powerful to her death, and leaving on the throne her son Clotaire II., whom she had infected with all her hatred against the queen of Austrasia. Brunehild lived till 614, thirty-nine years after the death of her husband Sigebert, and through the reins of her son and two of her grandsons, who were but puppets in her hands. Her later years, and perhaps most of her life, were marked by lack of womanly virtue, and by an unscrupulousness in ridding herself of her enemies significant of barbarous times. At length,