

The Song of Roland

translated by

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1. Charles the king, our great emperor, has been in Spain for seven full years; he has conquered all the upland right down to the seashore and not a castle can stand before him; neither wall nor city remains to be destroyed except Saragossa, which is built in a mountain. King Marsilie rules in Saragossa; he does not love God, he worships Mahomet and calls upon Apollin. He has no protection against all the evil which is about to come upon him.

2. King Marsilie was in Saragossa. He has gone into an orchard beneath the shade and has laid himself down on a slab of blue marble, and round about him are more than twenty thousand of his men. He calls his dukes and his counts to him: "Listen, my lords, what a calamity threatens us: The emperor Charles of fair France has come into this land to destroy us. I have no army capable of giving him battle, nor are my people such that they can break his to pieces. Counsel me, as wise men, and save me from death and dishonour." Not a heathen replied a single word save Blancandrin of the Castle of Valfonde.

3. Blancandrin was one of the wisest of the heathen. He was a good knight for his valour and a prudent man to counsel his lord. And he said to the king: "Now be not dismayed! Send a message of faithful service and very great friendship to Charles, the proud and arrogant one; say that you will give him bears and lions and dogs, seven hundred camels and a thousand moulted falcons, four hundred mules laden with gold and silver and fifty wagons wherewith to form the convoy, and he will have the wherewithal in plenty to pay his soldiers. He has been fighting in this land long enough and he ought to return to Aix in France. Say that you will follow him at the feast of St. Michael and you will accept the Christian faith and will be his vassal in all loyalty. If he ask for hostages you will send them, whether ten or twenty, as a pledge of your good faith. Let us send the sons of our own wives. It is far better that they

should lose their heads than that we should lose our honour and our dignity and be reduced to beggary.

4. Blancandrin spake: "By this my right hand and by the beard that waves over my breast, you will very soon see the army of the Frenchmen brought to nought. The Franks will return to France, their own land, and when each one is at the abode of his choice, Charles will be at Aix in his chapel and he will be holding high revel at Michaelmastide. The day will come and the appointed time will pass, but of us no word and no news shall he hear. The king is proud and his heart is wrathful, he will have our hostages beheaded. But it is far better that they lose their heads than that we should lose Spain, the bright and fair, and suffer evils and deprivations thereto." The heathen say "Perhaps he speaks truth."

5. King Marsilie has finished taking counsel and he has called to him Clarin of Balaguer, Estamarin and Eudropin his peer, Priamon and Guarlan the bearded, Machiner and his uncle Maheu, Joüner and Malbien from beyond the sea, and Blancandrin, to tell them what he has resolved. Ten of the most treacherous he has summoned: "Sir barons, you shall go to Charlemaine. He is besieging the city of Cordova. You shall carry olive-branches in your hands as a symbol of peace and of humility. If by your skill you can reconcile me to him, I will give you abundance of gold and silver, lands and fiefs as many as you wish." The heathen say: "We shall get great gain from this."

6. King Marsilie has finished taking counsel and he said to his men: "Lords, you shall go hence. Olive branches you shall carry in your hands, and of Charlemaine the king you shall beg on my behalf that for the sake of his God he have mercy on me. Tell him that I will follow him with a thousand of my faithful vassals before he sees this first month pass; and that I will receive the Christian law and become his man in love and loyalty. If he desire hostages, he shall have them in truth." Blancandrin said: "You will have a very good treaty."

7. Then Marsilie told them to lead up ten white mules which the king of Suatilie had sent him. Their bridles are of gold and their saddles set with silver. The messengers are mounted upon them carrying olive branches in their hands. They journey towards Charles who holds rule over France, and he cannot help but that they deceive him somewhat.

8. The emperor is confident and joyful: he has taken Cordova and broken down the walls; the towers he has demolished with his stonethrowers. His knights have got great booty, both of gold, of silver and of costly armour. Not a heathen has remained within the city unless he be dead or become a Christian. The emperor is in a large orchard; together with him are Roland and Oliver, duke Samson and Anseïs the proud, Geoffrey of Anjou, the king's standard-bearer, and there, too, are Gerin and Gerier and many others with them, even fifteen thousand men of fair France. The knights are seated on white silken cloths, the wiser and older ones are playing at tables and chess to amuse themselves, and the active younger ones are fencing. Beneath a pine tree, beside a bush of eglantine, they have placed a throne made all of pure gold and thereon is seated the king who holds sweet France. His beard is white and his hair all wavy, he has a noble form and a proud countenance: if anyone be looking for him, there is no need to point him out. And the messengers got down from their horses and saluted him for love and for honour.

9. First to speak was Blancandrin, and he said to the king: "May you have salvation of God, the glorious one, whom we ought to adore. This is the message that king Marsilie, the valiant knight, has sent you: He has much enquired concerning the true way of salvation. He wishes to give you large gifts of his possessions, bears and lions and greyhounds on the chain, seven hundred camels and a thousand moulted falcons, four hundred mules packed up with gold and silver, fifty wagons wherewith to form a convoy; and there will be so many besants of pure gold that you will abundantly have the wherewithal to pay your soldiers. You have been long enough in this land; you ought to return now to Aix in France. Thither my master will follow you, for so he has said." The emperor stretched forth his hands towards God, then bowed his head and began to think.

10. The emperor's head was bowed low. He was never hasty in his speech, but accustomed to speak at his leisure. When he raised his head his countenance was very proud, and he said to the messengers: "You have spoken very well. But king Marsilie is my greatest enemy, and how far can I trust him concerning the words which you have spoken to me?" "By hostages," replied the Saracen, "of whom you will receive ten or fifteen or twenty. At the risk of losing him I will put a son of mine

among the number and you will have, I doubt not, even nobler ones. Then when you are in your royal palace at the great festival of St. Michel du Peril, thither my master will follow you; such is his message. There in your baths which God made for you, there he wishes to become a Christian." Charlemaine replied: "He may yet be saved."

11. Fair was the evening time and the sun still shone brightly. Charles bade lead the mules to their stables, and he had a tent stretched in the wide orchard that the ten messengers might lodge therein. Twelve of his servants have cared for them well and they passed the night there until the daylight came. The emperor arose early and listened to both mass and matins. Then he betook himself beneath a pine tree and summoned his barons to take counsel, for he wishes to act in everything according to their will.

12. The emperor goes beneath a pine tree and summons his barons in order to take counsel—duke Ogier and archbishop Turpin, Richard the aged and his nephew Henry, the valiant count Acelin of Gascony, Tedbalt of Reims and Milo his cousin. There, too, were Gerin and Gerier, and together with them came count Roland and the brave and noble Oliver. Of the Franks of France there are more than a thousand. Ganelon came there too, the one who did the treacherous deed. Now begins the counsel which turned out so ill.

13. "Sir barons," said the emperor Charles, "king Marsilie has sent his messengers to me. He wishes to give me a great mass of his possessions—bears and lions and greyhounds on the leash, seven hundred camels and a thousand moulted falcons, four hundred mules laden with gold of Arabia, and besides all this more than fifty wagons. But he bids me return to France, and he will follow me to my palace at Aix, and there he will accept our most holy law; he will become a Christian, and he will hold his lands from me. But I do not know what is his intent." The Frenchmen say "It behoves us to be cautious."

14. The emperor has finished speaking. Count Roland, who does not agree with him, leaps up and begins to contradict him. He said to the king: "To your misfortune will you trust Marsilie! We came into Spain seven full years ago; I conquered Noples and Commibles for you, I took Valterne and the land of Pine and Balaguer, Tuele and Sezille. King Marsilie acted in very treacherous wise. He sent fifteen of his heathen,

each one carrying an olive branch, and they said these very same words to you. You took counsel with your Frenchmen and they advised you very unwisely. You sent two of your counts to the heathen; one was Basan and the other Basilie. He took off both their heads in the mountains beneath Haltilie. Carry on the war as you have begun it. Lead your army in battle array to Saragossa, besiege it for the rest of your life and avenge those whom the felon had murdered."

15. The emperor sat with bowed head. He stroked his beard and smoothed his moustache and gave his nephew no answer, either good or bad. The Frenchmen are silent—save Ganelon only. He jumped to his feet and came before, Charles and began to speak very fiercely. And he said to the king: "To your misfortune will you listen to a fool, whether me or any other man, if it be not to your profit. When Marsilie tells you that he will become your vassal with clasped hands, and will hold all Spain as a gift from you; that he will accept the faith that we hold whoever he be who advises you to reject this offer, sire, little he cares by what death we die. It is not right that a counsel of pride proceed any further; let us leave the fools and listen only to the wise."

16. Then Naimés came forward; in all the court there was no better vassal than he. And he said to the king: "You have heard the answer that Ganelon the count has given you. There is wisdom in it if it be rightly understood. King Marsilie is defeated in war: you have taken all his strongholds, you have broken down his walls with your stonethrowers, you have burnt his cities and defeated his army. Now that he requests you to have mercy on him, it would be a crime to do anything further against him.... And since he is willing to give you hostages as a pledge, this, great war ought not to go on any longer." The Frenchmen say: "The duke has spoken well."

17. "Sir barons, whom shall we send thither, to King Marsilie in Saragossa?" Duke Naimés replies: "I will go, by your leave. Give me now the glove and the staff." The King replies: "You are a man wise in counsel. By this beard and by these hairs on my face, you shall not go so far from me this year. Go and sit down, since no one bids you rise."

18. "Sir barons, whom can we send to the Saracen who holds Saragossa?" Roland replies: "I can very well go." "You certainly shall not," said count Oliver. "Your spirit is much too fierce and proud. I

doubt not that you would get yourself mixed up in strife. If the king wishes, I can go very well." But the king replies: "Be silent, both of you. Neither you nor he shall set foot there. By this beard which you see whitening, a curse upon him who wishes to send one of my twelve peers!" The Frenchmen are silent and there they sit quite dumbfounded.

19. Turpin of Reims has got up from his place, and he said to the king: "Let your Franks remain here. You have been seven years in this land and they have had many hardships and toils. But give me, sire, the staff and the glove and I will go to the Saracen of Spain and find out a little what he is like." The Emperor replies in anger: "Go and sit down on your white rug. Do not speak again unless I bid you."

20. "Noble knights," said the emperor Charles, "choose me now a baron of the land to carry my message to Marsilie." Then spake Roland: "It shall be Ganelon, my step-father." The Frenchmen say: "Indeed he may well do it. If you pass him by, you will not find a wiser man to send." Count Ganelon was filled with anguish at these words. He threw his large crimson cloak from his neck and stood there in his jerkin of silk. He had flashing eyes and a very proud countenance; he was noble of form and broad of chest. He was so good to look at that all his peers gazed at him. And he said to Roland: "Madman, why this anger? Everyone knows that I am thy step-father and this is why thou has decreed that I should go to Marsilie. If God grant that I return thence, I will stir up such trouble for thee as will last all the rest of thy life." Roland replies: "This is nothing but pride and folly. Everyone knows that I care not for threats. But it needs a clever man to be a good messenger; if the king wishes it, I am ready to go instead of you."

21. Ganelon replies: "Thou shalt certainly not go instead of me! Thou art not my man, nor am I thy lord. Charles commands me to carry out a service for him and I shall go to Marsilie at Saragossa. But be sure that I shall do some unexpected deed before this great anger is appeased." When Roland heard this he began to laugh.

22. When Ganelon sees that now Roland is mocking him, his mortification is so great that he nearly bursts with anger. His senses almost leave him, but he says to the count: "Indeed, I have no cause to love you; you have brought an unjust judgment on me. Just emperor, here am I; I desire to carry out your bidding."

23. "I know well that I must go to Saragossa. But he who goes thither does not return again. My chief concern is that I have sister to wife, and of her I have a son, the fairest that can be found. Baldwin is his name and he will be a valiant knight. To him I leave all my possessions and my fiefs. Care for him well, for I shall never see him again with these eyes." Charles replies: "Your heart is too tender. Since I command it, you must go."

24. Then the king said: "Ganelon, come hither and take the staff and the glove. You have heard it—the Franks have chosen you." "Sire," said Ganelon, "this is Roland's doing; I shall never love him all the rest of my life; nor Oliver, because he is his companion, nor the twelve peers because they love him so dearly. I defy them, sire, in your presence." The king replied: "You are too ill-tempered. You will certainly go now, for I command it."—"I can go thither, but I shall have no safeguard, for Basilie had none, nor his brother Basant."

25. The emperor hands him the glove from his right hand but count Ganelon would gladly not have been there. When he should have taken it, he let it fall to the ground. The Frenchmen say "God what can this mean? Great loss will come to us from this message." "Sirs," said Ganelon, "you will hear tidings of it."

26. "Sire," said Ganelon, "give me my dismissal. Since I must go, there is no reason to delay any longer." Then said the king: "Go in Jesus' name and in mine!" He has absolved him with his right hand and has made the sign of the cross upon him. Then he gave him the staff and the letter.

27. Ganelon the count goes to his dwelling and begins to get ready his armour, the very best that he can find. He has fixed golden spurs to his feet and he girds his sword Murgleis to his side. He has mounted Tachebrun, his battle-steed, and his uncle Guinemer held the stirrups for him. And there you might have seen many knights weeping, and they say to him: "Your valour was ill-fated. You have been long at the king's court and you have always been acclaimed a noble warrior. The one who proposed that you should go will not be saved or protected by Charlemaine. Count Roland ought not to have thought of it, for you are descended from a right noble stock." And then they say "Sire, take us with you!" But Ganelon replies: God forbid! It is better that I should die

alone than that so many good knights should lose their lives. Go back to dear France, my lords; salute my wife from me and Pinabel my friend and peer, and Baldwin my son whom you all know, protect him and consider him your lord." And so he gets on his way and begins his journey.

28. Ganelon is riding beneath a high olive-grove. He has joined himself to the Saracen messengers, and he and Blancandrin fall a little way behind. And they talk to each other in very cunning wise. Says Blancandrin: "Charles is a wonderful man. He has conquered Apulia and all Calabria, he has crossed the salt sea to England and has taken tribute for the use of St. Peter; what does he want here in our country?" Ganelon replies: "Such is his pleasure. There will never be a man who can stand up against him."

29. Said Blancandrin "The Franks are very gallant men. But these dukes and counts do much harm to their lord when they advise him such things. Both he himself and others are worn out and ruined thereby." Ganelon replies: "Indeed I know of no one except Roland who is to blame, and it will be to his confusion. Yesterday morning the emperor was sitting in the shade, and up comes his nephew, still clad in his byrnie and bringing the booty which he had obtained round about Carcassone. In his hand he held a crimson apple, and he said to his uncle: 'Take it, fair sir. I present you with the crowns of all the kings.' His own pride will bring him to nought, for he risks his life every day. If someone would only kill him, then we should have universal peace."

30. Said Blancandrin: "What a bad man is this Roland who wishes to defeat all nations and challenges all other lands. By what people does he hope to accomplish so much?" Ganelon replies: "By the French people. They love him so much that they will never fail him; he gives them so many gifts of gold and silver, mules and warhorses, silken cloths and armour. The emperor himself gets all that he wants from him, for he will conquer the lands for him from here to the East."

31. Ganelon and Blancandrin rode along together until they had pledged their faith each to the other that they would do their utmost to kill Roland. They rode along the main roads and the by-paths until they dismounted beneath a yew tree in Saragossa. There was a throne placed there beneath the shadow of a pine; it was enveloped in silken cloth of

Alexandria, and upon it was seated the king who held all Spain. Round about him are twenty thousand Saracens, and not one of them uttered a sound or a word, so anxious were they for the news they were about to hear. And now Ganelon and Blancandrin approach.

32. Blancandrin came and stood before Marsilie. He held Count Ganelon by the hand and he said to the king: "Greetings in the name of Mahomet and Apollin, whose holy laws we obey! We have accomplished your mission to Charles. He raised both his hands toward heaven, he praised his God, but made no other reply. He sends you here a noble baron of his; he is a baron of France and a very powerful man. You will hear from him whether you will have peace or not." Marsilie replies: "Now let him speak; we will listen to him."

33. Now count Ganelon had thought out his plan and he began to speak very skilfully, like a man who knows how to do it well. He said to the King: "Salutations in the name of God, the glorious one whom we ought to worship! This is the command that Charlemaine lays upon you: that you should accept the holy Christian faith and he will give you half of Spain as a fief. If you are not willing to make this treaty, you will be taken by force and bound; you will be taken to his residence at Aix and there you will be condemned to lose your life. You will die there in shame and dishonour." King Marsilie was dumbfounded at this speech; he was holding in his hand a dart feathered with gold, and he would have struck him if he had not been prevented.

34. King Marsilie has changed colour and he has seized the shaft of his weapon. When Ganelon saw this he put his hand to his sword and drew it from its sheath about two fingers' length. Then he addressed it: You are very bright and fair! I shall have carried you in kings' courts for a very long time. Never shall the emperor of France say that I died alone in a strange country before the best had paid it dearly by means of you!" The heathen say: "Let us separate them."

35. The best Saracens have besought him so much that Marsilie has sat down again on his throne. Said the Algalife "You have harmed our cause in wishing to strike the Frenchman. You ought to have listened to him and heard what he had to say. "Sire," said Ganelon, "such things I must suffer. Not for all God's gold nor for all the wealth to be found in this land, would I fail—provided I have the leisure thereto—to tell the

bidding of Charles, the mighty king, which he sends through me to his mortal foe." Ganelon is wrapped in a cloak of sable fur covered with Alexandrian silk—he throws it to the ground and Blancandrin receives it, but he has no mind to part with his sword; in his right hand by the gilded pommel he held it. The heathen say: "What a noble baron he is!"

36. Then Ganelon went and stood near the king, and he said to him: "You do wrong to be angry, because this is the bidding of Charles the ruler of France. Receive the Christian faith and he will give half of Spain as a fief, and Roland his nephew shall have the other half, and a very arrogant partner you will have! If you are not willing to sanction this treaty he will come and besiege you in Saragossa. You will be seized and bound by force and you will be taken straight to the city of Aix. You will have neither palfrey nor battle-horse, not a mule either male or female that you may ride, but you will be thrown upon a sorry beast of burden, and when you arrive there you will be condemned to lose your head. Our Emperor sends you this letter," and he put it into the heathen's right hand.

37. Marsilie was pale with anger as he broke the seal and threw away the wax. He looks at the letter and sees what is written therein: "Charles, the ruler of France, bids me call to mind the grief and the anger which I caused him concerning Basan and his brother Basilie, whose heads I took from them in the mountains of Hautoïe; if I wish to be quit with my life, I must send to him my uncle the Algalife; otherwise he will never be my friend." Then the son of Marsilie began to speak, and he said to the king: "Ganelon has spoken folly. He has gone too far and it is not right that he should live any longer. Hand him over to me and I will deal with him." When Ganelon heard this he brandished his sword and he went and leaned against the stem of the pine tree.

38. The king has gone into the orchard and he has taken his most trusted vassals with him. Blancandrin came with his white hair, Jurfarete his son and heir, and the Algalife, his uncle and his supporter. Then said Blancandrin: "Call the Frenchman; he has pledged his faith that he will help us." And the king replied: "Bring him here yourself." So he took Ganelon by the fingers of his right hand and brought him to the king in the orchard. There they planned their wicked act of treachery.

39. "Fair Sir Ganelon," said Marsilie to him, "I acted unadvisedly towards you when in my anger I sought to strike you. I offer you as a pledge these sable furs, whose value is more than five hundred pounds worth of gold, and before to-morrow evening I will make you ample amends." Ganelon replies: "I do not refuse it, and may God repay you well, if it be His will!"

40. Then said Marsilie: "Ganelon, know for certain that it is in my mind to show you great friendship. I wish to hear you speak of Charlemaine. He is very old and has completed his allotted span, for I know that he is more than two hundred years. He has sojourned in so many lands, he has received so many blows upon his buckler, he has reduced so many powerful kings to beggary; when will he be tired of carrying on this warfare?" Ganelon replies: "Charles is not such as you imagine. There is no man who sees him and can recognise him but he must admit that the emperor is a warrior. However much I may describe him and praise him to you, I cannot do justice to his honour and his munificence. Who could recount his great worth? God has glorified him with such nobility that he would rather die than desert his barons."

41. Then said the heathen: "I am much surprised concerning Charlemaine, and I may well be, for he is old and hoary. To my knowledge he is more than two hundred years old. He has spent himself in so many lands, he has received so many blows from lance and spear, he has reduced so many rich kings to beggary; when will he be tired of waging warfare?" "Never," replied Ganelon, "as long as his nephew is alive, for there is not such a vassal under the vault of heaven. Exceedingly valiant, too, is his comrade Oliver; the twelve peers also whom Charles loves so dearly and who form the vanguard with twenty thousand knights. Charles is safe for he has no one to fear."

42. Spake the Saracen "I am much surprised concerning Charlemaine, who is white and hoary! To my knowledge he is more than two hundred years old. He has been a conqueror in so many lands, he has received so many blows from good sharp-edged lances, he has slain so many strong kings or conquered them in battle; when will he be tired of waging warfare?" "Never," replied Ganelon, "as long as Roland lives, for there is not such a vassal from here to the East. Exceedingly valiant too is Oliver, his companion, and the twelve peers whom Charles loves so dearly and

who form the vanguard with twenty thousand Franks. Charles is safe for he need fear no man alive."

43. "Fair Sir Ganelon," said King Marsilie, "my people are such that you will never see a nobler race; I can put four hundred thousand knights into the field—can I fight against Charles and the Frenchmen?" Ganelon replies: "You have no chance this time! You would lose a great many of your heathen. Put aside foolish counsel and cleave to wisdom. Give the emperor such great gifts that there will not be a Frenchman who does not marvel at them. By reason of twenty hostages whom you will send to him the king will return to fair France; but he will leave his rearguard behind him, and count Roland his nephew will be in it—of this I am certain—and Oliver the brave and the courteous. The counts are dead men, if my words are believed, and Charles will see the fall of his great pride. He will never wish to fight against you any more."

44. "Fair Sir Ganelon.... How can I destroy Roland?" "I can easily tell you that," replied Ganelon. "The king will be at the major passes of Sizer; he will have left behind him his rearguard in which is his nephew, the powerful Roland, and Oliver in whom he has such faith. They have twenty thousand Franks in their company. Now do you send a hundred thousand of your heathen and let these engage them first in battle. The men of France will be wounded and harassed, and of yours too (for I must not hide the fact) there will be great slaughter. Then you will attack them a second time and in the same way, and Roland will not escape in whichever battle he perish. Then you will have accomplished a noble piece of knighthood and you will have no more war all your life."

45. "If anyone could compass Roland's death Charles would lose the right arm from his body and the marvellous armies would cease to exist. Charles would never get together so large a force again and the Land of the Ancients would rest in peace." When Marsilie heard this he kissed him on the neck, and straightway he began to have his treasures brought out.

46. Then said Marsilie: "An agreement is of no use unless (it be pledged).... You will have to swear to me that you will betray Roland." Ganelon replied: "Let this be as you wish." On the relics of his sword Murglais he swore to the treason, and thus the crime was committed.

47. There was a seat there, made all of ivory. Marsilie had a book brought forward—it was the law of Mahomet and Tervagant. And this is what the Saracen of Spain has sworn: If he finds Roland in the rearguard he will attack him with all his army and Roland shall die, if he can but achieve it. Ganelon replies: “So let it be.”

48. Then a heathen named Valdabrun come forward and he went and stood by King Marsilie. His face bright with smiles he spoke to Ganelon “Accept my sword than which no man has better. The guard alone is worth more than a thousand mangons. For friendship, fair sir, I give it to you, because you are helping us in respect of Roland so that we may find him in the rearguard. It will certainly be done,” count Ganelon replied; and they kissed each other on the face and on the chin.

49. After him came a heathen, Climorin. Laughing brightly he too said to Ganelon: “Accept my helmet—never was better one seen. And help us to find the best means whereby we may bring shame on Roland.” “It shall be done,” replied Ganelon, and then they kissed each other on the mouth and on the face.

50. Then Queen Bramimonde approached and she said to the count: “I love you greatly, sir, because both my lord and all his men think highly of you. To your wife I will send two necklaces richly set with gold and amethysts and jacinths; they are worth more than all the wealth of Rome. Your emperor never had such beauties.” He has taken them and put them into his hose.

51. The king calls Malduit his treasurer: “The gift for Charles, is it ready?” And he replies: “Yes, Sire, quite ready; seven hundred camels laden with gold and silver, and twenty hostages of the noblest under heaven.”

52. Marsilie took Ganelon by the shoulder and said to him—“You are exceedingly brave and wise. By that, faith which you hold most holy, beware lest you turn your heart away from us. I wish to give you a great mass of my wealth—ten mules laden with the finest gold of Arabia; and never will a year pass but I do as much for you again. Here, too, are the keys of this great city; make present of all this great wealth to Charles, and then get Roland appointed to the rearguard for me. If I come across him, either in pass or defile, I will engage in mortal conflict with him.”

Ganelon replies: "It seems to me that I delay too long." So he mounted and started on his journey.

53. The emperor is approaching his dwelling. He has come to the city of Galne which count Roland had taken and destroyed for him. For a hundred years from that time it remained deserted. The king is waiting for news from Ganelon and for the tribute of the great land of Spain. At dawn, just as the day begins to grow light, count Ganelon has arrived at the encampment.

54. The emperor has arisen betimes and has been present at mass and matins. On the green grass he stood before his tent, Roland was there, and Oliver the valiant, Naimes the duke and many others. Then came Ganelon the traitor, the perjured one. With great guile he began to speak, and he said to the King: "Salutation in God's name! I bring you here the keys of Saragossa. Very great treasure I have brought with me also and twenty hostages whom you must keep well guarded. And this is the message that king Marsilie sends: You must not blame him concerning the Algalife. For with my own eyes I saw four hundred thousand armed men, clad in their hauberks and many of them with closed helmets, girded with swords whose pommels were of chased gold, who accompanied him as far as the sea. They were fleeing from Marsilie on account of the Christian faith which they were unwilling either to receive or to keep. Before they had sailed four leagues, storm and tempest overtook them: and they were all drowned, you will not see any of them again. If he had been alive I would have brought him with me. Concerning the heathen king, Sire, believe the truth of what I say—that you will not see this first month pass before he will follow you to the kingdom of France and will accept the law that you hold; that he will become your vassal with folded hands and will hold the kingdom of Spain from you." Then said the king: "God be thanked! You have accomplished your mission well: you shall have a costly reward." Throughout the army a thousand horns are sounded. The Frenchmen fold their tents, load their beasts of burden and all start without delay for fair France.

55. Charlemaine has laid waste Spain, he has taken the strongholds and dismantled the cities. And now he says that he has finished waging war. Towards fair France the emperor rides.... Count Roland has fixed

the ensign, and on the top of a hill he has raised it towards the sky. At this sign the Frenchmen pitch their camps about the land. But the heathen are riding through the deep valleys, clad in their hauberks... with laced helmets and girded swords, with their shields upon their necks and lances in the rest. They have halted in a forest on the top of the mountains, and there four hundred thousand await the daybreak. God! what a grievous pity that the Frenchmen do not know it!

56. The day passes and dark night has come. Charles, the great emperor, is asleep. And he dreamed that he was on the major passes of Sizer and he was holding in his hands his lance of beech. Ganelon the count has seized it from him and has handled and brandished it with such force that the fragments fly up towards heaven. Charles sleeps on, for he has not yet awakened.

57. After this one he had another vision: This time he was in France, in his chapel at Aix. A fierce boar bit him in the right arm. From the Ardenne he saw a leopard coming and it attacked his very body most ferociously. Then from within the palace a greyhound rushed down and came galloping towards Charles. He rent the right ear of the first beast, then fought furiously with the leopard. The Frenchmen say that a great battle is going on; they do not know yet which of them will conquer. Charles is asleep, for he has not yet awakened.

58. The night passes and bright dawn appears. The emperor rides proudly through his army... and thus he spake to them: "Sir barons, you see the defiles and the narrow passes! Choose out now who shall be in the rearguard." Ganelon replies: "It shall be Roland, my stepson; you have no baron so courageous as he." When the King heard it, he looked at him fiercely and said to him: "You are a living devil. Deadly rage has taken possession of you. And who will go before me in the vanguard?" Ganelon replies again: "Ogier of Denmark; you have no baron who will do it better than he."

59. Count Roland, when he heard himself appointed for the task, spoke in knightly fashion: "Sir stepfather, I ought to be very grateful to you that you have chosen me for the rearguard! Charles, the king who rules France, will lose there, this I know well, neither palfrey nor battle-steed, neither ass nor mule, neither saddle-horse nor pack-horse

but it shall be paid for first by the sword." Ganelon replies: "You speak truth, I know well."

60. When Roland heard that he would be in the rearguard, he spoke angrily to his stepfather: "Ha, son of a slave, man of evil repute, dost thou think I would let the glove fall on the ground as thou didst the staff in front of Charles?"

61. "Just emperor," said the baron Roland, "give me the bow that you hold in your hand. I know that no one will be able to reproach me that it fell from my hand as the staff fell from Ganelon's right hand when he received it." But the emperor's head was bowed as he stroked his beard and twisted his moustache, and he cannot prevent the tears from falling from his eyes.

62. Then Naimes came forward; in all the court there is no better vassal than he. And he said to the king: "You have heard what has passed; count Roland is very angry. The rearguard has been adjudged to him and there is no baron in your court who can alter it now. So give him the bow that you hold stretched in your hand and find him someone who can render him right good assistance." The king gives it to him and Roland has taken it.

63. The emperor calls his nephew Roland: "Fair sir nephew, know now for a truth that I will hand over half my army to you as a gift. Keep them—they are for your protection." The count replied: "I will do no such thing. May God confound me if I belie my lineage. I will keep twenty thousand Franks behind with me, and you can cross the passes in all safety. You need fear no man as long as I am alive."

64. Count Roland has mounted his steed. His comrade Oliver comes towards him; Gerin and valiant count Gerier came too, Oton and Berengier, Astor and the aged Anseïs, and Girard of Roussillon the proud came also. The rich duke Gaifier has come. The archbishop said: "By my head, I will go!" "And I with you," said count Gautier; "I am Roland's man, I must not fail him." Amongst them they choose twenty thousand knights.

65. Count Roland calls Gautier del Hum: "Take a thousand Franks of France, our native land, and hold the defiles and the heights in order that the emperor may not lose a single one of his men." Gautier replies: "It is my duty to do it at your wish." With a thousand Frenchmen from

their native land of France, Gautier spreads out over the defiles and the heights. He will not come down on account of evil tidings until seven hundred swords have been drawn. King Almaris of the kingdom of Belferne will engage them in terrible conflict this very day.

66. High are the mountains and the valleys dark, the rocks are sombre and the defiles mysterious. The French passed the day in great grief. One could hear the noise of them fifteen leagues away. And when they came to their fatherland and saw Gascony the land of their liege-lord, then they remembered their fiefs and their possessions, their maidens and their gentle wives. And there is not one of them who does not weep for pity. But Charles is anxious more than all the others for he has left his nephew in the Spanish defiles. Pity takes hold of him and he cannot keep himself from weeping.

67. The twelve peers have remained behind in Spain. They have twenty thousand Frenchmen in their company and they have neither fear nor dread of death. The emperor is returning to France: he hides his face beneath his mantle. Duke Naimes is riding next to him and he says to the king: "What is the cause of your heaviness?" Charles replies: "You do wrong to ask! I have such great grief that I must give vent to it. France will be ruined by Ganelon. Last night it appeared to me in an angelic vision that he broke my lance between my hands; it was he who adjudged my nephew for the rearguard. I have left him in a foreign land. God! if I lose him, I shall never have another in his place."

68. Charlemaine cannot keep himself from weeping. A hundred thousand Frenchmen are filled with tenderness for him and with a dreadful fear for Roland. Ganelon the traitor has betrayed him; he has received large gifts in payment from the heathen king, gold and silver, rugs and silken cloths, mules and horses and camels and lions. Marsilie calls together the barons of Spain, the counts, the viscounts, the dukes, the almagours, the amirafles and the sons of the contors. Four hundred thousand he puts in battle array in three days. Then he has tambours sounded throughout Saragossa and he hoists Mahomet up to the highest tower; there is not a heathen who does not pray to him and adore him. Then they set out and ride at full speed, across the Terre Certeine and the valleys and the mountains until they see the banners of those of

France. The rearguard of the twelve companions will not fail to give them battle.

69. The nephew of Marsilie has come forward, mounted on a mule which he touches with his staff. Laughing joyfully he said to his uncle: "Fair sir king, I have served you long and many pains and hardships my service has brought me. I have fought battles and conquered in the field. Grant me a boon—to strike the first blow at Roland! I will kill him with my sharp-edged spear. If Mahomet will grant me his protection, I will deliver all the regions of Spain, from the passes as far as Durestant. Charles will grow weary and the Franks will turn back and you will never have any more war all your life." King Marsilie gave him the glove in pledge.

70. King Marsilie's nephew holds the glove in his hand and with proud speech he speaks to his uncle: "Fair sir king, you have given me a great gift. Now choose me out twelve of your barons and I will attack the twelve companions." First of all speaks Falsaron, the brother of king Marsilie: "Fair sir nephew, you and I will go together. We will surely join battle with the rearguard of the great army of Charles. It is decreed that we should slay them."

71. King Corsalis comes from the other side. He is from Barbary and he knows many evil arts. He spoke like a good vassal: "For all God's gold he would not be a coward...." Then Malprimis of Brigant came spurring up; he is more fleet of foot than any horse. He cries loudly before king Marsilie: "I will betake myself to Roncevaux; if I find Roland I will not fail to kill him."

72. There present is an amurafle from Balaguez; he has a noble form and his face is proud and open. When he is mounted on his horse he is a proud sight in his armour. Much praised he is too for his courage; if he had been a Christian he would have been a proper baron. He cried out before king Marsilie: "I will go and disport myself in Roncevaux! If I find Roland he will be done to death, and Oliver too, and all the twelve peers. The French will die in shame and dishonour. Charlemaine is old and in his dotage; he will be tired of waging war and Spain will remain a free heritage for us." King Marsilie has thanked him greatly for his words.

73. There was an almayour there from Moriane; no more felon in all the land of Spain than he. He has made his boast before Marsilie: "I will lead my company to Roncevaux, twenty thousand warriors with shields and lances. If I find Roland I swear that he is a dead man. Never a day will pass but Charles weeps for him."

74. Then up steps Turgis of Tortelosa; he is a count and the city belongs to him. He wishes to bring ruin upon the Christians and he ranges himself with the others before Marsilie; and thus he spoke to the King: "In no wise be dismayed. Mahomet is worth more than Saint Peter of Rome. If you serve him the glory of the battle will be ours. I will go and join Roland in Roncevaux and no man shall protect him from death. Look at my sword which is good and long: I will measure it with Durendal and you will have abundant means of hearing which is the better. The French will die if they try their strength against us; Charles the aged will have shame and dishonour, and never again on earth will he wear a crown."

75. Then Escremiz of Valterne came forward in his turn. He is a Saracen and the land of Valterne belongs to him. He cries out in the press before Marsilie: "I will go to Roncevaux to bring down their pride. If I find Roland he will not be quit with his head, nor Oliver either who captains the others. All the twelve peers are doomed to perish. The French will die and France will be deprived of them and Charles will have a dearth of good vassals."

76. Then steps forth a heathen Esturganz; and with him is Estramariz, one of his comrades; both of them are felons and perjured traitors, And Marsilie said to them: "Lords, come forward! You, too, shall go to Roncevaux, to the passing of the defiles, and you shall help to lead my people thither." And they reply: "At your bidding, Sire, "we will attack Oliver and Roland; the twelve peers will have no protection from death. Our swords are good and sharp; we will make them vermilion with hot blood. The French will die and Charles will be sore grieved. We will give you the Land of the Ancients as a gift. Come thither, king, you shall see it in very truth: we will bring you the emperor himself as a present."

77. Then, Margariz of Seville came running up. He holds the land as far as Casmarina. He is much beloved of the ladies for his beauty; not one of them sees him but she beams upon him and cannot refrain from

smiling when she looks at him. No other heathen is his match for courage. He came in the crowd and cried out above all the others, saying to the King: "Be not dismayed! I will go and kill Roland at Roncevaux—nor shall Oliver escape with his life. The twelve peers have remained behind for martyrdom. You see my sword—its hilt is of gold: the emir of Primes sent it to me. I swear to you that it will be dyed with crimson blood. The French will die and France will be dishonoured, and Charles the aged and hoary-bearded will never pass a day without grief and anger. Before a year has passed we shall have seized France and we shall be able to lie in the city of Saint Denis." The heathen king bowed low before him.

78. Then in his turn comes Chernuble of Munigre. His hair sweeps the very ground, and he can carry a greater weight for sport, when he so desires, than four mules saddled as beasts of burden. In that land, so it is said, from which he comes, the sun never shines and the wheat cannot grow, rain does not fall nor does dew rest upon the earth, and there is not a stone there but is completely black. Some say that devils live there. Thus spake Chernuble: "I have girded my good sword. I will stain it vermilion in Roncevaux. Never trust me again if I find Roland in my path and do not attack him; and I will vanquish Durendal with my own sword. The French will die and France will be deprived of them." At these words the twelve peers gather together and they will take with them a hundred thousand Saracens such as will rush forward in their zeal for battle. They go to arm themselves beneath a pine grove.

79. The heathen arm themselves with their Saracen hauberks, most of which are of triple thickness. They lace their good helmets of Saragossa and they gird their swords of Viennese steel. They have noble shields and Valencian lances, and battle standards of white and blue and red. They leave their mules and their palfreys; they mount their battle steeds and ride in serried ranks. The day was fair and the sun shone brightly and they have not a piece of armour that does not reflect its rays. A thousand trumpets sound to make the scene yet more beautiful. The noise is great and the Frenchmen hear it. Said Oliver: "Sir comrade, I feel sure that we shall have battle with the Saracens." Roland replies: "And may God grant it! For one's lord one ought to suffer hardship and endure both great heat and great cold, and lose one's skin and one's hair.

Now let each see that he strikes hard blows, that an evil song never be sung about us! The heathens are in the wrong and the Christians in the right. Never shall a bad example come from me."

80. Oliver is mounted on a hillock and he looks towards the right through a grassy valley and sees the heathen army approaching. He calls Roland his comrade: "I see such a commotion coming from the direction of Spain, so many bright hauberks and shining helmets! This army will bring much anguish upon our Frenchmen. Ganelon knew it—the felon, the traitor, who chose us out before the emperor." "Be silent, Oliver," count Roland replies; "he is my stepfather, I do not wish you to say a word about it."

81. Oliver has mounted on a hillock and he can clearly see the kingdom of Spain and the Saracens who are assembled in such numbers. Their helmets, which are set with gold, glisten, their shields too and their embroidered hauberks, their lances and their folded pennons. He cannot even count their formations, for there are so many that one cannot number them. He is much disturbed in mind as he looks at them; as quickly as possible he descends the hill and comes to the Frenchmen and tells them all.

82. Said Oliver: "I have seen the heathen; never has any man on earth seen a greater number of them. There are a hundred thousand of them in front of us, with shields and laced helmets, and clad in shining hauberks; their polished lances glitter as they hold the hafts erect. You will have a battle such as there never was before. Sir Frenchmen, may you have strength from God! Stand firm, that we be not vanquished!" The Frenchmen say: "Cursed be he who flees! Never will one of us fail you for fear of death."

83. Said Oliver The heathen are in great force, and it seems to me there are very few of our Frenchmen! Comrade Roland, sound your horn; Charles will hear it and the army will return." Roland replies: "I should act like a madman! I should lose my renown, in sweet France. I will strike hard blows with Durendal without delay; the blade will be stained with blood right up to the golden hilt. To their misfortune the felon heathen came to the passes; I warrant you that they are all appointed to death."

84. "Comrade Roland, sound your horn; Charles will hear it and will turn the army back. The king with all his barons will come to our aid." Roland replies: "May it not please God that my kinsfolk be blamed on my account, nor that sweet France fall into disrepute! Rather will I strike vigorously with Durendal, the good sword which I have girded to my side. You will see the blade all covered with blood. The treacherous heathen have come together to their hurt; I warrant you, they are all delivered up to death."

85. Comrade Roland, sound your horn; Charles will hear it as he crosses the passes and I warrant you the French will turn back." "May it not please God," replies Roland, "that it should be said by any living man that I ever sounded my horn on account of the heathen. Never shall my kinsfolk be reproached on this account. When I am in the thick of the battle, I shall strike a thousand and seven hundred blows and you will see the steel of Durendal stained with blood. The French are strong and they will strike valiantly; the men of Spain will have no protection from death."

86. Said Oliver: "I know of no reproach in this. I myself have seen the Saracens of Spain: the valleys and the mountains are covered with them, the open country and all the plains. Great are the armies of this foreign people and we have but a very small company." Roland replies: "My desire grows greater on that account. May it not please God nor His angels that France ever lose her worth on my account! I would rather die than be overtaken by dishonour. The better we strike the more the emperor will love us."

87. Roland is valiant and Oliver is wise. Both of them have marvellous courage. When once they are mounted and armed they will never avoid the battle for fear of death. They are noble counts and their words are bold. The felon heathen are riding fiercely. Said Oliver: "Roland, look in front of you now. The heathen are close to us, but Charles is far away. You did not deign to sound your horn; if the king were here we should take no harm. Look up towards the Spanish passes; you can see, the rearguard is in a sad plight. He who fights in the rearguard to-day will never fight in another one." Roland replies: "Speak not so rashly! Cursed be the heart which quakes within the breast! We will make a firm stand on the spot, and we shall be the ones to strike and to attack."

88. When Roland sees that the battle will take place he becomes fiercer than a lion or a leopard. He calls aloud to the French, and he summons Oliver: "Sir comrade, friend, say no such thing! The emperor who left the French with us put ten thousand men on one side amongst whom he knew there was not a single coward. For one's lord one ought to suffer great hardships and be able to endure excessive cold or heat—yea, one ought to be ready to lose one's blood and one's flesh. Strike with thy lance and I will strike with Durendal, my good sword that the king gave me. If I die on the battlefield, he who has it after me will be able to say that it belonged to a noble vassal."

89. Elsewhere in the field is the archbishop Turpin. He spurs his horse and mounts a bare spot of high ground; he calls the Frenchmen to him and these are the words he spake: "Sir barons, Charles has left us here; it is fitting that we should die for our king. Help to maintain the Christian faith! You will have battle, you are quite certain of it for with your own eyes you see the Saracens. Confess your sins and pray God for His mercy. I will absolve you for the salvation of your souls. If you die you will be holy martyrs; you will have seats in greater paradise." The Frenchmen dismount and kneel on the ground; the archbishop has blessed them in God's name and he bids them strike hard as penance for their sins.

90. The Frenchmen rise to their feet, absolved and quit of their sins; the archbishop has blessed them on God's behalf and they have mounted again on their swift steeds. They are armed in knightly fashion and fully equipped for battle. Count Roland calls Oliver "Sir comrade, you were right when you said that Ganelon had betrayed us all. He has taken gold and possessions and money. The emperor ought to avenge us. King Marsilie has bargained for us, but he will have to pay the price by the sword."

91. Roland is crossing the Spanish passes, mounted on Veillantif his swift courser. He carries his arms which become him well, and, as he goes, the baron brandishes his lance and turns the point upwards, with its white ensign affixed to the tip; the fringe falls down as far as his hands. His form is noble and his face is gay and smiling. His companion is riding close behind him, and the men of France acclaim him as their protector. He looks fiercely towards the Saracens, but very humbly and

gently towards the French and he addresses them courteously: "Sir barons, softly, hold back your speed! These heathen are in quest of a great martyrdom, and this very day we shall have a fair and noble booty. No king of France ever had one so costly." As he spoke these words the two armies came together.

92. Said Oliver: "I have no desire to speak. You did not deign to sound your horn and now you have no help from Charles. He knows not a word about it, so the baron is not to blame, and the brave ones over there, they are not blameworthy. Charge now with all your strength, sir barons, and hold the field! I pray you, for God's sake, be determined to strike hard blows, both to give and take! And we must not forget the battle-cry of Charles." At these words the French all shouted, and anyone who heard the cry of "Montjoie" then would have the remembrance of great valour. Then they charge—God! with what fury! They spur to the utmost for the greater speed; and thus they go to the attack, for what else could they do? And the Saracens do not shrink from them, so there are the two armies, the French and the heathen, joined in battle.

93. The nephew of Marsilie—Aelroth by name—rides first in advance of the army. And as he rides he says evil words of our Frenchmen: "Ye felon French, to-day you shall joust with us. The one who should have protected you has betrayed you and the king was mad to leave you behind in the passes. To-day sweet France will lose her reputation and Charlemaine will lose the right arm from his body." When Roland heard this, God! how angry he was! He spurs his horse and puts it to the gallop and strikes at the heathen to the utmost of his force. He breaks his shield and tears open his hauberk, he cuts open his breast and breaks all his bones and cleaves him to the chine. He makes an exit for the soul with his lance. He has driven it in deeply and made the heathen's body totter and the length of his haft he has hurled him dead from his horse. He has broken his neck in two halves; but he cannot refrain from speaking to him: "Begone, son of a slave! Charles is by no means mad, nor did he ever tolerate treason. He acted like a brave man when he left us at the passes. Sweet France will not lose her reputation to-day. Strike, Frenchmen, the first blow is ours! The right is on our side and these felons are in the wrong."

94. There was a duke there Falsaron by name—and he was king Marsilie's brother. He ruled the land of Dathan and Abiron and there is no viler traitor beneath the sky. So wide was the space between his two eyes that one might measure a good half foot. He is filled with grief when he sees his nephew dead; he advances out of the crowd and puts his horse to the gallop shouting the heathen battle-cry. Most insulting is he towards the French: "To-day fair France will lose her honour," he cries. Oliver hears him and he is very angry; he urges on his horse with his golden spurs and rides like a baron to strike him. He breaks his shield and rends his hauberk, he drives the flaps of his ensign right into his body and the length of his haft he hurls him from his saddle. Then he looks down and sees the villain lying on the ground, and says proudly to him: "I care not for your threats, son of a slave! Strike, Frenchmen, for we shall easily conquer them!" And he shouts "Montjoie," the battle-cry of Charles.

95. There is a king there, Corsablix by name, from Barbary a distant land. He called to the rest of the Saracens: "We can well sustain this battle for there are very few Frenchmen, and we need have only contempt for those who are here. Not one of them will ever have any protection from Charles; this is the day on which they must die." Archbishop Turpin heard him distinctly, and there is no man beneath the sky for whom his hatred could be greater. He pricks his horse with the spurs of fine gold and rides to strike him with all his force. He breaks his shield and tears his hauberk to pieces and drives his great lance right through the body. He has his lance firmly in his grasp and he shakes the dead man on it; then the length of his haft he hurls him on to the path. He looks down and sees the felon lying on the ground and he will not refrain from addressing him: "Heathen, son of a slave," says he, "you have lied! Charles, my master, is our protection at all times. Our men of France have no desire to flee until all your companions remain on this spot. I tell you this news, you will have to suffer death. Strike men of France! Let no one forget himself. This first blow is ours, God be thanked! And he cries Montjoie so as to hold the field.

96. And Gerin strikes Malprimis of Brigal. His good shield is not worth a farthing to him; the buckle of crystal is broken and half of it falls to the ground; the heathen's hauberk is rent as far as the flesh and

Gerin's good sword has entered into his body. The heathen falls down all of a heap and Satan carries away his soul.

97. Then Gerier his companion strikes the amirafle. He breaks his shield and tears the chain of his hauberk he drives his good lance right into his entrails. It is firmly grasped and he passes it through his body and hurls him dead in the field the length of his haft. Said Oliver: "Ours is a noble battle."

98. Samson the duke attacks the almaçour. He breaks his shield which is adorned with gold and flowers. The heathen's good hauberk is small protection to him, for his heart is pierced, and his liver and his lung. He has fallen dead, grieve for him who will. Said the archbishop: "That was the blow of a baron."

99. Then Anseïs spurs his horse forward and rides to attack Turgis of Tortelosa. He breaks his shield beneath the gilded buckle, he tears aside the parts of his hauberk, into his body he drives the point of his good lance. It is firmly grasped and the iron goes right through the heathen, and he rolls him over dead in the field the length of his haft. Said Roland: "This is the blow of a valiant man."

100. And Engelier, the Gascon of Bordeaux, spurs his horse and gives him the rein and goes to strike Escremez of Valterne. He has broken and cantled the shield which covers his neck, he has torn the chin-piece of his hauberk and has struck him in the breast between his neck bones. The length of his haft he has hurled him dead from his saddle. Then he said to him: "You have gone to your destruction."

101. And Otho strikes the heathen Estorgans on the panel in front of his shield and cuts across the quartering of white and vermillion; he has torn the sidepieces of his hauberk and driven his sharp-edged lance into his body and hurled him lifeless from his swift steed. Then he said to him: "No one can save you now!"

102. And Berengier strikes Astramariz. He has broken his shield and torn his hauberk to pieces and has thrust his strong lance through his body and hurled him lifeless among a thousand Saracens. Out of the twelve peers ten have been killed and there remain but two alive—those two are Chernuble and count Margariz.

103. Margariz is a very valiant knight, handsome and strong and swift and light. He spurs his horse and goes to strike Oliver and he has

broken his shield above the buckle of pure gold and has thrust his lance in close to his ribs. God protected him so that it did not touch his body. The haft broke off, but he did not fall down and the heathen rides on without an obstacle. He sounds his trumpet to rally his men.

104. The battle is marvellous and general. Count Roland does not tarry; he strikes with his lance as long as the handle lasts. But after fifteen blows he has broken it and cast it away. Then he draws Durendal, his good sword, and with it naked in his hand he spurs his horse and goes to strike Chernuble. He shatters his helmet with its shining carbuncles; he cleaves right through his hair and his head; his sword cuts down between the eyes in his face, through his hauberk with its delicate chainwork, and through his body till where it divides. Then through the saddle of beaten gold until it has reached the horse's body it has passed, and cloven its chine without seeking for the joint. He has hurled them both dead in the meadow on the thick grass. Then he said "Son of a slave, to your misfortune did you set out! You will never have any help from Mahomet. The battle will not be won to-day by scoundrels such as you."

105. Count Roland rides through the field. He holds Durendal which carves and cuts so well, and he brings great destruction upon the Saracens. If only you could have seen him heaping the dead one upon another, and the bright blood lying all over the ground! His hauberk is covered with blood, and both his arms, and the neck and shoulders of his good horse. Oliver, too, is not behind in the attack, nor can the twelve peers be blamed for that, and the whole French army fights and struggles. Many of the heathen are slain and others faint, so that the archbishop says: "May God reward our barons!" And he cries "Montjoie," the battle-cry of Charles.

106. Oliver, too, rides through the thick of the battle. His lance handle is broken, only a fragment of it remains. But he rides against a heathen, Malun by name, and he breaks his shield, which was adorned with gold and flowers, and thrusts both his eyes out of his head so that his brain falls right down to the ground at his feet and he has overthrown him lifeless with seven hundred more of his men. Then he killed Turgis and Esturgoz and the handle of his lance broke and splintered right up to his hands. Then Roland said to him: "Comrade, what are you doing? What is

the good of a stick in a battle like this? Iron and steel are what we need. Where is your sword which we are wont to call Halteclere? Its hilt is of gold and its pommel of crystal." "I could not draw it," said Oliver, "I had no leisure from striking blows."

107. Sir Oliver has drawn his good sword as his companion Roland bid him, and has shown him in knightly fashion how he uses it. He strikes a heathen, Justin of Val Ferrée, and he has severed his head right through; he has cut through his body with its brodered coat of mail, his good saddle which is jewelled with gold, and has cloven his horse to the chine. He has hurled them both dead before him in the meadow. Then Roland said: "Now I recognize you for my brother. For such blows the emperor loves us." On all sides "Montjoie!" resounds.

108. Count Gerin is seated on Sorel and his comrade Gerier on Passecerf. They slacken their reins and both spur forward at full speed to attack a heathen, Timozel. One strikes him on the shield and the other on the hauberk, and they have broken both their lances on his body. They overthrow him dead in the midst of the plough-land and I have never heard tell, nor do I know at all, which of them rode the fastest. Esprieris, the son of Burdel, was there... and the archbishop killed Siglorel the enchanter who had once been in hell, whither Jupiter by sorcery had led him. Said Turpin: "This man was an outlaw." And Roland replied: "The slave is vanquished. Oliver, my brother, such are the blows I love."

109. Meanwhile the battle has become furious. The French and the pagans both strike terrific blows. One attacks and another defends himself and many are the lances broken and blood-stained, and the ensigns and battle-standards torn to pieces! Many a valiant Frenchman loses his young life there. They will never set eyes again on their mothers or their wives, nor on those of France who await them at the passes. Charles the Great is weeping and wailing for them. But what does it avail? They can never have his aid. Ganelon rendered them an evil service on the day that he went to Saragossa to sell his kith and kin. But afterwards he lost both life and limb for it; he was condemned to be hung in the court of justice at Aix, both he and thirty of his kin with him who never thought to lose their lives in such a manner.

110. The battle is marvellous and grievous to be borne. Oliver and Roland both strike hard, and the archbishop delivers more than a

thousand blows and the twelve peers are not behind him, and the French all fight as one man. The pagans die by thousands and by hundreds and he who does not flee has no protection from death; whether he wills or no, he must leave his life there. The French lose their best equipments and they will never see their fathers nor their kinsmen, nor Charlemaine who awaits them at the passes. In France there is a fearful tempest; storms of thunder and wind and rain and hail beyond measure; thunderbolts fall thickly and often and the very earth itself trembles. From St. Michel du Peril as far as Xanten, from Besançon to the port of Wissant, there is not a dwelling-place but its wall splits in two. Towards midday there is pitch darkness and no light at all except when the sky is riven. Everyone who sees it is filled with dismay, and many people say: "It is the last day. The end of the world is at hand!" They do not know; their words are not true. It is the great grief for the death of Roland.

111. The French have struck with all their energy and strength, and the heathen lie dead in thousands and in crowds. Out of a hundred thousand not even two can escape. Said the archbishop: "Very valiant are our men; no one on earth could have better vassals. It is written in the annals of the Franks that...." They go through the field and search for their own men; they weep out of grief and tenderness of heart for the kinsmen that they love. Then king Marsilie with his great army comes suddenly upon them.

112. Marsilie marches along a valley with the great army that he has assembled. Twenty columns the king has numbered; their helmets shine with precious stones and their shields and their brodered tunics. Seven thousand trumpets sound the charge and the noise resounds throughout all the land. Then Roland said: "Oliver, comrade and brother, Ganelon the felon has decreed our death. The treason can no longer remain hidden and the emperor will take terrible vengeance. We shall have a fierce and hard-fought battle; never has any man seen the like. I will strike with my sword Durendal and you, comrade, must strike with Halteclere. We have carried them in so many places, and we have won so many battles with them! No evil song ought ever to be sung about them."

113. Marsilie sees the martyrdom of his people; he causes his horns and his trumpets to be sounded and then he rides forward with all the

bulk of his great army. The Saracen Abisme is riding in front—there is no greater felon than he in his company. He is a man of evil character and many crimes; he does not believe in God the son of holy Mary. He is as black as molten pitch, and he loves treason and murder better than all the gold of Galicia. No one ever saw him laugh or play; but he is courageous and very daring, and for this reason he is dear to the felon king Marsilie, and carries his dragon—the rallying point of his men. The archbishop could have small affection for him; as soon as he saw him he longed to strike him. Very quietly he said to himself: “This Saracen looks to me very like a heretic; much the best thing is for me to go and kill him, for I never loved either a coward or cowardice.”

114. The archbishop begins the battle. He is seated on a horse which he took from Grossaille, a king whom he killed in Denmark. The charger is swift of foot and movement; his feet are well formed, his legs are slender, his thighbone is short and his croup wide; his flanks are long and his backbone very high, his tail is white and his mane yellow, his ears small and his head quite tawny; there is not an animal that can equal him in running. The archbishop spurs his horse; with what courage he rides! He will not fail to attack Abisme. He rides to strike him on his marvellous shield—precious stones adorn it, amethysts and topaz, esterminals and carbuncles shine on it; a devil gave it to the emir Galafe in Val Metas and the emir sent it to him. Turpin strikes on it, he does not spare it at all, and after his stroke I should think it was not worth a farthing. He cuts his body in halves from one side to the other and hurls him down dead in an empty spot. The French say: “That was a valiant stroke! In the archbishop’s hands the crosier is quite safe.”

115. The French see the great numbers of the heathen and the fields covered with them on all sides. They call often on Oliver and Roland, and on the twelve peers to stand by them. The archbishop spoke out his mind to them: “Sir barons, have no unworthy thoughts! For God’s sake I pray you that you do not flee, that no gallant man ever sing an evil song about us. It would be far better for us to die in battle. We are destined to end our lives quite soon and after to-day we shall no longer be alive. But one thing I can guarantee to you: Holy paradise awaits you and you will be seated there amongst the Innocents.” At these words the French pluck up heart, and there is not one of them who does not shout “Montjoie.”

116. There was a Saracen there of Saragossa; half of the city belongs to him. His name was Climborin and he was not a man of honour. He received the oath of count Ganelon and he kissed him on the mouth as a token of friendship and he gave him his helmet with its carbuncle. He said that he would bring dishonour on the Land of the Ancients, and would take the emperor's crown from him. He is seated on a horse called Barbamusche which is swifter than hawk or swallow. He spurs it well, he lets it have the rein and he rushes to strike Engelier of Gascony. Neither his shield nor his coat of mail can save him; he drives the point of his lance into his body and with a firm grip he drives the blade right through him and overthrows him lifeless in the field. Then he cries: "These men are good to slay. Strike, heathen, and break through their ranks!" The French say: "God, what a noble man we have lost!"

117. Count Roland calls to Oliver, "Sir comrade, Engelier is a dead man; we had no more valiant knight than he." The count replies: "God grant that I may avenge him!" He spurs his horse with the spurs of pure gold, he holds Halteclere with its blood-stained blade, and he attacks the heathen with all his might. He delivers his stroke and the Saracen falls and the devils carry away his soul. Then he killed duke Alphasien, and cut off the head of Escababi and unhorsed seven Arabs: they are of no use to fight again. Then said Roland: "My comrade is angry! his valour may well compare with mine. For such blows Charles loves us all the better." And he cries loudly: "Strike on, knights."

118. Elsewhere is the heathen Valdabrun: it was he who knighted king Marsilie(?). He is lord of four hundred galleys by sea and there is not a skipper who does not refer to him. He took Jerusalem by treacherous means: he violated the temple of Solomon and slew the patriarch beside the font. It was he who took the oath of count Ganelon and gave him his sword with a thousand mangons. He is seated on a horse that he calls Gramimund; it is swifter in its course than a falcon. He spurs it well with his sharp spurs and goes to strike the strong duke Samson. He breaks his shield and tears his hauberk, he drives the flaps of his ensign into his body and hurls him from his saddle the full length of his lance.... "Strike, heathen; for we shall surely conquer!" But the Frenchmen say "God, it is grievous to lose such a baron!"

119. You can imagine that when count Roland saw Samson dead he was filled with very great grief. He spurs his horse and rushes towards the heathen at full speed. He holds Durendal, which is worth more than pure gold. Baron that he is, he goes and strikes him as hard as he can on his helmet which is jewelled with gold. He splits the heathen's head, his coat of mail and his body, the good jewelled saddle, and the horse's back right deep down; he kills them both, whether for praise or blame. The heathen say: "This is a hard blow for us!" Roland replies: "I cannot love your folk; on your side is the pride and the wrong."

120. Then an African from Africa rode forward—this was Malquiant, the son of King Malcud. His armour is all of beaten gold and he is more resplendent than all the others. He is seated on a horse that he calls Saut-Perdu: there is not a beast that can run against him. He rides and strikes Anseïs on the shield; he split all the vermilion and azure, he tore off the lappets of his hauberk and drove the iron and the wood of his lance into his body. The count is dead, his life is ended; and the French say: "Baron, how ill-fated thou wert!"

121. Turpin the archbishop rides through the field of battle. Never has mass been sung by a tonsured priest who performed such feats of valour as he. He said to the heathen: "May God send thee every ill! Thou hast killed one whom I regret from my heart." He has put his good horse to the gallop and has struck the heathen on his shield of Toledo and has hurled him dead upon the green grass.

122. Elsewhere is a heathen Grandoine, son of Capuel, king of Cappadocia. He is seated on a horse called Marmoire which is swifter than a bird in its flight. He slackens the rein and drives in his spurs and attacks Gerin with all his force. He breaks his crimson shield and hurls it from his neck; then he tears open his coat of mail and drives the blue ensign into his body and overthrows him lifeless on a high rock. He has killed his companion Gerier too, and Berenger and Guy of St. Antony; then he goes to strike a rich duke Astorge who ruled over Valence and Envers on the Rhône. He strikes him dead and the heathen rejoice greatly. But the French say: "Our men are falling in great numbers."

123. Count Roland held his blood-stained sword in his hand. He heard the Frenchmen lamenting to each other and it grieved him so sorely that it nearly broke his heart. He said to the heathen "May God

give thee every evil thing! Thou hast killed one for whom I am minded to make thee pay very dearly!" He spurs his horse... and they have come together and it is hard to say which of them will win.

124. Grandoine was a good and valiant knight, a fair and courageous fighter. He has met Roland in the middle of his path. He has never seen him before, but he recognizes him by his proud countenance and noble form, by his look and by his gait. He cannot help being filled with fear. He tries to fly but it is useless; the count has struck him with such force that he has split his helmet as far as the nose-piece; he has cut through his nose, his mouth and his teeth, his whole body with its mailed hauberk, the two silver sides of his gilded saddle, and the horse's back right deeply. He has killed both horse and rider without hope of recovery, and the Spaniards cry out in their grief. But the French say: "How well our protector strikes!"

125. The battle is marvellous and fierce. The French strike with force and fury; they cut through hands and sides and backbones, they pierce the clothing through to the live flesh. The bright blood trickles on to the green grass. "Land of the Ancestors, the curse of Mahomet be upon thee! Thy people are valiant beyond all others." There is not one of them but shouts "Marsilie! Ride, king! We have need of help!"

126. The battle is marvellous and vast. The French strike with their burnished lances. There you might have seen such human suffering, so many men dead, and wounded, and bleeding. They lie upon one another, on their backs and on their faces. The Saracens can hold out no longer; whether they will or no, they flee from the field, and the French pursue them with all their might and main.

127. Count Roland calls Oliver: "Sir comrade, you must grant that the archbishop is a very good knight and that there is no better on earth nor under heaven than he; he knows well how to strike with lance and spear." The count replies: "Let us go and help him!" At these words the French have renewed their attack, and hard are the blows and grievous the mêlée. The Christians are sore pressed and you ought to have seen Roland and Oliver striking and smiting with their swords! The archbishop, too, strikes with his lance. One can estimate the number of those they killed, for the chronicle tells us that it is recorded in the charters and the briefs that it was more than four thousand. In the first

four encounters things went well with them, but the fifth which followed was heavy and grievous. All the French knights were slain, except sixty whom God preserved; they will sell themselves very dearly before they die.

128. Count Roland sees the great slaughter of his men and he calls his companion Oliver and says to him: "Fair sir, dear comrade, for God's sake, what do you think? You see so many good vassals lying on the ground we ought to weep for the sweet land of fair France! Henceforward it will be destitute of such barons. Ah! king, friend, why are you not here? Oliver, my brother, how can we do it? How can we send him news?" Said Oliver: "I do not know how to set about it. Better that we die than that we be spoken of shamefully."

129. Roland said: "I will sound the horn, and Charles will hear it as he crosses the defiles; I warrant you the Franks will return." Said Oliver: "It would be a great disgrace and a reproach to all your family and the shame of it would last all their lives. When I told you to do it, you would not; and now you will not do it with my consent! If you sound your horn now it will not be an act of courage and already both your arms are covered with blood." The count replied "I have struck some noble blows."

130. Roland said: "It is a hard battle. I will blow the horn and, Charles the king will hear it." Said Oliver: "It would not be an act of valour. When I told you to do it, comrade, you thought it unworthy. If the king had been here we should have suffered no loss but we cannot blame those who are over there for it." And Oliver spoke again: "By this my beard, if I see my gentle sister Aude, you shall never lie in her embrace!"

131. Then said Roland: "Why are you angry with me?" And he replied: "Comrade, it was your fault, for valour tempered with sense is not a foolish thing and moderation is worth more than pride. The French are dead because of your thoughtlessness and Charles will never have service from us again. If you had listened to me, my lord had been here. This battle would have been won and king Marsilie either dead or a prisoner. Your prowess, Roland, has been our undoing. We shall not fight again for Charles, the great emperor, who will never have his equal till the day of judgement. You will die here and France will be disgraced.

To-day our faithful comradeship must end; there will be a sorrowful parting before the fall of night."

132. The archbishop heard them disputing, so he pricked his horse with his spurs of pure gold and came up to them and began to rebuke them: "Sir Roland, and you, Sir Oliver, for God's sake I beg you not to blame each other. Sounding the horn could not save you now; nevertheless it is better that you do it, that the king may come and be able to avenge us. The Spaniards must never return home rejoicing. Our Frenchmen will dismount from their horses; they will find us dead and mutilated; they will place us on biers on beasts of burden and will bury us in the cloisters of their chapels. We shall not be devoured by wolves and pigs and dogs." Roland replies: "Sir, you speak well."

133. Roland has put the horn to his mouth; he grasps it firmly and sounds it with all his might. High are the hills, and the voice carries a long way—a good thirty leagues away the echo was heard. Charles heard it and all his companies. And the king said: "Our men are fighting!" But Ganelon answered: "If anyone else had said that, I should have called it a lie."

134. Count Roland, with difficulty and effort and much suffering sounds his horn. The bright blood leaps forth from his mouth and he has broken the temple of his forehead. The sound of the horn he holds carries very far and Charles hears it as he crosses the border. Duke Naimes heard it too, and the French listened to it. Then said the king: "I hear the horn of Roland! He would never sound it unless he were fighting." Ganelon replies: "There is no battle! You are old and hoary and white; by words such as these you resemble a child. You know well Roland's great pride. It is amazing that God suffers it so long. He captured Noples without your permission—the Saracens came forth out of the town and fought a battle with good vassal Roland, and afterwards he washed the bloodstained meadows with water in order to remove all trace of it! He sounds his horn all day for nothing more than a hare; he is boasting now before his peers that there is not an army under the sky that would dare meet him in the field. Ride on; why are you stopping here? The Land of the Ancients is still far in front of us."

135. Count Roland's mouth is bleeding and he has burst the temple of his forehead; he sounds his horn with pain and difficulty. Charles has

heard it and the French hear it too. The king said: "That horn has a long breath." Duke Naimmes replies: "There is a baron in distress. A battle is going on, I know that well. It is the one who has betrayed him that bids you hesitate now. Arm yourself and sound your battle-cry, and go to the rescue of your noble household. You can hear well enough that Roland is in difficulty."

136. The emperor has commanded the trumpets to be sounded and the French dismount and arm themselves with hauberks and helmets and gilded swords. They have noble shields and lances both large and strong, and their pennons are of white and vermilion and blue. All the barons of the army mount their chargers and spur their utmost as long as they are in the defiles. There is not one who does not say to the other: "If only we could see Roland before he died we could strike some good blows with him." Of what use are their words? They have delayed too long.

137. The day has been fine and the evening glows brightly. Their armour flashes in the sunlight, hauberks and helmets shine like fire, their shields too which are painted with flowers, and the lances with their gilded pennons. The emperor rides in great wrath and the Frenchmen also are sad and angry; they all weep bitterly and are in great fear on account of Roland. The king commands that Ganelon be seized, and he hands him over to the cooks of his house. He calls Besgon, the head cook, and says to him: "Guard him well for me as such a felon deserves, for he has betrayed my household." Besgon receives him and sets upon him with a hundred of his companions of the best and worst of the kitchen. They tear out his beard and his moustache and each one strikes him four blows with his fist. They have beaten him well with stakes and sticks, then they put a chain on his neck and chained him up like a bear. They mounted him shamefully on a beast of burden and thus they kept him until such time as they should give him back to Charles.

138. High are the hills and dark and threatening, the valleys are deep and the waters swift. The trumpets sound in the rear and in the van and they all take up the sound of the horn. The emperor rides angrily, and the Frenchmen too are full of wrath and grief; all weep and wail greatly and pray God that he will spare Roland until they arrive all together upon the field of battle, for then they will strike valiantly with him. But

of what use are their prayers? They can avail them nothing, for they have delayed too long and cannot be in time.

139. Full of wrath rides the emperor Charles and his white beard lies spread out upon his coat of mail. All the barons of France spur their hardest and there is not one who does not utter his grief at not being with Roland their captain who is fighting with the Saracens of Spain. He is so wounded that I scarcely think his soul remains in his body. God! what men they are, those sixty who remain in his company! Never had king nor captain better men than those.

140. Roland looks at the hills and the open country. He sees so many of those of France lying there dead and he weeps for them like a gentle knight: "Sir barons, may God have mercy on you! May He grant entrance into paradise to all your souls and cause them to rest among the holy flowers! Better vassals than you have I never seen; so long have you continued in my service, and you have conquered such great lands for Charles. But the emperor nourished you for his undoing. Land of France, a very sweet land thou art, but laid waste to-day by great disaster. French barons, I see you dying for me, and I can neither protect you nor save you; May God help you, who never lied! Oliver, my brother, I must not fail you. I shall die of grief if I die of nought else. Sir comrade, let us go and strike fresh blows!"

141. Count Roland has returned to the field of battle. He holds Durendal and he strikes like a valiant man. He has cut in halves the heathen Faldrun de Pui and twenty-four others of the ones judged best. Never will there be a man so desirous of avenging himself. As the stag runs before the hounds so the heathen flee before Roland. Said the archbishop: "You acquit yourself well! Such valour becomes a knight who carries arms and rides a good steed. He ought to be strong and proud in battle; otherwise he is not worth four farthings and ought rather to be a monk in a monastery where he can pray all day for our sins." Roland replies: "Strike, do not spare them!" At these words the Franks begin again—but the havoc among the Christians was very great.

142. The man who knows that no prisoners will be taken puts up a good defence in battle. For this reason the Franks are as bold as lions. Here now comes Marsilie riding like a baron. He is seated on a horse that he calls Gaignon; he spurs it forward and goes to strike Bevon, lord

of Dijon and Beaune. He breaks his shield and rends his hauberk and strikes him down dead at a single blow. Then he killed Ivoire and Ivon, and together with them Girard of Roussillon. Count Roland was not far off and he said to the heathen: "Lord God confound thee! Foully hast thou slain my companions, but thou shalt pay for it before we part, and thou shalt soon know the name of my sword." Like a baron he goes to strike him and he cuts his right hand clean off; then he smites off the head of Jurfaleu the fair, the son of king Marsilie. The heathen cry: "Help us, Mahomet! Ye, our gods, save us from Charles who has left such felons in this land of ours that they will never quit the field for fear of death." Then said one to another: "Let us flee!" At this word a hundred thousand turn in flight and they will never come back, call them back who may.

143. Of what avail is it? If Marsilie has fled, his uncle Marganice remains behind. He it was who held Carthage...[?] and Ethiopia, an accursed land. The black people are in his domain; they have big noses and wide ears and altogether there are more than fifty thousand of them. They ride fiercely and furiously and they shout the heathen battle-cry. Then said Roland: "We shall obtain martyrdom here, and I know well now that we have not long to live. But cursed be he who does not sell himself dearly first! Strike, lords, with your burnished swords, and make a bid, whether it be for life or death, that sweet France be in no wise dishonoured by us! When Charles, my lord, comes to this field of battle he will see such punishment of the heathen that for every one of ours there will be fifteen dead of them, and he will not fail to give us his blessing."

144. When Roland sees the accursed people who are blacker than ink and have no white about them except their teeth, thus the count spoke: "Now I know indeed that we shall die to-day without fail. Strike, French, for I myself am about to begin again!" Said Oliver: "Cursed be he who lingers At these words the French rush to the attack.

145. When the heathen perceived that the French were few in number they were filled with pride and satisfaction. Said one to the other: "The emperor is in the wrong." The Marganice is seated on a red-brown horse; he urges him on with his golden spurs and strikes Oliver from behind in the middle of his back. He has rent the white hauberk on his

body and driven his lance through his breast and out the other side. Then he said to him: "There is a good blow for you! Charles the Great left you for your misfortune in the defiles! He has wronged us, and it is not right that he should boast of it, for by your death alone our men are avenged."

146. Oliver feels that he is stricken to death. But he still holds Halteclere with its burnished blade and he strikes Marganice upon his pointed and gilded helmet and scatters its flowers and crystals; he splits his head from the top to the front teeth, then he presses his stroke and the heathen has fallen dead. Afterwards he addressed him: "Heathen, a curse upon thee! I do not say that Charles has lost nothing, but never shalt thou boast to any woman or any lady in thy country that thou hast robbed me of the worth of a farthing, or done any harm whether to me or to another." Then he called to Roland to come to his aid.

147. Oliver feels that he is wounded to death and never will his desire for vengeance be sated. He strikes like a baron in the dense crowd; he hews to pieces lances and bucklers, feet and hands and saddles and ribs. Anyone who saw him dismembering the Saracens and heaping the dead one upon another, would always have the remembrance of a good vassal. Nor does he forget the battle-cry of Charles: "Montjoie!" he cries in a loud and clear voice, and he summons Roland, his friend and his peer: "Sir comrade, come near me, for we shall be parted with great grief this very day."

148. Roland looks at Oliver's face; it was ashen and grey, discoloured and pale. The bright blood streams down his body and falls in splashes to the ground. "God," said the count, "now I know not what to do. Sir comrade, pity it was for your valour! Never will there be a man to compare with thee. Ah! sweet France, how waste wilt thou be, deprived of thy good vassals, dishonoured and fallen. The emperor will have very great loss." At these words he swoops upon his horse.

149. There is Roland in a swoon upon his horse and Oliver wounded to death. He has lost so much blood that his vision is obscured and he cannot see clearly either far or near, nor can he recognize any mortal man. His companion, when they met in the field, he has struck upon the helmet set with gold and he has split it from the top to the nose-piece; but the sword has not touched his head. At the blow Roland looked at

him and asked him softly and gently: "Sir comrade, do you mean to strike me? It is I, Roland, who have always loved you so dearly. Never before have you offered me defiance!" Said Oliver: "Now I hear your voice. I cannot see you, may the Lord God see you! I have struck you, I pray you, pardon me." Roland replies: "I have taken no hurt. I pardon you here and before God." At these words they bent towards each other and thus very lovingly they parted.

150. Oliver feels that death is pressing hard upon him. Both his eyes turn in their sockets, he has lost his hearing and his sight completely. He dismounts and lays himself on the ground and resolutely he confesses his sins aloud, his two hands joined and stretched upwards towards the sky. He prays God that he will grant him paradise, that he will bless Charles and sweet France, and his companion Roland above all other men. His heart stops beating, his helmet falls forward and his body falls at full length upon the earth. Dead is the count and his sojourn on earth ended. Roland, the baron, weeps for him and laments; never on earth will you hear a man grieving so sorely.

151. Now Roland sees that his friend is dead, for he is lying prone with his face towards the ground. Very softly he begins to lament for the dead: "Sir comrade, ill-fated was your courage! We have spent years and days together and thou hast never done me harm nor have I ever sinned against thee. Now that thou art dead, it grieves me to be still alive." At these words the marquis swooned upon his horse that he calls Veillantif, He is held up firmly by his golden stirrups; to whichever side he moves, he cannot fall.

152. By the time that Roland came back to his senses and revived from his swoon, very great was the loss which he had suffered—the French were dead; he has lost them all save only the archbishop and Gautier del Hum. Gautier has come down again from the hills and has fought hard with the Spanish army; his men are dead, the heathen have vanquished them, and whether he will or no he is forced to flee along the valleys. He calls upon Roland to come to his aid: Ah, noble count, valiant man, where art thou? was never wont to fear when thou wast present. It is I, Gautier, the conqueror of Maelgut, the nephew of Droon the old and hoary! I was ever thy friend on account of my courage. My lance is broken, my shield is pierced, my hauberk is torn and broken.... I am at

the point of death, but I have sold myself dearly." At these words Roland has heard him he spurs his horse and rides swiftly towards him.

153. Roland is sad and sick at heart; he begins to strike again in the thick of the battle. He has laid twenty of the Spaniards low, Gautier has killed six and the archbishop five. The heathen say: "These are terrible men! Beware, sirs, lest they escape alive. Cursed be he who does not strike at them and a coward who lets them flee in safety." Then the hue and cry begins again and the attack is renewed on all sides.

154. Count Roland was a noble warrior, Gautier del Hum a very good knight, and the archbishop a proven man of valour. Each of them is unwilling to desert the other; in the thick of the fight they strike down the heathen. A thousand Saracens are dismounted and on foot, and there are forty thousand on horseback. But, to my knowledge, they dare not approach; they hurl lances and spears, arrows and dart, winged bolts and shafts.... At the first onslaught they have killed Gautier; they have pierced the shield of Turpin of Reims, broken his helmet and wounded him in the head, broken and torn his hauberk and wounded him with four lances through the body and killed his battle-steed beneath him. Great is the grief when the archbishop falls.

155. When Turpin of Reims feels himself overthrown and struck through the body by four lances, quickly the baron leaps up again. He looks for Roland, he hastens towards him and says but one word: "I am not beaten! A good vassal will never cease to fight as long as he lives." He draws Almace, his sword of burnished steel; in the thickest part of the battle he strikes a thousand blows and more. Charles said afterwards that he had spared no one; he found four hundred heathen lying round about him—some wounded, some pierced right through, and many there were who had lost their heads. So says the chronicle, and he who was present at the battle; the baron Gilles, for whom God works miracles, wrote the account of it in the monastery of Laon. He who does not know these things understands little of this story.

156. Count Roland is fighting nobly, but his body is burning hot and covered with sweat. He has a grievous pain in his head; his temple is broken from sounding the horn. But he wishes to know whether Charles will come, so he draws forth his horn and feebly sounds it. The emperor stood still and listened "Lords," said he, "it goes very badly with us.

Roland, my nephew, leaves us to-day. I hear by the sound of his horn that he is at the point of death. He who wishes to be with him over there must ride quickly; blow your trumpets—as many as there are in the army.” Sixty thousand men blow so loudly that the hills and the valleys echo to the sound. The heathen hear it and they are not disposed to scorn it; one says to the other: “Charles will soon be here.”

157. The heathen say: “The emperor is returning. Listen to the trumpets of the men of France. If Charles comes we shall suffer great loss. If Roland lives, he will renew this war and we shall have lost Spain, our native land.” Four hundred helmeted men, of those who are considered best on the battle-field, band themselves together, and deliver a very terrible attack on Roland. Now the count has enough to do on his own account.

158. Count Roland, when he sees them approaching, shows himself strong and proud and ready for the conflict. He will not turn in flight as long as he lives. He is seated on his horse called Veillantif; he spurs it forward with his golden spurs and rushes into the thick of the fight to attack them. Archbishop Turpin is close beside him, and they say to one another: “Forward, friend! we have heard the horns of those of France; Charles, the mighty king, is on his way back.”

159. Count Roland never loved a coward, nor a proud man, nor an ill-conditioned man—nor even a knight if he were not courageous. He called to archbishop Turpin: “Sire, you are on foot and I on horseback; out of love to you I will take my stand here and together we will suffer either good or ill. I will not abandon you for any mortal man. Even this attack of the heathen we will repulse, and the best blows given shall be those of Durendal.” Said the archbishop “Dishonoured be he who does not strike hard! Charles is returning and he will avenge us well.”

160. The heathen say: “To our misfortune were we born! What a dreadful day has dawned for us to-day. We have lost our lords and our peers and now Charles the warrior, is returning with his great army. We can hear the trumpets of the Frenchmen quite distinctly, and loud is the noise of their battle-cry Montjoie. Count Roland’s spirit is so fierce that he will never be vanquished by mortal man. Let us aim at him from a distance and leave him on the field of battle.” And so they aimed at him with their darts and their arrows, their spears and lances and feathered

shafts. They have broken and pierced Roland's shield and torn and dismailed his hauberk; but his body within they have not yet touched. But they have wounded Veillantif in thirty places and have struck him dead beneath the count. Then the heathen flee and leave him standing there. Count Roland remains there dismounted and on foot.

161. The heathen flee in wrath and evil humour; they strive their utmost to make their way towards Spain. Count Roland has not the wherewithal to pursue them, for he has lost Veillantif, his warhorse and, will he nill he, he has to remain on foot. He went to the assistance of archbishop Turpin; he unlaced the gilded helmet from his head, he took off his white, supple hauberk, he tore his jerkin to pieces and stuffed the strips into his gaping wounds. Then he lifted him, pressing him gently against his breast, and laid him down tenderly on the green grass. Then in a gentle voice he besought him: "Noble lord, give me your permission to go! All our comrades whom we loved so dearly are dead and we cannot leave them there. I must go and search for them and pick them out and gather them together here and range them before you." The archbishop replied: "Go and return hither! The field is yours, thank God, and mine."

162. Roland departs and wanders over the field by himself. He searches the valleys and the hills.... There he found Gerin and his companion Gerier, and Berenger and Aton; there too he found Anseïs and Samson, and the aged Girard de Roussillon. One by one the baron brought them and came with them to the archbishop and placed them in a row before his knees. The archbishop cannot refrain from weeping; he raises his hand and gives them his benediction. Then he says: "Ill-fated you have been, lords! May the God of glory receive your souls and place them in paradise among the holy flowers! And now my own death is causing me anguish; I shall never see the great emperor again."

163. Roland sets out again to search the field and this time he has found his comrade Oliver. He held him tightly in his arms against his breast and brought him to the archbishop as best he could and laid him on a shield beside the others. And the archbishop absolved him and made the sign of the cross upon him. Then the grief and the pity of it all increased. And Roland said: "Fair comrade Oliver, you were son of Duke Renier who held the region of Val de Runiers. You had no equal in any

land for breaking a lance or shattering a shield, for vanquishing and laying low the proud, for helping and counselling the valiant, for...."

164. Count Roland, when he sees all his peers dead, and Oliver too whom he loved so much, was overcome with tenderness and he began to weep. The colour left his face and his grief was so great that he could not stand. Whether he will or no, he falls down in a swoon. The archbishop said "You have had an evil fate, baron!"

165. The archbishop, when he saw that Roland had fainted, was filled with such great grief that never has there been greater. He stretched out his hand and picked up the horn. There is some running water in Roncevaux; he tried to go to it that he might give some to Roland. He sets out tottering, with little steps and slow; he is so weak that he cannot go any further. He has lost so much blood that he has no strength. In shorter time than one would take to cross an acre of ground, his heart failed him and he fell to the ground. His death is causing him great anguish.

166. Count Roland recovers from his swoon; he gets up on his feet but his suffering is very great. He looks down the valley and up the slope; on the green grass, a little beyond his comrades, he sees the noble baron lying, the archbishop whom God placed here in his name. He is confessing his sins and looking upwards; with his hands clasped towards heaven he prays God to grant him paradise. Turpin is dead, the warrior of Charles. Both by great battles and by very fine sermons he was always a champion against the heathen. May God grant him his holy benediction.

167. Count Roland sees the archbishop on the ground he sees his bowels lying outside his body and his brains in a heap upon his forehead. Upon his breast, between the two shoulder blades, he has crossed his beautiful white hands. Deeply Roland makes lament according to the custom of his land: "Ah! noble lord, knight of gentle birth, to-day I commend thee to the glorious God of heaven. Never will there be a man who serves him more willingly. Since the days of the apostles never has there been such a prophet for upholding the faith and for attracting men to it. May your soul know no lack and may the door of paradise be open to it!"

168. Roland feels that his own death is near; his brain is issuing forth out of his ears. Concerning his peers he prays God that he will call them to him, then on his own behalf he prays to the angel Gabriel. He takes the horn that he may have no reproach, and in the other hand he takes Durendal his sword. Somewhat further than a cross-bow can shoot an arrow he walks on the plough land in the direction of Spain; he mounts on a hillock and there under a fine tree there are four steps made of marble. He has fallen face downwards on the green grass and there he has lost consciousness for death is very near.

169. High are the hills and very high the trees, and there are four steps there of shining marble. Count Roland has swooned on the green grass. A Saracen who was feigning to be dead and lying amongst the others has been watching him all the time. He has besmeared his face and body with blood, and getting up on his feet he hastily runs towards him. He was big and strong and courageous, and his pride incites him to his fatal folly. He seized hold of Roland, both of his body and his arms and said one word: "The nephew of Charles is vanquished! I will take his sword to Arabia." As he drew it from him the count regained his senses a little.

170. Roland feels that he is taking his sword. He opens his eyes and says a word to him: "I know that thou art not one of ours!" He grips the horn from which he does not wish to be parted, and strikes the heathen on his helmet studded with gold. He smashes the steelwork and the head and the bones, he strikes both his eyes out of his head and overthrows him at his feet, dead. Then he said to him: "Heathen son of a slave, how wert thou so daring as to seize me, whether for right or for wrong? No one will hear of it but he will hold thee for a fool. Now my horn is split right in the wide part, and the crystal and the gold is all knocked off."

171. Roland feels that his sight is failing; he rises to his feet and exerts himself as much as he can, but all the colour has fled from his face. There is a dark rock in front of him and he strikes ten blows on it in grief and anger. The steel grates but it does not break nor splinter. "Ah!" said the count, "Holy Mary, help me! Durendal, good sword, how ill-fated thou wert! When I have left this life, I can care for thee no longer. Many are the battlefields on which I have been victorious through you, and many

are the broad lands I have conquered for Charles the hoary-bearded. May you never belong to a man who would flee before anyone! A very good vassal has wielded you this longtime; never will there be another such in the free land of France."

172. Roland strikes his sword on the hard stone. The steel grates, but it neither breaks nor splinters. When he sees that he cannot break it he begins to lament over it to himself: "Ah! Durendal, how beautiful thou art, how clear and bright! How dost thou shine and sparkle in the sunlight! Charles was in the valleys of Moriane when God sent word to him by an angel from heaven that he should give thee to a count and a leader. It was then that the great and noble king girded it on me. With it I conquered Anjou and Brittany, Poitou and the Maine. With it I conquered proud Normandy, and Provence and Aquitaine and Lombardy and the whole of Romania: with it I conquered Bavaria and all Flanders and Burgundy and the whole of Poland, and Constantinople which owed allegiance to him, and Saxony where he acts as he will. With it I conquered Scotland... and England which he called his chamber; with it I have conquered many countries and lands which now belong to Charles whose beard is growing white. I have such grief and heaviness for this sword; I would much rather die than leave it in the hands of the heathen. Oh God, and Father, let not France suffer this shame."

173. Roland struck upon the dark stone and shattered it in more pieces than I can tell you. The sword grates, but it does not splinter nor break; it rebounds upwards towards the sky. When the count perceives that he cannot break it, he laments over it very gently to himself: Ah! Durendal, how beautiful and holy thou art! In thy gilded pommel are many relics: Saint Peter's tooth and some of St. Basil's blood, some of the hairs of my lord Saint Denis and a piece of the garment of holy Mary. It is not right that thou shouldst be in the possession of the heathen; you should ever be in the guardianship of Christians. May no man who commits a cowardice possess you! By means of you I shall have vanquished many wide lands which are now in the possession of Charles the hoary bearded. The emperor has become powerful and rich thereby."

174. Roland feels that death holds him fast, for it has travelled down from his head to his heart. He has hastened to get beneath a pine-tree; there on the green grass he lays himself down on his face, and he places

his sword and the horn beneath him. He has turned his head in the direction of the heathen folk, for he wishes intently that Charles and all his army may say: "He has died like a conqueror, the noble count. In few words he confesses himself again and again, and holds forth his glove to God for his sins."

175. Roland feels that the end of his time has come. He lies on a rocky hillock looking towards Spain, and with one hand he beats his breast: "God, I am guilty before thee on account of the sins both great and small that I have committed, from the hour I was born to this day on which I am struck down!" He has stretched out his right glove towards God. The angels of heaven descend to him.

176. Count Roland has laid himself down beneath a pine tree and has turned his face towards Spain. He began to call many things to mind: the many lands he had conquered, sweet France, and the men of his lineage, and Charlemaine, his lord, who nurtured him. He cannot restrain himself from weeping and sighing, but he is not forgetful of himself; he confesses himself and prays God for his mercy: "O true Father, who didst never lie, thou who didst raise St. Lazarus from the dead and save Daniel from the lions, save my soul from all the perils that beset it on account of the sins which I have committed in my life." He held out his right glove to God, and St. Gabriel took it from his hand. His head was resting on his arm and his hands were clasped, and thus he went to his end. God sent down his angel Cherubin and St. Michel du Peril; with them came St. Gabriel, and they carry the soul of the count to Paradise.

177. Roland is dead; God has his soul in heaven. The emperor arrives at Roncevaux—there is not a road, not a path, not an ell nor a square foot of free ground but either a Frenchman or a heathen is lying on it. Charles cries out: "Where are you, fair nephew? Where is the archbishop? and Count Oliver? Where is Gerin and his companion Gerier? Where is Oton, and the count Berenger? Where are Ivon and Ivoire whom I loved so much? What has become of Engelier the Gascon? Of Samson the duke and the valiant warrior Anseïs? Where is the aged Girard of Roussillon, and where are the twelve peers whom I left behind?" Of what avail are his cries, for no one replies to them? "God," said the king, "I am full of dismay that I was not here at the beginning of the battle." He pulls his beard like a man in great anguish, and all his baron knights weep; twenty

thousand of them swoon and fall to the ground. Naimés the duke is filled with pity for them.

178. There is not a single knight nor baron who does not weep bitterly for pity. They mourn their sons, their brothers, their nephews, their friends and their liege-lords. Many of them lie in a swoon upon the ground. Duke Naimés acted on this occasion like a brave man. He was the first to address the emperor: Look, in front of us, about two leagues off, you can see the high roads covered with dust. There is a large army of heathen; ride on, I beseech you, avenge this grief!" "Ah! God," said Charles, "they are far away already. Counsel me now both rightly and honourably; for they have robbed me of the flower of sweet France." Then the king gave the order to Gebon and Oton, Tedbalt of Reims and count Milon: "Guard the field of battle and the valleys and the mountains. Leave the dead lying just as they are; let no lion or any beast touch them; let no squire nor any servant touch them. I forbid them to be touched by anyone until God permits us to return to this field." And they replied gently, out of love for their master: "Just emperor, dear lord, thus will we do." And they keep a thousand of their vassals with them there.

179. The emperor causes his trumpets to be sounded, then he rides forward valiantly with his great army. Those of Spain have their backs turned towards them (?); the French pursue after them as one man. When the king sees that evening is falling, he dismounts in a meadow upon the green grass, lies down upon the ground and prays to the Lord God that he will cause the sun to stop in its course for him, that the night might tarry and the day remain. And behold, an angel, the one that was accustomed to speak to him, quickly gave him the command: "Ride, Charles, for the light shall not fail thee. Thou hast lost the flower of France—God knows this. But you may take your vengeance on this wicked people." At these words the emperor mounted his horse again.

180. God performed a very great miracle for Charlemaine, for the sun stood still. The heathen flee, the French pursue them; they come up to them in the Val Ténébreux, then force them fighting towards Saragossa. They slay them with mighty blows and cut them off from the tracks and the high roads. Now the river Ebro is in front of them; it is a very deep river, mysterious and swift, and no barge, nor swift galley, nor sloop is

seen upon it. The heathen call upon Tervagant, one of their gods, then they leap in; but there is no protection for them. The armed men are the heaviest and they go straight down to the bottom in numbers; the others float down stream. The most fortunate have drunk in abundance and at last they are all drowned in great anguish. The French cry out: "To your misfortune you saw Roland."

181. When Charles sees that all the heathen are dead, some killed and many drowned, and that his knights have obtained great booty, the noble king dismounts from his horse, prostrates himself on the ground and renders thanks to God. When he stands up again, the sun has set. Then said the emperor: "It is time to encamp; it is too late now to return to Roncevaux. Our horses are tired and restive; take off their saddles, and the bridles that are on their heads, and let them refresh themselves in these meadows." The French reply: "Sire, you speak well."

182. The emperor has pitched his camp. The French dismount on the deserted land; they have removed the saddles from their horses and lowered the gilded bridles from their heads, and they let them have free course in the meadows where there is abundance of fresh grass. They cannot do anything more for them. Those who are tired fall asleep on the ground; they kept no watch that night.

183. The emperor has lain down in a meadow. Beside his head the baron has put his great lance, for he did not wish to disarm himself that night. He is clothed in his white brodered hauberk, he has laced his helmet which is studded with gold, and has girded on "Joyeuse," which never had its peer and each day reflects a score of different shades of light. We know well the history of the lance wherewith our Lord was wounded on the cross; Charles has the point of it, by God's grace, and he has had it encased into the golden pommel of his sword. On account of this honour and this favour the name of "Joyeuse" was given to the sword. The French barons ought never to forget it; from that they have their battle-cry, Montjoie; and it is for this reason that no people can withstand them.

184. The night is bright and the moon is shining. Charles has laid himself down, but he is oppressed by the grief that he feels for Roland and Oliver; for the twelve peers too and the Frenchmen whom he has left dead and bleeding in Roncevaux. He cannot help weeping and lamenting,

and he prays God that he will save their souls. The king is weary, for the strain upon him is great. He has fallen asleep, for he cannot do more. Scattered over the meadows the Frenchmen are sleeping. There is not a horse that can stand upright; if they wish to eat the grass they must take it lying down. He who knows suffering well, has learnt much.

185. Charles sleeps like a man ill at ease. God has sent the angel Gabriel to him and has commanded him to watch over the emperor. All night the angel stays beside his head. He has warned him in a vision of a battle that awaits him and has shown him a very ominous portent. Charles looks up toward the sky; he sees thunders and winds, icy blasts and storms; fearful tempests, fires, and flames are visible to him, and they fall suddenly on all his army. The lances of beech and apple-wood are set alight, and the shields, right up to their pure golden buckles. The handles of the sharp lances splinter, the hauberks and steel helmets crack. He sees all his knights in great distress. Bears and leopards, serpents and vipers, dragons and, demons seek to devour them. There are griffins too, more than thirty thousand of them, and there is not one of them that does not attack the Frenchmen. And the French cry: "Charlemaine, help us." The king is filled with grief and pity; he wishes to go to them, but something prevents him. Forth from a wood comes a huge lion, evil and fierce and proud; it leaps up and attacks the emperor himself and they meet in close embrace for the struggle; but the emperor knows not which will vanquish nor which will fall, and he has not yet awakened from his sleep.

186. After this one another vision came to him: he dreamed he was in France, at Aix, on a terrace of stone, holding fast a bear in two chains. He saw thirty bears coming from the direction of the Ardenne, and each one spoke to him with a man's voice, saying: "Sir, give him back to us! It is not right that he should be with you any longer; we ought to come to the help of our relative." Then a greyhound from the palace runs up and picks out the biggest bear and attacks him on the green grass beyond his companions. The king watched this marvellous fight, but he does not know which of the two will be the victor. The angel of God instructed him as to this, and Charles slept on till morning, when the day was bright.

187. King Marsilie fled to Saragossa. He has dismounted beneath an olive tree in the shade. He lays aside his sword, his helmet and his coat of mail, and lies down painfully on the green grass. He has lost his right hand completely; he is fainting and weak from the loss of blood. His wife Bramimonde weeps and wails in front of him; excessively she grieves, and more than twenty thousand men keep her company, and they curse Charles and fair France. They run to a grotto to find Apollin, they abuse him and disfigure him savagely: "Ah, evil god," say they, "why dost thou dishonour us thus? Why hast thou allowed this king of ours to be defeated? Thou givest a cruel reward to one who serves thee faithfully!" Then they take his sceptre and crown from him and hang him up by his hands to a column; then they trample him beneath their feet on the ground and beat and bruise him with large sticks. They deprive Tervagant of his carbuncle-stone and thrust Mahomet down into a ditch; there the swine and the dogs bite and trample him.

188. Marsilie has recovered from his swoon and has had himself carried into his vaulted chamber, which is painted and adorned with many colours. Bramimonde, the queen, weeps for him; she tears her hair and proclaims her misery, and then more loudly still she cries: "Ah! Saragossa, how art thou deprived to-day of the noble king who governed thee! Our gods have behaved treacherously, in that they failed him to-day in the battle. The emir will be a coward if he does not resist this bold race, which is so proud that they have no care for their lives. The emperor with the white beard is valiant and full of pride; if there is a battle he will not flee. It is a great pity that there is no one who can kill him."

189. The emperor has been seven full years in Spain by reason of his strength, and has taken strongholds and many cities. King Marsilie made a great effort; in the first year he caused his letters to be sealed and he sent a summons to Baligant in Babylon. Baligant is the ancient emir of antiquity, older even than Virgil and Homer. Let him go now to Saragossa and help; if he does not go, Marsilie will abandon his gods and all the idols that he is accustomed to worship; he will accept holy Christianity and be reconciled to Charlemaine. Baligant is a long way off and he has delayed long; he is summoning his men from forty kingdoms; he has prepared his great transports—sailing ships and barges, galleys

and vessels; he has assembled all his fleet at Alexandria, a port on the seashore. It was in May, on the first day of summer, that he thrust all his armies out to sea.

190. Large are the armies of this accursed people. They set sail; they navigate and direct their course forward steadily; on the tops of the masts and on the high yardarms there are many lanterns, and stones which reflect the light. Up there, on high, they give forth such light by night that they make the sea more beautiful, and when they arrive at the land of Spain all the countryside is illuminated and lighted up by them. The news of their arrival reaches Marsilie.

191. The heathen army brook no delay. They leave the high sea, they reach the calm waters, they leave Marbrise and Marbrose behind them, right up to the Ebro they steer their ships. There are lanterns and brilliant stones in abundance, which give a bright light all the night, and in the morning they arrive at Saragossa.

192. The day is bright and the sun is shining. The emir has disembarked from his vessel. Espaneliz advances at his right hand, seventeen kings follow behind him, and I know not how many dukes and counts. Beneath a laurel in the middle of a field they throw a white silken rug upon the green grass. On it they place an ivory seat and the heathen Baligant takes his seat thereon. All the others remain standing. Their lord spoke first: "Charles the king, the emperor of the Franks, has no right to eat unless I give him leave. Throughout the whole of Spain he has carried on a great war against me. Now I intend to go and find him in fair France, and I will not give up the quest all my life until he is either dead or a fugitive." In pledge thereof he strikes his right glove upon his knee.

193. Now that he has said it, he is fixed in his determination that for all the gold beneath the sky he will not desist from going to Aix where Charles is wont to hold his court. His men applaud it and give him the same advice. Then he called two of his knights, one Clarifan the other Clarien by name: "You are the sons of king Maltraien who used to be a willing messenger. I command you to go to Saragossa. Tell Marsilie from me that I am come to help him against the French. If I come across their army there will be a great battle; give him as a pledge this glove pleated with gold and let him put it on his right hand. Take him this little staff of

pure gold also and bid him come to acknowledge his fief. I shall go to wage war on Charles in France. If he does not lie down at my feet and beg for mercy, and if he will not abandon the Christian faith, I will take the crown from his head." The heathen reply: "Sire, you have spoken well."

194. Baligant said Ride forward, barons! One of you take the glove, the other the staff." And they replied: "Dear lord, we will." On they rode until they reached Saragossa. They pass through ten gates, they cross four bridges and all the streets which the citizens frequent. As they approach the high part of the city they hear a great tumult from the direction of the palace. There a host of the heathen folk have assembled; they are weeping and screaming and making show of great grief; they lament for their gods Tervagant, Mahomet and Appollin, whom they have no longer. They say one to another: "Unhappy people; what will become of us? Terrible destruction has come upon us; we have lost king Marsilie—Count Roland cut off his right hand yesterday; we have Jurfalen the fair no longer; the whole of Spain now lies at their mercy." The two messengers dismount at the steps of the palace.

195. They leave their horses beneath an olive tree, and two Saracens have seized them by their bridles. The messengers held each other by their cloaks, and they have mounted to the highest part of the palace. When they entered the vaulted chamber, with friendly intent they made an ill-framed salutation: "May Mahomet our ruler, and Tervagant, and Apollin our lord, save the king and protect the queen!" Said Bramimonde: "What folly do I hear! These gods of ours are powerless. Poor prowess they showed in Roncesvaux; they let our knights be slain, they failed my lord here in battle. He has lost his right hand—it is gone; it was Roland who cut it off, the strong warrior. Charles will soon rule over the whole of Spain. What will become of me, bereaved and fugitive? Alas, why will no one take my life?"

196. Clarien said: "Lady, do not talk so much! We are messengers from Baligant, the heathen. He says that he will protect Marsilie and he sends him his staff and his glove in pledge thereof. We have four thousand vessels on the Ebro, sloops and barges and swift galleys, and I know not how many dromonts. The emir is rich, strong and powerful; he will go to France to find Charlemaine and he is determined either to kill

him or to put him to flight." Said Bramimonde: "To his misfortune will he go so far! You may find the French much more near at hand they have already been seven years in this land. The emperor is a valiant warrior; he would rather die than flee the field of battle. There is not a king beneath the sky whom he accounts more than a child. Charles does not fear any living man."

197. "Let that be!" said king Marsilie. He spoke to the messengers: "Lords, you should address yourselves to me! You can see that I am stricken to death and I have neither son, nor daughter, nor heir. I had one, but he was killed at even yesterday. Bid my master come to see me; the emir has a right to Spain—I hand it over to him, if he will have it, then he can defend it against the French! I will give him good advice concerning Charles, and a month from now he will be his captive. You shall take the keys of Saragossa to him and tell him to go not hence if he believes my words." They reply: "Sire, you speak the truth."

198. Then said Marsilie: "Charles the emperor has slain my men and laid waste my land; he has broken open and violated my cities. This night he was encamped by the waters of the Ebro, not more than seven leagues from here by my reckoning. Tell the emir to lead his army thither and join forces there; this is the message I send by you." He handed over the keys of Saragossa to them, and the messengers both bowed themselves and took their dismissal and departed.

199. The two messengers have mounted their horses. Hastily they leave the city; they ride furiously back to the emir and hand over to him the keys of Saragossa. Said Baligant: "What have you learnt? Where is Marsilie to whom I sent my message?" Clarien replied: "He is mortally wounded. The emperor was passing through the defiles yesterday on his way to fair France. He had left behind him a rearguard likely to do him honour; Roland his nephew had remained behind in it, and Oliver, and all the twelve peers together with twenty thousand knights of France. King Marsilie attacked them, valiant warrior that he was. He and Roland survived after the battle; Roland gave him such a blow with Durendal that he severed his right arm from his body. He killed his son, whom he loved so dearly, and the barons whom he had taken with him. Marsilie fled, for he could hold out no longer. The emperor has pursued him hard, and now the king bids you come to his aid. He hands over to you

quit the kingdom of Spain." At this Baligant begins to be anxious and his grief is so great that he almost loses his reason.

200. "Sir Emir," said Clarien, "there was a battle at Roncesvaux yesterday. Roland is dead, and Count Oliver, the twelve peers whom Charles loved so dearly, and twenty thousand of their Frenchmen lost their lives there. King Marsilie lost his right hand there and the emperor has pursued him closely. In this land there is not a knight left unless he be slain by the sword or drowned in the Ebro. The French are encamped on the river bank; they have come so near to us in this country that you can make their retreat difficult, if you so desire." At these words Baligant becomes proud again and his heart is filled with joy and satisfaction. He rises up from his seat and cries: "Barons, do not delay! Leave your ships, mount your horses and ride! Unless Charlemaine the aged flees, king Marsilie will be avenged ere long; I will give him the emperor's head in exchange for his right hand."

201. The heathens of Arabia have come out of their ships and have mounted their horses and mules. Now they ride forward; what else could they do? The emir, who has put them in motion, calls Gemalfin, one of his trusted ones, to him and says: I entrust all my armies to thee.... Then he mounts his battlesteed.... With him he takes four dukes, and they ride until they come to Saragossa. He has dismounted beside a marble step, and four counts have held his stirrup for him. He goes up the staircase to palace and Bramimonde comes running towards him and says to him: "Unhappy that I am, I was born to misfortune! I have lost my lord in such shameful wise, Sire!" She falls at his feet; the emir raises her, and they go up to the chamber together sorrowing.

202. As soon as he sees Baligant, king Marsilie calls two of his Saracens of Spain: "Take me in your arms and raise me up so that I can sit." In his left hand he has taken one of his gloves, and thus he spake again: "Sir king, emir, all my lands I give thee (?) and Saragossa and all the land that appertains thereto. For I and all my people are undone." The emir replies: "So much the more sorry am I. I cannot converse with you longer, for I know well that Charles will not wait for me. Nevertheless I will receive your glove." He turns back weeping for the great grief he feels; he descends from the palace by the stairs, he mounts his horse and comes galloping back to his people. He rode so hard that

he outstripped all the others, and from time to time he shouted: "Come on, heathen, for already they are fleeing from the battle!"

203. In the morning, at the first peep of dawn, the emperor Charles has awakened. Saint Gabriel, who protects him on behalf of God, raises his hand and makes his sign upon him. The king... has put off his arms, and all the others throughout the army disarm themselves likewise. Then they mount their horses and ride in full force down the long roads and the wide tracks; they are going to see the terrible havoc in Roncesvaux where the battle took place.

204. Charles has come to Roncesvaux. He begins to weep for the dead he finds there. To the Frenchmen he says: "Lords, ride slowly, for I myself must go on ahead for the sake of my nephew whom I would find. I was once at Aix on a festive occasion, and my valiant knights were boasting of great battles and furious attacks. I heard Roland speak in this wise: Never would he die in a foreign land unless he had outstripped his men and his peers; his face would be turned towards the enemy's country and he would die victoriously, like the baron that he is." A little more than a staff's throw in front of the others the emperor has advanced on to the rising ground.

205. When the emperor is searching for his nephew he finds the flowers of the field all vermilion with the blood of our barons. He is filled with pity for them, and he cannot restrain his tears. He makes his way beneath two trees... and he recognizes the blows of Roland on the three blocks of stone. And there on the green grass he sees his nephew lying. It is small wonder if Charles is filled with grief. He dismounted and ran quickly to him; between his two hands.... But he swooned on the body, his anguish was so great.

206. The emperor has recovered from his swoon. Duke Naimés, and count Acelin, Geoffroy of Anjou and his brother Henry raise the king and place him beneath a pine tree. He looks down and sees his nephew lying there, and very tenderly he begins to lament for him: "Friend Roland, may God have mercy upon thee! No man ever saw such a knight for joining battles and winning them. My honour has begun to decline." Charles loses his senses again—he cannot help himself.

207. King Charles has recovered from his swoon and four of his barons hold him up in their arms. He looks down and sees his nephew

lying there. His form is still fair, but he has lost his colour; his eyes have turned in his head and the light has gone out of them. Charles mourns for him in all fidelity and love: "Friend Roland, may God put thy soul among the flowers in paradise with the angels! To thy misfortune hast thou followed thy lord to Spain! Never will a day pass but I feel the pangs of sorrow for thee. How will my power and my strength be fallen! I shall have no one now to uphold my honour. I feel now that I have not a single friend beneath the sky, and if I have relatives there are none so valiant as thou." He tears out his hair by handfuls, and a hundred thousand Frenchmen are so grieved for him that there is not one who does not weep bitterly.

208. "Friend Roland, I shall go back to France. When I am at Laon, my own domain, strangers will come to me from many lands and will ask: 'Where is the count, the captain?' I shall tell them that he died in Spain. Hereafter I shall rule my kingdom like a sad man and I shall never pass a day without weeping and mourning."

209. "Friend Roland, gentle knight, beauty of youth, when I am at Aix, in my chapel, men will come and will ask me for news. Strange and terrible will be the news I shall tell them: 'Dead is my nephew, who made me such a conqueror.' The Saxons will rebel against me, the Hungarians, the Bulgarians and many a hostile nation; the people of Romania, all those of, Apulia, men of Africa and those of Califerne. They will bear tidings of my sufferings and my losses. Who now will lead my armies with such power since he is dead who has always been our leader? Ali! France, how art thou bereft! I am so sad that I would I were dead!" He begins to tear his white beard and the hairs of his head with both his hands. A hundred thousand Frenchmen fall senseless to the earth.

210. "Friend Roland, may God have mercy on thee. May thy soul be placed in paradise! He who slew thee has brought much grief to France. I am so sad on account of all my vassals who have lost their lives for me that I would I were dead. May God, son of holy Mary, grant that, ere I reach the major passes of Cize, my soul may quit my body and be placed amongst theirs, and that my flesh may be buried close to them!" Tears flow from his eyes, he pulls his white beard, and duke Naimés says: "Great is the distress of Charles."

211. "My lord and emperor," said Geoffroy of Anjou, "do not give way to such great grief! Cause the field to be searched for our men whom those of Spain have slain in the battle. Command that they be carried to a charnel house." The king replied: "Sound your horn to this end."

212. Geoffroy of Anjou has sounded his horn. The French dismount as Charles has commanded. All their friends whom they found dead have they carried straightway to a charnel house. There were plenty of bishops, of abbots, of monks and canons and tonsured priests, who have absolved them and pronounced a benediction upon them. Then they burnt myrrh and incense and perfumed them all right well: and afterwards they buried them honourably and left them, for what else could they do?

213. The emperor has Roland and Oliver and the archbishop Turpin put on one side. In his own presence he has them opened and their hearts wrapped in cloth of silk; then they are placed in a coffin of white marble. Afterwards they have taken the bodies of the barons; in skins of deer they placed them when they had washed them well in spices and in wine. The king commanded Tedbalt and Geboin, count Milon and the marquis Oton: "Conduct them on three chariots...." They are covered completely with a cloth of Galazin silk.

214. Charles is about to depart, when the advance guards of the heathen army loom up in front of him. From the foremost of them come two messengers, who challenge him to battle in the name of the emir: "Proud king, not thus shalt thou depart, as if all were ended! Dost thou see Baligant, who is riding after thee? He is bringing great armies from Arabia, and this very day we shall see whether thou art valiant." At these words Charles the king took his beard in his hands; he thought of the grief and the loss; then he looked at his people very proudly and cried out in his loud and clear voice: "Barons of France, to horse and to arms!"

215. The emperor is the first to arm himself. Quickly he has donned his coat of mail; he has laced his helmet and girded on Joyeuse, which loses none of its brilliance even in the sunlight, and he suspends his shield... to his neck. He seizes his lance and brandishes it aloft; then he mounts his good steed Tencendur, which he conquered at the fords

below Marsone when he slew Malpalin of Narbonne; he gives him rein and spurs him swiftly and gallops forward in the sight of a hundred thousand men calling upon God and the apostle of Rome.

216. All about the field the French dismount, and more than a hundred thousand arm themselves at once. They have armour which becomes them well; their horses are swift and their arms are very fair. They have mounted again and well they know what to do (?). They will give battle when the time comes. Their pennons hang down on to their helmets, and when Charles sees their noble appearance he exclaims to Jozeran of Provence, and Naimés the duke, and Antelme of Mayence: "Such vassals as these a man can trust! Mad is anyone who loses heart in their midst. If the Arabs think not better of having come, I am minded to make them pay the death of Roland dearly." Duke Naimés replies: "God grant we may!"

217. Charles calls Rabel and Guinemant and speaks to them these words: "Sirs, I command you to fill the places of Oliver and Roland. One of you shall carry the sword, the other the horn, and you shall ride forward in the front rank. In your company you shall have fifteen thousand men of France, all young squires of the bravest of the land. And after these shall be as many more whom Giboin and Guinemant shall lead." Duke Naimés and count Jozeran put the two companies in good order; there will be a very great battle when the time comes.

218. The first two army corps are composed of Frenchmen; after these two a third is formed, and in this one are the vassals of Bavaria. They were estimated at twenty thousand knights, and the battle will never be abandoned where they are stationed. There is no people under the sky that Charles holds so dear, except those of France, the conquerors of kingdoms. Count Ogier of Denmark, the valiant fighter, will lead them, for they are a proud troop.

219. The emperor Charles has three army corps. Then Naimés the duke establishes the fourth of barons renowned for their courage. They are Germans, and they have come from Germany; there are twenty thousand of them according to report. They are well equipped with horses and with arms, and they will never abandon the battle for fear of death. Hermann, duke of Trace, will lead them—he would rather die than do a cowardly deed.

220. Duke Naimés and count Jozeran have formed the fifth corps of Normans. The French estimate them at twenty thousand. They have splendid arms and good, swift horses; they will never flee for fear of death. There is no nation on the earth so powerful in battle. Richard the aged will lead them in the field; he will strike well with his sharp-edged lance.

221. The sixth army corps is composed of Bretons; thirty thousand knights there are in their company. They ride in knightly wise with lances erect and ensigns hanging. Their lord's name is Eudon. He summons count Nevelon, Tedbalt of Rheims and the marquis Oton and gives them the command: "Lead my people, I grant you this boon!"

222. The emperor has six army corps already formed. Then duke Naimés established the seventh of Poitevins and men of Auvergne. Some forty thousand knights there might be, and they are well mounted and armed. They are drawn up apart in a valley at the foot of a hill, and Charles blessed them with his right hand. These will be led by Jozeran and Godselme.

223. Naimés has formed the eighth army corps. It is composed of Flemings and Frisian barons. There are more than forty thousand knights in it, and the line will not give way where they are stationed. The king said: "These men will do my work." Rembalt and Hamon de Galice will lead them according to the laws of knighthood.

224. Naimés and Jozeran the count together have formed the ninth army corps; it is composed of warriors, knights of Lorraine and Burgundy. Fifty thousand knights compose their number, with helmets laced and byrnie's donned. They have strong lances with short handles. If the Arabs venture to come against them, they will strike hard when they let themselves go. Thierry, duke of Argonne will be their leader.

225. The tenth army corps is formed of barons of France. A hundred thousand of our best captains are these. They have noble forms and proud faces; their heads are hoary and their beards are white. They have donned their hauberks and their padded coats of mail, they have girded on their swords of French and Spanish steel, and they have noble shields of many cognizances. As soon as they are mounted they demand a battle. "Montjoie" is their battle-cry and Charles himself is in their company. Geoffroy of Anjou carries the oriflamme; it had belonged to St. Peter and

was called "Romaine," but it has changed its name since and become "Montjoie"(?).

226. The emperor has dismounted from his horse and laid himself flat down upon the green grass. He turns his face towards the rising sun and calls upon God from his heart: "True Father, defend me this day: Thou who didst deliver Jonas from the whale which had him in its body, and didst spare the king of Nineveh, and deliver Daniel from horrible suffering in the lions' den where he had been put, and the three youths from the fiery furnace! Let thy love be present, with me this day! By thy mercy, if it please thee, grant that I may avenge my nephew Roland!" When he had prayed, he arose and made upon his head the sign which has such power. Then the king mounted on his swift steed; Naimes and Jozeran held his stirrup for him. He seizes his shield and his sharp-edged lance; he has a noble form, handsome and comely, and his countenance is open and good to look upon. Then he rides forward, firmly seated in his saddle, and a thousand trumpets sound behind him and before. The sound of the horn reverberates above all the others, and the French weep out of grief for Roland.

227. Very nobly the emperor rides. He has placed his beard outside his byrnie, and the others all do the same for the love of their lord; by this his hundred thousand Frenchmen can be recognized. They pass the mountains and the high rocks, the deep valleys and the terrible defiles; they traverse the passes and the deserted land, and enter into the region of Spain, where they establish themselves on an open piece of land. Baligant's advance guards return to him and a Syrian told him the tidings: "We have seen the proud king Charles. His men are resolute and they will not fail him. Arm yourselves, we shall have battle ere long!" Said Baligant: "These are the tidings of good vassals! Sound your horns that my heathen may know of it."

228. Then are the tambours sounded throughout the army, and the buccines and the clear-voiced trumpets. The heathen dismount to arm themselves. The emir will not be behind them. He dons a byrnie with brodered lappets, he laces his helmet studded with gold; then he girds his sword to his left side. He has found a name for his sword in his pride: because of the sword of Charlemaine of which he has heard tell [he calls it "Précieuse "], and this is his battle-cry in the field which he

has told his knights to shout. Round his neck he hangs one of his shields; it is large and wide, its buckle is of gold bordered with crystal; the strap is of good silk cloth ringed round. He grasps his spear which he calls "Maltet"; the handle is as large as a club and the iron part alone would load a mule. Baligant has mounted his charger; Marcules from over-seas held the stirrup for him. A very large stride has the baron; he is slender at the thighs, but wide at the ribs. His chest is broad and he is well moulded; his shoulders are wide, his complexion is very clear, his face is proud and his waving hair is as white as the flowers in summer; concerning valour he is well proven. God! what a warrior, if he had been a Christian! He spurs his horse so that the bright blood pours forth; it bounds forward and leaps across a ditch a good fifty feet wide. The heathen cry: "This man ought to defend the borders! There is not a Frenchman who would not willy nilly lose his life if he met him in the fight. Charles is mad not to have departed ere now."

229. The emir looks a true baron. His beard is as white as a flower, and he is very learned in the law of the land; in battle he is both fierce and proud. Very chivalrous too is his son Malpramis—he is tall and strong and takes after his ancestors. He said to his father: "Sire, let us advance! If we see Charles I shall be much surprised." Said Baligant: "We shall see him, for he is very valiant. Many honourable things are told of him in several chronicles. But he no longer has his nephew Roland. He will not have the strength to hold out against us."

230. "Fair son Malpramis," said Baligant to him, "the other day the good vassal Roland was killed, and Oliver that valiant knight, the twelve peers whom Charles loved so dearly and twenty thousand fighting men of France. I care not a glove for all the rest. The emperor is certainly returning: my messenger the Syrian has informed me." Ten great army corps approach(?). The one who sounds the horn is valiant, and his companion answers with his clear-voiced trumpet; they ride in advance in the front rank and they have fifteen thousand Frenchmen with them young knights whom Charles calls his children. After these come as many more again and they will strike proudly. Said Malpramis: "The first stroke I beg as a boon."

231. "Son Malpramis," said Baligant to him, "I grant you all that you have asked me. Go straightway and attack the French; take with you

Torleu the Persian king, and Dapamort the Leutician king. If you can abase the great pride [of Charlemaine] I will give you a slice of my land, from Cheriant as far as Val Marchis." He replies: "Sire, receive my thanks!" He advances and accepts the gift; that is of the land which belonged to king Flori at this time. But he never saw it, nor was he ever invested with it as a possession.

232. The emir rides amongst his troops and his son, tall of stature, follows him. The kings Torleu and Dapamort quickly form thirty army corps; each contains a marvellous number of knights and in the least of them there are fifty thousand. The first is formed of men of Butentrot; the next of large-headed men of Micenes who have bristles like pigs all along the backbone. The third is formed of Nubles and of Blos, the fourth of Bruns and Esclavons, the fifth of Sorbres and of Sors, the sixth of Armenians and Moors, the seventh of men of Jericho, the eighth is of Nigres and the ninth of Gros, the tenth is of men from the stronghold of Balide. It is a troop of evil-intentioned men. The emir swears with all his might by Mahomet and his miracles: "Charles of France is mad to advance. There will be a battle unless he takes himself off and he will never wear a golden crown upon his head again."

233. Then they form another ten army corps. The first is of hideous Chananeans who have come across (?) from Val-Fuit. The second is of Turks, the third of Persians, the fourth is of Pinceneis and Persians (?), the fifth of Solteras and Avers, the sixth of Ormaleus and Eugiez, the seventh of the people of Samuel, the eighth of those of Bruise, the ninth of Clavers, and the tenth is of men from desert Occian. It is a troop of men who serve not God; you will never hear tell of greater felons—their skins are as hard as iron so that they have no need of helmet or hauberk, and they are evil and fierce in the battle.

234. The emir has adjusted ten more army corps. The first is of the giants of Malprose, the second of Huns, the third of Hungarians, the fourth is of men of Baldise la Longue, the fifth of those of Val Penose, the sixth of those of Marose, the seventh of Lens and Astrimoines, the eighth of those of Argoilles and the ninth of Clarbonne, the tenth of bearded men of Fronde. It is a troop of men who never loved God in the annals of the French the thirty army corps are numbered. Great are the armies

where the bugles are sounding, and the heathen ride forward after the manner of valiant men.

235. The emir is a very important person. He commands that his dragon be carried before him and the standard of Tervagant and Mahomet and a statue of the felon Apollin. The Chananeans are riding round about and they exhort the others loudly: "Let him who wishes our gods to protect him pray and do homage to them with great humility." The heathen bow their heads and cast their faces down so that their bright helmets are all lowered. The French say: "Your hour is come, ye scoundrels! A curse upon you this day! Do thou, our God, protect Charles and let this battle be won in his name (?)."

236. The emir is a very wise man. He calls his son and the two kings and says to them: "Sir barons, you will ride in front of the army and you will lead all my troops. But I wish to keep three of the best ones—one of Turks, another of Ormaleis and the third of the giants of Malprose. Those of Occiant will I keep with me also and they shall join battle with Charles and the French. If the emperor engages in combat with me he will lose the head from his body. He may be quite certain that this will be his only right."

237. Great are the hosts and the army corps are good to see. Between the two armies there is neither mountain nor valley nor hillock, neither forest nor wood; no ambush is possible there; they see each other clearly in the open country. Said Baligant: "Heathens, advance now and give battle!" Amborre of Oloferne bears the ensign. The heathen shout; they call it "Précieuse!" The French say: "May your losses be great to-day!" And they renew their cry of "Montjoie" loudly. The emperor has his trumpets sounded, and the horn which resounds more clearly than them all. The heathen say: "Charles has a fine army. We shall have a terrible and hard-fought battle."

238. Wide is the plain and outstretched the open country. Brightly shine the helmets studded with precious stones, the shields, the brodered byrnies, the lances and the ensigns fastened to them. The clear-voiced trumpets sound, and loud are the blasts of the horn. The emir calls to his brother—Canabeus, king of Floredée is he, and he holds the land as far as Val Sevrée—and he has shown him the armies of Charles: "You see the pride of much-praised France! The emperor rides

very proudly; he is behind with that bearded troop. Their beards are as white as snow upon ice and they have thrown them outside their byrnies. They will strike with lances and swords and we shall have a fierce and hard-fought battle such as no man ever saw joined." A little further than one could throw a peeled rod Baligant rode out in front of his companies and thus he spoke to them: "Advance, heathen, for I will lead the way (?)." Then he brandished the handle of his lance and turned the point of it towards Charles.

239. Charlemaine, when he sees the emir and the dragon, the ensign and the standard—so huge is the army of the Arabs that they have occupied all parts of the country except just as much as the emperor has of it—the king of France cries very loudly: "French barons, you are noble vassals. Many are the battles you have fought. Look at the heathen; they are felons and cowards; all their laws are not worth one farthing. Who cares, lords, if they have a large army? Let anyone who does not wish to come with me now depart!" Then he spurs his horse and Tencendur makes four leaps forward. The French say: "The king is a warrior! Ride, baron! Not one of us will fail you!"

240. The day was bright and the sun was shining. The armies are a fine sight and there are great masses of men. The front ranks have come together: count Rabel and count Guinemant give their swift horses the rein and spur vigorously. Then all the Frenchmen advance at a gallop and go to strike with their sharp-edged spears.

241. Count Rabel is a bold knight. He pricks his horse with the spurs of pure gold and he rides to strike Torleu, the Persian king. Neither shield nor byrnie could resist his blow. He has driven his gilded lance right into his body and hurled him dead on to some low brushwood. The French say: "May the Lord God help us! Charles is in the right; we ought not to fail him."

242. Guineman has encountered a Leutician king. He has shattered his painted shield and torn his byrnie to shreds; the whole ensign he has driven into his body and has struck him dead be it for tears or for laughter. At this blow the men of France cry out: "Strike, barons, do not linger! Charles is in the right.... God has placed us at the bar of truth."

243. Malpramis is seated on a pure white horse; he makes his way into the thickest part of the French army, and ever and again he strikes

great blows and overthrows his enemies heaping one corpse upon another. Before all the others Baligant cries out: "Ye barons, whom I have nourished so long, see my son how he goes seeking out Charles and challenging so many barons to fight! I ask for no better baron than he! Go to his aid with your sharp-edged spears!" At these words the heathen advance and strike hard blows, and the slaughter is great. The battle is strange and awful: never was there such a one, either before or since.

244. Great are the hosts and fierce the troops. All the army corps are engaged and the heathen strike amazingly. God! how many lances are broken in halves, how many shields are shattered and coats of mail torn to shreds! You might have seen the ground littered with them, and the grass of the field, so green and delicate.... The emir calls upon his vassals again: "Strike hard, barons, upon this army of christians!" The battle is very stern and obstinate; never was there such a desperate one either before or since, and not even by night time will it draw to a close.

245. The emir calls upon his vassals: "Strike, heathen, for nought else have you come hither! I will give you fair and noble wives; I will grant you fiefs and possessions and lands." The heathen reply: "That is what we ought to do." And they lose many of their lances by reason of their hard strokes; more than a hundred thousand swords are drawn there. What a grievous and terrible struggle it is! Anyone who wished to be there might see a battle indeed.

246. The emperor speaks again to his Frenchmen: "Sir barons, I love you and I trust you. Many are the battles you have fought for me, the kingdoms you have conquered and the kings you have overthrown! I know well that I owe you as payment both my person, my lands and my possessions. Avenge your sons, your brothers, your heirs who were slain in Roncevaux but yester'een. You know full well that I defend the right against the heathen." The French reply: "Sire, you speak truth." And the twenty thousand men who are with him all pledge their faith as one man that they will not fail him for fear of death or distress. Then each one brings his lance into action and they strike with their swords without delay. Terrible is the battle in its fierceness.

247. Malpramis rides across the battlefield and he wreaks great havoc among the men of France. Naimes the duke looks at him proudly and advances to attack him like a valiant man. He breaks the upper part of his

shield and tears the two sidepieces of his hauberk; he puts his yellow ensign right into his body and hurls him a dead man amongst hundreds of others.

248. King Canabeu, the emir's brother, spurs his horse forward. He has drawn his sword—the pommel is of crystal—and he strikes Naimes on the top of his helmet. The half on one side he has smashed to pieces and he has severed five of the bands with his blade of steel. The head armour availed him nothing, for his bonnet of mail was cut through to the flesh and a piece of it thrown to the ground. It was a fearful stroke and the duke was stunned; he would have fallen at once had not God helped him. He held with both arms on to the neck of his steed. If the heathen had given one more such blow the noble vassal would have been killed on the spot. But Charles of France has come to him and he will help him.

249. Duke Naimes is much afflicted and the heathen hastens to deliver another blow. But Charles said to him: "Son of a slave, you struck in an evil hour!" Very courageously he rode to attack him. He broke his shield and crushed it against his heart; he tore the visier of his hauberk and hurled him dead to the ground. The saddle remains empty from the blow.

250. Charlemaine the king is much grieved when he sees Naimes wounded before him and the clear blood falling on to the green grass. The emperor spoke a word of counsel to him: "Fair Sir Naimes, I beseech you, ride beside me! The scoundrel who threatened your life is dead; I put my lance once for all into his body." The duke replied: "Sire, I put my trust in you. If I live longer you will gain thereby." So they rode together to the attack in love and loyalty, and twenty thousand Frenchmen rode with them and not one of them failed to strike and to hew.

251. The emir rides through the field and goes to strike count Guinemant. He forces his white shield against his heart and severs the sidepieces from his hauberk; he cuts his body asunder midway between his flanks and hurls him dead from his swift steed. Then he slew Geboin and Lorant, and Richard the aged, the liege-lord of the Normans. The pagans cry: "Précieuse is doing well! Strike, barons, for therein lies our safety!"

252. It was a sight to see the knights of Arabia, those of Occiant and Argoille and those of Bascle! How they strike and hew with their lances! Nor have the French any desire to flee and many are the dead on one side and on the other. The battle was fierce until the evening and great was the slaughter of the French barons. There will be great grief before the battle ends.

253. The French and the Arabs fight hard. Many are the lances and the polished spears that come to grief! It was a sight to see the mangled shields; and anyone who heard the white hauberks rattling and the shields grating on the helmets and saw the knights falling all round, and heard the groans of men as they died upon the ground, would always have a memory of great grief. This was a battle grievous to be borne. The emir calls upon Apollin and Tervagant, and Mahomet too: "My lord gods, I have served you faithfully. I will make images of you all in pure gold." Suddenly a faithful vassal, Gemalfin, appears before him. He has brought him evil tidings: "Baligant, sire," says he, "you are ill-fated to-day. You have lost your son Malpramis, and Canabeus your brother is slain; to two Frenchmen belongs the honour—the emperor is one, I doubt not: he is tall and noble to look at, and his beard is white as the flowers in May." The emir bowed his armed head and his countenance fell. So great was his grief that he thought he would die. He called Jangleu from over sea.

254. The emir said "Jangleu, come hither! You are both brave and wise and I have always listened to your counsel. What do you think about the Arabs and the French? Shall we be victorious in this battle?" Jangleu replied: "You are a dead man, Baligant. Your gods will not be able to save you. Charles is proud and his men are brave. I never saw such good fighters. Nevertheless call again upon the barons of Occiant, the Turks, the Enfruns, the Arabs and the Giants. Do not put off the inevitable."

255. The emir has put his beard outside his armour; it was as white as the hawthorn flower. Whatever may happen he does not wish to hide himself. Now he puts a clear sounding trumpet to his mouth and sounds it loudly for his heathen to hear. His troops rally to the sound from all parts of the field: those of Occiant bray and neigh, those of Argoille yap like dogs. With great fury they attack the French and they break and

scatter their ranks where they are thickest. In this attack seven thousand were slain.

256. Count Ogier was never a coward; a better vassal than he never donned a coat of mail. When he saw the French columns broken he called Thierry, the duke of Argonne, Geoffroy of Anjou and count Jozeran, and very boldly he spoke to Charles: "You see how the heathen kill your men! May you never wear a crown again by God's grace, if you do not strike now to avenge your disgrace." No one replied a single word, but forward they spur giving their horses the rein and they will strike hard wherever they meet their foe.

257. Charlemaine the king strikes vigorously, and duke Naimés and Ogier of Denmark, and Geoffroy of Anjou who bore the ensign. Especially brave is Ogier the Dane: he pricks his horse and lets him bound forward and rides to strike the bearer of the dragon with such force that he overthrows Ambore with the dragon and the king's ensign on the spot. When Baligant sees his battle standard fall and the ensign of Mahomet drop, he perceives with certainty that he is in the wrong and Charles is in the right. The heathens of Arabia.... The emperor calls upon his Frenchmen: "Answer me, barons, for God's sake. Will you stand by me?" The French reply: "You do wrong to ask. Cursed be he who does not strike his hardest."

258. The day passes and evening comes on. French and heathen both strike with their swords. Great was the courage of the ones who joined these two armies in battle. Neither of them has forgotten their battle cry: the emir shouts "Précieuse!" and Charles cries "Montjoie!" the well-known signal. Each recognized the other by his loud, clear voice and they met in the middle of the field. They advance to the attack and they gave each other terrific blows on their circle-marked shields. Both their shields are broken beneath the wide loges, and the flaps are torn from their hauberks; but neither of them is touched as yet in the body. Their girths are broken, their saddles roll over and the kings fall to the ground.... Quickly they rise again to their feet and undaunted they draw their swords. The combat will never be averted now; it will not come to an end till one of them be slain.

259. Very valiant is Charles of sweet France; but the emir neither fears nor dreads him. They brandish their naked swords and give each

other great blows upon their shields; they cut through the skins and the double staves, the nails fall out and the bosses are broken in pieces. Then, unprotected, they rain blows on their coats of mail and fire flashes from their bright helmets. This battle cannot cease until one or other of them acknowledges that he is to blame.

260. Said the emir: "Charles, bethink thyself now and make up thy mind to repent towards me! Thou hast killed my son as I know for a truth; without any right thou dost lay claim to my land. Become my liege-man now... and come hence as my vassal to the East." Charles replies: "A base proposal dost thou make to me. Neither peace nor love ought I to accord to a heathen. Accept the law which God has given us, the Christian law, and then I will love thee straightway; then serve and adore the King omnipotent." Baligant answered: "Thou preachest an evil sermon." And they renew the fight with the swords that hang at their sides.

261. The emir is a powerful man. He strikes Charlemaine on his burnished helmet and he has broken and split it on his head. The sword has reached his hair and has taken a large handful and more of his flesh so that the bone is bare where he struck him. Charles tottered and all but fell, but God willed not that he should be killed or conquered. Saint Gabriel appeared to him and asked him: "Great king, what art thou doing?"

262. When Charles heard the holy voice of the angel he no longer had any fear or dread of death. Strength and consciousness came back to him and he struck the emir with the sword of France. He has shattered the helmet with its sparkling gems, he has cloven his head so that the brains are scattered, and his face down to the white beard, and he has struck him down dead without hope of recovery. Then he shouts "Montjoie" for a signal, and at the word duke Naimés comes up. He takes Tencendur and the great king mounts upon him. The heathen flee, for God wills not that they remain, and the Frenchmen have attained their desire.

263. The heathen flee, for God has willed it. The French pursue and the emperor with them. Then said the king: "Lords, avenge your losses; by so doing you will assuage your desires and your hearts, for this very morning I saw you weeping." The French reply: "Sire, it behoves us to

do so." Each strikes as hard blows as he can and very few of those who were there escaped.

264. The heat is great and the dust rises up. The heathen flee and the French harass them. The pursuit lasted from there to Saragossa. Bramimonde has mounted to the top of her tower; with her are the clerks and canons of the false law which God never loved; they have neither orders nor tonsured heads. When she saw the rout of the Arabs with a loud voice she cried: "Help us, Mahomet(?)!.... Ah, noble king, our men are defeated, and the emir shamefully slain!" When Marsilie heard her words he turned his face to the wall tears flowed from his eyes and his head sank down. He died of grief for sin lay heavy on him. He renders up his soul to living demons.

265. The heathens are dead.... And Charles has been victorious. He has beaten down the gate of Saragossa and he knows that now it will be defended no longer. He takes possession of the city and his army has entered it and they lie in it that night as conquerors. The white-bearded king is a bold man. And Bramimonde has handed over the towers to him; ten of them are large and fifty are small. He whom God helps achieves much.

266. The day passes and the night has fallen; the moon is bright and the stars are shining. The emperor has taken Saragossa. A thousand Frenchmen have to search the town with care, and the synagogues and the mosques. With iron mallets and hatchets they break the images and everyone of the idols. No trace of sorcery or fraud will they leave in the place. The king worships God and desires to serve him; his bishops bless the waters and take the heathen to the baptistry. If there is any one there who refuses to obey, Charles bids that he be hung, or burnt, or killed by the sword. More than a hundred thousand were baptized and became true Christians; the queen alone was not amongst them. She is to be led captive to sweet France, for the king wishes her to be converted by love.

267. The night passes and the bright day dawns. Charles places a garrison in the towers of Saragossa; a thousand knights he left there, good fighters who will guard the town for the emperor. Then the king mounted, and all his men, and Bramimonde whom he leads away as a prisoner; but he has no desire to do her ought but good. And so they returned with joy and good cheer. They passed Narbonne with all speed,

they came to Bordeaux, the city of.... On the altar of Saint Seurin the baron he places the horn filled with gold and mangons. The pilgrims see it who go that way. He passed Gironde with its great ships afloat and right to Blaye he has brought his nephew, and Oliver his brave comrade, and the archbishop, that wise and valiant man. In white tombs he has the knights placed at Saint Romain, and there the barons lie. The French commend them to God and to his glory. Charles rides across the valleys and the mountains; he does not wish to halt until he reaches Aix. Now at last he has dismounted by the steps and as soon as he is in his lofty palace he sends forth messengers to summon his judges: Bavarians and Saxons, Lorrains and Frisians; Germans too he summons, Burgundians and Poitevins, Normans and Bretons, and the men of France who are wisest of all. Now begins the trial of Ganelon.

268. The emperor has returned from Spain and has come to Aix, the best seat in France. He mounted the steps of the palace and went into the hall. And there came Aude, a fair damsel, and said to him: "Where is the chieftain Roland, who swore to take me for his wife?" Then Charles was filled with grief and heaviness; tears flow from his eyes and he pulls his white beard. "Sister, dear friend, thou hast asked me news of a dead man. I will give thee the best possible exchange, to wit Louis, and nothing better can I promise; he is my son, and he will hold my borders." Aude replies: "These words mean nothing to me. May it not please God nor his saints nor his angels that I remain alive after Roland." Her colour leaves her, she falls at the feet of Charlemaine and she dies straightway; may God have mercy on her soul. The French barons weep and lament for her.

269. The fair Aude is dead. The king thinks she has fainted; he is sorry for her and he weeps. He takes her by the hands and has raised her up, but her head falls on to her shoulders. When Charles sees that she is dead he straightway bids four countesses approach, and he has her carried to a cloister of nuns. They keep watch over her all night till the morning. Then they buried her honourably beside an altar and the king gave great gifts on her behalf.

270. The emperor has returned to Aix. Ganelon the traitor in chains of iron is in the city before the palace. The servants have fastened him to a stake, and they bind his hands with leather thongs and beat him hard

with sticks and thongs. He has deserved no better treatment; in great distress he awaits his trial.

271. It is told in the old chronicle that Charles summoned his men from many lands. They assembled at Aix, at the chapel. It was the high day of a solemn festival—some say it was the day of Saint Silvester, the baron. Now begins the trial and the account of the fate of Ganelon who committed the treason. The emperor has had him brought before him.

272. "Sir barons," said Charlemaine the king, "now give me right judgment concerning Ganelon! He went to Spain with me, in my army; he robbed me of twenty thousand of my Frenchmen and my nephew whom you will never see again, and of Oliver the valiant and the knightly. The twelve peers too he betrayed for gain." Said Ganelon: "May I be accursed if I conceal it! Roland wronged me in money and in possessions; that is why I sought his death and his destruction but I do not admit that there was any treason." "Now we will take counsel concerning the matter."

273. There stood Ganelon before the king. His form is comely and his face well coloured. Had he been loyal, one would have taken him for a valiant knight. He sees the men of France and all his judges and thirty of his relatives who are there with him. Then he cried loudly, at the top of his voice: "For the love of God, listen to me, barons! Sirs, I was in the army with the emperor; I served him in fealty and in love. His nephew Roland conceived a hatred for me; he assigned me death and sorrow. I went as messenger to king Marsilie and I was only saved by my skill. I defied the warrior Roland, and Oliver, and all their companions. Charles and all his noble barons heard me do it; I avenged myself on them, but it was not treason." The French reply: "We will go and take counsel."

274. Ganelon sees that his final trial is about to begin. There are thirty of his relatives there with him. There is one of them to whom the others listen: Pinabel is his name, of the castle of Sorence. He speaks well and can give a good account of himself. To him Ganelon spoke as follows: "Friend... save me from death and calumny to-day!" Pinabel said: "You will be safe ere long. There is not a Frenchman who will condemn you to be hung, but if the emperor lets us meet in single combat I will give him the lie with my blade of steel." Ganelon the count falls at his feet.

275. Bavarians and Saxons, Poitevins, Normans and Frenchmen have met together to take counsel. Germans and Teutons are there too in number, and the men of Auvergne who are most courteous of all. They speak quietly together on account of Pinabel. One says to the other: "Better let the matter rest! Let us leave the trial and beg the king that he acquit Ganelon this time and he will serve him ever after in all love and loyalty. Roland is dead; you will never see him again. Neither gold nor possessions will bring him back, and only a madman would take up arms for him now." There is not one but approves and endorses these words, except Thierry, the brother of my lord Geoffroy.

276. The barons come back to Charlemaine and say to him: "Sire, we beseech you, acquit count Ganelon and let him serve you hereafter in loyalty and love. Let him live, for he is a very noble man.... The king replied "You are traitors to me."

277. When Charles sees that none of his barons support him, his face and his expression grow dark and he groans aloud in his grief. Then up came a knight and stood before him. It was Thierry, brother of Geoffroy duke of Anjou. His body was spare and slim, his hair was black and his skin rather dark; he was not large of stature but neither was he too small. He spoke courteously to the emperor: "Fair sir king, grieve not so much! You know well that I have served you faithfully. By reason of my lineage I have a right to speak thus: Whether or no Roland acted wrongly towards Ganelon, he was in your service and that ought to have protected him. Ganelon is a traitor in that he betrayed him; he has perjured himself and committed a crime towards you. Therefore my verdict is that he be hung and put to death... inasmuch as he is a felon and has committed felony. If now he has a kinsman who wishes to give me the lie, I will forthwith defend my judgment with the sword that is girded to my side." The French reply: "You have spoken well indeed."

278. Then Pinabel came and stood before the king. He is tall and strong, courageous and swift. Any one who receives a blow from him has no longer to live. And he said to the king: "Sire, this trial is yours! Bid then that all this commotion cease! I see here Thierry, who has given his judgment. I declare it to be false and I will defend my view against him." His right glove of deerskin he placed in the king's hand. The emperor said: "I require good hostages." Thirty kinsmen offer

themselves as loyal pledges, and the king said: "I for my part accept your surety." He puts them into custody until the right be vindicated.

279. As soon as Thierry sees that the combat will take place he has handed his right glove to Charles. The emperor pledges him by hostages and commands four benches to be brought to the spot. On these the combatants take their seats. In the opinion of all the challenge has been duly carried out; it was Ogier of Denmark who arranged the matter. Then they call for their horses and their arms.

280. As soon as they are ready for the combat they confessed themselves and received absolution and blessing; they have heard their masses and received communion and large offerings have they left to the churches. Then they both presented themselves before Charles. They have fixed their spurs, they have donned their white hauberks which are light and strong, they have enclosed their heads in their bright helmets and girded their swords hilted with pure gold. Their quartered shields hang from their necks, in their right hands they hold their sharp-edged spears, and now they have mounted their swift steeds. Then a hundred thousand knights wept, because for Roland's sake they are filled with pity for Thierry. God only knows what the end will be.

281. Below Aix there is a wide meadow and there the two barons meet in single combat. Both are valiant knights of great courage, and their horses are swift and eager. They spur them well they give them the rein and ride with all their might against each other. Both their shields are broken and shattered, their hauberks rent, their girths torn to fragments, the supports shift round and the saddles fall to the ground. A hundred thousand men weep at the sight.

282. Both knights have fallen to the ground. Quickly they rise to their feet. Pinabel is strong and swift and light. Each seeks to strike the other; they no longer have their horses. With their gold-hilted swords they strike and hew on the steel helmets, and their blows are strong enough to split the helmets asunder. Great is the distress of the French knights. "Ah! God," said Charles, "make manifest the right."

283. Then Pinabel said: "Thierry, withdraw thy words! I will be thy man in love and loyalty, I will give of my possessions as much as thou desirest, provided that thou wilt make Ganelon's peace with the king!" Thierry replied: "I will not consider it. May I be accursed if I agree to

such a thing! May God vindicate the right between us two this day!" Then Thierry spoke: "Pinabel, thou art a valiant knight; thou art tall and strong and thy limbs are well fashioned. Thy peers take account of thy courage. Now withdraw from this combat; I will make thy peace with Charlemaine and such justice shall be done concerning Ganelon that it shall be spoken of continually." Said Pinabel: "May it not please the Lord God! I will support my kin; I will not yield for any mortal man. I would rather die than bear reproach for that." Then they begin again to strike each other on their gold-decked helmets so that bright sparks fly upwards towards the sky. There is no way now by which they can be separated; by a man's death alone can the combat end.

284. A very valiant knight is Pinabel of Sorence and he strikes Thierry upon his helmet of Provence. Fire leaps forth and causes the grass to catch light. Then he thrusts the point of his blade towards him. Past his forehead it descends, across his face... his right cheek is all bleeding from it and his hauberk is torn right round from back to front. God saved him that he was not hurled down dead.

285. Thierry sees that he is wounded in the face. The bright blood flows down on to the grassy meadow. He strikes Pinabel on his polished helmet; he has broken and split it as far as the nose-piece, he has scattered the brains from his head. He has delivered his stroke and has hurled him down dead. This stroke has decided the battle. The French say: "God has shown us a sign! It is right that Ganelon be hung, both he and his kinsmen who have pleaded for him."

286. When Thierry had won his battle the emperor Charles approached. With him came four of his barons, Naimés the duke, Ogier of Denmark, Geoffroy of Anjou and William of Blaye. The king takes Thierry in his arms and he wipes his face with the fur of his great sable mantle; then he throws down this mantle and takes another one. Very gently the knights disarm him and mount him on an Arab mule. Then they repair to Aix with joy and brave show, and they dismount before the palace. Now begins the execution of the others.

287. Charles calls his counts and his dukes: "What do you counsel me to do with those I kept in custody? They came hither for Ganelon's trial and I received them as hostages for Pinabel." The French reply: "Let not one of them remain alive!" Then the king gave the order to his provost

Basbrun: "Go and hang them all on the tree of accursèd wood. By this beard of which the hairs are hoary, if one escapes thou art a dead and ruined man!" He replied: "How could I do otherwise?" With a hundred sergeants he took them by force, and thirty of them were hung on the spot. A traitor brings both himself and others to destruction.

288. Then the Bavarians and Germans, the Poitevins, the Bretons and the Normans departed. The French more than all the others have decreed that Ganelon shall die a death of special torment. They order four chargers to be brought up, and they bind him to them by his hands and feet. The horses are spirited and swift; four sergeants drive them forwards towards a mare in the middle of a field. Ganelon has come to a terrible end. All his nerves are stretched and his limbs break asunder from his body; the bright blood spurts forth on to the green grass. Ganelon is dead like the felon traitor that he is. It is not right that he who betrays another should live to boast of it.

289. When the emperor had accomplished his vengeance he called the bishops of France, those of Bavaria and those of Germany, and said to them: "There is a noble captive in my house. She has heard so many sermons and homilies that she wishes to believe in God and she has asked to become a Christian. Baptize her so that God may have her soul." And they replied: "She must have godmothers." At the baths of Aix... there they baptized the queen of Spain, and they chose for her the name of Juliana. She is a Christian now by true confession.

290. The day has passed, the night has fallen by the time the emperor has executed his judgment and relieved his great wrath, and instilled the Christian faith into Bramimonde. The king has laid himself down in his vaulted chamber. Saint Gabriel came to him with a message from God: "Charles, summon the armies of thy empire! By force shalt thou enter the land of Bire and bring succour to king Vivien in his city of Imphe which the heathen have besieged. The Christians are crying out and calling for thee." The emperor had no wish to go. "God," he said, "how full of toil is my life!" Tears flow from his eyes and he pulls his white beard.