

of a dark forest was granted the male members of the family, by royal decree, in the thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The inspiring augury, contained in an ancient statute-book of the country, that its inhabitants should "be free as long as the wind blows out of the clouds and the earth remains," they intrepidly sought to verify by the might of their weighty swords in frequent engagements with foreign invaders, who again and again attempted to put them under subjection.

The Frisians, originally a Germanic race, were already occupying the northern territory of Belgic Gaul when Julius Cæsar, in the year 57 B.C., invaded it. They were then far advanced in successful methods of agriculture, and so rich in cattle that they were required by the Romans to pay a heavy tribute in hides and horns. Their fair complexions, bright blue eyes, heavy locks of auburn hair, great stature, and physical vigor, constantly commanded the admiration of the Latin invaders. The men, clad in plainly-made woollen tunics and loosely-fitting breeches, and the women, as simply attired, were so grand in character that they quickly won the respect of the Roman soldiery.

The people of Frisia recognized the existence of God, in whose divine fatherhood they discovered care and guidance, and whom they worshipped in consecrated forests on appointed days. They had no priests and offered no sacrifices. They hallowed marriage; each man exclusively honoring with his affection and fortune the woman chosen for his wife.

The frequent incursions of foreign forces, led by ambitious and depraved commanders seeking to dispossess the inhabitants of Frisia of their property and independence, gradually distempered their minds and morally debased their offspring. It happened in the year 728 that Archbishop Wolfram, of Sens, in Gaul, under the sanction of Charles Martel, or Charles the Hammer, undertook the conversion of the people of Friesland to Christianity. Among those who were willing to be baptized in evidence of their acceptance of the religious teachings of the zealous dignitary was Radbod, a dethroned Frisian king. While waiting to receive the outward sign confirmatory of his faith, his thoughts reverted to his deceased pagan ancestors. "Are they in heaven or hell?" he asked. "In hell," the pious prelate answered. "Then I would rather dwell hereafter with my kindred there than with a few strange Christians in heaven," he frankly declared, and forthwith strode away from the surprised archbishop.

Poppo, the son of Radbod, who succeeded him in governing Friesland, was killed in 750 in a battle with Charles the Hammer, who established at Utrecht the famous episcopate of which Saint Willebrordus was the first

<sup>1</sup>*Écusson* : un cerf sautant gardant dans une clairière d'une forêt noire. *Cimier* : la tête d'un cerf gardant. *Lambrequin* : de sinople et d'argent. *Vide* : Frontispiece.