

Amis and Amile

translated by

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In the days of Pepin, King of the Franks, a boy was born in the Castle of Bericain to a father of Allemaigne, of noble descent and of great holiness. His father and mother, who had no other child, vowed to God and to St. Peter and St. Paul that if God vouchsafed him breath he should be carried to Rome for his baptism. At the same hour a vision was seen of the Count of Alverne—whose wife was near her day—in which he saw the Apostle of Rome, who baptized many children in his palace, and confirmed them with the anointing of holy oil. When the Count awoke from his sleep he inquired of the wise men of those parts what this thing might mean. Then a certain wise old man, having heard his words, by the counsel of God made answer, and said—

“Rejoice greatly, Count, for a son shall now be born to thee great in courage and in virtue, and thou shalt carry him to Rome, so that he may be baptized by the Apostle.”

So the Count rejoiced in his heart, and he and his people praised the counsel of that ancient man.

The child was born, and cherished dearly, and when he was of the age of two years his father prepared to carry him to Rome, according to his purpose. On his way he came to the city of Lucca, and there fell in with a certain nobleman of Allemaigne who was on pilgrimage to Rome, that there he might baptize his son. Each greeted the other, and inquired of his name and business; and when they knew they were in the like case, and bound on the same errand, they took each other as companion with a kind heart, and voyaged together to Rome. The two children, also, loved so dearly, that one would not eat save the other ate with him; so that they fed from the same dish, and lay in the one bed. In such manner as this the fathers carried the boys before the Apostle at Rome, and said to him—

“Holy Father, whom we believe and know to be seated in the chair of St. Peter the Apostle, we, the Count of Alverne, and the Chatelain of Castle Bericain, humbly pray your Holiness that you would deign to baptize the sons they have carried here from a distant land, and to accept this humble offering from their hands.”

Then the Pope made answer —

“It is very meet to come with such a gift before me, but of such I have no need. Give it, therefore, to the poor, who cry for alms. Right willingly will I baptize the children, and may the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost ever fold them close in the love of the Holy Trinity.”

So at that one time the Apostle baptized the two children in St. Saviour’s Church, and he gave to the son of the Count of Alverne the name of Amile, and to the son of the Chatelain of Castle Bericain gave he the name of Amis. Many a knight of Rome held them at the font, and answered in their name as god-parents, according to the will of God. Then, when the Sacrament of Baptism was at an end, the Apostle commanded to be brought two wooden cups, fair with gold and set with costly stones, of one workmanship, size and fashion, and these he handed to the children, saying

“Take this gift in witness that I have baptized you in St. Saviour’s Church.”

So the knights received the cups with great joy, and rendered him grace for his gift, and parting from thence repaired each to his own home in all comfort and solace.

To the child of the Knight of Bericain God also gave a gift, the gift of such wise understanding that men might almost believe that he was another Solomon.

When Amis was of the age of thirty years a fever seized upon his father, and he began to admonish his son in words such as these —

“Fair, dear son, my end is near at hand, but thou shalt tarry for a season, and be thine own lord. Firstly, fair son, observe the commandments of God, and be of the chivalry of Jesus Christ. Keep faith with thy overlords, and turn not thy back on thy companions and thy friends. Defend the widow and the orphan; be pitiful to the captive and to all in need; think every day upon that day which shall be thy last. Forsake not the society and friendship of the son of the Count of

Alverne, for the Apostle of Rome baptized you together on one day, and graced you with one gift. Are you not alike in all things—in beauty, in comeliness, and in strength, so that whosoever sees you, thinks you to be sons of one mother?”

Having spoken these words, he was houselled of the priest, and died in our Lord; and his son gave him fitting burial, and paid him all such service as is meetly required for the dead.

After the death of his father divers evil persons wrought Amis much mischief, because of the envy they felt towards him; but nevertheless he bore them no ill will, and patiently suffered all the wrong and malice that they did. Let me tell you, then, without more words, that such was his case that he and his servants were cast forth from the heritage of his fathers, and driven from the gate of his own keep. But when he had called to mind the words of his father, he said to those who journeyed with him in the way—

“The wicked have spoiled me wrongfully of my inheritance, yet have I good hope that the Lord is on my side. Come now, let us seek the Court of Count Amile, my comrade and my friend. Peradventure he will give us of his goods and lands; but if not, then will we gather to Hildegarde, the Queen, wife of King Charles of France, the stay and support of the disinherited.”

So those of his company made answer that they would follow where he led, and would serve him as his men. They rode, therefore, to the court of the Count, but might not find him, for reason that he had passed to Bericain to comfort Amis, his companion, because of the death of his father. When Amile might not find Amis, he departed from the castle, greatly vexed, and resolved within himself that he would not solace himself in his own fief until he had met with Amis, his friend. Therefore he rode on this quest through France and Allemaigne, seeking news of him from all his kindred, but finding none.

Now Amis, together with his company, for his part sought diligently for Amile his friend, until it chanced that on a day a certain lord gave him harbourage, and at his bidding Amis told him of this adventure. Then said the nobleman—

“Dwell ye with me, sir knights, and I will give my daughter to your lord, because of the wisdom men report of him, and you, for your own part, shall be made rich in silver, in gold and in lands.”

They rejoiced greatly at his word, and the wedding feast was celebrated with marvellous joy. But when they had tarried in that place for one year and six months, Amis called together his ten companions and spake to them.

“We are recreant, inasmuch as we have forgotten all this while to seek for Amile.”

So he left two men-at-arms, together with his precious cup, and set forth towards Paris.

Now for the space of nearly two years Amile had sought for Amis without pause or rest. Drawing near to Paris he lighted upon a pilgrim and asked of him if perchance he knew aught of Amis, whom evil men had hunted from his lands. The palmer said “Nay,” wherefore Amile divested himself of his cloak, and gave it to the pilgrim, saying—

“Pray thou to our Lord and His saints for me that they give me grace to meet Amis, my friend.”

So he saluted the pilgrim, and went his way to Paris, seeking in every place for news of Amis his friend, and finding none. But the pilgrim, passing swiftly upon his road, came upon Amis about the hour of vespers, and they saluted each the other. Then Amis inquired of the palmer whether he had seen or heard, in any land or realm, aught of Amile, the son of the Count of Alverne.

“What manner of man art thou,” answered the palmer all astonished, “that thou makest mock of a pilgrim? Thou seemest to me that very Amile who but this morn sought of me if I had seen Amis, his friend. I know not for what reason thou hast changed thine apparel, thy company, thy horses and thy arms, nor why thou askest of me the same question thou didst require at nine hours of the morn when thou gavest me this cloak.”

“Be not angry with me,” said Amis, “for I am not the man you deem; but I am Amis who searches for his friend Amile.”

So he gave him money from his pouch, and prayed him that he would require of our Lord that He might grant him grace to find Amile.

“Hasten quickly to Paris,” said the pilgrim, “and there shalt thou find him whom so fondly thou seekest.”

So Amis hastened instantly to the city.

It chanced upon the morrow that Amile departed from Paris, and took his ease within a daisied meadow near by the pleasant waters of the Seine. Whilst he ate there with his knights there came that way Amis with his men-at-arms. So Amile and his company armed themselves forthwith, and rode forth before them at adventure. Then Amis said to his companions

“Behold these French knights who seek to do us a mischief. Stand stoutly together, and so shall we defend our lives. If we but escape this peril soon shall we be within the walls of Paris, and sweetly shall we be entreated at the palace of the King.”

Then drew the two companies together with loosened rein, with lance in rest, and with brandished sword, in such fashion that it seemed as if none might escape alive from the fury of that onset. But God, the all powerful, Who knoweth all, and bringeth to a good end the travail of the just, suffered not that spears should meet in that encounter. So when they were near at hand Amis cried aloud—

“Who are you, knights, that are so eager to slay Amis the Banished and his companions?”

When Amile heard these words he knew well the voice of Amis, his comrade, so he answered him—

“Oh thou, Amis, most dear, sweet as rest to my labour, know me for Amile, son of the Count of Alverne, who have not given over my quest for thee these two whole years.”

Then forthwith they lighted from their steeds, and clasped and kissed each the other, giving grace to God Who granteth the treasure to the seeker. Moreover, upon the guard of Amile’s sword, wherein was set a holy relic, they swore faith, and friendship, and fellowship to death, the one with the other. So set they forth from that place, riding together to the Court of Charles, the King of France. There they moved amongst the lords, young, discreet and wise, fair to see, shapen wondrously alike in form and face, beloved of all men and held of all in honour. There, too, the King received them with much courtesy, making of Amis his treasurer, and to Amile gave he the office of seneschal.

In this fashion they tarried long with the King, but at the end of three years Amis said to Amile—

“Fair, sweet companion, I desire greatly to see my wife, whom I have left so long. Stay thou at Court, and for my part I will return so soon as I may. But have thou no dealings with the daughter of the King, and, more than all, beware and keep thee from the malice of Arderay the felon knight.”

“I will observe thy bidding,” answered Amile, “but make no long tarrying from my side.”

On these words Amis departed from the Court; but Amile for his part saw with his eyes that the daughter of the King was fair, and knew the princess, in love, as soon as he was able. Thus the commandment and the warning of Amis, his companion, passed quickly from his mind; yet think not too hardly of the young man forasmuch that he was not more holy than David, nor wiser than Solomon, David’s son.

Whilst Amile was busied with these matters there came to him Arderay, the traitor, full of envy, and said—

“Thou dost not know, comrade, thou dost not know that Amis has stolen gold from the King’s treasury, and therefore hath he taken flight. Since things are thus I require that you swear to me fealty of friendship and of brotherhood, and I will swear to you the like oath on the holy Gospels.”

Having pledged such troth as this, Amile feared not to betray his secret to the felon knight. Now when Amile bore basin and ewer to the King, that he might wash his hands, then said that false Arderay to his lord—

“Take no water from the hands of this recreant, Sir King, for he is worthier of death than of life, since he has plucked from the Queen’s daughter the flower of her maidenhood.”

When Amile heard this thing he was so fearful that he fell upon the floor, and answered not a word, so that the courteous King raised him to his feet, and said—

“Have no fear, Amile, but stand up and acquit thee of this blame.”

Then Amile stood upon his feet and said—

“Sir King, give no ready credence to the lies of this traitor Arderay, for well I know that you are an upright judge, turning neither for love

nor hate out of the narrow way. Grant me, therefore, time for counsel with my friends, so that I may purge myself of this charge before you, and in single combat with Arderay, the traitor, prove him to be a liar before all your Court."

The King gave to both champions till three hours after noon that each might take counsel with his friends, and bade that at such time they should stand before him to fulfil their devoir. At the appointed hour they came before the King. With Arderay for friend and witness came Herbert the Count; but Amile found none to stand at his side, save only Hildegarde, the Queen. So sweetly did the lady plead his cause that she prevailed upon her lord to grant Amile such further respite for counsel that he might seek Amis, his friend; yet nevertheless only on such covenant that if Amile returned not on the appointed day the lady should be banished ever from the royal bed.

Whilst Amile was on his way to take counsel with his friend, he chanced on Amis, his comrade, who repaired to the Court of the King. So he alighted from his steed, and kneeling at the feet of his companion, said—

"Oh thou, my one hope of surety, I have not obeyed the charge you laid upon me, and am truly blamed by reason of my dealings with the daughter of the King. Therefore must I endure ordeal of battle with the false Arderay."

"Let us leave here our companions," returned Amis, sighing, "and enter in this wood to make the matter clear."

Then Amis, having heard, reproached Amile, and said—

"Let us now exchange our garments and our horses, and thou, for thy part, get thee gone to my house, whilst I ride to do judgment by combat for thee upon this traitor."

But Amile answered him—

"How then may I go about thine house, seeing that I know not thy wife nor thy household, nor ever have looked upon their face?"

And Amis replied—

"Very easily mayest thou do this thing, so thou dost but walk prudently; but take thou good heed to have no dealings with my wife."

Thereupon the two companions departed one from the other, with tears; Amis riding to the Court of the King in the guise of Amile, and

Amile to the house of his comrade in the guise of Amis. Now the wife of Amis, seeing him draw near, hastened to embrace him whom she thought was her lord, and would have kissed him. But Amile said—

“Is this a time for play? I have matter for tears rather than for claspings, for since I parted from thee have I suffered many bitter griefs, yea, and yet must suffer.”

And that night as they made ready to lie together in one bed, Amile set his naked sword between the twain, and said to his brother’s wife—

“Beware lest thy body draw near in any wise to mine, for then will I slay thee with this sword.”

In such fashion passed the night, and every night, until Amis repaired secretly to the castle to know certainly whether Amile kept faith and word in this matter of his wife.

The day appointed for the combat now was come, and the Queen awaited Amile, sick of heart; for Arderay, that traitor, cried aloud, that certainly ought she never to come near the King’s bed, since she had suffered and consented to Amile’s dealings with her maid. Whilst Arderay boasted thus, Amis entered within the Court of the King at the hour of noon, clad in the apparel of his comrade, and said—

“Right debonair and Lord Justicier of this realm, here stand I to seek ordeal of battle with this false Arderay, because of the blame he has laid upon me, the Queen, and the Princess, her child.”

Then answered the King right courteously—

“Be stout of heart, oh Count, for if you prove Arderay to be false I will give thee my daughter Belisant to wife.”

On the morning of the morrow Arderay and Amis rode into the lists, armed from plume to heel, in the presence of the King and of much people. But the Queen with a great company of maidens and widows and dames went from church to church, giving gifts of money and of torches, and praying God for the safety of the champion of her daughter. Now Amis considered in his heart that should he slay Arderay he would be guilty of his blood before the eyes of God, and if he were overthrown then would it be a shame to him for all his days. So he spake in such manner as this to Arderay.

“Foul counsel hast thou followed, Sir Count, so ardently to seek my death, and to thrust this life of thine into grievous peril of hurt. So thou

wilt withdraw the reproach thou hast fastened upon me, and avoid this mortal strife, thou canst have of me friendship and loyal service."

But Arderay was right wroth at these words, and replied—

"No care have I for friendship or service of thine; rather will I swear to the truth as that truth is, and smite thy head from thy shoulders."

Then Arderay swore that his foe had done wrong to the daughter of the King, and Amis made oath that he lied. Thereupon, incontinent they drove together, and with mighty strokes strove one against the other from the hour of tierce till it was nones. And at nones Arderay fell within the lists; and Amis struck off his head.

The King lamented that Arderay was dead, but rejoiced that his daughter was proved clean from stain. He gave the Princess to Amis for dame, and with her, as dowry, a mighty sum in gold and silver, and a city near by the sea where they might dwell. So Amis rejoiced greatly in his bride; and returned as quickly as he might to the castle where he had hidden Amile, his companion. When Amile saw him hastening homewards with many horsemen, he was sore adread that Amis was overthrown, and made ready to escape. But Amis sent messages to him that he should return in all surety, since he had avenged him upon Arderay, and thus, by proxy, was he married to the daughter of the King. So Amile repaired from that place, and dwelt with his dame in that city which was her heritage.

Now Amis abode with his wife, but by the permission of God he became a leper, and his sickness was so heavy upon him that he could not leave his bed, for whom God loveth him He chasteneth. His wife—who was named Obias—for this cause hated him sorely, and sought his death many a time in shameful fashion. When Amis perceived her malice he called to him two of his men-at-arms, Azonem and Horatus, and said to them—

"Deliver me from the hands of this wicked woman, and take with you my cup secretly, and bear us to the tower of Bericain."

When they drew near to the castle men came out before them asking of the sickness and of the man whom they carried there. Then they answered that this was Amis, their lord, who was a leper, for which cause they prayed them to show him some pity. But mercilessly they beat

the sergeants, and tumbled Amis forth from the litter in which he was borne, crying—

“Flee swiftly from hence, if ye care aught for your lives.”

Then Amis wept grievously, and said—

“Oh Thou, God most pitiful and compassionate, grant me to die, or give me help in this my extremity.”

Again he said to the men-at-arms—

“Carry me now to the church of the Father of Rome; perchance God of His loving kindness will there give alms to the beggar.”

When they were come to Rome, Constantine the Apostle, full of pity and of sanctity, together with many a knight of those who had held Amis at the font, came before him and supplied the wants of Amis and his servants. But after three years a great famine came upon the city—a famine so grievous that the father put his very offspring from the door. Then Azonem and Horatus spake to Amis—

“Fair sir, bear witness how loyally we have served you from the death of your father, even to this day, and that never have we done against your bidding. But now we dare no longer to bide with you, since we have no heart to die of hunger. For this cause we pray you to acquit us of our service, so that we may avoid this mortal pestilence.”

Then answered Amis in his tears—

“Oh, my dear children, not servants but sons, my only comfort, I pray you for the love of God that you forsake me not here, but that you bear me to the city of my comrade, Count Amile.”

And these, willing to obey his commandment, carried him to that place where Amile lay. Now when they came before the court of Amile’s house they began to sound their clappers, as the leper is wont to do; so when Amile heard the sound thereof he bade a servitor of his to carry to the sick man bread and meat, and the cup which was given to him at Rome brimed with rich wine. When the man-at arms had done the bidding of his lord, he came to him again, and said—

“Sir, by the faith which is your due, if I held not your cup within my hand, I should believe it to be the cup that the sick man beareth even now, for they are alike in workmanship and height.”

And Amile said to him—

“Go quickly, and bring him hither to me.”

When the leper was come before his comrade, Amile inquired of him who he was, and how he came to own such a cup.

"I am of Castle Bericain," said he, "and the cup was given me by the Apostle of Rome who baptized me."

When Amile heard these words he knew within himself that this was Amis, his comrade, who had delivered him from death, and given him the daughter of the King of France as dame. So at once he fell upon his neck, and began to weep and lament his evil case, kissing and embracing him. When his wife heard this thing she ran forth with fallen hair, weeping and making great sorrow, for she bore in mind that this was he who had done judgment on Arderay. Forthwith they set him in a very fair bed, and said to him—

"Tarry with us, fair sir, until the will of God is done on you, for all that we have is as thine own."

So he dwelt with them, he and his two men-at-arms likewise.

Now on a night when Amis and Amile lay together in a chamber, without other company, God sent Raphael, His angel, to Amis, who spake him thus—

"Amis, sleepest thou?"

And he, deeming that Amile had called him, answered—

"I sleep not, fair dear companion."

And the angel said to him—

"Thou hast well spoken, for thou art the companion of the citizens of Heaven, and like Job and Tobit hast suffered all things meekly and with patience. I am Raphael, an angel of our Lord, who am come to show thee medicine for thy healing, for God hath heard thy prayers. Thou must bid Amile, thy comrade, to slay his two children with the sword, and wash thee in their blood, that thus thy body may become clean."

Then Amis replied—

"This be far from me, that my comrade be blood-guilty for my health."

But the angel said—

"It is meet that he should do this thing."

On these words the angel departed from him.

Now Amile also, in his sleep, had heard these words, and he awoke, and said—

“Comrade, who is this who hath spoken to thee?”

And Amis answered that no man had spoken.

“But I prayed our Lord, as is my wont.”

But Amile said—

“It is not thus, but some one hath spoken with thee.”

Then he rose from the bed, and went to the door of the chamber, and finding it fast, said—

“Tell me, fair brother, who hath said to thee these hidden words.”

Then Amis began to weep bitterly, and denied not that it was Raphael, the angel of our Lord, who had said to him, “Amis, our Lord sends word to thee that thou biddest Amile to slay his two children with the sword, and to wash thee in their blood, that thou mayest be clean of thy leprosy.”

And Amile was sorely distressed on hearing these words, and said—

“Amis, gladly have I given thee sergeant and damsel and all the riches that I had, and in fraud thou feignest that the angel hath bidden me to slay my two little ones with the sword.”

Then Amis broke out into weeping, and said—

“I know that I have told thee of a grievous matter, but not of mine own free will; I pray thee therefore that thou cast me not forth from thy house.”

And Amile answered him that the covenant he had made with him he would not depart from till the hour of death. “But I adjure thee by the faith between me and thee, and by our fellowship, and by the baptism given to us twain at Rome, that thou tell me truly whether it was man or angel who spoke to thee of this thing.”

And Amis made reply—

“So truly as the angel hath held converse with me this night, so may God make me clean of my infirmity.”

Then Amile began to weep privily, and to consider within his heart. “If this man was willing to die in my stead before the King, why then should I not slay mine own for him! He hath kept faith with me even unto death: shall I not therefore keep faith with him! Abraham was saved by faith, and by faith have the saints proved mightier than kings. Yea, God saith in the Gospel, ‘Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them.’”

Then Amile delayed no more, but went to his wife's chamber, and bade her to attend the Divine Office; so the Countess sought the church, as was her wont to do, and the Count took his sword and went to the bed where lay the children, and they were asleep. And bending above them he wept bitterly, and said—

“Hath any man heard of such father who was willing to slay his child? Alas, alas, my children, no longer shall I be your father, but your cruel murderer.”

The children awoke because of their father's tears which fell upon them, and looking upon his face began to laugh. Since therefore they were about the age of three years he said to them—

“Your laughter will turn to tears, for now your innocent blood shall be shed.”

He spoke thus, and cut off their heads; and making straight their limbs upon the bed, he set their heads to their bodies, and covered all with the coverlet, as if they slept. So he washed his companion with the blood of that slaying, and said—

“Lord God, Jesus Christ, Who hast bidden men to keep faith on earth, and didst cleanse the leper with Thy word, deign Thou to make clean my comrade, for love of whom I have shed the blood of my children.”

Straightway was Amis made whole of his leprosy, and they gave grace to our Lord with great joy, saying—

“Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who saveth those who put their trust in Him.”

And Amile clad his comrade from his own rich apparel and passing to the church to render thanks in that place, the bells rang without ringers, as was the will of God. When the people of the city heard thereof they hastened to behold this marvel. Now the wife of the Count, when she saw the twain walking together, began to question which was her husband, and said, “Well I know the vesture which they wear, but which is Amile, that I know not,” and the Count said—

“I am Amile, and this, my companion, is Amis, who is healed.”

Then the Countess marvelled greatly, and said

“Easy is it to see that he is healed, but much desire I to know the manner of that healing.”

“Render thanks to our Lord,” returned the Count, “nor seek curiously of the fashion of that cleansing!”

The hour of tierce was now come, and neither of the parents had yet entered in the chamber where the children lay, but the father went heavily for reason of their death. The Countess asked therefore for her sons that they might share in the joy, but the Count replied—

“Nay, dame, but let the children sleep.”

Then entering by himself within the chamber to bewail his children, he found them playing in the bed; and about their necks, in the place of that mortal wound, showed as it were a crimson thread. So he clasped them in his arms, and bore them to their mother, saying—

“Dame, rejoice greatly, for thy sons whom I had slain with the sword, at the bidding of the angel, are alive, and by their blood is Amis cleansed and healed.”

When the Countess heard this thing she said—

“Count, why was I not with thee to gather the blood of my children, that I too might have washed Amis, thy comrade and my lord?”

And the Count answered her—

“Dame, let be these words; rather let us dedicate ourselves to our Lord, who hath wrought such marvels in our house.”

So from that day, even unto their deaths, they lived together in perfect chastity; and for the space of ten days the people of that city held high festival. But on that very day that Amis was made clean, the devil seized upon his wife, and breaking her neck, carried off her soul.

After these things Amis rode to the castle of Bericain, and laid siege thereto, and sat before it for so long a time that those within the castle yielded themselves into his hand. He received them graciously, forgetting his anger against them, and forgiving them the wrongs that they had done, so that from thenceforth he dwelt peaceably amongst them, and with him, in his own house, lived the elder son of Count Amile. There he served our Lord with all his heart.

Now Adrian, being at this time Pope of Rome, sent letters to Charles, King of France, praying him to come to his aid against Didier, King of the Lombards, who wrought much mischief to him and the Church. Now Charles lay in the town of Thionville, and to that place came Peter, the envoy of the Apostle, with messages from the Pope praying him to

hasten to the succour of Holy Church. For this cause Charles sent letters to the said Didier requiring him to render to the Holy Father the cities and all other things which he had wrongfully seized, and promising that if he would do this thing the said Charles would send him in return the sum of forty thousand pieces of gold, in gold and silver. But he would not do right, neither for prayers nor for gifts.

Then the stout King Charles summoned to his aid all his men bishops, abbots, dukes, princes, marquises, and other stout knights. Divers of these he sent to Cluses to guard the pass, and of this number was Albin, Bishop of Angers, a man of great holiness.

King Charles himself, with a large company of spears, drew towards Cluses by the way of Mont Cenis, and he sent Bernard, his uncle, with other knights, thither by way of Mont Saint-Bernard. The vanguard of the host said that Didier, with all his strength, lay at Cluses, which town he had made strong with iron chains and works of stone. Whilst Charles approached to Cluses he sent messengers to Didier, requiring him to render to the Holy Father the cities which he had taken, but he would not heed his prayer. Again Charles sent him other letters demanding three children of the justices of Lombardy as hostages, until such time as he had yielded up the cities of the Church; in which case for his part he would return to France with all his spears, without battle and without malice. But neither for this nor for that would he stint.

When God the All-powerful had beheld the hard heart and the malice of this Didier, and found that the French desired greatly to return, He put so fearful a trembling in the hearts of the Lombards that they took to flight, though there was none that pursued, leaving behind them their tents and all their harness. So Charles and his host followed after them, and Frenchman, German, Englishman and divers other people entered hot after them into Lombardy.

Amis and Amile were of the host, and very near to the person of the King. Always they strove to follow our Lord in good works, and were constant in fast, in vigil, in giving of alms, in succouring the widow and the orphan, in assuaging often the wrath of the King, in patient suffering of evil men, and in piteous dealings within the Roman realm.

But though Charles had a great army drawn together in Lombardy, King Didier feared not to come before him with his little host—for there

where Didier had a priest, Charles had a bishop; where one had a monk, the other had an abbot; if this had a knight, that had a prince; if Didier had a man-at-arms, then Charles had a duke or a count. What shall I tell you; for a single knight on the one side Charles could number thirty pennons. And the two hosts fell each upon the other with a tumult of battle cries, and with banners in array; and the stones and arrows flew from here and there, and knights were smitten down on every side.

For the space of three days the Lombards strove so valiantly that they slew a very great company of Charles's men. But on the third day Charles set in order the hardest and bravest of his host and said to them—

“Go now, and win this battle, or return no more.”

So King Didier together with the host of the Lombards fled to the place called Mortara, which was then known as Belle-Foret, because the country was so fair, there to refresh themselves and their horses. On the morning of the next day King Charles with his army drew near the town, and found the Lombards arrayed for the battle. So fierce was the combat that a great multitude of men were slain, both of one party and the other, and for reason of this slaying was the place named Mortara. There, too, on that field died Amis and Amile, for as it had pleased God to make their lives lovely and pleasant together, so in their deaths they were not divided. There also many another hardy knight was slain with the sword. But Didier, together with his justiciary, and all the multitude of the Lombards, fled to Pavia; and King Charles followed closely after him and lay before the city, and invested it on every side; and lying there he sent to France to seek the Queen and his children. But St. Albin, the Bishop of Angers, and many another bishop and abbot counselled the King and Queen that they should bury those who fell in that battle, and build in that place a church. This counsel greatly pleased the King, so that on the field were built two churches, one by bidding of Charles in honour of St. Eusebius of Vercueil, and the other by bidding of the Queen in honour of St. Peter.

Moreover the King caused to be brought the two coffins of stone wherein were buried Amis and Amile, and Amile was carried to the church of St. Peter, and Amis to the church of St. Eusebius. But on the morrow the body of Amile in his coffin of stone was found in the church

of St. Eusebius near by the coffin of his comrade, Amis. So have you heard the story of this marvellous fellowship which could not be dissevered, even by death. This miracle did God for His servants—that God Who gave such power to His disciples that in His strength they might move even mountains. Because of this wonder the King and Queen tarried there for thirty days, giving fit burial to the bodies of the slain, and honouring those ministers with many rich gifts.

But all this while the host of Charles toiled mightily for the taking of the city before which it lay. Our Lord also tormented those within the walls so grievously that they might not bear their harness by reason of weakness and of death. At the end of ten months Charles took Didier the King, and all those who were with him, and possessed himself of the city and of all that realm. So Didier the King and his wife were led as captives into France.

But St. Albin, who in his day gave life to the dead and light to the blind, ordained clerks, and priests and deacons in the aforesaid church of St. Eusebius, and bade them always to hold in tireless keeping the bodies of those two comrades, Amis and Amile, who suffered death under Didier, King of Lombardy, the 12th day of October, and are now with our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.