

IVANHOE



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TOLD TO THE CHILDREN

BY
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AUTHOR OF "THE KNIGHTS' MAGAZINE"

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EDITOR'S NOTE

In the original version of Ethel Lindsay's book, the chapters were not named or indicated. In order to improve ease of use in the Heritage History version, we've divided the text into fifteen short chapters, and given appropriate names to each.

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CHAPTER I

OLD ENGLAND

Many hundreds of years ago the greater part of England was covered by thick forests. In those days the small towns which existed were few and far between, and to go a journey between these towns was an undertaking fraught with considerable danger, for there were often wild bands of outlaws roaming the woods who seized the opportunity to waylay and plunder the unwary or lonely traveler unprotected by a bodyguard of armed serving men.

In the valleys there were often swamps across which it was impossible to go unless well acquainted with the safe paths, or accompanied by a guide. In these woods the barons or rich nobles built their great castles and fortresses, and owing to the difficulty of travel in those days they often ruled as petty kings, caring nothing for laws or customs but such as they made for their own convenience and comfort.

About the time at which our story opens kings and nobles were vying with each other to raise armies to proceed to Palestine to fight the Turks and to endeavour to regain possession of Jerusalem, so that Christians might be able once again to visit the place where Christ was crucified and the Holy Sepulcher.

As soon as King Richard came to the throne of England he commenced preparations for the taking of a large army to Palestine. Before doing so he appointed three men to rule the country in his absence, who, as events turned out, proved themselves little worthy of the trust, and for various causes allowed all kinds of injustice to afflict the poor. These rulers were unable to check the already powerful barons. Each in his own territory endeavoured to strengthen his fortress and his hold on the surrounding country and to attack and conquer his weaker neighbours. So you will see that the country, especially the fairer

and more useful portions of it which were already devoted to the growing of crops, was continually laid waste, while the poor peasants and small land-holders were stripped of their possessions and their homes burnt to the ground. There were few descendants of the old Saxon princes and nobles who had fought against William the Conqueror at Hastings who still retained possession of their estates and houses. Where these existed their dwellings were usually crude, wooden structures protected by a palisade of timber.

The Saxons had never learnt the art of building big fortresses of stone, and so their poor defenses were of little use in withstanding the onslaught of their Norman neighbours. One by one, where they had not been confiscated by the Norman kings and given to favourites, they had been attacked by their stronger neighbours and frequently burnt into surrender, and their friends and their dependents chased away from their own countryside to become wanderers. In many cases they took to the woods, and, joining themselves into bands, roamed the forest as outlaws and robbers, thus taking revenge on those who allowed them to be driven out and refused them justice or redress.

One of the few Saxons who still held his ancestral lands was named Cedric. He was very proud of his ancestors and noble Saxon blood, and from the very strength of his fiery spirit he had so far kept his enemies at bay, nor had his near and powerful neighbours attempted openly to attack his house. He was a fine, powerful man, proud, but obstinate, and with his beautiful ward, the Lady Rowena, he lived at Rotherwood, not far from the town of Ashby-de-la-Zouche. At this town many grand tournaments were held in those days. Now, a tournament was a very popular form of amusement, and was attended by nobles and knights who came together accompanied by gorgeous bands of servants and retainers to try their strength in warlike sports against each other. The most beautiful ladies were accommodated in gaily decorated stands, and people of all classes flocked to the place chosen for the tournament from the country round.

CHAPTER II

THE FOOL AND THE SWINEHERD

One afternoon as the sun was going down, two men turned into a wide glade of the forest near Rotherwood and sat down to rest. One was garbed as a fool, and the other, as could be seen from his dress and the engraved brass collar which he wore round his neck, was a thrall or slave of Cedric. As the sun was getting low he rose and blew his horn; but although the pigs of which he had charge and which were scattered about amongst the trees answered his call, they made no effort to leave their feast of acorns.

"Curse those infernal porkers!" he said to his companion; "if a two-legged wolf snap not them up ere nightfall, I am no true man;" then, "Fangs! Fangs!" he called to his dog, a ragged-looking sort of lurcher which ran about limping, but was unable to do much to help his master. The reason of this was that the noble who owned most of the lands in that part had had the front claws of all dogs cut off so that they could not attack the deer which he had the sole right of killing as overlord of the forests round.

"By St. Dunstan!" said Gurth, for that was his name, "the Normans seem to have left us little but the air we breathe. The finest and fattest game seems preserved for their board, our best men have to serve as soldiers to our foreign masters, leaving few here who have either the will or the power to protect the unfortunate Saxon. God's blessing on our master Cedric, but Reginald Front-de-Boeuf, the Norman, is coming down in person. Here, here Fangs! Well done! Thou hast the swine before thee now and bring'st them on bravely."

"Gurth," said the Jester as they rose to follow, "I know thou thinkest me a fool, or thou would'st not be so rash as to speak treason against the Normans. One word to Reginald

Front-de-Boeuf or our other neighbour Philip de Malvoisin, and thou would'st be hung on yonder trees by them as a terror to all speakers of treason against them."

"Dog! thou would'st not betray me," said Gurth, turning suddenly on his companion.

"Betray thee!" answered the Jester; "of course not, but soft, whom have we here?" he said, listening to the trampling of several horses which became audible.

"Never mind," answered Gurth, who had now got his herd before him. "Hark! there is a terrible storm of thunder approaching; we must hurry on." And with the aid of Fangs he drove them down one of the glades.

Soon, as they hurried along, they found that the horsemen, who numbered ten, were following them and quickly catching them up. As they got close Gurth saw that the two leading were persons of character and distinction. One, in spite of his gay clothes, he recognised as a monk. He rode upon a well-fed mule, whose harness was highly decorated. The other rider leading was a man of middle age, tall and vigorous. His features, strong and expressive, had been burnt almost to the colour of a negro by constant exposure to the tropical sun. He wore a long scarlet cloak, and on the right shoulder of his mantle there was cut in white cloth a cross of peculiar form, which showed him to be a Knight Templar of war. This upper robe concealed a shirt of mail, with sleeves and gloves of the same. He rode a strong hackney, while his gallant war-horse was led behind by one of his squires. On one side of this animal hung his master's short battle-axe, while on the other was his plumed head-piece and hood of mail with a long, heavy, two-handled sword. A second squire who rode behind carried the knight's lance, from the extremity of which fluttered a smaller banderole or streamer, bearing a cross of the same form as that embroidered on his cloak.

The two squires were followed by two dark men in oriental garments, natives of some distant eastern land. Each

of them had at his saddle-bow a bundle of darts or javelins, such as the Saracens used. The whole appearance of this warrior and his attendants was wild and gorgeous. Needless to say the singular appearance of this cavalcade startled and excited the curiosity of Gurth and his companion as it caught them up.

"Tell us, my children," said the monk, whom Gurth now recognised as Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx Abbey, and who was famed for many miles round, "tell us where we can find a night's lodging."

"If the reverend fathers love good cheer," said Wamba the fool, "they will find it after riding a few miles farther on at the Priory of Brinxworth," for fool as he was he knew the Normans would not be welcome at his master's house, even though Cedric would not be inhospitable enough to turn them away.

"Tell me, good fellow," said the Prior, "are we not near the dwelling of Cedric?"

"The road will be uneasy to find," broke in Gurth for the first time, "and the family retire early to rest."

"Tush, fellow!" said the rider with the white cross roughly; "it will be easy for them to arise and supply the wants of travelers who have the right to command."

"I know not," answered Gurth sullenly, "if I should show the way to my master's house to them who demand the shelter which most ask as a favour."

"Do you dispute with me, slave!" said the rider; and he angrily raised the rod in his hand with the purpose of chastising the peasant.

"Nay, brother Brian," said the Prior, hastily interrupting, "you must not think you are now in Palestine. Tell me, good fellow," he said to Wamba, "the way to Cedric's house."

Wamba gave the Prior lengthy directions and so the cavalcade moved off.

"If they follow thy wise direction," said Gurth as soon as they were out of earshot, "they will hardly reach Rotherwood tonight."

"No," said the Jester, grinning, "but they may with good luck reach Sheffield."

"Thou art right," said Gurth; "it were ill for our master Cedric to quarrel with the military monk, as he most likely would," and so talking, they hurried on their way home.

CHAPTER III

AT ROTHERWOOD

After it had gone some distance, the cavalcade stopped, unable to decide which way Wamba had directed them. As they did so, they espied a man lying beside the path either asleep or dead.

"Here, Hugo," said the Templar to one of his attendants, "stir him with the butt-end of your lance."

This was no sooner done than the figure arose and said, "Whosoever thou art, it is discourteous to disturb my thoughts."

"We did but wish to speak to you," said the Prior. "Which is the way to Cedric the Saxon's house?"

"I am going there myself," said the stranger, "and if I had a horse, I would be your guide."

"Thou shalt have both thanks and reward," said the Prior, and he caused one of his attendants to mount a led horse and gave that upon which he had ridden to the stranger.

And now their conductor, taking the opposite path to that directed by Wamba, led them by devious and often dangerous paths across brooks and by bogs which had caused much agitation to the Prior, whose nerves were not of the strongest. At last they came into a wide avenue, and pointing to a large, low building at the upper extremity, their conductor said to the Prior, "Yonder is Rotherwood, the dwelling of Cedric the Saxon."

"Who are you?" said the Prior, easy again now that he was in sight of his destination.

"A Palmer, just returned from the Holy Land," was the answer.

Now, a Palmer was a pilgrim who had journeyed to the Holy Land and was so called because he returned carrying a branch of palm which he wore stuck in his hood or attached to his staff.

"You had better have tarried there and fought," said the Templar.

"True, Reverend Knight," answered the Palmer, "but when such as you who are under oath to fight for the Holy Sepulcher are found wandering so far from the Holy Land, can you wonder that a peaceful peasant like me should decline the task which you have abandoned?"

The Templar would have made an angry reply, but they now stood before the mansion. This was a low, irregular building, containing several courtyards or enclosures, but it differed entirely from the tall, castellated buildings in which the Normans resided. It was not, however, without defenses. A deep fosse, or ditch, was drawn round the whole building, and filled with water from a neighbouring stream. A double stockade or high fence composed of pointed beams defended the outer and inner bank of the trench or moat. There was an entrance from the west through the outer stockade, which communicated with the interior by a drawbridge over the trench.

Before the entrance the Templar wound his horn loudly, for the rain, which had long threatened, began to descend with great violence.

"Why tarries the Lady Rowena?" said Cedric to his cup-bearer, as he sat at head of the table in the big hall, waiting the arrival of his fair ward before commencing the evening meal.

"She is changing her head-gear," replied a female attendant who stood near, "for she has been to evening mass and was caught in the storm."

"I wish she may choose a fair evening next time she goes to her devotions," said Cedric irritably.

At that moment the blast of a horn was heard through the hall. This was immediately followed by the barking of all the dogs in the hall and many that were quartered in various parts of the building.

"To the gate, knaves!" said Cedric to his attendants, "and see what tidings the horn tells of."

In a few minutes a warder returned to announce Prior Aymer and the Knight Brian de Bois-Guilbert.

"Normans both," muttered Cedric, repeating their names, "but Norman or Saxon, I cannot refuse hospitality. Go, Hundebert," he added to a servant, "introduce the strangers to the guests' lodging. Let them have a change of vestments and see that they lack nothing; bid the cooks add what they hastily can to our evening meal. Elgitha, let thy Lady Rowena know we shall not this night expect her in the hall unless such be her special wish. Here at least the descendant of King Alfred still reigns a princess."

Cedric sat waiting his unwelcome guests, his eyes fixed on the ground for an instant; as he raised them the folding doors at the end of the hall opened, and preceded by his servant Hundebert, with his wand, and servants bearing torches, Bois-Guilbert and the Prior, followed by the Palmer, wrapped in his long cloak and covering his face with a mask, entered the hall.

Cedric rose to receive his guests with an air of dignified hospitality, and descending from the dais, advanced three steps to meet them.

"I grieve, Reverend Prior," he said, "that my vow binds me not to advance farther upon this floor except to receive one of Saxon Royal blood, and I cannot do so even to receive such guests as you. Sir Prior and Knight, let welcome make amends for hard fare."

The guests being seated, the feast, which was a plentiful one, was about to begin when Hundebert, suddenly raising his wand, said aloud—"Forbear!—Place for the Lady Rowena." A side door opened, and the Lady Rowena, followed by her maids, entered the apartment. Cedric at once advanced to lead her to the elevated seat at his own right hand, while the others stood to receive her. She replied to their courtesy by a mute gesture of salutation as she moved gracefully forward to assume her place at the board. Cedric, though hiding his feelings, was not altogether pleased that his beautiful ward should appear in public on this occasion.

Now, the Prior and Templar were on their way to Ashby to attend a great tournament at which Prince John, the absent king's brother, was to be present.

"Let us hope that the Lady Rowena will be present at the tournament," said the Prior.

"Our going thither is uncertain," said Cedric. "I love not these vanities, which were unknown to my fathers when England was free."

"Let us hope, nevertheless, that our company may determine you to travel thitherward."

"Sir Prior," said Cedric, "I have always found the assistance of my own good sword, with my faithful followers, in no respect needful of aid. If I go to Ashby I travel with my noble country man, Athelstane of Coningsburgh. I drink to your health, Sir Prior."

"I will tax your courtesy, Sir Knight," said Lady Rowena to the Templar, "to tell the latest news of Palestine."

At this moment the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the porter's page to announce that there was a stranger at the gates, imploring shelter.

"Admit him," said Cedric. "We cannot refuse him food and rest a night like this. Let his wants be ministered to with all care."



PLACE FOR THE LADY ROWENA.

The page, returning, whispered in his master's ear, "It is a Jew, who calls himself Isaac of York; is it fit that I marshal him into the hall?"

So hated were the Jews at this time that they were persecuted in whatever country they wandered. Yet in spite of much cruelty and sometimes even torture, they grew rich, though they had to hide their riches, and often feigned poverty for fear they should be seized by the wicked barons and tortured till they handed over large portions of their wealth and savings. Wherever they went they were treated as outcasts, and so Cedric said, "I cannot refuse my hospitality even to an unbelieving Jew." So the page went back to admit the stranger.

With many a bow of deep humility, an old man followed the page into the hall. His long cloak was drenched with rain and upon his head he wore a square, yellow cap which all Jews were compelled to wear to distinguish them from Christians.

The old man met with a cruel reception, and Cedric nodded coldly and signed to him to take a place at the lower end of the table amongst the inferior servants of his household, where, however, no one offered to make room. While the Jew thus stood an outcast, unable to obtain a seat at the table, the Pilgrim, who sat by the chimney corner, rose from his seat, saying, "Old man, sit and dry your garments and appease your hunger;" and saying this he brought him a plate of porridge from the larger board and set it on a small table by the Jew's side. Then without waiting the Jew's thanks, he crossed to the other side of the hall, nearer the upper end of the table.

At this moment Cedric raised his goblet. "To the strong in arms," he said, "who fight in Palestine as champions of the Cross!"

"It becomes not one of them to answer," said Sir Brian Bois-Guilbert; "yet to whom but the sworn champions of the Holy Sepulcher can the praise be assigned?"

"Were there, then, none in the English army" said the Lady Rowena, "whose names are worthy to be mentioned?"

"Forgive me, lady," said the Knight. "King Richard did bring a host of gallant warriors."

"Who were second to none," exclaimed the Pilgrim, now joining in the conversation for the first time. "I say," he repeated in a strong voice as all turned towards him, "that the English chivalry were second to none."

"I will give thee a piece of gold, Palmer," said Cedric, "if thou wilt name me those knights who were the bravest and the most gallant!"

"That will I blithely do without gold," said the Pilgrim. "The first in honour as in arms was Richard, King of England. The Earl of Leicester was the second. Sir Thomas Multon of Gilsland was the third. Sir Foulk Doilly the fourth; Sir Edwin Turneham the fifth."

"Genuine Saxon the last!" shouted Cedric with exultation. "And the sixth?" he continued with eagerness.

"The sixth," said the Palmer, "was a knight of lesser rank, but his name I do not remember."

"Sir Palmer," said the Templar scornfully, "you assume forgetfulness. I will myself name this knight before whose lance ill-luck caused me to fall—it was the Knight of Ivanhoe. No one had more renown in arms, and were he in England, and durst repeat the challenge at the coming tournament at Ashby, I would give him every advantage of weapons and abide by the result."

"Your challenge would soon be answered," retorted the Palmer, "were your antagonist near you."

Meanwhile Cedric had remained a silent listener, though his face betrayed many conflicting emotions, while the name of Ivanhoe seemed to have produced an electrical effect on his servants.

"And now, Sir Cedric," said the Prior, "permit us another pledge to the welfare of the Lady Rowena, and allow us to pass to our repose, as we are tired."

CHAPTER IV

THE JEW AND THE PALMER

So with deep bows to their host and his ward, the guests arose and retired to their sleeping apartments. As they passed down the hall the Templar turned as he came to the old Jew and cursed him, afterwards turning to mutter something in a foreign tongue to his own eastern slaves.

As the Palmer, escorted by a domestic bearing a torch, passed through the apartments, he was stopped by a waiting maid, who informed him that the Lady Rowena wished to speak with him. The Palmer showed some surprise at the summons, but obeyed it without answer.

Arrived at the Lady Rowena's apartment, the Palmer found himself in a room richly decorated, though in the rough style still in use with the Saxons. It was richly draped with tapestries and lit by large waxen torches. In spite of this magnificence, however, the walls were so full of crevices that the night wind shook the hangings, while the flames of the torches were blown side-ways.

The Lady Rowena was seated on a sort of throne, and the Palmer went towards her and knelt down.

"Rise, Palmer," said the lady. "You this night mentioned the name of Ivanhoe in the hall where by nature it should have sounded most welcome."

"I know little of the Knight of Ivanhoe," answered the Palmer with a troubled voice. "I would I knew better, lady, since you are interested in his fate; though I have heard that he was unjustly treated by the French knights in Palestine."

"Would to God," said the Lady Rowena, "that he were here safely in England and could bear arms in the approaching tournament," and she sighed deeply. "Should Athelstane of

Coningsburgh win the prize at the tournament, Ivanhoe is likely to hear evil tidings when he does return." She said this for she well knew it was Cedric's intention to marry her to Athelstane, his noble kinsman. "How looked the stranger when you last saw him?"

"He was darker and thinner," said the Palmer, "than when we first came to Palestine with King Richard."

"Thanks, good Pilgrim," she said after a pause, "for your information concerning the friend of my childhood. Accept this alms, friend, as a token of my gratitude."

The Palmer took the piece of gold offered him and followed a maid from the apartment.

In an anteroom he found a man waiting to escort him to the small apartments or cells where the domestics and strangers of low degree slept.

"In which of these sleeps the Jew? he asked.

"In the next cell to yours," replied the man.

"And where sleeps Gurth the swine-herd?" said the stranger.

"Gurth," replied the servant, "sleeps on the other side of you."

As the Palmer entered the cell allotted to him, he took the torch from the serving man and wished him good-night. The Palmer, having extinguished his torch, threw himself on his bed, where he lay till the earliest sunbeams found their way through the little grated window. He then started up, and leaving his cell, entered that of Isaac the Jew, lifting the latch as gently as he could. He found its occupant tossing from side to side on his narrow bed in troubled slumber.

The Palmer stirred the sleeping man with his staff, at which the Jew started up in wild alarm, fearing someone had come to rob him.

"Fear nothing from me, Isaac," said the Palmer. "I come as your friend."

"What may it be your pleasure to want at so early an hour from the poor Jew?"

"It is to tell you," said the Palmer, "that if you leave not this mansion instantly and travel with haste, your journey may be a dangerous one."

"Holy father!" said the Jew; "whom could it interest to endanger so poor a wretch as I am?"

"Last night," said the Palmer, "as the Templar passed down the hall I heard him say to his attendants in the Saracen language, which I understand, "Seize upon the Jew at a convenient distance from this mansion and conduct him to the castle of Philip de Malvoisin or Front-de-Boeuf."

The poor old Jew fell at the Pilgrim's feet as one stricken with grief and fear.

"Stand up and hearken to me, Isaac," said the Pilgrim. "You have cause for terror considering how your brethren have been ill-treated in order to extract from them their hoards of gold, but stand up, and I will show you how to escape. Depart instantly, and I will guide you by the secret path of the priest, and not leave you till you are under the protection of some good noble going to the tournament."

"Good youth," cried the old man. "I will go with you."

"Follow me, then," said the Pilgrim. "I must find a way to leave this house."

He led the way to the adjoining cell, occupied by Gurth the swineherd.

"Arise, Gurth," said the Pilgrim. "Undo the gate and let out the Jew and me."

Gurth, whose occupation in those days was not looked upon as so mean as now, was somewhat offended at the

commanding tone of the Pilgrim, and did not attempt to rise from his pallet.

"We suffer no visitors to depart by stealth at this early hour," he said.

"Nevertheless," replied the Pilgrim in a commanding tone, "you will not refuse me that favour," saying which he bent down and whispered something in his ear in Saxon.

At this Gurth hastily jumped to obey him, and led them out through the postern gate. Here Gurth left them to fetch the Jew's mule, and shortly returned, bringing another also for the Pilgrim to ride. Then mounting, the Pilgrim gave his hand to Gurth, who kissed it. As the travelers rode off he stood gazing after them till they were lost under the boughs of the forest path.

As they proceeded on their way, the Jew was seized with fear lest he should be betrayed by his companion into an ambuscade. At this time the Jews were never sure of their lives, and often had to buy them off with their immense riches. It is told of King John that he confined a rich Jew in one of his castles and caused one of his teeth to be torn out each day until, when most of his teeth were gone, the unhappy Jew consented to pay the tyrant a large ransom.

When the travelers had gone on some time a very rapid rate, they came to a large, decayed oak.

"That tree marks the boundary of Front-de-Boeuf's land," said the Pilgrim, "and our roads separate here.

The Jew, however, begged the pilgrim not to leave him, and so he consented to travel as far as Sheffield, where the Jew would meet men of his tribe with whom to take refuge.

"The blessing of Jacob be on you, good youth!" he said. "I will reward thee with a horse and armour to fight at the tournament."

The Pilgrim started, and faced his companion.

"What fiend prompted that guess?" he said hastily.

"No matter," said the Jew, smiling; "it is true, and I can supply thy wants. I saw a knight's chain and spurs of gold beneath your Pilgrim's cloak as you stooped over my bed this morning."

The Palmer smiled on hearing this.

"Dost thou not know, Isaac, that the loser at the tournament forfeits his horse and armour, and so might I forfeit your horse should I be beaten."

The Jew looked somewhat astounded at this possibility. "No, no, it is impossible. I will not think so," he said, taking courage. "Thy lance will be too powerful. Take this piece of paper on which I have written to the rich Jew, Kirjath, at Leicester. He has goodly horses and armour fit for kings, and will furnish you for the tournament."

"I thank thee, Jew," said the Palmer, taking the paper. "I will accept thy kind offer, and it will go hard with me but I will requite it."

Then they parted, each taking different roads into the town of Sheffield.

CHAPTER V

THE TOURNAMENT AT ASHBY

At this time King Richard was a prisoner in Austria, where he had been seized by the Duke and held to ransom as he journeyed back from the Holy Land. In England efforts were being made to raise the sum demanded for his release, but his brother, Prince John, was doing all he could secretly to delay this payment and to induce the Duke of Austria to prolong his brother's captivity and keep him out of the country while he strengthened his own position, hoping that he might hear of Richard's death and so seize the crown himself, which really should, after Richard, pass to his nephew Arthur, Duke of Brittany, who was still a boy.

Prince John was deceitful and fond of lawless pleasures, and so he easily gathered round him many bad men who forwarded his designs, fearing that they should be punished, should King Richard return, for their many crimes and misdeeds during his absence. The people of England suffered badly under this state of affairs, added to which, many men who had despaired of justice for their wrongs under the wicked nobles had formed themselves into gangs, and now roamed the woods and forests, setting all law at defiance.

Even amid all this distress, however, the poor as well as the rich hurried to the tournament. Here all found pleasure and excitement, which increased when it was stated that Prince John himself would grace the tournament.

The scene was a beautiful one, and was laid in an extensive meadow beside a wood, about a mile outside Ashby. The meadow was enclosed by a fence, and at either end were large, wooden gates to admit the knights who engaged in combat. On a slight rise of ground by the southern gate were placed five magnificent tents, adorned with pennons of the

colours of the five knight challengers; and before each was hung the shield of the knight by whom it was occupied. The central tent had been erected for Brian de Bois-Guilbert the Templar, whose renown in all games of chivalry had occasioned him to be eagerly received into the company of the challengers. Then came the tents of Reginald Front-de-Boeuf and Philip de Malvoisin, and after them the knights of lesser degree.

The whole of the space occupied by the tents was strongly guarded by men-at-arms. At the northern entrance to the lists was a large enclosed space reserved for such knights as might be disposed to enter the lists with the challenger; behind which were placed tents for refreshments of every kind, with armourers, farriers, and other attendants ready to give their services wherever they might be needed.

There was one gallery or stand raised higher than the rest on the eastern side. This was reserved for Prince John and his attendants. Opposite this was another, more gaily, if less sumptuously, decorated. On this was emblazoned an inscription informing the spectators that it was reserved for the Queen of Beauty and of Love. But who was to occupy the seat of honour as the Queen of Beauty on the present occasion, no one was prepared to guess.

Meanwhile, spectators of every description thronged forward to occupy their respective stations. Those of humbler rank, who were not entitled to seats in the galleries, took up stations on the sloping banks round the meadow, while others climbed into the branches of the trees.

When Prince John, followed by his glittering train, well mounted, and splendidly dressed in crimson and gold, rode into the lists at the head of his jovial party, he laughed loud with his followers as he eyed the beautiful ladies who occupied seats in the galleries. At the brave show this prince made, the crowd applauded loudly.

As John rode round, he espied a commotion in a corner of the lists, and in this tumult he beheld Isaac the Jew and his lovely daughter, Rebecca. Now, this prince knew Isaac quite well, and was even at the moment endeavouring to borrow a large sum of money from Isaac and his brethren at York.



HE BEHELD ISAAC AND HIS LOVELY DAUGHTER REBECCA.

"Who is that lovely girl with you, Isaac?" he cried gaily. "Wife or daughter?"

"My daughter, Rebecca, your grace," replied the Jew with a low bow.

"Then she should with her beauty have a place in the stands. Who sits above there?" the prince cried, looking up at this part of the gallery. "Saxon churls, I see, lolling at their lazy length! Out upon them. Let them sit close and make room for the Jew and his daughter."

Now, those to whom this injurious and unpolite speech was addressed were the family of Cedric the Saxon and his ally and kinsman Athelstane of Coningsburgh, a personage who, on account of his descent from the last Saxon monarchs of England, was held in the highest respect by Saxons in the north of England. In spite of his royal descent, he was a weak man and sluggish in his motions, and generally called Athelstane the Unready.

Athelstane, utterly confounded at an order so insulting and injurious, unwilling to obey, opened his eyes without making any movement. The impatient John, seeing this, called aloud.

"The Saxon porker is either asleep or minds me not. Prick him with your lance," he said to one of his followers as he moved on. Suddenly he stopped and turned to the Prior of Jorvaulx, who rode in his cavalcade. "By my halidom," he cried, "we have forgotten to choose the fair Sovereign of Love and Beauty; for my part, I care not if we appoint the lovely Rebecca, the Jew's daughter."

"Holy Virgin!" answered the Prior in horror; "a Jewess! I swear by my patron saint that she is far inferior to the lovely Saxon Rowena."

"Saxon or Jew," said John, "I say Rebecca."

"Nay, my Lord," remonstrated one of his followers, De Bracy. "It would be an insult to appoint a Jewess, and no knight

here would fight before such a Queen of Beauty. Let us leave it till we know the conqueror of the tournament, and leave him to choose."

To this Prince John agreed, and dismounting from his palfrey, he ascended his throne in the gallery and gave signal to the heralds to proclaim the rules of the tournament, which were briefly as follows: That the five knights were to undertake to fight all comers. That any knight might choose the one he most wished to fight by touching the other's shield. That when the knights present had accomplished their vow by each of them breaking five lances, the Prince was to declare the victor in the first day's tourney, who should receive as prize a war-horse of exquisite beauty; and in addition to this honour it was now declared that he should have the peculiar honour of naming the Queen of Beauty, by whom the prize should be given on the ensuing day. It was also announced that on the second day there should be a general tournament in which all the knights present who wished might take part, and being divided into two bands, fight one against the other until Prince John gave the signal for the battle to be ended.

It was customary for the knights to fight with lances and swords, or battle-axes. A knight unhorsed might fight another on foot, but those still mounted were forbidden to attack those on foot. Any knights struck down or unable to rise must yield themselves up as beaten, and hand their horses and armour over to their conquerors. On the second day the knightly games ceased, but they were followed by archery, bull baiting and other popular sports for the populace to take part in.

When the heralds had finished their proclamation they withdrew from the lists. As they did so the barriers were opened, and five knights, chosen by lot, advanced slowly into the arena, a single champion riding in front, and the other four riding in pairs. They rode up the platform on which the tents of the challengers stood, and each one touched lightly the shield of the antagonist whom he wished to oppose. Then the challengers of all comers came out from their tents, and mounting their

horses, and headed by Brian de Bois-Guilbert, descended from the platform and opposed themselves individually to the knights who had touched their shields.

At the flourish of trumpets, they started out against each other at full gallop, and such was the superior skill or good fortune of the challengers, that those knights opposed to Bois-Guilbert, Malvoisin and Front-de-Boeuf, rolled on the ground. The antagonist of the fourth knight broke his lance across his opponent by swerving, and this was accounted a disgrace, worse than being unhorsed, as it showed bad management of his weapon and horse. The fifth knight alone was unsuccessful in defeating his opponent, and these two parted after having both splintered their lances without advantage on either side.

Then the shouts of the people announced the triumph of the victors, who retreated to their tents to await the next knights who wished to oppose them. A second and third party of knights came forward, and although they had various successes, the advantage still remained with the challengers. Three knights only entered on a fourth encounter, and those contented themselves with touching three shields, but avoiding those of Bois-Guilbert and Front-de-Boeuf. After this encounter there was a pause, nor did it appear that anyone was desirous of continuing the contest. The spectators murmured amongst themselves, for Malvoisin and Front-de-Boeuf were not popular with the populace, and two of the other knights were disliked as strangers and foreigners.

But none shared the general feeling so keenly as Cedric the Saxon, who saw in each advantage gained by the Norman challengers triumph over the honour of England. He himself was a brave and determined soldier, but he had never been taught skill in the games of chivalry such as the Normans loved.

"The day is against England, my lord," cried Cedric to Athelstane; "are you not tempted to fight the challengers?"

"I shall tilt to-morrow," answered Athelstane lazily. "It is not worthwhile to arm myself to-day."

CHAPTER VI

THE DISINHERITED KNIGHT

The pause in the tournament was still uninterrupted, except by the voices of the heralds. Prince John began to talk to his attendants about making ready the banquet, and the necessity of awarding the prize to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, the Templar. At length there was the sound of a solitary trumpet at the northern entrance to the lists. All eyes were turned to see the new champion which these sounds announced, and as they looked they saw a single warrior ride into the lists. As far as they could judge he was a warrior who did not greatly exceed the middle size, and seemed rather slender than strongly made. He was mounted upon a gallant black horse and was clothed in steel armour, richly inlaid with gold, and the device on his shield was a young oak tree pulled up by the roots, with a Spanish word meaning Disinherited. To the wonder of all, this knight with much youthful grace and skill rode up to the tent of Bois-Guilbert and struck that challenger's shield until it rang. All stood astonished, but none more than the Templar himself, who had now been defied to mortal combat.

"Take your place in the lists," said Bois-Guilbert, "and look your last upon the sun, for this night thou shalt sleep in Paradise."

"Gramercy for thy courtesy," replied the Disinherited Knight "and to requite it, I advise you to take a fresh horse and lance, for you will need both."

The Templar, however much resenting the advice, took the precaution to provide himself with a fresh horse and lance, and so rode into the lists where the stranger knight was waiting.

The people waited breathlessly until the signal for combat was given; then the champions rushed at each other

with the shock of a thunderbolt. As they met, their lances shivered, and it seemed at the moment each knight had fallen, for the shock had made their horses fall back on their haunches. Receiving fresh lances, the knights dashed together again and fought till the girths of the Templar's saddle burst and he and his horse rolled on the ground. Stung with madness the Templar sprang to his feet, when the Disinherited Knight dismounted to meet his adversary on foot. At this the marshals of the tournament spurred their horses between them and reminded them that the laws of the tournament did not permit them to engage in this species of encounter.

"We shall meet again," cried the Templar, angrily looking at his victor, "and where there will be none to part us."

"I am ever ready to encounter thee," said the Disinherited Knight.

Then the Templar returned to his tent in rage and despair.

After this the conqueror desired his herald to announce that he was willing to meet the other four challengers in whatever order they might choose to come. At this the gigantic Front-de-Boeuf entered the lists, but over this champion the Disinherited Knight obtained a slight but decisive advantage. In the third encounter with Sir Philip Malvoisin he was equally successful. The last two knights he defeated in turn, throwing the last to the ground with such violence that blood gushed from his nose and mouth and he was borne senseless from the lists. The acclamations of thousands applauded the unanimous award of the Prince and his marshals, announcing that day's honours to the Disinherited Knight.

And now the marshals came forward to congratulate the victor, praying him to unlace his helmet that they might conduct him to receive the day's prize at the hands of the Prince. The Disinherited Knight with all courtesy declined to do this, alleging that he could not at this time suffer his face to be seen.

Prince John's curiosity was excited by the mystery of this unknown and valiant knight, and turning to some of his train, he asked them if they knew who the victor could be.

"I cannot guess," answered one, "nor did I think there could be a champion who could bear down those five challengers."

As Prince John and his followers were hazarding guesses as to who the knight might be, a whisper arose among the train that it might be King Richard himself.

"The gods forbid!" muttered John, turning pale as death. "Brave knights and gentlemen," he said, turning to his followers, "remember your promises, and stand truly by me."

"Here is no danger," said one, named Waldemar. "The king is far taller and broader than yonder knight. Look at him more closely, your Highness, and you will see."

As the marshals brought the victor forward and he stood at the foot of the throne, the Prince, still shaken with fear, congratulated him upon his valour, and delivered over to him the beautiful war-horse.

The Disinherited Knight spoke not a word in reply, but only acknowledged it with a low obeisance.

The horse was led into the lists by two grooms richly dressed, the animal accoutered with war furniture. Mounting, the victor rode twice round the lists, and was again applauded loudly by all present. Then the Prior of Jorvaulx reminded Prince John in a whisper that the knight must choose the lady he wished to fill the throne as Queen of Beauty. The Prince accordingly made a sign with his truncheon as the knight passed him. The knight turned to the throne, and the Prince then said:

"Sir Knight, it is now your privilege to name the fair lady who, as Queen of Honour and Love, is to preside over next day's festival."

He then placed upon the point of the knight's lance a coronet of green satin with a circlet of gold round it, which was to be the crown of the chosen Queen. The Disinherited Knight then rode past the galleries slowly, examining the many fair faces till he came to that in which the Lady Rowena sat. On this, Cedric the Saxon, who was overjoyed at the discomfiture of the Normans, and especially his neighbours Front-de-Boeuf and Malvoisin, was watching the victor with his whole heart and soul. Even the unmoved Athelstane showed some excitement and quaffed a huge goblet of wine to the victor's health.

Amongst another group stationed under the gallery was Isaac of York and his daughter Rebecca. As the Disinherited Knight rode his courses, the Jew had shown great anxiety for his horse and the armour he rode, fearing it should be hurt in the fray.

"Ah, the good horse that was brought from so far," he exclaimed; "he takes no more care of him than if he were a wild ass's colt, and the armour he wears he cares for as little as if he had found it on the highway."

"If he risks his own life, father," said Rebecca, "he can scarce be expected to spare his horse and armour."

"Child!" said Isaac excitedly, "thou knowest not what thou speakest. Nevertheless, he is a good youth. See, he is about to do battle again. Pray for him, Rebecca, and his steed and his rich armour."

And now the fight was over, and the knight, riding round to choose the Queen of Beauty, drew up before this gallery occupied by the Saxon and Jew. The knight paused for fully a minute, while all round the lists watched his movements intently. At last, gradually and gracefully, he dropped the point of his lance and deposited the coronet which it supported at the feet of the Lady Rowena. The trumpets instantly sounded, while the heralds proclaimed the Lady Rowena Queen of Beauty and of Love. Prince John then

spurred his horse forward to the gallery where sat the Lady Rowena. He was angry that one of the Norman ladies had not been chosen.

"Assume, fair lady," he said as he rode up, "your coronet, and if it please you to-day, with your noble sire and friends, to grace our banquet at the Castle of Ashby, we shall learn to know the empress of to-morrow."

Rowena remained silent, and Cedric answered for her.

"The Lady Rowena possesses not the language in which to reply to your courtesy. I also and the noble Athelstane speak only the language of our fathers. We therefore decline your Highness's courteous invitation."

So saying, he lifted the coronet and placed it on Rowena's head.

"What says he?" said Prince John, pretending not to understand the Saxon's reply. "It is well," said he when this was repeated in French. "You, at least, Sir Knight, will this day share our banquet?"

The Knight, speaking for the first time in a low and hurried voice, excused himself by pleading fatigue.

"It is well," said Prince John, "although we are unused to such refusals. We will endeavour to digest our banquet without the day's victor or the Queen of Beauty."

So saying, he rode out of the lists with his glittering train. This was the signal for the breaking up of the spectators.

The Disinherited Knight had no sooner reached his tent than squires and pages in abundance offered their services to attend him and take off his armour. He refused all assistance, however, save that of his own squire or yeoman, who, wrapped in a long cloak, seemed just as anxious as his master not to be recognised.

The Knight had scarcely finished a hasty meal ere his man announced to him that five men, each leading a horse

with armour on its back, desired to speak to him. The knight had now changed his armour and wore a long robe with a hood. This almost concealed his face when drawn forward, but as it was nearly dark it was impossible to distinguish his features even without this precaution. He therefore stepped boldly forth and found the squires of the five challengers, each of whom led his master's charger, loaded with the armour in which he had fought that day.

"According to the laws of chivalry," said the foremost of these men, "I, squire to the redoubted Knight Brian de Bois-Guilbert, make offer to you of my master's horse and armour."

The other squires repeated the same formula, and all awaited the decision of the Disinherited Knight.

"To you all, sirs," replied the Knight, "I have one common reply. Tell your master that I should do ill to deprive them of steeds and arms which can never be used by braver men; but as I am, in truth, the Disinherited, I must ask your masters that they will, of their courtesy, ransom their steeds and arms, since that which I wear I can hardly call my own."

"We stand commissioned, each of us," answered a squire, "to offer a hundred pieces in ransom of these horses and armour."

"It is enough," said the Knight; "half the sum is sufficient for my present necessities; the other half distribute amongst yourselves and the heralds and minstrels."

The squires, with cap in hand and low bows, expressed their deep sense of the Knight's generosity. The Knight then turned to the squire of Bois-Guilbert.

"From your master," said he, "I will accept neither arms nor ransom. Say to him in my name that our strife is not ended till we have fought with swords as with lances. To this mortal combat he has defied me and I shall not forget his challenge."

"My master," answered the squire, whose name was Baldwin, "knows how to requite scorn with scorn, blow with blow. He would never mount this horse again since you would not accept a ransom from him, so I must leave him here."

"You have spoken well, good squire," said the Knight. "Leave not, however, the horse and armour here. If your master refuses to have them back, keep them, good friend, for your own use."

Baldwin made a low bow and retired with his companions; and the Knight entered his tent.

"Thus far, Gurth," he said, turning to his attendant, "the reputation of English chivalry hath not suffered in my hands."

"And I," said Gurth, "for a swineherd have not ill played the part of a Squire-at-arms. If I am discovered—"

"Enough," said the Knight; "thou knowest my promise. Trust me, I will requite thee for the risk thou runnest for love of me. Meanwhile, I pray you to accept these ten golden pieces. And now," continued his master, "take this bag of gold to Ashby and find out Isaac the Jew of York, and let him pay himself for the horse and arms which he procured from me."

"I will do so," said Gurth, and taking the bag under his cloak, he left the apartment.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND DAY OF THE TOURNAMENT

The next morning the sun rose in unclouded splendour, and soon there were crowds of eager spectators moving towards the lists in order to secure favourable positions for the day's sports. Soon the heralds and marshals appeared to arrange the battle in which all the knights were to take part. The leader of one side was to be the knight who had won the tournament of the previous day, and according to custom, the second best, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, was to captain the other side.

About ten o'clock, when the borders of the lists were crowded with spectators, Cedric the Saxon, with the Lady Rowena, arrived. Athelstane was clothing himself in armour, and to the surprise of Cedric, was preparing to take the field on the side of the Templar. The reason for this was that the indolent and obstinate Saxon considered that the Lady Rowena was destined to be his wife, and he was jealous when the Disinherited Knight selected her for the honour of Queen of Beauty. He therefore hoped, by choosing the side of the Templar, to single him out during the fray and defeat him. All Prince John's followers had attached themselves to the side of the Templar, Prince John hoping that side would be victorious; but numbers of others chose the side of the brave unknown knight. As soon as Prince John observed the destined Queen of the day had arrived on the field, he rode up to her, doffed his bonnet, and alighting from his horse, assisted her to alight from her saddle.

"It is thus," said the Prince, "that we set the example of loyalty to the Queen of Beauty and ourselves guide her to her throne."

So saying, Prince John escorted the Lady Rowena to the seat of honour opposite his own, while the spectators shouted their greetings to her. The heralds then proclaimed silence while the laws of the tournament were rehearsed.

After this had been done, the knights of each party entered at opposite ends of the lists and arranged themselves in double file precisely opposite to each other. As soon as the leader of each party had arranged himself in the center of the foremost rank, one of the marshals of the tournament gave the signal to commence. At this spurs were dashed into horses' flanks, and both the front ranks dashed at each other at full gallop.

The consequences of the encounter were not instantly seen, for the dust raised by the trampling of so many steeds darkened the air, but it was soon seen that half the knights on either side were dismounted. Some lay stretched upon the earth as though they would never rise again, while others were already on their feet and fighting hand to hand. Those who were still mounted continued the fight with their swords.

Amid the varied fortunes of the combat, the eyes of all the spectators endeavoured to discover the leaders of each band. Both displayed great courage. They repeatedly tried to single out each other. Such, however, was the crowd and confusion that during the earlier part of the fight their efforts to meet were unavailing. At length, however, the Templar and Disinherited Knight met hand to hand with all the fury of mortal animosity and rivalry. But at this moment, the party of the Disinherited Knight had the worst; the gigantic forms of Front-de-Boeuf and Athelstane bearing down to the assistance of the Templar.

At this unequal assault the spectators shouted warning to the Disinherited Knight, and hearing their cries he struck a full blow at the Templar, then reined back his steed to avoid the charge of Athelstane and Front-de-Boeuf. The masterly horsemanship of the Disinherited Knight enabled him for a minute to keep his three opponents at bay. So wonderfully did

he do this with his sword that the lists rang with applause, but it was evident that he must soon be overpowered, and the nobles round Prince John begged him to stop the fight and so save so brave a knight.

"Not I, by Heaven!" said John; "this same man who conceals his name and refuses my hospitality hath gained one prize and may now let others have a turn."

Almost as he spoke, however, the fortunes of the day changed.

There was among the ranks of the Disinherited Knight a champion in black armour, mounted on a black horse, large and powerful as the rider by whom he was mounted. This knight, who bore no device upon his shield, had hitherto evinced very little interest in the fight, beating off with ease any who sought him out for combat in the melee. In short, he had hitherto acted the part rather of a spectator, and some of the spectators had even nicknamed him the Black Sluggard. Now seeing the leader of his party so hard pressed, he suddenly set spurs to his horse, which was quite fresh, and crying in a loud voice, "To the rescue!" dashed forward.

He met Front-de-Boeuf, and aiming a terrific blow with his sword at his head, both rider and horse rolled on the ground. He then turned his horse upon Athelstane of Coningsburgh; and his own sword having been broken when it crashed down on Front-de-Boeuf, he wrenched the battle-axe from the heavy Saxon's hand and struck him such a blow that Athelstane rolled from his horse and lay senseless on the ground. Having achieved this double feat, so totally unexpected, he seemed to resume his sluggish character, leaving the Disinherited Knight to fight the Templar alone. This was no longer a matter of much difficulty, for the Templar's horse had bled much, and gave way under the shock of the Disinherited Knight's charge. Brian de Bois-Guilbert rolled upon the field. His antagonist sprang to the ground, and waving his sword, commanded him to yield, when Prince John, moved by the Templar's dangerous situation, put an end

to the conflict, thus saving the Templar from having to confess himself beaten.

The squires now thronged into the lists to attend the wounded, who were removed to the neighbouring tents with the utmost care. Thus ended the memorable tournament of Ashby-de-la-Zouche.

It being now the duty of Prince John to name the knight who had done best, he determined that the honour of the day remained with the Black Knight. It was pointed out to the Prince that the victory had, in fact, been won by the leader, the Disinherited Knight, who in the course of the day had overcome six champions and had finally defeated the leader of the opposite party, but Prince John adhered to his own opinion. To the surprise of all, however, the Black Knight was nowhere to be found, and had in fact been seen to ride slowly away into the forest. After he had been summoned twice by sound of trumpet, it became necessary to name another, and John had no choice but to name the Disinherited Knight champion of the day.

"Disinherited Knight," said John, "we a second time award to you the honours of the tournament and announce to you your right to claim and receive from the hands of the Queen of Beauty the Chaplet of Honour which your valour has justly deserved." The Knight bowed low and gracefully, but returned no answer.

While the trumpets sounded and while ladies waved their silken handkerchiefs, the marshals conducted the victor across the lists to the foot of the throne of honour, which was occupied by the Lady Rowena. On the lower step of this throne the champion was made to kneel down, and it was observed that he tottered as they guided him a second time across the lists. Rowena, descending from her station with dignified step, was about to place the chaplet which she held in her hand upon the helmet of the champion, when the marshals exclaimed with one voice, "It must not be thus—his head must be bare." The Knight muttered faintly a few words.

Whether from love of form, or curiosity, the marshals paid no heed to his words or expressions of reluctance, but cut the laces of his helmet. When this was removed, the well-formed, sunburnt features of a young man of twenty-five were seen. He had short fair hair and his pale face was seen to be streaked with blood.

Rowena had no sooner beheld him than she uttered a faint shriek; but summoning up her energy and self control, she placed the splendid chaplet upon the drooping head of the victor and said in a clear voice: "I bestow on thee this chaplet, Sir Knight, as the meed of valour assigned to this day's victor."

The Knight stooped his head and kissed the hand of the lovely Queen of Beauty, and then, sinking yet farther forward, lay prostrate at her feet.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCHEMES OF PRINCE JOHN

There was general consternation and alarm. Cedric, who had been struck mute on recognising the Disinherited Knight as his banished son, Sir Wilfred of Ivanhoe, now rushed forward as if to separate him from Rowena. But this had been already accomplished by the marshals, who, guessing the cause of Ivanhoe's swoon, had hastened to undo his armour, and found that he was wounded in his side.

The name of Ivanhoe was no sooner pronounced than it flew from mouth to mouth. It was not long ere it reached the ears of Prince John and his circle. The Prince's brow darkened as he heard the news.

"My lords," said he, "I felt the presence of my brother's follower and guessed the Disinherited Knight was he."

"Front-de-Boeuf must prepare to restore the lands which King Richard gave him and which in his absence your Highness generously gave to Front-de-Boeuf," said one, de Bracy.

"Front-de-Boeuf," said John, "is a man much more likely to accept lands than to give them up again."

A noble now returned to the Prince and said, "Ivanhoe is likely to give your Highness little trouble and to leave Front-de-Boeuf undisturbed, for he is severely wounded."

"Whatever becomes of him," said John, "he is victor of the day and must be looked after. Our own physician shall attend him."

As he said this, a stern smile curled the Prince's lip.

"Who is this Queen of Beauty who was so grieved at the victor's wound?" he went on.

"A Saxon heiress of large possessions," replied the Prior Aymer.

"We shall cheer her sorrows then," said Prince John, "by marrying her to a Norman. How sayest thou, de Bracy? What thinkest thou of gaining fair lands by marrying the Saxon?"

"If the lands are to my liking," said de Bracy, "I will, and shall feel grateful to your Highness."

At this moment a small letter was put into the Prince's hand. As he looked at it he turned pale, for he read a strange message which hinted that King Richard was free and on his way to England. He took de Bracy and another noble, Waldemar, on one side and put the message into their hands to read.

"It means," he explained, "that my brother Richard is free."

"It may be a false alarm," said de Bracy.

"At any rate," said Waldemar, "it is time to end these sports and draw our party together at York, if we are to hope to place the crown on your Highness's head. Your Highness must break up this meeting. Let the archers shoot a few rounds," he said, "that the people may not go away discontented."

"We shall, however, hold our banquet tonight as intended," said the Prince. "Let new cares come with tomorrow's new day."

In the course of this festival which closed the tournament, Prince John put aside his anger and received with courtesy the Saxons whom he had invited, including Cedric and Athelstane, for he was determined to do all in his power now to make himself popular with all classes.

In the course of this banquet many occasions were taken to insult Cedric and the other Saxons present, and to

make fun of their habits and behavior, so different from the Normans.

At last John rose, and raising his goblet, said: "We drink this beaker to the health of Wilfred of Ivanhoe, the champion of the day. Let all fill to the pledge, especially Cedric of Rotherwood."

"No, my lord," replied Cedric, starting up, "I drink not to this son of mine who despises my commands. He left my home against my orders to mingle at the gay court of your brother, and even accepted the lands as a feudal vassal which rightly belonged freely to his lathers."

At last to the many jests and insults heaped on Cedric he raged with anger and sent back insults at the Normans seated round. At length Prince John rose.

"We have," he said, "drunk to the health of our Saxon guests; now we require thee," he continued, addressing Cedric, "to name some Norman whose health we may drink." At this Cedric rose. "At your Highness's command, I will drink to the health of a Norman. I quaff this goblet to the health of Richard the Lion-hearted!"

Prince John, who had expected his own name, started when that of his injured brother was mentioned. Many of the guests did not know whether to comply with the toast or not, and while hesitating, the outraged Cedric, having enjoyed his triumph for a minute, put down his goblet and left the hall, followed by the other Saxons.

"By the bones of St. Thomas," said John, "the Saxon churls have borne off the beset of the day and retreated in triumph!"

By now the other guests were leaving the hall, with the exception of those immediately attached to the Prince.

Thus," said John angrily, "even at the mention of my brother's name men leave me."

"Have patience, sir," replied Waldemar; "I will go amongst the nobles and offer them fresh bribes on your behalf."

Later many of those who seemed likely to refuse to follow the Prince's cause agreed to attend a meeting at York for the purpose of making arrangements to place the crown immediately on John's head before Richard returned.

The reader cannot have forgotten the Black Knight, whose exertions had decided the tournament in favor of Ivanhoe's party and who left the field so abruptly, taking the short road through the forest.

He paused for the night at a small hostelry off the ordinary route, where he obtained from a wandering minstrel the news of the result of the tourney.

The next morning the knight journeyed on again through the woods till late in the afternoon, and when he was no longer able to decide on the right path to follow, he suddenly heard the tinkle of a little bell which told him he was near some small chapel or hermitage. Following the sound, the knight soon found himself in an opening before an ivy-mantled rock, at the foot of which was a small hut, built chiefly of the trunks of trees. At a little distance a fountain of purest water trickled out of the rock. Beside this fountain were the ruins of a chapel, part of the roof of which had fallen in. As the knight looked on this peaceful scene, he pulled up his horse, then dismounted, and, crossing the smooth turf, knocked at the door of the hut.

"Pass on, whosoever thou art," was the answer given by a deep voice from inside.

"Worthy father," answered the knight, "a poor wanderer seeks hospitality."

"Good brother," replied the inhabitant, "I have no provisions here which even a dog would share."



THE BLACK KNIGHT ENJOYS THE HOSPITALITY OF THE JOVIAL
HERMIT.

"Then at least show me my road," said the knight; but on hearing the hermit's description of the dangerous road, he begged once more for shelter, and knocked so hard and angrily at the door, that the hermit let him in. Soon he dragged out some forage for the horse and then threw down some dried

ferns for the knight to rest on. He then brought out a large pasty and a leather bottle and drinking cups, and bade the knight sit down to the meal.

"May I crave your name, good father?" asked the knight.

"Thou mayest call me," answered the hermit, "the Clerk of Copmanhurst, for so I am termed in these parts; and now, valiant knight, I pray you for the name of my guest."

"I am called the Black Knight," said the other.

"Then I will drink your health, Sir Black Knight," said the hermit.

The knight raised his wine cup. For long they talked together, while later, the hermit, who proved himself a jovial companion and a good host, reached down his harp and sang to his guest.

The reader will have probably guessed that the jovial hermit was none other than Friar Tuck, a member of Robin Hood's merry men.

CHAPTER IX

THE CAPTURE OF CEDRIC

When Cedric saw his son drop down senseless, he could not bring himself to acknowledge in public the son whom he had renounced; but he ordered that he was to be conveyed to Ashby and cared for. When the crowd dispersed, however, the knight was nowhere to be seen. It was in vain that Cedric's cupbearer, Oswald, looked round for his young master, until his eye suddenly lighted on a man dressed as a squire whom he recognised as his fellow servant, Gurth, who was also looking for his young master. At last Oswald learned from bystanders that the knight had been raised by certain well-attired grooms and carried away. Oswald went to tell this news to Cedric, forcing Gurth to go along with him.

When Cedric left the banquet, he returned to Rowena, who had resolutely refused to accompany him. Soon all the Saxons of their party were mounted and a start was made for home. It was at this moment that he spied Gurth, and his anger at his treatment at the banquet vented itself on the swineherd, whose hands he commanded to be tied with a halter.

"To horse, and forward!" cried Cedric.

After a long journey, the travelers reached the verge of a large wood through which they had to pass, and which was at that time held dangerous from the number of outlaws who roamed its glades. As they did so, they heard repeated cries for assistance. Riding up to the place from whence they came, they were surprised to find Isaac the Jew and his daughter. The Jew, when he could calm himself, explained that he had hired six men as a bodyguard at Ashby to carry his friend on a litter which now lay on the ground. They had come to the edge of the wood, when, thinking they heard the sound of outlaws,

they had fled, and taken with them the mules which had carried the litter.

"Would you permit the poor Jews to travel under your protection?" concluded Isaac.

At the same moment Rebecca stole to the side of Rowena's horse and said in a low voice, "In the name of one dear to many and even you, I beseech you to let this sick person be transported under your protection."

The solemn air of Rebecca gave weight to her words, and the Lady Rowena said to her guardian: "The man is old and feeble, and their friend sick and in peril of his life, and Jews though they be, we cannot leave them. Let two of our mules transport the litter."

To this Cedric assented, while Athelstane insisted that they should travel in the rear of the party, though the Lady Rowena requested Rebecca to ride at her side. It was arranged that Gurth should give up his horse to the Jewess and ride behind another of the attendants, but in the bustle of changing he managed to loose his bonds and slip away unseen.

The party now proceeded on their way, but as the path was narrow, they had to ride two abreast, and it was in this order that they were suddenly surprised by a band of outlaws and made prisoners. The only one who escaped was Wamba the jester, and as he was about to return to be made a prisoner with his master, he was joined by Gurth, who had followed a short way behind the party since his escape, and had only heard the cries and the clash of swords.

As soon as he heard what had happened, he proposed to Wamba that they should attack the outlaws, trusting to the suddenness of their onslaught to drive them off. As they were about to do this, a third person appeared and commanded them to halt. He was dressed much as the outlaws, but wore no mask.

"What is the meaning of all this?" said he.

Wamba explained.

"Stay here, then," said the other, "and I dare you to disobey me," saying which, he took a mask from his pocket and disappeared once more. Soon he returned.

"The men will do your masters no violence," he said, "and it is impossible for us to attack so large a band; but I trust soon to gather such a force as may set your masters free. You are both servants, I think, of Cedric the Saxon, the friend of the rights of Englishmen, and he shall not want English hands to help him."

As he set off hurriedly through the forest, Gurth and Wamba wondered much where they were being led and how it would end.

It was after a good three hours' walking that the servants of Cedric arrived at a small opening in the forest, in the center of which grew an enormous oak-tree. Beneath this tree four or five yeomen lay stretched on the ground, while another walked to and fro in the moonlight, keeping guard. As the travelers approached, their guide was welcomed with every token of respect.

"Where is the Friar?" he asked.

"In his cell," was the reply.

"Thither will I go," said their guide, who was none other than the bold Robin Hood, who had made his name famous even in those days of derring-do. For the time being he had assumed the name of Locksley. "Disperse and seek your companions. Collect what force you can. Two of you take the road quickly towards Torquilstone, the castle of Front-de-Boeuf. A set of gallants, who have disguised themselves as members of our band, are carrying a band of prisoners thither. Keep a close watch on them and send me news as soon as you can."

The men then promised implicit obedience, and started on their errands, while Locksley, with Gurth and Wamba, walked on till they came to the chapel of Copmanhurst.

When they reached the little hermitage in which the Black Knight had sought hospitality, they heard sounds of singing, and so loud was this that Locksley had to knock long before he could make the priest hear. At last, however, the singing ceased and the door was unbolted.

"Why, hermit," said Locksley as soon as he had entered and beheld the knight, "what boon companion hast thou here?"

"Good yeoman," said the knight, coming forward, "be not wroth with my merry host. He did but afford me the hospitality which I would have compelled from him if he had refused it."

"Thou compel!" exclaimed the Friar; "wait till I have changed my monk's gown for a green suit, and if I make not a bruise on thy pate with my staff, I am neither true monk nor good yeoman."

While he hurriedly proceeded to change his cloak, Locksley called the knight on one side and said, "Sir Knight, deny it not—you are he who decided the victory at the tournament at Ashby."

"And what if I am?"

"In that case," said Locksley, "I should hold you the friend of the weaker party."

"Such," answered the other, "is the duty of a true knight at least."

"Hear me, then," said Locksley. "A band of villains in the disguise of better men, have taken prisoners a noble Englishman called Cedric, his ward, and his noble kinsman, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, and have transported them to the

castle called Torquilstone. I ask thee, as a good knight and a good Englishman, wilt thou aid in their rescue?"

"I will willingly," said the knight "but I would know who you are who request my assistance."

"I am at present a nameless man," answered the forester, "but I am the friend of my country and my country's friend. With this account of me you must at present remain satisfied."

The Friar was now completely dressed as a yeoman, with sword and bow and quiver of arrows.

"Come on, Jack Priest," said Locksley; "we must collect all our forces; we shall have few enough if we are to storm Front-de-Boeuf's castle."

And so they hurried away through the forest.

CHAPTER X

AT FRONT-DE-BOEUF'S CASTLE

While these measures were being taken on behalf of Cedric and his companions, the armed men hurried the latter along through the wood towards Front-de-Boeuf's castle. As soon as Cedric saw the turrets of the castle he understood who was the author of his misfortunes.

"I did injustice," he said, "to the thieves and outlaws of these woods. Tell me, dogs," he said, turning to those who guarded him, "is it my life or my lands that your master wants? If the Saxon Cedric cannot rescue England from the oppressor, he is willing to die for her. I do only beseech him send the Lady Rowena home in safety."

To this the attendants remained mute, for they were already before the gates of the castle. The noble, de Bracy, with the Templar at his side, rode up to the gates and winded his horn three times, and the men-at-arms and cross-bow men who had manned the walls at the approach of the party, hastened to lower the drawbridge and admit them.

Arrived inside the castle, the prisoners were compelled by their guards to alight, and were conducted to an apartment, where a hasty meal was offered them, after which they were informed that they were to be imprisoned in an apartment apart from the Lady Rowena. Resistance was in vain, and they were obliged to follow to another large apartment, while the Lady Rowena was also led away to another part of the castle. Rebecca also, in spite of her father's entreaties, was confined by herself.

"Base Jew," said the attendants; "when thou hast seen the dungeon prepared for you, you will not want to take your daughter there too."

"Tell your master, Front-de-Beouf," said Cedric, "that we know no reason that he can have for withholding our liberty except to enrich himself. He can, therefore, name the ransom at which he rates our liberty and it shall be paid."

To this the attendant made no answer, but bowed his head.

"And tell Sir Reginald Front-de-Boeuf," said Athelstane, "that I send him challenge to mortal combat, either on foot or horseback, which if he be a true knight he will not refuse."

"I shall deliver to the knight your defiance," said the attendant; "meanwhile I leave you to your food."

The captives had not long enjoyed their refreshment, however, ere their attention was disturbed by the blast of a horn winded before the gate. It was repeated three times. The Saxons started from the table and hastened to the window. But their curiosity was disappointed, for those outlets looked only into the court of the castle. However, the summons seemed to be of importance, for they immediately heard sounds of bustle and moving men in the castle.

And now, as the horn continued to be sounded defiantly without the castle, the Templar and de Bracy hurried to the hall of the castle. Here they were soon joined by Front-de-Boeuf, who had been engaged in trying to extort a large sum of money from the Jew by threats of cruel torture, while de Bracy had been to the apartment where the Lady Rowena was confined, trying in vain to persuade her to agree to marry him. To all his entreaties she, however, turned a deaf ear, for she secretly loved the Knight of Ivanhoe. As he entered the hall, a letter was brought in by his squire, who announced that it had been delivered by a messenger who was waiting for an answer outside the gate.

"Give the letter to me," said the Templar, for neither Front-de-Boeuf nor de Bracy could read.

"It is a letter of defiance," he said as he read it through, "and is signed by Gurth, the swineherd of Cedric, by the Black Knight and by the yeoman Locksley, and they demand that our prisoners, with their goods and horses, should be delivered up in an hour."

At this two of the knights laughed aloud, but Front-de-Boeuf took a more serious view of the threat.

"How many are there outside?" he asked an attendant.

"Two hundred," replied the man.

"This comes of lending my castle for your enterprise," said Front-de-Boeuf, "that I now have this hornet's nest about my ears."

"For shame!" said the Templar. "Let us summon our people and sally forth. One knight or man-at-arms is worth twenty peasants."

"How can we sally forth," said Front-de-Boeuf, "when we have scarce enough men to defend the castle? All my other men-at-arms are at York."

"Then send a message to York and recall our people," said de Bracy.

"I will send you writing materials, then," said Front-de-Boeuf, "and you shall return an answer to this bold challenge, Sir Templar."

The Templar sat down accordingly and wrote a reply to the challenge, adding a request for a priest to be sent to the castle to comfort Cedric and his companions, whom he intended to execute that morning before noon as a warning to those who came to rescue them.

This letter, when ready, was delivered to the squire, and by him to the messenger who waited outside the gates. With this the messenger hurried back to the place where he had left Locksley and the Black Knight. Around them had now gathered more than two hundred bold yeomen, and these were

still arriving in answer to the summons of their leader, Locksley. Besides these, there were bands of Saxon peasants and servants from Cedric's estates, who had hastily answered the summons to help in the rescue.

"I wish," said the Black Knight, after he had read the reply, "that there was someone among us who could obtain admission to the castle in disguise."

"I will go," said Wamba the jester, and it was decided that he should be disguised as a priest and sent to the castle that he might find out the state of the defenses of the castle and how many men there were to defend it. With the help of the hermit's cowl and cloak he was soon disguised, and approached the gates of the castle.

"Who are you?" said the warder.

"I'm a poor priest," said Wamba, "come to comfort the prisoners secured in the castle."

"Thou art a bold friar," said the warder, "to come hither;" saying which, he left the turret and went to acquaint his master.

It needed all Wamba's courage to support him when he found himself in the presence of a man so dreaded as Front-de-Boeuf.

"Canst thou tell me, holy father," said he, "how many men there are outside?"

"At least five hundred, gallant sir," answered the supposed friar.

"What!" cried the Templar, who stood by; "muster the wasps so quickly? It's time to stifle such a mischievous brood." Then taking Front-de-Boeuf aside, he said, "Knowest thou the priest?"

"He is a stranger from a distant convent," said Front-de-Boeuf.

"Then write a message to de Bracy's men, ordering them to come to our aid, and let the priest deliver it. In the meantime, that he suspect nothing, send him to the prisoners." So forthwith Wamba was conducted to the apartment where Cedric and Athelstane were.

"The blessing of St. Dunstan be with you!" said Wamba as he entered the room.

"Enter freely," said Cedric. "With what intent art thou come hither?"

"To bid you prepare for death," answered the jester.

"It is impossible!" replied Cedric, starting. "They dare not kill us."

"Alas!" said Wamba, "they will. You must prepare for death, noble Cedric, and you, gallant Athelstane."

"I am ready," answered Athelstane.

"Wait yet a moment, good uncle," said Wamba in his natural voice.

"By my faith," said Cedric, "I know that voice!"

"It is that of your trusty slave and jester," answered Wamba, throwing back his cowl. "Take a fool's advice and you will not be here long."

"How mean'st thou?" said Cedric.

"Take this frock and disguise thyself and march out quietly," answered Wamba.

"Leave thee in my stead!" said Cedric; "why, they would hang thee. No," said Cedric. "But I will agree to your changing places with Lord Athelstane."

"No," said Wamba, "I'll die for my born master, the son of Hereward, but not for a stranger."

"Villain," said Cedric, "the fathers of Athelstane were Kings of England. And if I go, then," he added, "is there any prospect of rescue from without?"

"Prospect!" echoed Wamba; "there are five hundred men. Go and farewell, master, and let my cap hang at Rotherwood in memory that I flung away my life for my master like a faithful—fool."

As he spoke these words, the tears stood in Cedric's eyes.

"Thy memory shall be preserved," he said, "and I trust that I shall find means to save the Lady Rowena and thee, noble Athelstane, and thee also, my poor Wamba."

The exchange of dresses was quickly accomplished and Cedric left the apartment. As he hurried through the castle he was suddenly confronted by Reginald Front-de-Boeuf. It was with difficulty he compelled himself to make obeisance to the haughty Baron.

"Hast thou prepared thy penitents for death, father?" he said.

"I found them," said Cedric, in such French as he knew, "prepared for death since they knew into whose hands they had fallen."

"How now, Sir Friar," replied Front-de-Boeuf; "thy speech, methinks, sounds Saxon."

"I was bred at the convent of a Saxon," said Cedric.

"It will soon be," said Front-de-Boeuf, "that a monk's cloak will protect a Saxon as little as a coat of mail."

"God's will be done," answered Cedric in a voice trembling with anger and which the knight put down to fear.

"Do me one service," he said, "and whatever happens, you shall be safe."

"Speak your commands," said Cedric.

"Follow me through this passage, then, that I may send thee out by the postern gate," and as he strode before him he schooled Cedric in the service he was to do.

"Thou seest the Saxon swine outside; do all you can to keep them from attacking the castle for twenty-four hours, then take this letter to the castle of Philip de Malvoisin and ask him to send to York for help." As the knight opened the postern for Cedric, he said: "Remember, if thou failest in thy errand, I'll flay off thy cowl and skin too."

CHAPTER XI

"TO THE BATTLEMENTS"

Returning to his hall, Front-de-Boeuf ordered that the two prisoners, Cedric and Athelstane, should be brought before him. His commands were obeyed, and the two captives soon stood before him under guard.

"How do you like your entertainment here, dog?" he said, turning to the one he thought was Cedric. "What will you pay me to spare your life?"

"Nothing," said Wamba.

"Saint Genevieve!" said Front-de-Boeuf; "what have we got here?"

And with this he struck off Cedric's cap from his servant's head.

"You dogs and varlets!" he exclaimed to his attendants. "Giles—Clement—what have you brought me here?"

"I think I can tell you," said de Bracy, who had just entered. "This is Cedric's jester."

"I will settle it then for them both," said Front-de-Boeuf; "they shall hang on the same gallows. Fiends of hell! It must have been the Saxon boar I let out at the postern. Dost thou not see, de Bracy, that he has our communication and will now know its contents? What have we to expect but that they will instantly storm the castle?"

"To the battlements, then," said de Bracy. "Call the Templar. Let us do our best and the Saxon outlaws might as well try to scale the clouds as the walls of this castle." So saying, he opened a latticed window which led to a balcony and immediately called back—"Saint Dennis! the archers

swarm like a cloud about the walls, protected by planks and large shields."

Reginald Front-de-Boeuf went to look out also, and then snatching his bugle, blew a long blast, and commanded his men to their posts on the walls.

De Bracy now went to the eastern side of the castle to direct the defense, while the Templar went to the western. "By my faith!" he said as he turned to go to his post, "these men approach with discipline. They must be commanded by some noble knight or gentleman, skillful in war."

"I espy him," said de Bracy, who had been looking out. "I see the waving of a knight's crest and the gleam of armour. By Saint Dennis, he is the same Black Knight who overthrew you at Ashby, Front-de-Boeuf."

"So much the better," replied Front-de-Boeuf, "that he comes here to give me my revenge."

Each knight now repaired to his post, and at the head of the few followers whom they were able to muster, and who were insufficient to defend such a large castle, they awaited calmly the threatened assault.

The reader may have guessed that the litter contained the fallen hero, Ivanhoe. When he sank down and seemed abandoned by all the world, it was Rebecca who prevailed on her father Isaac to have him carried away to a house near Ashby where many Jews were lodging. Here Rebecca bound up his wounds and nursed him, though it was difficult to restrain his impatience when he heard that his faithful servant Gurth was made prisoner by his father.

"The brother of my King," he said, "by whom I was honoured, is raising his arm to take his crown; be wise, maiden, and let me go."

"Nay," said Rebecca, "thou art too weak; be patient and you will recover."

Ivanhoe was convinced by the reasoning of Rebecca, and obeyed; and one morning, soon after, she pronounced him well enough to be moved. He was still too weak to stand or ride a horse, however, so he was placed in the horse litter which had brought him from the lists, and every precaution taken for his travelling with ease. Isaac, with the fear of robbers and thieves ever before him, travelled at a very great speed, thus passing the more leisurely and ease-loving Cedric and his party. The reader already knows how abruptly their journey ended, and how the Jew and his daughter, with the litter, were permitted to continue their journey with Cedric. After the attack, they were, with the others of the party, taken to Front-de-Boeuf's castle.

De Bracy, though he recognised Ivanhoe when he was carried into the castle, was too chivalrous to betray him to Front-de-Boeuf, who would have had no scruple about putting him to death. On the other hand, de Bracy would not liberate a rival suitor to the hand of the Lady Rowena, as the events of the tournament had shown him to be. He, therefore, caused him to be carried to a distant apartment in the castle, where he was nursed by an old woman. When the attack on the castle was made, however, in the excitement Rebecca was able to make her way to her patient once more, and bending over this couch, felt his pulse.

"Is it you, gentle maiden?" he asked. "Thanks to your skill, I am better."

At this moment there was great clamour and bustle in the castle, for the attack had begun. They could hear the voices of the knights calling to their followers, and Ivanhoe, as he heard these war-like sounds, grew restless and impatient.

"If I could but drag myself to yonder window," he said, "that I might see how the brave game goes!"

"You may not," said Rebecca. "I myself will stand at the lattice and describe to you what passes."

"You must not—you shall not!" exclaimed Ivanhoe; "the archers will shoot you. Rebecca, dear Rebecca, this is no maiden's pastime; do not expose thyself; at least cover thyself with yonder ancient shield and show as little of your person as possible."

Following Ivanhoe's directions, she was thus able to describe what was passing without the castle and report to him. From here, she could now see that the skirts of the wood seemed lined with archers, and that it was on this side that the defenders seemed to expect the greatest danger to the castle.

"Under what banner are they?" asked Ivanhoe.

"Under no ensign of war which I can observe," answered Rebecca.

"Canst thou see any leaders?" he asked.

"A knight clad in sable armour is the most conspicuous; he alone is armed from head to heel."

"What device does he bear on his shield?" replied Ivanhoe.

"Something resembling a bar of iron and a padlock."

"Seem there no other leaders?" exclaimed the anxious inquirer.

"None of mark and distinction that I can behold," said Rebecca; "but, doubtless, the other side of the castle is also attacked. God of Zion! They are attacking now; and as she spoke, Ivanhoe heard the assailants shouting their battle cry, "St. George for merry England!"

The archers, trained by their woodland pastimes, aimed their arrows so well that no defender dared show on the castle walls. This heavy discharge continued thick and sharp.

"And I must lie here like a bedridden monk!" exclaimed Ivanhoe. "Look from the window once again, kind maiden. What dost thou see now?"

"Nothing but a cloud of arrows," replied Rebecca. "Where is the knight?"

"I see him not," answered Rebecca.

"Foul craven!" exclaimed Ivanhoe; "is he afraid?"

"No, no," said Rebecca. "I see him now; he leads a party close under the outer barrier. Now they are pulling down the piles and palisades. His black plume floats above the throng. Now there is a breach and they are fighting hand to hand." Then she uttered a shriek. "He is down!—he is down!"

"Who is down?" said Ivanhoe excitedly.

"The Black Knight," answered Rebecca faintly. "No," she exclaimed, "he is up again; his sword is broken, but he snatches an axe from a yeoman. Now he is fighting Front-de-Boeuf hand to hand. Now he falls."

"Who falls?" said Ivanhoe.

"Front-de-Boeuf," answered the Jewess. "The Templar and his men rush to the rescue; their united efforts compel the Black Knight to pause while they drag Front-de-Boeuf within the walls. Now they have won the barriers and they press hard upon the outer walls; some plant ladders and swarm up like bees. Now the ladders are thrown down, but the Black Knight approaches the postern gate with his huge axe."

"By Saint John of Acre!" said Ivanhoe, "methought there was but one man in England that might do such a deed."

"The postern gate shakes," continued Rebecca; "it crashes—it is splintered by his blows—they rush in—the outwork is won. Oh, God! they throw the defenders from the walls into the moat. Now it is over for the time," said Rebecca; "our friends are strengthening themselves."

"Surely," said Ivanhoe, "they will not now abandon the attack. See'st thou the Black Knight now? Why, his deeds are those of a hero. Can'st thou see if he has any motto on his shield?"

"No," said Rebecca. "All about him is black as the raven's wing. Alas," she continued, leaving her position at the window now that there was a lull in the fighting, "all this excitement and yearning after action will injure your health. How could'st thou hope to take part till thine own wound is healed?"

Soon after this, Ivanhoe, worn out with the excitement, fell asleep. Rebecca then wrapped herself closely in her veil and sat down at a distance from his couch to watch.

CHAPTER XII

THE CASTLE BURNS

During the interval of quiet which followed the first success of the besiegers, the Templar and de Bracy held brief council in the hall of the castle.

"Where is Front-de-Boeuf?" said the latter. "Men say he is slain."

"He lives," said the Templar coolly; "but however he had been armed, he must have gone down to yonder fatal axe and he cannot live."

"How think you, Sir Brian? had we better not make terms and give up the prisoners?" said de Bracy.

"For shame!" said the Templar. "Give up our prisoners to a troop of outlaws and make ourselves objects of ridicule? The ruins of this castle shall bury me first."

"Let us to the walls then," said de Bracy. "No man, Turk or Templar, ever feared death less than I do."

Meanwhile the lord of the castle lay upon a bed of bodily pain and mental agony. As he saw life departing, all his crimes crowded back on his mind, and he had newly awakened feelings of horror, and his heart was appalled as he now faced death. And as he lay, unable to move, a thick vapour filled the room.

"By heaven," he gasped as he felt himself suffocating, "the castle is on fire!" In the extremity of his agony he shouted for his attendants. "Clement! Giles! I burn here unaided. To the rescue!—Bois-Guilbert to the rescue! It is Front-de-Boeuf calling you, brother-in-arms. Do you abandon me to perish? They hear me not—they cannot hear me—my voice is lost in the din of battle. The fire is now burning the floor below," and

in the mad frenzy of despair, the wretch shouted with the shouts of the fighters. And now the red fire flashes through the smoke. But it is impossible further to relate his last dying words.

Outside the castle the besiegers were preparing to renew the attack on the castle itself. The Black Knight had caused a raft to be built, and this was thrown out across the moat towards the castle wall. Well aware of the necessity of taking the foe by surprise, he dashed across the slippery bridge, closely followed by Cedric, and reached the opposite side. Here he began to thunder with his axe upon the gate of the castle, protected partly from the shot and stones which the defenders hurled down by the ruins of the former drawbridge. The followers of the knight had no such shelter, and two were shot down, while the others retreated. The situation of Cedric and the Black Knight was now truly dangerous.

"Shame on ye!" cried de Bracy, "to let two dogs keep their station under the walls. Get lever and pick-axes, and hurl down yonder stone carving on them."

"St. George!" cried Locksley, "leave you those two brave men alone? Make in, and the castle is ours." With this he bent his bow and shot an arrow through the breast of one of the men who was working under de Bracy's directions. He shot an arrow into a second also. And now the men on the wall were afraid to endanger themselves to loosen the heavy stonework.

"Give me the lever, cowards!" said de Bracy, and he worked at the stone.

Thrice did Locksley send an arrow at de Bracy, and each time they bounded off his armour. The stone seemed now about to fall, and already tottered, when the Templar ran to de Bracy.

"All is lost, de Bracy!" he cried. "The castle burns."

"Thou art mad to say so!" said de Bracy.

"It is all in flames on the western side. I have striven in vain to extinguish it. Lead thy men down as if to sally out," he went on coolly. "Throw open the postern gate; there are but two men there—fling them into the moat. I will charge the main gate, and if we can regain the barbican, we may hold out till we are relieved."

De Bracy hastily drew his men together and rushed down to the postern gate, which he caused to be hastily thrown open. But scarce was this done ere the Black Knight, exerting his great strength, forced his way inward, despite de Bracy and his followers.

"Dogs!" said de Bracy, "will ye let two men win our only pass for safety?"

"He is the devil!" said one of his followers, giving way before the Black Knight.

And now the vaulted passage to the postern rang with furious blows as de Bracy himself rushed at the Black Knight with his sword. Valiantly did he fight, but he was no match for the Black Knight, and soon he received a blow which stretched him on the ground.

"Yield, de Bracy," said the Black Knight, stooping over him.

"I will not yield to an unknown conqueror," said de Bracy faintly.

At this the Black Champion bent down and whispered something, at which de Bracy immediately yielded.

"I will await your orders," he said; "but let me tell you what it imports you to know. Wilfred of Ivanhoe is wounded, and a prisoner and will perish in the burning castle."

"Wilfred of Ivanhoe!" exclaimed the Black Knight. "The life of every man in the castle shall be forfeit if a hair of his head is singed. Show me his chamber!"

"Ascend yon winding stair," said de Bracy; "it leads to his apartment."

During this combat, Cedric, at the head of a body of men, seeing that the postern was open, had pushed across the bridge and driven back de Bracy's followers, many of whom yielded. As the fire gained, symptoms of it became apparent to Ivanhoe and Rebecca. He had been awakened from his brief slumber by the noise of the battle. At length volumes of smoke rolled into the chamber.

"Fly, Rebecca, and save your own life," said Ivanhoe.

"I will not fly," answered Rebecca. "We will be saved, or perish together."

Just then the Templar rushed into the apartment.

"I have come to save thee, Rebecca," he said.

"Alone," answered Rebecca, "I will not be saved. Save the wounded knight and my father."

"I will not," said the Templar. "I come to save thee," and ignoring the shrieks of the terrified maiden, he seized her and carried her from the apartment, while Ivanhoe shouted after him: "Traitor! Hound!"

It was at this moment the Black Knight rushed into Wilfred's apartment.

"I had not found thee, Wilfred, if it had not been for thy shouts."

"If thou be'st true knight," said Ivanhoe, "think not of me, but save the Lady Rowena and the Jewess—also noble Cedric."

"In their turn," answered the Black Knight, "but thine first," and seizing Ivanhoe, he carried him off.

The noble Cedric had by now saved the Lady Rowena, and all the prisoners had been rescued; the besiegers went from apartment to apartment, carrying off the treasure they

found. Meanwhile the Templar had escaped and ridden off with Rebecca, accompanied by his Saracen slaves.



HE SEIZED HER AND CARRIED HER FROM THE APARTMENT.

The towering flames had now surmounted every obstruction and rose to the evening skies, one huge beacon. Tower after tower crashed down, while Locksley called to his followers:

"Stout yeomen, the den of tyrants is no more. Let each bring his spoil to one chosen place at the Trysting-tree, for there at break of day we will divide the treasure together with our allies in this great deed of vengeance."

At daylight the outlaws all assembled at the Trysting-tree, where they had spent the night in refreshing themselves. The spoils were indeed large, and included plate and rich armour, yet no one ventured to appropriate any portion, which was brought into one common mass. Then Locksley mounted a throne of turf, and after assigning a seat to the Black Knight, proceeded to divide the spoils amongst Cedric's followers and his own. Just then, however, Cedric rode up.

"Good sirs," he said, "my heart is oppressed, for the noble Athelstane is no more. A sufficient guard must be provided for the Lady Rowena, who desires to return to Rotherwood. I waited but to render thanks to thee and thy bold yeomen for the life and honour ye have saved. As for the booty, neither I nor any of mine will accept any share."

As Rowena now turned her steed towards Locksley's seat, he rose with all his yeomen to receive her.

"God bless you and requite you," she said, "and if ever the Normans should drive you from these forests, remember that Rowena has forests of her own, where you will be free to roam and hunt."

"Thanks, gentle lady," said Locksley, as she turned her palfrey to depart.

As Cedric was about to follow her, he turned to the Black Knight and earnestly entreated him to accompany him to Rotherwood.

"To Rotherwood will I come, brave Saxon, and that speedily; but as now pressing matters detain me from your halls. Peradventure when I come thither I shall have a boon to ask."

"It is granted ere spoken," said Cedric as he rode away.

"Noble Knight," said Locksley as the Black Champion mounted his horse to depart, "disdain not to accept a bugle which an English yeoman recently won at Ashby, and if ye are ever hard pressed in these forests, as happeneth oft to a gallant knight, sound it three times and it may well chance ye shall find helpers and rescue."

"Long live our leader and the Black Knight!" shouted the yeomen; "and may he soon use our service."

Just at this moment there was a shout of welcome as the Friar, who had fought so well before the castle, and was one of Locksley's band, appeared, leading prisoner the Jew Isaac.

"Where did you find him?" said Locksley.

"By St. Dunstan!" said the Friar, "I found him in the cellars of the castle when I went to look for booty."

"Well," said Locksley, "you must consider what you will pay us to set you free after rescuing you from the castle. And now I have another prisoner to examine," and he called to two yeomen, who brought in the Prior of Jorvaulx, whom they had captured. He was at the same time proud and yet in bodily terror as he was brought before Locksley.

"Now, Sir Prior, you must pay a good, round sum as ransom if you wish to return to your convent. Here, Jew," he called to Isaac, "you have had much dealing with the convent of Jorvaulx; what sum do you think the Prior should pay?"

"I think six hundred crowns the wily Prior might pay!" said Isaac.

"Six hundred crowns!" said the Prior. "Where am I to find it?"

It was at last decided that Isaac should pay his ransom, and he also undertook to find the money for the Prior to ransom himself if the Prior would send a message asking the Templar to give up his daughter, for the yeomen had seen him riding off with Rebecca and had told Isaac of this. To induce the Templar to give up Rebecca, the Jew promised to pay him 600 crowns as ransom. To this the Prior agreed, and wrote the message, which was given to the Jew with directions to take it to the Pre-ceptory of Templestowe. With this in his possession he set out with all haste to rescue Rebecca from the clutches of the Templar.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BLACK KNIGHT

When the Black Knight left the Trysting-tree of the generous outlaw, he held his way straight to a neighbouring religious house to which the wounded Ivanhoe had been carried under the guidance of the faithful Gurth. Here the Black Knight found him, and after spending some time with him, said:

"We will meet at Coningsburgh, where thy father, Cedric, holds the funeral ceremonies for his noble relation. I would see your Saxon kindred together and become better acquainted with them, and it shall be my task to reconcile thee with thy father." So saying, he took an affectionate farewell of Ivanhoe, who expressed an anxious desire to attend upon his deliverer. "Rest this day; thou hast scarce strength enough yet. I will take the honest Wamba as my guide," and so he set out. The same day Ivanhoe borrowed a horse, and commanding Gurth to keep close to his side, followed the track of the Black Knight into the forest.

Meanwhile the Black Knight and his guide were pacing at their leisure the paths of the forest. Suddenly Wamba, who had been amusing the knight with quaint sayings, and indulging in various antics as he sat on his horse, spoke seriously.

"If I mistake not," he said, "there is a company in yonder brake, that are on the lookout for us."

"What makes thee judge so?" said the knight.

"Because I have twice noticed men amongst the trees. If they were honest men, they would keep to the path."

"By my faith!" said the knight closing his visor, "I believe thou art right." As he spoke, three arrows flew at the

same instant from the suspected spot against his head and breast.

"Let us close with them, Wamba," he said, and he rode straight at the thicket. He was met by six or seven men-at-arms, who ran against him with their lances. Three of the weapons struck him and splintered with as little effect as if they were driven against a tower of steel. The Black Knight's eyes seemed to flash fire even through the aperture of his visor. He raised himself in his stirrups with an air of dignity, and exclaimed, "What means this, my masters?" The men made no other reply than by drawing their swords and attacking him on every side, crying, "Die, tyrant!"

"Ha! Saint Edward! Saint George!" said the Black Knight, striking down two men; "have we traitors here?"

His opponents, dangerous as they were, gave way before him, for his arm dealt death at every blow, and it seemed as if he was to gain the battle, though against such heavy odds. Suddenly a knight, in blue armour, who had hitherto kept in the background, spurred forward with his lance, and taking aim at the horse and not its rider, wounded the noble animal mortally.

"That was a felon stroke!" exclaimed the Black Knight, as the horse fell, bearing him to the earth.

At this moment Wamba sounded the bugle, for the whole incident had passed so quickly that he had not had time to do so sooner. The sudden sound made the murderers give way for a moment, and Wamba rushed forward and assisted the Black Knight to rise.

"Shame on ye!" cried the knight in blue armour; "are ye afraid of a jester with a bugle?"

Animated by these words, they attacked the Black Knight anew, whose best refuge was now to place his back against an oak, and fight with his sword. The other knight, watching for a moment when his antagonist was most closely

pressed, galloped against him, lance in hand. At this moment the Jester, seeing his intention, and hovering on the skirts of the fight, where he was little noticed by the men-at-arms, effectually checked the intentions of the Blue Knight by slashing his horse across the legs with his sword as it passed him, thus bringing it crashing to the ground with its rider. Still, however, the situation of the Black Knight was very dangerous, pressed by so many men, and he began to be fatigued when an arrow suddenly stretched dead his nearest foe, and a band of yeomen broke forth from the glade, headed by the forester, Locksley, and the jovial Friar, who soon disposed of the ruffians, killing some and wounding others. The Black Knight thanked his deliverers with a dignity they had not before observed in his bearing.

"And now," he said, "who is this knight who thus leads assassins?"

Wamba, with no gentle hand, rolled over the Blue Knight and undid his helmet. As he did so the Black Knight showed much surprise.

"Waldemar Fitzurse!" he said in astonishment. "What could urge you to such a deed? Stand back!" he said to those around. "I would speak to him alone. And now, Fitzurse, confess who set thee on this traitorous deed."

"Thy father's son, thy brother John," said Waldemar.

The Black Knight's eyes sparkled with indignation. After a moment he said: "Take thy life, Fitzurse; I release you on condition you leave England and never mention the name of John of Anjou as he that set you on to this felony. If thou breathest aught of this, by St. George! I will hang thee. Let this knight have a horse, Locksley."

"But that I judge I listen to a voice that must be obeyed, I would send an arrow through him," said the forester.

"Thou bearest an English heart, Locksley, and guess right. I am Richard, King of England!"

On hearing this, Locksley and his yeomen at once kneeled before him, and at the same time tendered their allegiance and implored his pardon for their offences.

"Rise, my friends," said Richard. "Arise, my liegemen, and be good subjects in future, and thou, brave Locksley—"

"Call me no longer Locksley, my liege, for I am Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest."

"King of outlaws!" said the King, "be assured that no deed shall be remembered to thy disadvantage;" and to the jovial friar of Copmanhurst, who, as you know, was also known to Robin Hood's followers as Friar Tuck and who was now kneeling before the King, he said, "Thou shalt have good meat and plenty of good wine and ale yearly delivered to you, and if there is not enough to satisfy thy hunger and thirst, thou must come to Court and become acquainted with my butler."

At this the Friar bowed profoundly.

"And Wamba," he went on, noting the Jester, "thy good service shall not be forgotten."

At this moment two newcomers appeared, and as they rode up it was seen that they were Ivanhoe and Gurth. The astonishment of Ivanhoe was beyond all bounds when he saw his master besprinkled with blood. He hesitated whether to address Richard as King or Black Knight.

"Fear not, Wilfred, to address me as Richard Plantagenet, for we are now in the company of true English hearts. Treason hath been with us, Ivanhoe," went on the King, "but thanks to these brave men, treason hath met its deserts. And now, I bethink me, thou art a traitor too," he said smiling, "for were not our orders positive that thou shouldst repose until thy wound was healed?"

"It is healed now, noble Prince," said Ivanhoe; "but wilt thou not declare thyself and save thy unhappy country, which is threatened with civil war?"

"The time I spend in concealment, Wilfred, is necessary," answered the King, "to give my friends and faithful nobles time to assemble their forces, that when Richard's return is announced he should be at the head of such a force as enemies shall tremble to face, and thus subdue the meditated treason without bloodshed. In twenty-four hours I shall have such news from the south and north as shall enable me to advance on York. And now, sirs," went on Richard, "let us on to Coningsburgh and think no more of this."

CHAPTER XIV

AT CASTLE CONINGSBURGH

Later, the King, attended by Ivanhoe, Gurth and Wamba, arrived without further interruption at the castle of Coningsburgh.

When Richard Coeur-de-Lion and his small band approached the castle, a black flag was flying from the top of the tower, and numerous parties of mourners were approaching up the sides of the hill to the gate. As Richard and his followers entered the castle yard, a steward, struck by the good bearing of Richard and Ivanhoe, advanced to meet them, and soon conducted them to the entrance of the tower. As they entered the large round room, Wilfred took opportunity to muffle up his face in his mantle, so that his father should not recognise him until the King should give the signal.

Assembled in the apartment, round an oak table, were about a dozen of the most distinguished representatives of the neighbouring Saxon families. They were mostly elderly men, for the younger men had, like Ivanhoe, broken down the barriers which had so long separated the Norman conquerors and the Saxons, to the great displeasure of their seniors.

Cedric, seated amongst these men, seemed to be acknowledged now as their chief. Upon the entrance of Richard—known to him as the Black Knight—he rose gravely and welcomed him, raising a goblet at the same time. Richard, no stranger to the Saxon customs, returned the greeting with appropriate words, at the same time raising a cup which was handed to him.

After this, Cedric conducted Richard and Ivanhoe into the next apartment, where the body of Athelstane lay guarded by pious monks from the convent of St. Edmund's. After muttering a brief prayer here beside the bier, Cedric led them to a small room destined, as he informed them, for the exclusive accommodation of honourable guests. He assured them of every attention and was about to withdraw when the Black Knight took his hand.

"I crave to remind you, noble Thane, that when we last parted you promised to grant me a boon."

"It is granted ere named, noble knight," said Cedric.

"Know me, then," said the Black Knight, "as Richard Plantagenet."

"Richard of Anjou!" exclaimed Cedric, stepping back with the utmost astonishment.

"No, noble Cedric—Richard of England!—whose deepest wish is to see her sons united with each other. And now, worthy Thane, hast thou no knee for thy Prince?"

"To Norman blood it hath never bended," said Cedric.

"Reserve thy homage, then," said the monarch, "until I shall prove my right to it by my equal protection of Normans and English."

"Prince," answered Cedric, "I have ever done justice to thy bravery, nor am I ignorant of thy claim to the crown through thy descent from Matilda; but Matilda, though of royal Saxon blood, was not the heir to the monarchy."

"I will not dispute my title with thee, noble Thane," said Richard calmly. "And now to my boon. I require thee, on thy word, to forgive and receive to thy paternal affection the good knight, Wilfred of Ivanhoe. In this I have interest, wishing to see my friend happy and dissensions disappear amongst my people."

"And this is Wilfred!" said Cedric, pointing to his son.

"My father!—my father!" said Wilfred, prostrating himself at Cedric's feet; "grant me thy forgiveness!"

"Thou hast it, my son," said Cedric, raising him up. "The son of Hereward knows how to keep his word. Thou art about to speak," he said sternly, "and I guess the topic. The Lady Rowena must complete two years in mourning ere she weds. Were we to treat of a new union now, the ghost of Athelstane would rise."

It seemed as if Cedric's words had raised a specter, for as he uttered them, a door flew open, and Athelstane entered. The effect of this apparition on the persons present was utterly appalling.

"In the name of God!" said Cedric, recovering himself, "if thou art mortal, speak!"

"I will," said the specter composedly, "when I have gained breath. I am alive."

"Why, noble Athelstane," said the Black Knight, "I myself saw thee struck down by the fierce Templar."

"You thought amiss, Sir Knight," said Athelstane. "No, the Templar's sword turned in his hand as he struck the blow, so that I was able to ward it off with my mace, though it still hit my head heavily and I fell, stunned, indeed, but unwounded, so that I never recovered my senses until I found myself in my coffin; an open one, by good luck."

"And now," said Cedric, "tell this Norman prince, Richard of Anjou, that lion-hearted as he is, he shall not hold the throne while a descendant of Edward the Confessor lives."

"How!" said Athelstane; "is this King Richard?"

"It is Richard Plantagenet himself," said Cedric; "yet I need hardly remind thee that coming here a guest he cannot be detained prisoner. Thou knowest thy duty as host."

"Ay, by my faith!" said Athelstane; "and I know my duty as a subject, for I tender him my allegiance. I have had enough of plots, for since they were first hatched I have had nothing but journeys, indigestions and blows, and they can only end in the murder of some thousands of folk. I tell you I will be king nowhere but in my own castle."

"And my fair ward Rowena, then," said Cedric—"I trust you intend not to desert her?"

"Father Cedric," said Athelstane, "be reasonable. The Lady Rowena cares not for me. She loves my kinsman and your son Wilfred. Here, Wilfred," he called as he turned round; but Ivanhoe was nowhere to be seen. It was at length discovered that a Jew had been to seek him and that he had been seen hurrying away from the castle with Gurth.

"Well," said Athelstane, "I turn to you, noble King Richard, to take vows of allegiance as a liege subject—"

But King Richard was gone also, and it was found that, shortly after Ivanhoe had left, he had secured the Jew, and, after a moment's speech, compelled him to mount a horse and set off at a speed which Wamba said would be the death of the Jew.

CHAPTER XV

THE RESCUE OF REBECCA

When Ivanhoe left Coningsburgh in answer to the Jew's message, he rode hard to Templestowe, where the Templar had taken Rebecca. Here he found the Templar, whom he challenged to mortal combat. After a fierce fight the Templar was defeated, and reeling from his horse, fell to the ground and expired. At this moment King Richard rode up.

"I am too late," he said, looking round. "I had doomed Bois-Guilbert for my own prisoner. Ivanhoe, was this well, to take on thee such a venture, and thou scarce able to keep thy saddle yet?"

"Heaven, my Liege," answered Ivanhoe, "hath taken this proud man for his victim."

By now Rebecca was locked in her father's arms.

"Let us go," he said, "and throw ourselves at the feet of the good youth whose strong arm has rescued you."

"No, no," said Rebecca "not now—not now! I most devoutly acknowledged his service, and it shall be more so; but not now, father; grant my request—not now! Thou seest that King Richard is with him."

"True, my dear Rebecca," said Isaac, "then let us hence! He is, no doubt, short of money now he has returned from Palestine, and he may want some of mine and blame me for lending it to Prince John."

Hurrying his daughter away, Isaac conveyed her to the house of another Jew, where he left her in safety.

And now as time went on, Cedric answered the summons of King Richard, and seeing his hopes of restoring a Saxon King to the throne were at an end, he obeyed and made

his vows of allegiance to Richard. King Richard, on this occasion, paid Cedric so much personal attention and delighted so much in his blunt humour that ere he had been a guest at the King's court for seven days, Cedric had given his consent for the marriage of his ward to his son Ivanhoe.



AFTER A FIERCE FIGHT THE TEMPLAR WAS DEFEATED.

The truth was that now Athelstane had refused to marry Rowena, Cedric was proud that his son, whose growing fame gave him pleasure, should be allied to a descendant of King Alfred, and so their marriage was celebrated in the noble minster of York. The King himself attended, and from the countenance which he afforded on this and other occasions to the distressed Saxons, who had always been looked down on and sneered at by the Normans, he gave them a certain promise of attaining their just right in future, equally with the Normans. Upon the second morning after her marriage, Rowena was made acquainted that a damsel wished to see her, and she commanded that she should be admitted. When the stranger entered, she dropped on one knee and kissed the hem of Rowena's dress.

"What means this?" said Rowena.

"It means," said Rebecca (for it was she), rising up, "that I am the unhappy Jewess whom your husband rescued, and I may lawfully, and without rebuke, pay my debt of gratitude to you."

"Damsel," said Rowena, "Wilfred of Ivanhoe on that day paid back in slight measure the debt he owed you for saving his life. Is there aught remains in which he or I can serve you?"

"Nothing," said Rebecca, "unless you will give him my grateful farewell."

"You leave England, then?" said Rowena.

"I leave it, lady," said Rebecca, "ere this moon changes. My father hath a brother high in favour with the King of Grenada; thither we go, secure of peace and protection. Farewell!" said she, and glided from the apartment, leaving Rowena surprised at the visit.

The fair Saxon related the incident to her husband, on whose mind it left a deep impression. He lived long and

happily with Rowena, for they were attached to each other by bonds of early affection.

Ivanhoe distinguished himself in the service of King Richard, and was graced with further marks of his favour. He might have risen still higher, but for the premature death of the heroic Richard, who was killed while storming a castle in France. The brave Gurth was given land, and being made a freeman by Cedric, lived long to render good service to Wilfred as his squire, while the brave Wamba also lived long and happily, after being greatly rewarded for his services. As time went on, the Saxons and Normans intermingled more and more, and married one with the other till the races became united in general peace.

Richard spared Prince John and sent him abroad to reside with their mother till, at his death, John secured the crown of England. It was in his reign that Normans and Saxons rose together to force the King to give greater justice to his subjects, thus uniting the two races in a common cause.