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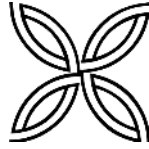
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LEGENDS OF CHARLEMAGNE

T. BULFINCH



Thomas Bulfinch



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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

No new edition of Bulfinch's classic work can be considered complete without some notice of the American scholar to whose wide erudition and painstaking care it stands as a perpetual monument. "The Age of Fable" has come to be ranked with older books like "Pilgrim's Progress," "Gulliver's Travels," "The Arabian Nights," "Robinson Crusoe," and five or six other productions of world-wide renown as a work with which every one must claim some acquaintance before his education can be called really complete. Many readers of the present edition will probably recall coming in contact with the work as children, and, it may be added, will no doubt discover from a fresh perusal the source of numerous bits of knowledge that have remained stored in their minds since those early years. Yet to the majority of this great circle of readers and students the name Bulfinch in itself has no significance.

Thomas Bulfinch was a native of Boston, Mass., where he was born in 1796. His boyhood was spent in that city, and

he prepared for college in the Boston schools. He finished his scholastic training at Harvard College, and after taking his degree was for a period a teacher in his home city. For a long time later in life he was employed as an accountant in the Boston Merchants' Bank. His leisure time he used for further pursuit of the classical studies which he had begun at Harvard, and his chief pleasure in life lay in writing out the results of his reading, in simple, condensed form for young or busy readers. The plan he followed in this work, to give it the greatest possible usefulness, is set forth in the Author's Preface.

"Age of Fable," First Edition, 1855; "The Age of Chivalry," 1858; "The Boy Inventor," 1860; "Legends of Charlemagne, or Romance of the Middle Ages," 1863; "Poetry of the Age of Fable," 1863; "Oregon and Eldorado, or Romance of the Rivers," 1860.

In this complete edition of his mythological and legendary lore "The Age of Fable," "The Age of Chivalry," and "Legends of Charlemagne" are included. Scrupulous care has been taken to follow the original text of Bulfinch, but attention should be called to some additional sections which have been inserted to add to the rounded completeness of the work, and which the publishers believe would meet with the sanction of the author himself, as in no way intruding upon his original plan but simply carrying it out in more complete detail. The

section on Northern Mythology has been enlarged by a retelling of the epic of the "Nibelungen Lied," together with a summary of Wagner's version of the legend in his series of music-dramas. Under the head of "Hero Myths of the British Race" have been included outlines of the stories of Beowulf, Cuchulain, Hereward the Wake, and Robin Hood. Of the verse extracts which occur throughout the text, thirty or more have been added from literature which has appeared since Bulfinch's time, extracts that he would have been likely to quote had he personally supervised the new edition.

Finally, the index has been thoroughly overhauled and, indeed, remade. All the proper names in the work have been entered, with references to the pages where they occur, and a concise explanation or definition of each has been given. Thus what was a mere list of names in the original has been enlarged into a small classical and mythological dictionary, which it is hoped will prove valuable for reference purposes not necessarily connected with "The Age of Fable."

Acknowledgments are due the writings of Dr. Oliver Huckel for information on the point of Wagner's rendering of the Nibelungen legend, and M. I. Ebbutt's authoritative volume on "Hero Myths and Legends of the British Race," from which much of the information concerning the British heroes has been obtained.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

If no other knowledge deserves to be called useful but that which helps to enlarge our possessions or to raise our station in society, then Mythology has no claim to the appellation. But if that which tends to make us happier and better can be called useful, then we claim that epithet for our subject. For Mythology is the handmaid of literature; and literature is one of the best allies of virtue and promoters of happiness.

Without a knowledge of mythology much of the elegant literature of our own language cannot be understood and appreciated. When Byron calls Rome "the Niobe of nations," or says of Venice, "She looks a Sea-Cybele fresh from ocean," he calls up to the mind of one familiar with our subject, illustrations more vivid and striking than the pencil could furnish, but which are lost to the reader ignorant of mythology. Milton abounds in similar allusions. The short poem "Comus" contains more than thirty such, and the ode "On the Morning of the Nativity" half as many. Through "Paradise Lost" they are scattered

profusely. This is one reason why we often hear persons by no means illiterate say that they cannot enjoy Milton. But were these persons to add to their more solid acquirements the easy learning of this little volume, much of the poetry of Milton which has appeared to them "harsh and crabbed" would be found "musical as is Apollo's lute." Our citations, taken from more than twenty-five poets, from Spenser to Longfellow, will show how general has been the practice of borrowing illustrations from mythology.

The prose writers also avail themselves of the same source of elegant and suggestive illustration. One can hardly take up a number of the "Edinburgh" or "Quarterly Review" without meeting with instances. In Macaulay's article on Milton there are twenty such.

But how is mythology to be taught to one who does not learn it through the medium of the languages of Greece and Rome? To devote study to a species of learning which relates wholly to false marvels and obsolete faiths is not to be expected of the general reader in a practical age like this. The time even of the young is claimed by so many sciences of facts and things that little can be spared for set treatises on a science of mere fancy.

But may not the requisite knowledge of the subject be acquired by reading the ancient poets in translations? We reply, the field is too extensive for a preparatory course; and these very translations require some previous

knowledge of the subject to make them intelligible. Let any one who doubts it read the first page of the "Aeneid," and see what he can make of "the hatred of Juno," the "decree of the Parcae," the "judgment of Paris," and the "honors of Ganymede," without this knowledge.

Shall we be told that answers to such queries may be found in notes, or by a reference to the Classical Dictionary? We reply, the interruption of one's reading by either process is so annoying that most readers prefer to let an allusion pass unapprehended rather than submit to it. Moreover, such sources give us only the dry facts without any of the charm of the original narrative; and what is a poetical myth when stripped of its poetry? The story of Ceyx and Halcyone, which fills a chapter in our book, occupies but eight lines in the best (Smith's) Classical Dictionary; and so of others.

Our work is an attempt to solve this problem, by telling the stories of mythology in such a manner as to make them a source of amusement. We have endeavored to tell them correctly, according to the ancient authorities, so that when the reader finds them referred to he may not be at a loss to recognize the reference. Thus we hope to teach mythology not as a study, but as a relaxation from study; to give our work the charm of a story-book, yet by means of it to impart a knowledge of an important branch of education. The index at the end will adapt it to the purposes of reference, and make it a Classical

Dictionary for the parlor.

Most of the classical legends in "Stories of Gods and Heroes" are derived from Ovid and Virgil. They are not literally translated, for, in the author's opinion, poetry translated into literal prose is very unattractive reading. Neither are they in verse, as well for other reasons as from a conviction that to translate faithfully under all the embarrassments of rhyme and measure is impossible. The attempt has been made to tell the stories in prose, preserving so much of the poetry as resides in the thoughts and is separable from the language itself, and omitting those amplifications which are not suited to the altered form.

The Northern mythological stories are copied with some abridgment from Mallet's "Northern Antiquities." These chapters, with those on Oriental and Egyptian mythology, seemed necessary to complete the subject, though it is believed these topics have not usually been presented in the same volume with the classical fables.

The poetical citations so freely introduced are expected to answer several valuable purposes. They will tend to fix in memory the leading fact of each story, they will help to the attainment of a correct pronunciation of the proper names, and they will enrich the memory with many gems of poetry, some of them such as are most frequently quoted or alluded to in reading and conversation.

Having chosen mythology as connected with literature for our province, we have endeavored to omit nothing which the reader of elegant literature is likely to find occasion for. Such stories and parts of stories as are offensive to pure taste and good morals are not given. But such stories are not often referred to, and if they occasionally should be, the English reader need feel no mortification in confessing his ignorance of them.

Our work is not for the learned, nor for the theologian, nor for the philosopher, but for the reader of English literature, of either sex, who wishes to comprehend the allusions so frequently made by public speakers, lecturers, essayists, and poets, and those which occur in polite conversation.

In the "Stories of Gods and Heroes" the compiler has endeavored to impart the pleasures of classical learning to the English reader, by presenting the stories of Pagan mythology in a form adapted to modern taste. In "King Arthur and His Knights" and "The Mabinogion" the attempt has been made to treat in the same way the stories of the second "age of fable," the age which witnessed the dawn of the several states of Modern Europe.

It is believed that this presentation of a literature which held unrivalled sway over the imaginations of our ancestors, for many centuries, will not be without benefit to the reader, in addition to the amusement it may

afford. The tales, though not to be trusted for their facts, are worthy of all credit as pictures of manners; and it is beginning to be held that the manners and modes of thinking of an age are a more important part of its history than the conflicts of its peoples, generally leading to no result. Besides this, the literature of romance is a treasure-house of poetical material, to which modern poets frequently resort. The Italian poets, Dante and Ariosto, the English, Spenser, Scott, and Tennyson, and our own Longfellow and Lowell, are examples of this.

These legends are so connected with each other, so consistently adapted to a group of characters strongly individualized in Arthur, Launcelot, and their compeers, and so lighted up by the fires of imagination and invention, that they seem as well adapted to the poet's purpose as the legends of the Greek and Roman mythology. And if every well-educated young person is expected to know the story of the Golden Fleece, why is the quest of the Sangreal less worthy of his acquaintance? Or if an allusion to the shield of Achilles ought not to pass unapprehended, why should one to Excalibar, the famous sword of Arthur?--

"Of Arthur, who, to upper light restored,
With that terrific sword,
Which yet he brandishes for future war,
Shall lift his country's fame above the polar star."

[Footnote: Wordsworth]

It is an additional recommendation of our subject, that it tends to cherish in our minds the idea of the source from which we sprung. We are entitled to our full share in the glories and recollections of the land of our forefathers, down to the time of colonization thence. The associations which spring from this source must be fruitful of good influences; among which not the least valuable is the increased enjoyment which such associations afford to the American traveller when he visits England, and sets his foot upon any of her renowned localities.

The legends of Charlemagne and his peers are necessary to complete the subject.

In an age when intellectual darkness enveloped Western Europe, a constellation of brilliant writers arose in Italy. Of these, Pulci (born in 1432), Boiardo (1434), and Ariosto (1474) took for their subjects the romantic fables which had for many ages been transmitted in the lays of bards and the legends of monkish chroniclers. These fables they arranged in order, adorned with the embellishments of fancy, amplified from their own invention, and stamped with immortality. It may safely be asserted that as long as civilization shall endure these productions will retain their place among the most cherished creations of

human genius.

In "Stories of Gods and Heroes," "King Arthur and His Knights" and "The Mabinogion" the aim has been to supply to the modern reader such knowledge of the fables of classical and mediaeval literature as is needed to render intelligible the allusions which occur in reading and conversation. The "Legends of Charlemagne" is intended to carry out the same design. Like the earlier portions of the work, it aspires to a higher character than that of a piece of mere amusement. It claims to be useful, in acquainting its readers with the subjects of the productions of the great poets of Italy. Some knowledge of these is expected of every well-educated young person.

In reading these romances, we cannot fail to observe how the primitive inventions have been used, again and again, by successive generations of fabulists. The Siren of Ulysses is the prototype of the Siren of Orlando, and the character of Circe reappears in Alcina. The fountains of Love and Hatred may be traced to the story of Cupid and Psyche; and similar effects produced by a magic draught appear in the tale of Tristram and Isoude, and, substituting a flower for the draught, in Shakspeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream." There are many other instances of the same kind which the reader will recognize without our assistance.

The sources whence we derive these stories are, first, the

Italian poets named above; next, the "Romans de Chevalerie" of the Comte de Tressan; lastly, certain German collections of popular tales. Some chapters have been borrowed from Leigh Hunt's Translations from the Italian Poets. It seemed unnecessary to do over again what he had already done so well; yet, on the other hand, those stories could not be omitted from the series without leaving it incomplete.

THOMAS BULFINCH.

INTRODUCTION

Those who have investigated the origin of the romantic fables relating to Charlemagne and his peers are of opinion that the deeds of Charles Martel, and perhaps of other Charleses, have been blended in popular tradition with those properly belonging to Charlemagne. It was indeed a most momentous era; and if our readers will have patience, before entering on the perusal of the fabulous annals which we are about to lay before them, to take a rapid survey of the real history of the times, they will find it hardly less romantic than the tales of the poets.

In the century beginning from the year 600, the countries bordering upon the native land of our Saviour, to the east and south, had not yet received his religion. Arabia was the seat of an idolatrous religion resembling that of the ancient Persians, who worshipped the sun, moon, and stars. In Mecca, in the year 571, Mahomet was born, and here, at the age of forty, he proclaimed himself

the prophet of God, in dignity as superior to Christ as Christ had been to Moses. Having obtained by slow degrees a considerable number of disciples, he resorted to arms to diffuse his religion. The energy and zeal of his followers, aided by the weakness of the neighboring nations, enabled him and his successors to spread the sway of Arabia and the religion of Mahomet over the countries to the east as far as the Indus, northward over Persia and Asia Minor, westward over Egypt and the southern shores of the Mediterranean, and thence over the principal portion of Spain. All this was done within one hundred years from the Hegira, or flight of Mahomet from Mecca to Medina, which happened in the year 622, and is the era from which Mahometans reckon time, as we do from the birth of Christ.

From Spain the way was open for the Saracens (so the followers of Mahomet were called) into France, the conquest of which, if achieved, would have been followed very probably by that of all the rest of Europe, and would have resulted in the banishment of Christianity from the earth. For Christianity was not at that day universally professed, even by those nations which we now regard as foremost in civilization. Great part of Germany, Britain, Denmark, and Russia were still pagan or barbarous.

At that time there ruled in France, though without the title of king, the first of those illustrious Charleses of

whom we have spoken, Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne. The Saracens of Spain had made incursions into France in 712 and 718, and had retired, carrying with them a vast booty. In 725, Anbessa, who was then the Saracen governor of Spain, crossed the Pyrenees with a numerous army, and took by storm the strong town of Carcassone. So great was the terror excited by this invasion, that the country for a wide extent submitted to the conqueror, and a Mahometan governor for the province was appointed and installed at Narbonne. Anbessa, however, received a fatal wound in one of his engagements, and the Saracens, being thus checked from further advance, retired to Narbonne.

In 732 the Saracens again invaded France under Abdalrahman, advanced rapidly to the banks of the Garonne, and laid siege to Bordeaux. The city was taken by assault and delivered up to the soldiery. The invaders still pressed forward, and spread over the territories of Orleans, Auxerre and Sens. Their advanced parties were suddenly called in by their chief, who had received information of the rich abbey of St. Martin of Tours, and resolved to plunder and destroy it.

Charles during all this time had done nothing to oppose the Saracens, for the reason that the portion of France over which their incursions had been made was not at that time under his dominion, but constituted an

independent kingdom, under the name of Aquitaine, of which Eude was king. But now Charles became convinced of the danger, and prepared to encounter it. Abdalrahman was advancing toward Tours, when intelligence of the approach of Charles, at the head of an army of Franks, compelled him to fall back upon Poitiers, in order to seize an advantageous field of battle.

Charles Martel had called together his warriors from every part of his dominions, and, at the head of such an army as had hardly ever been seen in France, crossed the Loire, probably at Orleans, and, being joined by the remains of the army of Aquitaine, came in sight of the Arabs in the month of October, 732. The Saracens seem to have been aware of the terrible enemy they were now to encounter, and for the first time these formidable conquerors hesitated. The two armies remained in presence during seven days before either ventured to begin the attack; but at length the signal for battle was given by Abdalrahman, and the immense mass of the Saracen army rushed with fury on the Franks. But the heavy line of the Northern warriors remained like a rock, and the Saracens, during nearly the whole day, expended their strength in vain attempts to make any impression upon them. At length, about four o'clock in the afternoon, when Abdalrahman was preparing for a new and desperate attempt to break the line of the Franks, a

terrible clamor was heard in the rear of the Saracens. It was King Eude, who, with his Aquitanians, had attacked their camp, and a great part of the Saracen army rushed tumultuously from the field to protect their plunder. In this moment of confusion the line of the Franks advanced, and, sweeping the field before it, carried fearful slaughter amongst the enemy. Abdalrahman made desperate efforts to rally his troops, but when he himself, with the bravest of his officers, fell beneath the swords of the Christians, all order disappeared, and the remains of his army sought refuge in their immense camp, from which Eude and his Aquitanians had been repulsed. It was now late, and Charles, unwilling to risk an attack on the camp in the dark, withdrew his army, and passed the night in the plain, expecting to renew the battle in the morning.

Accordingly, when daylight came, the Franks drew up in order of battle, but no enemy appeared; and when at last they ventured to approach the Saracen camp they found it empty. The invaders had taken advantage of the night to begin their retreat, and were already on their way back to Spain, leaving their immense plunder behind to fall into the hands of the Franks.

This was the celebrated battle of Tours, in which vast numbers of the Saracens were slain, and only fifteen

hundred of the Franks. Charles received the surname of Martel (the Hammer) in consequence of this victory.

The Saracens, notwithstanding this severe blow, continued to hold their ground in the south of France; but Pepin, the son of Charles Martel, who succeeded to his father's power, and assumed the title of king, successively took from them the strong places they held; and in 759, by the capture of Narbonne, their capital, extinguished the remains of their power in France.

Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, succeeded his father, Pepin, on the throne in the year 768. This prince, though the hero of numerous romantic legends, appears greater in history than in fiction. Whether we regard him as a warrior or as a legislator, as a patron of learning or as the civilizer of a barbarous nation, he is entitled to our warmest admiration. Such he is in history; but the romancers represent him as often weak and passionate, the victim of treacherous counsellors, and at the mercy of turbulent barons, on whose prowess he depends for the maintenance of his throne. The historical representation is doubtless the true one, for it is handed down in trustworthy records, and is confirmed by the events of the age. At the height of his power, the French empire extended over what we now call France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and great part of Italy.

In the year 800 Charlemagne, being in Rome, whither he had gone with a numerous army to protect the Pope, was crowned by the Pontiff Emperor of the West. On Christmas day Charles entered the Church of St. Peter, as if merely to take his part in the celebration of the mass with the rest of the congregation. When he approached the altar and stooped in the act of prayer the Pope stepped forward and placed a crown of gold upon his head; and immediately the Roman people shouted, "Life and victory to Charles the August, crowned by God the great and pacific Emperor of the Romans." The Pope then prostrated himself before him, and paid him reverence, according to the custom established in the times of the ancient Emperors, and concluded the ceremony by anointing him with consecrated oil.

Charlemagne's wars were chiefly against the pagan and barbarous people, who, under the name of Saxons, inhabited the countries now called Hanover and Holland. He also led expeditions against the Saracens of Spain; but his wars with the Saracens were not carried on, as the romances assert, in France, but on the soil of Spain. He entered Spain by the Eastern Pyrenees, and made an easy conquest of Barcelona and Pampeluna. But Saragossa refused to open her gates to him, and Charles ended by negotiating and accepting a vast sum of gold as the price of his return over the Pyrenees.

On his way back, he marched with his whole army through the gorges of the mountains by way of the valleys of Engui, Eno, and Roncesvalles. The chief of this region had waited upon Charlemagne, on his advance, as a faithful vassal of the monarchy; but now, on the return of the Franks, he had called together all the wild mountaineers who acknowledged him as their chief, and they occupied the heights of the mountains under which the army had to pass. The main body of the troops met with no obstruction, and received no intimation of danger; but the rear-guard, which was considerably behind, and encumbered with its plunder, was overwhelmed by the mountaineers in the pass of Roncesvalles, and slain to a man. Some of the bravest of the Frankish chiefs perished on this occasion, among whom is mentioned Roland or Orlando, governor of the marches or frontier of Brittany. His name became famous in after times, and the disaster of Roncesvalles and death of Roland became eventually the most celebrated episode in the vast cycle of romance.

Though after this there were hostile encounters between the armies of Charlemagne and the Saracens, they were of small account, and generally on the soil of Spain. Thus the historical foundation for the stories of the romancers is but scanty, unless we suppose the events

of an earlier and of a later age to be incorporated with those of Charlemagne's own time.

There is, however, a pretended history, which for a long time was admitted as authentic, and attributed to Turpin, Archbishop of Rheims, a real personage of the time of Charlemagne. Its title is "History of Charles the Great and Orlando." It is now unhesitatingly considered as a collection of popular traditions, produced by some credulous and unscrupulous monk, who thought to give dignity to his romance by ascribing its authorship to a well-known and eminent individual. It introduces its pretended author, Bishop Turpin, in this manner:

"Turpin, Archbishop of Rheims, the friend and secretary of Charles the Great, excellently skilled in sacred and profane literature, of a genius equally adapted to prose and verse, the advocate of the poor, beloved of God in his life and conversation, who often fought the Saracens, hand to hand, by the Emperor's side, he relates the acts of Charles the Great in one book, and flourished under Charles and his son Louis, to the year of our Lord eight hundred and thirty."

The titles of some of Archbishop Turpin's chapters will show the nature of his history. They are these: "Of the Walls of Pampeluna, that fell of themselves." "Of the War of the holy Facundus, where the Spears grew."

(Certain of the Christians fixed their spears in the evening, erect in the ground, before the castle; and found them, in the morning, covered with bark and branches.) "How the Sun stood still for Three Days, and of the Slaughter of Four Thousand Saracens."

Turpin's history has perhaps been the source of the marvellous adventures which succeeding poets and romancers have accumulated around the names of Charlemagne and his Paladins, or Peers. But Ariosto and the other Italian poets have drawn from different sources, and doubtless often from their own invention, numberless other stories which they attribute to the same heroes, not hesitating to quote as their authority "the good Turpin," though his history contains no trace of them; and the more outrageous the improbability, or rather the impossibility, of their narrations, the more attentive are they to cite "the Archbishop," generally adding their testimonial to his unquestionable veracity.

The principal Italian poets who have sung the adventures of the peers of Charlemagne are Pulci, Boiardo, and Ariosto. The characters of Orlando, Rinaldo, Astolpho, Gano, and others, are the same in all, though the adventures attributed to them are different. Boiardo tells us of the loves of Orlando, Ariosto of his disappointment and consequent madness, Pulci of his death.