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CHAPTER I

HOW ENGLAND BECAME CHRISTIAN

One day, in the far-off sixth-century, a youthful deacon of the Roman Church walked into the slave-market of Rome, situated at one extremity of the ancient Forum. Gregory, his name; his origin from an ancient noble family, whose genealogy could be traced back to the days of the early Caesars. A youth was this of imperial powers of mind, one who, had he lived when Rome was mistress of the physical world, might have become emperor; but who, living when Rome had risen to lordship over the spiritual world, became pope,—the famous Gregory the Great.

In the Forum the young deacon saw that which touched his sympathetic soul. Here cattle were being sold; there, men. His eyes were specially attracted by a group of youthful slaves, of aspect such as he had never seen before. They were bright of complexion, their hair long and golden, their expression of touching innocence. Their fair faces were strangely unlike the embrowned complexions to which he had been accustomed, and he stood looking at them in admiration, while the slave-dealers extolled their beauty of face and figure.

"From what country do these young men come?" asked Gregory.

"They are English, Angles," answered the dealers.

"Not Angles, but angels," said the deacon, with a feeling of poetic sentiment, "for they have angel-like faces. From what country come they?" he repeated.

"They come from Deira," said the merchants.

"*De irâ*" he rejoined, fervently; "ay, plucked from God's ire and called to Christ's mercy. And what is the name of their king?"

"Ella," was the answer.

"Alleluia shall be sung there!" cried the enthusiastic young monk, his imagination touched by the significance of these answers. He passed on, musing on the incident which had deeply stirred his sympathies, and considering how the light of Christianity could be shed upon the pagan lands whence these fair strangers came.

It was a striking picture which surrounded that slave-market. From where the young deacon stood could be seen the capitol of ancient Rome and the grand proportions of its mighty Coliseum; not far away the temple of Jupiter Stator displayed its magnificent columns, and other stately edifices of the imperial city came within the circle of vision. Rome had ceased to be the mistress of the world, but it was not yet in ruins, and many of its noble edifices still stood almost in perfection. But paganism had vanished. The cross of Christ was the dominant symbol. The march of the warriors of the legions was replaced by long processions of cowed and solemn monks. The temporal imperialism of Rome had ceased, the spiritual had begun; instead of armies to bring the world under the dominion of the sword, that ancient city now sent out its legions of priests to bring it under the dominion of the cross.

Gregory resolved to be one of the latter. A fair new field for missionary labor lay in that distant island, peopled by pagans whose aspect promised to make them noble subjects of Christ's kingdom upon earth. The enthusiastic youth left Rome to seek Saxon England, moved thereto not by desire of earthly glory, but of heavenly reward. But this was not to be. His friends deemed that he was going to death, and begged the pope to order his return. Gregory was brought back and England remained pagan.

Years went by. The humble deacon rose to be bishop of Rome and head of the Christian world. Gregory the Great, men named him, though he styled himself "Servant of the servants of God," and lived in like humility and simplicity of style as when he was a poor monk.

The time at length came to which Gregory had looked forward. Ethelbert, king of Kentish England, married Bertha, daughter of the French king Charibert, a fervent Christian woman. A few priests came with her to England, and the king gave them a ruined Christian edifice, the Church of St. Martin, outside the walls of Canterbury, for their worship. But it was overshadowed by a pagan temple, and the worship of Odin and Thor still dominated Saxon England.

Gregory took quick advantage of this opportunity. The fair faces of the English slaves still appealed to his pitying soul, and he now sent Augustine, prior of St. Andrew's at Rome, with a band of forty monks as missionaries to England. It was the year of our Lord 597. The missionaries landed at the very spot where Hengist the Saxon had landed more than a century before. The one had brought the sword to England, the others brought the cross. King Ethelbert knew of their coming and had agreed to receive them; but, by the advice of his priests, who feared conjuration and spells of magic, he gave them audience in the open air, where such spells have less power. The place was on the chalk-down above Minster, whence, miles away across the intervening marshes, one may to-day behold the distant tower of Canterbury cathedral.

The scene, as pictured to us in the chronicles of the monks, was a picturesque and inspiring one. The hill selected for the meeting overlooked the ocean. King Ethelbert, with Queen Bertha by his side, awaited in state his visitors. Around were grouped the warriors of Kent and the priests of Odin. Silence reigned, and in the distance the monks could be seen advancing in solemn procession, singing as they came. He who came first bore a large silver crucifix. Another carried a banner with the painted image of Christ. The deep and solemn music, the venerable and peaceful aspect of the strangers, the solemnity of the occasion, touched the heart of Ethelbert, already favorably inclined, as we may believe, to the faith of his loved wife.

Augustine had brought interpreters from Gaul. By their aid he convey to the king the message he had been sent to bring.

Ethelbert listened in silence, the queen in rapt attention, the warriors and priests doubtless with varied sentiments. The appeal of Augustine at an end, Ethelbert spoke.



CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

"Your words are fair," he said, "but they are new, and of doubtful meaning. For myself, I propose to worship still the gods of my fathers. But you bring peace and good words; you are welcome to my kingdom; while you stay here you shall have shelter and protection."

His land was a land of plenty, he told them; food, drink, and lodging should be theirs, and none should do them wrong; England should be their home while they chose to stay.

With these words the audience ended. Augustine and his monks fell again into procession, and, with singing of psalms and display of holy emblems, moved solemnly towards the city of Canterbury, where Bertha's church awaited them. As they entered the city they sang:

"Turn from this city, O Lord, thine anger and wrath, and turn it from Thy holy house, for we have sinned." Then

Gregory's joyful cry of "Alleluia! Alleluia!" burst from their devout lips, as they moved into the first English church.

The work of the "strangers from Rome" proceeded but slowly. Some converts were made, but Ethelbert held aloof. Fortunately for Augustine, he had an advocate in the palace, one with near and dear speech in the king's ear. We cannot doubt that the gentle influence of Queen Bertha was a leading power in Ethelbert's conversion. A year passed. At its end the king gave way. On the day of Pentecost he was baptized. Christ had succeeded Odin and Thor on the throne of the English heart, for the story of the king's conversion carried his kingdom with it. The men of Kent, hearing that their king had adopted the new faith, crowded the banks of the Swale, eager for baptism. The under-kings of Essex and East Anglia became Christians. On the succeeding Christmas-day ten thousand of the people followed the example of their king. The new faith spread with wonderful rapidity through out the kingdom of Kent.

When word of this great event reached Pope Gregory at Rome his heart was filled with joy. He exultingly wrote to a friend that his missionaries had spread the religion of Christ "in the most remote parts of the world," and at once appointed Augustine archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England, that he might complete the work he had so promisingly begun. Such is the story of the Christianizing of England as told in the ancient chronicle of the venerable Bede, the earliest of English writers.

As yet only Kent had been converted. North of it lay the kingdom of Northumbria, still a pagan realm. The story of its conversion, as told by Bede, is of no less interest than that just related. Edwin was its king, a man of great ability for that early day. His prowess is shown in a proverb: "A woman with her babe might walk scathless from sea to sea in Edwin's day." The highways, long made dangerous by outlaw and ruthless warrior, were now safe avenues of travel; the springs by the roadside were marked by stakes, while brass cups beside them awaited the traveller's hand. Edwin ruled over all northern England, as

Ethelbert did over the south. Edinburgh was within his dominions, and from him it had its name,—Edwin's burgh, the city of Edwin.

Christianity came to this monarch's heart in some such manner as it had reached that of Ethelbert, through the appealing influence of his wife. A daughter of King Ethelbert had come to share his throne. She, like Bertha her mother, was a Christian. With her came the monk Paulinus, from the church at Canterbury. He was a man of striking aspect,—of tall and stooping form, slender, aquiline nose, and thin, worn face, round which fell long black hair. The ardent missionary, aided doubtless by the secret appeals of the queen, soon produced an influence upon the intelligent mind of Edwin. The monarch called a council of his wise men, to talk with them about the new doctrine which had been taught in his realm. Of what passed at that council we have but one short speech, but it is one that illuminates it as no other words could have done, a lesson in prose which is full of the finest spirit of poetry, perhaps the most picturesque image of human life that has ever been put into words.

"So seems to me the life of man, O king," said an aged noble, "as a sparrow's flight through the hall when you are sitting at meat in winter-tide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth, while outside all is storm of rain and snow. The sparrow flies in at one door, and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the fire within, and then, flying forth from the other, vanishes into the wintry darkness whence it came. So the life of man tarries for a moment in our sight; but of what went before it, or what is to follow it, we know nothing. If this new teaching tells us something more certain of these things, let us follow it."

Such an appeal could not but have a powerful effect upon his hearers. Those were days when men were more easily moved by sentiment than by argument. Edwin and his councillors heard with favoring ears. Not last among them was Coifi, chief priest of the idol-worship, whose ardent soul was stirred by the words of the old thane.

"None of your people, King Edwin, have worshipped the gods more busily than I," he said, "yet there are many who have been more favored and are more fortunate. Were these gods good for anything they would help their worshippers."

Grasping his spear, the irate priest leaped on his horse, and riding at full speed towards the temple sacred to the heathen gods, he hurled the warlike weapon furiously into its precincts. The lookers-on, nobles and commons alike, beheld his act with awe, in doubt if the deities of their old worship would not avenge with death this insult to their fane. Yet all remained silent; no thunders rent the skies; the desecrating priest sat his horse unharmed. When, then, he bade them follow him to the neighboring stream, to be baptized in its waters into the new faith, an eager multitude crowded upon his steps.

The spot where Edwin and his followers were baptized is thus described by Camden, in his "Description of Great Britain," etc.: "In the Roman times, not far from its bank upon the little river Foulness (where Wighton, a small town, but well-stocked with husbandmen, now stands), there seems to have formerly stood Delgovitia; as it is probable both from the likeness and the signification of the name. For the British word *Delgwe* (or rather *Ddelw*) signifies the statues or images of the heathen gods; and in a little village not far off there stood an idol-temple, which was in very great honor in the Saxon times, and, from the heathen gods in it, was then called Godmundingham, and now, in the same sense, Godmanham." It was into this temple that Coifi flung his desecrating spear, and in this stream that Edwin the king received Christian baptism.

But Christianity did not win England without a struggle. After the death of Ethelbert and Edwin, paganism revived and fought hard for the mastery. The Roman monks lost their energy, and were confined to the vicinity of Canterbury. Conversion came again, but from the west instead of the east, from Ireland instead of Rome.



AN ANGLO-SAXON KING.

Christianity had been received with enthusiasm in Erin's isle. Less than half a century after the death of St. Patrick, the

first missionary, flourishing Christian schools existed at Darrow and Armagh, letters and the arts were cultivated, and missionaries were leaving the shores of Ireland to carry the faith elsewhere. From the famous monastery which they founded at Iona, on the west coast of Scotland, came the new impulse which gave Christianity its fixed footing in England, and finally drove paganism from Britain's shores. Oswald, of Northumbria, became the bulwark of the new faith; Penda, of Mercia, the sword of heathendom; and a long struggle for religion and dominion ensued between these warlike chiefs. Oswald was slain in battle; Penda led his conquering host far into the Christian realm; but a new king, Oswi by name, overthrew Penda and his army in a great defeat, and the worship of the older gods in England was at an end. But a half-century of struggle and bloodshed passed before the victory of Christ over Odin was fully won.

CHAPTER II

KING ALFRED AND THE DANES

In his royal villa at Chippenham, on the left bank of the gently flowing Avon, sat King Alfred, buried in his books. It was the evening of the 6th of January, in the year 878, a thousand years and more backward in time. The first of English kings to whom a book had a meaning,—and the last for centuries afterwards,—Alfred, the young monarch, had an insatiable thirst for knowledge, a thirst then difficult to quell, for books were almost as rare as gold-mines in that day. When a mere child, his mother had brought to him and his brothers a handsomely illuminated book, saying,—

"I will give this to that one of you four princes who first learns to read."

Alfred won the book; so far as we know, he alone sought to win it, for the art of reading in those early times was confined to monks, and disdained by princes. Ignorance lay like a dismal cloud over England, ignorance as dense as the heart of the Dark Ages knew. In the whole land the young prince was almost alone in his thirst for knowledge; and when he made an effort to study Latin, in which language all worthy literature was then written, we are told that there could not be found throughout the length and breadth of the land a man competent to teach him that sealed tongue. This, however, loses probability in view of the fact that the monks were familiar with Latin and that Alfred succeeded in acquiring a knowledge of that language.

When little more than a boy Alfred became king. There was left him then little time for study, for the Danes, whose ships had long been descending in annual raids on England's shores, gave the youthful monarch an abundance of more active service. For years he fought them, yet in his despite Guthrum, one of their ablest chiefs, sailed up the Severn, seized upon a

wide region of the realm of Wessex, made Gloucester his capital, and defied the feebly-supported English king.

It was midwinter now, a season which the Danes usually spent in rest and revelry, and in which England gained some relief from their devastating raids. Alfred, dreaming of aught but war, was at home with his slender store of much-beloved books in his villa at Chippenham. With him were a few of his thanes and a small body of armed attendants, their enjoyment the pleasures of the chase and the rude sports of that early period. Doubtless, what they deemed the womanish or monkish tastes of their young monarch were objects of scorn and ridicule to those hardy thanes, upon whom ignorance lay like a thick garment. Yet Alfred could fight as well as read. They might disdain his pursuits; they must respect his prowess.

While the king lay thus in ease at Chippenham, his enemies at Gloucester seemed lost in enjoyment of their spoils. Guthrum had divided the surrounding lands among his victorious followers, the Saxons had been driven out, slain, or enslaved, and the brutal and barbarous victors dwelt in peace and revelry on their new lands, spending the winter in riot and wassail, and waiting for the spring time budding of the trees to renew the war with their Saxon foes.

Not so with Guthrum. He had sworn revenge on the Saxons. Years before, his father, a mighty chieftain, Ragnar by name, had fallen in a raid on England. His sons had vowed to Odin to wash out the memory of his death in English blood, and Guthrum now determined to take advantage of the midwinter season for a sudden and victorious march upon his unsuspecting enemy. If he could seize Alfred in his palace, the war might be brought to an end, and England won, at a single blow.

If we can take ourselves back in fancy to New Year's day of 878, and to an open plain in the vicinity of Gloucester, we shall see there the planted standard of Guthrum floating in the wind, while from every side armed horsemen are riding into the surrounding space. They know not why they come. A hasty

summons has been sent them to meet their chieftain here on this day, armed and mounted, and, loyal to their leader, and ever ready for war, they ride hastily in, until the Danish champion finds himself surrounded by a strong force of hardy warriors, eager to learn the cause of this midwinter summons.

"It is war," said Guthrum to his chiefs. "I have sworn to have England, and England shall be mine. The Saxons are scattered and at rest, not dreaming of battle and blood. Now is our time. A hard and sudden blow will end the war, and the fair isle of England will be the Raven's spoil."

We may still hear in fancy the wild shouts of approval with which this stirring declaration was heard. Visions of slaughter, plunder, and rich domains filled the souls of chiefs and men alike, and their eagerness to take to the field was such that they could barely wait to hear their leader's plans. "Alfred, the Saxon king, must be ours," said Guthrum. "He is the one man I dread in all the Saxon hosts. They have many hands, but only one head. Let us seize the head, and the hands are useless. Alfred is at Chippenham. Thither let us ride at speed."

Their bands were mustered, their arms examined, and food for the expedition prepared, and then to horse and away! Headlong over the narrow and forest-bordered roads of that day rode the host of Danes, in triumphant expectation of victory and spoil.

In his study sat Alfred, on the night of January 6, poring over an illuminated page; or mayhap he was deep in learned consultation with some monkish scholar, mayhap presiding at a feast of his thanes: we may fancy what we will, for history or legend fails to tell us how he was engaged on that critical evening of his life. But we may imagine a wide eyed Saxon sentinel, scared and hasty, breaking upon the monarch's leisure with the wild alarm cry,—

"Up and away, my king! The Danes are coming! hosts of them, armed and horsed! Up and away!"

Hardly had he spoken before the hoof beats of the advancing foe were heard. On they came, extending their lines as they rode at headlong speed, hoping to surround the villa and seize the king before the alarm could be given.

They were too late. Alfred was quick to hear, to heed, and to act. Forest bordered the villa; into the forest he dashed, his followers following in tumultuous haste. The Danes made what haste the obstructions in their way permitted. In a few minutes they had swept round the villa, with ringing shouts of triumph. In a few minutes more they were treading its deserted halls, Guthrum at their head, furious to find that his hoped-for prey had vanished and left him but the empty shell of his late home.

"After him!" cried the furious Dane. "He cannot be far. This place is full of signs of life. He has fled into the forest. After him! A king's prize for the man who seizes him."

In vain their search, the flying king knew his own woods too well to be overtaken by the Danes. Yet their far cries filled his ears, and roused him to thoughts of desperate resistance. He looked around on his handful of valiant followers.

"Let us face them!" he cried, in hot anger. "We are few, but we fight for our homes. Let us meet these baying hounds!"

"No, no," answered the wisest of his thanes. "It would be worse than rash, it would be madness. They are twenty—a hundred, mayhap—to our one. Let us fly now, that we may fight hereafter. All is not lost while our king is free, and we to aid him."

Alfred was quick to see the wisdom of this advice. He must bide his time. To strike now might be to lose all. To wait might be to gain all. He turned with a meaning look to his faithful thanes.

"In sooth, you speak well," he said. "The wisdom of the fox is now better than the courage of the lion. We must part here. The land for the time is the Danes'. We cannot hinder them.

They will search homestead and woodland for me. Before a fortnight's end they will have swarmed over all Wessex, and Guthrum will be lord of the land. I admire that man; he is more than a barbarian, he knows the art of war. He shall learn yet that Alfred is his match. We must part."

"Part?" said the thanes, looking at him in doubt. "Wherefore?"

"I must seek safety alone and in disguise. There are not enough of you to help me; there are enough to betray me to suspicion. Go your ways, good friends. Save yourselves. We will meet again before many weeks to strike a blow for our country. But the time is not yet."

History speaks not from the depths of that woodland whither Alfred had fled with his thanes. We cannot say if just these words were spoken, but such was the purport of their discourse. They separated, the thanes and their followers to seek their homes; Alfred, disguised as a peasant, to thread field and forest on foot towards a place of retreat which he had fixed upon in his mind. Not even to the faithfulest of his thanes did he tell the secret of his abode. For the present it must be known to none but himself.

Meanwhile, the cavalry of Guthrum were raiding the country far and wide. Alfred had escaped, but England lay helpless in their grasp. News travelled slowly in those days. Everywhere the Saxons first learned of the war by hearing the battle cry of the Danes. The land was overrun. England seemed lost. Its only hope of safety lay in a man who would not acknowledge defeat, a monarch who could bide his time.

The lonely journey of the king led him to the centre of Somersetshire. Here, at the confluence of the Tone and the Parret, was a small island, afterwards known as Ethelingay, or Prince's Island. Around it spread a wide morass, little likely to be crossed by his pursuers. Here, still disguised, the fugitive king sought a refuge from his foes.

For several months Alfred remained in this retreat, his place of refuge during part of the time being in the hut of a swineherd; and thereupon hangs a tale. Whether or not the worthy herdsman knew his king, certainly the weighty secret was not known to his wife. One day, while Alfred sat by the fire, his hands busy with his bow and arrows, his head mayhap busy with plans against the Danes, the good woman of the house was engaged in baking cakes on the hearth.

Having to leave the hut for a few minutes, she turned to her guest, and curtly bade him watch the cakes, to see that they did not get overdone.

"Trust me for that," he said.

She left the room. The cakes smoked on the hearth, yet he saw them not. The good wife returned in a brief space, to find her guest buried in a deep study, and her cakes burned to a cinder.

"What!" she cried, with an outburst of termagant spleen, "I warrant you will be ready enough to eat them by-and-by, you idle dog! and yet you cannot watch them burning under your very eyes."

What the king said in reply the tradition which has preserved this pleasant tale fails to relate. Doubtless it needed some of the swineherd's eloquence to induce his irate wife to make a fresh supply for their careless guest.

It had been Guthrum's main purpose, as we may be assured, in his rapid ride to Chippenham, to seize the king. In this he had failed; but the remainder of his project went successfully forward. Through Dorset, Berkshire, Wilts, and Hampshire rode his men, forcing the people everywhere to submit. The country was thinly settled, none knew the fate of the king, resistance would have been destruction, they bent before the storm, hoping by yielding to save their lives and some portion of their property from the barbarian foe. Those near the coast crossed with their families and movable effects to Gaul.

Elsewhere submission was general, except in Somersetshire, where alone a body of faithful warriors, lurking in the woods, kept in arms against the invaders.

Alfred's secret could not yet be safely revealed. Guthrum had not given over his search for him. Yet some of the more trusty of his subjects were told where he might be found, and a small band joined him in his morass-guarded isle. Gradually the news spread, and others sought the isle of Ethelingay, until a well-armed and sturdy band of followers surrounded the royal fugitive. This party must be fed. The island yielded little subsistence. The king was obliged to make foraging raids from his hiding place. Now and then he met and defeated straggling parties of Danes, taking from them their spoils. At other times, when hard need pressed, he was forced to forage on his own subjects.

Day by day the news went wider through Saxon homes, and more warriors sought their king. As the strength of his band increased, Alfred made more frequent and successful forays. The Danes began to find that resistance was not at an end. By Easter the king felt strong enough to take a more decided action. He had a wooden bridge thrown from the island to the shore, to facilitate the movements of his followers, while at its entrance was built a fort, to protect the island party against a Danish incursion.

Such was the state of Alfred's fortunes and of England's hopes in the spring of 878. Three months before, all southern England, with the exception of Gloucester and its surrounding lands, had been his. Now his kingdom was a small island in the heart of a morass, his subjects a lurking band of faithful warriors, his subsistence what could be wrested from the strong hands of the foe.

While matters went thus in Somerset, a storm of war gathered in Wales. Another of Ragnar's sons, Ubbo by name, had landed on the Welsh coast, and, carrying everything before him, was marching inland to join his victorious brother.

He was too strong for the Saxons of that quarter to make head against him in the open field. Odun, the valiant ealdorman who led them, fled, with his thanes and their followers, to the castle of Kwineth, a stronghold defended only by a loose wall of stones, in the Saxon fashion. But the fortress occupied the summit of a lofty rock, and bade defiance to assault. Ubbo saw this. He saw, also, that water must be wanting on that steep rock. He pitched his tents at its foot, and waited till thirst should compel a surrender of the garrison.

He was to find that it is not always wise to cut off the supplies of a beleaguered foe. Despair aids courage. A day came in the siege in which Odun, grown desperate, left his defences before dawn, glided silently down the hill with his men, and fell so impetuously upon the Danish host that the chief and twelve hundred of his followers were slain, and the rest driven in panic to their ships. The camp, rich with the spoil of Wales, fell into the victors' hands, while their trophies included the great Raven standard of the Danes, said to have been woven in one noontide by Ragnar's three daughters. This was a loss that presaged defeat to the Danes, for they were superstitious concerning this standard. If the raven appeared to flap its wings when going into battle, victory seemed to them assured. If it hung motionless, defeat was feared. Its loss must have been deemed fatal.

Tidings of this Saxon victory flew as if upon wings throughout England, and everywhere infused new spirit into the hearts of the people, new hope of recovering their country from the invading foe. To Alfred the news brought a heart-tide of joy. The time for action was at hand. Recruits came to him daily; fresh life was in his people; trusty messengers from Ethelingay sought the thanes throughout the land, and bade them, with their followers, to join the king at Egbert, on the eastern border of Selwood forest, in the seventh week after Easter.

Guthrum, meanwhile, was not idle. The frequent raids in mid-Somersetshire had taught him where his royal enemy might be found. Action, immediate and decisive, was necessary, or Alfred would be again in the field with a Saxon army, and the

fruits of the successful midwinter raid be lost. Messengers were sent in haste to call in the scattered Danish bands, and a fortified camp was formed in a strong place in the vicinity of Ethelingay, whence a concerted movement might be made upon the lurking foe.

The time fixed for the gathering of the Saxon host was at hand. It was of high importance that the numbers and disposition of the Danes should be learned. The king, if we may trust tradition, now undertook an adventure that has ever since been classed among the choicest treasures of romance. The duty demanded was too important to trust to any doubtful hands. Alfred determined himself to venture within the camp of the Danes, observe how they were fortified and how arranged, and use this vital information when the time for battle came.

The enterprise was less desperate than might seem. Alfred's form and face were little known to his enemies. He was a skilful harper. The glee-man in those days was a privileged person, allied to no party, free to wander where he would, and to twang his harp-strings in any camp. He might look for welcome from friend and foe.

Dressed in Danish garb, and bearing the minstrel's harp, the daring king boldly sought and entered the camp of the invaders, his coming greeted with joy by the Danish warriors, who loved martial music as they loved war.

Songs of Danish prowess fell from the disguised minstrel's lips, to the delight of his audience. In the end Guthrum and his chiefs heard report of the coming of this skilled glee-man, and ordered that he should be brought to the great tent, where they sat carousing, in hopeful anticipation of coming victory.

Alfred, nothing loath, sought Guthrum's tent, where, with stirring songs of the old heroes of their land, he flattered the ears of the chiefs, who applauded him to the echo, and at times broke into wild refrains to his warlike odes. All that passed we cannot say. The story is told by tradition only, and tradition is not to be

trusted for details. Doubtless, when the royal spy slipped from the camp of his foes he bore with him an accurate mind picture of the numbers, the discipline, and the arrangement of the Danish force, which would be of the highest value in the coming fray.

Meanwhile, the Saxon hosts were gathering. When the day fixed by the king arrived they were there: men from Hampshire, Wiltshire, Devonshire, and Somerset; men in smaller numbers from other counties; all glad to learn that England was on its feet again, all filled with joy to see their king in the field. Their shouts filled the leafy alleys of the forest, they hailed the king as the land's avenger, every heart beat high with assurance of victory. Before night of the day of meeting the woodland camp was overcrowded with armed men, and at dawn of the next day Alfred led them to a place named Icglea, where, on the forest's edge, a broad plain spread with a morass on its front. All day long volunteers came to the camp; by night Alfred had an army in open field, in place of the guerilla band with which, two days before, he had lurked in the green aisles of Selwood forest, like a Robin Hood of an earlier day, making the verdant depths of the greenwood dales his home.

At dawn of the next day the king marshalled his men in battle array, and occupied the summit of Ethandune, a lofty eminence in the vicinity of his camp. The Danes, fiery with barbaric valor, boldly advanced, and the two armies met in fierce affray, shouting their war-cries, discharging arrows and hurling javelins, and rushing like wolves of war to the closer and more deadly hand-to-hand combat of sword and axe, of the shock of the contending forces, the hopes and fears of victory and defeat, the deeds of desperate valor, the mighty achievements of noted chiefs, on that hard-fought field no Homer has sung, and they must remain untold. All we know is that the Danes fought with desperate valor, the English with a courage inspired by revenge, fear of slavery, thirst for liberty, and the undaunted resolution of men whose every blow was struck for home and fireside.

In the end patriotism prevailed over the baser instinct of piracy; the Danes were defeated, and driven in tumultuous hosts to their intrenched camp, falling in multitudes as they fled, for the incensed English laid aside all thought of mercy in the hot fury of pursuit.

Only when within the shelter of his works was Guthrum able to make head against his victorious foe. The camp seemed too strong to be taken by assault, nor did Alfred care to immolate his men while a safer and surer expedient remained. He had made himself fully familiar with its formation, knew well its weak and strong points and its sparseness of supplies, and without loss of time spread his forces round it, besieging it so closely that not a Dane could escape. For fourteen days the siege went on, Alfred's army, no doubt, daily increasing, that of his foe wasting away before the ceaseless flight of arrows and javelins.

Guthrum was in despair. Famine threatened him. Escape was impossible. Hardly a bird could have fled unseen through the English lines. At the end of the fortnight he yielded, and asked for terms of surrender. The war was at an end. England was saved.

In his moment of victory Alfred proved generous. He gave the Danes an abiding-place upon English soil, on condition that they should dwell there as his vassals. To this they were to bind themselves by oath and the giving of hostages. Another condition was that Guthrum and his leading chiefs should give up their pagan faith and embrace Christianity.

To these terms the Danish leader acceded. A few weeks after the fight Aubre, near Athelney, was the scene of the baptizing of Guthrum and thirty of his chiefs. To his heathen title was added the Saxon name of Athelstan, Alfred standing sponsor to the new convert to the Christian faith. Eight days afterwards Guthrum laid off the white robe and chrysmal fillet of his new faith, and in twelve days bade adieu to his victorious foe, now, to all seeming, his dearest friend. What sum of Christian faith the baptized heathen took with him to the new

lands assigned him it would be rash to say, but at all events he was removed from the circle of England's foes.

The treaty of Wedmore freed southern England from the Danes. The shores of Wessex were teased now and then by after-descents, but these incursions were swept away like those of stinging hornets. In 894 a fleet of three hundred ships invaded the realm, but they met a crushing defeat. The king was given some leisure to pursue those studies to which his mind so strongly inclined, and to carry forward measures for the education of his people by the establishment of schools which, like those of Charlemagne in France, vanished before he was fairly in the grave. This noble knight died in 901, nearly a thousand years ago, after having proved himself one of the ablest warriors and most advanced minds that ever occupied the English throne.

CHAPTER III

THE WOOING OF ELFRIDA

Of all the many fair maidens of the Saxon realm none bore such fame for beauty as the charming Elfrida, daughter of the earl of Devonshire, and the rose of southern England. She had been educated in the country and had never been seen in London, but the report of her charms of face and person spread so widely that all the land became filled with the tale.

It soon reached the court and came to the ears of Edgar, the king, a youthful monarch who had an open ear for all tales of maidenly beauty. He was yet but little more than a boy, was unmarried, and a born lover. The praises of this country charmer, therefore, stirred his susceptible heart. She was nobly born, the heiress to an earldom, the very rose of English maidens,—what better consort for the throne could be found? If report spoke true, this was the maiden he should choose for wife, this fairest flower of the Saxon realm. But rumor grows apace, and common report is not to be trusted. Edgar thought it the part of discretion to make sure of the beauty of the much-lauded Elfrida before making a formal demand for her hand in marriage.

Devonshire was far away, roads few and poor in Saxon England, travel slow and wearisome, and the king had no taste for the journey to the castle of Olgar of Devon. Nor did he deem it wise to declare his intention till he made sure that the maiden was to his liking. He, therefore, spoke of his purpose to Earl Athelwold, his favorite, whom he bade to pay a visit, on some pretence, to Earl Olgar of Devonshire, to see his renowned daughter, and to bring to the court a certain account concerning her beauty.

Athelwold went to Devonshire, saw the lady, and proved faithless to his trust. Love made him a traitor, as it has made many before and since his day. So marvellously beautiful he

found Elfrida that his heart fell prisoner to the most vehement love, a passion so ardent that it drove all thoughts of honor and fidelity from his soul, and he determined to have this charming lass of Devonshire for his own, despite king or commons.

Athelwold's high station had secured him a warm welcome from his brother earl. He acquitted himself of his pretended mission to Olga; basked as long as prudence permitted in the sunlight of his lady's eyes, and, almost despite himself, made manifest to Elfrida the sudden passion that had filled his soul. The maiden took it not amiss. Athelwold was young, handsome, rich, and high in station, Elfrida susceptible and ambitious, and he returned to London not without hope that he had favorably impressed the lady's heart, and filled with the faithless purpose of deceiving the king.

"You have seen and noted her, Athelwold," said Edgar, on giving him audience; "what have you to say? Has report spoken truly? Is she indeed the marvellous beauty that rumor tells, or has fame, the liar, played us one of his old tricks?"

"Not altogether; the woman is not bad looking," said Athelwold, with studied lack of enthusiasm; "but I fear that high station and a pretty face have combined to bewitch the people. Certainly, if she had been of low birth, her charms would never have been heard of outside her native village."

"I' faith, Athelwold, you are not warm in your praise of this queen of beauty," said Edgar, with some disappointment. "Rumor, then, has lied, and she is but an every-day woman, after all?"

"Beauty has a double origin," answered Athelwold; "it lies partly in the face seen, partly in the eyes seeing. Some might go mad over this Elfrida, but to my taste London affords fairer faces. I speak but for myself. Should you see her you might think differently."

Athelwold had managed his story shrewdly; the king's ardor grew cold.

"If the matter stands thus, he that wants her may have her," said Edgar. "The diamond that fails to show its lustre in all candles is not the gem for my wearing. Confess, Athelwold, you are trying to over paint this woman; you found only an ordinary face."

"I saw nothing in it extraordinary," answered the faithless envoy. "Some might, perhaps. I can only speak for myself. As I take it, Elfrida's noble birth and her father's wealth, which will come to her as sole heiress, have had their share in painting this rose. The woman may have beauty enough for a countess; hardly enough for a queen."

"Then you should have wooed and won her yourself," said Edgar, laughing. "Such a faintly praised charmer is not for me. I leave her for a lower-born lover."

Several days passed. Athelwold had succeeded in his purpose; the king had evidently been cured of his fancy for Elfrida. The way was open for the next step in his deftly-laid scheme. He took it by turning the conversation, in a later interview, upon the Devon maiden.

"I have been thinking over your remark, that I should woo and win Elfrida myself," he said. "It seems to me not a bad idea. I must confess that the birth and fortune of the lady added no beauty to her in my eyes, as it seems to have done in those of others; yet I cannot but think that the woman would make a suitable match for me. She is an earl's daughter, and she will inherit great wealth; these are advantages which fairly compensate some lack of beauty. I have decided, therefore, sire, if I can gain your approbation, to ask Olga for his daughter's hand. I fancy I can gain her consent if I have his."

"I shall certainly not stand in your way," said the king, pleased with the opportunity to advance his favorite's fortunes. "By all means do as you propose. I will give you letters to the earl and his lady, recommending the match. You must trust to yourself to make your way with the maiden."

"I think she is not quite displeased with me," answered Athelwold.

What followed few words may tell. The passion of love in Athelwold's heart had driven out all considerations of honor and duty, of the good faith he owed the king, and of the danger of his false and treacherous course. Warm with hope, he returned with a lover's haste to Devonshire, where he gained the approval of the earl and countess, won the hand and seemingly the heart of their beautiful daughter, and was speedily united to the lady of his love, and became for the time being the happiest man in England.

But before the honeymoon was well over, the faithless friend and subject realized that he had a difficult and dangerous part to play. He did not dare let Edgar see his wife, for fear of the instant detection of his artifice, and he employed every pretence to keep her in the country. His duties at the court brought him frequently to London, but with the skill at excuses he had formerly shown he contrived to satisfy for the time the queries of the king and the importunities of his wife, who had a natural desire to visit the capital and to shine at the king's court.

Athelwold was sailing between Scylla and Charybdis. He could scarcely escape being wrecked on the rocks of his own falsehood. The enemies who always surround a royal favorite were not long in surmising the truth, and lost no time in acquainting Edgar with their suspicions. Confirmation was not wanting. There were those in London who had seen Elfrida. The king's eyes were opened to the treacherous artifice of which he had been made the victim.

Edgar was deeply incensed, but artfully concealed his anger. Reflection, too, told him that these men were Athelwold's enemies, and that the man he had loved and trusted ought not to be condemned on the insinuations of his foes. He would satisfy himself if his favorite had played the traitor, and if so would visit him with the punishment he deserved.

"Athelwold," said Edgar, in easy tones, "I am surprised you do not bring your wife to court. Surely the woman, if she is true woman, must crave to come."

"Not she," answered Athelwold. "She loves the country well and is a pattern of the rural virtues. The woman is homely and home-loving, and I should be sorry to put new ideas in her rustic pate. Moreover, I fear my little candle would shine too poorly among your courtly stars to offer her in contrast."

"Fie on you, man! the wife of Athelwold cannot be quite a milkmaid. If you will not bring her here, then I must pay you a visit in your castle; I like you too well not to know and like your wife."

This proposition of the king filled Athelwold with terror and dismay. He grew pale, and hesitatingly sought to dissuade Edgar from his project, but in vain. The king had made up his mind, and laughingly told him that he could not rest till he had seen the homely housewife whom Athelwold was afraid to trust in court.

"I feel the honor you would do me," at length remarked the dismayed favorite. "I only ask, sire, that you let me go before you a few hours, that my castle may be properly prepared for a visit from my king."

"As you will, gossip," laughed the king. "Away with you, then; I will soon follow."

In all haste the traitor sought his castle, quaking with fear, and revolving in his mind schemes for avoiding the threatened disclosure. He could think of but one that promised success, and that depended on the love and compliance of Elfrida. He had deceived her. He must tell her the truth. With her aid his faithless action might still be concealed.

Entering his castle, he sought Elfrida and revealed to her the whole measure of his deceit, how he had won her from the king, led by his overpowering love, how he had kept her from

the king's eyes, and how Edgar now, filled, he feared, with suspicion, was on his way to the castle to see her for himself.

In moving accents the wretched man appealed to her, if she had any regard for his honor and his life, to conceal from the king that fatal beauty which had lured him from his duty to his friend and monarch, and led him into endless falsehoods. He had but his love to offer as a warrant for his double faithlessness, and implored Elfrida, as she returned his affection, to lend her aid to his exculpation. If she loved him as she seemed, she would put on her homliest attire, employ the devices of the toilette to hide her fatal beauty, and assume an awkward and rustic tone and manner, that the king might be deceived.

Elfrida heard him in silence, her face scarcely concealing the indignation which burned in her soul on learning the artifice by which she had been robbed of a crown. In the end, however, she seemed moved by his entreaties and softened by his love, and promised to comply with his wishes and do her utmost to conceal her charms.

Gratified with this compliance, and full of hope that all would yet be safe, Athelwold completed his preparations for the reception of the king, and met him on his appearance with every show of honor and respect. Edgar seemed pleased by his reception, entered the castle, but was not long there before he asked to see its lady, saying merrily that she had been the loadstone that had drawn him thither, and that he was eager to behold her charming face.

"I fear I have little of beauty and grace to show you," answered Athelwold; "but she is a good wife withal, and I love her for virtues which few would call courtly."

He turned to a servant and bade him ask his mistress to come to the castle hall, where the king expected her.

Athelwold waited with hopeful eyes; the king with curious expectation. The husband knew how unattractive a toilet his wife could make if she would; Edgar was impatient to test

for himself the various reports he had received concerning this wild rose of Devonshire.

The lady entered. The hope died from Athelwold's eyes; the pallor of death overspread his face. A sudden light flashed into the face of the king, a glow made up of passion and anger. For instead of the ill-dressed and awkward country housewife for whom Athelwold looked, there beamed upon all present a woman of regal beauty, clad in her richest attire, her charms of face and person set off with all the adornment that jewels and laces could bestow, her face blooming into its most engaging smile as she greeted the king.

She had deceived her trusting husband. His story of treachery had driven from her heart all the love for him that ever dwelt there. He had robbed her of a throne; she vowed revenge in her soul; it might be hers yet; with the burning instinct of ambition she had adorned herself to the utmost, hoping to punish her faithless lord and win the king.

She succeeded. While Athelwold stood by, biting his lips, striving to bring back the truant blood to his face, making hesitating remarks to his guest, and turning eyes of deadly anger on his wife, the scheming woman was using her most engaging arts of conversation and manner to win the king, and with a success greater than she knew. Edgar beheld her beauty with surprise and joy, his heart throbbing with ardent passion. She was all and more than he had been told. Athelwold had basely deceived him, and his new-born love for the wife was mingled with a fierce desire for revenge upon the husband. But the artful monarch dissembled both these passions. He was, to a certain extent, in Athelwold's power. His train was not large, and those were days in which an angry or jealous thane would not hesitate to lift his hand against a king. He, therefore, affected not to be struck with Elfrida's beauty, was gracious as usual to his host, and seemed the most agreeable of guests.

But passion was burning in his heart, the double passion of love and revenge. A day or two of this play of kingly

clemency passed, then Athelwold and his guests went to hunt in the neighboring forest, and in the heat of the chase Edgar gained the opportunity he desired. He stabbed his unsuspecting host in the back, left him dead on the field, and rode back to the castle to declare his love to the suddenly-widowed wife.

Elfrida had won the game for which she had so heartlessly played. Ambition in her soul out-weighed such love as she bore for Athelwold, and she received with gracious welcome the king whose hands were still red from the murder of her late spouse. No long time passed before Edgar and Elfrida were publicly married, and the love romance which had distinguished the life of the famed beauty of Devonshire reached its consummation.

This romantic story has a sequel which tells still less favorably for the Devonshire beauty. She had compassed the murder of her husband. It was not her last crime. Edgar died when her son Ethelred was but seven years of age. The king had left another son, Edward, by his first wife, now fifteen years old. The ambitious woman plotted for the elevation of her son to the throne, hoping, doubtless, herself to reign as regent. The people favored Edward, as the rightful heir, and the nobility and clergy, who feared the imperious temper of Elfrida, determined to thwart her schemes. To put an end to the matter, Dunstan the monk, the all-powerful king-maker of that epoch, had the young prince anointed and crowned. The whole kingdom supported his act, and the hopes of Elfrida were seemingly at an end.

But she was a woman not to be easily defeated. She bided her time, and affected warm regard for the youthful king, who loved her as if he had been her own son, and displayed the most tender affection for his brother. Edward, indeed, was a character out of tone with those rude tenth-century days, when might was right, and murder was often the first step to a throne. He was of the utmost innocence of heart and amiability of manners, so pure in his own thoughts that suspicion of others found no place in his soul.

One day, four years after his accession, he was hunting in a forest in Dorsetshire, not far from Corfe-castle, where Elfrida and Ethelred lived. The chances of the chase led him to the vicinity of the castle, and, taking advantage of the opportunity to see its loved inmates, he rode away from his attendants, and in the evening twilight sounded his hunting-horn at the castle gates.

This was the opportunity which the ambitious woman had desired. The rival of her son had put himself unattended within her reach. Hastily preparing for the reception she designed to give him, she came from the castle, smiling a greeting.

"You are heartily welcome, dear king and son," she said. "Pray dismount and enter."

"Not so, dear madam," he replied. "My company will miss me, and fear I have met with some harm. I pray you give me a cup of wine, that I may drink in the saddle to you and my little brother. I would stay longer, but may not linger."

Elfrida returned for the wine, and as she did so whispered a few words to an armed man in the castle hall, one of her attendants whom she could trust. As she went on, this man slipped out in the gathering gloom and placed himself close behind the king's horse.

In a minute more Elfrida reappeared, wine cup in hand. The king took the cup and raised it to his lips, looking down with smiling face on his step mother and her son, who smiled their love-greeting back to him. At this instant the lurking villain in the rear sprang up and buried his fatal knife in the king's back.

Filled with pain and horror, Edward involuntarily dropped the cup and spurred his horse. The startled animal sprang forward, Edward clinging to his saddle for a few minutes, but soon, faint with loss of blood, falling to the earth, while one of his feet remained fast in the stirrup.

The frightened horse rushed onward, dragging him over the rough ground until death put an end to his misery. The

hunters, seeking the king, found the track of his blood, and traced him till his body was discovered, sadly torn and disfigured.

Meanwhile, the child Ethelred cried out so pitifully at the frightful tragedy which had taken place before his eyes, that his heartless mother turned her rage against him. She snatched a torch from one of the attendants and beat him unmercifully for his uncontrollable emotion.

The woman a second time had won her game,—first, by compassing the murder of her husband; second, by ordering the murder of her step-son. It is pleasant to say that she profited little by the latter base deed. The people were incensed by the murder of the king, and Dunstan resolved that Ethelred should not have the throne. He offered it to Edgitha, the daughter of Edgar. But that lady wisely preferred to remain in the convent where she lived in peace; so, in default of any other heir, Ethelred was put upon the throne,—Ethelred the Unready, as he came afterwards to be known.

Elfrida at first possessed great influence over her son; but her power declined as he grew older, and in the end she retired from the court, built monasteries and performed penances, in hopes of providing a refuge for her pious soul in heaven, since all men hated her upon the earth.

As regards Edward, his tragical death so aroused the sympathy of the people that they named him the Martyr, and believed that miracles were wrought at his tomb. It cannot be said that his murder was in any sense a martyrdom, but the men of that day did not draw fine lines of distinction, and Edward the Martyr he remains.

CHAPTER IV

THE END OF SAXON ENGLAND

We have two pictures to draw, preliminary scenes to the fatal battle of Hastings Hill. The first belongs to the morning of September 25, 1066. At Stamford Bridge, on the Derwent River, lay encamped a stalwart host, that of Harold Hardrada, king of Norway. With him was Tostig, rebel brother of King Harold of England, who had brought this army of strangers into the land. On the river near by lay their ships.

Here Harold found them, a formidable force, drawn up in a circle, the line marked out by shining spears. The English king had marched hither in all haste from the coast, where he had been awaiting the coming of William of Normandy. Tostig, the rebel son of Godwin, had brought ruin upon the land.

Before the battle commenced, twenty horsemen rode out from Harold's vanguard and moved towards the foe. Harold, the king, rode at their head. As they drew near they saw a leader of the opposing host, clad in a blue mantle and wearing a shining helmet, fall to the earth through the stumbling of his horse.

"Who is the man that fell?" asked Harold.

"The king of Norway," answered one of his companions.

"He is a tall and stately warrior," answered Harold, "but his end is near."

Then, under command of the king, one of his noble followers rode up to the opposing line and called out,—

"Is Tostig, the son of Godwin, here?"

"It would be wrong to say he is not," answered the rebel Englishman, stepping into view. The herald then begged him to make peace with his brother, saying that it was dreadful that two

men, sons of the same mother, should be in arms against each other.

"What will Harold give me if I make peace with him?" asked Tostig.

"He will give you a brother's love and make you earl of Northumberland."

"And what will he give to my friend, the king of Norway?"

"Seven feet of earth for a grave," was the grim answer of the envoy; "or, as he seems a very tall man, perhaps a foot or two more."

"Ride back, then," said Tostig, "and bid Harold make ready for battle. Whatever happens, it shall never be said of Tostig that he basely gave up the friend who had helped him in time of need."

The fight began,—and quickly ended. Hardrada fought like a giant, but an arrow in his throat brought him dead to the ground. Tostig fell also, and many other chiefs. The Northmen, disheartened, yielded. Harold gave them easy terms, bidding them take their ships and sail again to the land whence they had come.

This warlike picture on the land may be matched by one upon the sea. Over the waves of the English Channel moved a single ship, such a one as had rarely been seen upon those waters. Its sails were of different bright colors; the vanes at the mast-heads were gilded; the three lions of Normandy were painted here and there; the figure-head was a child with a bent bow, its arrow pointed towards the land of England. At the main mast-head floated a consecrated banner, which had been sent from Rome.

It was the ship of William of Normandy, alone upon the waves. Three thousand vessels in all had left with it the shores of France, six or seven hundred of them large in size. Now, day

was breaking, and the king's ship was alone. The others had vanished in the night.

William ordered a sailor to the mast-head to report on what he could see.

"I see nothing but the water and the sky," came the lookout's cry from above.

"We have outsailed them; we must lay to," said the duke.

Breakfast was served, with warm spiced wine, to keep the crew in good heart. After it was over the sailor was again sent aloft.

"I can see four ships, low down in the offing," he proclaimed.

A third time he was sent to the mast-head. His voice now came to those on deck filled with merry cheer.

"Now I see a forest of masts and sails," he cried.

Within a few hours afterwards the Normans were landing in Pevensey Bay, on the Sussex coast. Harold had been drawn off by the invasion in the north, and the new invaders were free to land. Duke William was among the first. As he set foot on shore he stumbled and fell. The hearts of his knights fell with him, for they deemed this an unlucky sign. But William had that ready wit which turns ill into good fortune. Grasping two handfuls of the soil, he hastily rose, saying, cheerily, "Thus do I seize upon the land of England."

Meanwhile, Harold was feasting, after his victory at York. As he sat there with his captains, a stir was heard at the doors, and in rushed a messenger, booted and spurred, and covered with dust from riding fast and far.

"The Normans have come!" was his cry. "They have landed at Pevensey Bay. They are out already, harrying the land. Smoke and fire are the beacons of their march."

That feast came to a sudden end. Soon Harold and his men were in full march for London. Here recruits were gathered in all haste. Within a week the English king was marching towards where the Normans lay encamped. He was counselled to remain and gather more men, leaving some one else to lead his army.

"Not so," he replied; "an English king must never turn his back to the enemy."

We have now a third picture to draw, and a great one,—that of the mighty and momentous conflict which ended in the death of the last of the Saxon kings, and the Norman conquest of England.

The force of William greatly outnumbered that of Harold. It comprised about sixty thousand men, while Harold had but twenty or thirty thousand. And the Normans were more powerfully armed, the English having few archers, while many of them were hasty recruits who bore only pitchforks and other tools of their daily toil. The English king, therefore, did not dare to meet the heavily-armed and mail-clad Normans in the open field. Wisely he led his men to the hill of Senlac, near Hastings, a spot now occupied by the small town of Battle, so named in memory of the great fight. Here he built intrenchments of earth, stones, and tree-trunks, behind which he waited the Norman assault. Marshy ground covered the English right. In front, at the most exposed position, stood the "huscarls," or body-guard, of Harold, men clad in mail and armed with great battle-axes, their habit being to interlock their shields like a wall. In their midst stood the standard of Harold,—with the figure of a warrior worked in gold and gems,—and beside it the Golden Dragon of Wessex, a banner of ancient fame. Back of them were crowded the half armed rustics who made up the remainder of the army.

Duke William had sought, by ravaging the land, to bring Harold to an engagement. He had until now subsisted by plunder. He was now obliged to concentrate his forces. A concentrated army cannot feed by pillage. There was but one

thing for the Norman leader to do. He must attack the foe in his strong position, with victory or ruin as his only alternatives.

The night before the battle was differently passed by the two armies. The Normans spent the hours in prayer and confession to their priests. Bishop Odo celebrated mass on the field as day dawned, his white episcopal vestment covering a coat of mail, while war-horse and battle-axe awaited him when the benediction should be spoken. The English, on their side, sat round their watch-fires, drinking great horns of ale, and singing warlike lays, as their custom for centuries had been.

Day had not dawned on that memorable 14th of October, of the year 1066, when both sides were in arms and busily preparing for battle. William and Harold alike harangued their men and bade them do their utmost for victory. Ruin awaited the one side, slavery the other, if defeat fell upon their banners.

William rode a fine Spanish horse, which a Norman had brought from Galicia, whither he had gone on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Iago. The consecrated standard was borne by his side by one Tonstain, "the White," two barons having declined the dangerous honor. Behind him rode the pride of the Norman nobility.

On the hill-side before them stood Harold and his stout body-guard, trenches and earthworks in their front, their shields locked into a wall of iron. In the first line stood the men of Kent, this being their ancient privilege. Behind them were ranged the burgesses of London, the royal standard in their midst. Beside the standard stood Harold himself, his brothers Gurth and Leofwin by his side, and around them a group of England's noblest thanes and warriors.

On came the Norman column. Steadily awaited them the English phalanx. "Dieu aide!" or "God is our help!" shouted the assailing knights. "Christ's rood! the holy rood!" roared back the English warriors. Nearer they came, till they looked in each other's eyes, and the battle was ready to begin.

And now, from the van of the Norman host, rode a man of renown, the minstrel Taillefer. A gigantic man he was, singer, juggler, and champion combined. As he rode fearlessly forward he chanted in a loud voice the ancient "Song of Roland," flinging his sword in the air with one hand as he sang, and catching it as it fell with the other. As he sang, the Normans took up the refrain of his song, or shouted their battle cry of "Dieu aide."

Onward he rode, thrusting his blade through the body of the first Englishman he met. The second he encountered was flung wounded to the ground. With the third the "Song of Roland" ended; the giant minstrel was hurled from his horse pierced with a mortal wound. He had sung his last song. He crossed himself and was at rest.

On came the Normans, the band of knights led by William assailing Harold's centre, the mercenary host of French and Bretons attacking his flanks. The Norman foot led the van, seeking to force a passage across the English stockade. "Out, out!" fiercely shouted the men of gent, as they plied axe and javelin with busy hands. The footmen were driven back. The Norman horse in turn were repulsed. Again and again the duke rallied and led his knights to the fatal stockade; again and again he and his men were driven back. The blood of the Norseman in his veins burned with all the old Viking battle-thirst. The headlong valor which he had often shown on Norman plains now impelled him relentlessly forward. Yet his coolness and readiness never forsook him. The course of the battle ever lay before his eyes, its reins in his grasp. At one time during the combat the choicest of the Norman cavalry were driven upon a deep trench which the English had dug and artfully concealed. In they went in numbers, men and horses falling and perishing. Disaster threatened Duke William's army. The Bretons, checked by the marshes on the right broke in disorder. Panic threatened to spread through the whole array, and a wild cry arose that the duke was slain. Men in numbers turned their backs upon the foe; a head-long flight was begun.

At this almost fatal moment Duke William's power as a leader revealed itself. His horse had been killed, but no harm had come to him. Springing to the back of a fresh steed, he spurred before the fugitives, and bade them halt, threatened them, struck them with his spear. When the cry was repeated that the duke was dead, he tore off his helmet and showed his face to the flying host. "Here I am!" he cried, in a stentorian voice. "Look at me! I live, and by God's help will conquer yet!"

Their leader's voice gave new courage to the Norman host, the flight ceased; they rallied, and, following the headlong charge of the duke, attacked the English with renewed fierceness and vigor. William fought like an aroused lion. Horse after horse was killed under him, but he still appeared at the head of his men, shouting his terrible war-cry, striking down a foeman with every swing of his mighty iron club.

He broke through the stockade; he spurred furiously on those who guarded the king's standard; down went Gurth, the king's brother, before a blow of that terrible mace; down went Leofwin, a second brother of the king; William's horse fell dead under him, a rider refused to lend him his horse, but a blow from that strong mailed hand emptied the saddle, and William was again horsed and using his mighty weapon with deadly effect.

Yet despite all his efforts the English line of defence remained unbroken. That linked wall of shields stood intact. From behind it the terrible battle-axes of Harold's men swung like flails, making crimson gaps in the crowded ranks before them. Hours had passed in this conflict. It began with day-dawn; the day was waning, yet still the English held their own; the fate of England hung in the scale; it began to look as if Harold would win.

But Duke William was a man of resources. That wall of shields must be rent asunder, or the battle was lost. If it could not be broken by assault, it might by retreat. He bade the men around him to feign a disorderly flight. The trick succeeded; many of the English leaped the stockade and pursued their flying

foes. The crafty duke waited until the eager pursuers were scattered confusedly down the hill. Then, heading a body of horse which he had kept in reserve, he rushed upon the disordered mass, cutting them down in multitudes, strewing the hill-side with English slain.

Through the abandoned works the duke led his knights, and gained the central plateau. On the flanks the French and Bretons poured over the stockade and drove back its poorly armed defenders. It was mid-afternoon, and the field already seemed won. Yet when the sunset hour came on that red October day the battle still raged. Harold had lost his works of defence, yet his huscarls stood stubbornly around him, and with unyielding obstinacy fought for their standard and their king. The spot on which they made their last fight was that marked afterwards by the high altar of Battle Abbey.

The sun was sinking. The battle, was not yet decided. For nine hours it had raged. Dead bodies by thousands clogged the field. The living fought from a platform of the dead. At length, as the sun was nearing the horizon, Duke William brought up his archers and bade them pour their arrows upon the dense masses crowded around the standard of the English king. He ordered them to shoot into the air, that the descending shafts might fall upon the faces of the foe.

Victory followed the flight of those plumed shafts. As the sun went down one of them pierced Harold's right eye. When they saw him fall the Normans rushed like a torrent forward, and a desperate conflict ensued over the fallen king. The Saxon standard still waved over the serried English ranks. Robert Fitz Ernest, a Norman knight, fought his way to the staff. His outstretched hand had nearly grasped it when an English battle-axe laid him low. Twenty knights, grouped in mass, followed him through the English phalanx. Down they went till ten of them lay stretched in death. The other ten reached the spot, tore down the English flag, and in a few minutes more the consecrated banner of Normandy was flying in its stead.

The conflict was at an end. As darkness came the surviving English fled into the woods in their rear. The Normans remained masters of the field. Harold, the king, was dead, and all his brothers had fallen; Duke William was England's lord. On the very spot where Harold had fallen the conqueror pitched his tent, and as darkness settled over vanquished England he "sate down to eat and drink among the dead."

No braver fight had ever been made than that which Harold made for England. The loss of the Normans had been enormous. On the day after the battle the survivors of William's army were drawn up in line, and the muster-roll called. To a fourth of the names no answer was returned. Among the dead were many of the noblest lords and bravest knights of Normandy. Yet there were hungry nobles enough left to absorb all the fairest domains of Saxon England, and they crowded eagerly around the duke, pressing on him their claims. A new roll was prepared, containing the names of the noblemen and gentlemen who had survived the bloody fight. This was afterwards deposited in Battle Abbey, which William had built upon the hill where Harold made his gallant stand.

The body of the slain king was not easily to be found. Harold's aged mother, who had lost three brave sons in the battle, offered Duke William its weight in gold for the body of the king. Two monks sought for it, but in vain. The Norman soldiers had despoiled the dead, and the body of a king could not be told among that heap of naked corpses. In the end the monks sent for Editha, a beautiful maiden to whom Harold had been warmly attached, and begged her to search for her slain lover.

Editha, the "swan necked," as some chroniclers term her, groped, with eyes half-blinded with tears, through that heap of mutilated dead, her soul filled with horror, yet seeking on and on until at length her love-true eyes saw and knew the face of the king. Harold's body was taken to Waltham Abbey, on the river Lea, a place he had loved when alive. Here he was interred, his tomb bearing the simple inscription, placed there by the monks of Waltham, "Here lies the unfortunate Harold!"

CHAPTER V

HEREWARD THE WAKE

Through the mist of the far past of English history there looms up before our vision a notable figure, that of Hereward the Wake, the "last of the Saxons," as he has been appropriately called, a hero of romance perhaps more than of history, but in some respects the noblest warrior who fought for Saxon England against the Normans. His story is a fabric in which threads of fact and fancy seem equally interwoven; of much of his life, indeed, we are ignorant, and tradition has surrounded this part of his biography with tales of largely imaginary deeds; but he is a character of history as well as of folk lore, and his true story is full of the richest elements of romance. It is this noteworthy hero of old England with whom we have now to deal.

No one can be sure where Hereward was born, though most probably the county of Lincolnshire may claim the honor. We are told that he was heir to the lordship of Bourne, in that county. Tradition—for we have not yet reached the borders of fact—says that he was a wild and unruly youth, disrespectful to the clergy, disobedient to his parents, and so generally unmanageable that in the end his father banished him from his home.

Little was the truculent lad troubled by this. He had in him the spirit of a wanderer and outlaw, but was one fitted to make his mark wherever his feet should fall. In Scotland, while still a boy, he killed, single-handed, a great bear,—a feat highly considered in those days when all battles with man and beast were hand-to-hand. Next we hear of him in Cornwall, one of whose race of giants Hereward found reserved for his prowess. This was a fellow of mighty limb and boastful tongue, vast in strength and terrible in war, as his own tale ran. Hereward fought him, and the giant ceased to boast. Cornwall had a giant the less.

Next he sought Ireland, and did yeoman service in the wars of that unquiet island. Taking ship thence, he made his way to Flanders, where legend credits him with wonderful deeds. Battle and bread were the nutriment of his existence, the one as necessary to him as the other, and a journey of a few hundreds of miles, with the hope of a hard fight at the end, was to him but a holiday.

Such is the Hereward to whom tradition introduces us, an idol of popular song and story, and doubtless a warrior of unwonted courage and skill, agile and strong, ready for every toil and danger, and so keenly alert and watchful that men called him the Wake. This vigorous and valiant man was born to be the hero and champion of the English, in their final struggle for freedom against their Norman foes.

A new passion entered Hereward's soul in Flanders, that of love. He met and wooed there a fair lady, Torfrida by name, who became his wife. A faithful helpmeet she proved, his good comrade in his wanderings, his wise counsellor in warfare, and ever a softening influence in the fierce warrior's life. Hitherto the sword had been his mistress, his temper the turbulent and hasty one of the dweller in camp. Henceforth he owed a divided allegiance to love and the sword, and grew softer in mood, gentler and more merciful in disposition, as life went on.

To this wandering Englishman beyond the seas came tidings of sad disasters in his native land. Harold and his army had been overthrown at Hastings, and Norman William was on the throne; Norman earls had everywhere seized on English manors, Norman churls, ennobled on the field of battle, were robbing and enslaving the old owners of the land. The English had risen in the north, and William had harried whole counties, leaving a desert where he had found a fertile and flourishing land. The sufferings of the English at home touched the heart of this genuine Englishman abroad. Hereward the Wake gathered a band of stout warriors, took ship, and set sail for his native land.

And now, to a large extent, we leave the realm of legend, and enter the domain of fact. Hereward henceforth is a historical character, but a history his with shreds of romance still clinging to its skirts. First of all, story credits him with descending on his ancestral hall of Bourne, then in the possession of Normans, his father driven from his domain, and now in his grave. Hereward dealt with the Normans as Ulysses had done with the suitors, and when the hall was his there were few of them left to tell the tale. Thence, not caring to be cooped up by the enemy within stone walls, he marched merrily away, and sought a safer refuge elsewhere.

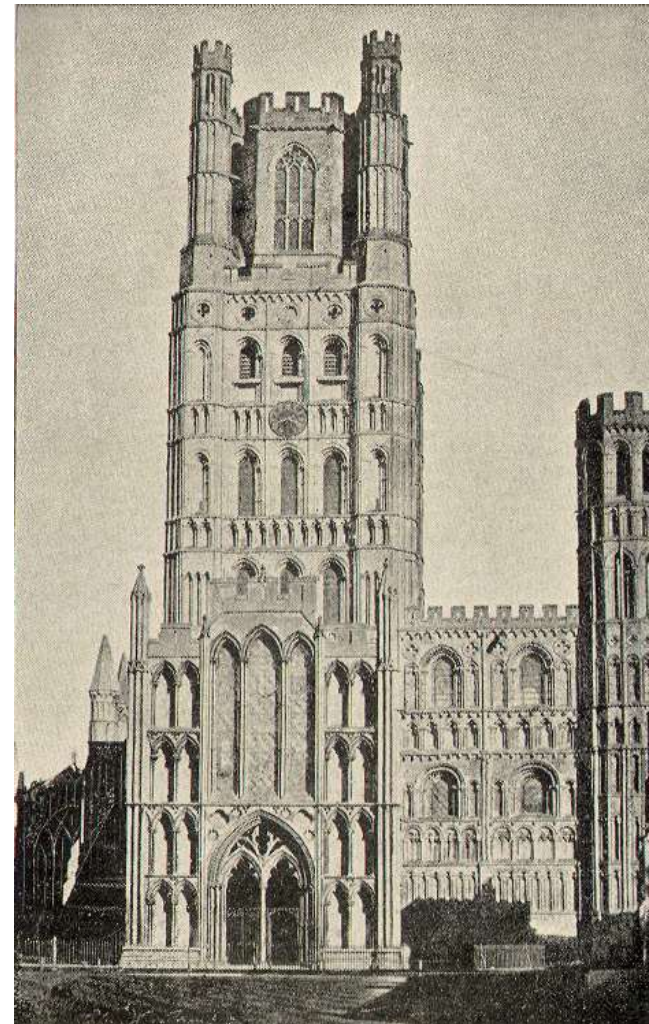
This descent upon Bourne we should like to accept as fact. It has in it the elements of righteous retribution. But we must admit that it is one of the shreds of romance of which we have spoken, one of those interesting stories which men believe to be true because they would like them to be true, possibly with a solid foundation, certainly with much embellishment.

Where we first surely find Hereward is in the heart of the fen country of eastern England. Here, at Ely in Cambridgeshire, a band of Englishmen had formed what they called a "Camp of Refuge," whence they issued at intervals in excursions against the Normans. England had no safer haven of retreat for her patriot sons. Ely was practically an island, being surrounded by watery marshes on all sides. Lurking behind the reeds and rushes of these fens, and hidden by their misty exhalations, that faithful band had long defied its foes.

Hither came Hereward with his warlike followers, and quickly found himself at the head of the band of patriot refugees. History was repeating itself. Centuries before King Alfred had sought just such a shelter against the Danes, and had troubled his enemies as Hereward now began to trouble his.

The exiles of the Camp of Refuge found new blood in their organization when Hereward became their leader. Their feeble forays were quickly replaced by bold and daring ones. Issuing like hornets from their nests, Hereward and his valiant

followers sharply stung the Norman invaders, hesitating not to attack them wherever found, cutting off armed bands, wresting from them the spoils of which they had robbed the Saxons, and flying back to their reedy shelter before their foes could gather in force.



ELY CATHEDRAL.

Of the exploits of this band of active warriors but one is told in full, and that one is worth repeating. The Abbey of Peterborough, not far removed from Ely, had submitted to Norman rule and gained a Norman abbot, Turolde by name. This angered the English at Ely, and they made a descent upon the settlement. No great harm was intended. Food and some minor spoil would have satisfied the raiders. But the frightened monks, instead of throwing themselves on the clemency of their fellow countrymen, sent word in haste to Turolde. This incensed the raiding band, composed in part of English, in part of Danes who had little regard for church privileges. Provoked to fury, they set fire to the monks' house and the town, and only one house escaped the flames. Then they assailed the monastery, the monks flying for their lives. The whole band of outlaws burst like wolves into the minter, which they rapidly cleared of its treasures. Here some climbed to the great rood, and carried off its golden ornaments. There others made their way to the steeple, where had been hidden the gold and silver pastoral staff. Shrines, roods, books, vestments, money, treasures of all sorts vanished, and when Abbot Turolde appeared with a party of armed Normans, he found but the bare walls of the church and the ashes of the town, with only a sick monk to represent the lately prosperous monastery. Whether or not Hereward took part in this affair, history does not say.

King William had hitherto disregarded this patriot refuge, and the bold deeds of the valiant Hereward. All England besides had submitted to his authority, and he was too busy in the work of making a feudal kingdom of free England to trouble himself about one small centre of insurrection. But an event occurred that caused him to look upon Hereward with more hostile eyes.

Among those who had early sworn fealty to him, after the defeat of Harold at Hastings, were Edwin and Morcar, the earls of Mercia and Northumberland. They were confirmed in the possession of their estates and dignities, and remained faithful to William during the general insurrection of northern

England. As time went on, however, their position became unbearable. The king failed to give them his confidence, the courtiers envied them their wealth and titles, and maligned them to the king. Their dignity of position was lost at the court; their safety even was endangered; they resolved, when too late, to emulate their braver countryman, and strike a blow for home and liberty. Edwin sought his domain in the north, bent on insurrection. Morcar made his way to the Isle of Ely, where he took service with his followers, and with other noble Englishmen, under the brave Hereward, glad to find one spot on which a man of true English blood could still set foot in freedom.

His adhesion brought ruin instead of strength to Hereward. If William could afford to neglect a band of outlaws in the fens, he could not rest with these two great earls in arms against him. There were forces in the north to attend to Edwin; Mortar and Hereward must be looked after.

Gathering an army, William marched to the fen country and prepared to attack the last of the English in their almost inaccessible Camp of Refuge. He had already built himself a castle at Cambridge, and here he dwelt while directing his attack against the outlaws of the fens.

The task before him was not a light one, in the face of an opponent so skilful and vigilant as Hereward the Wake. The Normans of that region had found him so ubiquitous and so constantly victorious that they ascribed his success to enchantment; and even William, who was not free from the superstitions of his day, seemed to imagine that he had an enchanter for a foe. Enchanter or not, however, he must be dealt with as a soldier, and there was but one way in which he could be reached. The heavily armed Norman soldiers could not cross the marsh. From one side the Isle of Ely could be approached by vessels, but it was here so strongly defended that the king's ships failed to make progress against Hereward's works. Finding his attack by water a failure, William began the building of a

causeway, two miles long, across the morasses from the dry land to the island.

This was no trifling labor. There was a considerable depth of mud and water to fill, and stones and trunks of trees were brought for the purpose from all the surrounding country, the trees being covered with hides as a protection against fire. The work did not proceed in peace. Hereward and his men contested its progress at every point, attacked the workmen with darts and arrows from the light boats in which they navigated the waters of the fens, and, despite the hides, succeeded in setting fire to the woodwork of the causeway. More than once it had to be rebuilt; more than once it broke down under the weight of the Norman knights and men-at-arms, who crowded upon it in their efforts to reach the island, and many of these eager warriors, weighed down by the burden of their armor, met a dismal death in the mud and water of the marshes.

Hereward fought with his accustomed courage, warlike skill, and incessant vigilance, and gave King William no easy task, despite the strength of his army and the abundance of his resources. But such a contest, against so skilled an enemy as William the Conqueror, and with such disparity of numbers, could have but one termination. Hereward struck so valiant a last blow for England that he won the admiration of his great opponent; but William was not the man to rest content with aught short of victory, and every successful act of defence on the part of the English was met by a new movement of assault. Despite all Hereward's efforts, the causeway slowly but surely moved forward across the fens.

But Hereward's chief danger lay behind rather than before; in the island rather than on the main land. His accessions of nobles and commons had placed a strong body of men under his command, with whom he might have been able to meet William's approaches by ship and causeway, had not treason laid intrenched in the island itself. With war in his front and treachery in his rear the gallant Wake had a double danger to contend with.

This brings us to a picturesque scene, deftly painted by the old chroniclers. Ely had its abbey; a counterpart of that of Peterborough. Thurston, the abbot, was English-born, as were the monks under his pastoral charge; and long the cowed inmates of the abbey and the armed patriots of the Camp of Refuge dwelt in sweet accord. In the refectory of the abbey monks and warriors sat side by side at table, their converse at meals being doubt less divided between affairs spiritual and affairs temporal, while from walls and roof hung the arms of the warriors, harmoniously mingled with the emblems of the church. It was a picture of the marriage of church and state well-worthy of reproduction on canvas.

Yet King William knew how to deal with Abbot Thurston. Lands belonging to the monastery lay beyond the fens, and on these the king laid the rough hand of royal right, as an earnest of what would happen when the monastery itself should fall into his hands. A flutter of terror shook the hearts of the abbot and his family of monks. To them it seemed that the skies were about to fall, and that they would be wise to stand from under.

While the monks of Ely were revolving this threat of disaster in their souls, the tide of assault and defence rolled on. William's causeway pushed its slow length forward through the fens. Hereward assailed it with fire and sword, and harried the king's lands outside by sudden raids. It is said that, like King Alfred before him, he more than once visited the camp of the Normans in disguise, and spied out their ways and means of warfare.

There is a story connected with this warlike enterprise so significant of the times that it must be told. Whether or not William believed Hereward to be an enchanter, he took steps to defeat enchantment, if any existed. An old woman, who had the reputation of being a sorceress, was brought to the royal camp, and her services engaged in the king's cause. A wooden tower was built, and pushed along the causeway in front of the troops, the old woman within it actively dispensing her incantations and

calling down the powers of witchcraft upon Hereward's head. Unfortunately for her, Hereward tried against her sorcery of the broomstick the enchantment of the brand, setting fire to the tower and burning it and the sorceress within it. We could scarcely go back to a later date than the eleventh-century to find such an absurdity as this possible, but in those days of superstition even such a man as William the Conqueror was capable of it.

How the contest would have ended had treason been absent it is not easy to say. As it was, Abbot Thurston and his monks brought the siege to a sudden and disastrous end. They showed the king a secret way of approach to the island, and William's warriors took the camp of Hereward by surprise. What followed scarcely needs the telling. A fierce and sharp struggle, men falling and dying in scores, William's heavy-armed warriors pressing heavily upon the ranks of the more lightly clad Englishmen, and final defeat and surrender, complete the story of the assault upon Ely.

William had won, but Hereward still defied him. Striking his last blow in defence, the gallant leader, with a small band of chosen followers, cut a lane of blood through the Norman ranks and made his way to a small fleet of ships which he had kept armed and guarded for such an emergency. Sail was set, and down the stream they sped to the open sea, still setting at defiance the power of Norman William.

We have two further lines of story to follow, one of history, the other of romance; one that of the reward of the monks for their treachery, the other that of the later story of Hereward the Wake. Abbot Thurston hastened to make his submission to the king. He and the inmates of the monastery sought the court, then at Warwick, and humbly begged the royal favor and protection. The story goes that William repaid their visit by a journey to Ely, where he entered the minster while the monks, all unconscious of the royal visit, were at their meal in the refectory. The king stood humbly at a distance from the

shrine, as not worthy to approach it, but sent a mark of gold to be offered as his tribute upon the altar.

Meanwhile, one Gilbert of Clare entered the refectory, and asked the feasting monks whether they should not dine at some other time, and if it were not wise to repress their hunger while King William was in the church. Like a flock of startled pigeons the monks rose, their appetites quite gone, and flocked tumultuously towards the church. They were too late. William was gone. But in his short visit he had left them a most unwelcome legacy by marking out the site of a castle within the precincts of the monastery, and giving orders for its immediate building by forced labor

Abbot Thurston finally purchased peace from the king at a high rate, paying him three hundred marks of silver for his one mark of gold. Nor was this the end. The silver marks proved to be light in weight. To appease the king's anger at this, another three hundred silver marks were offered, and King William graciously suffered them to say their prayers thenceforward in peace. Their treachery to Hereward had not proved profitable to the traitors.

If now we return to the story of Hereward the Wake, we must once more leave the realm of history for that of legend, for what further is told of him, though doubtless based on fact, is strictly legendary in structure. Landing on the coast of Lincolnshire, the fugitives abandoned their light ships for the wide-spreading forests of that region, and long lived the life of outlaws in the dense woodland adjoining Hereward's ancestral home of Bourne. Like an earlier Robin Hood, the valiant Wake made the greenwood his home and the Normans his prey, covering nine shires in his bold excursions, which extended as far as the distant town of Warwick. The Abbey of Peterborough, with its Norman abbot, was an object of his special detestation, and more than once Turolde and his monks were put to flight, while the abbey yielded up a share of its treasures to the bold assailants.

How long Hereward and his men dwelt in the greenwood we are not able to say. They defied there the utmost efforts of their foes, and King William, whose admiration for his defiant enemy had not decreased, despairing of reducing him by force, made him overtures of peace. Hereward was ready for them. He saw clearly by this time that the Norman yoke was fastened too firmly on England's neck to be thrown off. He had fought as long as fighting was of use. Surrender only remained. A day came at length in which he rode from the forest with forty stout warriors at his back, made his way to the royal seat of Winchester, and Docked at the city gates, bidding the guards to carry the news to the conqueror that Hereward the Wake had come.

William gladly received him. He knew the value of a valiant soul, and was thereafter a warm friend of Hereward, who, on his part, remained as loyal and true to the king as he had been strong and earnest against him. And so years passed on, Hereward in favor at court, and he and Torfrida, his Flemish wife, living happily in the castle which William's bounty had provided them.

There is more than one story of Hereward's final fate. One account says that he ended his days in peace. The other, more in accordance with the spirit of the times and the hatred and jealousy felt by many of the Norman nobles against this English protégé of the king, is so stirring in its details that it serves as a fitting termination to the Hereward romance.

The story goes that he kept close watch and ward in his house against his many enemies. But on one occasion his chaplain, Ethelward, then on lookout duty, fell asleep on his post. A band of Normans was approaching, who broke into the house without warning being given, and attacked Hereward alone in his hall.

He had barely time to throw on his armor when his enemies burst in upon him and assailed him with sword and spear. The fight that ensued was one that would have gladdened the soul of a Viking of old. Hereward laid about him with such

savage energy that the floor was soon strewn with the dead bodies of his foes, and crimsoned with their blood. Finally the spear broke in the hero's hand. Next he grasped his sword and did with it mighty deeds of valor. This, too, was broken in the stress of fight. His shield was the only weapon left him, and this he used with such vigor and skill that before he had done fifteen Normans lay dead upon the floor.

Four of his enemies now got behind him and smote him in the back. The great warrior was brought to his knees. A Breton knight, Ralph of Del, rushed upon him, but found the wounded lion dangerous still. With a last desperate effort Hereward struck him a deadly blow with his buckler, and Breton and Saxon fell dead together to the floor. Another of the assailants, Asselin by name, now cut off the head of this last defender of Saxon England, and holding it in the air, swore by God and his might that he had never before seen a man of such valor and strength, and that if there had been three more like him in the land the French would have been driven out of England, or been slain on its soil.

And so ends the stirring story of Hereward the Wake, that mighty man of old.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEATH OF THE RED KING

William of normandy, by the grace of God and iron mace, had made himself king of England. An iron king he proved, savage, ruthless, the descendant of a few generations of pirate Norsemen, and himself a pirate in blood and temper. England strained uneasily under the harsh rein which he placed upon it, and he harried the country mercilessly, turning a great area of fertile land into a desert. That he might have a hunting-park near the royal palace, he laid waste all the land that lay between Winchester and the sea, planting there, in place of the homes destroyed and families driven out, what became known as the "New Forest." Nothing angered the English more than this ruthless act. A law had been passed that any one caught killing a deer in William's new hunting-grounds should have his eyes put out. Men prayed for retribution. It came. The New Forest proved fatal to the race of the Conqueror. In 1081 his oldest son Richard mortally wounded himself within its precincts. In May of the year 1100 his grandson Richard, son of Duke Robert, was killed there by a stray arrow. And, as if to emphasize more strongly this work of retribution, two months afterwards William Rufus, the Red King, the son of the Conqueror, was slain in the same manner within its leafy shades.

William Rufus—William II. of England—was, like all his Norman ancestors, fond of the chase. When there were no men to be killed, these fierce old dukes and kings solaced themselves with the slaughter of beasts. In early summer of the year 1100 the Red King was at Winchester Castle, on the skirts of the New Forest. Thence he rode to Malwood-Keep, a favorite hunting-lodge in the forest. Boon companions were with him, numbers of them, one of them a French knight named Sir Walter Tyrrell, the king's favorite. Here the days were spent in the

delights of the chase, the nights in feasting and carousing, and all went merrily.

Around them spread far and wide the umbrageous lanes and alleys of the New Forest, trees of every variety, oaks in greatest number, crowding the soil. As yet there were no trees of mighty girth. The forest was young. Few of its trees had more than a quarter-century of growth, except where more ancient woodland had been included. The place was solitary, tenanted only by the deer which had replaced man upon its soil, and by smaller creatures of wing and fur. Rarely a human foot trod there, save when the king's hunting retinue swept through its verdant aisles and woke its solitary depths with the cheerful notes of the hunting-horn. The savage laws of the Conqueror kept all others but the most daring poachers from its aisles.

Such was the stage set for the tragedy which we have to relate. The story goes that rough jests passed at Malwood-Keep between Tyrrell and the king, ending in anger, as jests are apt to. William boasted that he would carry an army through France to the Alps. Tyrrell, heated with wine, answered that he might find France a net easier to enter than to escape from. The hearers remembered these bitter words afterwards.

On the night before the fatal day it is said that cries of terror came from the king's bedchamber. The attendants rushed thither, only to find that the monarch had been the victim of nightmare. When morning came he laughed the incident to scorn, saying that dreams were fit to scare only old women and children. His companions were not so easily satisfied. Those were days when all men's souls were open to omens good and bad. They earnestly advised him not to hunt that day. William jested at their fears, vowed that no dream should scare him from the chase, yet, uneasy at heart, perhaps, let the hours pass without calling for his horse. Midday came. Dinner was served. William ate and drank with unusual freedom. Wine warmed his blood and drove off his clinging doubts. He rose from the table and ordered his horse to be brought. The day was young enough still to strike a deer, he said.

The king was in high spirits. He joked freely with his guests as he mounted his horse and prepared for the chase. As he sat in his saddle a woodman presented him six new arrows. He examined them, declared that they were well-made and proper shafts, and put four of them in his quiver, handing the other two to Walter Tyrrell.

"These are for you," he said. "Good marksmen should have good arms."

Tyrrell took them, thanked William for the gift, and the hunting-party was about to start, when there appeared a monk who asked to speak with the king.

"I come from the convent of St. Peter, at Gloucester," he said. "The abbot bids me give a message to your majesty."

"Abbot Serlon; a good Norman he," said the king. "What would he say?"

"Your majesty," said the monk, with great humility, "he bids me state that one of his monks has dreamed a dream of evil omen. He deems the king should know it."

"A dream!" declared the king. "Has he sent you hither to carry shadows? Well, tell me your dream. Time presses."

"The dream was this. The monk, in his sleep, saw Jesus Christ sitting on a throne, and at his feet kneeled a woman, who supplicated him in these words: 'Saviour of the human race, look down with pity on thy people groaning under the yoke of William.'"

The king greeted this message with a loud laugh. "Do they take me for an Englishman, with their dreams?" he asked. "Do they fancy that I am fool enough to give up my plans because a monk dreams or an old woman sneezes? Go, tell your abbot I have heard his story. Come, Walter de Poiz, to horse!"

The train swept away, leaving the monkish messenger alone, the king's disdainful laugh still in his ears. With William were his brother Henry, long at odds with him, now reconciled,

William de Bretnil, and several other nobles. Quickly they vanished among the thickly clustering trees, and soon broke up into small groups, each of which took its own route through the forest. Walter Tyrrell alone remained with the king, their dogs hunting together.

That was the last that was seen of William, the Red King, alive. When the hunters returned he was not with them. Tyrrell, too, was missing. What had become of them? Search was made, but neither could be found, and doubt and trouble of soul pervaded Malwood-Keep.

The shades of night were fast gathering when a poor charcoal-burner, passing with his cart through the forest, came upon a dead body stretched bleeding upon the grass. An arrow had pierced its breast. Lifting it into his cart, wrapped in old linen, he jogged slowly onward, the blood still dripping and staining the ground as he passed. Not till he reached the hunting-lodge did he discover that it was the corpse of a king he had found in the forest depths. The dead body was that of William II. of England.

Tyrrell had disappeared. In vain they sought him. He was nowhere to be found. Suspicion rested on him. He had murdered the king, men said, and fled the land.

Mystery has ever since shrouded the death of the Red King. Tyrrell lived to tell his tale. It was probably a true one, though many doubted it. The Frenchman had quarrelled with the king, men said, and had murdered him from revenge. Just why he should have murdered so powerful a friend and patron, for a taunt passed in jest, was far from evident.

Tyrrell's story is as follows: He and the king had taken their stations, opposite one another, waiting the work of the woodsmen who were beating up the game. Each had an arrow in his cross-bow, his finger on the trigger, eagerly listening for the distant sounds which would indicate the coming of game. As they stood thus intent, a large stag suddenly broke from the bushes and sprang into the space between them.

William drew, but the bow-string broke in his hand. The stag, startled at the sound, stood confused, looking suspiciously around. The king signed to Tyrrell to shoot, but the latter, for some reason, did not obey. William grew impatient, and called out,—

"Shoot, Walter, shoot, in the devil's name!"

Shoot he did. An instant afterwards the king fell without word or moan. Tyrrell's arrow had struck a tree, and, glancing, pierced the king's breast; or it may be that an arrow from a more distant bow had struck him. When Tyrrell reached his side he was dead.

The French knight knew what would follow if he fell into the hands of the king's companions. He could not hope to make people credit his tale. Mounting his horse, he rode with all speed through the forest, not drawing rein till the coast was reached. He had far outridden the news of the tragedy. Taking ship here, he crossed over in haste to Normandy, and thence made his way to France, not drawing a breath free from care till he felt the soil of his native land beneath his feet. There he lived to a good age and died in peace, his life diversified by a crusading visit to the Holy Land.

The end of the Red King resembled that of his father. The Conqueror had been deserted before he had fairly ceased breathing, his body left half clad on the bare boards of his chamber, while some of his attendants rifled the palace, others hastened to offer their services to his son. The same scenes followed the Red King's death. His body was left to the charcoal-burner's cart, clotted with blood, to be conveyed to Winchester, while his brother Henry rode post-haste thither to seize the royal treasure, and the train of courtiers rode as rapid a course, to look after their several interests.

Reaching the royal palace, Henry imperiously demanded the keys of the king's treasure-chamber. Before he received them William de Breteuil entered, breathless with haste, and bade the keepers not to deliver them.

"Thou and I," he said to Henry, "ought loyally to keep the faith which we promised to thy brother, Duke Robert; he has received our oath of homage, and, absent or present, he has the right."

But what was faith, what an oath, when a crown was the prize? A quarrel followed; Henry drew his sword; the people around supported him; soon he had the treasure and the royal regalia; Robert might have the right, he had the kingdom.

There is tradition connected with the Red King's death. A stirrup hangs in Lyndhurst Hall, said to be that which he used on that fatal day. The charcoal-burner was named Purkess. There are Purkesses still in the village of Minstead, near where William Rufus died. And the story runs that the earthly possessions of the Purkess family have ever since been a single horse and cart. A stone marks the spot where the king fell, on it is the inscription,—

"Here stood the oak tree on which the arrow, shot by Walter Tyrrell at a stag, glanced and struck King William II., surnamed Rufus, on the breast; of which stroke he instantly died on the second of August, 1100.

"That the spot where an event so memorable had happened might not hereafter be unknown, this stone was set up by John, Lord Delaware, who had seen the tree growing in this place, anno 1745"

We may end by saying that England was revenged; the retribution for which her children had prayed had overtaken the race of the pirate king. That broad domain of Saxon England, which William the Conqueror had wrested from its owners to make himself a hunting-forest, was reddened with the blood of two of his sons and a grandson. The hand of Heaven had fallen on that cruel race. The New Forest was consecrated in the blood of one the Norman kings.

CHAPTER VII

HOW THE WHITE SHIP SAILED

Henry i., king of England, had made peace with France. Then to Normandy went the king with a great retinue, that he might have Prince William, his only and dearly-loved son, acknowledged as his successor by the Norman nobles and married to the daughter of the Count of Anjou. Both these things were done; regal was the display, great the rejoicing, and on the 25th of November, 1120, the king and his followers, with the prince and his fair young bride, prepared to embark at Barfleur on their triumphant journey home.

So far all had gone well. Now disaster lowered. Fate had prepared a tragedy that was to load the king's soul with life-long grief and yield to English history one of its most pathetic tales.

Of the vessels of the fleet, one of the best was a fifty-oared galley called "The White Ship," commanded by a certain Thomas Fitzstephen, whose father had sailed the ship on which William the Conqueror first came to England's shores. This service Fitzstephen represented to the king, and begged that he might be equally honored.

"My liege," he said, "my father steered the ship with the golden boy upon the prow in which your father sailed to conquer England. I beseech you to grant me the same honor, that of carrying you in the White Ship to England."

"I am sorry, friend," said the king, "that my vessel is already chosen, and that I cannot sail with the son of the man who served my father. But the prince and all his company shall go along with you in the White Ship, which you may esteem an honor equal to that of carrying me."

By evening of that day the king with his retinue had set sail, with a fair wind, for England's shores, leaving the prince

with his attendants to follow in Fitzstephen's ship. With the prince were his natural brother Richard, his sister the countess of Perch, Richard, earl of Chester, with his wife, the king's niece, together with one hundred and forty of the flower of the young nobility of England and Normandy, accompanying whom were many ladies of high descent. The whole number of persons taking passage on the White Ship, including the crew, were three hundred.

Prince William was but a boy, and one who did little honor to his father's love. He was a dissolute youth of eighteen, who had so little feeling for the English as to have declared that when he came to the throne he would yoke them to the plough like oxen. Destiny had decided that the boastful boy should not have the opportunity to carry out this threat.

"Give three casks of wine, Fitzstephen," he said, "to your crew. My father, the king, has sailed. What time have we to make merry here and still reach England with the rest?"

"If we sail at midnight," answered Fitzstephen, "my fifty rowers and the White Ship shall overtake the swiftest vessel in the king's fleet before daybreak."

"Then let us be merry," said the prince; "the night is fine, the time young, let us enjoy it while we may."

Merry enough they were; the prince and his companions danced in the moonlight on the ship's deck, the sailors emptied their wine-casks, and when at last they left the harbor there was not a sober sailor on board, and the captain himself was the worse for wine.

As the ship swept from the port, the young nobles, heated with wine, hung over the sides and drove away with taunts the priests who had come to give the usual benediction. Wild youths were they,—the most of them,—gay, ardent, in the hey-day of life, caring mainly for pleasure, and with little heed of aught beyond the moment's whim. There seemed naught to give them care, in sooth. The sea lay smooth beneath them, the air was

mild, the moon poured its soft lustre upon the deck, and propitious fortune appeared to smile upon the ship as it rushed onward, under the impulse of its long banks of oars, in haste to overtake the distant fleet of the king.

All went merrily. Fitzstephen grasped the helm, his soul proud with the thought that, as his father had borne the Conqueror to England's strand, he was bearing the pride of younger England, the heir to the throne. On the deck before him his passengers were gathered in merry groups, singing, laughing, chatting, the ladies in their rich-lined mantles, the gentlemen in their bravest attire; while to the sound of song and merry talk the well-timed fall of the oars and swash of driven waters made refrain.

They had reached the harbor's mouth. The open ocean lay before them. In a few minutes more they would be sweeping over the Atlantic's broad expanse. Suddenly there came a frightful crash; a shock that threw numbers of the passengers head-long to the deck, and tore the oars from the rowers' hands; a cry of terror that went up from three hundred throats. It is said that some of the people in the far-off ships heard that cry, faint, far, despairing, borne to them over miles of sea, and asked themselves in wonder what it could portend.

It portended too much wine and too little heed. The vessel, carelessly steered, had struck upon a rock, the *Cateeraze*, at the harbor's mouth, with such violence that a gaping wound was torn in her prow, and the waters instantly began to rush in.

The White Ship was injured, was filling, would quickly sink. Wild consternation prevailed. There was but one boat, and that small. Fitzstephen, sobered by the concussion, hastily lowered it, crowded into it the prince and a few nobles, and bade them hastily to push off and row to the land.

"It is not far," he said, "and the sea is smooth. The rest of us must die."

They obeyed. The boat was pushed off, the oars dropped into the water, it began to move from the ship. At that moment, amid the cries of horror and despair on the sinking vessel, came one that met the prince's ear in piteous appeal. It was the voice of his sister, Marie, the countess of Perch, crying to him for help.

In that moment of frightful peril Prince William's heart beat true.

"Row back at any risk!" he cried. "My sister must be saved. I cannot bear to leave her."

They rowed back. But the hope that from that panic-stricken multitude one woman could be selected was wild. No sooner had the boat reached the ship's side than dozens madly sprung into it, in such numbers that it was overturned. At almost the same moment the White Ship went down, dragging all within reach into her eddying vortex. Death spread its sombre wings over the spot where, a few brief minutes before, life and joy had ruled.

When the tossing eddies subsided, the pale moon light looked down on but two souls of all that gay and youthful company. These clung to a spar which had broken loose from the mast and floated on the waves, or to the top of the mast itself, which stood above the surface.

"Only two of us, out of all that gallant company!" said one of these in despairing tones. "Who are you, friend and comrade?"

"I am a nobleman, Godfrey, the son of Gilbert de L'Aigle. And you?" he asked.

"I am Berold, a poor butcher of Rouen," was the answer.

"God be merciful to us both!" they then cried together.

Immediately afterwards they saw a third, who had risen and was swimming towards them. As he drew near he pushed the wet, clinging hair from his face, and they saw the white, agonized countenance of Fitzstephen. He gazed at them with

eager eyes; then cast a long, despairing look on the waters around him.

"Where is the prince?" he asked, in tones that seemed to shudder with terror.

"Gone! gone!" they cried. "Not one of all on board, except we three, has risen above the water."

"Woe! woe, to me!" moaned Fitzstephen. He ceased swimming, turned to them a face ghastly with horror, and then sank beneath the waves, to join the goodly company whom his negligence had sent to a watery death. He dared not live to meet the father of his charge.

The two continued to cling to their support. But the water had in it the November chill, the night was long, the tenderly-reared nobleman lacked the endurance of his humbler companion. Before day-dawn he said, in faint accents,—

"I am exhausted and chilled with the cold. I can hold on no longer. Farewell, good friend! God preserve you!"

He loosed his hold and sank. The butcher of Rouen remained alone.

When day came some fisherman saw this clinging form from the shore, rowed out, and brought him in, the sole one living of all that goodly company. A few hours before the pride and hope of Normandy and England had crowded that noble ship. Now only a base-born butcher survived to tell the story of disaster, and the stately White Ship, with her noble freightage, lay buried beneath the waves.

For three days no one dared tell King Henry the dreadful story. Such was his love for his son that they feared his grief might turn to madness, and their lives pay the forfeit of their venture. At length a little lad was sent in to him with the tale. Weeping bitterly, and kneeling at the king's feet, the child told in broken accents the story which had been taught him, how the White Ship had gone to the bottom at the mouth of Barfleur

harbor, and all on board been lost save one poor commoner. Prince William, his son, was dead.

The king heard him to the end, with slowly whitening face and horror-stricken eyes. At the conclusion of the child's narrative the monarch fell prostrate to the floor, and lay there long like one stricken with death. The chronicle of this sad tragedy ends in one short phrase, which is weighty with its burden of grief,—From that day on King Henry never smiled again!

CHAPTER VIII

A CONTEST FOR A CROWN

Terrible was the misery of England. Torn between contending factions, like a deer between snarling wolves, the people suffered martyrdom, while thieves and assassins, miscalled soldiers, and brigands, miscalled nobles, ravaged the land and tortured its inhabitants. Outrage was law, and death the only refuge from barbarity, and at no time in the history of England did its people endure such misery as in those years of the loosening of the reins of justice and mercy which began with 1139 A.D.

It was the autumn of the year named. At every port of England bands of soldiers were landing, with arms and baggage; along every road leading from the coast bands of soldiers were marching; in every town bands of soldiers were mustering; here joining in friendly union, there coming into hostile contact, for they represented rival parties, and were speeding to the gathering points of their respective leaders.

All England was in a ferment, men everywhere arming and marching. All Normandy was in turmoil, soldiers of fortune crowding to every port, eager to take part in the harrying of the island realm. The Norman nobles of England were everywhere fortifying their castles, which had been sternly prohibited by the recent king. Law and authority were for the time being abrogated, and every man was preparing to fight for his own hand and his own land. A single day, almost, had divided the Normans of England into two factions, not yet come to blows, but facing each other like wild beasts at bay. And England and the English were the prey craved by both these herds of human wolves.

There were two claimants to the throne: Matilda,—or Maud, as she is usually named,—daughter of Henry I., and

Stephen of Blois, grandson of William the Conqueror. Henry had named his daughter as his successor; Stephen seized the throne; the issue was sharply drawn between them. Each of them had a legal claim to the throne, Stephen's the better, he being the nearest male heir. No woman had as yet ruled in England. Maud's mother had been of ancient English descent, which gave her popularity among the Saxon inhabitants of the land. Stephen was personally popular, a good-humored, generous prodigal, his very faults tending to make him a favorite. Yet he was born to be a swordsman, not a king, and his only idea of royalty was to let the land rule—or misrule it if preferred—itsself, while he enjoyed the pleasures and declined the toils of kingship.

A few words will suffice to bring the history of those turbulent times up to the date of the opening of our story. The death of Henry I. was followed by anarchy in England. His daughter Maud, wife of Geoffrey the Handsome, Count of Anjou, was absent from the land. Stephen, Count of Blois, and son of Adela, the Conqueror's daughter, was the first to reach it. Speeding across the Channel, he hurried through England, then in the turmoil of lawlessness, no noble joining him, no town opening him its gates, until London was reached. There the coldness of his route was replaced by the utmost warmth of welcome. The city poured from its gates to meet him, hastened to elect him king, swore to defend him with blood and treasure, and only demanded in return that the new king should do his utmost to pacify the realm.

Here Stephen failed. He was utterly unfit to govern. While he thought only of profligate enjoyment, the barons fortified their castles and became petty kings in their several domains. The great prelates followed their example. Then, for the first time, did Stephen awake from his dream of pleasure and attempt to play the king. He seized Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, and threw him into prison to force him to surrender his fortresses. This precipitated the trouble that brooded over England. The king lost the support of the clergy by his violence to their leader, alienated many of the nobles by his hasty action,

and gave Maud the opportunity for which she had waited. She lost no time in offering herself to the English as a claimant to the crown.

Her landing was made on the 22nd of September, 1139, on the coast of Sussex. Here she threw herself into Arundel Castle, and quickly afterwards made her way to Bristol Castle, then held by her illegitimate brother, Robert, Earl of Gloucester.

And now the state of affairs we had described began. The nobles of the north and west of England renounced their allegiance to Stephen and swore allegiance to Maud. London and the east remained faithful to the king. A stream of men-at-arms, hired by both factions, poured from the neighboring coast of Normandy into the disputed realm. Each side had promised them, for their pay, the lands and wealth of the other. Like vultures to the feast they came, with little heed to the rights of the rival claimants and the wrongs of the people, with much heed to their own private needs and ambitions.

In England such anarchy ruled as that land of much intestine war has rarely witnessed. The Norman nobles prepared in haste for the civil war, and in doing so made the English their prey. To raise the necessary funds, many of them sold their domains, townships, and villages, with the inhabitants thereof and all their goods. Others of them made forays on the lands of those of the opposite faction, and seized cattle, horses, sheep, and men alike carrying off the English in chains, that they might force them by torture to yield what wealth they possessed.

Terror ruled supreme. The realm was in a panic of dread. So great was the alarm, that the inhabitants of city and town alike took to flight if they saw a distant group of horsemen approaching. Three or four armed men were enough to empty a town of its inhabitants. It was in Bristol, where Maud and her foreign troops lay, that the most extreme terror prevailed. All day long men were being brought into the city bound and gagged. The citizens had no immunity. Soldiers mingled among them in disguise, their arms concealed, their talk in the English

tongue, strolling through markets and streets, listening to the popular chat, and then suddenly seizing any one who seemed to be in easy circumstances. These they would drag to their headquarters and hold to ransom.

The air was filled with tales of the frightful barbarities practised by the Norman nobles on the unhappy English captives in the depths of their gloomy castles. "They carried off," says the Saxon chronicle, "all who they thought possessed any property, men and women, by day and by night; and whilst they kept them imprisoned, they inflicted on them tortures, such as no martyr ever underwent, in order to obtain gold and silver from them." We must be excused from quoting the details of these tortures.

"They killed many thousands of people by hunger," continues the chronicle. "They imposed tribute after tribute upon the towns and villages, calling this in their tongue *tenserie*. When the citizens had nothing more to give them, they plundered and burnt the town. You might have travelled a whole day without finding a single soul in the towns, or a cultivated field. The poor died of hunger, and those who had been formerly well-off begged their bread from door to door. Whoever had it in his power to leave England did so. Never was a country delivered up to so many miseries and misfortunes; even in the invasions of the pagans it suffered less than now. Neither the cemeteries nor the churches were spared; they seized all they could, and then set fire to the church. To till the ground was useless. It was openly reported that Christ and his saints were sleeping."

One cannot but think that this frightful picture is somewhat overdrawn; yet nothing could indicate better the condition of a Middle-Age country under a weak king, and torn by the adherents of rival claimants to the throne.

Let us leave this tale of torture and horror and turn to that of war. In the conflict between Stephen and Maud the king took the first step. He led his army against Bristol. It proved too strong for him, and his soldiers, in revenge, burnt the environs,

after robbing them of all they could yield. Then, leaving Bristol, he turned against the castles on the Welsh borders, nearly all of whose lords had declared for Maud.

From the laborious task of reducing these castles he was suddenly recalled by an insurrection in the territory so far faithful to him. The fens of Ely, in whose recesses Hereward the Wake had defied the Conqueror, now became the stronghold of a Norman revolt. A baron and a bishop, Baldwin de Revier and Lenior, Bishop of Ely, built stone in intrenchments on the island, and defied the king from behind the watery shelter of the fens.

Hither flocked the partisans of Maud; hither came Stephen, filled with warlike fury. He lacked the qualities that make a king, but he had those that go to make a soldier. The methods of the Conqueror in attacking Hereward were followed by Stephen in assailing his foes. Bridges of boats were built across the fens; over these the king's cavalry made their way to the firm soil of the island; a fierce conflict ensued, ending in the rout of the soldiers of Baldwin and Lenior. The bishop fled to Gloucester, whither Maud had now proceeded.

Thus far the king had kept the field, while his rival lay intrenched in her strongholds. But her party was earnestly at work. The barons of the Welsh marches, whose castles had been damaged by the king, repaired them. Even the towers of the great churches were filled with war-engines and converted into fortresses, ditches being dug in the church yards around, with little regard to the fact that the bones of the dead were unearthed and scattered over the soil. The Norman bishops, completely armed, and mounted on war-horses, took part in these operations, and were no more scrupulous than the barons in torturing the English to force from them their hoarded gold and silver.

Those were certainly not the days of merry England. Nor were they days of pious England, when the heads of the church, armed with sword and spear, led armies against their foes. In this they were justified by the misrule of Stephen, who had shown

his utter unfitness to rule. In truth, a bishop ended that first phase of the war. The Bishop of Chester rallied the troops which had fled from Ely. These grew by rapid accretions until a new army was in the field. Stephen attacked it, but the enemy held their own, and his troops were routed. They fled on all sides, leaving the king alone in the midst of his foes. He lacked not courage. Single-handed he defended himself against a throng of assailants. But his men were in flight; he stood alone; it was death or surrender; he yielded himself prisoner. He was taken to Gloucester, and thence to Bristol Castle, in whose dungeons he was imprisoned. For the time being the war was at an end. Maud was queen.

The daughter of Henry might have reigned during the remainder of her life but for pride and folly, two faults fitted to wreck the best built cause. All was on her side except herself. Her own arrogance drove her from the throne before it had grown warm from her sitting.

For the time, indeed, Stephen's cause seemed lost. He was in a dungeon strongly guarded by his adversaries. His partisans went over in crowds to the opposite side,—his own brother, Henry, Bishop of Winchester, with them. The English peasants, embittered by oppression, rose against the beaten army, and took partial revenge for their wrongs by plundering and maltreating the defeated and dispersed soldiers in their flight.

Maud made her way to Winchester, her progress being one of royal ostentation. Her entry to the town was like a Roman triumph. She was received with all honor, was voted queen in a great convocation of nobles, prelates, and knights, and seized the loyal regalia and the treasures of her vanquished foe. All would have gone well with her had not good fortune turned her brain. Pride and a haughty spirit led to her hasty downfall.

She grew arrogant and disdainful. Those who had made her queen found their requests met with refusal, their advice rejected with scorn. Those of the opposite party who had joined

her were harshly treated. Her most devoted friends and adherents soon grew weak in their loyalty, and many withdrew from the court, with the feeling that they had been fools to support this haughty woman against the generous-hearted soldier who lay in Bristol dungeon.

From Winchester Maud proceeded to London, after having done her cause as much harm as she well could in the brief time at her disposal. She was looked for in the capital city with sentiments of hope and pride. Her mother had been English, and the English citizens felt a glow of enthusiasm to feel that one whose blood was even half Saxon was coming to rule over them. Their pride quickly changed into anger and desire for revenge.

Maud signalized her entrance into London by laying on the citizens an enormous poll-tax. Stephen had done his utmost to beggar them; famine threat ened them; in extreme distress they prayed the queen to give them time to recover from their present miseries before laying fresh taxes on them.

"The king has left us nothing," said their deputies, humbly.

"I understand," answered Maud, with haughty disdain, "that you have given all to my adversary and have conspired with him against me; now you expect me to spare you. You shall pay the tax."

"Then," pleaded the deputies, "give us something in return. Restore to us the good laws of thy great uncle, Edward, in place of those of thy father, King Henry, which are bad and too harsh for us."

Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad. The queen listened to the deputies in a rage, treated them as if they had been guilty of untold insolence in daring to make this request, and with harsh menaces drove them from her presence, bidding them to see that the tax was paid, or London should suffer bitterly for its contumacy.

The deputies withdrew with a show of respect, but with fury in their hearts, and repaired to their council-chamber, whence the news of what had taken place sped rapidly through the city. In her palace Queen Maud waited in proud security, nothing doubting that she had humbled those insolent citizens, and that the deputies would soon return ready to creep on their knees to the foot of her throne and offer a golden recompense for their daring demand for milder laws.

Suddenly the bells of London began to ring. In the streets adjoining the palace loud voices were heard. People seemed gathering rapidly. What did it mean? Were these her humbled citizens of London? Surely there were threats mingled with those harsh cries! Threats against the queen who had just entered London in triumph and been received with such hearty enthusiasm! Were the Londoners mad?

She would have thought so had she been in the streets. From every house issued a man, armed. With the first weapon he could find, his face inflamed with anger. They flocked out as tumultuously as bees from a hive, says an old writer. The streets of London, lately quiet, were now filled with a noisy throng, all hastening towards the palace, all uttering threats against this haughty foreign woman, who must have lost every drop of her English blood, they declared.

The palace was filled with alarm. It looked as if the queen's Norman blood would be lost as well as that from her English sires. She had men-at-arms around her, but not enough to be of avail against the clustering citizens in those narrow and crooked streets. Flight, and that a speedy one, was all that remained. White with terror, the queen took to horse, and, surrounded by her knights and soldiers, fled from London with a haste that illy accorded with the stately and deliberate pride with which she had recently entered that turbulent capital.

She was none too soon. The frightened cortege had not left the palace far behind it before the maddened citizens burst open its doors, searched every nook and cranny of the building

for the queen and her body-guard, and, finding they had fled, wreaked their wrath on all that was left, plundering the apartments of all they contained.

Meanwhile, the queen, wild with fright, was galloping at full speed from the hostile beehive she had disturbed. Her barons and knights, in a panic of fear and deeming themselves hotly pursued, dropped off from the party one by one, hoping for safety by leaving the highway for the by-ways, and caring little for the queen so that they saved their frightened selves. The queen rode on in mad terror until Oxford was reached, only her brother, the Earl of Gloucester, and a few others keeping her company to that town.

They fled from a shadow. The citizens had not pursued them. These turbulent tradesmen were content with ridding London of this power-mad woman, and they went back satisfied to their homes, leaving the city open to occupation by the partisans of Stephen, who entered it under pretense of an alliance with the citizens. The Bishop of Winchester, who seems to have been something of a weather cock in his political faith, turned again to his brother's side, set Stephen's banner afloat on Windsor Castle and converted his bishop's residence into a fortress. Robert of Gloucester came with Maud's troops to besiege it. The garrison set fire to the surrounding houses to annoy the besiegers. While the town was burning, an army from London appeared, fiercely attacked the assailants, and forced them to take refuge in the churches. These were set on fire to drive out the fugitives. The affair ended in Robert of Gloucester being taken prisoner and his followers dispersed.

Then once more the Saxon peasants swarmed from their huts like hornets from their hives and assailed the fugitives as they had before assailed those from Stephen's army. The proud Normans, whose language betrayed them in spite of their attempts at disguise, were robbed, stripped of their clothing, and driven along the roads by whips in the hands of Saxon serfs, who thus repaid themselves for many an act of wrong. The Bishop of Canterbury and other high prelates and numbers of great lords

were thus maltreated, and for once were thoroughly humbled by those despised islanders whom their fathers had enslaved.

Thus ended the second act in this drama of conquest and re-conquest. Maud, deprived of her brother, was helpless. She exchanged him for King Stephen, and the war broke out afresh. Stephen laid siege to Oxford, and pressed it so closely that once more Maud took to flight. It was midwinter. The ground was covered with snow. Dressing herself from head to foot in white, and accompanied by three knights similarly attired, she slipped out of a postern in the hope of being unseen against the whiteness of the snow-clad surface.

Stephen's camp was asleep, its sentinels alone being astir. The scared fugitives glided on foot through the snow, passing close to the enemy's posts, the voices of the sentinels sounding in their ears. On foot they crossed the frozen Thames, gained horses on the opposite side, and galloped away in hasty flight.

There is little more to say. Maud's cause was at an end. Not long afterwards her brother died, and she withdrew to Normandy, glad, doubtless, to be well out of that pestiferous island, but, mayhap, mourning that her arrogant folly had robbed her of a throne.

A few years afterwards her son Henry took up her cause, and landed in England with an army. But the threatened hostilities ended in a truce, which provided that Henry should reign after Stephen's death. Stephen died a year afterwards, England gained an able monarch, and prosperity returned to the realm after fifteen years of the most frightful misery and misrule.

CHAPTER IX

THE CAPTIVITY OF RICHARD COEUR DE LION

In the month of October, in the year of our Lord 1192, a pirate vessel touched land on the coast of Sclavonia, at the port of Yara. Those were days in which it was not easy to distinguish between pirates and true mariners, either in aspect or avocation, neither being afflicted with much inconvenient honesty, both being hungry for spoil. From this Vessel were landed a number of passengers,—knights, chaplains, and servants,—Crusaders on their way home from the Holy Land, and in need, for their overland journey, of a safe-conduct from the lord of the province.

He who seemed chief among the travellers sent a messenger to the ruler of Yara, to ask for this safe-conduct, and bearing a valuable ruby ring which he was commissioned to offer him as a present. The lord of Yara received this ring, which he gazed upon with eyes of doubt and curiosity. It was too valuable an offer for a small service, and, he had surely heard of this particular ruby before.

"Who are they that have sent thee to ask a free passage of me?" he asked the messenger.

"Some pilgrims returning from Jerusalem," was the answer.

"And by what names call you these pilgrims?"

"One is called Baldwin de Bethune," rejoined the messenger. "The other, he who sends you this ring, is named Hugh the merchant."

The ruler fixed his eyes again upon the ring, which he examined with close attention. He at length replied,—

"You had better have told me the truth, for your ring reveals it. This man's name is not Hugh, but Richard, king of England. His gift is a royal one, and, since he wished to honor me with it without knowing me, I return it to him, and leave him free to depart. Should I do as duty bids, I would hold him prisoner."

It was indeed Richard Coeur de Lion, on his way home from the Crusade which he had headed, and in which his arbitrary and imperious temper had made enemies of the rulers of France and Austria, who accompanied him. He had concluded with Saladin a truce of three years, three months, three days, and three hours, and then, disregarding his oath that he would not leave the Holy Land while he had a horse left to feed on, he set sail in haste for home. He had need to, for his brother John was intriguing to seize the throne.

On his way home, finding that he must land and proceed part of the way overland, he dismissed all his suite but a few attendants, fearing to be recognized and detained. The single vessel which he now possessed was attacked by pirates, but the fight, singularly enough, ended in a truce, and was followed by so close a friendship between Richard and the pirate captain that he left his vessel for theirs, and was borne by them to Yara.

The ruler of Yara was a relative of the marquis of Montferrat, whose death in Palestine had without warrant been imputed to Richard's influence. The king had, therefore, unwittingly revealed himself to an enemy and was in imminent danger of arrest. On receiving the message sent him he set out at once, not caring to linger in so doubtful a neighborhood. No attempt was made to stop him. The lord of Yara was in so far faithful to his word. But he had not promised to keep the king's secret, and at once sent a message to his brother, lord of a neighboring town, that King Richard of England was in the country, and would probably pass through his town.

There was a chance that he might pass undiscovered; pilgrims from Palestine were numerous; Richard reached the

town, where no one knew him, and obtained lodging with one of its householders as Hugh, a merchant from the East.

As it happened, the lord of the town had in his service a Norman named Roger, formerly from Argenton. To him he sent, and asked him if he knew the king of England.

"No; I never saw him," said Roger.

"But you know his language—the Norman French, there may be some token by which you can recognize him; go seek him in the inns where pilgrims lodge, or elsewhere. He is a prize well worth taking. If you put him in my hands I will give you the government of half my domain"

Roger set out upon his quest, and continued it for several days, first visiting the inns, and then going from house to house of the town, keenly inspecting every stranger. The king was really there, and at last was discovered by the eager searcher. Though in disguise, Roger suspected him. That mighty bulk, those muscular limbs, that imperious face, could belong to none but him who had swept through the Saracen hosts with a battle-axe which no other of the Crusaders could wield. Roger questioned him so closely that the king, after seeking to conceal his identity, was at length forced to reveal who he really was.

"I am not your foe, but your friend," cried Roger, bursting into tears. "You are in imminent danger here, my liege, and must fly at once. My best horse is at your service. Make your escape, without delay, out of German territory."

Waiting until he saw the king safely horsed, Roger returned to his master, and told him that the report was a false one. The only Crusader he had found in the town was Baldwin de Bethune, a Norman knight, on his way home from Palestine. The lord, furious at his disappointment, at once had Baldwin arrested and imprisoned. But Richard had escaped.

The flying king hurried onward through the German lands, his only companions now being William de l'Etang, his intimate friend, and a valet who could speak the language of the

country, and who acted as their interpreter. For three days and three nights the travellers pursued their course, without food or shelter, not daring to stop or accost any of the inhabitants. At length they arrived at Vienna, completely worn out with hunger and fatigue.

The fugitive king could have sought no more dangerous place of shelter. Vienna was the capitol of Duke Leopold of Austria, whom Richard had mortally offended in Palestine, by tearing down his banner and planting the standard of England in its place. Yet all might have gone well but for the servant, who, while not a traitor, was as dangerous a thing, a fool. He was sent out from the inn to change the gold byzantines of the travellers for Austrian coin, and took occasion to make such display of his money, and assume so dignified and courtier like an air, that the citizens grew suspicious of him and took him before a magistrate to learn who he was. He declared that he was the servant of a rich merchant who was on his way to Vienna, and would be there in three days. This reply quieted the suspicions of the people, and the foolish fellow was released.

In great affright he hastened to the king, told him what had happened, and begged him to leave the town at once. The advice was good, but a three days' journey without food or shelter called for some repose, and Richard decided to remain some days longer in the town, confident that, if they kept quiet, no further suspicion would arise.

Meanwhile, the news of the incident at Yara had spread through the country and reached Vienna. Duke Leopold heard it with a double sentiment of enmity and avarice. Richard had insulted him; here was a chance for revenge; and the ransom of such a prisoner would enrich his treasury, then, presumably, none too full. Spies and men-at-arms were sent out in search of travellers who might answer to the description of the burly English monarch. For days they traversed the country, but no trace of him could be found. Leopold did not dream that his mortal foe was in his own city, comfortably lodged within a mile of his palace.

Richard's servant, who had imperilled him before, now succeeded in finishing his work of folly. One day he appeared in the market to purchase provisions, foolishly bearing in his girdle a pair of richly embroidered gloves, such as only great lords wore when in court attire. The fellow was arrested again, and this time, suspicion being increased, was put to the torture. Very little of this sharp discipline sufficed him. He confessed whom he served, and told the magistrate at what inn King Richard might be found.

Within an hour afterwards the inn was surrounded by soldiers of the duke, and Richard, taken by surprise, was forced to surrender. He was brought before the duke, who recognized him at a glance, accosted him with great show of courtesy, with every display of respect ordered him to be taken to prison, where picked soldiers with drawn swords guarded him day and night.

The news that King Richard was a prisoner in an Austrian fortress spread through Europe, and everywhere gave joy to the rulers of the various realms. Brave soldier as he was, he of the lion heart had succeeded in offending all his kingly comrades in the Crusade, and they rejoiced over his captivity as one might over the caging of a captured lion. The emperor called upon his vassal, Duke Leopold, to deliver the prisoner to him, saying that none but an emperor had the right to imprison a king. The duke assented, and the emperor, filled with glee, sent word of his good fortune to the king of France, who returned answer that the news was more agreeable to him than a present of gold or topaz. As for John, the brother of the imprisoned king, he made overtures for an alliance with Philip of France, redoubled his intrigues in England and Normandy, and secretly instigated the emperor to hold on firmly to his royal prize. All Europe seemed to be leagued against the unlucky king, who lay in bondage within the stern walls of a German prison.

And now we feel tempted to leave awhile the domain of sober history, and enter that of romance, which tells one of its prettiest stories about King Richard's captivity. The story goes that the people of England knew not what had become of their

king. That he was held in durance vile somewhere in Germany they had been told, but Germany was a broad land and had many prisons, and none knew which held the lion-hearted king. Before he could be rescued he must be found, and how should this be done?

Those were the days of the troubadours, who sang their lively lays not only in Provence but in other lands. Richard himself composed lays and sang them to the harp, and Blondel, a troubadour of renown, was his favorite minstrel, accompanying him wherever he went. This faithful singer mourned bitterly the captivity of his king, and at length, bent on finding him, went wandering through foreign lands, singing under the walls of fortresses and prisons a lay which Richard well knew. Many weary days he wandered without response, almost without hope; yet still faithful Blondel roamed on, heedless of the palaces of the land, seeking only its prisons and strongholds.

At length arrived a day in which, from a fortress window above his head, came an echo of the strain he had just sung. He listened in ecstasy. Those were Norman words; that was a well-known voice; it could be but the captive king.

"O Richard! O my king!" sang the minstrel again, in a song of his own devising.

From above came again the sound of familiar song. Filled with joy, the faithful minstrel sought England's shores, told the nobles where the king could be found, and made strenuous exertions to obtain his ransom, efforts which were at length crowned with success.

Through the alluring avenues of romance the voice of Blondel still comes to us, singing his signal lay of "O Richard! O my king!" but history has made no record of the pretty tale, and back to history we must turn.

The imprisoned king was placed on trial before the German Diet at Worms, charged with—no one knows what. Whatever the charge, the sentence was that he should pay a

ransom of one hundred thousand pounds of silver, and acknowledge himself vassal of the emperor. The latter, a mere formality, was gone through with as much pomp and Ceremony as though it was likely to have any binding force upon English kings. The former, the raising of the money, was more difficult. Two years passed, and still it was not all paid. The royal prisoner, weary of his long captivity, complained bitterly of the neglect of his people and friends, singing his woes in a song composed in the polished dialect of Provence, the land of the troubadours.

"There is no man, however base, whom for want of money I would let lie in a prison cell," he sang. "I do not say it as a reproach, but I am still a prisoner."

A part of the ransom at length reached Germany, whose emperor sent a third of it to the duke of Austria as his share of the prize, and consented to the liberation of his captive in the third week after Christmas if he would leave hostages to guarantee the remaining payment.

Richard agreed to everything, glad to escape from prison on any terms. But the news of this agreement spread until it reached the ears of Philip of France and his ally, John. Dread filled their hearts at the tidings. Their plans for seizing on England and Normandy were not yet complete. In great haste Philip sent messengers to the emperor, offering him seventy thousand marks of silver if he would hold his prisoner for one year longer, or, if he preferred, a thousand pounds of silver for each month of captivity. If he would give the prisoner into the custody of Philip and his ally, they would pay a hundred and fifty thousand marks for the prize.

The offer was a tempting one. It dazzled the mind of the emperor, whose ideas of honor were not very deeply planted. But the members of the Diet would not suffer him to break his faith. Their power was great, even over the emperor's will, and the royal prisoner, after his many weary months of captivity, was set free.



STATUE OF RICHARD COEUR DE LION

Word of the failure of his plans came quickly to Philip's knavish ears, and he wrote in haste to his confederate, "the devil is loose; take care of yourself," an admonition which John was quite likely to obey. His hope of seizing the crown vanished. There remained to meet his placable brother with a show of fraternal loyalty.

But Richard was delayed in his purpose of reaching England, and danger again threatened him. He had been set free near the end of January, 1194. He dared not enter France, and Normandy, then invaded by the French, was not safe for him. His best course was to take ship at a German port and sail for England. But it was the season of storms; he lay a month at Anvers imprecating the weather; meanwhile, avarice overcame both fear and honor in the emperor's heart, the large sum offered him outweighed the opposition of the lords of the Diet, and he resolved to seize the prisoner again and profit by the French king's golden bribe.

Fortunately for Richard, the perfidious emperor allowed the secret of his design to get adrift; one of the hostages left in his hands heard of it and found means to warn the king. Richard, at this tidings, stayed not for storm, but at once took passage in the galliot of a Norman trader named Alain Franchemer, narrowly escaping the men-at-arms sent to take him prisoner. Not many days afterwards he landed at the English port of Sandwich, once more a free man and a king.

What followed in Richard's life we design not to tell, other than the story of his life's ending with its romantic incidents. The liberated king had not been long on his native soil before he succeeded in securing Normandy against the invading French, building on its borders a powerful fortress, which he called his "Saucy Castle," and the ruins of whose sturdy walls still remain. Philip was wrathful when he saw its ramparts growing.

"I will take it were its walls of iron," he declared.

"I would hold it were the walls of butter," Richard defiantly replied.

It was church land, and the archbishop placed Normandy under an interdict. Richard laughed at his wrath, and persuaded the pope to withdraw the curse. A "rain of blood" fell, which scared his courtiers, but Richard laughed at it as he had at the bishop's wrath. "Had an angel from heaven bid him abandon his work, he would have answered with a curse," says one writer.

"How pretty a child is mine, this child of but a year old!" said Richard, gladly, as he saw the walls proudly rise.

He needed money to finish it. His kingdom had been drained to pay his ransom. But a rumor reached him that a treasure had been found at Limousin, twelve knights of gold seated round a golden table, said the story. Richard claimed it. The lord of Limoges refused to surrender it. Richard assailed his castle. It was stubbornly defended. In savage wrath he swore he would hang every soul within its walls.

There was an old song which said that an arrow would be made in Limoges by which King Richard would die. The song proved a true prediction. One night, as the king surveyed the walls, a young soldier, Bertrand de Gourdon by name, drew an arrow to its head, and saying, "Now I pray God speed thee well!" let fly.

The shaft struck the king in the left shoulder. The wound might have been healed, but unskilful treatment made it mortal. The castle was taken while Richard lay dying, and every soul in it hanged, as the king had sworn, except Bertrand de Gourdon. He was brought into the king's tent, heavily chained.

"Knave!" cried Richard, "what have I done to you that you should take my life?"

"You have killed my father and my two brothers," answered the youth. "You would have hanged me. Let me die now, by any torture you will. My comfort is that no torture to me

can save you. You, too, must die; and through me the world is quit of you."

The king looked at him steadily, and with a gleam of clemency in his eyes.

"Youth," he said, "I forgive you. Go unhurt." Then turning to his chief captain, he said, "Take off his chains, give him a hundred shillings, and let him depart."

He fell back on his couch, and in a few minutes was dead, having signalized his last moments with an act of clemency which had had few counterparts in his life. His clemency was not matched by his piety. The priests who were present at his dying bed exhorted him to repentance and restitution, but he drove them away with bitter mockery, and died as hardened a sinner as he had lived. It should, however, be said that this statement of the character of Richard's death, given by the historian Green, does not accord with that of Lingard, who says that Richard sent for his confessor and received the sacraments with sentiments of compunction.

As for Bertrand, the chronicles say that he failed to profit by the kindness of the king. A dead monarch's voice has no weight in the land. The pardoned youth was put to death.

CHAPTER X

ROBIN HOOD AND THE KNIGHT OF THE RUEFUL COUNTENANCE

"Where will the old duke live?" asks Oliver, in Shakespeare's "As you like it."

"They say he is already in the forest of Arden," answers Charles, "and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England, and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world."

Many a merry man, indeed, was there with Robin Hood in Sherwood forest, and, if we may believe the stories that live in the heart of English song, there they fleeted the time as carelessly as men did in the golden age; for Robin was king of the merry greenwood, as the Norman kings were lords of the realm beside, and though his state was not so great nor his coffers so full, his heart was merrier and his conscience more void of offence against man and God. If Robin lived by plunder, so did the king; the one took toll from a few travellers, the other from a kingdom; the one dealt hard blows in self-defence, the other killed thousands in war for self-aggrandizement; the one was a patriot, the other an invader. Verily Robin was far the honestest man of the two, and most worthy the admiration of mankind.

Nor was the kingdom of Robin Hood so much less extensive than that of England's king as men may deem, though its tenants were fewer and its revenues less. For in those days forest land spread widely over the English isle. The Norman kings had driven out the old inhabitants far and wide, and planted forests in place of towns, peopling them with deer in place of men. In its way this was merciful, perhaps. Those rude old kings were not content unless they were hunting and killing,

and it was better they should kill deer than men. But their cruel game laws could not keep men from the forests, and the woods they planted served as places of shelter for the outlaws they made.

William the Conqueror, so we are told, had no less than sixty-eight forests peopled with deer, and guarded against intrusion of common man by a cruel interdict. His successors added new forests, until it looked as if England might be made all woodland, and the red deer its chief inhabitants. Sherwood forest, the favorite lurking place of the bold Robin, stretched for thirty miles in an unbroken line. But this was only part of Robin's "realm of plesaunce." From Sherwood it was but a step to other forests, stretching league after league, and peopled by bands of merry rovers, who laughed at the king's laws, killed and ate his cherished deer at their own sweet wills, and defied sheriff and man at arms, the dense forest depths affording them innumerable lurking-places, their skill with the bow enabling them to defend their domain from assault, and to exact tribute from their foes.



ROBIN HOOD'S WOODS.

Such was the realm of Robin Hood, a realm of giant oaks and silvery birches, a realm prodigal of trees, o'er canopied with green leaves until the sun had ado to send his rays downward, carpeted with brown moss and emerald grasses, thicketed with a rich undergrowth of bryony and clematis, prickly holly and golden furze, and a host of minor shrubs, while some parts of the forest were so dense that, as Camden says, the entangled branches of the thickly-set trees "were so twisted together, that they hardly left room for a person to pass."

Here were innumerable hiding places for the forest outlaws when hunted too closely by their foes. They lacked not food; the forest was filled with grazing deer and antlered stags. There was also abundance of smaller game,—the hare, the coney, the roe; and of birds,—the partridge, pheasant, woodcock, mallard, and heron. Fuel could be had in profusion when fire was needed. For winter shelter there were many caverns, for Sherwood forest is remarkable for its number of such places of refuge, some made by nature, others excavated by man.

Happy must have been the life in this greenwood realm, jolly the outlaws who danced and sang beneath its shades, merry as the day was long their hearts while summer ruled the year, while even in drear winter they had their caverns of refuge, their roaring wood-fires, and the spoils of the year's forays to carry them through the season of cold and storm. A follower of bold Robin might truly sing, with Shakespeare,—

"Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather."

But the life of the forest-dwellers was not spent solely in enjoyment of the pleasures of the merry greenwood. They were hunted by men, and became hunters of men. True English hearts theirs, all Englishmen their friends, all Normans their foes, they were in no sense brigands, but defenders of their soil against the foreign foe who had over run it, the successors of Hereward the Wake, the last of the English to bear arms against the invader, and to keep a shelter in which the English heart might still beat in freedom.

No wonder the oppressed peasants and serfs of the fields sang in gleeful strains the deeds of the forest-dwellers; no wonder that Robin Hood became the hero of the people, and that the homely song of the land was full of stories of his deeds. We can scarcely call these historical tales: they are legendary; yet it may well be that a stratum of fact underlies the after growth of romance; certainly they were history to the people, and as such, with a mental reservation, they shall be history to us. We propose, therefore, here to convert into prose "a lytell geste of Robyn Hode."

It was a day in merry spring-tide. Under the sun-sprinkled shadows of the "woody and famous forest of Barnsdale" (adjoining Sherwood) stood gathered a group of men attired in Lincoln green, bearing long bows in their hands and quivers of sharp-pointed arrows upon their shoulders, hardy men all, strong of limb and bold of face.

Leaning against an oak of centuried growth stood Robin Hood, the famous outlaw chief, a strong man and sturdy, with handsome face and merry blue eyes, one fitted to dance cheerily in days of festival, and to strike valiantly in hours of conflict. Beside him stood the tall and stalwart form of Little John, whose name was given him in jest, for he was the stoutest of the band. There also were valiant Much, the miller's son, gallant Scathelock, George a Green, the pindar of Wakefield, the fat and jolly Friar Tuck, and many another woodsman of renown, a band of lusty archers such as all England could not elsewhere match.

"Faith o' my body, the hours pass apace," quoth Little John, looking upward through the trees. "Is it not time we should dine?"

"I am not in the mood to dine without company," said Robin. "Our table is a dull one with out guests. If we had now some bold baron or fat abbot, or even a knight or squire, to help us carve our haunch of venison, and to pay his scot for the feast, I wot me all our appetites would be better."

He laughed meaningly as he looked round the circle of faces.

"Marry, if such be your whim," answered Little John, "tell us whither we shall go to find a guest fit to grace our greenwood table, and of what rank he shall be."

"At least let him not be farmer or yeoman," said Robin. "We war on hawks, not on doves. If you can bring me a bishop now, or i' faith, the high sheriff of Nottingham, we shall dine merrily. Take Much and Scathelock with you, and away. Bring me earl or baron, abbot or simple knight, or squire, if no better can be had; the fatter their purses the better shall be their welcome."

Taking their bows, the three yeomen strode at a brisk pace through the forest, bent upon other game than deer or antlered stag. On reaching the forest edge near Barnsdale, they lurked in the bushy shadows and kept close watch and ward upon the highway that there skirted the wood, in hope of finding a rich relish to Robin's meal.

Propitious fortune seemed to aid their quest. Not long had they bided in ambush when, afar on the road, they spied a knight riding towards them. He came alone, without squire or follower, and promised to be an easy prey to the trio of stout woodsmen. But as he came near they saw that something was amiss with him. He rode with one foot in the stirrup, the other hanging loose; a simple hood covered his head, and hung negligently down over his eyes; grief or despair filled his visage,

"a soryer man than he rode never in somer's day." Little John stepped into the road, courteously bent his knee to the stranger, and bade him welcome to the greenwood.

"Welcome be you, gentle knight," he said; "my master has awaited you fasting, these three hours."

"Your master—who is he?" asked the knight, lifting his sad eyes.

"Robin Hood, the forest chief," answered Little John.

"And a lusty yeoman he," said the knight. "Men say much good of him. I thought to dine to-day at Blythe or Dankaster, but if jolly Robin wants me I am his man. It matters little, save that I have no heart to do justice to any man's good cheer. Lead on, my courteous friend. The green wood, then, shall be my dining-hall."

Our scene now changes to the lodge of the woodland chief. An hour had passed. A merry scene met the eye. The long table was well-covered with game of the choicest, swan, pheasants, and river fowl, and with roasts and steaks of venison, which had been on hoof not many hours before. Around it sat a jolly company of foresters, green-clad like the trees about them. At its head sat Robin Hood, his handsome face lending encouragement to the laughter and gleeful chat of his men. Beside him sat the knight, sober of attire, gloomy of face, yet brightening under the courteous treatment of his host and the gay sallies of the outlaw band.

"Gramercy, Sir Woodman," said the knight, when the feast was at an end, "such a dinner as you have set me I have not tasted for weeks. When I come again to this country I hope to repay you with as good a one."

"A truce to your dinner," said Robin, curtly. "All that dine in our woodland inn pay on the spot, Sir Knight. It is a good rule, I wot."

"To full hands, mayhap," said the knight; "but I dare not, for very shame, proffer you what is in my coffers."

"Is it so little, then?"

"Ten shillings is not wealth," said the knight. "I can offer you no more."

"Faith, if that be all, keep it, in God's name; and I'll lend you more, if you be in need. Go look, Little John; we take no stranger's word in the greenwood."

John examined the knight's effects, and reported that he had told the truth. Robin gazed curiously at his guest.

"I held you for a knight of high estate," he said. "A heedless husbandman you must have been, a gambler or wassailer, to have brought yourself to this sorry pass. An empty pocket and threadbare attire ill befit a knight of your parts."

"You wrong me, Robin," said the knight, sadly. "Misfortune, not sin, has beggared me. I have nothing left but my children and my wife; but it is through no deed of my own. My son—my heir he should have been—slew a knight of Lancashire and his squire. To save him from the law I have made myself a beggar. Even my lands and house must go, for I have pledged them to the abbot of St. Mary as surety for four hundred pounds loaned me. I cannot pay him, and the time is near its end. I have lost hope, good sir, and am on my way to the sea, to take ship for the Holy Land. Pardon my tears, I leave a wife and children."

"Where are your friends?" asked Robin.

"Where are the last year's leaves of your trees?" asked the knight. "They were fair enough while the summer sun shone; they dropped from me when the winter of trouble came."

"Can you not borrow the sum?" asked Robin.

"Not a groat," answered the knight. "I have no more credit than a beggar."

"Mayhap not with the usurers," said Robin. "But the greenwood is not quite bare, and your face, Sir Knight, is your

pledge of faith. Go to my treasury, Little John, and see if it will not yield four hundred pounds."

"I can promise you that, and more if need be," answered the woodman. "But our worthy knight is poorly clad, and we have rich cloths to spare, I wot. Shall we not add a livery to his purse?"

"As you will, good fellow, and forget not a horse, for our guest's mount is of the sorriest."

The knight's sorrow gave way to hope as he saw the eagerness of the generous woodmen. Little John's count of the money added ample interest; the cloths were measured with a bow-stick for a yard, and a palfrey was added to the courser, to bear their welcome gifts. In the end Robin lent him Little John for a squire, and gave him twelve months in which to repay his loan. Away he went, no longer a knight of rueful countenance.

"Howe as the knight went on his way,
This game he thought full good,
When he looked on Bernysdale
He blyssed Robin Hode;

"And when he thought on Bernysdale,
On Scathelock, Much, and John,
He blyssed them for the best company
That ever he in come."

The next day was that fixed for the payment of the loan to the abbot of St. Mary's. Abbot and prior waited in hope and excitement. If the cash was not paid by night a rich estate would fall into their hands. The knight must pay to the last farthing, or be beggared. As they sat awaiting the cellarer burst in upon them, full of exultation.

"He is dead or hanged!" he cried. "We shall have our four hundred pounds many times over."

With them were the high-justice of England and the sheriff of the shire, brought there to give the proceeding the

warrant of legality. Time was passing, an hour or two more would end the knight's grace, only a narrow space of time lay between him and beggary. The justice had just turned with congratulations to the abbot, when, to the discomfiture of the churchmen, the debtor, Sir Richard of the Lee, appeared at the gate of the abbey, and made his way into the hall.

Yet he was shabbily clad; his face was sombre; there seemed little occasion for alarm. There seemed none when he began to speak.

"Sir Abbot," he said, "I come to hold my day." "Mist thou brought my pay?" asked the abbot. "Not one penny," answered the knight.

"Thou art a shrewd debtor," declared the abbot, with a look of satisfaction. "Sir Justice, drink to me. What brings you here then, sirrah, if you fetch no money?"

"To pray your grace for a longer day," said Sir Richard, humbly.

"Your day is ended; not an hour more do you get," cried the abbot.

Sir Richard now appealed to the justice for relief, and after him to the sheriff, but to both in vain. Then, turning to the abbot again, he offered to be his servant, and work for him till the four hundred pounds were earned, if he would take pity on him.

This appeal was lost on the merciless churchman. In the end hot words passed, and the abbot angrily exclaimed,—

"Out of my hall, thou false knight! Speed thee out, sirrah!"

"Abbot, thou liest, I was never false to my word," said Sir Richard, proudly. "You lack courtesy, to suffer a knight to kneel and beg so long. I am a true knight and a true man, as all who have seen me in tournament or battle will say."

"What more will you give the knight for a full release?" asked the justice. "If you give, nothing, you will never hold his lands in peace."

"A hundred pounds," said the abbot.

"Give him two," said the justice.

"Not so," cried the knight. "If you make it a thousand more, not a foot of my land shall you ever hold. You have outwitted yourself, master abbot, by your greed."

Sir Richard's humility was gone; his voice was clear and proud; the churchmen trembled, here was a new tone. Turning to a table, the knight took a bag from under his cloak, and shook out of it on to the board a ringing heap of gold.

"Here is the gold you lent me, Sir Abbot," he cried. "Count it. You will find it four hundred pounds to the penny. Had you been courteous, I would have been generous. As it is, I pay not a penny over my due."

"The abbot sat styli, and ete no more
For all his ryall chore;
He cast his head on his sholder,
And fast began to stare."

So ended this affair, the abbot in despair, the knight in triumph, the justice laughing at his late friends and curtly refusing to return the cash they had paid to bring him there. His money counted, his release signed, the knight was a glad man again.

"The knight stert out of the dore,
Awaye was all his care,
And on he put his good clothynge,
The other he left there.

"He wente hym forthe full mery syngynge,
As men have tolde in tale,
His lady met hym at the gate,
At home in Wierysdale.

"Welcome, my lorde,' sayd his lady;
Syr, lost is all your good?'
Be mery dame,' said the knight,'
And pray for Robyn Hode,

"That ever his soule be in blysse,
He holpe me out of my tene;
Ne had not be his kyndenesse,
Beggars had we ben."

The story wanders on, through pages of verse like the above, but we may fitly end it with a page of prose. The old singers are somewhat prolix; it behooves us to be brief.

A twelvemonth passed. The day fixed by the knight to repay his friend of the merry greenwood came. On that day the highway skirting the forest was made brilliant by a grand array of ecclesiastics and their retainers, at their head no less a personage than the fat cellarer of St. Mary's.

Unluckily for them, the outlaws were out that day, on the lookout for game of this description, and the whole pious procession was swept up and taken to Robin Hood's greenwood court. The merry fellow looked at his new guests with a smile. The knight had given the Virgin as his security,—surely the Virgin had taken him at his word, and sent these holy men to repay her debt.

In vain the high cellarer denied that he represented any such exalted personage. He even lied as to the state of his coffers. It was a lie wasted, for Little John served him as he had the knight, and found a good eight hundred pounds in the monk's baggage.

"Fill him with wine of the best!" cried Robin. "Our Lady is a generous debtor. She pays double. Fill him with wine and let him go. He has paid well for his dinner."

Hardly had the monk and his train gone, in dole and grief, before another and merrier train was seen winding under the great oaks of the forest. It was the knight on his way to pay his debt. After him rode a hundred men clad in white and red, and bearing as a present to the delighted foresters a hundred bows of the finest quality, each with its sheaf of arrows, with burnished points, peacock feathers, and notched with silver. Each shaft was an ell long.

The knight begged pardon. He had been delayed. On his way he had met a poor yeoman who was being ill treated. He had stayed to rescue him. The sun was down; the hour passed; but he bore his full due to the generous lords of the greenwood.

"You come too late," said Robin. "The Virgin, your surety, has been before you and paid your debt. The holy monks of St. Mary, her almoners, have brought it. They paid well, indeed; they paid double. Four hundred is my due, the other four hundred is yours. Take it, my good friend, our Lady sends it, and dwell henceforth in a state befitting your knightly station."

Once more the good knight, Sir Richard of the Lee, dined with Robin Hood, and merry went the feast that day under the greenwood tree. The leaves of Sherwood still laugh with the mirth that then shook their bowery arches. Robin Hood dwells there no more, but the memory of the mighty archer and his merry men still haunts the woodland glades, and will while a lover of romance dwells in England's island realm.

CHAPTER XI

WALLACE, THE HERO OF SCOTLAND

On a summer's day, many centuries ago, a young gentleman of Scotland was fishing in the river Irvine, near Ayr, attended by a boy who carried his fishing-basket. The young man was handsome of face, tall of figure, and strongly built, while his skill as an angler was attested by the number of trout which lay in the boy's basket. While he was thus engaged several English soldiers, from the garrison of Ayr, came up to the angler, and with the insolence with which these invaders were then in the habit of treating the Scotch, insisted on taking the basket and its contents from the boy.

"You ask too much," said Wallace, quietly. "You are welcome to a part of the fish, but you cannot have them all."

"That we will," answered the soldiers.

"That you will not," retorted the youth. "I have other business than to play fisherman for your benefit."

The soldiers insisted, and attempted to take the basket. The angler came to the aid of his attendant. Words were followed by blows. The soldiers laid hands on their weapons. The youth had no weapon but his fishing-rod. But with the butt end of this he struck the foremost Englishman so hard a blow under his ear that he stretched him dead upon the ground. Seizing the man's sword, which had fallen from his hand, he attacked the others with such skill and fury that they were put to flight, and the bold angler was enabled to take his fish safely home.

The name of the courageous youth was William Wallace. He was the son of a private gentleman, called Wallace of Ellerslie, who had brought up his boy to the handling of warlike weapons, until he had grown an adept in their use; and also to a

hatred of the English, which was redoubled by the insolence of the soldiers with whom Edward I. of England had garrisoned the country. Like all high-spirited Scotchmen, the young man viewed with indignation the conduct of the conquerors of his country, and expressed the intensity of his feeling in the tragical manner above described.

Wallace's life was in imminent danger from his exploit. The affair was reported to the English governor of Ayr, who sought him diligently, and would have put him to death had he been captured. But he took to the hills and woods, and lay concealed in their recesses until the deed was forgotten, being supplied by his friends with the necessities of life. As it was not safe to return to Ayr after his period of seclusion, he made his way to another part of the country, where his bitter hostility to the English soon led him into other encounters with them, in which his strength, skill, and courage usually brought him off victorious. So many were the affairs in which he was engaged, and so great his daring and success, that the people began to talk of him as the champion of Scotland, while the English grew to fear this indomitable young swordsman.

At length came an adventure which brought matters to a crisis. Young Wallace had married a lady of Lanark, and had taken up his residence in that town with his wife. The place had an English garrison, and one day, as Wallace walked in the market-place in a rich green dress, with a handsome dagger by his side, an Englishman accosted him insultingly, saying that no Scotchman had the right to wear such finery or to carry so showy a weapon.

He had tried his insolence on the wrong man. A quarrel quickly followed, and, as on similar occasions before, Wallace killed the Englishman. It was an unwise act, inspired by his hasty temper and fiery indignation. His peril was great. He hastened to his house, which was quickly attacked by soldiers of the garrison. While they were seeking to break in at the front, Wallace escaped at the rear, and made his way to a rocky glen, called the Cortland-crags, near the town, where he found a

secure hiding place among its thick-growing trees and bushes. Meanwhile, the governor of Lanark, Hazelrigg by name, finding that the culprit had escaped, set fire to his house, and with uncalled-for cruelty put his wife and servants to death. He also proclaimed Wallace an outlaw, and offered a reward for any one who should bring him in, dead or alive. He and many of his countrymen were destined to pay the penalty of this cruel deed before Wallace should fall into English hands.

The murder of his wife set fire to the intense patriotism in Wallace's soul. He determined to devote his life to acts of reprisal against the enemy, and if possible to rescue his country from English hands. He soon had under his command a body of daring partisans, some of them outlaws like himself, others quite willing to become such for the good of Scotland. The hills and forests of the country afforded them numerous secure hiding-places, whence they could issue in raids upon the insolent foe.

From that time forward Wallace gave the English no end of trouble. One of his first expeditions was against Hazelrigg, to whom he owed so bitter a debt of vengeance. The cruel governor was killed, and the murdered woman avenged. Other expeditions were attempted, and collisions with the soldiers sent against him became so frequent and the partisan band so successful, that Wallace quickly grew famous, and the number of his followers rapidly increased. In time, from being a band of outlaws, his party grew to the dimensions of a small army, and in place of contenting himself with local reprisals on the English, he cherished the design of striking for the independence of his country.

The most notable adventure which followed this increase of Wallace's band is one the story of which may be in part legendary, but which is significant of the cruelty of warfare in those thirteenth-century days. It is remembered among the Scottish people under the name of the "Barns of Ayr."

The English governor of Ayr is said to have sent a general invitation to the nobility and gentry of that section of

Scotland to meet him in friendly conference on national affairs. The place fixed for the meeting was in certain large buildings called the barns of Ayr. The true purpose of the governor was a murderous one. He proposed to rid himself of many of those who were giving him trouble by the effective method of the rope. Halters with running nooses had been prepared, and hung upon the beams which supported the roof. The Scotch visitors were admitted two at a time, and as they entered the nooses were thrown over their heads, and they drawn up and hanged. Among those thus slain was Sir Reginald Crawford, sheriff of the county of Ayr, and uncle to William Wallace.

This story it is not easy to believe, in the exact shape in which it is given, since it is unlikely that the Scottish nobles were such fools as it presupposes; but that it is founded on some tragical fact is highly probable. The same is the case with the story of Wallace's retribution for this crime. When the news of it came to his ears he is said to have been greatly incensed, and to have determined on an adequate revenge. He collected his men in a wood near Ayr, and sent out spies to learn the state of affairs. The English had followed their crime with a period of carousing, and, having eaten and drunk all they wished, had lain down to sleep in the barns in which the Scotch gentry had been murdered. Not dreaming that a foe was so near, they had set no guards, and thus left themselves open to the work of revenge.

This news being brought to Wallace, he directed a woman, who was familiar with the locality, to mark with chalk the doors of the buildings where the Englishmen lay. Then, slipping up to the borders of Ayr, he sent a party with ropes, bidding them to fasten securely all the marked doors. This done, others heaped straw on the outside of the buildings and set it on fire. The buildings, being constructed of wood, were quickly in a flame, the English waking from their drunken slumbers to find themselves environed with fire.

Their fate was decided. Every entrance to the buildings had been secured. Such as did succeed in getting out were driven back into the flames, or killed on the spot. The whole party

perished miserably, not one escaping. In addition to the English thus disposed of, there were a number lodged in a convent. These were attacked by the prior and the monks, who had armed themselves with swords, and fiercely assailed their guests, few of them escaped. The latter event is known as "The Friar of Ayr's Blessing."



THE WALLACE MONUMENT, STIRLING.

Such is the story of a crime and its retribution. To say that it is legendary is equivalent to saying that it is not true in all its particulars; but that it is founded on fact its common acceptance by the people of that country seems evidence.

So far the acts of Wallace and his men had been of minor importance. But now his party of followers grew into an army, many of the Scottish nobles joining him. Prominent among these was Sir William Douglas, the head of the most famous family in Scottish history. Another was Sir John Grahame, who became the chief friend and confident of the champion of the rights of Scotland.

This rebellious activity on the part of the Scotch had not been viewed with indifference by the English. The raids of Wallace and his band of outlaws they had left the local garrisons to deal with. But here was an army, suddenly sprung into existence, and needing to be handled in a different manner. An English army, under the command of John de Warenne, the Earl of Surrey, marched towards Wallace's camp, with the purpose of putting a summary end to this incipient effort at independence.

The approach of Warenne weakened Wallace's army, since many of the nobles deserted his ranks, under the fear that he could not withstand the greatly superior English force. Yet, in spite of these defections, he held his ground. He still had a considerable force under his command, and took position near the town of Stirling, on the south side of the river Forth, where he awaited the approaching English army. The river was at this point crossed by a long wooden bridge.

The English host reached the southern bank of the river. Its commander, thinking that he might end the matter in a peaceful way, sent two clergymen to Wallace, offering a pardon to him and his followers if they would lay down their arms.

"Go back to Warenne," was the reply of Wallace, "and tell him we value not the pardon of the king of England. We are not here for the purpose of treating of peace, but of abiding

battle, and restoring freedom to our country. Let the English come on; we defy them to their very beards!"

Despite the disparity in numbers, Wallace had some warrant for his tone of confidence. The English could not reach him except over the long and narrow bridge, and stood the chance of having their vanguard destroyed before the remainder could come to their aid.

Such proved to be the case. The English, after some hesitation, attempted the passage of the bridge. Wallace held off until about half the army had crossed and the bridge was thickly crowded with others. Then he charged upon them with his whole force, and with such impetuosity that they were thrown into confusion, and soon put to rout, a large number being slain and the remainder driven into the Forth, where the greater part of them were drowned. The portion of the English army which had not crossed became infected with the panic of their fellows, and fled in all haste, first setting fire to the bridge to prevent pursuit.

This signal victory had the most encouraging influence on the people of Scotland. The defeated army fled in all haste from the country, and those of the Scotch who had hitherto remained in doubt now took arms, and assailed the castles still held by the English. Many of these were taken, and numerous gallant deeds done, of which Wallace is credited with his full share. How much exaggeration there may be in the stories told it is not easy to say, but it seems certain that the English suffered several defeats, lost most of the towns and castles they had held, and were driven almost entirely from the country. Wallace, indeed, led his army into England, and laid waste Cumberland and Northumberland, where many cruelties were committed, the Scottish soldiers being irrepressible in their thirst for revenge on those who had so long oppressed their country.

While these events were going on Edward I. was in Flanders. He had deemed Scotland thoroughly subjugated, and learned with surprise and fury that the Scottish had risen against him, defeated his armies, set free their country, and even invaded

England. He hurried back from Flanders in a rage, determined to bring this rebellion to a short and decisive termination.

Collecting a large army, Edward invaded Scotland. His opponent, meanwhile, had been made protector, or governor, of Scotland, with the title of Sir William Wallace. Yet he had risen so rapidly from a private station to this great position that there was much jealousy of him on the part of the great nobles, and their lack of support of the best soldier and bravest man of their nation was the main cause of his downfall and the subsequent disasters to their country.

Wallace, despite their defection, had assembled a considerable army. But it was not so strong as that of Edward, who had, besides, a large body of the celebrated archers of England, each of whom carried, so it was claimed, twelve Scotchmen's lives in his girdle,—in his twelve cloth-yard arrows.

The two armies met at Falkirk. Wallace, before the fighting began, addressed his men in a pithy sentence: "I have brought you to the ring, let me see how you can dance." The battle opened with a charge of the English cavalry on the dense ranks of the Scottish infantry, who were armed with long spears which they held so closely together that their line seemed impregnable. The English horsemen found it so. They attempted again and again to break through that "wood of spears," as it has been called, but were every time beaten off with loss. But the Scotch horse failed to support their brave footmen. On the contrary, they fled from the field, through ill-will or treachery of the nobles, as is supposed.

Edward now ordered his archers to advance. They did so, and poured their arrows upon the Scottish ranks in such close and deadly volleys that flesh and blood could not endure it. Wallace had also a body of archers, from Ettrick forest, but they were attacked in their advance and many of them slain. The English cavalry now again charged. They met with a different reception from their previous one. The storm of arrows had

throw Wallace's infantry into confusion, the line was broken at several points, and the horsemen charged into their midst, cutting them down in great numbers. Sir John Grahame and others of their leaders were slain, and the Scotch, their firm ranks broken and many of them slain, at length took to flight.

It was on the 22nd of July, 1298, that this decisive battle took place. Its event put an end, for the time, to the hopes of Scottish independence. Opposition to Edward's army continued, and some successes were gained, but the army of invasion was abundantly reinforced, until in the end Wallace alone, at the head of a small band of followers, remained in arms.

After all others had yielded, he persistently refused to submit to Edward and his armies. As he had been the first to take arms, he was the last to keep the field, and for some years he continued to maintain himself among the woods and hills of the Highlands, holding his own for more than a year after all the other chiefs had surrendered.

Edward was determined not to leave him at liberty. He feared the influence of this one man more than of all the nobles of Scotland, and pursued him unremittingly, a great price being offered for his head. At length the gallant champion was captured, a Scotchman, Sir John Menteith, earning obloquy by the act. The story goes that the capture was made at Robroyston, near Glasgow, the fugitive champion being taken by treachery, the signal for rushing upon him and taking him unawares being for one of the company to turn a loaf, which lay upon the table, with its bottom side uppermost. In after-days it was considered very ill-breeding for any one to turn a loaf in this manner, if a person named Menteith were at table.

However this be, it is certain that Wallace was taken and delivered to his great enemy, and no less certain that he was treated with barbarous harshness. He was placed on trial at Westminster Hall, on the charge of being a traitor to the English crown, and Edward, to insult him, had him crowned with a green

garland, as one who had been king of outlaws and robbers in the Scottish woods.

"I could not be a traitor to Edward, for I was never his subject," was the chieftain's answer to the charge against him.

He was then accused of taking many towns and castles, killing many men, and doing much violence.

"It is true I have killed many Englishmen," replied Wallace, "but it was because they came to oppress my native country. Far from repenting of this, I am only sorry not to have put to death many more of them."

Wallace's defence was a sound one, but Edward had prejudged him. He was condemned and executed, his body being quartered, in the cruel fashion of that time, and the parts exposed on spikes on London bridge, as the limbs of a traitor. Thus died a hero, at the command of a tyrant.

CHAPTER XII

BRUCE AT BANNOCKBURN

To Edward the Second, lying in luxurious idleness in his palace of pleasure at London, came the startling word that he must strike a blow or lose a kingdom. Scotland was slipping from his weak grasp. Of that great realm, won by the iron hand of his father, only one stronghold was left to England—Stirling Castle, and that was fiercely besieged by Edward Bruce, brother of Robert Bruce, who some years before had been crowned King of Scotland and was now seeking to drive the English out of his realm.

The tidings that came to Edward were these. Sir Philip Mowbray, governor of Stirling, hotly pressed by Bruce, and seeing no hope of succor, had agreed to deliver the town and castle to the Scotch, unless relief reached him before midsummer. Bruce stopped not the messengers. He let them speed to London with the tidings, willing, doubtless, in his bold heart, to try it once for all with the English king, and win all or lose all at a blow.

The news stirred feebly the weak heart of Edward,—lapped in delights, and heedless of kingdoms. It stirred strongly the vigorous hearts of the English nobility, men who had marched to victory under the banners of the iron Edward, and who burned with impatience at the inglorious ease of his silken son. The great deeds of Edward I. should not go for naught, they declared. He had won Scotland; his son should not lose it. Robert Bruce, the rebel chief, had been left alone until he had gathered an army and nearly made Scotland his own. Only Stirling remained; it would be to the endless disgrace of England should it be abandoned, and the gallant Mowbray left without support. An army must be gathered, Bruce must be beaten, Scotland must be won.

Like the cry of a pack of sleuth-hounds in the ear of the timid deer came these stern demands to Edward the king. He dared not disregard them. It might be as much as his crown were worth. England meant business, and its king must take the lead or he might be asked to yield the throne. Stirred alike by pride and fear, he roused from his lethargy, gave orders that an army should be gathered, and vowed to drive the beleaguering Scots from before Stirling's walls.

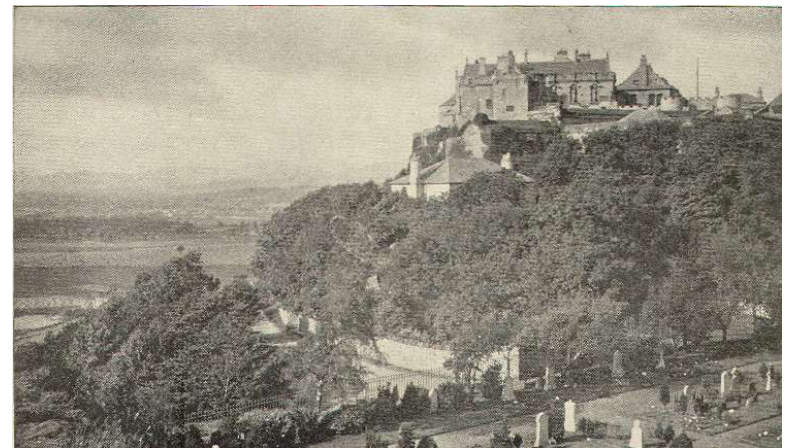
From every side they came, the marching troops. England, hot with revengeful blood, mustered its quota in haste. Wales and Ireland, new appendages of the English throne, supplied their share. From the French provinces of the kingdom hosts of eager men-at-arms flocked across the Channel. All the great nobles and the barons of the realm led their followers, equipped for war, to the mustering-place, until a force of one hundred thousand men was ready for the field, perhaps the largest army which had ever marched under an English king. In this great array were thirty thousand horsemen. It looked as if Scotland were doomed. Surely that sterile land could raise no force to face this great array!

King Robert the Bruce did his utmost to prepare for the storm of war which threatened to break upon his realm. In all haste he summoned his barons and nobles from far and near. From the Highlands and the Lowlands they came, from island and mainland flocked the kilted and tartaned Scotch, but, when all were gathered, they numbered not a third the host of their foes, and were much more poorly armed. But at their head was the most expert military chief of that day, since the death of Edward I. the greatest warrior that Europe knew. Once again was it to be proved that the general is the soul of his army, and that skill and courage are a full offset for lack of numbers.

Towards Stirling marched the great English array, confident in their numbers, proud of their gallant show. Northward they streamed, filling all the roads, the king, at their head, deeming doubtless that he was on a holiday excursion, and that behind him came a wind of war that would blow the Scotch

forces into the sea. Around Stirling gathered the army of the Bruce, marching in haste from hill and dale, coming in to the stirring peal of the pipes and the old martial airs of the land, until the plain around the beleaguered town seemed a living sea of men, and the sunlight burned on endless points of steel.

But Bruce had no thought of awaiting the onset here. He well knew that he must supply by skill what he lacked in numbers. The English army was far superior to his, not only in men, but in its great host of cavalry, which alone equalled his entire force, and in its multitude of archers, the best bowmen in the world. What he lacked in men and arms he must make up in brains. With this in view, he led his army from before the town into a neighboring plain, called the Park, where nature had provided means of defence of which he might avail himself.



STIRLING CASTLE.

The ground which his army here occupied was hard and dry. That in front of it, through which Edward's host must pass, was wet and boggy, cut up with frequent watercourses, and ill-fitted for cavalry. Should the heavy-armed horsemen succeed in crossing this marshy and broken ground and reach the firm soil in the Scottish front, they would find themselves in a worse strait still. For Bruce had his men dig a great number of holes as deep

as a man's knee. These were covered with light brush, and the turf spread evenly over them, so that the honeycombed soil looked to the eye like an unbroken field. Elsewhere on the plain he scattered calthrops steel spikes—to lame the English horses. Smooth and promising looked the field, but the English cavalry were likely to find it a plain of pitfalls and steel points.

While thus defending his front, Bruce had given as skilful heed to the defence of his flanks. On the left his line reached to the walls of Stirling. On the right it touched the banks of Bannockburn, a brook that ran between borders so rocky as to prevent attack from that quarter. Here, on the 98d of June, 1314, was posted the Scottish army, awaiting the coming of the foe, the camp-followers, cart-drivers, and other useless material of the army being sent back behind a hill,—afterwards known as the gillies' or servants' hill, that they might be out of the way. They were to play a part in the coming fray of which Bruce did not dream.

Thus prepared, Bruce reviewed his force, and addressed them in stirring words. The battle would be victory or death to him, he said. He hoped it would be to all. If any among them did not propose to fight to the bitter end and take victory or death, as God should decree, for his lot, now was the time to withdraw; all such might leave the field before the battle began. Not a man left.

Fearing that the English might try to throw a force into Stirling Castle, the king posted his nephew Randolph with a body of men near St. Ninian's church. Lord Douglas and Sir Robert Keith were sent to survey and report upon the English force, which was marching from Falkirk. They returned with tidings to make any but stout hearts quiver. Such an army as was coming they had never seen before; it was a beautiful but a terrible sight, the approach of that mighty host. The whole country, as far as the eye could see, was crowded with men on horse or on foot. Never had they beheld such a grand display of standards, banners, and pennons. So gallant and fearful a show was it all, that the bravest host in Christendom might well

tremble to see King Edward's army marching upon them. Such was the story told by Douglas, though his was not the heart to tremble in the telling.

Bruce was soon to see this great array of horse and foot for himself. On they came, filling the country far and near with their numbers. But before they had come in view, another sight met the vigilant eyes of the Scottish king. To the eastward there became visible a body of English horse, riding at speed, and seeking to reach Stirling from that quarter. Bruce turned to his nephew, who stood beside him.

"See, Randolph," he said, "there is a rose fallen from your chaplet."

The English had passed the post which Randolph had been set to guard. He heard the rebuke in silence, rode, hastily to the head of his men, and rushed against the eight hundred English horse with half that number of footmen. The English turned to charge this daring force. Randolph drew up his men in close order to receive them. It looked as if the Scotch would be overwhelmed, and trampled under foot by the powerful foe.

"Randolph is lost!" cried Douglas. "He must have help. Let me go to his aid."

"Let Randolph redeem his own fault," answered the king, firmly. "I cannot break the order of battle for his sake."

Douglas looked on, fuming with impatience. The danger seemed more imminent. The small body of Scotch foot almost vanished from sight in the cloud of English horsemen. The glittering lances appeared about to annihilate them.

"So please you," said Douglas, "my heart will not suffer me to stand idle and see Randolph perish. I must go to his assistance."

The king made no answer. Douglas spurred to the head of his troop, and rode off at speed. He neared the scene of conflict. Suddenly a change came. The horsemen appeared confused. Panic seemed to have stricken their ranks. In a

moment away they went, in full flight, many of the horses with empty saddles, while the gallant troop of Scotch stood unmoved.

"Halt!" cried Douglas. "Randolph has gained the day. Since we are not soon enough to help him in the battle, do not let us lessen his glory by approaching the field." And the noble knight pulled rein and galloped back, unwilling to rob Randolph of any of the honor of his deed.

The English vanguard was now in sight. From it rode out a number of knights, eager to see the Scotch array more nearly. King Robert did the same. He was in armor, but was poorly mounted, riding only a little pony, with which he moved up and down the front of his army, putting his men in order. A golden crown worn over his helmet was his sole mark of distinction. The only weapon he carried was a steel battle-axe. As the English knights came nearer, he advanced a little to have a closer look at them.

Here seemed an opportunity for a quick and decisive blow. The Scottish king was at some distance in front of his men, his rank indicated by his crown, his horse a poor one, his hand empty of a spear. He might be ridden down by a sudden onset, victory to the English host be gained by a single blow, and great glory come to the bold knight that dealt it.

So thought one of the English knights, Sir Henry de Bohun by name. Putting spurs to his powerful horse, he galloped furiously upon the king, thinking to bear him easily to the ground. Bruce saw him coming, but made no movement of flight. He sat his pony warily, waiting the onset, until Bohun was nearly upon him with his spear. Then a quick touch to the rein, a sudden movement of the horse, and the lance-point sped past, missing its mark.

The Scotch army stood in breathless alarm; the English host in equally breathless expectation; it seemed for the moment as if Robert the Bruce were lost. But as De Bohun passed him, borne onward by the career of his steed, King Robert rose in his stirrups, swung his battle-axe in the air, and brought it down on

his adversary's head with so terrible a blow that the iron helmet cracked as though it were a nutshell, and the knight fell from his horse, dead before he reached the ground.

King Robert turned and rode back, where he was met by a storm of reproaches from his nobles, who declared that he had done grave wrong in exposing himself to such danger, when the safety of the army depended on him. The king heard their reproaches in silence, his eyes fixed on the fractured edge of his weapon.

"I have broken my good battle-axe," was his only reply.

This incident ended the day. Night was at hand. Both armies rested on the field. But at an early hour of the next day, the 24th of June, the battle began, one of the critical battles of history.

Through the Scottish ranks walked barefooted the abbot of Inchaffray, exhorting the men to fight their best for freedom. The soldiers kneeled as he passed.

"They kneel down!" cried King Edward, who saw this. "They are asking forgiveness!"

"Yes," said a baron beside him, "but they ask it from God, not from us. These men will conquer, or die upon the field"

The battle began with a flight of English arrows. The archers, drawn up in close ranks, bent their bows, and poured their steel shafts as thickly as snow-flakes on the Scotch, many of whom were slain. Something must be done, and that, speedily, or those notable bowmen would end the battle of themselves. Flesh and blood could not long bear that rain of cloth-yard shafts, with their points of piercing steel.

But Bruce had prepared for this danger. A body of well-mounted men-at-arms stood ready, and at the word of command rushed at full gallop upon the archers, cutting them down to right and left. Having no weapons but their bows and arrows, the archers broke and fled in utter confusion, hundreds of them being slain.

This charge of the Scotch cavalry was followed by an advance in force of the English horsemen, who came forward in such close and serried ranks and with so vast an array that it looked as if they would overwhelm the narrow lines before them. But suddenly trouble came upon this mighty mass of knights and men-at-arms. The seemingly solid earth gave way under their horses' feet, and down they went into the hidden pits, the horses hurled headlong, the riders flung helplessly upon the ground, from which the weight of their armor prevented their rising.

In an instant the Scotch footmen were among them, killing the defenceless knights, cutting and slashing among the confused mass of horsemen, breaking their fine display into irretrievable disorder. Bruce brought up his men in crowding multitudes. Through the English ranks they glided, stabbing horses, slaying their iron clad riders, doubly increasing the confusion of that wild whirl of horsemen, whose trim and gallant ranks had been thrown into utter disarray. The English fought as they could, though at serious disadvantage. But their numbers were so great that they might have crushed the Scotch under their mere weight but for one of these strange chances on which the fate of so many battles have depended. As has been said, the Scotch camp-followers had been sent back behind a hill. But on seeing that their side seemed likely to win the day, this rabble came suddenly crowding over the hill, eager for a share in the spoil.

It was a disorderly mob, but to the sorely pressed English cavalry it seemed a new army which the Bruce had held in reserve. Suddenly stricken with panic, the horsemen turned and fled, each man for himself, as fast as their horses could carry them, the whole army breaking rank and rushing back in terror over the ground which they had lately traversed in such splendor of appearance and confidence of soul.

After them came the Scotch, cutting, slashing, killing, paving the earth with English slain. King Edward put spurs to his horse and fled in all haste from the fatal field. A gallant

knight, Sir Giles de Argentine, who had won glory in Palestine, kept by him till he was out of the press. Then he drew rein.

"It is not my custom to fly," he said.

Turning his horse and shouting his war-cry of "Argentine! Argentine!" he rushed into the densest ranks of the Scotch, and was quickly killed.

Many others of high rank fell, valiantly fighting, men who knew not the meaning of flight. But the bulk of the army was in hopeless panic, flying for life, red lines constantly falling before the crimsoned claymores of the Scotch, until the very streams ran red with blood.

King Edward found war less than ever to his royal taste. He fled to Stirling Castle and begged admittance.

"I cannot grant it, my liege," answered Mowbray. "My compact with the Bruce obliges me to surrender the castle tomorrow. If you enter here it will be to become prisoner to the Scotch."

Edward turned and continued his flight, his route lying through the Torwood. After him came Lord Douglas, with a body of cavalry, pressing forward in hot haste. On his way he met a Scotch knight, Sir Lawrence Abernethy, with twenty horsemen, riding to join Edward's army.

"Edward's army? He has no army," cried Douglas. "The army is a rout. Edward himself is in flight. I am hot on his track."

"I am with you, then," cried Abernethy, changing sides on the instant, and joining in pursuit of the king whom he had just before been eager to serve.

Away went the frightened king. On came the furious pursuers. Not a moment was given Edward to draw rein or alight. The chase was continued as far as Dunbar, whose governor, the earl of March, opened his gates to the flying king, and shut them against his foes. Giving the forlorn monarch a

small fishing-vessel, he set him on the seas for England, a few distressed attendants alone remaining to him of the splendid army with which he had marched to the conquest of Scotland.

Thus ended the battle which wrested Scotland from English hands, and made Robert Bruce king of the whole country. From the state of an exile, hunted with hounds, he had made himself a monarch, and one who soon gave the English no little trouble to protect their own borders.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SIEGE OF CALAIS

Terrible and long-enduring had been the siege of Calais. For a whole year it had continued, and still the sturdy citizens held the town. Outside was Edward III., with his English host, raging at the obstinacy of the French and at his own losses during the siege. Inside was John de Vienne, the unyielding governor, and his brave garrison. Outside was plenty; inside was famine; between were impregnable walls, which all the engines of Edward failed to reduce or surmount. No resource was left the English king but time and famine; none was left the garrison but the hope of wearying their foes or of relief by their king. The chief foe they fought against was starvation, an enemy against whom warlike arms were of no avail, whom only stout hearts and inflexible endurance could meet; and bravely they faced this frightful foe, those stout citizens of Calais.



THE PORT OF CALAIS.

An excellent harbor had Calais. It had long been the sheltering-place for the pirates that preyed on English commerce. But now no ship could leave or enter. The English fleet closed the passage by sea; the English army blocked all approach by land; the French king, whose great army had just been mercilessly slaughtered at Crecy, held aloof, nothing seemed to remain for Calais but death or surrender, and yet the valiant governor held out against his foes.

As the days went on and no relief came he made a census of the town, selected seventeen hundred poor and unsoldierly folks, "useless mouths," as he called them, and drove them outside the walls. Happily for them, King Edward was just then in a good humor. He gave the starving outcasts a good dinner and twopence in money each, and passed them through his ranks to make their way whither they would.

More days passed; food grew scarcer; there were more "useless mouths" in the town; John de Vienne decided to try this experiment again. Five hundred more were thrust from the gates. This time King Edward was not in a good humor. He bade his soldiers drive them back at sword's-point. The governor refused to admit them into the town. The whole miserable multitude died of starvation in sight of both camps. Such were the amenities of war in the Middle-Ages, and in fact, of war in almost all ages, for mercy counts for little when opposed by military exigencies.

A letter was now sent to the French king, Philip de Valois, imploring succor. They had eaten, said the governor, their horses, their dogs, even the rats and mice; nothing remained but to eat one another. Unluckily, the English, not the French, king received this letter, and the English host grew more watchful than ever. But Philip de Valois needed not letters to tell him of the extremity of the garrison; he knew it well, and knew as well that haste alone could save him one of his fairest towns.

But he had suffered a frightful defeat at Crecy only five days before the siege of Calais began. Twelve hundred of his knights and thirty thousand of his foot soldiers—a number equal

to the whole English force—had been slain on the field; thousands of others had been taken prisoner; a new army was not easily to be raised. Months passed before Philip was able to come to the relief of the beleaguered stronghold. The Oriflamme, the sacred banner of the realm, never displayed but in times of dire extremity, was at length unfurled to the winds, and from every side the great vassals of the kingdom hastened to its support. France, ever prolific of men, poured forth her sons until she had another large army in the field. In July of 1347, eleven months after the siege began, the garrison, weary with long waiting, saw afar from their lookout towers the floating banners of France, and beneath them the faintly-seen forms of a mighty host.

The glad news spread through the town. The king was coming with a great army at his back! Their sufferings had not been in vain; they would soon be relieved, and those obstinate English be driven into the sea! Had a fleet of bread-ships broken through the blockade, and sailed with waving pennons into the harbor, the souls of the garrison could not have been more uplifted with joy.

Alas! it was a short-lived joy. Not many days elapsed before that great host faded before their eyes like a mist under the sun-rays, its banners lifting and falling as they slowly vanished into the distance, the gleam of its many steel-headed weapons dying out until not a point of light remained. Their gladness turned into redoubled misery as they saw themselves thus left to their fate; their king, who had marched up with such a gallant show of banners and arms, marching away without striking a blow. It was hard to believe it; but there they went, and there the English lay.

The soil of France had never seen anything quite so ludicrous—but for its tragic side—as this march of Philip the king. Two roads led to the town, but these King Edward, who was well-advised of what was coming, had taken care to intrench and guard so strongly that it would prove no light nor safe matter to force a way through. Philip sent out his spies, learned what

was before him, and, full of the memory of Crecy, decided that it would be too costly an experiment to attack those works. But were not those the days of chivalry? was not Edward famed for his chivalrous spirit? Surely he, as a noble and puissant knight, would not take an unfair advantage of his adversary. As a knight of renown he could not refuse to march into the open field, and trust to God and St. George of England for his defence, as against God and St. Denys of France.

Philip, thereupon, sent four of his principal lords to the English king, saying that he was there to do battle, as knight against knight, but *could find no way to come to him*. He requested, therefore, that a council should meet to fig upon a place of battle, where the difference between him and his cousin of England might be fairly decided.

Surely such a request had never before been made to an opposing general. Doubtless King Edward laughed in his beard at the naive proposal, even if courtesy kept him from laughing in the envoys' faces. As regards his answer, we cannot quote its words, but its nature may be gathered from the fact that Philip soon after broke camp, and marched back over the road by which he had come, saying to himself, no doubt, that the English king lacked knightly honor, or he would not take so unfair an advantage of a foe. And thus ended this strange episode in war, Philip marching away with all the bravery of his host, Edward grimly turning again to the town which he held in his iron grasp.

The story of the siege of Calais concludes in a highly dramatic fashion. It was a play presented upon a great stage, but with true dramatic accessories of scenery and incident. These have been picturesquely preserved by the old chroniclers, and are well-worthy of being again presented. Froissart has told the tale in his own inimitable fashion. We follow others in telling it in more modern phrase.

When the people of Calais saw that they were deserted by their king, hope suddenly fled from their hearts. Longer defence meant but deeper misery. Nothing remained but

surrender. Stout-hearted John de Vienne, their commander, seeing that all was at an end, mounted the walls with a flag of truce, and made signs that he wished to speak with some person of the besieging host. Word of this was brought to the English king, and he at once sent Sir Walter de Manny and Sir Basset as his envoys to confer with the bearer of the flag. The governor looked down upon them from the walls with sadness in his eyes and the lines of starvation on his face.

"Sirs," he said, "valiant knights you are, as I well know. As for me, I have obeyed the command of the king, my master, by doing all that lay in my power to hold for him this town. Now succor has failed us, and food we have none. We must all die of famine unless your noble and gentle king will have mercy on us, and let us go free, in exchange for the town and all the goods it contains, of which there is great abundance."

"We know something of the intention of our master," answered Sir Walter. "He will certainly not let you go free, but will require you to surrender without conditions, some of you to be held to ransom, others to be put to death. Your people have put him to such despite by their bitter obstinacy, and caused him such loss of treasure and men, that he is sorely grieved against them."

"You make it too hard for us," answered the governor. "We are here a small company of knights and squires, who have served our king to our own pain and misery, as you would serve yours in like case; but rather than let the least lad in the town suffer more than the greatest of us, we will endure the last extremity of pain. We beg of you to plead for us with your king for pity, and trust that, by God's grace, his purpose will change, and his gentleness yield us pardon."

The envoys, much moved by the wasted face and earnest appeal of the governor, returned with his message to the king, whom they found in an unrelenting mood. He answered them that he would make no other terms. The garrison must yield

themselves to his pleasure. Sir Walter answered with words as wise as they were bold,—

"I beg you to consider this more fully," he said, "for you may be in the wrong, and make a dangerous example from which some of us may yet suffer. We shall certainly not very gladly go into any fortress of yours for defence, if you should put any of the people of this town to death after they yield; for in like case the French will certainly deal with us in the same fashion."

Others of the lords present sustained Sir Walter in this opinion, and presented the case so strongly that the king yielded.

"I will not be alone against you all," he said, after an interval of reflection. "This much will I yield. Go, Sir Walter, and say to the governor that all the grace I can give him is this. Let him send me six of the chief burgesses of the town, who shall come out bareheaded, barefooted, and barelegged, clad only in their shirts, and with halters around their necks, with the keys of the tower and castle in their hands. These must yield themselves fully to my will. The others I will take to mercy."

Sir Walter returned with this message, saying that no hope of better terms could be had of the king.

"Then I beg you to wait here," said Sir John, "till I can take your message to the townsmen, who sent me here, and bring you their reply."

Into the town went the governor, where he sought the market-place, and soon the town-bell was ringing its mustering peal. Quickly the people gathered, eager, says Jehan le Bel, "to hear their good news, for they were all mad with hunger." Sir John told them his message, saying,—

"No other terms are to be had, and you must decide quickly, for our foes ask a speedy answer."

His words were followed by weeping and much lamentation among the people. Some of them must die. Who should it be? Sir John himself shed tears for their extremity. It

was not in his heart to name the victims to the wrath of the English king.

At length the richest burgess of the town, Eustace de St. Pierre, stepped forward and said, in tones of devoted resolution,—

"My friends and fellows, it would be great grief to let you all die by famine or otherwise, when there is a means given to save you. Great grace would he win from our Lord who could keep this people from dying. For myself, I have trust in God that if I save this people by my death I shall have pardon for my faults. Therefore, I offer myself as the first of the six, and am willing to put myself at the mercy of King Edward."

He was followed by another rich burgess, Jehan D'Aire by name, who said, "I will keep company with my gossip Eustace."

Jacques de Wissant and his brother, Peter de Wissant, both rich citizens, next offered themselves, and two others quickly made up the tale. Word was taken to Sir Walter of what had been done, and the victims apparelled themselves as the king had commanded.

It was a sad procession that made its way to the gate of the town. Sir John led the way, the devoted six followed, while the remainder of the towns people made their progress woeful with tears and cries of grief. Months of suffering had not caused them deeper sorrow than to see these their brave hostages marching to death.

The gate opened. Sir John and the six burgesses passed through. It closed behind them. Sir Walter stood waiting.

"I deliver to you, as captain of Calais," said Sir John, "and by the consent of all the people of the town, these six burgesses, who I swear to you are the richest and most honorable burgesses of Calais. Therefore, gentle knight, I beg you pray the king to have mercy on them, and grant them their lives."

"What the king will do I cannot say," answered Sir Walter, "but I shall do for them the best I can."

The coming of the hostages roused great feeling in the English host. Their pale and wasted faces, their miserable state, the fate which threatened them, roused pity and sympathy in the minds of many, and not the least in that of the queen, who was with Edward in the camp, and came with him and his train of nobles as they approached the place to which the hostages had been led. When they were brought before the king the burgesses kneeled and piteously begged his grace, Eustace saying,—

"Gentle king, here be we six, who were burgesses of Calais, and great merchants. We bring you the keys of the town and the castle, and submit ourselves fully to your will, to save the remainder of our people, who have already suffered great pain. We beseech you to have mercy and pity on us through your high nobleness."

His words brought tears from many persons there present, for naught so piteous had ever come before them. But the king looked on them with vindictive eyes, and for some moments stood in lowering silence. Then he gave the harsh command to take these men and strike off their heads.

At this cruel sentence the lords of his council crowded round the king, begging for compassion, but he turned a deaf ear to their pleadings. Sir Walter de Manny then said, his eyes fixed in sorrow on the pale and trembling victims,—

"Noble sire, for God's sake restrain your wrath. You have the renown of all gentleness and nobility; I pray you do not a thing that can lay a blemish on your fair fame, or give men cause to speak of you despitely. Every man will say it is a great cruelty to put to death such honest persons, who of their own will have put themselves into your hands to save the remainder of their people."

These words seemed rather to heighten than to soften the king's wrath. He turned away fiercely, saying,—

"Hold your peace, Master Walter; it shall be as I have said.—Call the headsman. They of Calais have made so many of my men to die, that they must die themselves."

The queen had listened sadly to these words, while tears flowed freely from her gentle eyes. On hearing the harsh decision of her lord and king, she could restrain herself no longer. With streaming eyes she cast herself on her knees at his feet, and turned up to him her sweet, imploring face.

"Gentle sir," she said, "since that day in which I passed over sea in great peril, as you know, I have asked no favor from you. Now I pray and beseech you with folded hands, in honor of the Son of the Virgin Mary, and for the love which you bear me, that you will have mercy on these poor men."

The king looked down upon her face, wet with tears, and stood silent for a few minutes. At length he spoke.

"Ah, dame, I would you had been in some other place this day. You pray so tenderly that I cannot refuse you. Though it is much against my will, nevertheless take them, I give them to you to use as you will."

The queen, filled with joy at these words of grace and mercy, returned glad thanks to the king, and bade those near her to take the halters from the necks of the burgesses and clothe them. Then she saw that a good dinner was set before them, and gave each of them six nobles, afterwards directing that they should be taken in safety through the English army and set at liberty.

Thus ended that memorable siege of Calais, with one of the most dramatic incidents which history has to tell. For more than two centuries the captured city remained in English hands, being theirs long after they had lost all other possessions on the soil of France. At length, in 1558, in the reign of Queen Mary, it was taken by the French, greatly to the chagrin of the queen, who is reported to have said, "When I die, you will find the word *Calais* written on my heart."

CHAPTER XIV

THE BLACK PRINCE AT POITIERS

Through the centre of France marched the Black Prince, with a small but valiant army. Into the heart of that fair kingdom had he come, ravaging the land as he went, leaving misery and destitution at every step, when suddenly across his line of march there appeared an unlooked-for obstacle. The plundering marches of the English had roused the French. In hosts they had gathered round their king, marched in haste to confront the advancing foe, and on the night of Saturday, September 17, 1356, the English found their line of retreat cut off by what seemed an innumerable array of knights and men-at-arms, filling the whole country in their front as far as eye could see, closing with a wall of hostile steel their only road to safety.

The danger was great. For two years the Black Prince and his army of foragers had held France at their mercy, plundering to their hearts' content. The year before, the young prince had led his army up the Garonne into—as an ancient chronicler tells us—"what was before one of the fat countries of the world, the people good and simple, who did not know what war was; indeed, no war had been waged against them till the prince came. The English and Gascons found the country full and gay, the rooms adorned with carpets and draperies, the caskets and chests full of fair jewels. But nothing was safe from these robbers. They, and especially the Gascons, who are very greedy, carried off everything." When they reached Bordeaux their horses were "so laden with spoils that they could hardly move."

Again the prince had led his army of freebooters through France, but he was not to march out again with the same impunity as before. King John, who had just come to the throne, hastily gathered an army and marched to his country's relief. On

the night named, the Black Prince, marching briskly forward with his small force of about eight thousand men, found himself suddenly in face of an overwhelming array of not less than sixty thousand of the best fighting blood of France.

The case seemed hopeless. Surrender appeared the only resource of the English. Just ten years before, at Crecy, Edward III., in like manner driven to bay, had with a small force of English put to rout an overwhelming body of French. In that affair the Black Prince, then little more than a boy, had won the chief honor of the day. But it was beyond hope that so great a success could again be attained. It seemed madness to join battle with such a disproportion of numbers. Yet the prince remembered Crecy, and simply said, on being told how mighty was the host of the French,—

"Well, in the name of God, let us now study how we shall fight with them at our advantage."

Small as was the English force, it had all the advantages of position. In its front were thick and strong hedges. It could be approached only by a deep and narrow lane that ran between vineyards. In the rear was higher ground, on which the small body of men-at-arms were stationed. The bowmen lay behind the hedges and in the vineyards, guarding the lane of approach. Here they lay that night, awaiting the fateful morrow. With the morning's light the French army was drawn up in lines of assault. "Then trumpets blew up through the host," says gossipy old Froissart, "and every man mounted on horseback and went into the field, where they saw the king's banner wave with the wind. There might have been seen great nobles of fair harness and rich armory of banners and pennons; for there was all the flower of France; there was none durst abide at home, without he would be shamed forever."

It was Sunday morning, a suitable day for the church to take part in the affair. Those were times in which the part of the church was apt to be played with sword and spear, but on this occasion it bore the olive-branch. At an early hour the cardinal

of Perigord appeared on the scene, eager to make peace between the opposing forces. The pope had commissioned him to this duty.



CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME POITIERS.

"Sir," he said, kneeling before King John, "ye have here all the flower of your realm against a handful of Englishmen, as regards your company. And, sir, if ye may have them accorded to you without battle, it shall be more profitable and honorable than to adventure this noble chivalry. I beg you let me, in the name of God and humility, ride to the prince and show him in what danger ye have him in."

"That pleases me well," answered the king. "Go; but return again shortly."

The cardinal thereupon rode to the English side and accosted the prince, whom he found on foot among his men. A courteous greeting passed.

"Fair son," said the envoy of peace, "if you and your council know justly the power of the French king, you will suffer me to treat for peace between you."

"I would gladly fall to any reasonable way," answered the prince, "if but my honor and that of my people be saved."

Some further words passed, and the cardinal rode again to the king.

"Sir," he said, "there seems hope of making peace with your foes, nor need you make haste to fight them, for they cannot flee if they would. I beg you, therefore, to forbear for this day, and put off the battle till to-morrow sunrise. That may give time to conclude a truce."

This advice was not pleasing to the king, who saw no wisdom in delay, but the cardinal in the end persuaded him to consent to a day's respite. The conference ended, the king's pavilion of red silk was raised, and word sent through the army that the men might take their ease, except the advanced forces of the constable and marshal.

All that day the cardinal kept himself busy in earnest efforts to effect an agreement. Back and forth he rode between the tents of the king and the prince, seeking to make terms of peace or surrender. Offer after offer was made and refused. The king's main demand was that four of the principal Englishmen should be placed in his hands, to deal with as he would, and all the others yield themselves prisoners. This the prince refused. He would agree to return all the castles and towns he had taken, surrender all prisoners, and swear not to bear arms against the French for seven years; this and no more he would offer.

King John would listen to no such terms. He had the English at his mercy, as he fully believed, and it was for him, not for them, to make terms. He would be generous. The prince and a hundred of his knights alone should yield themselves prisoners. The rest might go free. Surely this was a most favorable offer, pleaded the cardinal. But so thought not the Black Prince, who refused it absolutely, and the cardinal returned in despair to Poitiers.

That day of respite was not wasted by the prince. What he lacked in men he must make up in work. He kept his men busily employed, deepening the dikes, strengthening the hedges, making all the preparations that skill suggested and time permitted.

The sun rose on Monday morning, and with its first beams the tireless peacemaker was again on horse, with the forlorn hope that the bloody fray might still be avoided. He found the leaders of the hosts in a different temper from that of the day before. The time for words had gone; that for blows had come.

"Return whither ye will," was King John's abrupt answer; "bring hither no more words of treaty or peace; and if you love yourself depart shortly."

To the prince rode the good cardinal, overcome with emotion.

"Sir," he pleaded, "do what you can for peace. Otherwise there is no help from battle, for I can find no spirit of accord in the French king."

"Nor here," answered the prince, cheerfully. "I and all my people are of the same intent,—and God help the right!"

The cardinal turned and rode away, sore-hearted with pity. As he went the prince turned to his men.

"Though," he said, "we be but a small company as compared with the power of our foes, let not that abash us; for victory lies not in the multitude of people, but goes where God sends it. If fortune makes the day ours, we shall be honored by all the world; but if we die, the king, my father, and your good friends and kinsmen shall revenge us. Therefore, sirs and comrades, I require you to do your duty this day; for if God be pleased, and Saint George aid, this day you shall see me a good knight."

The battle began with a charge of three hundred French knights up the narrow lane. No sooner had they appeared than

the vineyards and hedges rained arrows upon them, killing and wounding knights and horses; the animals, wild with pain, flinging and trampling their masters; the knights, heavy with armor and disabled by wounds, strewing that fatal lane with their bodies; while still the storm of steel-pointed shafts dealt death in their midst.

The horsemen fell back in dismay, breaking the thick ranks of footmen behind them, and spreading confusion wherever they appeared. At this critical moment a body of English horse, who were posted on a little hill to the right, rushed furiously upon the French flank. At the same time the archers poured their arrows upon the crowded and disordered mass, and the prince, seeing the state of the enemy, led his men-at-arms vigorously upon their broken ranks.

"St. George for Guienne!" was the cry, as the horsemen spurred upon the panic-stricken masses of the French.

"Let us push to the French king's station; there lies the heart of the battle," said Lord Chandos to the prince. "He is too valiant to fly, I fancy. If we fight well, I trust, by the grace of God and St. George, we shall have him. You said we should see you this day a good knight."

"You shall not see me turn back," said the prince. "Advance, banner, in the name of God and St. George!"

On went the banner; on came the array of fighting knights; into the French host they pressed deeper and deeper, King John their goal. The field was strewn with dead and dying; panic was spreading in widening circles through the French army; the repulsed horsemen were in full flight and thousands of those behind them broke and followed. King John fought with knightly courage, his son Philip, a boy of sixteen, by his side, aiding him by his cries of warning. But nothing could withstand the English onset. Some of his defenders fell, others fled; he would have fallen himself but for the help of a French knight, in the English service.

"Sir, yield you," he called to the king, pressing between him and his assailants.

"To whom shall I yield?" asked the king.

Where is my cousin, the prince of Wales?"

"He is not here, sir. Yield, and I will bring you to him."

"And who are you?"

"I am Denis of Morbecque, a knight of Artois. I serve the English king, for I am banished from France, and all I had has been forfeited."

"Then I yield me to you," said the king, handing him his right gauntlet.

Meanwhile the rout of the French had become complete. On all sides they were in flight; on all sides the English were in pursuit. The prince had fought until he was overcome with fatigue.

"I see no more banners or pennons of the French," said Sir John Chandos, who had kept beside him the day through.

"You are sore chafed. Set your banner high in this bush, and let us rest."

The prince's pavilion was set up, and drink brought him. As he quaffed it, he asked if any one had tidings of the French king.

"He is dead or taken," was the answer. "He has not left the field."

Two knights were thereupon sent to look for him, and had not got far before they saw a troop of men-at-arms wearily approaching. In their midst was Sir John, afoot and in peril, for they had taken him from Sir Denis, and were quarrelling as to who owned him.

"Strive not about my taking," said the king. "Lead me to the prince. I am rich enough to make you all rich."

The brawling went on, however, until the lords who had been sent to seek him came near.

"What means all this, good sirs?" they asked. "Why do you quarrel?"

"We have the French king prisoner," was the answer; "and there are more than ten knights and squires who claim to have taken him and his son."

The envoys at this bade them halt and cease their clamor, on pain of their heads, and taking the king and his son from their midst they brought him to the tent of the prince of Wales, where the exalted captives were received with all courtesy.

The battle, begun at dawn, was ended by noon. In that time was slain "all the flower of France; and there was taken, with the king and the Lord. Philip his son, seventeen earls, besides barons, knights, and squires."

The men returning from the pursuit brought in twice as many prisoners as their own army numbered in all. So great was the host of captives that many of them were ransomed on the spot, and set free on their word of honor to return to Bordeaux with their ransom before Christmas.

The prince and his comrades had breakfasted that morning in dread; they supped that night in triumph. The supper party, as described by Froissart, is a true picture of the days of chivalry,—in war all cruelty, in peace all courtesy; ruthless in the field, gentle and ceremonious at the feast. Thus the picturesque old chronicler limns it,—

"The prince made the king and his son, the Lord James of Bourbon, the Lord John d'Artois, the earl of Tancarville, the Lord d'Estampes, the Earl Dammartyn, the earl of Greville, and the earl of Pertney, to sit all at one board, and other lords, knights, and squires at other tables; and always the prince served before the king as humbly as he could, and would not sit at the king's board, for any desire that the king could make; but he said he was not sufficient to sit at the table with so great a prince as

the king was; but then he said to the king, 'Sir, for God's sake, make none evil nor heavy cheer, though God did not this day consent to follow your will; for, sir, surely the king my father shall bear you as much honor and amity as he may do, and shall accord with you so reasonably, and ye shall ever be friends together after; and, sir, methinks you ought to rejoice, though the journey be not as you would have had it; for this day ye have won the high renown of prowess, and have passed this day in valiantness all other of your party. Sir, I say not this to mock you; for all that be on our party, that saw every man's deeds, are plainly accorded by true sentence to give you the prize and chaplet."

So ended that great day at Poitiers. It ended miserably enough for France, the routed soldiery themselves becoming bandits to ravage her, and the people being robbed for ransom till the whole realm was given over to misery and woe.

It ended famously for England, another proud chaplet of victory being added to the crown of glory of Edward III. and his valiant son, the great day at Crecy being matched with as great a day at Poitiers. Agincourt was still to come, the three being the most notable instances in history of the triumph of a handful of men well led over a great but feebly-handled host. The age of knighthood and chivalry reached its culmination on these three memorable days. It ended at Agincourt, "villanous gunpowder" sounding its requiem on that great field. Cannon, indeed, had been used by Edward III. in his wars; but not until after this date did firearms banish the spear and bow from the "tented field."

CHAPTER XV

WAT TYLER AND THE MEN OF KENT

In that year of woe and dread, 1348, the Black Death fell upon England. Never before had so frightful a calamity been known; never since has it been equaled. Men died by millions. All Europe had been swept by the plague, as by a besom of destruction, and now England became its prey. The population of the island at that period was not great,—some three or four millions in all. When the plague had passed more than half of these were in their graves, and in many places there were hardly enough living to bury the dead.

We call it a calamity. It is not so sure that it was. Life in England at that day, for the masses of the people, was not so precious a boon that death had need to be sorely deplored. A handful of lords and a host of laborers, the latter just above the state of slavery, constituted the population. Many of the serfs had been set free, but the new liberty of the people was not a state of unadulterated happiness. War had drained the land. The luxury of the nobles added to the drain. The patricians caroused. The plebeians suffered. The Black Death came. After it had passed, labor, for the first time in English history, was master of the situation.

Laborers had grown scarce. Many men refused to work. The first general strike for higher wages began. In the country, fields were left untilled and harvests rotted on the ground. "The sheep and cattle strayed through the fields and corn, and there were none left who could drive them." In the towns, craftsmen refused to work at the old rate of wages. Higher wages were paid, but the scarcity of food made higher prices, and men were little better off. Many laborers, indeed, declined to work at all, becoming tramps,—what were known as "sturdy beggars,"—or haunting the forests as bandits.

The king and parliament sought to put an end to this state of affairs by law. An ordinance was passed whose effect would have made slaves of the people. Every man under sixty, not a land owner or already at work (says this famous act), must work for the employer who demands his labor, and for the rate of wages that prevailed two years before the plague. The man who refused should be thrown into prison. This law failed to work, and sterner measures were passed. The laborer was once more made a serf, bound to the soil, his wage-rate fixed by parliament. Law after law followed, branding with a hot iron on the forehead being finally ordered as a restraint to runaway laborers. It was the first great effort made by the class in power to put down an industrial revolt.

The peasantry and the mechanics of the towns resisted. The poor found their mouth piece in John Ball, "a mad priest of Kent," as Froisaart calls him. Mad his words must have seemed to the nobles of the land. "Good people," he declared, "things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villains and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet, and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we have oat cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labor, the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state."

So spoke this early socialist. So spoke his hearers in the popular rhyme of the day:

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

So things went on for years, growing worse year by year, the fire of discontent smouldering, ready at a moment to burst into flame.

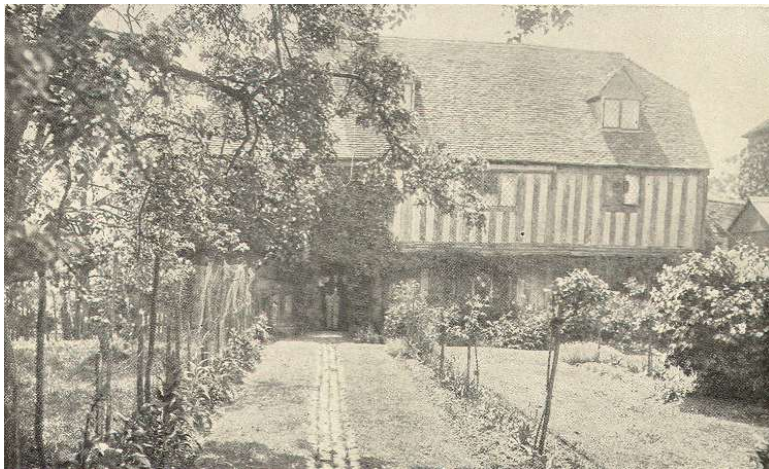
At length the occasion came. Edward the Third died, but he left an ugly heritage of debt behind him. His useless wars in France had beggared the crown. New money must be raised. Parliament laid a poll-tax on every person in the realm, the poorest to pay as much as the wealthiest.

Here was an application of the doctrine of equality of which the people did not approve. The land was quickly on fire from sea to sea. Crowds of peasants gathered and drove the tax-gatherers with clubs from their homes. Rude rhymes passed from lip to lip, full of the spirit of revolt. All over southern England spread the sentiment of rebellion.

The incident which set flame to the fuel was this. At Dartford, in Kent, lived one Wat Tyler, a hardy soldier who had served in the French wars. To his house, in his absence, came a tax-collector, and demanded the tax on his daughter. The mother declared that she was not taxable, being under fourteen years of age. The collector thereupon seized the child in an insulting manner, so frightening her that her screams reached the ears of her father, who was at work not far off. Wat flew to the spot, struck one blow, and the villanous collector lay dead at his feet.

Within an hour the people of the town were in arms. As the story spread through the country, the people elsewhere rose and put themselves under the leadership of Wat Tyler. In Essex was another party in arms, under a priest called Jack Straw. Canterbury rose in rebellion, plundered the palace of the archbishop, and released John Ball from the prison to which this "mad" socialist had been consigned. The revolt spread like wildfire. County after county rose in insurrection. But the heart of the rebellion lay in Kent, and from that county marched a hundred thousand men, with Wat Tyler at their head, London their goal.

To Blackheath they came, the multitude swelling as it marched. Every lawyer they met was killed. The houses of the stewards were burned, and the records of the manor courts flung into the flames. A wild desire for liberty and equality animated the mob, yet they did no further harm. All travellers were stopped and made to swear that they would be true to King Richard and the people. The king's mother fell into their hands, but all the harm done her was the being made to kiss a few rough-bearded men who vowed loyalty to her son.



WAT TYLER'S COTTAGE.

The young king—then a boy of sixteen—addressed them from a boat in the river. But his council would not let him land, and the peasants, furious at his distrust, rushed upon London, uttering cries of "Treason!" The drawbridge of London Bridge had been raised, but the insurgents had friends in the city who lowered it, and quickly the capital was swarming with Wat Tyler's infuriated men. Soon the prisons were broken open, and their inmates had joined the insurgent ranks. The palace of the Duke of Lancaster, the Savoy, the most beautiful in England, was quickly in flames. That nobleman, detested by the people, had fled in all haste to Scotland. The Temple, the head-quarters of the lawyers, was set on fire, and its books and documents

reduced to ashes. The houses of the foreign merchants were burned. There was "method in the madness" of the insurgents. They sought no indiscriminate ruin. The lawyers and the foreigners were their special detestation. Robbery was not permitted. One thief was seen with a silver vessel which he had stolen from the Savoy. He and his plunder were flung together into the flames. They were, as they boasted, "seekers of truth and justice, not thieves or robbers."

Thus passed the first day of the peasant occupation of London, the people of the town in terror, the insurgents in subjection to their leaders, and still more so to their own ideas. Many of them were drunk, but no outrages were committed. The influence of one terrible example repressed all theft. Never had so orderly a mob held possession of so great a city.

On the second day, Wat Tyler and a band of his followers forced their way into the Tower. The knights of the garrison were panic-stricken, but no harm was done them. The peasants, in rough good humor, took them by the beards, and declared that they were now equals, and that in the time to come they would be good friends and comrades.

But this rude jollity ceased when Archbishop Sudbury, who had been active in preventing the king from landing from the Thames, and the ministers who were concerned in the levy of the poll-tax, fell into their hands. Short shrift was given these detested officials. They were dragged to Tower Hill, and their heads struck off.

"King Richard and the people!" was the rallying cry of the insurgents. It went ill with those who hesitated to subscribe to this sentiment. So evidently were the peasants friendly to the king that the youthful monarch fearlessly sought them at Mile End, and held a conference with sixty thousand of them who lay there encamped.

"I am your king and lord, good people," he boldly addressed them; "what will ye?"

"We will that you set us free forever," was the answer of the insurgents, "us and our lands; and that we be never named nor held for serfs."

"I grant it," said the king.

His words were received with shouts of joy. The conference then continued, the leaders of the peasants proposing four conditions, to all of which the king assented. These were, first, that neither they nor their descendants should ever be enslaved; second, that the rent of land should be paid in money at a fixed price, not in service; third, that they should be at liberty to buy and sell in market and elsewhere, like other free men; fourth, that they should be pardoned for past offences.

"I grant them all," said Richard. "Charters of freedom and pardon shall be at once issued. Go home and dwell in peace, and no harm shall come to you."

More than thirty clerks spent the rest of that day writing at all speed the pledges of amnesty promised by the king. These satisfied the bulk of the insurgents, who quietly left for their homes, placing all confidence in the smooth promises of the youthful monarch.

Some interesting scenes followed their return. The gates of the Abbey of St. Albans were forced open, and a throng of townsmen crowded in, led by one William Grindcobbe, who compelled the abbot to deliver up the charters which held the town in serfage to the abbey. Then they burst into the cloister, sought the millstones which the courts had declared should alone grind corn at St. Albans, and broke them into small pieces. These were distributed among the peasants as visible emblems of their new-gained freedom.

Meanwhile, Wat Tyler had remained in London, with thirty thousand men at his back, to see that the kingly pledge was fulfilled. He had not been at Mile End during the conference with the king, and was not satisfied with the demands of the

peasants. He asked, in addition, that the forest-laws should be abolished, and the woods made free.

The next day came. Chance brought about a meeting between Wat and the king, and hot blood made it a tragedy. King Richard was riding with a train of some sixty gentlemen, among them William Walworth, the mayor of London, when, by ill hap, they came into contact with Wat and his followers.

"There is the king," said Wat. "I will go speak with him, and tell him what we want."

The bold leader of the peasants rode forward and confronted the monarch, who drew rein and waited to hear what he had to say.

"King Richard," said Wat, "dost thou see all my men there?"

"Ay," said the king. "Why?"

"Because," said Wat, "they are all at my command, and have sworn to do whatever I bid them."

What followed is not very clear. Some say that Wat laid his hand on the king's bridle, others that he fingered his dagger threateningly. Whatever the provocation, Walworth, the mayor, at that instant pressed forward, sword in hand, and stabbed the unprotected man in the throat before he could make a movement of defence. As he turned to rejoin his men he was struck a death-blow by one of the king's followers.

This rash action was one full of danger. Only the ready wit and courage of the king saved the lives of his followers,—perhaps of himself.

"Kill! kill!" cried the furious peasants, "they have killed our captain."

Bows were bent, swords drawn, an ominous movement begun. The moment was a critical one. The young king proved himself equal to the occasion. Spurring his horse, he rode boldly to the front of the mob.

"What need ye, my masters?" he cried. "That man is a traitor. I am your captain and your king. Follow me!"

His words touched their hearts. With loud shouts of loyalty they followed him to the Tower, where he was met by his mother with tears of joy.

"Rejoice and praise God," the young king said to her; "for I have recovered to-day my heritage which was lost, and the realm of England."

It was true; the revolt was at an end. The frightened nobles had regained their courage, and six thousand knights were soon at the service of the king, pressing him to let them end the rebellion with sword and spear.

He refused. His word had been passed, and he would live to it—at least, until the danger was passed. The peasants still in London received their charters of freedom and dispersed to their homes. The city was freed of the low-born multitude who had held it in mortal terror.

Yet all was not over. Many of the peasants were still in arms. Those of St. Albans were emulated by those of St. Edmondsbury, where fifty thousand men broke their way into the abbey precincts, and force the monks to grant a charter of freedom to the town. In Norwich, a dyer, Littester by name, calling himself the King of the Commons, forced the nobles captured by his followers to act as his meat-tasters, and serve him on their knees during his repasts. His reign did not last long. The Bishop of Norwich, with a following of knights and men-at-arms, fell on his camp and made short work of his majesty.

The king, soon forgetting his pledges, led an army of forty thousand men through Kent and Essex, and ruthlessly executed the peasant leaders. Some fifteen hundred of them were put to death. The peasants resisted stubbornly, but they were put down. The jurors refused to bring the prisoners in guilty, until they were threatened with execution themselves. The king and council, in the end, seemed willing to compromise with the

peasantry, but the land-owners refused compliance. Their serfs were their property, they said, and could not be taken from them by king or parliament without their consent. "And this consent," they declared, "we have never given and never will give, were we all to die in one day."

Yet the revolt of the peasantry was not without its useful effect. From that time serfdom died rapidly. Wages continued to rise. A century after the Black Death, a laborer's work in England "commanded twice the amount of the necessities of life which could have been obtained for the wages paid under Edward the Third." In a century and a half serfdom had almost vanished.

Thus ended the greatest peasant outbreak that England ever knew. The outbreak of Jack Cade, which took place seventy years afterwards, was for political rather than industrial reform. During those seventy years the condition of the working-classes had greatly improved, and the occasion for industrial revolt correspondingly decreased.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WHITE ROSE OF ENGLAND

The wars of the White and the Red Roses were at an end, Lancaster had triumphed over York, Richard III., the last of the Plantagenets, had died on Bosworth field, and the Red Rose candidate, Henry VII., was on the throne. It seemed fitting, indeed, that the party of the red should bear the banners of triumph, for the frightful war of white and red had deluged England with blood, and turned to crimson the green of many a fair field. Two of the White Rose claimants of the throne, the sons of Edward IV., had been imprisoned by Richard III. in the Tower of London, and, so said common report, had been strangled in their beds. But their fate was hidden in mystery, and there were those who believed that the princes of the Tower still lived.

One claimant to the throne, a scion of the White Rose kings, Edward, Earl of Warwick, was still locked up in the Tower, so closely kept from human sight and knowledge as to leave the field open to the claims of imposture. For suddenly a handsome youth appeared in Ireland declaring that he was the Earl of Warwick, escaped from the Tower, and asking aid to help him regain the throne, which he claimed as rightfully his. The story of this boy is a short one; the end of his career fortunately a comedy instead of a tragedy. In Ireland were many adherents of the house of York. The story of the handsome lad was believed; he was crowned at Dublin,—the crown being taken from the head of a statue of the Virgin Mary,—and was then carried home on the shoulders of a gigantic Irish chieftain, as was the custom in green Erin in those days.

The youthful claimant had entered Ireland with a following of two thousand German soldiers, provided by Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV., who

hated Henry VII. and all the party of Lancaster with an undying hatred. From Ireland he invaded England, with an Irish following added to his German. His small army was met by the king with an overpowering force, half of it killed, the rest scattered, and the young imposter taken captive.



BATTLE IN THE WARE OF THE ROSES.

Henry was almost the first king of Norman England who was not cruel by instinct. He could be cruel enough by calculation, but he was not disposed to take life for the mere pleasure of killing. He knew this boy to be an impostor, since Edward, Earl of Warwick, was still in the Tower. The astute king deemed it wiser to make him a laughing stock than a martyr. He made inquiry as to his origin. The boy proved to be the son of a baker of Oxford, his true name Lambert Simnel. He had been tutored to play the prince by an ambitious priest named Simons. This priest was shut up in prison, and died there. As for his pupil, the king contemptuously sent him into his kitchen, and condemned him to the servile office of turnspit. Afterwards, as young Simnel showed some intelligence and loyalty, he was made one of the king's falconers. And so ended the story of this sham Plantagenet.

Hardly had this ambitious boy been set to the humble work of turning a spit in the king's kitchen, when a new claimant of the crown appeared,—a far more dangerous one. It is his story to which that of Lambert Simnel serves as an amusing prelude.

On one fine day in the year 1492—Columbus being then on his way to the discovery of America—there landed at Cork, in a vessel hailing from Portugal, a young man very handsome in face, and very winning in manners, who lost no time in presenting himself to some of the leading Irish and telling them that he was Richard, Duke of York, the second son of Edward IV. This story some of his hearers were not ready to believe. They had just passed through an experience of the same kind.

"That cannot be," they said: "the sons of King Edward were murdered by their uncle in the Tower."

"People think so, I admit," said the young stranger. "My brother *was* murdered there, foully killed in that dark prison. But I escaped, and for seven years have been wandering."

The boy had an easy and engaging manner, a fluent tongue, and told so well-devised and probable a story of the manner of his escape, that he had little difficulty in persuading his credulous hearers that he was indeed Prince Richard. Soon he had a party at his back, Cork shouted itself hoarse in his favor, there was banqueting and drinking, and in this humble fashion the cause of the White Rose was resuscitated, the banners of York were again flung to the winds.

We have begun our story in the middle. We must go back to its beginning. Margaret of Burgundy, whose hatred for the Lancastrian king was intense, had spread far and wide the rumor that Richard, Duke of York, was still alive. The story was that the villains employed by Richard III. to murder the princes in the Tower, had killed the elder only. Remorse had stricken their hardened souls, and compassion induced them to spare the younger, and privately to set him at liberty, he being bidden on peril of life not to divulge who he really was. This seed well sown, the astute duchess laid her plans to bring it to fruitage. A

handsome youth was brought into her presence, a quick-witted, intelligent, crafty lad, with nimble tongue and unusually taking manners. Such, at least, was the story set afloat by Henry VII., which goes on to say that the duchess kept her protégé concealed until she had taught him thoroughly the whole story of the murdered prince, instructed him in behavior suitable to his assumed birth, and filled his memory with details of the boy's life and certain secrets he would be likely to know, while advising him how to avoid certain awkward questions that might be asked. The boy was quick to learn his lesson, the hope of becoming king of England inciting his naturally keen wit. This done, the duchess sent him privately to Portugal, knowing well that if his advent could be traced to her house suspicion would be aroused.

This is the narrative that has been transmitted to us, but it is one which, it must be acknowledged, has come through suspicious channels, as will appear in the sequel. But whatever be the facts, it is certain that about this time Henry VII. declared war against France, and that the war had not made much progress before the youth described sailed from Portugal and landed in Cork, where he claimed to be Richard, Duke of York, and the true heir of the English throne.

And now began a most romantic and adventurous career. The story of the advent of a prince of the house of York in Ireland made its way through England and France. Henry VII. was just then too busy with his French war to attend to his new rival; but Charles VIII. of France saw here an opportunity of annoying his enemy. He accordingly sent envoys to Cork, with an invitation to the youth to seek his court, where he would be acknowledged as the true heir to the royal crown of England.

The astute young man lost no time in accepting the invitation. Charles received him with as much honor as though he were indeed a king, appointed him a body-guard, and spread far and wide the statement that the Duke of York, the rightful heir of the English crown, was at his court, and that he would sustain his claim. What might have come of this, had the war

continued, we cannot say. A number of noble Englishmen, friends of York, made their way to Paris, and became believers in the story of the young adventurer. But the hopes of the aspirant in this quarter came to an end with the ending of the war. Charles's secret purpose had been to force Henry to conclude a peace, and in this he succeeded. He had now no further use for his young protégé. He had sufficient honor not to deliver him into Henry's hands, as he was asked to do; but he set him adrift from his own court, bidding him to seek his fortune elsewhere.

From France the young aspirant made his way into Flanders, and presented himself at the court of the Duchess of Burgundy, with every appearance of never having been there before. He sought her, he said, as his aunt. The duchess received him with an air of doubt and suspicion. He was, she acknowledged, the image of her dear departed brother, but more evidence was needed. She questioned him, therefore, closely, before the members of her court, making searching inquiries into his earlier life and recollections. These he answered so satisfactorily that the duchess declared herself transported with astonishment and joy, and vowed that he was indeed her nephew, miraculously delivered from prison, brought from death to life, wonderfully preserved by destiny for some great fortune. She was not alone in this belief. All who heard his answers agreed with her, many of them borne away by his grace of person and manner and the fascination of his address. The duchess declared his identity beyond doubt, did him honor as a born prince, gave him a body-guard of thirty halberdiers, who were clad in a livery of murrey and blue, and called him by the taking title of the "White Rose of England." He seemed, indeed, like one risen from the grave to set afloat once more the banners of the White Rose of York.

The tidings of what was doing in Flanders quickly reached England, where a party in favor of the aspirant's pretensions slowly grew up. Several noblemen joined it, discontent having been caused by certain unpopular acts of the

king. Sir Robert Clifford sailed to Flanders, visited Margaret's court, and wrote back to England that there was no doubt that the young man was the Duke of York, whose person he knew as he knew his own.

While these events were fomenting, secretly and openly, King Henry was at work, secretly and openly, to disconcert his foes. He set a guard upon the English ports, that no suspicious person should enter or leave the kingdom, and then put his wits to task to prove the falsity of the whole neatly wrought tale. Two of those concerned in the murder of the princes were still alive,—Sir James Tirrel and John Dighton. Sir James claimed to have stood at the stair-foot, while Dighton and another did the murder, smothering the princes in their bed. To this they both testified, though the King, for reasons unexplained, did not publish their testimony.

Henry also sent spies abroad, to search into the truth concerning the assumed adventurer. These, being well-supplied with money, and bidden to trace every movement of the youth, at length declared that they had discovered that he was the son of a Flemish merchant, of the city of Tournay, his name Perkin Warbeck, his knowledge of the language and manners of England having been derived from the English traders in Flanders. This information, with much to support it, was set afloat in England, and the king then demanded of the Archduke Philip, sovereign of Burgundy, that he should give up this pretender, or banish him from his court. Philip replied that Burgundy was the domain of the duchess, who was mistress in her own land. In revenge, Henry closed all commercial communication between the two countries, taking from Antwerp its profitable market in English cloth.

Now tragedy followed comedy. Sir Robert Clifford, who had declared the boy to be undoubtedly the Duke of York, suffered the king to convince him that he was mistaken, and denounced several noblemen as being secretly friends to Perkin Warbeck. These were arrested, and three of them beheaded, one of them, Sir William Stanley, having saved Henry's life on

Bosworth Field. But he was rich, and a seizure of his estate would swell the royal coffers. With Henry VII. gold weighed heavier than gratitude.

For three years all was quiet. Perkin Warbeek kept his princely state at the court of the Duchess of Burgundy, and the merchants of Flanders suffered heavily from the closure of the trade of Antwerp. This grew intolerable. The people were indignant. Something must be done. The pretended prince must leave Flanders, or he ran risk of being killed by its inhabitants.

The adventurous youth was thus obliged to leave his refuge at Margaret's court, and now entered upon a more active career. Accompanied by a few hundred men, he sailed from Flanders and landed on the English coast at Deal. He hoped for a rising in his behalf. On the contrary, the country people rose against him, killed many of his followers, and took a hundred and fifty prisoners. These were all hanged, by order of the king, along the sea shore, as a warning to any others who might wish to invade England.

Flanders was closed against the pretender. Ireland was similarly closed, for Henry had gained the Irish to his side. Scotland remained, there being hostility between the English and Scottish kings. Hither the fugitive made his way. James IV. of Scotland gave him a most encouraging reception, called him cousin, and in a short time married him to one of the most beautiful and charming ladies of his court, Lady Catharine Gordon, a relative of the royal house of the Stuarts.

For a time now the fortunes of the young aspirant improved. Henry, alarmed at his progress, sought by bribery of the Scottish lords to have him delivered into his hands. In this he failed; James was faithful to his word. Soon Perkin had a small army at his back. The Duchess of Burgundy provided him with men, money, and arms, till in a short time he had fifteen hundred good soldiers tinder his command.

With these, and with the aid of King James of Scotland, who reinforced his army and accompanied him in person, he

crossed the border into England, and issued a proclamation, calling himself King Richard the Fourth, and offering large rewards to any one who should take or distress Henry Tudor, as he called the king.

Unluckily for the young invader, the people of England had had enough of civil war. White Rose or Red Rose had become of less importance to them than peace and prosperity. They refused to rise in his support, and quickly grew to hate his soldiers, who, being of different nations, most of them brigandish soldiers of fortune, began by quarrelling with one another, and ended by plundering the country.

"This is shameful," said Perkin. "I am not here to distress the English people. Rather than fill the country with misery, I will lose my rights."

King James laughed at his scruples, giving him to understand that no true king would stop for such a trifle. But Perkin was resolute, and the army marched back again into Scotland without fighting a battle. The White Rose had shown himself unfit for kingship in those days. He was so weak as to have compassion for the people, if that was the true cause of his retreat.

This invasion had one unlooked-for result. The people had been heavily taxed by Henry, in preparation for the expected war. In consequence the men of Cornwall rose in rebellion. With Flammock, a lawyer, and Joseph, a blacksmith, at their head, they marched eastward through England until within sight of London, being joined by Lord Audley and some other country gentlemen on their route. The king met and defeated them, though they fought fiercely. Lord Audley was beheaded, Flammock and Joseph were hanged, the rest were pardoned. And so ended this threatening insurrection.

It was of no advantage to the wandering White Rose. He soon had to leave Scotland, peace having been made between the two kings. James, like Charles VIII. before him, was honorable and would not give him up, but required him to leave his

kingdom. Perkin and his beautiful wife, who clung to him with true love, set sail for Ireland. For a third time he had been driven from shelter.

In Ireland he found no support. The people had become friendly to the king, and would have nothing to do with the wandering White Rose. As a forlorn hope, he sailed for Cornwall, trusting that, the stout Cornish men, who had just struck so fierce a blow for their rights, might gather to his support. With him went his wife, clinging with unyielding faith and love to his waning fortunes.

He landed at Whitsand Bay, on the coast of Cornwall, issued a proclamation under the title of Richard the Fourth of England, and quickly found himself in command of a small army of Cornishmen. His wife he left in the castle of St. Michael's Mount, as a place of safety, and at the head of three thousand men marched into Devonshire. By the time he reached Exeter he had six thousand men under his command. They besieged Exeter, but learning that the king was on the march, they raised the siege, and advanced until Taunton was reached, when they found themselves in front of the king's army.

The Cornishmen were brave and ready. They were poorly armed and outnumbered, but battle was their only thought. Such was not the thought of their leader. For the first time in his career he found himself face to face with a hostile army. He could plot, could win friends by his engaging manners, could do anything but fight. But now that the critical moment had come he found that he lacked courage. Perhaps this had as much as compassion to do with his former retreat to Scotland. It is certain that the sight of grim faces and brandished arms before him robbed his heart of its bravery. Mounting a swift horse, he fled in the night, followed by about threescore others. In the morning his men found themselves without a leader. Having nothing to fight for, they surrendered. Some few of the more desperate of them were hanged. The others were pardoned and permitted to return.

No sooner was the discovery made that the White Rose had taken to the winds than horsemen were sent in speedy pursuit, one troop being sent to St. Michael's Mount to seize the Lady Catharine, and a second troop of five hundred horse to pursue the fugitive pretender, and take him, if possible, before he could reach the sanctuary of Beaulieu, in the New Forest, whither he had fled. The lady was quickly brought before the king. Whether or not he meant to deal harshly with her, the sight of her engaging face moved him to compassion and admiration. She was so beautiful, bore so high a reputation for goodness, and was so lovingly devoted to her husband, that the king was disarmed of any ill purposes he may have entertained, and treated her with the highest respect and consideration. In the end he gave her an allowance suitable to her rank, placed her at court near the queen's person, and continued her friend during life. Years after, when the story of Perkin Warbeck had almost become a nursery-tale, the Lady Catharine was still called by the people the "White Rose," as a tribute to her beauty and her romantic history.

As regards the fugitive and his followers, they succeeded in reaching Beaulieu and taking sanctuary. The pursuers, who had failed to overtake them, could only surround the sanctuary and wait orders from the king. The astute Henry pursued his usual course, employing policy instead of force. Perkin was coaxed out of his retreat, on promise of good treatment if he should surrender, and was brought up to London, guarded, but not bound. Henry, who was curious to see him, contrived to do so from a window, screening himself while closely observing his rival.

London reached, the cavalcade became a procession, the captive being led through the principal streets for the edification of the populace, before being taken to the Tower. The king had little reason to fear him. The pretended prince, who had run away from his army, was not likely to obtain new adherents. Scorn and contempt were the only manifestations of popular opinion.

So little, indeed, did Henry dread this aspirant to the throne, that he was quickly released from the Tower and brought to Westminster, where he was treated as a gentleman, being examined from time to time regarding his imposture. Such parts of his confession as the king saw fit to divulge were printed and spread through the country, but were of a nature not likely to settle the difficulty. "Men missing of that they looked for, looked about for they knew not what, and were more in doubt than before, but the king chose rather not to satisfy, than to kindle coals."

Perkin soon brought the king's complaisance to an end. His mercurial disposition counselled flight, and, deceiving his guards, he slipped from the palace and fled to the seashore. Here he found all avenues of escape closed, and so diligent was the pursuit that he quickly turned back, and again took sanctuary in Bethlehem priory, near Richmond. The prior came to the king and offered to deliver him up, asking for his life only. His escapade had roused anger in the court.

"Take the rogue and hang him forthwith," was the hot advice of the king's council.

"The silly boy is not worth a rope," answered the king. "Take the knave and set him in the stocks. Let the people see what sort of a prince this is."

Life being promised, the prior brought forth his charge, and a few days after Perkin was set in the stocks for a whole day, in the palace court at Westminster. The next day he was served in the same manner at Cheapside, in both places being forced to read a paper which purported to be a true and full confession of his imposture. From Cheapside he was taken to the Tower, having exhausted the mercy of the king.

In the Tower he was placed in the company of the Earl of Warwick, the last of the acknowledged Plantagenets, who had been in this gloomy prison for fourteen years. It is suspected that the king had a dark purpose in this. To the one he had promised life; the other he had no satisfactory reason to remove; possibly

he fancied that the uneasy temper of Perkin would give him an excuse for the execution of both.

It such was his scheme, it worked well. Perkin had not been long in the Tower before the quick silver of his nature began to declare itself. His insinuating address gained him the favor of his keepers, whom he soon began to offer lofty bribes to aid his escape. Into this plot he managed to draw the young earl. The plan devised was that the four keepers should murder the lieutenant of the Tower in the night, seize the keys and such money as they could find, and let out Perkin and the earl.

It may be that the king himself had arranged this plot, and instructed the keepers in their parts. Certainly it was quickly divulged. And by strange chance, just at this period a third pretender appeared, this time a shoemaker's son, who, like the baker's son, pretended to be the Earl of Warwick. His name was Ralph Wilford. He had been taught his part by a priest named Patrick. They came from Suffolk and advanced into Bent, where the priest took to the pulpit to advocate the claims of his charge. Both were quickly taken, the youth executed, the priest imprisoned for life.

And now Henry doubtless deemed that matters of this kind had gone far enough. The earl and his fellow-prisoner were indicted for conspiracy, tried and found guilty, the earl beheaded on Tower Hill, and Perkin Warbeck hanged at Tyburn. This was in the year 1499. It formed a dramatic end to the history of the fifteenth-century, being the closing event in the wars of the White and the Red Roses, the death of the last Plantagenet and of the last White Rose aspirant to the throne.

In conclusion, the question may be asked, Who was Perkin Warbeck? All we know of him is the story set afloat by Henry VII., made up of accounts told by his spies and a confession wrested from a boy threatened with death. That he was taught his part by Margaret of Burgundy we have only this evidence for warrant. He was publicly acknowledged by this lady, the sister of Edward IV., was married by James of Scotland to a

lady of royal blood, was favorably received by many English lords, and was widely believed, in view of the mystery surrounding the fate of the princes, to be truly the princely person he declared himself. However that be, his story is a highly romantic one, and forms a picturesque closing scene to the long drama of the Wars of the Roses.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD

It was the day fixed for the opening of the most brilliant pageant known to modern history. On the green space in front of the dilapidated castle of Guisnes, on the soil of France, but within what was known as the English pale, stood a summer palace of the amplest proportions and the most gorgeous decorations, which was furnished within with all that comfort demanded and art and luxury could provide. Let us briefly describe this magnificent palace, which had been prepared for the temporary residence of the English king.

The building was of wood, square in shape, each side being three hundred and twenty-eight feet long. On every side were oriel windows and curiously glazed clerestories, whose mullions and posts were overlaid with gold. In front of the grand entrance stood an embattled gate-way, having on each side statues of warriors in martial attitudes. From the gate to the palace sloped upward a long passage, flanked with images in bright armor and presenting "sore and terrible countenances." This led to an embowered landing-place, where, facing the great doors, stood antique figures girt with olive-branches.

Interiorly the palace halls and chambers were superbly decorated, white silk forming the ceilings of the passages and galleries, from which depended silken hangings of various colors and braided cloths, "which showed like bullion of fine braided gold." Roses set in lozenges, on a golden ground-work, formed the chamber ceilings. The wall spaces were decorated with richly carved and gilt panels, while embroidered silk tapestry hung from the windows and formed the walls of the corridors. In the state apartments the furniture was of princely richness, the whole domains of art and industry having been ransacked to provide their most splendid belongings. Exteriorly the building

presented an equally ornate appearance, glass, gold-work, and ornamental hangings quite concealing the carpentry, so that "every quarter of it, even the least, was a habitation fit for a prince."

To what end, in the now far-away year of 1520, and in that rural locality, under the shadows of a castle which had fallen into irredeemable ruin, had such an edifice been built,—one which only the revenues of a kingdom, in that day, could have erected? Its purpose was a worthy one. France and England, whose intercourse for centuries had been one of war, were now to meet in peace. Crecy and Agincourt had been the last meeting-places of the monarchs of these kingdoms, and death and ruin had followed their encounters. Now Henry the Eighth of England and Francis the First of France were to meet in peace and amity, spending the revenues of their kingdoms not for armor of linked mail and death-dealing weapons, but for Splendid attire and richest pageantry, in token of friendship and fraternity between the two realms.

A century had greatly changed the relations of England and France. In 1420 Henry V. had recently won the great victory of Agincourt, and France lay almost prostrate at his feet. In 1520 the English possessions in France were confined to the seaport of Calais and a small district around it known as the "English pale." The castle of Guisnes stood just within the English border, the meeting between the two monarchs being fixed at the line of separation of the two kingdoms.

The palace we have described, erected for the habitation of King Henry and his suite, had been designed and ordered by Cardinal Wolsey, to whose skill in pageantry the management of this great festival had been consigned. Extensive were the preparations alike in England and in France. All that the island kingdom could furnish of splendor and riches was provided, not alone for the adornment of the king and his guard, but for the host of nobles and the multitude of persons of minor estate, who came in his train, the whole following of the king being nearly four thousand persons, while more than a thousand formed the

escort of the queen. For the use of this great company had been brought nearly four thousand richly-caparisoned horses, with vast quantities of the other essentials of human comfort and regal display.

While England had been thus busy in preparing for the pageant, France had been no less active. Arde, a town near the English pale, had been selected as the dwelling-place of Francis and his train. As for the splendor of adornment of those who followed him, there seems to have been almost nothing worn but silks, velvets, cloth of gold and silver, jewels and precious stones, such being the costliness of the display that a writer who saw it humorously says, "Many of the nobles carried their castles, woods, and farms upon their backs."

Magnificent as was the palace built for Henry and his train, the arrangements for the French king and his train were still more imposing. The artistic taste of the French was contrasted with the English love for solid grandeur. Francis had proposed that both parties should lodge in tents erected on the field, and in pursuance of this idea there had been prepared "numerous pavilions, fitted up with halls, galleries, and chambers ornamented within and without with gold and silver tissue. Amidst golden balls and quaint devices glittering in the sun, rose a gilt figure of St. Michael, conspicuous for his blue mantle powdered with golden *fleurs-de-lis*, and crowning a royal pavilion of vast dimensions supported by a single mast. In his right hand he held a dart, in his left a shield emblazoned with the arms of France. Inside, the roof of the pavilion represented the canopy of heaven ornamented with stars and figures of the zodiac. The lodgings of the queen, of the Duchess d'Alençon, the king's favorite sister, and of other ladies and princes of the of the tents, to the number of three or four hundred, emblazoned with the arms of their owners, were pitched on the banks of a small river outside the city walls."

No less abundant provision had been made for the residence of the English visitors. When King Henry looked from the oriel windows of his fairy palace, he saw before him a scene

of the greatest splendor and the most incessant activity. The green space stretching southward from the castle was covered with tents of all shapes and sizes, many of them brilliant with emblazonry, while from their tops floated rich-colored banners and pennons in profusion. Before each tent stood a sentry, his lance point glittering like a jewel in the rays of the June sun. Here richly-caparisoned horses were prancing, there sumpter mules laden with supplies, and decorated with ribbons and flowers, made their slow way onward. Everywhere was movement, everywhere seemed gladness; merriment ruled supreme, the hilarity being doubtless heightened by frequent visits to gilded fountains, which spouted forth claret and hypocras into silver cups from which all might drink. Never had been seen such a picture in such a place. The splendor of color and decoration of the tents, the shining armor and gorgeous dresses of knights and nobles, the brilliancy of the military display, the glittering and gleaming effect of the pageant as a whole, rendering fitly applicable the name by which this royal festival has since been known, "The Field of the Cloth of Gold."

Two leagues separated Arde and Guisnes, two leagues throughout which the spectacle extended, rich tents and glittering emblazonry occupying the whole space, the canvas habitations of the two nations meeting at the dividing-line between England and France. It was a splendid avenue arranged for the movements of the monarchs of these two great kingdoms.

Such was the scene: what were the ceremonies? They began with a grand procession, headed by Cardinal Wolsey, who, as representative of the king of England, made the first move in the game of ostentation. Before him rode fifty gentlemen, each wearing a great gold chain, while their horses were richly caparisoned with crimson velvet. His ushers, fifty other gentlemen, followed, bearing maces of gold which at one end were as large as a man's head. Next came a dignitary in crimson velvet, proudly carrying the cardinal's cross of gold, adorned with precious stones. Four lackeys, at tired in cloth of gold and with magnificent plumed bonnets in their hands,

followed. Then came the cardinal himself, man and horse splendidly equipped, his strong and resolute face full of the pride and arrogance which marked his character, his bearing that of almost regal ostentation. After him followed an array of bishops and other churchmen, while a hundred archers of the king's guard completed the procession.



HENRY THE EIGHTH.

Reaching Arde, the cardinal dismounted in front of the royal tent, and, in the stateliest manner, did homage in his master's name to Francis, who received him with a courteous display of deference and affection. The next day the representatives of France returned this visit, with equal pomp and parade, and with as kindly a reception from Henry, while the English nobles feasted those of France in their lordliest fashion, so boisterous being their hospitality that they fairly forced their visitors into their tents.

These ceremonial preliminaries passed, the meeting of the two sovereigns came next in order. Henry had crossed the channel to greet Francis; Francis agreed to be the first to cross the frontier to greet him. June 7 was the day fixed. On this day the king of France left his tent amid the roar of cannon, and, followed by a noble retinue in cloth of gold and silver, made his way to the frontier, where was set up a gorgeous pavilion, in whose decorations the heraldries of England and France were commingled. In this handsome tent the two monarchs were to confer.

About the same time Henry set out, riding a powerful stallion, nobly caparisoned. At the border line between English and French territory the two monarchs halted, facing each other, each still on his own soil. Deep silence prevailed in the trains, and every eye was fixed on the two central figures.

They were strongly contrasted. Francis was tall but rather slight in figure, and of delicate features. Henry was stout of form, and massive but handsome of face. He had not yet attained those swollen proportions of face and figure in which history usually depicts him. Their attire was as splendid as art and fashion could produce. Francis was dressed in a mantle of cloth of gold, which fell over a jewelled cassock of gold frieze. He wore a bonnet of ruby velvet enriched with gems, while the front and sleeves of his mantle were splendid with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and "ropes of pearls." He rode a "beautiful horse covered with goldsmith's work."

Henry was dressed in cloth of silver damask, studded with gems, and ribbed with gold cloth, while his horse was gay with trappings of gold, embroidery and mosaic work. Altogether the two men were as splendid in appearance as gold, silver, jewelry, and the costliest tissues could make them,—and as different in personal appearance as two men of the same race could well be.

The occasion was not alone a notable one, it was to some extent a critical one. For centuries the meetings of French and English kings had been hostile; could they now be trusted to be peaceful? Might not the sword of the past be hidden in the olive branch of the present? Suppose the lords of France should seize and hold captive the English king, or the English lords act with like treachery towards the French king, what years of the outpouring of blood and treasure might follow! Apprehensions of such treachery were not wanting. The followers of Francis looked with doubt on the armed men in Henry's escort. The English courtiers in like manner viewed with eyes of question the archers and cavaliers in the train of Francis. Lord Abergavenny ran to King Henry as he was about to mount for the ride to the French frontier.

"Sire," he said, anxiously, "ye be my lord and sovereign; wherefore, above all, I am bound to show you the truth and not be let for none. I have been in the French party, and they be more in number,—double so many as ye be."

"Sire," answered Lord Shrewsbury, "whatever my lord of Abergavenny sayeth, I myself have been there, and the Frenchmen be more in fear of you and your subjects than your subjects be of them. Wherefore, if I were worthy to give counsel, your grace should march forward."

Bluff King Harry had no thought of doing anything else. The doubt which shook the souls of some of his followers, did not enter his.

"So we intend, my lord," he briefly answered, and rode forward.

For a moment the two kings remained face to face, gazing upon each other in silence. Then came a burst of music, and, spurring their horses, they galloped forward, and in an instant were hand in hand. Three times they embraced; then, dismounting, they again embraced, and walked arm in arm towards the pavilion. Brief was the conference within, the constables of France and England keeping strict ward outside, with swords held at salute. Not till the monarchs emerged was the restraint broken. Then Henry and Francis were presented to the dignitaries of the opposite nation, their escorts fraternized, barrels of wine were broached, and as the wine-cups were drained the toast, "Good friends, French and English," was cheerily repeated from both sides. The nobles were emulated in this by their followers, and the good fellowship of the meeting was signalized by abundant revelry, night only ending the merry-making.

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday passed in exchange of courtesies, and in preparations for the tournament which was to be the great event of the occasion. On Sunday afternoon Henry crossed the frontier to do homage to the queen of France, and Francis offered the same tribute to the English queen. Henry rode to Arde in a dress that was heavy with gold and jewels, and was met by the queen and her ladies, whose beauty was adorned with the richest gems and tissues and the rarest laces that the wealth and taste of the time could command. The principal event of the reception was a magnificent dinner, whose service was so rich and its viands so rare and costly that the chronicler confesses himself unequal to the task of describing it. Music, song, and dancing filled up the intervals between the courses, and all went merrily until five o'clock, when Henry took his leave, entertaining the ladies as he did so with an exhibition of his horsemanship, he making his steed to "bound and curvet as valiantly as man could do." On his road home he met Francis, returning from a like reception by the queen of England. "What cheer?" asked the two kings as they cordially embraced, with such a show of amity that one might have supposed them brothers born.

The next day was that set for the opening of the tournament. This was to be held in a park on the high ground between Arde and Guisnes. On each aide of the enclosed space long galleries, hung with tapestry, were erected for the spectators, a specially adorned box being prepared for the two queens. Triumphal arches marked each entrance to the lists, at which stood French and English archers on guard. At the foot of the lists was erected the "tree of noblesse," on which were to be hung the shields of those about to engage in combat. It bore "the noble thorn [the sign of Henry] entwined with raspberry" [the sign of Francis]; around its trunk was wound cloth of gold and green damask; its leaves were formed of green silk, and the fruit that hung from its limb was made of silver and Venetian gold.

Henry and Francis, each supported by some eighteen of their noblest subjects, designed to hold the lists against all comers, it being, however, strictly enjoined that sharp-pointed weapons should not be used, lest serious accidents, as in times past, might take place. Various other rules were made, of which we shall only name that which required the challenger who was worsted in any combat to give "a gold token to the lady in whose cause the comer fights."

Shall we tell the tale of this show of mimic war? Splendid it was, and, unlike the tournaments of an older date, harmless. The lists were nine hundred feet long and three hundred and twenty broad, the galleries bordering them being magnificent with their hosts of richly-attired lords and ladies and the vari-colored dresses of the archers and others of lesser blood. For two days, Monday and Thursday, Henry and Francis held the lists. In this sport Henry displayed the skill and prowess of a true warrior. Francis could scarcely wield the swords which his brother king swept in circles around his head. When he spurred, with couched lance, upon an antagonist, his ease and grace aroused the plaudits of the spectators, which became enthusiastic as saddle after saddle was emptied by the vigor of his thrust.

Next to Henry in strength and prowess was Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who vied with the king for the honors

of the field. "The king of England and Suffolk did marvels," says the chronicler. On the days when the monarchs did not appear in the field lesser knights strove for the honors of the joust, wrestling-matches helped to amuse the multitude of spectators, and the antics of mummers wound up the sports of the day. Only once did Henry and Francis come into friendly contest. This was in a wrestling-match, from which the French king, to the surprise of the spectators, carried off the honors. By a clever twist of the wrestler's art, he managed to throw his burly brother king. Henry's face was red with the hot Tudor blood when he rose, his temper had been lost in his fall, and there was anger in the tone in which he demanded a renewal of the contest. But Francis was too wise to fan a triumph into a quarrel, and by mild words succeeded in smoothing the frown from Henry's brow.

For some two weeks these entertainments lasted, the genial June sun shining auspiciously upon the lists. From the galleries shone two minor luminaries, the queens of England and France, who were always present, "with their ladies richly dressed in jewels, and with many chariots, litters, and hackneys covered with cloth of gold and silver, and emblazoned with their arms." They occupied a glazed gallery hung with tapestry, where they were often seen in conversation, a pleasure not so readily enjoyed by their ladies in waiting, most of whom had to do their talking through the vexatious aid of an interpreter.

During most of the time through which the tournament extended the distrust of treachery on one side or the other continued. Francis never entered the English pale unless Henry was on French soil. Henry was similarly distrustful. Or, rather, the distrust lay in the advisers of the monarchs, and as the days went on grew somewhat offensive. Francis was the first to break it, and to show his confidence in the good faith, of his brother monarch. One morning early he crossed the frontier and entered the palace at Guisnes while Henry was still in bed, or, as some say, was at breakfast. To the guards at the gate he playfully said, "Surrender your arms, you are all my prisoners; and now conduct me to my brother of England." He accosted Henry with

the utmost cordiality, embracing him and saying, in a merry tone,—

"Here you see I am your prisoner."

"My brother," cried Henry, with the warmest pleasure, "you have played me the most agreeable trick in the world, and have showed me the full confidence I may place in you. I surrender myself your prisoner from this moment."

Costly presents passed between the two monarchs, and from that moment all restraint was at an end. Each rode to see the other when he chose, their attendants mingled with the same freedom and confidence, and during the whole time not a quarrel, or even a dispute, arose between the sons of England and France. In the lists they used spear and sword with freedom, but out of them they were the warmest of friends.

On Sunday, June 24, the tournament closed with a solemn mass sung by Wolsey, who was assisted by the ecclesiastics of the two lands. When the gospels were presented to the two kings to kiss, there was a friendly contest as to who should precede. And at the *Agnus Dei*, when the *Pax* was presented to the two queens, a like contest arose, which ended in their kissing each other in lieu of the sacred emblem.

At the close of the services a showy piece of fireworks attracted the attention of the spectators. "There appeared in the air from Arde a great artificial salamander or dragon, four fathoms long and full of fire; many were frightened, thinking it a comet or some monster, as they could see nothing to which it was attached; it passed right over the chapel to Guisnes as fast as a footman can go, and as high as a bolt from a cross-bow." A splendid banquet followed, which concluded the festivities of the "Field of the Cloth of Gold." The two kings entered the lists again, but now only to exchange farewells. Henry made his way to Calais; Francis returned to Abbeyville: the great occasion was at an end.

What was its result? Amity between the two nations; a century of peace and friendship? Not so. In a month Henry had secretly allied himself to Charles the Fifth against Francis of France. In five years was fought the battle of Pavia, between France and the Emperor Charles, in which Francis, after showing great valor on the field, was taken prisoner. "All is lost, except honor," he wrote. Such was the sequel of the "Field of the Cloth of Gold."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE STORY OF ARABELLA STUART

Of royal blood was the lady here named, near to the English throne. Too near, as it proved, for her own comfort and happiness, for her life was distracted by the fears of those that filled it. Her story, in consequence, became one of the romances of English history.

"The Lady Arabella," as she was called, was nearly related to Queen Elizabeth, and became an object of jealous persecution by that royal lady. The great Elizabeth had in her disposition something of the dog in the manger. She would not marry herself, and thus provide for the succession to the throne, and she was determined that the fair Arabella should not perform this neglected duty. Hence Arabella's misery.

The first thing we hear of this unfortunate scion of royal blood concerns a marriage. The whole story of her life, in fact, is concerned with marriage, and its fatal ending was the result of marriage. Never had a woman been more sought in marriage; never more hindered; her life was a tragedy of marriage.

Her earlier story may be briefly given. James VI. of Scotland, cousin of the Lady Arabella, chose as a husband for her another cousin, Lord Esme Stuart, Duke of Lennox, his proposed heir. The match was a desirable one, but Queen Elizabeth forbade the banns. She threw the lady into a prison, and defied King James when he demanded her delivery, not hesitating to speak with contempt of her brother monarch.

The next to choose a husband for Arabella was the pope, who would have been delighted to provide a Catholic for the succession to the English throne. A prince of the house of Savoy was the choice of his holiness. The Duke of Parma was married, and his brother was a cardinal, and therefore unmarriageable, but

the pope had the power to overcome the difficulty which this created. He secularized the churchman, and made him an eligible aspirant for the lady's hand. But, as may well be supposed, Elizabeth decisively vetoed this chimerical plan.

To escape from the plots of scheming politicians, the Lady Arabella now took the task in her own hand, proposing to marry a son of the Earl of Northumberland. Unhappily, Elizabeth would none of it. To her jealous fancy an English earl was more dangerous than a Scotch duke. Thus went on this extraordinary business till Elizabeth died, and King James of Scotland, whom she had despised, became her successor on the throne, she having paved the way to his succession by her neglect to provide an heir for it herself, and her insensate determination to prevent Arabella Stuart from doing so.

James was now king. He had chosen a husband for his cousin Arabella before. It was a natural presumption that he would not object to her marriage now. But if Elizabeth was jealous, he was suspicious. A foolish plot was made by some unimportant individuals to get rid of the Scottish king and place Arabella on the English throne. A letter to this effect was sent to the lady. She laughed at it, and sent it to the king, who, probably, did not consider it a laughing-matter.

This was in 1603. In 1604 the king of Poland is said to have asked for the lady's hand in marriage. Count Maurice, Duke of Guildres, was also spoken of as a suitable match. But James had grown as obdurate as Elizabeth,—and with as little sense and reason. The lady might enjoy life in single blessedness as she pleased, but marry she should not. "Thus far to the Lady Arabella crowns and husbands were like a fairy banquet seen at moonlight opening on her sight, impalpable, and vanishing at the moment of approach."

Several years now passed, in which the lady lived as a dependant on the king's bounty, and in which, so far as we know, no thoughts of marriage were entertained. At least, no projects of marriage were made public, whatever may have been the lady's

secret thoughts and wishes. Then came the romantic event of her life,—a marriage, and its striking consequences. It is this event which has made her name remembered in the romance of history.

Christmas of 1608 had passed, and the Lady Arabella was still unmarried; the English crown had not tottered to its fall through the entrance of this fair maiden into the bonds of matrimony. The year 1609 began, and terror seized the English court; this insatiable woman was reaching out for another husband! This time the favored swain was Mr. William Seymour, the second son of Lord Beauchamp, and grandson of the earl of Hertford. He was a man of admired character, a studious scholar in times of peace, an ardent soldier in times of war. He and Arabella had known each other from childhood.

In February the daring rebellion of the Lady Arabella became known, and sent its shaft of terror to the heart of King James. The woman was at it again, wanting to marry; she must be dealt with. She and Seymour were summoned before the privy council and sharply questioned. Seymour was harshly censured. How dared he presume to seek an alliance with one of royal blood, he was asked, in blind disregard of the fact that royal blood ran in his own veins.

He showed fitting humility before the council, pleading that he meant no offence. Thus he told the dignified councillors the story of his wooing,— "I boldly intruded myself into her ladyship's chamber in this court on Candlemas-day last, at which time I imparted my desire unto her, which was entertained, but with this caution on either part, that both of us resolved not to proceed to any final conclusion without his Majesty's most gracious favor first obtained. And this was our first meeting. After this we had a second meeting at Brigg's house in Fleet Street, and then a third at Mr. Baynton's; at both of which we had the like conference and resolution as before."

Neither of them would think of marrying without "his Majesty's most gracious favor," they declared. This favor could

not be granted. The safety of the English crown had to be considered. The lovers were admonished by the privy council and dismissed.

But love laughs at privy councils, as well as at locksmiths. This time the Lady Arabella was not to be hindered. She and Seymour were secretly married, without regard to "his Majesty's most gracious favor," and enjoyed a short period of connubial bliss in defiance of king and council.

Their offence was not discovered till July of the following year. It roused a small convulsion in court circles. The king had been defied. The culprits must be punished. The lovers—for they were still lovers—were separated, Seymour being sent to the Tower, for "his contempt in marrying a lady of the royal family without the king's leave;" the lady being confined at the house of Sir Thomas Parry, at Lambeth.

Their confinement was not rigorous. The lady was allowed to walk in the garden. The gentleman was given the freedom of the Tower. Letters seem to have passed between them. From one of these ancient love-letters we may quote the affectionate conclusion. Seymour had taken cold. Arabella writes:

"I do assure you that nothing the State can do with me can trouble me so much as this news of your being ill doth; and, you see, when I am troubled I trouble you with too tedious kindness, for so I think you will account so long a letter, yourself not having written to me this good while to much as how you do. But, sweet sir, I speak not of this to trouble you with writing but when you please. Be well, and I shall account myself happy in being

"Your faithful, loving wife.

ARB. S.

They wrote too much, it seems. Their correspondence was discovered. Trouble ensued. The king determined to place the lady in closer confinement under the bishop of Durham.

Arabella was in despair when this news was brought her. She grew so ill from her depression of spirits that she could only travel to her new place of detention in a litter and under the care of a physician. On reaching Highgate she had become unfit to proceed, her pulse weak, her countenance pale and wan. The doctor left her there and returned to town, where he reported to the king that the lady was too sick to travel.

"She shall proceed to Durham if I am king," answered James, with his usual weak headed obstinacy.

"I make no doubt of her obedience," answered the doctor.

"Obedience is what I require," replied the king. "That given, I will do more for her than she expects."

He consented, in the end, that she should remain a month at Highgate, under confinement, at the end of which time she should proceed to Durham. The month passed. She wrote a letter to the king which procured her a second month's respite. But that time, too, passed on, and the day fixed for her further journey approached.

The lady now showed none of the wild grief which she had at first displayed. She was resigned to her fate, she said, and manifested a tender sorrow which won the hearts of her keepers, who could not but sympathize with a high-born lady thus persecuted for what was assuredly no crime, if even a fault.

At heart, however, she was by no means so tranquil as she seemed. Her communications with Seymour had secretly continued, and the two had planned a wildly-romantic project of escape, of which this seeming resignation was but part. The day preceding that fixed for her departure arrived. The lady had persuaded an attendant to aid her in paying a last visit to her husband, whom she declared she must see before going to her distant prison. She would return at a fixed hour. The attendant could wait for her at an appointed place.

This credulous servant, led astray, doubtless, by sympathy with the loving couple, not only consented to the request, but assisted the lady in assuming an elaborate disguise.



ROTTEN ROW. LONDON.

"She drew," we are told, "a pair of large French-fashioned hose or trousers over her petticoats, put on a man's doublet or coat, a peruke such as men wore, whose long locks covered her own ringlets, a black hat, a black coat, russet boots with red tops, and a rapier by her side. Thus accoutred, the Lady Arabella stole out with a gentleman about three o'clock in the afternoon. She had only proceeded a mile and a half when they stopped at a post-inn, where one of her confederates was waiting with horses; yet she was so sick and faint that the hostler who held her stirrup observed that the gentleman could hardly hold out to London."

But the "gentleman" grew stronger as she proceeded. The exercise of riding gave her new spirit. Her pale face grew rosy; her strength increased; by six o'clock she reached Blackwall, where a boat and servants were waiting. The plot had been well devised and all the necessary preparations made.

The boatmen were bidden to row to Woolwich. This point reached, they were asked to proceed to Gravesend. Then they rowed on to Tilbury. By this time they were fatigued, and landed for rest and refreshment. But the desired goal had not yet been reached, and an offer of higher pay induced them to push on to Lee.

Here the, fugitive lady rested till daybreak. The light of morn discovered a French vessel at anchor off the harbor, which was quickly boarded. It had been provided for the escape of the lovers. But Seymour, who had planned to escape from the Tower and meet her here, had not arrived. Arabella was desirous that the vessel should continue at anchor until he appeared. If he should fail to come she did not care to proceed. The land that held her lord was the land in which she wished to dwell, even if they should be parted by fate and forced to live asunder.

This view did not please those who were aiding her escape. They would be pursued, and might be overtaken. Delay was dangerous. In disregard of her wishes, they ordered the captain to put to sea. As events turned out, their haste proved unfortunate for the fair fugitive, and the "cause of woes unnumbered" to the loving pair.

Leaving her to her journey, we must return to the adventures of Seymour. Prisoner at large, as he was, in the Tower, escape proved not difficult. A cart had entered the enclosure to bring wood to his apartment. On its departure he followed it through the gates, unobserved by the warder. His servant was left behind, with orders to keep all visitors from the room, on pretence that his master was laid up with a raging toothache.

Reaching the river, the escaped prisoner found a man in his confidence in waiting with a boat. He was rowed down the stream to Lee, where he expected to find his Arabella in waiting. She was not there, but in the distance was a vessel which he fancied might have her on board. He hired a fisherman to take him out. Hailing the vessel, he inquired its name, and to his grief

learned that it was not the French ship which had been hired for the lovers' flight. Fate had separated them. Filled with despair, he took passage on a vessel from Newcastle, whose captain was induced, for a fair consideration, to alter his course. In due time he landed in Flanders, free, but alone. He was never to set eyes on Arabella Stuart again.

Meanwhile, the escape of the lady from Highgate had become known, and had aroused almost as much alarm as if some frightful calamity had overtaken the State. Confusion and alarm pervaded the court. The Gunpowder Plot itself hardly shook up the gray heads of King James's cabinet more than did the flight of this pair of parted doves. The wind seemed to waft peril. The minutes seemed fraught with threats. Couriers were despatched in all haste to the neighboring seaports, and hurry everywhere prevailed.

A messenger was sent to the Tower, bidding the lieutenant to guard Seymour with double vigilance. To the surprise of the worthy lieutenant, he discovered that Seymour was not there to be guarded. The bird had flown. Word of this threw King James into a ludicrous state of terror. He wished to issue a vindictive proclamation, full of hot fulminations, and could scarcely be persuaded by his minister to tone down his foolish utterances. The revised edict was sent off with as much speed as if an enemy's fleet were in the offing, the courier being urged to his utmost despatch, the postmasters aroused to activity by the stirring superscription, "Haste, haste, post haste! Haste for your life, your life!" One might have thought that a new Norman invasion was threatening the coast, instead of a pair of new-married lovers flying to finish their honey-moon in peace and freedom abroad.

When news of what had happened reached the family of the Seymours, it threw them into a state of alarm not less than that of the king. They knew what it meant to offend the crown. The progenitor of the family, the Duke of Somerset, had lost his head through some offence to a king, and his descendants had no ambition to be similarly curtailed of their natural proportions.

Francis Seymour wrote to his uncle, the Earl of Hertford, then distant from London, telling the story of the flight of his brother and the lady. This letter still exists, and its appearance indicates the terror into which it threw the earl. It reached him at midnight. With it came a summons to attend the privy council. He read it apparently by the light of a taper, and with such agitation that the sheet caught fire. The scorched letter still exists, and is burnt through at the most critical part of its story. The poor old earl learned enough to double his terror, and lost the section that would have alleviated it. He hastened up to London in a state of doubt and fear, not knowing but that he was about to be indicted for high treason.

Meanwhile, what had become of the disconsolate Lady Arabella? The poor bride found herself alone upon the seas, mourning for her lost Seymour, imploring her attendants to delay, straining her eyes in hopes of seeing some boat bearing to her him she so dearly loved. It was in vain. No Seymour appeared. And the delay in her flight proved fatal. The French ship which bore her was overtaken in Calais roads by one of the king's vessels which had been so hastily despatched in pursuit, and the lady was taken on board and brought back, protesting that she cared not what became of her if her dear Seymour should only escape.

The story ends mournfully. The sad-hearted bride was consigned to an imprisonment that preyed heavily upon her. Never very strong, her sorrow and depression of spirits reduced her powers, while, with the hope that she might die the sooner, she refused the aid of physicians. Grief, despair, intense emotion, in time impaired her reason, and at the end of four years of prison life she died, her mind having died before. Rarely has a simple and innocent marriage produced such sad results through the uncalled-for jealousy of kings. The sad romance of the poor Lady Arabella's life was due to the fact that she had an unreasonable woman to deal with in Elizabeth, and a suspicious fool in James. Sound common-sense must say that neither had

aught to gain from this persecution of the poor lady, who they were so obstinately determined should end life a maid.

Seymour spent some years abroad, and then was permitted to return to England. His wife was dead; the king had naught to fear. He lived through three successive reigns, distinguishing himself by his loyalty to James and his two successors, and to the day of his death retaining his warm affection for his first love. He married again, and to the daughter born from this match he gave the name of Arabella Stuart, in token of his undying attachment to the lady of his life's romance.

CHAPTER XIX

LOVE'S KNIGHT ERRANT

On the 18th of February, 1623, two young men, Tom and John Smith by name, plainly dressed and attended by one companion in the attire of an upper servant, rode to the ferry at Gravesend, on the Thames. They wore heavy beards, which did not look altogether natural, and had pulled their hats well down over their foreheads, as if to hide their faces from prying eyes. They seemed a cross between disguised highwaymen and disguised noblemen.

The ancient ferryman looked at them with some suspicion as they entered his boat, asking himself, "What lark is afoot with these young bloods? There's mischief lurking under those beards."

His suspicions were redoubled when his passengers, in arbitrary tones, bade him put them ashore below the town, instead of at the usual landing place. And he became sure that they were great folks bent on mischief when, on landing, one of them handed him a gold-piece for his fare, and rode away without asking for change.

"Aha! my brisk lads, I have you now," he said, with a chuckle. "There's a duel afoot. Those two youngsters are off for the other side of the Channel, to let out some angry blood, and the other goes along as second or surgeon. It's very neat, but the law says nay; and I know my duty. I am not to be bought off with a piece of gold."

Pocketing his golden fare, he hastened to the nearest magistrate, and told his story and his suspicion. The magistrate agreed with him, and at once despatched a post-boy to Rochester, with orders to have the doubtful travellers stopped. Away rode the messenger at haste, on one of the freshest horses

to be found in Gravesend stables. But his steed was no match for the thoroughbreds of the suspected wayfarers, and they had left the ancient town of Rochester in the rear long before he reached its skirts.

Rochester passed, they rode briskly onward, conversing with the gay freedom of frolicsome youth; when, much to their alarm as it seemed, they saw in the road before them a stately train. It consisted of a carriage that appeared royal in its decorations and in the glittering trappings of its horses, beside which rode two men dressed like noblemen, following whom came a goodly retinue of attendants.

The young wayfarers seemed to recognize the travellers, and drew up to a quick halt, as if in alarm.

"Lewknor and Mainwaring, by all that's unlucky!" said the one known as Tom Smith.

"And a carriage-load of Spanish high mightiness between them; for that's the ambassador on his way to court," answered John Smith. "It's all up with our escapade if they get their eyes on us. We must bolt."

"How and whither?"

"Over the hedge and far away."

Spurring their horses, they broke through the low hedge that bordered the roadside, and galloped at a rapid pace across the fields beyond. The approaching party viewed this movement with lively suspicion.

"Who can they be?" queried Sir Lewis Lewknor, one of the noblemen.

His companion, who was no less a personage than Sir Henry Mainwaring, lieutenant of Dover Castle, looked questioningly after the fugitives.

"They are well mounted and have the start on us. We cannot overtake them," he muttered.

"You know them, then?" asked Lewknor.

"I have my doubt that two of them are the young Barneveltdts, who have just tried to murder the Prince of Orange.

They must be stopped and questioned."

He turned and bade one of his followers to ride back with all speed to Canterbury, and bid the magistrates to detain three suspicious travellers, who would soon reach that town. This done, the train moved on, Mainwaring satisfied that he had checked the runaways, whoever they were.

The Smiths and their attendant reached Canterbury in good time, but this time they were outridden. Mainwaring's messenger had got in before them, and the young adventurers found themselves stopped by a mounted guard, with the unwelcome tidings that his honor, the mayor, would like to see them.

Being brought before his honor, they blustered a little, talked in big tones of the rights of Englishmen, and asked angrily who had dared order their detention. They found master mayor cool and decided.

"Gentlemen, you will stay here till I know better who you are," he said. "Sir Henry Mainwaring has ordered you to be stopped, and he best knows why. Nor do I fancy he has gone amiss, for your names of Tom and John Smith fit you about as well as your beards."

At these words, the one that claimed the name of John Smith burst into a hearty laugh. Seizing his beard, he gave it a slight jerk, and it came off in his hand. The mayor started in surprise. The face before him was one that he very well knew.

"The Marquis of Buckingham!" he exclaimed.

"The same, at your service," said Buckingham, still laughing. "Mainwaring takes me for other than I am. Likely enough he deems me a runaway road agent. You will scarcely

stop the lord admiral, going in disguise to Dover to make a secret inspection of the fleet?"

"Why, that certainly changes the case," said the mayor. "But who is your companion?" he continued, in a low tone, looking askance at the other.

"A young gallant of the court, who keeps me company," said Buckingham, carelessly.

"The road is free before you, gentlemen," said the mayor, graciously. "I will answer to Mainwaring."

He turned and bade his guards to deliver their horses to the travellers. But his eyes followed them with a peculiar twinkle as they left the room.

"A young gallant of the court!" he muttered. "I have seen that gallant before. Well, well, what mad frolic is afoot? Thank the stars, I am not bound, by virtue of my office, to know him."

The party reached Dover without further adventure. But the inspection of the fleet was evidently an invention for the benefit of the mayor. Instead of troubling themselves about the fleet, they entered a vessel that seemed awaiting them, and on whose deck they were joined by two companions. In a very short time they were out of harbor and off with a fresh wind across the Channel. Mainwaring had been wrong,—was the ferryman right?—was a duel the purpose of this flight in disguise?

No; the travellers made no halt at Boulogne, the favorite dueling-ground of English hot-bloods, but pushed off in haste for Montreuil, and thence rode straight to Paris, which they reached after a two-days' journey.

It seemed an odd freak, this ride in disguise for the mere purpose of a visit to Paris. But there was nothing to indicate that the two young men had any other object as they strolled carelessly during the next day about the French capital, known to none there, and enjoying themselves like school-boys on a holiday.

Among the sights which they managed to see were the king, Louis XIII., and his royal mother, Marie de Medicis. That evening a mask was to be rehearsed at the palace, in which the queen and the Princess Henrietta Maria were to take part. On the plea of being strangers in Paris, the two young Englishmen managed to obtain admittance to this royal merrymaking, which they highly enjoyed. As to what they saw, we have a partial record in a subsequent letter from one of them.

"There danced," says this epistle, "the queen and madame, with as many as made up nineteen fair dancing ladies; amongst which the queen is the handsomest, which hath wrought in me a greater desire to see her sister."

This sister was then at Madrid, for the queen of France was a daughter of Philip III. of Spain. And, as if Spain was the true destination of the travellers, and to see the French queen's sister their object, at the early hour of three the next morning they were up and on horseback, riding out of Paris on the road to Bayonne. Away they went, pressing onward at speed, he whom we as yet know only as Tom Smith taking the lead, and pushing forward with such youthful eagerness that even the seasoned Buckingham looked the worse for wear before they reached the borders of Spain.

Who was this eager errant knight? All London by this time knew, and it is time that we should learn. Indeed, while the youthful wayfarers were speeding away on their mad and merry ride, the privy councillors of England were on their knees before King James, half beside themselves with apprehension, saying that Prince Charles had disappeared, that the rumor was that he had gone to Spain, and begging to know if this wild rumor were true.

"There is no doubt of it," said the king. "But what of that? His father, his grandfather, and his great grandfather all went into foreign countries to fetch home their wives,—why not the prince, my son?"

"England may learn why," was the answer of the alarmed councillors, and after them of the disturbed Country.

"The king of Spain is not to be trusted with such a royal morsel. Suppose he seizes the heir to England's throne, and holds him as hostage! The boy is mad, and the king in his dotage to permit so wild a thing." Such was the scope of general comment on the prince's escapade.

While England fumed, and King James had begun to fret in chorus with the country, his "sweet boys and dear venturous knights, worthy to be put in a new romanço," as he had remarked on first learning of their flight, were making their way at utmost horse-speed across France. A few miles beyond Bayonne they met a messenger from the Earl of Bristol, ambassador at Madrid, bearing despatches to England. They stopped him, opened his papers, and sought to read them, but found the bulk of them written in a cipher beyond their powers to solve. Baffled in this, they bade Gresley, the messenger, to return with them as far as Iran, where they wished him to bear to the king a letter written on Spanish soil.

No great distance farther brought them to the small river Bidassoa, the Rubicon of their journey. It formed the boundary between France and Spain. On reaching its southern bank they stood on the soil of the land of the dons, and the truant prince danced for joy, filled with delight at the success of his runaway prank. Gresley afterwards reported in England that Buckingham looked worn from his long ride, but that he had never seen Prince Charles so merry.

Onward through this new kingdom went the youthful scapegraces, over the hills and plains of Spain, their hearts beating with merry music,—Buckingham gay from his native spirit of adventure, Charles eager to see in knight-errant fashion the charming infanta of Spain, of whom he had seen, as yet, only the "counterfeit presentment," and a view of whom in person was the real object of his journey. So ardent were the two young men that they far outtrode their companions, and at eight o'clock

in the evening of March 7, seventeen days after they had left Buckingham's villa at Newhall, the truant pair were knocking briskly at the door of the Earl of Bristol at Madrid.

Wilder and more perilous escapade had rarely been adventured. The king had let them go with fear and trembling. Weak-willed monarch as he was, he could not resist Buckingham's persuasions, though he dreaded the result. The uncertain temper of Philip of Spain was well-known, the preliminaries of the marriage which had been designed between Charles and the infanta were far from settled, the political relations between England and Spain were not of the most pacific, and it was within the bounds of probability that Philip might seize and hold the heir of England. It would give him a vast advantage over the sister realm, and profit had been known to outweigh honor in the minds of potentates.

Heedless of all this, sure that his appearance would dispel the clouds that hung over the marriage compact and shed the sunshine of peace and union over the two kingdoms, giddy with the hopefulness of youth, and infected with Buckingham's love of gallantry and adventure, Charles reached Madrid without a thought of peril, wild to see the infanta in his new rôle of knight-errant, and to decide for himself whether the beauty and accomplishments for which she was famed were as patent to his eye as to the voice of common report, and such as made her worthy the love of a prince of high degree.

Such was the mood and such the hopes with which the romantic prince knocked at Lord Bristol's door. But such was not the feeling with which the practised diplomat received his visitors. He saw at a glance the lake of possible mischief before him; yet he was versed in the art of keeping his countenance serene, and received his guests as cordially as if they had called on him in his London mansion.

Bristol would have kept the coming of the prince to himself, if it had been possible. But the utmost he could hope was to keep the secret for that night, and even in this he failed.

Count Gondomar, a Spanish diplomat, called on him, saw his visitors, and while affecting ignorance was not for an instant deceived. On leaving Bristol's house he at once hurried to the royal palace, and, filled with his weighty tidings, burst upon Count Olivares, the kings' favorite, at supper. Count Olivares, the Godomar's face was beaming. Olivares, looked at him in surprise.

"What brings you so late?" he asked. "One would think that you had got the king of England in Madrid."

"If I have not got the king," replied Gondomar, "at least I have got the prince. You cannot ask a rarer prize."

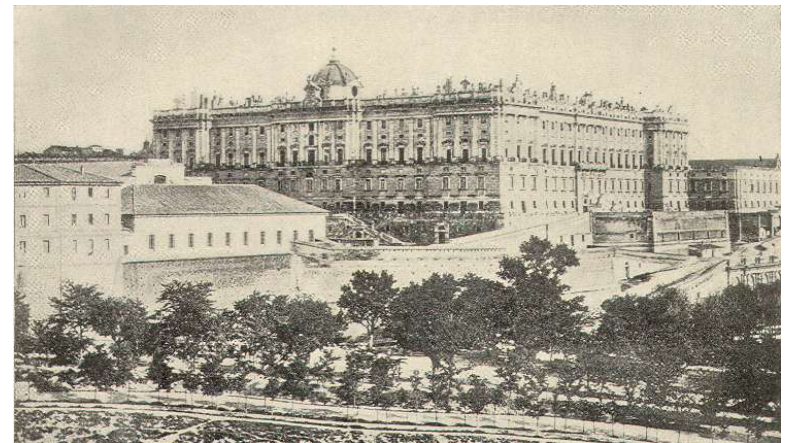
Olivares sat stupefied at the astounding news. As soon as he could find words he congratulated Gondomar on his important tiding sand quickly hastened to find the king, who was in his bed-chamber, and whom he astonished with the tale he had to tell.

The monarch and his astute minister earnestly discussed the subject in all its bearings. On one point they felt sure. The coming of Charles to Spain was evidence to them that he intended to change his religion and embrace the Catholic faith. He would never have ventured otherwise. But, to "make assurance doubly sure," Philip turned to a crucifix which stood at the head of his bed, and swore on it that the coming of the Prince of Wales should not induce him to take a step in the marriage not favored by the pope, even if it should involve the loss of his kingdom.

"As to what is temporal and mine," he said, to Olivares, "see that all his wishes are gratified, in consideration of the obligation under which he has placed us by coming here."

Meanwhile, Bristol spent the night in the false belief that the secret was still his own. He summoned Gondomar in the morning, told him, with a show of conferring a favor, of what had occurred, and bade him to tell Olivares that Buckingham had arrived, but to say nothing about the prince. That Gondomar

consented need not be said. He had already told all there was to tell. In the afternoon Buckingham and Olivares had a brief interview in the gardens of the palace. After nightfall the English marquis had the honor of kissing the hand of his Catholic Majesty, Philip IV. of Spain. He told the king of the arrival of Prince Charles, much to the seeming surprise of the monarch, who had learned the art of keeping his countenance.



THE ROYAL PALACE, MADRID.

During the next day a mysterious silence was preserved concerning the great event, through certain unusual proceedings took place. Philip, with the queen, his sister, the infanta, and his two brothers, drove backward and forward through the streets of Madrid. In another carriage the Prince of Wales made a similarly stately progress through the same streets, the purpose being to yield him a passing glimpse of his betrothed and the royal family. The streets were thronged, all eyes were fixed on the coach containing the strangers, yet silence reigned. The rumor had spread far and wide who those strangers were, but it was a secret, and no one must show that the secret was afoot. Yet, though their voices were silent, their hearts were full of triumph in the belief that the future king of England had come with the purpose of embracing the national faith of Spain.

At the end of the procession Olivares joined the prince and told him that his royal master was dying to speak with him, and could scarcely restrain himself. An interview was quickly arranged, its locality to be the coach of the king. Meanwhile, Olivares sought Buckingham.

"Let us despatch this matter out of hand," he said, "and strike it up without the pope."

"Very well," answered Buckingham; "but how is it to be done?"

"The means are very easy," said Olivares, lightly. "It is but the conversion of the prince, which we cannot conceive but his highness intended when he resolved upon this journey."

This belief was a very natural one. The fact of Charles being a Protestant had been the stumbling block in the way of the match. A dispensation for the marriage of a Catholic princess with the Protestant prince of England had been asked from the pope, but had not yet been given. Charles had come to Madrid with the empty hope that his presence would cut the knot of this difficulty, and win him the princess out of hand. The authorities and the people, on the contrary, fancied that nothing less than an intention to turn Catholic could have brought him to Spain. As for the infanta herself, she was an ardent Catholic, and bitterly opposed to being united in marriage to a heretic prince. Such was the state of affairs that prevailed. The easy pathway out of the difficulty which the hopeful prince had devised was likely to prove not quite free from thorns.

The days passed on. Buckingham declared to Olivares that Charles had no thought of becoming a Catholic. Charles avoided the subject, and talked only of his love. The Spanish ministers blamed Bristol for his indecision, and had rooms prepared for the prince in the royal palace. Charles willingly accepted them, and on the 16th of March rode through the streets of Madrid, on the right hand of the king, to his new abode.

The people were now permitted to applaud to their hearts' desire, as no further pretence of a secret existed. Glad acclamations attended the progress of the royal cortege. The people shouted with joy, and all, high and low, sang a song composed for the occasion by Lope de Vega, the famous dramatist, which told how Charles had come, under the guidance of love, to the Spanish sky to see his star Maria.

"Carlos Estuardo soy
Que, siendo amor mi guia,
Al cielo d'España voy
Por ver mi estrella Maria."

The palace was decorated with all its ancient splendor, the streets everywhere showed signs of the public joy, and, as a special mark of royal clemency, all prisoners, except those held for heinous crimes, were set at liberty, among them numerous English galley-slaves, who had been captured in pirate vessels preying upon Spanish commerce.

Yet all this merrymaking and clemency, and all the negotiations which proceeded in the precincts of the palace, did not expedite the question at issue. Charles had no thought of becoming a Catholic. Philip had little thought of permitting a marriage under any other conditions. The infanta hated the idea of the sacrifice, as she considered it. The authorities at Rome refused the dispensation. The wheels of the whole business seemed firmly blocked.

Meanwhile, Charles had seen the infanta again, somewhat more closely than in a passing glance from a carriage, and though no words had passed between them, her charms of face strongly attracted his susceptible heart. He was convinced that he deeply loved her, and he ardently pressed for a closer interview. This Spanish etiquette hindered, and it was not until April 7, Easter Day, that a personal interview was granted the ardent lover. On that day the king, accompanied by a train of grandees, led the English prince to the apartments of the queen, who sat in state, with the infanta by her side.

Greeting the queen with proper respect, Charles turned to address the lady of his love. A few ceremonial words had been set down for him to utter, but his English heart broke the bonds of Spanish etiquette, and, forgetting everything but his passion, he began to address the princess in ardent words of his own choice. He had not gone far before there was a sensation. The persons present began to whisper. The queen looked with angry eyes on the presuming lover. The infanta was evidently annoyed. Charles hesitated and stopped short. Something seemed to have gone wrong. The infanta answered his eager words with a few cold, common-place sentences; a sense of constraint and uneasiness appeared to haunt the apartment; the interview was at an end. English ideas of love-making had proved much too unconventional for a Spanish court.

From that day forward the affair dragged on with infinite deliberation, the passion of the prince growing stronger, the aversion of the infanta seemingly increasing, the purpose of the Spanish court to mould the ardent lover to its own ends appearing more decided.

While Charles showed his native disposition by prevarication, Buckingham showed his by an impatience that soon led to anger and insolence. The wearisome slowness of the negotiations ill suited his hasty and arbitrary temper, he quarrelled with members of the State Council, and, in an interview between the prince and the friars, he grew so incensed at the demands made that, in disregard of all the decencies of etiquette, he sprang from his seat, expressed his contempt for the ecclesiastics by insulting gestures, and ended by flinging his hat on the ground and stamping on it. That conference came to a sudden end.

As the stay of the prince in Madrid now seemed likely to be protracted, attendants were sent him from England that he might keep up some show of state. But the Spanish court did not want them, and contrived to make their stay so unpleasant and their accommodations so poor, that Charles soon packed the most of them off home again.

"I am glad to get away," said one of these, James Eliot by name, to the prince; "and hope that your Highness will soon leave this pestiferous Spain. It is a dangerous place to alter a man and turn him. I myself in a short time have perceived my own weakness, and am almost turned."

"What motive had you?" asked Charles. "What have you seen that should turn you?"

"Marry," replied Eliot, "when I was in England, I turned the whole Bible over to find Purgatory, and because I could not find it there I believed there was none. But now that I have come to Spain, I have found it here, and that your Highness is in it; whence that you may be released, we, your Highness's servants, who are going to Paradise, will offer unto God our utmost devotions."

A purgatory it was,—a purgatory lightened for Charles by love, he playing the rôle assigned by Dante to Paolo, though the infanta was little inclined to imitate Francesca da Rimini. Buckingham fumed and fretted, was insolent to the Spanish Ministers, and sought as earnestly to get Charles out of Madrid as he had done to get him there, and less successfully. But the love-stricken prince had become impracticable. His fancy deepened as the days passed by. Such was the ardor of his passion, that on one day in May he broke headlong through the rigid wall of Spanish etiquette, by leaping into the garden in which the lady of his love was walking, and addressing her in words of passion. The startled girl shrieked and fled, and Charles was with difficulty hindered from following her.

Only one end could come of all this. Spain and the pope had the game in their own hands. Charles had fairly given himself over to them, and his ardent passion for the lady weakened all his powers of resistance. King James was a slave to his son, and incapable of refusing him anything. The end of it all was that the English king agreed that all persecution of Catholics in England should come to an end, without a thought as to what the parliament might say to this hasty promise, and

Charles signed papers assenting to all the Spanish demands, excepting that he should himself become a Catholic.

The year wore wearily on till August was reached. England and her king were by this time wildly anxious that the prince should return. Yet he hung on with the pitiful indecision that marked his whole life, and it is not unlikely that the incident which induced him to leave Spain at last was a wager with Bristol, who offered to risk a ring worth one thousand pounds that the prince would spend his Christmas in Madrid.

It was at length decided that he should return, the 2nd of September being the day fixed upon for his departure. He and the king enjoyed a last hunt together, lunched under the shadows of the trees, and bade each other a seemingly loving farewell. Buckingham's good-by was of a different character. It took the shape of a violent quarrel with Olivares, the Spanish minister of state. And home again set out the brace of knights-errant, not now in the simple fashion of Tom and John Smith, but with much of the processional display of a royal cortége. Then it was a gay ride of two ardent youths across France and Spain, one filled with thoughts of love, the other with the spirit of adventure. Now it was a stately, almost a regal, movement, with anger as its source, disappointment as its companion. Charles had fairly sold himself to Philip, and yet was returning home without his bride. Buckingham, the nobler nature of the two, had by his petulance and arrogance kept himself in hot water with the Spanish court. Altogether, the adventure had not been a success.

The bride was to follow the prince to England in the spring. But the farther he got from Madrid the less Charles felt that he wanted her. His love, which had grown as he came, diminished as he went. It had then spread over his fancy like leaves on a tree in spring; now it fell from him like leaves from an October tree. It had been largely made up, at the best, of fancy and vanity, and blown to a white heat by the obstacles which had been thrown in his way. It cooled with every mile that took him from Madrid.

To the port of Santander moved the princely train. As it entered that town, the bells were rung and cannon fired in welcoming peals. A fleet lay there, sent to convey him home, one of the ships having a gorgeously-decorated cabin for the infanta,—who was not there to occupy it.

Late in the day as it was, Charles was so eager to leave the detested soil of Spain, that he put off in a boat after nightfall for the fleet. It was a movement not without its peril. The wind blew, the tide was strong, the rowers proved helpless against its force, and the boat with its precious freight would have been carried out to sea had not one of the sailors managed to seize a rope that hung by the side of a ship which they were being rapidly swept past. In a few minutes more the English prince was on an English deck.

For some days the wind kept the fleet at Santander. All was cordiality and festivity between English and Spaniards. Charles concealed his change of heart. Buckingham repressed his insolence. On the 18th of September the fleet weighed anchor and left the coast of Spain. On the 5th of October. Prince Charles landed at Portsmouth, his romantic escapade happily at an end.

He hurried to London with all speed. But rapidly as he went, the news of his coming had spread before him. He came without a Spanish bride. The people, who despised the whole business and feared its results, were wild with delight. When Charles landed from the barge in which he had crossed the Thames, he found the streets thronged with applauding people, he heard the bells on every side merrily ringing, he heard the enthusiastic people shouting, "Long live the Prince of Wales!" All London was wild with delight. Their wandering prince had been lost and was found again.

The day was turned into a holiday. Tables loaded with food and wine were placed in the streets by wealthy citizens, that all who wished might partake. Prisoners for debt were set at liberty, their debts being paid by persons unknown to them. A

cart load of felons on its way to the gallows at Tyburn was turned back, it happening to cross the prince's path, and its inmates gained an unlooked for respite. When night fell the town blazed out in illumination, candles being set in every window, while bonfires blazed in the streets. In the short distance between St. Paul's and London Bridge flamed more than a hundred piles. Carts laden with wood were seized by the populace, the horses taken out and the torch applied, cart and load together adding their tribute of flame. Never had so sudden and spontaneous an ebullition of joy broken out in London streets. The return of the prince was a strikingly different affair from that mad ride in disguise a few months before, which spread suspicion at every step, and filled England with rage when the story became known.

We have told the story of the prince's adventure; a few words will tell the end of his love-affair. As for Buckingham, he had left England as a marquis, he came back with the title of duke. King James had thus rewarded him for abetting the folly of his son. The Spanish marriage never took place. Charles's love had been lost in his journey home. He brought scarce a shred of it back to London. The temper of the English people in regard to the concessions to the Catholics was too outspokenly hostile to be trifled with. Obstacles arose in the way of the marriage. It was postponed. Difficulties appeared on both sides of the water. Before the year ended all hopes of it were over, and the negotiations at an end. Prince Charles finally took for wife that Princess Henrietta Maria of France whom he and Buckingham had first seen dancing in a royal masque, during their holiday visit in disguise to Paris. The romance of his life was over. The reality was soon to begin.

CHAPTER XX

THE TAKING OF PONTEFRACT CASTLE

On the top of a lofty hill, with a broad outlook over the counties of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Nottinghamshire, stood Pontefract Castle, a strong work belonging to the English crown, but now in the hands of Cromwell's men, and garrisoned by soldiers of the Parliamentary army. The war, indeed, was at an end, King Charles in prison, and Cromwell lord of the realm, so that further resistance seemed useless.

But now came a rising in Scotland in favor of the king, and many of the royalists took heart again, hoping that, while Cromwell was busy with the Scotch, there would be risings elsewhere. In their view the war was once more afoot, and it would be a notable deed to take Pontefract Castle from its Puritan garrison and hold it for the king. Such were the inciting causes to the events of which we have now to speak.

There was a Colonel Morrice, who, as a very young man, had been an officer in the king's army. He afterwards joined the army of the Parliament, where he made friends and did some bold service. Later on, the strict discipline of Cromwell's army offended this versatile gentleman, and he threw up his commission and retired to his estates, where he enjoyed life with much of the Cavalier freedom.

Among his most intimate friends was the Parliamentary governor of Pontefract Castle, who enjoyed his society so greatly that he would often have him at the castle for a week at a time, they sleeping together like brothers. The confiding governor had no suspicion of the treasonable disposition of his bed-fellow, and, though warned against him, would not listen to complaint.

Morrice was familiar with the project to surprise the fortress, at the head of which was Sir Marmaduke Langdale, an old officer of the king. To one of the conspirators he said,—

"Do not trouble yourself about this matter. I will surprise the castle for you, whenever you think the time ripe for it"

This gentleman thereupon advised the conspirators to wait, and to trust him to find means to enter the stronghold. As they had much confidence in him, they agreed to his request, without questioning him too closely for the grounds of his assurance. Meanwhile, Morrice went to work.

"I should counsel you to take great care that you have none but faithful men in the garrison," he said to the governor. "I have reason to suspect that there are men in this neighborhood who have designs upon the castle; among them some of your frequent visitors."

He gave him a list of names, some of them really conspirators, others sound friends of the Parliament.

"You need hardly be troubled about these fellows, however," he said. "I have a friend in their counsel, and am sure to be kept posted as to their plans. And for that matter I can, in short notice, bring you forty or fifty safe men to strengthen your garrison, should occasion arise."

He made himself also familiar with the soldiers of the garrison, playing and drinking with them; and when sleeping there would often rise at night and visit the guards, sometimes inducing the governor, by misrepresentations, to dismiss a faithful man, and replace him by one in his own confidence.

So the affair went on, Morrice laying his plans with much skill and caution. As it proved, however, the conspirators became impatient to execute the affair before it was fully ripe. Scotland was in arms; there were alarms elsewhere in the kingdom; Cromwell was likely to have enough to occupy him; delay seemed needless. They told the gentleman who had asked

them to wait that he must act at once. He in his turn advised Morrice, who lost no time in completing his plans.

On a certain night fixed by him the surprise party were to be ready with ladders, which they must erect in two places against the wall. Morrice would see that safe sentinels were posted at these points. At a signal agreed upon they were to mount the ladders and break into the castle.

The night came. Morrice was in the castle, where he shared the governor's bed. At the hour arranged he rose and sought the walls. He was just in time to prevent the failure of the enterprise. Unknown to him, one of the sentinels had been changed. Those without gave the signal. One of the sentinels answered it. The surprise-party ran forward with both ladders.

Morrice, a moment afterwards, heard a cry of alarm from the other sentinel, and hasting forward found him running back to call the guard. He looked at him. It was the wrong man! There had been some mistake.

"What is amiss?" he asked.

"There are men under the wall," replied the soldier. "Some villainy is afoot."

"Oh, come, that cannot be."

"It is. I saw them"

"I don't believe you, sirrah," said Morrice, severely. "You have been frightened by a shadow. Come, show me the place. Don't make yourself a laughing-stock for your fellows."

The sentinel turned and led the way to the top of the wall. He pointed down.

"There; do you see?" he asked.

His words stopped there, for at that instant he found himself clasped by strong arms, and in a minute more was thrown toppling from the wall. Morrice had got rid of the dangerous sentry.

By this time the ladders were up, and some of those without had reached the top of the wall. They signalled to their friends at a distance, and rushed to the court of guard, whose inmates they speedily mastered, after knocking two or three of them upon the head. The gates were now thrown open, and a strong body of horse and foot who waited outside rode in.

The castle was won. Morrice led a party to the governor's chamber, told him that "the castle was surprised and himself a prisoner," and advised him to surrender. The worthy governor seized his arms and dealt some blows, but was quickly disarmed, and Pontefract was again a castle of the king.

So ended the first act in this drama. There was a second act to be played, in which Cromwell was to take a hand. The garrison was quickly reinforced by royalists from the surrounding counties; the castle was well provisioned and its fortifications strengthened; contributions were raised from neighboring parts; and the marauding excursions of the garrison soon became so annoying that an earnest appeal was made to Cromwell, "that he would make it the business of his army to reduce Pontefract."

Just then Cromwell had other business for his army. The Scots were in the field. He was marching to reduce them. Pontefract must wait. He sent, however, two or three regiments, which, with aid from the counties, he deemed would be sufficient for the work.

Events moved rapidly. Before the Parliamentary troops under Rainsborough reached the castle, Cromwell had met and defeated the army of Scots, taking, among other prisoners, Sir Marmaduke Langdale, whom the Parliament threatened to make "an example of their justice."

The men of Pontefract looked on Sir Marmaduke as their leader. Rainsborough was approaching the castle, but was still at some distance. It was deemed a worthy enterprise to take him prisoner, if possible and hold him as hostage for Sir Marmaduke. Morrice took on himself this difficult and dangerous enterprise.

At nightfall, with a party of twelve picked and choice men, he left the castle and made his way towards the town which Rainsborough then occupied. The whole party knew the roads well, and about daybreak reached the point for which they had aimed,—the common road leading from York. The movement had been shrewdly planned. The guards looked for no enemy from this direction, and carelessly asked the party of strange horsemen "whence they came."

The answer was given with studied ease and carelessness.

"Where is your general?" asked Morrice. "I have a letter for him from Cromwell."

The guard sent one of their number with the party to show them where Rainsborough might be found,—at the best inn of the town. When the inn-gate was opened in response to their demand, three only of the party entered. The others rode onward to the bridge at the opposite end of the town, on the road leading to Pontefract. Here they found a guard of horse and foot, with whom they entered into easy conversation.

"We are waiting for our officer," they said. "He went in to speak to the general. Is there anything convenient to drink? We have had a dry ride."

The guards sent for some drink, and, it being now broad day, gave over their vigilance, some of the horse-soldiers alighting, while the footmen sought their court of guard, fancying that their hour of duty was passed.

Meanwhile, tragical work was going on at the inn. Nobody had been awake there but the man who opened the gate. They asked him where the general lay. He pointed up to the chamber-door, and two of them ascended the stairs, leaving the third to hold the horses and in conversation with the soldier who had acted as their guide.

Rainsborough was still in bed, but awakened on their entrance and asked them who they were and what they wanted.

"It is yourself we want," they replied. "You are our prisoner. It is for you to choose whether you prefer to be killed, or quietly to put on your clothes, mount a horse which is ready below for you, and go with us to Pontefract."

He looked at them in surprise. They evidently meant what they said; their voices were firm, their arms ready; he rose and dressed quickly. This completed, they led him downstairs, one of them carrying his sword.

When they reached the street only one man was to be seen. The soldier of the guard had been sent away to order them some breakfast. The prisoner, seeing one man only where he had looked for a troop, struggled to escape and called loudly for help.

It was evident that he could not be carried off; the moment was critical; a few minutes might bring a force that it would be madness to resist; but they had not come thus far and taken this risk for nothing. He would not go; they had no time to force him; only one thing remained: they ran him through with their swords and left him dead upon the ground. Then, mounting, they rode in haste for the bridge.

Those there knew what they were to do. The approach of their comrades was the signal for action. They immediately drew their weapons and attacked those with whom they had been in pleasant conversation. In a brief time several of the guard were killed and the others in full flight. The road was clear. The others came up. A minute more and they were away, in full flight, upon the shortest route to Pontefract, leaving the soldiers of the town in consternation, for the general was soon found dead, with no one to say how he had been killed. Not a soul had seen the tragic deed. In due time Morrice and his men reached Pontefract, without harm to horse or man, but lacking the hoped-for prisoner, and having left death and vengeance behind them.

So far all had gone well with the garrison. Henceforth all promised to go ill. Pontefract was the one place in England that held out against Cromwell, the last stronghold of the king. And

its holders had angered the great leader of the Ironsides by killing one of his most valued officers. Retribution was demanded. General Lambert was sent with a strong force to reduce the castle.

The works were strong, and not easily to be taken by assault. They might be taken by hunger. Lambert soon had the castle surrounded, cooping the garrison closely within its own precincts.

Against this they protested,—in the martial manner. Many bold sallies were made, in which numbers on both sides lost their lives. Lambert soon discovered that certain persons in the country around were in correspondence with the garrison, sending them information. Of these he made short work, according to the military ethics of that day. They were seized and hanged within sight of the castle, among them being two divines and some women of note, friends of the besieged. Some might call this murder. They called it war,—a salutary example.

Finding themselves closely confined within their walls, their friends outside hanged, no hope of relief, starvation their ultimate fate, the garrison concluded at length that it was about time to treat for terms of peace. All England besides was in the hands of Cromwell and the Parliament; there was nothing to be gained by this one fortress holding out, unless it were the gallows. They therefore offered to deliver up the castle, if they might have honorable conditions. If not, they said,—

"We are still well stocked with provisions, and can hold out for a long time. If we are assured of pardon we will yield; if not, we are ready to die, and will not sell our lives for less than a good price."

"I know you for gallant men," replied Lambert, "and am ready to grant life and liberty to as many of you as I can. But there are six among you whose lives I cannot save. I am sorry for this, for they are brave men; but my hands are bound."

"Who are the six? And what have they done that they should be beyond mercy?"

"They were concerned in the death of Rainsborough. I do not desire their death, but Cromwell is incensed against them."

He named the six. They were Colonel Morrice, Sir John Digby, and four others who had been in the party of twelve.

"These must be delivered up without conditions," he continued. "The rest of you may return to your homes, and apply to the Parliament for release from all prosecution. In this I will lend you my aid."

The leaders of the garrison debated this proposal, and after a short time returned their answer.

"We acknowledge your clemency and courtesy," they said, "and would be glad to accept your terms did they not involve a base desertion of some of our fellows, We cannot do as you say, but will make this offer. Give us six days, and let these six men do what they can to deliver themselves, we to have the privilege of assisting them. This much we ask for our honor."

"Do you agree to surrender the castle and all within it at the end of that time?" asked Lambert. "We pledge ourselves to that."

"Then I accept your proposal. Six days' grace shall be allowed you."

Just what they proposed to do for the release of their proscribed companions did not appear. The castle was closely and strongly invested, and these men were neither rats nor birds. How did they hope to escape?

The first day of the six passed and nothing was done. A strong party of the garrison had made its appearance two or three times, as if resolved upon a sally; but each time they retired, apparently not liking the outlook. On the second day they were bolder. They suddenly appeared at a different point from that threatened the day before, and attacked the besiegers with such

spirit as to drive them from their posts, both sides losing men. In the end the sallying party was driven back, but two of the six—Morrice being one—had broken through and made their escape. The other four were forced to retire.

Two days now passed without a movement on the part of the garrison. Four of the six men still remained in the castle. The evening of the fourth day came. The gloom of night gathered, Suddenly a strong party from the garrison emerged from a sally-port and rushed upon the lines of the besiegers with such fire and energy that they were for a time broken, and two more of the proscribed escaped. The others were driven back.

The morning of the fifth day dawned. Four days had gone, and four of the proscribed men were free. How were the other two to gain their liberty? The method so far pursued could scarcely be successful again. The besiegers would be too heedfully on the alert. Some of the garrison had lost their lives in aiding the four to escape. It was too dangerous an experiment to be repeated, with their lives assured them if they remained in the castle. What was to be done for the safety of the other two? The matter was thoroughly debated and a plan devised.

On the morning of the sixth day the besieged made a great show of joy, calling from the walls that their six friends had gone, and that they would be ready to surrender the next day. This news was borne to Lambert, who did not believe a word of it, the escape of the four men not having been observed. Meanwhile, the garrison proceeded to put in effect their stratagem.

The castle was a large one, its rooms many and spacious. Nor was it all in repair. Here and there walls had fallen and not been rebuilt, and abundance of waste stones strewed the ground in these localities. Seeking a place which was least likely to be visited, they walled up the two proscribed men, building the wall in such a manner that air could enter and that they might have some room for movement. Giving them food enough to last for thirty days, they closed the chamber, and left the two men in

their tomb-like retreat. The sixth day came. The hour fixed arrived. The gates were thrown open. Lambert and his men marched in and took possession of the fortress. The garrison was marshaled before him, and a strict search made among them for the six men, whom he fully expected to find. They were not there. The castle was closely searched. They could not be found. He was compelled to admit that the garrison had told him the truth, and that the six had indeed escaped.

For this Lambert did not seem in any sense sorry. The men were brave. Their act had been one allowable in war. He was secretly rather glad that they had escaped, and treated the others courteously, permitting them to leave the castle with their effects and seek their homes, as he had promised. And so ended the taking and retaking of Pontefract Castle.

It was the last stronghold of the king in England, and was not likely to be used again for that purpose. But to prevent this, Lambert handled it in such fashion that it was left a vast pile of ruins, unfit to harbor a garrison. He then drew off his troops, not having discovered the concealed men in this proceeding. Ten days passed. Then the two flung down their wall and emerged among the ruins. They found the castle a place for bats, uninhabited by man, but lost no time in seeking less suspicious quarters.

Of the six men, Morrice was afterwards taken and executed; the others remained free. Sir John Digby lived to become a favored member of the court of Charles II. As for Sir Marmaduke Langdale, to whose imprisonment Rainsborough owed his death, he escaped from his prison in Nottingham Castle, and made his way beyond the seas, not to return until England again had a king.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ADVENTURES OF A ROYAL FUGITIVE

It was early September of 1651, the year that tolled the knell of royalty in England. In all directions from the fatal field of Worcester panic-stricken fugitives were flying; in all directions blood craving victors were pursuing. Charles I. had lost his head for his blind obstinacy, two years before. Charles II., crowned king by the Scotch, had made a gallant fight for the throne. But Cromwell was his opponent, and Cromwell carried victory on his banners. The young king had invaded England, reached Worcester, and there felt the heavy hand of the Protector and his Ironsides. A fierce day's struggle, a defeat, a flight, and kingship in England was at an end while Cromwell lived; the last scion of royalty was a flying fugitive.

At six o'clock in the evening of that fatal day, Charles, the boy-king, discrowned by battle, was flying through St. Martin's Gate from a city whose streets were filled with the bleeding bodies of his late supporters. Just outside the town he tried to rally his men; but in vain, no fight was left in their scared hearts. Nothing remained but flight at panic speed, for the bloodhounds of war were on his track, and if caught by those stern Parliamentarians he might be given the short shriving of his beheaded father. Away went the despairing prince with a few followers, riding for life, flinging from him as he rode his blue ribbon and garter and all his princely ornaments, lest pursuers should know him by these insignia of royalty. On for twelve hours Charles and his companions galloped at racing speed, onward through the whole night following that day of blood and woe; and at break of day on September 4 they reached Whiteladies, a friendly house of refuge in Severn's fertile valley.

The story of the after-adventures of the fugitive prince is so replete with hair-breadth escapes, disguises, refreshing

instances of fidelity, and startling incidents, as to render it one of the most romantic tales to be found in English history. A thousand pounds were set upon his head, yet none, peasant or peer, proved false to him. He was sheltered alike in cottage and hall; more than a score of people knew of his route, yet not a word of betrayal was spoken, not a thought of betrayal was entertained; and the agents of the Protector vainly scoured the country in all directions for the princely fugitive, who found himself surrounded by a loyalty worthy a better man, and was at last enabled to leave the country in Cromwell's despite.

Let us follow the fugitive prince in his flight. Reaching Whiteladies, he found a loyal friend in its proprietor. No sooner was it known in the mansion that the field of Worcester had been lost, and that the flying prince had sought shelter within its walls, than all was haste and excitement.

"You must not remain here," declared Mr. Gifford, one of his companions. "The house is too open. The pursuers will be here within the hour. Measures for your safety must be taken at once."

"The first of which is disguise," said Charles.

His long hair was immediately cut off, his face and hands stained a dark hue, and the coarse and threadbare clothing of a peasant provided to take the place of his rich attire. Thus dressed and disguised, the royal fugitive looked like anything but a king.

"But your features will betray you," said the cautious Gifford. "Many of these men know your face. You must seek a safer place of refuge."

Hurried movements followed. The few friends who had accompanied Charles took to the road again, knowing that their presence would endanger him, and hoping that their flight might lead the bloodhounds of pursuit astray. They gone, the loyal master of Whiteladies sent for certain of his employees whom he could trust. These were six brothers named Penderell, laborers

and woodmen in his service, Catholics, and devoted to the royal family.

"This is the king," he said to William Penderell; "you must have a care of him, and preserve him as you did me."

Thick woodland adjoined the mansion of Whiteladies. Into this the youthful prince was led by Richard Penderell, one of the brothers. It was now broad day. Through the forest went the two seeming peasants, to its farther side, where a broad highway ran past. Here, peering through the bushes, they saw a troop of horse ride by, evidently not old soldiers, more like the militia who made up part of Cromwell's army.

These countrified warriors looked around them. Should they enter the woods? Some of the Scottish rogues, mayhap Charles Stuart, their royal leader, himself, might be there in hiding. But it had begun to rain, and by good fortune the shower poured down in torrents upon the woodland, while little rain fell upon the heath beyond. To the countrymen, who had but begun to learn the trade of soldiers, the certainty of a dry skin was better than the forlorn chance of a flying prince. They rode rapidly on to escape a drenching, much to the relief of the lurking observers.

"The rogues are hunting me close," said the prince, "and by our Lady, this waterfall isn't of the pleasantest. Let us get back into the thick of the woods."

Penderell led the way to a dense glade, where he spread a blanket which he had brought with him under one of the most thick-leaved trees, to protect the prince from the soaked ground. Hither his sister, Mrs. Yates, brought a supply of food, consisting of bread, butter, eggs, and milk. Charles looked at her with grateful eyes.

"My good woman," he said, "can you be faithful to a distressed cavalier?"

"I will die sooner than betray you," was her devoted answer.

Charles ate his rustic meal with a more hopeful heart than he had had since leaving Worcester's field. The loyal devotion of these humble friends cheered him up greatly.

As night came on the rain ceased. No sooner had darkness settled upon the wood than the prince and his guide started towards the Severn, it being his purpose to make his way, if possible, into Wales, in some of whose ports a vessel might be found to take him abroad. Their route took them past a mill. It was quite dark, yet they could make out the miller by his white clothes, as he sat at the mill door. The flour sprinkled fellow heard their footsteps in the darkness, and called out,—

"Who goes there?"

"Neighbors going home," answered Richard Penderell.

"If you be neighbors, stand, or I will knock you down," cried the suspicious miller, reaching behind the door for his cudgel.

"Follow me," said Penderell, quietly, to the prince. "I fancy master miller is not alone."

They ran swiftly along a lane and up a hill, opening a gate at the top of it. The miller followed, yelling out, "Rogues! rogues! Come on, lads; catch these runaways."

He was joined by several men who came from the mill, and a sharp chase began along a deep and dirty lane, Charles and his guide running until they were tired out. They had distanced their pursuers; no sound of footsteps could be heard behind them.

"Let us leap the hedge, and lie behind it to see if they are still on our track," said the prince.

This they did, and lay there for half an hour, listening intently for pursuers. Then, as it seemed evident that the miller and his men had given up the chase, they rose and walked on.

At a village near by lived an honest gentleman named Woolfe, who had hiding-places in his house for priests. Day was

at hand, and travelling dangerous. Penderell proposed to go on and ask shelter from this person for an English gentleman who dared not travel by day.

"Go, but look that you do not betray my name," said the prince.

Penderell left his royal charge in a field, sheltered under a hedge beside a great tree, and sought Mr. Woolfe's house, to whose questions he replied that the person seeking shelter was a fugitive from the battle of Worcester.

"Then I cannot harbor him," was the good man's reply. "It is too dangerous a business. I will not venture my neck for any man, unless it be the king himself."

"Then you will for this man, for you have hit the mark; it is the king," replied the guide, quite forgetting the injunction given him.

"Bring him, then, in God's name," said Mr. Woolfe. "I will risk all I have to help him"

Charles was troubled when he heard the story of his loose-tongued guide. But there was no help for it now. The villager must be trusted. They sought Mr. Woolfe's house by the rear entrance, the prince receiving a warm but anxious welcome from the loyal old gentleman.

"I am sorry you are here, for the place is perilous," said the host. "There are two companies of militia in the village who keep a guard on the ferry, to stop any one from escaping that way. As for my hiding-places, they have all been discovered, and it is not safe to put you in any of them. I can offer you no shelter but in my barn, where you can lie behind the corn and hay."

The prince was grateful even for this sorry shelter, and spent all that day hidden in the hay, feasting on some cold meat which his host had given him. The next night he set out for Richard Penderell's house, Mr. Woolfe having told him that it was not safe to try the Severn, it being closely guarded at all its

fords and bridges. On their way they came again near the mill. Not caring to be questioned as before by the suspicious miller, they diverged towards the river.

"Can you swim?" asked Charles of his guide. "Not I; and the river is a scurvy one."

"I've a mind to try it," said the prince. "It's a small stream at the best, and I may help you over."

They crossed some fields to the river-side, and Charles entered the water, leaving his attendant on the bank. He waded forward, and soon found that the water came but little above his waist.

"Give me your hand," he said, returning. "There's no danger of drowning in this water."

Leading his guide, he soon stood on the safe side of that river the passage of which had given him so many anxious minutes.

Towards morning they reached the house of a Mr. Whitgrave, a Catholic, whom the prince could trust. Here he found in hiding a Major Careless, a fugitive officer from the defeated army. Charles revealed himself to the major, and held a conference with him, asking him what he had best do.

"It will be very dangerous for you to stay here; the hue and cry is up, and no place is safe from search," said the major. "It is not you alone they are after, but all of our side. There is a great wood near by Boscobel house, but I would not like to venture that, either. The enemy will certainly search there. My advice is that we climb into a great, thick-leaved oak-tree that stands near the woods, but in an open place, where we can see around us."

"Faith, I like your scheme, major," said Charles, briskly. "It is thick enough to hide us, you think?"

"Yes; it was lopped a few years ago, and has grown out again very close and bushy. We will be as safe there as behind a thick-set hedge."

"So let it be, then," said the prince.

Obtaining some food from their host,—bread, cheese, and small beer, enough for the day,—the two fugitives, Charles and Careless, climbed into what has since been known as the "royal oak," and remained there the whole day, looking down in safety on soldiers who were searching the wood for royalist fugitives. From time to time, indeed, parties of search passed under the very tree which bore such royal fruit, and the prince and the major heard their chat with no little amusement.

Charles light-hearted by nature, and a mere boy in years, he had just passed twenty-one,—was rising above the heavy sense of depression which had hitherto borne him down. His native temperament was beginning to declare itself, and he and the major, couched like squirrels in their leafy covert, laughed quietly to themselves at the baffled searchers, while they ate their bread and cheese with fresh appetites.

When night had fallen they left the tree, and the prince, parting with his late companion, sought a neighboring house where he was promised shelter in one of those hiding-places provided for proscribed priests. Here he found Lord Wilmot, one of the officers who had escaped with him from the fatal field of Worcester, and who had left him at Whiteladies.

It is too much to tell in detail all the movements that followed. The search for Prince Charles continued with unrelenting severity. Daily, noble and plebeian officers of the defeated army were seized. The country was being scoured, high and low. Frequently the prince saw the forms or heard the voices of those who sought him diligently. But "Will Jones," the woodman, was not easily to be recognized as Charles Stuart, the prince. He was dressed in the shabbiest of weather-worn suits, his hair cut short to his ears, his face embrowned, his head covered with an old and greasy gray steeple hat, with turned-up

brims, his ungloved and stained hands holding for cane a long and crooked thorn stick. Altogether it was a very unprincely individual who roamed those peril-haunted shires of England.

The two fugitives—Prince Charles and Lord Wilmot—now turned their steps towards the sea port of Bristol, hoping there to find means of passage to France. Their last place of refuge in Staffordshire was at the house of Colonel Lane, of Bently, an earnest royalist. Here Charles dropped his late name, and assumed that of Will Jackson. He threw off his peasant's garb, put on the livery of a servant, and set off on horseback with his seeming mistress, Miss Jane Lane, sister of the colonel, who had suddenly become infected with the desire of visiting a cousin at Abbotsleigh, near Bristol. The prince had now become a lady's groom, but he proved an awkward one, and had to be taught the duties of his office.

"Will," said the colonel, as they were about to start, "you must give my sister your hand to help her to mount."

The new groom gave her the wrong hand. Old Mrs. Lane, mother to the colonel, who saw the starting, but knew not the secret, turned to her son, saying satirically,—

"What a goodly horseman my daughter has got to ride before her!"

To ride before her it was, for, in the fashion of the day, groom and mistress occupied one horse, the groom in front, the mistress behind. Not two hours had they ridden, before the horse cast a shoe. A road-side village was at hand, and they stopped to have the bare hoof shod. The seeming groom held the horse's foot, while the smith hammered at the nails. As they did so an amusing conversation took place.

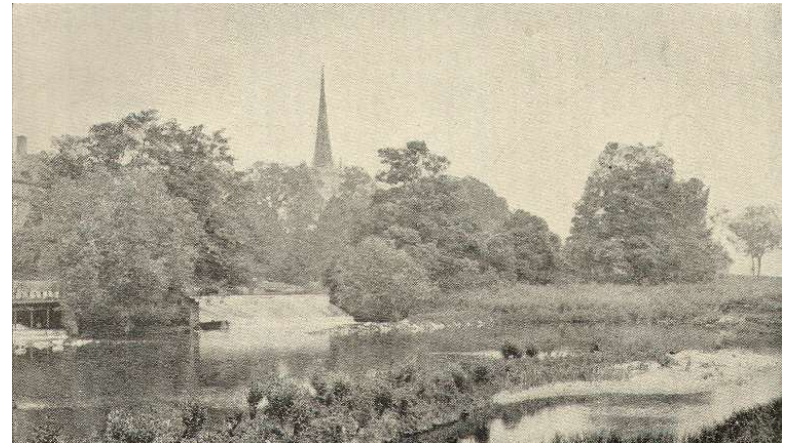
"What news have you?" asked Charles.

"None worth the telling," answered the smith; "nothing has happened since the beating of those rogues, the Scots."

"Have any of the English, that joined hands with the Scots, been taken?" asked Charles.

Some of them, they tell me," answered the smith, hammering sturdily at the shoe; "but I do not hear that that rogue, Charles Stuart, has been taken yet."

"Faith," answered the prince, "if he should be taken, he deserves hanging more than all the rest, for bringing the Scots upon English soil."



SCENE ON THE RIVER AVON.

"You speak well, gossip, and like an honest man," rejoined the smith, heartily. "And there's your shoe, fit for a week's travel on hard roads."

And so they parted, the king merrily telling his mistress the joke, when safely out of reach of the smith's ears.

There is another amusing story told of this journey. Stopping at a house near Stratford-upon-Avon, "Will Jackson" was sent to the kitchen, as the groom's place. Here he found a buxom cook-maid, engaged in preparing supper.

"Wind up the jack for me," said the maid to her supposed fellow-servant.

Charles, nothing loath, proceeded to do so. But he knew much less about handling a jack than a sword, and awkwardly

wound it up the wrong way. The cook looked at him scornfully, and broke out in angry tones,—

"What countrymen are you, that you know not how to wind up a jack?"

Charles answered her contritely, repressing the merry twinkle in his eye.

"I am a poor tenant's son of Colonel Lane, in Staffordshire," he said; "we seldom have roast meat, and when we have, we don't make use of a jack."

"That's not saying much for your Staffordshire cooks, and less for your larders," replied the maid, with a head-toss of superiority.

The house where this took place still stands, with the old jack hanging beside the fireplace; and those who have seen it of late years do not wonder that Charles was puzzled how to wind it up. It might puzzle a wiser man.

There is another story in which the prince played his part as a kitchen servant. It is said that the soldiers got so close upon his track that they sought the house in which he was, not leaving a room in it unvisited. Finally they made their way to the kitchen, where was the man they sought, with a servant-maid who knew him. Charles looked around in nervous fear. His pursuers had never been so near him. Doubtless, for the moment, he gave up the game as lost. But the loyal cook was mistress of the situation. She struck her seeming fellow-servant a smart rap with the basting-ladle, and called out, shrewishly,—

"Now, then, go on with thy work; what art thou looking about for?"

The soldiers laughed as Charles sprang up with a sheepish aspect, and they turned away without a thought that in this servant lad lay hidden the prince they sought.

On September 13, ten days after the battle, Miss Lane and her groom reached Abbotsleigh, where they took refuge at

the house of Mr. Norton, Colonel Lane's cousin. To the great regret of the fugitive, he learned here that there was no vessel in the port of Bristol that would serve his purpose of flight. He remained in the house for four days, under his guise of a servant, but was given a chamber of his own, on pretence of indisposition. He was just well of an ague, said his mistress. He was, indeed, somewhat worn out with fatigue and anxiety, though of a disposition that would not long let him endure hunger or loneliness.

In fact, on the very morning after his arrival he made an early toilette, and went to the buttery hatch for his breakfast. Here were several servants, Pope, the butler, among them. Bread and butter seems to have been the staple of the morning meal, though the butler made it more palatable by a liberal addition of ale and sack. As they ate they were entertained by a minute account of the battle of Worcester, given by a country fellow who sat beside Charles at table, and whom he concluded, from the accuracy of his description, to have been one of Cromwell's soldiers.

Charles asked him how he came to know so well what took place, and was told in reply that he had been in the king's regiment. On being questioned more closely, it proved that he had really been in Charles's own regiment of guards.

"What kind of man was he you call the king?" asked Charles, with an assumed air of curiosity.

The fellow replied with an accurate description of the dress worn by the prince during the battle, and of the horse he rode. He looked at Charles on concluding.

"He was at least three fingers taller than you," he said.

The buttery was growing too hot for Will Jackson. What if, in another look, this fellow should get a nearer glimpse at the truth? The disguised prince made a hasty excuse for leaving the place, being, as he says, "more afraid when I knew he was one of our own soldiers, than when I took him for one of the enemy's."

This alarm was soon followed by a greater one. One of his companions came to him in a state of intense affright.

"What shall we do?" he cried, "I am afraid Pope, the butler, knows you. He has said very positively to me that it is you, but I have denied it."

"We are in a dangerous strait, indeed," said Charles. "There is nothing for it, as I see, but to trust the man with our secret. Boldness, in cases like this, is better than distrust. Send Pope to me."

The butler was accordingly sent, and Charles, with a flattering show of candor, told him who he was, and requested his silence and aid. He had taken the right course, as it proved. Pope was of loyal blood. He could not have found a more intelligent and devoted adherent than the butler showed himself during the remainder of his stay in that house.

But the attentions shown the prince were compromising, in consideration of his disguise as a groom; suspicions were likely to be aroused, and it was felt necessary that he should seek a new asylum. One was found at Trent House, in the same county, the residence of a fervent royalist named Colonel Windham. Charles remained here, and in this vicinity, till the 6th of October, seeking in vain the means of escape from one of the neighboring ports. The coast proved to be too closely watched, however; and in the end soldiers began to arrive in the neighborhood, and the rumor spread that Colonel Windham's house was suspected. There was nothing for it but another flight, which, this time, brought him into Wiltshire, where he took refuge at Hele House, the residence of Mr. Hyde.

Charles himself tells an interesting story of one of his adventures while at Trent House. He, with some companions, had ridden to a place called Burport, where they were to wait for Lord Wilmot, who had gone to Lyme, four miles farther, to look after a possible vessel. As they came near Burport they saw that the streets were full of red-coats, Cromwell's soldiers, there being a whole regiment in the town.

"What shall we do?" asked Colonel Windham, greatly startled at the sight.

"Do? why face it out impudently, go to the best hotel in the place, and take a room there," said Charles. "It is the only safe thing to do. And otherwise we would miss Lord Wilmot, which would be inconvenient to both of us."

Windham gave in, and they rode boldly forward to the chief inn of the place. The yard was filled with soldiers. Charles, as the groom of the party, alighted, took the horses, and purposely led them in a blundering way through the midst of the soldiers to the stable. Some of the red-coats angrily cursed him for his rudeness, but he went serenely on, as if soldiers were no more to him than flies.

Reaching the stable, he took the bridles from the horses, and called to the hostler to give them some oats.

"Sure," said the hostler, peering at him closely, "I know your face."

This was none too pleasant a greeting for the disguised prince, but he put on a serene countenance, and asked the man whether he had always lived at that place.

"No," said the hostler. "I was born in Exeter, and was hostler in an inn there near Mr. Potter's, a great merchant of that town."

"Then you must have seen me at Mr. Potter's," said Charles. "I lived with him over a year."

"That is it," answered the hostler. "I remember you a boy there. Let us go drink a pot of beer on it."

Charles excused himself, saying that he must go look after his master's dinner, and he lost little time in getting out of that town, lest some one else might have as inconvenient and less doubtful a memory.

While the prince was flying, his foes were pursuing. The fact that the royal army was scattered was not enough for the

politic mind of Cromwell. Its leader was still at large, somewhere in England; while he remained free all was at risk. Those turbulent Scotch might be again raised. A new Dunbar or Worcester might be fought, with different fortune. The flying Charles Stuart must be held captive within the country, and made prisoner within a fortress as soon as possible. In consequence, the coast was sedulously watched to prevent his escape, and the country widely searched, the houses of known royalists being particularly placed under surveillance; a large reward was offered for the arrest of the fugitive; the party of the Parliament was everywhere on the alert for him; only the good faith and sound judgment of his friends kept him from the hands of his foes.

At Hele House, the fugitive was near the Sussex coast, and his friends hoped that a passage to France might be secured from some of its small ports. They succeeded at length. On October 13, in early morning, the prince, with a few loyal companions, left his last hiding-place. They took dogs with them, as if they were off for a hunting excursion to the downs.

That night they spent at Hambledon, in Hampshire. Colonel Gunter, one of the party, led the way to the house of his brother-in-law, though without notifying him of his purpose. The master of the house was absent, but returned while the party were at supper, and was surprised to find a group of hilarious guests around his table. Colonel Gunter was among them, however, and explained that he had taken the privilege of kinship to use his house as his own.

The worthy squire, who loved good cheer and good society, was nothing loath to join this lively company, though in his first surprise to find his house invaded a round Cavalier oath broke from his lips. To his astonishment, he was taken to task for this by a crop-haired member of the company, who reproved him in true Puritan phrase for his profanity.

"Whom have you here, Gunter?" the squire asked his brother-in-law. "This fellow is not of your sort. I warrant me the canting chap is some round headed rogue's son."

"Not a bit of it," answered the colonel. "He is true Cavalier, though he does wear his hair somewhat of the shortest, and likes not oaths. He's one of us, I promise you."

"Then here's your health, brother Roundhead!" exclaimed the host, heartily, draining a brimming glass of ale to his unknown guest.

The prince, before the feast was over, grew gay enough to prove that he was no Puritan, though he retained sufficient caution in his cups not further to arouse his worthy host's suspicions. The next day they reached a small fishing-village, then known as Brighthelstone, now grown into the great town of Brighton. Here lay the vessel which had been engaged. The master of the craft, Anthony Tattersall by name, with the merchant who had engaged his vessel, supped with the party at the village inn. It was a jovial meal. The prince, glad at the near approach of safety, allowed himself some freedom of speech. Captain Tattersall watched him closely throughout the meal. After supper he drew his merchant friend aside, and said to him,—

"You have not dealt fairly with me in this business. You have paid me a good price to carry over that gentleman; I do not complain of that; but you should have been more open. He is the king, as I very well know."

"You are very much mistaken, captain," protested the merchant, nervously. "What has put such nonsense into your pate?"

"I am not mistaken," persisted the captain. "He took my ship in '48, with other fishing-craft of this port, when he commanded his father's fleet. I know his face too well to be deceived. But don't be troubled at that; I think I do my God and my country good service in preserving the king; and by the grace

of God, I will venture my life and all for him, and set him safely on shore, if I can, in France."

Happily for Charles, he had found a friend instead of a foe in this critical moment of his adventure. He found another, for the mariner was not the only one who knew his face. As he stood by the fire, with his palm resting on the back of a chair, the inn-keeper came suddenly up and kissed his hand.

"God bless you wheresoever you go!" he said, fervently. "I do not doubt, before I die, to be a lord, and my wife a lady."

Charles burst into a hearty laugh at this ambitious remark of his host. He had been twice discovered within the hour, after a month and a half of impunity. Yet he felt that he could put full trust in these worthy men, and slept soundly that last night on English soil.

At five o'clock of the next morning, he, with Lord Wilmot, his constant companion, went on board the little sixty-ton craft, which lay in Shoreham harbor, waiting the tide to put to sea. By day-break they were on the waves. The prince was resting in the cabin, when in came Captain Tattersall, kissed his hand, professed devotion to his interests, and suggested a course for him to pursue.

His crew, he said, had been shipped for the English port of Poole. To head for France might cause suspicion. He advised Charles to represent himself as a merchant who was in debt and afraid of arrest in England, and who wished to reach France to collect money due him at Rouen. If he would tell this story to the sailors, and gain their good-will, it might save future trouble.

Charles entered freely into this conspiracy, went on deck, talked affably with the crew, told them the story concocted by the captain, and soon had them so fully on his side, that they joined him in begging the captain to change his course and land his passengers in France. Captain Tattersall demurred somewhat at this, but soon let himself be convinced, and headed his ship for the Gallic coast.

The wind was fair, the weather fine. Land was sighted before noon of the 16th. At one o'clock the prince and Lord Wilmot were landed at Fécamp, a small French port. They had distanced the bloodhounds of the Parliament, and were safe on foreign soil.

CHAPTER XXII

CROMWELL AND THE PARLIAMENT

The Parliament of England had defeated and put an end to the king; it remained for Cromwell to put an end to the Parliament. "The Rump," the remnant of the old Parliament was derisively called. What was left of that great body contained little of its honesty and integrity, much of its pride and incompetency. The members remaining had become infected with the wild notion that they were the governing power in England, and instead of preparing to disband themselves they introduced a bill for the disbanding of the army. They had not yet learned of what stuff Oliver Cromwell was made.

A bill had been passed, it is true, for the dissolution of the Parliament, but in the discussion of how the "New Representative" was to be chosen it became plainly evident that the members of the Rump intended to form part of it, without the formality of re-election. A struggle for power seemed likely to arise between the Parliament and the army. It could have but one ending, with a man like Oliver Cromwell at the head of the latter. The officers demanded that Parliament should immediately dissolve. The members resolutely refused. Cromwell growled his comments.

"As for the members of this Parliament," he said, "the army begins to take them in disgust."

There was ground for it, he continued, in their selfish greed, their interference with law and justice, the scandalous lives of many of the members, and, above all, their plain intention to keep themselves in power.

"There is little to hope for from such men for a settlement of the nation," he concluded.



OLIVER CROMWELL.

The war with Holland precipitated the result. This war acted as a barometer for the Parliament. It was a naval combat. In the first meeting of the two fleets the Dutch were defeated, and the mercury of Parliamentary pride rose. In the next combat Van Tromp, the veteran Dutch admiral, drove Blake with a shattered fleet into the Thames. Van Tromp swept the Channel in triumph, with a broom at his masthead. The hopes of

the members went down to zero. They agreed to disband in November. Cromwell promised to reduce the army. But Blake put to sea again, fought Van Tromp in a four days' running fight, and won the honors of the combat. Up again went the mercury of Parliamentary hope and pride. The members determined to continue in power, and not only claimed the right to remain members of the new Parliament, but even to revise the returns of the elected members, and decide for themselves if they would have them as fellows.

The issue was now sharply drawn between army and Parliament. The officers met and demanded that Parliament should at once dissolve, and let the Council of State manage the new elections. A conference was held between officers and members, at Cromwell's house, on April 19, 1653. It ended in nothing. The members were resolute.

"Our charge," said Haslerig, arrogantly, "cannot be transferred to any one."

The conference adjourned till the next morning, Sir Harry Vane engaging that no action should be taken till it met again. Yet when it met the next morning the leading members of Parliament were absent, Vane among them. Their absence was suspicious. Were they pushing the bill through the House in defiance of the army?

Cromwell was present,—"in plain black clothes, and gray worsted stockings,"—a plain man, but one not safe to trifle with. The officers waited a while for the members. They did not come. Instead there came word that they were in their seats in the House, busily debating the bill that was to make them rulers of the nation without consent of the people, hurrying it rapidly through its several stages. If left alone they would soon make it a law.

Then the man who had hurled Charles I. from his throne lost his patience. This, in his opinion, had gone far enough. Since it had come to a question whether a self-elected Parliament, or the army to which England owed her freedom,

should hold the balance of power, Cromwell was not likely to hesitate.

"It is contrary to common honesty!" he broke out, angrily.

Leaving Whitehall, he set out for the House of Parliament, bidding a company of musketeers to follow him. He entered quietly, leaving his soldiers outside. The House now contained no more than fifty-three members. Sir Harry Vane was addressing this fragment of a Parliament with a passionate harangue in favor of the bill. Cromwell sat for some time in silence, listening to his speech, his only words being to his neighbor, St. John.

"I am come to do what grieves me to the heart," he said.

Vane pressed the House to waive its usual forms and pass the bill at once.

"The time has come," said Cromwell to Harrison, whom he had beckoned over to him.

"Think well," answered Harrison; "it is a dangerous work."

The man of fate subsided into silence again. A quarter of an hour more passed. Then the question was put "that this bill do now pass."

Cromwell rose, took off his hat, and spoke. His words were strong. Beginning with commendation of the Parliament for what it had done for the public good, he went on to charge the present members with acts of injustice, delays of justice, self-interest, and similar faults, his tone rising higher as he spoke until it had grown very hot and indignant.

"Your hour is come; the Lord hath done with you," he added.

"It is a strange language, this," cried one of the members, springing up hastily; "unusual this within the walls of

Parliament. And from a trusted servant, too; and one whom we have so highly honored; and one—"

"Come, come," cried Cromwell, in the tone in which he would have commanded his army to charge, "we have had enough of this." He strode furiously into the middle of the chamber, clapped on his hat, and exclaimed, "I will put an end to your prating."

He continued speaking hotly and rapidly, "stamping the floor with his feet" in his rage, the words rolling from him in a fury. Of these words we only know those with which he ended.

"It is not fit that you should sit here any longer! You should give place to better men! You are no Parliament!" came from him in harsh and broken exclamations. "Call them in," he said, briefly, to Harrison.

At the word of command a troop of some thirty musketeers marched into the chamber. Grim fellows they were, dogs of war, the men of the Rump could not face this argument; it was force arrayed against law,—or what called itself law,—wrong against wrong, for neither army nor Parliament truly represented the people, though just then the army seemed its most rightful representative.

"I say you are no Parliament!" roared the lord general, hot with anger. "Some of you are drunkards." His eye fell on a bottle-loving member.

"Some of you are lewd livers; living in open contempt of God's commandments" His hot gaze flashed on Henry Marten and Sir Peter Wentworth. "Following your own greedy appetites and the devil's commandments; corrupt, unjust persons, scandalous to the profession of the gospel: how can you be a Parliament for God's people? Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God—go!"

These words were like bomb shells exploded in the chamber of Parliament. Such a scene had never before and has never since been seen in the House of Commons. The members

were all on their feet, some white with terror, some red with indignation. Vane fearlessly faced the irate general.

"Your action," he said, hotly, "is against all right and all honor."

"Ah, Sir Harry Vane, Sir Harry Vane," retorted Cromwell, bitterly, "you might have prevented all this; but you are a juggler, and have no common honesty. The Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane!"

The retort was a just one. Vane had attempted to usurp the government. Cromwell turned to the speaker, who obstinately clung to his seat, declaring that he would not yield it except to force.

"Fetch him down!" roared the general.

"Sir, I will lend you a hand," said Harrison.

Speaker Lenthall left the chair. One man could not resist an army. Through the door glided, silent as ghosts, the members of Parliament.

"It is you that have forced me to this," said Cromwell, with a shade of regret in his voice. "I have sought the Lord night and day, that He would rather slay me than put upon me the doing of this work."

He had, doubtless; he was a man of deep piety and intense bigotry; but the Lord's answer, it is to be feared, came out of the depths of his own consciousness. Men like Cromwell call upon God, but answer for Him themselves.

"What shall be done with this bauble?" said the general, lifting the sacred mace, the sign-manual of government by the representatives of the people. "Take it away!" he finished, handing it to a musketeer.

His flashing eyes followed the retiring members until they all had left the House. Then the musketeers filed out, followed by Cromwell and Harrison. The door was locked, and the key and mace carried away by Colonel Otley.

A few hours afterwards the Council of State, the executive committee of Parliament, was similarly dissolved by the lord-general, who, in person, bade its members to depart.

"We have heard," cried John Bradshaw, one of its members, "what you have done this morning at the House, and in some hours all England will hear it. But you mistake, sir, if you think the Parliament dissolved. No power on earth can dissolve the Parliament but itself, be sure of that."

The people did hear it,—and sustained Cromwell in his action. Of the two sets of usurpers, the army and a non-representative Parliament, they preferred the former.

"We did not hear a dog bark at their going," said Cromwell, afterwards.

It was not the first time in history that the army had overturned representative government. In this case it was not done with the design of establishing a despotism. Cromwell was honest in his purpose of reforming the administration, and establishing a Parliamentary government. But he had to do with intractable elements. He called a constituent convention, giving to it the duty of paving the way to a constitutional Parliament. Instead of this, the convention began the work of reforming the constitution, and proposed such radical changes that the lord-general grew alarmed. Doubtless his musketeers would have dealt with the convention as they had done with the Rump Parliament, had it not fallen to pieces through its own dissensions. It handed back to Cromwell the power it had received from him. He became the lord protector of the realm. The revolutionary government had drifted, despite itself, into a despotism. A despotism it was to remain while Cromwell lived.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE RELIEF OF LONDONDERRY

Frightful was the state of Londonderry. "No surrender" was the ultimatum of its inhabitants, "blockade and starvation" the threat of the besiegers; the town was surrounded, the river closed, relief seemed hopeless, life, should the furious besiegers break in, equally hopeless. Far off, in the harbor of Lough Foyle, could be seen the English ships. Thirty vessels lay there, laden with men and provisions, but they were able to come no nearer. The inhabitants could see them, but the sight only aggravated their misery. Plenty so near at hand! Death and destitution in their midst! Frightful, indeed, was their extremity.

The Foyle, the river leading to the town, was fringed with hostile forts and batteries, and its channel barricaded. Several boats laden with stone had been sunk in the channel. A row of stakes was driven into the bottom of the stream. A boom was formed of trunks of fir-trees, strongly bound together, and fastened by great cables to the shore. Relief from the fleet, with the river thus closed against it, seemed impossible. Yet scarcely two days' supplies were left in the town, and without hasty relief starvation or massacre seemed the only alternatives.

Let us relate the occasion of this siege. James II. had been driven from England, and William of Orange was on the throne. In his effort to recover his kingdom, James sought Ireland, where the Catholic peasantry were on his side. His appearance was the signal for fifty thousand peasants to rise in arms, and for the Protestants to fly from peril of massacre. They knew their fate should they fall into the hands of the half-savage peasants, mad with years of misrule.

In the north, seven thousand English fugitives fled to Londonderry, and took shelter behind the weak wall, manned by a few old guns, and without even a ditch for defence, which

formed the only barrier between them and their foes. Around this town gathered twenty-five thousand besiegers, confident of quick success. But the weakness of the battlements was compensated for by the stoutness of the hearts within. So fierce were the sallies of the desperate seven thousand, so severe the loss of the besiegers in their assaults, that the attempt to carry the place by storm was given up, and a blockade substituted. From April till the end of July this continued, the condition of the besieged daily growing worse, the food-supply daily growing less. Such was the state of affairs at the date with which we are specially concerned.

Inside the town, at that date, the destitution had grown heart-rending. The fire of the enemy was kept up more briskly than ever, but famine and disease killed more than cannon-balls. The soldiers of the garrison were so weak from privation that they could scarcely stand; yet they repelled every attack, and repaired every breach in the walls as fast as made. The damage done by day was made good at night. For the garrison there remained a small supply of grain, which was given out by mouthfuls, and there was besides a considerable store of salted hides, which they gnawed for lack of better food. The stock of animals had been reduced to nine horses, and these so lean and gaunt that it seemed useless to kill them for food.

The townsmen were obliged to feed on dogs and rats, an occasional small fish caught in the river, and similar sparse supplies. They died by hundreds. Disease aided starvation in carrying them off. The living were too few and too weak to bury the dead. Bodies were left unburied, and a deadly and revolting stench filled the air. That there was secret discontent and plottings for surrender may well be believed. But no such feeling dared display itself openly. Stubborn resolution and vigorous defiance continued the public tone. "No surrender" was the general cry, even in that extremity of distress. And to this voices added, in tones of deep significance, "First the horses and hides; then the prisoners; and then each other."

Such was the state of affairs on July 28, 1689. Two days' very sparse rations alone remained for the garrison. At the end of that time all must end. Yet still in the distance could be seen the masts of the ships, holding out an unfulfilled promise of relief; still hope was not quite dead in the hearts of the besieged. Efforts had been made to send word to the town from the fleet. One swimmer who attempted to pass the boom was drowned. Another was caught and hanged. On the 13th of July a letter from the fleet, sewed up in a cloth button, reached the commander of the garrison. It was from Kirke, the general in command of the party of relief, and promised speedy aid. But a fortnight and more had passed since then, and still the fleet lay inactive in Lough Foyle, nine miles away, visible from the summit of the Cathedral, yet now tending rather to aggravate the despair than to sustain the hopes of the besieged.

The sunset hour of July 28 was reached. Services had been held that afternoon in the Cathedral,—services in which doubtless the help of God was despairingly invoked, since that of man seemed in vain. The heart-sick people left the doors, and were about to disperse to their foodless homes, when a loud cry of hope and gladness came from the lookout in the tower above their heads.

"They are coming!" was the stirring cry. "The ships are coming up the river! I can see their sails plainly! Relief is coming!"

How bounded the hearts of those that heard this gladsome cry! The listeners dispersed, carrying the glad news to every corner of the town. Others came in hot haste, eager to hear further reports from the lookout tower. The town, lately so quiet and depressed, was suddenly filled with activity. Hope swelled every heart, new life ran in every vein; the news was like a draught of wine that gave fresh spirit to the most despairing soul.

And now other tidings came. There was a busy stir in the camp of the besiegers. They were crowding to the river-banks. As far as the eye could see, the stream was lined. The daring

ships had a gauntlet of fire to run. Their attempt seemed hopeless, indeed. The river was low. The channel which they would have to follow ran near the left bank, where numerous batteries had been planted. They surely would never succeed. Yet still they came, and still the lookout heralded their movements to the excited multitude below.

The leading ship was the Mountjoy, a merchant-vessel laden heavily with provisions. Its captain was Micaiah Browning, a native of Londonderry. He had long advised such an attempt, but the general in command had delayed until positive orders came from England that something must be done.

On hearing of this, Browning immediately volunteered. He was eager to succor his fellow-townsmen. Andrew Douglas, captain of the Phoenix, a vessel laden with meal from Scotland, was willing and anxious to join in the enterprise. As an escort to these two merchantmen came the Dartmouth, a thirty-six-gun frigate, its commander John Leake, afterwards an admiral of renown.

Up the stream they came, the Dartmouth in the lead, returning the fire of the forts with effect, pushing steadily onward, with the merchantmen closely in the rear. At length the point of peril was reached. The boom extended across the stream, seemingly closing all further passage. But that remained to be seen. The Mountjoy took the lead, all its sails spread, a fresh breeze distending the canvas, and rushed head on at the boom.

A few minutes of exciting suspense followed, then the great barricade was struck, strained to its utmost, and, with a rending sound, gave way. So great was the shock that the Mountjoy rebounded and stuck in the mud. A yell of triumph came from the Irish who crowded the banks. They rushed to their boats, eager to board the disabled vessel; but a broadside from the Dartmouth sent them back in disordered flight.

In a minute more the Phoenix, which had followed close, sailed through the breach which the Mountjoy had made, and

was past the boom. Immediately afterwards the Mountjoy began to move in her bed of mud. The tide was rising. In a few minutes she was afloat and under way again, safely passing through the barrier of broken stakes and spars. But her brave commander was no more. A shot from one of the batteries had struck and killed him, when on the very verge of gaining the highest honor that man could attain,—that of saving his native town from the horrors of starvation or massacre.

While this was going on, the state of feeling of the lean and hungry multitude within the town was indescribable. Night had fallen before the ships reached the boom. The lookout could no longer see and report their movements. Intense was the suspense. Minutes that seemed hours passed by. Then, in the distance, the flash of guns could be seen. The sound of artillery came from afar to the ears of the expectant citizens. But the hope which this excited went down when the shout of triumph rose from the besiegers as the Mountjoy grounded. It was taken up and repeated from rank to rank to the very walls of the city, and the hearts of the besieged sank dismally. This cry surely meant failure. The miserable people grew livid with fear. There was unutterable anguish in their eyes, as they gazed with despair into one another's pallid faces. A half-hour more passed. The suspense continued. Yet the shouts of triumph had ceased. Did it mean repulse or victory?" Victory! victory!" for now a spectral vision of sails could be seen, drawing near the town. They grew nearer and plainer; dark hulls showed below them; the vessels were coming! the town was saved!

Wild was the cry of glad greeting that went up from thousands of throats, soul-inspiring the cheers that came, softened by distance, back from the ships. It was ten o'clock at night. The whole population had gathered at the quay. In came the ships. Loud and fervent were the cheers and welcoming cries. In a few minutes more the vessels had touched the wharves, well fed-sailors and starved townsmen were fraternizing, and the long months of misery and woe were forgotten in the intense joy of that supreme moment of relief.

Many hands now made short work. Wasted and weak as were the townsmen, hope gave them strength. A screen of casks filled with earth was rapidly built up to protect the landing-place from the hostile batteries on the other side of the river. Then the unloading began. The eyes of the starving inhabitants distended with joy as they saw barrel after barrel rolled ashore, until six thousand bushels of meal lay on the wharf. Great cheeses came next, beef-casks, flitches of bacon, kegs of butter, sacks of peas and biscuit, until the quay was piled deep with provisions.

One may imagine with what tears of joy the soldiers and people ate their midnight repast that night. Not many hours before the ration to each man of the garrison had been half a pound of tallow and three-quarters of a pound of salted hide. Now to each was served out three pounds of flour, two pounds of beef, and a pint of peas. There was no sleep for the remainder of the night, either within or without the walls. The bonfires that blazed along the whole circuit of the walls told the joy within the town. The incessant roar of guns told the rage without it. Peals of bells from the church towers answered the Irish cannon; shouts of triumph from the walls silenced the cries of anger from the batteries. It was a conflict of joy and rage.

Three days more the batteries continued to roar. But on the night of July 31 flames were seen to issue from the Irish camp; on the morning of August 1 a line of scorched and smoking ruins replaced the lately-occupied huts, and along the Foyle went a long column of pikes and standards, marking the retreat of the besieging army.

The retreat became a rout. The men of Enniskillen charged the retreating army of Newtown Butler, struggling through a bog to fall on double their number, whom they drove in a panic before them. The panic spread through the whole army. Horse and foot, they fled. Not until they had reached Dublin, then occupied by King James, did the retreat stop, and confidence return to the baffled besiegers of Londonderry.

Thus ended the most memorable siege in the history of the British islands. It had lasted one hundred and five days. Of the seven thousand men of the garrison but about three thousand were left. Of the besiegers probably more had fallen than the whole number of the garrison.

To-day Londonderry is in large measure a monument to its great siege. The wall has been carefully preserved, the summit of the ramparts forming a pleasant walk, the bastions being turned into pretty little gardens. Many of the old culverins, which threw lead-covered bricks among the Irish ranks, have been preserved, and may still be seen among the leaves and flowers. The cathedral is filled with relics and trophies, and over its altar may be observed the French flag-staffs, taken by the garrison in a desperate sally, the flags they once bore long since reduced to dust. Two anniversaries are still kept,—that of the day on which the gates were closed, that of the day on which the siege was raised,—salutes, processions, banquets, addresses, sermons signalizing these two great events in the history of a city which passed through so frightful a baptism of war, but has ever since been the abode of peace.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE HUNTING OF BRAEMAR

In the great forest of Braemar, in the Highlands of Scotland, was gathered a large party of hunters, chiefs, and clansmen, all dressed in the Highland costume, and surrounded by extensive preparations for the comfort and enjoyment of all concerned. Seldom, indeed, had so many great lords been gathered for such an occasion. On the invitation of the Earl of Mar, within whose domain the hunt was to take place, there had come together the Marquises of Huntly and Tulliebardine, the Earls of Nithsdale, Marischal, Traquair, Errol, and several others, and numerous viscounts, lords, and chiefs of clans, many of the most important of the nobility and clan leaders of the Highlands being present.

With these great lords were hosts of clansmen, all attired in the picturesque dress of the Highlands, and so numerous that the convocation had the appearance of a small army, the sport of hunting in those days being often practised on a scale of magnificence resembling war. The red deer of the Highlands were the principal game, and the method of hunting usually employed could not be conducted without the aid of a large body of men. Around the broad extent of wild forest land and mountain wilderness, which formed the abiding-place of these animals, a circuit of hunters many miles in extent was formed. This circuit was called the *tinchel*. Upon a given signal, the hunters composing the circle began to move inwards, rousing the deer from their lairs, and driving them before them, with such other animals as the forest might contain.

Onward moved the hunters, the circle steadily growing less, and the terrified beasts becoming more crowded together, until at length they were driven down some narrow defile, along whose course the lords and gentlemen had been posted, lying in

wait for the coming of the deer, and ready to show their marksmanship by shooting such of the bucks as were in season.

The hunt with which we are at present concerned, however, had other purposes than the killing of deer. The latter ostensible object concealed more secret designs, and to these we may confine our attention. It was now near the end of August, 1715. At the beginning of that month, the Earl of Mar, in company with General Hamilton and Colonel Hay, had embarked at Gravesend, on the Thames, all in disguise and under assumed names. To keep their secret the better, they had taken passage on a coal sloop, agreeing to work their way like common seamen; and in this humble guise they continued until Newcastle was reached, where a vessel in which they could proceed with more comfort was engaged. From this craft they landed at the small port of Elie, on the coast of Fife, a country then well filled with Jacobites, or adherents to the cause of the Stuart princes. Such were the mysterious preliminary steps towards the hunting-party in the forest of Braemar.

In truth, the hunt was little more than a pretence. While the clansmen were out forming the *tinchel*, the lords were assembled in secret convocation, in which the Earl of Mar eloquently counselled resistance to the rule of King George, and the taking of arms in the cause of James Francis Edward, son of the exiled James II., and, as he argued, the only true heir to the English throne. He told them that he had been promised abundant aid in men and money from France, and assured them that a rising in Scotland would be followed by a general insurrection in England against the Hanoverian dynasty. He is said to have shown letters from the Stuart prince, the Chevalier de St. George, as he was called, making the earl his lieutenant-general and commander-in-chief of the armies of Scotland.

How many red deer were killed on this occasion no one can say. The noble guests of Mar had other things to think of than singling out fat bucks. None of them opposed the earl in his arguments, and in the end it was agreed that all should return home, raise what forces they could by the 3rd of September, and

meet again on that day at Aboyne, in Aberdeenshire, where it would be settled how they were to take the field.

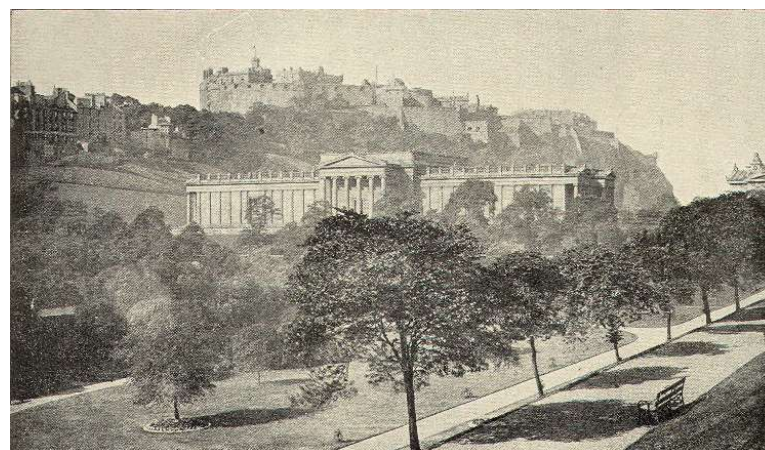
Thus ended that celebrated hunt of Braemar, which was destined to bring tears and blood to many a household in Scotland, through loyal devotion to a prince who was not worth the sacrifice, and at the bidding of an earl who was considered by many as too versatile in disposition to be fully trusted. An anecdote is given in evidence of this opinion. The castle of Braemar was, as a result of the hunt, so overflowing with guests, that many of the gentlemen of secondary importance could not be accommodated with beds, but were forced to spend the night around the kitchen fire,—a necessity then considered no serious matter by the hardy Scotch. But such was not the opinion of all present. An English footman, a domestic of the earl, came pushing among the gentlemen, complaining bitterly at having to sit up all night, and saying that rather than put up with much of this he would go back to his own country and turn Whig. As to his Toryism, however, he comforted himself with the idea that he served a lord who was especially skilful in escaping danger.

"Let my lord alone," he said; "if he finds it necessary, he can turn cat-in-pan with any man in England."

While these doings were in progress in the Highlands, the Jacobites were no less active in the Lowlands, and an event took place in the metropolis of Scotland which showed that the spirit of disaffection had penetrated within its walls. This was an attempt to take the castle of Edinburgh by surprise,—an exploit parallel in its risky and daring character with those told of the Douglas and other bold lords at an earlier period.

The design of scaling this almost inaccessible stronghold was made by a Mr. Arthur, who had been an ensign in the Scots' Guards and quartered in the castle, and was, therefore, familiar with its interior arrangement. He found means to gain over, by cash and promises, a sergeant and two privates, who agreed that, when on duty as sentinels on the walls over the precipice to the north, they would draw up rope-ladders, and fasten them by

grappling-irons at their top to the battlements of the castle. This done, it would be easy for an armed party to scale the walls and make themselves masters of the stronghold. Arthur's plan did not end with the mere capture of the fortress. He had arranged a set of signals with the Earl of Mar, consisting of a beacon displayed at a fixed point on the castle walls, three rounds of artillery, and a succession of fires flashing the news from hill top to hill-top. The earl, thus apprised of the success of the adventurers, was to hasten south with all the force he could bring, and take possession of Edinburgh.



EDINBURGH CASTLE.

The scheme was well devised, and might have succeeded but for one of those unlucky chances which have defeated so many well laid plans. Agents in the enterprise could be had in abundance. Fifty Highlanders were selected, picked men from Lord Drummond's estates in Perthshire. To these were added fifty others chosen from the Jacobites of Edinburgh. Drummond, otherwise known as MacGregor, of Bahaldie, was given the command. The scheme was one of great moment. Its success would give the Earl of Mar a large supply of money, arms, and ammunition, deposited in the fortress, and control of the greater

part of Scotland, while affording a ready means of communication with the English malcontents.

Unluckily for the conspirators, they had more courage than prudence. Eighteen of the younger men were, on the night fixed, amusing themselves with drinking in a public-house, and talked with such freedom that the hostess discovered their secret. She told a friend that the party consisted of some young gentlemen who were having their hair powdered in order to go to an attack on the castle. Arthur, the originator of the enterprise, also made what proved to be a dangerous revelation. He engaged his brother, a doctor, in the scheme. The brother grew so nervous and low-spirited that his wife, seeing that something was amiss with him, gave him no rest until he had revealed the secret. She, perhaps to save her husband, perhaps from Whig proclivities, instantly sent an anonymous letter to Sir Adam Cockburn, lord justice-clerk of Edinburgh, apprising him of the plot. He at once sent the intelligence to the castle. His messenger reached there at a late hour, and had much difficulty in gaining admittance. When he did so, the deputy-governor saw fit to doubt the improbable tidings sent him. The only precaution he took was to direct that the rounds and patrols should be made with great care. With this provision for the safety of the castle, he went to bed, doubtless with the comfortable feeling that he had done all that could be expected of a reasonable man in so improbable a case.

While this was going on, the storming party had collected at the church-yard of the West Kirk, and from there proceeded to the chosen place at the foot of the castle walls. There had been a serious failure, however, in their preparations. They had with them a part of the rope-ladders on which their success depended, but he who was to have been there with the remainder—Charles Forbes, an Edinburgh merchant, who had attended to their making—was not present, and they awaited him in vain.

Without him nothing could be done; but, impatient at the delay, the party made their way with difficulty up the steep cliff,

and at length reached the foot of the castle wall. Here they found on duty one of the sentinels whom they had bribed; but he warned them to make haste, saying that he was to be relieved at twelve o'clock, and after that hour he could give them no aid.

The affair was growing critical. The midnight hour was fast approaching, and Forbes was still absent. Drummond, the leader, had the sentinel to draw up the ladder they had with them and fasten it to the battlements, to see if it were long enough for their purpose. He did so; but it proved to be more than a fathom short.

And now happened an event fatal to their enterprise. The information sent the deputy-governor, and his direction that the patrols should be alert, had the effect of having them make the rounds earlier than usual. They came at half-past eleven instead of at twelve. The sentinel, hearing their approaching steps, had but one thing to do for his own safety. He cried out to the party below, with an oath,—

"Here come the rounds I have been telling you of this half hour; you have ruined both yourselves and me; I can serve you no longer."

With these words, he loosened the grappling-irons and flung down the ladders, and, with the natural impulse to cover his guilty knowledge of the affair, fired his musket, with a loud cry of "Enemies!"

This alarm cry forced the storming-party to fly with all speed. The patrol saw them from the wall and fired on them as they scrambled hastily down the rocks. One of them, an old man, Captain McLean, rolled down the cliff and was much hurt. He was taken prisoner by a party of the burgher guard, whom the justice-clerk had sent to patrol the outside of the walls. They took also three young men, who protested that they were there by accident, and had nothing to do with the attempt. The rest of the party escaped. In their retreat they met Charles Forbes, coming tardily up with the ladders which, a quarter of an hour

earlier, might have made them masters of the castle, but which were now simply an aggravation.

It does not seem that any one was punished for this attempt, beyond the treacherous sergeant, who was tried, found guilty, and hanged, and the deputy-governor, who was deprived of his office and imprisoned for some time. No proof could be obtained against any one else.

As for the conspirators, indeed, it is probable that the most of them found their way to the army of the Earl of Mar, who was soon afterwards in the field at the head of some twelve thousand armed men, pronouncing himself the general of His Majesty James III.,—known to history as the "Old Pretender."

What followed this outbreak it is not our purpose to describe. It will suffice to say that Mar was more skilful as a conspirator than as a general, that his army was defeated by Argyle at Sheriffmuir, and that, when Prince James landed in December, it was to find his adherents fugitives and his cause in a desperate state. Perceiving that success was past hope, he made his way back to France in the following month, the Earl of Mar going with him, and thus, as his English footman had predicted, escaping the fate which was dealt out freely to those whom he had been instrumental in drawing into the outbreak. Many of these paid with their lives for their participation in the rebellion, but Mar lived to continue his plotting for a number of years afterwards, though it cannot be said that his later plots were more notable for success than the one we have described.

CHAPTER XXV

THE FLIGHT OF PRINCE CHARLES

It was early morning on the Hebrides, that crowded group of rocky islands on the west coast of Scotland where fish and anglers much do congregate. From one of these, South Uist by name, a fishing-boat had put out at an early hour, and was now, with a fresh breeze in its sail, making its way swiftly over the ruffled waters of the Irish Channel. Its occupants, in addition to the two watermen who managed it, were three persons,—two women and a man. To all outward appearance only one of these was of any importance. This was a young lady of bright and attractive face, dressed in a plain and serviceable travelling costume, but evidently of good birth and training. Her companions were a man and a maid-servant, the latter of unusual height for a woman, and with an embrowned and roughened face that indicated exposure to severe hardships of life and climate. The man was a thorough Highlander, red-bearded, shock-haired, and of weather-beaten aspect.

The boat had already made a considerable distance from the shore when its occupants found themselves in near vicinity to another small craft, which was moving lazily in a line parallel to the island coast. At a distance to right and left other boats were visible. The island waters seemed to be patrolled. As the fishing boat came near, the craft just mentioned shifted its course and sailed towards it. It was sufficiently near to show that it contained armed men, one of them in uniform. A hail now came across the waters.

"What boat is that? Whom have you on board?"

"A lady; on her way to Skye," answered the boatman.

"Up helm, and lay yourself alongside of us. We must see who you are."

The fishermen obeyed. They had reason to know that, just then, there was no other course to pursue. In a few minutes the two boats were riding side by side, lifting and falling lazily on the long Atlantic swell. The lady looked up at the uniformed personage, who seemed an officer.

"My name is Flora McDonald," she said. "These persons are my servants. My father is in command of the McDonalds on South Uist. I have been visiting at Clanranald, and am now on my way home."

"Forgive me, Miss McDonald," said the officer, courteously; "but our orders are precise; no one can leave the island without a pass."

"I know it," she replied, with dignity, "and have provided myself. Here is my passport, signed by my father."

The officer took and ran his eye over it quickly: "Flora McDonald; with two servants, Betty Bruce and Malcolm Rae," he read. His gaze moved rapidly over the occupants of the boat, resting for a moment on the bright and intelligent face of the young lady.

"This seems all right, Miss McDonald," he said, respectfully, returning her the paper. "You can pass. Good-by, and a pleasant journey."

"Many thanks," she answered. "You should be successful in catching the bird that is seeking to fly from that island. Your net is spread wide enough."

"I hardly think our bird will get through the meshes," he answered, laughingly.

In a few minutes more they were wide asunder. A peculiar smile rested on the face of the lady, which seemed reflected from the countenances of her attendants, but not a word was said on the subject of the recent incident.

Their reticence continued until the rocky shores of the Isle of Skye were reached, and the boat was put into one of the

many inlets that break its irregular contour. Silence, indeed, was maintained until they had landed on a rocky shelf, and the boat had pushed off on its return journey. Then Flora McDonald spoke,—

"So far we are safe," she said. "But I confess I was frightfully scared when that patrol-boat stopped us."

"You did not look so," said Betty Bruce, in a voice of masculine depth.

"I did not dare to," she answered. "If I had looked what I felt, we would never have passed. But let us continue our journey. We have no time to spare."

It was a rocky and desolate spot on which they stood, the rugged rock-shelves which came to the water's edge gradually rising to high hills in the distance. But as they advanced inland the appearance of the island improved, and signs of human habitation appeared. They had not gone far before the huts of fishermen and others became visible, planted in little clearings among the rocks, whose inmates looked with eyes of curiosity on the strangers. This was particularly the case when they passed through a small village, at no great distance inland. Of the three persons, it was the maid-servant, Betty Bruce, that attracted most attention, her appearance giving rise to some degree of amusement. Nor was this without reason. The woman was so ungainly in appearance, and walked with so awkward a stride, that the skirts which clung round her heels seemed a decided incumbrance to her progress. Her face, too, presented a roughness that gave hint of possibilities of a beard. She kept unobtrusively behind her mistress, her peculiar gait set the goodwives of the village whispering and laughing as they pointed her out.

For several miles the travellers proceeded, following the general direction of the coast, and apparently endeavoring to avoid all collections of human habitations. Now and then, however, they met persons in the road, who gazed at them with the same curiosity as those they had already passed.

The scenery before them grew finer as they advanced. Near nightfall they came near mountainous elevations, abutting on the sea-shore in great cliffs of columnar basalt, a thousand feet and more in height, over which leaped here and there waterfalls of great height and beauty. Their route now lay along the base of these cliffs, on the narrow strip of land between them and the sea.

Here they paused, just as the sun was shedding its last rays upon the water. Seating themselves on some protruding boulders, they entered into conversation, the fair Flora's face presenting an expression of doubt and trouble.

"I do not like the looks of the people," she said. "They watch you too closely. And we are still in the country of Sir Alexander, a land filled with our enemies. If you were only a better imitation of a woman."

"Faith, I fear I'm but an awkward sample," answered Betty, in a voice of man like tone. "I have been doing my best, but—"

"But the lion cannot change his skin," supplied the lady. "This will not do. We must take other measures. But our first duty is to find the shelter fixed for to-night. It will not do to tarry here till it grows dark."

They rose and proceeded, following Malcolm, who acted as guide. The place was deserted, and Betty stepped out with a stride of most unmaidenly length, as if to gain relief from her late restraint. Her manner now would have revealed the secret to any shrewd observer. The ungainly maid-servant was evidently a man in disguise.

We cannot follow their journey closely. It will suffice to say that the awkwardness of the assumed Betty gave rise to suspicion on more than one occasion in the next day or two. It became evident that, if the secret of the disguised personage was not to be discovered, they must cease their wanderings; some

shelter must be provided, and a safer means of progress be devised.

A shelter was obtained,—one that promised security. In the base of the basaltic cliffs of which we have spoken many caverns had been excavated by the winter surges of the sea. In one of these, near the village of Portree, and concealed from too easy observation, the travellers found refuge. Food was obtained by Malcolm from the neighboring settlement, and some degree of comfort provided for. Leaving her disguised companion in this shelter, with Malcolm for company, Flora went on. She had devised a plan of procedure not without risk, but which seemed necessary. It was too perilous to continue as they had done during the few past days.

Leaving our travellers thus situated, we will go back in time to consider the events which led to this journey in disguise. It was now July, the year being 1746. On the 16th of April of the same year a fierce battle had been fought on Culloden moor between the English army under the Duke of Cumberland and the host of Highlanders led by Charles Edward Stuart, the "Young Pretender." Fierce had been the fray, terrible the bloodshed, fatal the defeat of the Highland clans. Beaten and broken, they had fled in all directions for safety, hotly pursued by their victorious foes. Prince Charles had fought bravely on the field; and, after the fatal disaster, had fled—having with him only a few Irish officers whose good faith he trusted—to Gortuleg, the residence of Lord Lovat. If he hoped for shelter there, he found it not. He was overcome with distress; Lord Lovat, with fear and embarrassment. No aid was to be had from Lovat, and, obtaining some slight refreshment, the prince rode on.

He obtained his next rest and repast at Invergarry, the castle of the laird of Glengarry, and continued his journey into the west Highlands, where he found shelter in a village called Glenbeisdale, near where he had landed on his expedition for the conquest of England. For nearly a year he had been in Scotland, pursuing a career of mingled success and defeat, and was now

back at his original landing place, a hopeless fugitive. Here some of the leaders of his late army communicated with him. They had a thousand men still together, and vowed that they would not give up hope while there were cattle in the Highlands or meal in the Lowlands. But Prince Charles refused to deal with such a forlorn hope. He would seek France, he said, and return with a powerful reinforcement. With this answer he left the mainland, sailing for Long Island, in the Hebrides, where he hoped to find a French vessel.

And now dangers, disappointments, and hardships surrounded the fugitive. The rebellion was at an end; retribution was in its full tide. The Highlands were being scoured, the remnants of the defeated army scattered or massacred, the adherents of the Pretender seized, and Charles himself was sought for with unremitting activity. The islands in particular were closely searched, as it was believed that he had fled to their shelter. His peril was extreme. No vessel was to be had. Storms, contrary winds, various disappointments attended him. He sought one hiding-place after another in Long Island and those adjoining, exposed to severe hardships, and frequently having to fly from one place of shelter to another. In the end he reached the island of South Uist, where he found a faithful friend in Clanranald, one of his late adherents. Here he was lodged in a ruined forester's hut, situated near the summit of the wild mountain called Corradale. Even this remote and almost inaccessible shelter grew dangerous. The island was suspected, and a force of not less than two thousand men landed on it, with orders to search the interior with the closest scrutiny, while small war-vessels, cutters, armed boats, and the like surrounded the island, rendering escape by water almost hopeless. It was in this critical state of affairs that the devotion of a woman came to the rescue of the imperilled Prince. Flora McDonald was visiting the family of Clanranald. She wished to return to her home in Skye. At her suggestion the chief provided her with the attendants whom we have already described, her awkward maid-servant Betty Bruce being no less a personage than the wandering prince. The daring and devoted lady was step daughter to a chief

of Sir Alexander McDonald's clan, who was on the king's side, and in command of a section of the party of search. From him Flora obtained a passport for herself and two servants, and was thus enabled to pass in safety through the cordon of investing boats. No one suspected the humble-looking Betty Bruce as being a flying prince. And so it was that the bird had passed through the net of the fowlers, and found shelter in the island of Skye.

And now we must return to the fugitives, whom we left concealed in a basaltic cavern on the rocky coast of Skye. The keen-witted Flora had devised a new and bold plan for the safety of her charge, no less a one than that of trusting the Lady Margaret McDonald, wife of Sir Alexander, with her dangerous secret. This seemed like penetrating the very stronghold of the foe; but the women of the Highlands had—most of them—a secret leaning to Jacobitism, and Flora felt that she could trust her high-born relative. She did so, telling Lady Margaret her story. The lady heard it with intense alarm. What to do she did not know. She would not betray the prince, but her husband was absent, her house filled with militia officers, and shelter within its walls impossible. In this dilemma she suggested that Flora should conduct the disguised prince to the house of McDonald of Kingsburgh, her husband's steward, a brave and intelligent man, in whom she could fully trust.

Returning to the cavern, the courageous girl did as suggested, and had the good fortune to bring her charge through in safety, though more than once suspicion was raised. At Kingsburgh the connection of Flora McDonald with the unfortunate prince ended. Her wit and shrewdness had saved him from inevitable capture. He was now out of the immediate range of search of his enemies, and must henceforth trust to his own devices.

From Kingsburgh the fugitive sought the island of Rasa, led by a guide supplied by McDonald, and wearing the dress of a servant. The laird of Rasa had taken part in the rebellion, and his domain had been plundered in consequence. Food was scarce,

and Charles suffered great distress. He next followed his seeming master to the land of the laird of MacKinnon, but, finding himself still in peril, felt compelled to leave the islands, and once more landed on the Scottish mainland at Loch Nevis.

Here his peril was as imminent as it had been at South Uist. It was the country of Lochiel, Glengarry, and other Jacobite chiefs, and was filled with soldiers, diligently seeking the leaders of the insurrection. Charles and his guides found themselves surrounded by foes. A complete line of sentinels, who crossed each other upon their posts, inclosed the district in which he had sought refuge, and escape seemed impossible. The country was rough, bushy, and broken; and he and his companions were forced to hide in defiles and woodland shelters, where they dared not light a fire, and from which they could see distant soldiers and hear the calls of the sentinels.

For two days they remained thus cooped up, not knowing at what minute they might be taken, and almost hopeless of escape. Fortunately, they discovered a deep and dark ravine that led down from the mountains through the line of sentries. The posts of two of these reached to the edges of the ravine, on opposite sides. Down this gloomy and rough defile crept noiselessly the fugitives, hearing the tread of the sentinels above their heads as they passed the point of danger. No alarm was given, and the hostile line was safely passed. Once more the fugitive prince had escaped.

And now for a considerable time Charles wandered through the rough Highland mountains, his clothes in rags, often without food and shelter, and not daring to kindle a fire; vainly hoping to find a French vessel hovering off the coast, and at length reaching the mountains of Strathglass. Here he, with Glenaladale, his companion at that time, sought shelter in a cavern, only to find it the lurking place of a gang of robbers, or rather of outlaws, who had taken part in the rebellion, and were here in hiding. There were seven of these, who lived on sheep and cattle raided in the surrounding country.

These men looked on the ragged suppliants of their good will at first as fugitives of their own stamp. But they quickly recognized, in the most tattered of the wanderers, that "Bonnie Charlie" for whom they had risked their lives upon the battle-field, and for whom they still felt a passionate devotion. They hailed his appearance among them with gladness, and expressed themselves as his ardent and faithful servants in life and death.

In this den of robbers the unfortunate prince was soon made more comfortable than he had been since his flight from Culloden. Their faith was unquestionable, their activity in his service unremitting. Food was abundant, and, in addition, they volunteered to provide him with decent clothing, and tidings of the movements of the enemy. The first was accomplished somewhat ferociously. Two of the outlaws met the servant of an officer, on his way to Fort Augustus with his master's baggage. This poor fellow they killed, and thus provided their guest with a good stock of clothing. Another of them, in disguise, made his way into Fort Augustus. Here he learned much about the movements of the troops, and, eager to provide the prince with something choice in the way of food, brought him back a pennyworth of gingerbread,—a valuable luxury to his simple soul.

For three weeks Charles remained with these humble but devoted friends. It was not easy to break away from their enthusiastic loyalty.

"Stay with us," they said; "the mountains of gold which the government has set upon your head may induce some gentleman to betray you, for he can go to a distant country and live upon the price of his dishonor. But to us there exists no such temptation. We can speak no language but our own, we can live nowhere but in this country, where, were we to injure a hair of your head, the very mountains would fall down to crush us to death. Do not leave us, then. You will nowhere be so safe as with us."

This advice was hardly to Charles's taste. He preferred court-life in France to cave-life in Scotland, and did not cease his efforts to escape. His purposes were aided by an instance of enthusiastic devotion. A young man named McKenzie, son of an Edinburgh goldsmith, and a fugitive officer from the defeated army, happened to resemble the prince closely in face and person. He was attacked by a party of soldiers, defended himself bravely, and when mortally wounded, cried out, "Ah, villains, you have slain your prince!"

His generous design proved successful. His head was cut off, and sent to London as that of the princely fugitive, which it resembled so closely that it was some time before the mistake was discovered. This error proved of the utmost advantage to the prince. The search was greatly relaxed, and he found it safe to leave the shelter of his cave, and seek some of his late adherents, of whose movements he had been kept informed. He therefore bade farewell to the faithful outlaws, with the exception of two, who accompanied him as guides and guards.

Safety was not yet assured. It was with much difficulty, and at great risk, that he succeeded in meeting his lurking adherents, Lochiel and Cluny McPherson, who were hiding in Badenoch. Here was an extensive forest, the property of Cluny, extending over the side of a mountain, called Benalder. In a deep thicket of this forest was a well-concealed hut, called the Cage. In this the fugitives took up their residence, and lived there in some degree of comfort and safety, the game of the forest and its waters supplying them with abundant food.

Word was soon after brought to Charles that two French frigates had arrived at Lochnanuagh, their purpose being to carry him and other fugitives to France. The news of their arrival spread rapidly through the district, which held many fugitives from Culloden, and on the 20th of September Charles and Lochiel, with nearly one hundred others of his party, embarked on these friendly vessels, and set sail for France. Cluny McPherson refused to go. He remained concealed in his own

country for several years, and served as the agent by which Charles kept up a correspondence with the Highlanders.

On September 29 the fugitive prince landed near Morlaix, in Brittany, having been absent from France about fourteen months, five of which had been months of the most perilous and precarious series of escapes and adventures ever recorded of a princely fugitive in history or romance. During these months of flight and concealment several hundred persons had been aware of his movements, but none, high or low, noble or outlaw, had a thought of betraying his secret. Among them all, the devoted Flora McDonald stands first, and her name has become historically famous through her invaluable services to the prince.

CHAPTER XXVI

TRAFALGAR AND THE DEATH OF NELSON

From the main peak of the flag ship Victory hung out Admiral Nelson's famous signal, "England expects every man to do his duty!" an inspiring appeal, which has been the motto of English warriors since that day. The fleet under the command of the great admiral was drawing slowly in upon the powerful naval array of France, which lay awaiting him off the rocky shore of Cape Trafalgar. It was the morning of October 21, 1805, the dawn of the greatest day in the naval history of Great Britain.

Let us rapidly trace the events which led up to this scene,—the prologue to the drama about to be played. The year 1805 was one of threatening peril to England. Napoleon was then in the ambitious youth of his power, full of dreams of universal empire, his mind set on an invasion of the pestilent little island across the channel which should rival the "Invincible Armada" in power and far surpass it in performance.

Gigantic had been his preparations. Holland and Belgium were his, their coast-line added to that of France. In a hundred harbors all was activity, munitions being collected, and flat-bottomed boats built, in readiness to carry an invading army to England's shores. The landing of William the Conqueror in 1066 was to be repeated in 1805. The land forces were encamped at Boulogne. Here the armament was to meet. Meanwhile, the allied fleets of France and Spain were to patrol the Channel, one part of them to keep Nelson at bay, the other part to escort the flotilla bearing the invading army.

While Napoleon was thus busy, his enemies were not idle. The war-ships of England hovered near the French ports, watching all movements, doing what damage they could. Lord Nelson keenly observed the hostile fleet. To throw him off the track, two French naval squadrons set sail for the West Indies, as

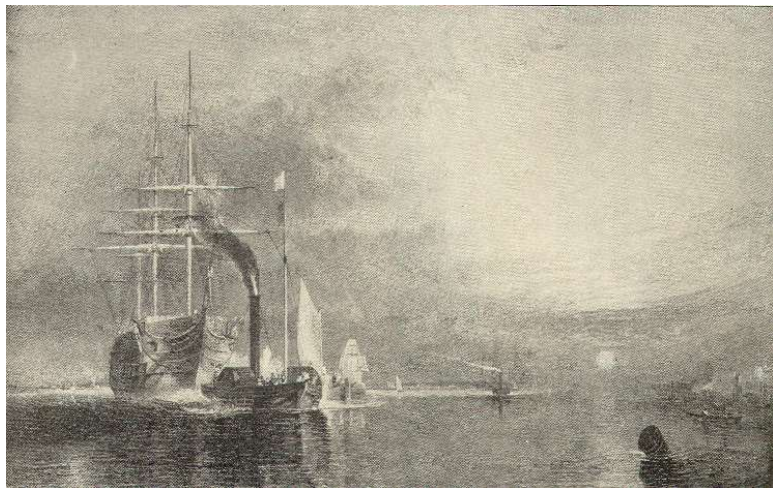
if to attack the British islands there. Nelson followed. Suddenly turning, the decoying squadron came back under a press of sail, joined the Spanish fleet, and sailed for England. Nelson had not returned, but a strong fleet remained, under Sir Robert Calder, which was handled in such fashion as to drive the hostile ships back to the harbor of Cadiz.

Such was the state of affairs when Nelson again reached England. Full of the spirit of battle, he hoisted his flag on the battle-ship Victory, and set sail in search of his foes. There were twenty-seven line-of-battle ships and four frigates under his command. The French fleet, under Admiral Villeneuve, numbered thirty-three sail of the line and seven frigates. Napoleon, dissatisfied with the disinclination of his fleet to meet that of England, and confident in its strength, issued positive orders, and Villeneuve sailed out of the harbor of Cadiz, and took position in two crescent-shaped lines off Cape Trafalgar. As soon as Nelson saw him he came on with the eagerness of a lion in sight of its prey, his fleet likewise in two lines, his signal flags fluttering with the inspiring order, "England expects every man to do his duty."

The wind was from the west, blowing in light breezes; a long, heavy swell ruffled the sea. Down came the great ships, Collingwood, in the Royal Sovereign, commanding the lee-line; Nelson, in the Victory, leading the weather division. One order Nelson had given, which breathes the inflexible spirit of the man. "His admirals and captains, knowing his object to be that of a close and decisive action, would supply any deficiency of signals, and act accordingly. In case signals cannot be seen or clearly understood, no captain can do wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy."

Nelson wore that day his admiral's frock-coat, bearing on the breast four stars, the emblems of the orders with which he had been invested. His officers beheld these ornaments with apprehension. There were riflemen on the French ships. He was offering himself as a mark for their aim. Yet none dare suggest that he should remove or cover the stars. "In honor I gained

them, and in honor I will die with them," he had said on a previous occasion.



THE OLD TEMERAIRE.

The long swell set in to the bay of Cadiz. The English ships moved with it, all sail set, a light southwest wind filling their canvas. Before them lay the French ships, with the morning sun on their sails, presenting a stately and beautiful appearance.

On came the English fleet, like a flock of giant birds swooping low across the ocean. Like a white flock at rest awaited the French three-deckers. Collingwood's line was the first to come into action, Nelson steering more to the north, that the flight of the enemy to Cadiz, in case of their defeat, should be prevented. Straight for the centre of the foeman's line steered the Royal Sovereign, taking her station side by side with the Santa Anna, which she engaged at the muzzle of her guns.

"What would Nelson give to be here!" exclaimed Collingwood, in delight.

"See how that noble fellow, Collingwood, carries his ship into action!" responded Nelson from the deck of the Victory.

It was not long before the two fleets were in hot action, the British ships following Collingwood's lead in coming to close quarters with the enemy. As the Victory approached, the French ships opened with broadsides upon her, in hopes of disabling her before she could close with them. Not a shot was returned, though men were falling on her decks until fifty lay dead or wounded, and her main-topmast, with all her studding-sails and booms, had been shot away.

"This is too warm work, Hardy, to last," said Nelson, with a smile, as a splinter tore the buckle from the captain's shoe.

Twelve o'clock came and passed. The Victory was now well in. Firing from both sides as she advanced, she ran in side by side with the Redoubtable, of the French fleet, both ships pouring broadsides into each other. On the opposite side of the Redoubtable came up the English ship Temeraire, while another ship of the enemy lay on the opposite side of the latter.

The four ships lay head to head and side to side, as close as if they had been moored together, the muzzles of their guns almost touching. So close were they that the middle- and lower-deck guns of the Victory had to be depressed and fired with light charges, lest their balls should pierce through the foe and injure the Temeraire. And lest the Redoubtable should take fire from the lower-deck guns, whose muzzles touched her side when they were rim out, the fireman of each gun stood ready with a bucket of water to dash into the hole made by the shot. While the starboard guns of the Victory were thus employed, her larboard guns were in full play upon the Bucentaure and the huge Santissima Trinidad. This warm work was repeated through the entire fleet. Never had been closer and hotter action.

The fight had reached its hottest when there came a tragical event that rendered the victory at Trafalgar, glorious as it was, a loss to England. The Redoubtable, after her first broadside, had closed her lower-deck ports, lest the English should board her through them. She did not fire another great gun during the action. But her tops, like those of her consorts,

were filled with riflemen, whose balls swept the decks of the assailing ships. One of these, fired from the mizzen-top of the Redoubtable, not fifteen yards from where Nelson stood, struck him on the left shoulder, piercing the epaulette. It was about quarter after one, in the heat of the action. He fell upon his face.

"They have done for me, at last, Hardy," he said, as his captain ran to his assistance.

"I hope not!" cried Hardy.

"Yes," he replied, "my backbone is shot through."

A thorough sailor to the last, he saw, as they were carrying him below, that the tiller ropes which had been shot away were not replaced, and ordered that this should be immediately attended to. Then, that he might not be seen by the crew, he spread his handkerchief over his face and his stars. But for his needless risk in revealing them before, he might have lived.

The cockpit was crowded with the wounded and dying men. Over their bodies he was carried, and laid upon a pallet in the midshipmen's berth. The wound was mortal. A brief examination showed this. He had known it from the first, and said to the surgeon,—

"Leave me, and give your services to those for whom there is some hope. You can do nothing for me."

Such was the fact. All that could be done was to fan him, and relieve his intense thirst with lemonade. On deck the fight continued with undiminished fury. The English star was in the ascendant. Ship after ship of the enemy struck, the cheers of the crew of the Victory heralding each surrender, while every cheer brought a smile of joy to the face of the dying veteran.

"Will no one bring Hardy to me?" he repeatedly cried. "He must be killed! He is surely dead!"

In truth, the captain dared not leave the deck. More than an hour elapsed before he was able to come down. He grasped in silence the hand of the dying admiral.

"Well, Hardy, how goes the day with us?" asked Nelson, eagerly.

"Very well," was the answer. "Ten ships have struck; but five of the van have tacked, and show an intention to bear down upon the Victory. I have called two or three of our fresh ships around, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing."

"I hope none of our ships have struck," said Nelson.

"There is no fear of that," answered Hardy. Then came a moment's silence, and then Nelson spoke of himself.

"I am a dead man, Hardy," he said. "I am going fast; it will be all over with me soon. Come nearer to me. Let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair and all other things belonging to me."

"I hope it is not so bad as that," said Hardy, with much emotion. "Dr. Beatty must yet hold out some hope of life."

"Oh, no, that is impossible," said Nelson. "My back is shot through: Beatty will tell you so."

Captain Hardy grasped his hand again, the tears standing in his eyes, and then hurried on deck to hide the emotion he could scarcely repress.

Life slowly left the frame of the dying hero: every minute he was nearer death. Sensation vanished below his breast. He made the surgeon test and acknowledge this.

"You know I am gone," he said. "I know it. I feel something rising in my breast which tells me so."

"Is your pain great?" asked Beatty.

"So great, that I wish I were dead. Yet," he continued, in lower tones, "one would like to live a little longer, too."

A few moments of silence passed; then he said in the same low tone,—

"What would become of my poor Lady Hamilton if she knew my situation?"

Fifteen minutes elapsed before Captain Hardy returned. On doing so, he warmly grasped Nelson's hand, and in tones of joy congratulated him on the victory which he had come to announce.

"How many of the enemy are taken, I cannot say," he remarked; "the smoke hides them; but we have not less than fourteen or fifteen."

"That's well," cried Nelson, "but I bargained for twenty. Anchor, Hardy, anchor!" he commanded, in a stronger voice.

"Will not Admiral Collingwood take charge of the fleet?" hinted Hardy.

"Not while I live, Hardy," answered Nelson, with an effort to lift himself in his bed. "Do you anchor"

Hardy started to obey this last order of his beloved commander. In a low tone Nelson called him back.

"Don't throw me overboard, Hardy," he pleaded. "Take me home that I may be buried by my parents, unless the king shall order otherwise. And take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy; take care of poor Lady Hamilton. Kiss me, Hardy."

The weeping captain knelt and kissed him. "Now I am satisfied," said the dying hero. "Thank God, I have done my duty."

Hardy stood and looked down in sad silence upon him, then again knelt and kissed him on the forehead.

"Who is that?" asked Nelson.

"It is I, Hardy," was the reply.

"God bless you, Hardy," came in tones just above a whisper.

Hardy turned and left. He could bear no more. He had looked his last on his old commander.

"I wish I had not left the deck," said Nelson; "for I see I shall soon be gone."

It was true; life was fast ebbing.

"Doctor," he said to the chaplain, "I have not been a *great* sinner." He was silent a moment, and then continued, "Remember that I leave Lady Hamilton and my daughter Horatia as a legacy to my country."

Words now came with difficulty.

"Thank God, I have done my duty," he said, repeating these words again and again. They were his last words. He died at half-past four, three and a quarter hours after he had been wounded.

Meanwhile, Nelson's prediction had been realized: twenty French ships had struck their flags. The victory of Trafalgar was complete; Napoleon's hope of invading England was at an end. Nelson, dying, had saved his country by destroying the fleet of her foes. Never had a sun set in greater glory than did the life of this hero of the navy of Great Britain, the ruler of the waves.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE MASSACRE OF AN ARMY

The sentinels on the ramparts of Jelalabad, a fortified post held by the British in Afghanistan, looking out over the plain that extended northward and westward from the town, saw a singular-looking person approaching. He rode a pony that seemed so jaded with travel that it could scarcely lift a foot to continue, its head drooping low as it dragged slowly onward. The traveller seemed in as evil plight as his horse. His head was bent forward upon his breast, the rein had fallen from his nerveless grasp, and he swayed in the saddle as if he could barely retain his seat. As he came nearer, and lifted his face for a moment, he was seen to be frightfully pale and haggard, with the horror of an untold tragedy in his bloodshot eyes. Who was he? An Englishman, evidently, perhaps a messenger from the army at Cabul. The officers of the fort, notified of his approach, ordered that the gates should be opened. In a short time man and horse were within the walls of the town.

So pitiable and woe-begone a spectacle none there had ever beheld. The man seemed almost a corpse on horseback. He had fairly to be lifted from his saddle, and borne inward to a place of shelter and repose, while the animal was scarcely able to make its way to the stable to which it was led. As the traveller rested, eager questions ran through the garrison. Who was he? How came he in such a condition? What had he to tell of the army in the field? Did his coming in this sad plight portend some dark disaster?

This curiosity was shared by the officer in command of the fort. Giving his worn-out guest no long time to recover, he plied him with inquiries.

"You are exhausted," he said. "I dislike to disturb you, but I beg leave to ask you a few questions."

"Go on sir; I can answer," said the traveller, in a weary tone.

"Do you bring a message from General Elphinstone,—from the army?"

"I bring no message. There is no army,—or, rather, I am the army," was the enigmatical reply.

"You the army? I do not understand you."

"I represent the army. The others are gone,—dead, massacred, prisoners,—man, woman, and child. I, Doctor Brydon, am the army,—all that remains of it."

The commander heard him in astonishment and horror. General Elphinstone had seventeen thousand soldiers and camp-followers in his camp at Cabul. "Did Dr. Brydon mean to say—"

"They are all gone," was the feeble reply. "I am left; all the others are slain. You may well look frightened, sir; you would be heart-sick with horror had you gone through my experience. I have seen an army slaughtered before my eyes, and am here alone to tell it."

It was true; the army had vanished; an event had happened almost without precedent in the history of the world, unless we instance the burying of the army of Cambyses in the African desert. When Dr. Brydon was sufficiently rested and refreshed he told his story. It is the story we have here to repeat.

In the summer of 1841 the British army under General Elphinstone lay in cantonments near the city of Cabul, the capital of Afghanistan, in a position far from safe or well chosen. They were a mile and a half from the citadel,—the Bala Hissar,—with a river between. Every corner of their cantonments was commanded by hills or Afghan forts. Even their provisions were beyond their reach, in case of attack, being stored in a fort at some distance from the cantonments. They

were in the heart of a hostile population. General Elphinstone, trusting too fully in the puppet of a khan who had been set up by British bayonets, had carelessly kept his command in a weak and untenable position.

The general was old and in bad health; by no means the man for the emergency. He was controlled by bad advisers, who thought only of returning to India, and discouraged the strengthening of the fortress. The officers lost heart on seeing the supineness of their leader. The men were weary of incessant watching, annoyed by the insults of the natives, discouraged by frequent reports of the death of comrades, who had been picked off by roving enemies. The ladies alone retained confidence, occupying themselves in the culture of their gardens, which, in the delightful summer climate of that situation, rewarded their labors with an abundance of flowers.

As time went on the situation grew rapidly worse. Akbar Khan, the leading spirit among the hostile Afghans, came down from the north and occupied the Khoord Cabul Pass, the only way back to Hindustan. Ammunition was failing, food was decreasing, the enemy were growing daily stronger and more aggressive. Affairs had come to such a pass that but one of two things remained to do,—to leave the cantonments and seek shelter in the citadel till help should arrive, or to endeavor to march back to India.

On the 23rd of December the garrison was alarmed by a frightful example of boldness and ferocity in the enemy. Sir William Macnaughten, the English envoy, who had left the works to treat with the Afghan chiefs, was seized by Akbar Khan and murdered on the spot, his head, with its green spectacles, being held up in derision to the soldiers within the works.

The British were now "advised" by the Afghans to go back to India. There was, in truth, nothing else to do. They were starving where they were. If they should fight their way to the citadel, they would be besieged there without food. They must

go, whatever the risk or hardships. On the 6th of January the fatal march began,—a march of four thousand five hundred soldiers and twelve thousand camp-followers, besides women and children, through a mountainous country, filled with savage foes, and in severe winter weather.

The first day's march took them but five miles from the works, the evacuation taking place so slowly that it was two o'clock in the morning before the last of the force came up. It had been a march of frightful conditions. Attacked by the Afghans on every side, hundreds of the fugitives perished in those first five dreadful miles. As the advance body waited in the snow for those in the rear to join them, the glare of flames from the burning cantonments told that the evacuation had been completed, and that the whole multitude was now at the mercy of its savage foes. It was evident that they had a frightful gantlet to run through the fire of the enemy and the winters chilling winds. The snow through which they had slowly toiled was reddened with blood all the way back to Cabul. Baggage was abandoned, and men and women alike pushed forward for their lives, some of them, in the haste of flight, but half-clad, few sufficiently protected from the severe cold.

The succeeding days were days of massacre and horror. The fierce hill-tribes swarmed around the troops, attacking them in front, flank, and rear, pouring in their fire from every point of vantage, slaying them in hundreds, in thousands, as they moved hopelessly on. The despairing men fought bravely. Many of the foe suffered for their temerity. But they were like prairie-wolves around the dying bison; the retreating force lay helpless in their hands; two new foes took the place of every one that fell.

Each day's horrors surpassed those of the last. The camp-followers died in hundreds from cold and starvation, their frost-bitten feet refusing to support them. Crawling in among the rugged rocks that bordered the road, they lay there helplessly awaiting death. The soldiers fell in hundreds. It grew worse as they entered the contracted mountain-pass through which their road led. Here the ferocious foe swarmed among the rocks, and

poured death from the heights upon the helpless fugitives. It was impossible to dislodge them. Natural breastworks commanded every foot of that terrible road. The hardy Afghan mountaineers climbed with the agility of goats over the hill-sides, occupying hundreds of points which the soldiers could not reach. It was a carnival of slaughter. Nothing remained for the helpless fugitives but to push forward with all speed through that frightful mountain-pass and gain as soon as possible the open ground beyond.

Few gained it. On the fourth day from Cabul there were but two hundred and seventy soldiers left. The fifth day found the seventeen thousand fugitives reduced to five thousand. A day more, and these five thousand were nearly all slain. Only twenty men remained of the great body of fugitives which had left Cabul less than a week before. This handful of survivors was still relentlessly pursued. A barrier detained them for a deadly interval under the fire of the foe, and eight of the twenty died in seeking to cross it. The pass was traversed, but the army was gone. A dozen worn-out fugitives were all that remained alive.

On they struggled towards Jelalabad, death following them still. They reached the last town on their road; but six of them had fallen. These six were starving. They had not tasted food for days. Some peasants offered them bread. They devoured it like famished wolves. But as they did so the inhabitants of the town seized their arms and assailed them. Two of them were cut down. The others fled, but were hotly pursued. Three of the four were overtaken and slain within four miles of Jelalabad. Dr. Brydon alone remained, and gained the fort alone, the sole survivor, as he believed and reported, of the seventeen thousand fugitives. The Afghan chiefs had boasted that they would allow only one man to live, to warn the British to meddle no more with Afghanistan. Their boast seemed literally fulfilled. Only one man had traversed in safety that "valley of the shadow of death."

Fortunately, there were more living than Dr. Brydon was aware of. Akbar Khan had offered to save the ladies and children

if the married and wounded officers were delivered into his hands. This was done. General Elphinstone was among the prisoners, and died in captivity, a relief to himself and his friends from the severe account to which the government would have been obliged to call him. Now for the sequel to this story of suffering and slaughter. The invasion of Afghanistan by the English had been for the purpose of protecting the Indian frontier. A prince, Shah Soojah, friendly to England, was placed on the throne. This prince was repudiated by the Afghan tribes, and to their bitter and savage hostility was due the result which we have briefly described. It was a result with which the British authorities were not likely to remain satisfied. The news of the massacre sent a thrill of horror through the civilized world. Retribution was the sole thought in British circles in India. A strong force was at once collected to punish the Afghans and rescue the prisoners. Under General Pollock it fought its way through the Khyber Pass and reached Jelalabad. Thence it advanced to Cabul, the soldiers, infuriated by the sight of the bleaching skeletons that thickly lined the roadway, assailing the Afghans with a ferocity equal to their own. Wherever armed Afghans were met death was their portion. Nowhere could they stand against the maddened English troops. Filled with terror, they fled for safety to the mountains, the invading force having terribly revenged their slaughtered countrymen.

It next remained to rescue the prisoners. They had been carried about from fort to fort, suffering many hardships and discomforts, but not being otherwise maltreated. They were given up to the British, after the recapture of Cabul, with the hope that this would satisfy these terrible avengers. It did so. The fortifications of Cabul were destroyed, and the British army was withdrawn from the country. England had paid bitterly for the mistake of occupying it. The bones of a slaughtered army paved the road that led to the Afghan capital.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE ROYAL AND DIAMOND JUBILEES OF QUEEN VICTORIA

In the year 1887 came a great occasion in the life of England's queen, that of the fiftieth anniversary of her reign, a year of holiday and festivity that extended to all quarters of the world, for the broad girdle of British dominion had during her reign extended to embrace the globe. India led the way, the rejoicing over the royal jubilee of its empress extending throughout its vast area, from the snowy passes of the Himalayas on the north to the tropic shores of Cape Comorin on the south. Other colonies joined in the festivities, the loyal Canadians vieing with the free-hearted Australians, the semi-bronzed Africanders and the planters of the West Indies, in the celebration of the joyous anniversary year.

In the history of England there have been only four such jubilees, the earlier ones being those of Henry III., Edward III., and George III. It is a curious coincidence, that of these three sovereigns preceding Victoria whose reigns extended over fifty years, each of them was the third of his name. Victoria broke the rule in this as well as in the breadth and splendor of the jubilee display and rejoicings. To show this a few lines must be devoted to these earlier occasions.

The reign of Henry III. was memorable as being that in which trial by jury was introduced and the first real English Parliament, that summoned by Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, was held. It was this that gives eclat to the jubilee year, 1265, for it was in that year that the first Parliament convened. Yet sorrow rather than rejoicing marked the year, for the horrors of civil war rent the land and the bloody battle of Evesham saddened all loyal souls.

The jubilee of Edward III. came in 1376, when that monarch entered the fiftieth year of his reign. This was a year fitted for rejoicing, for the age was one of glory and prosperity. The horrors of the "black death," which had swept the land some twenty years before, were forgotten and men were in a happy mood. We read of tournaments, processions, feasts and pageantry in which all the people participated. Yet sorrow came before the year ended, for the death of the "Black Prince," the most brilliant hero of chivalry, was sorely mourned by his father, the king, and by the subjects of the realm, while the rising clouds of civil war threw a gloom on the end of the jubilee year, as they had on that of Henry.

More than four centuries elapsed before another jubilee year arrived, that of George III., the fiftieth year of whose reign came in 1810. It was a year of festivities that spread widely over the land, the people entering into it with all the Anglo Saxon love of holiday. In addition to the grand state banquets, splendid balls, showy reviews and general illuminations, there were open-air feasts free to all, at which bullocks were roasted whole, while army and navy deserters were pardoned, prisoners of war set free, and a great subscription was made for the release from prison of poor debtors.

Yet there was little in the character of the king or the state of the country to justify these festivities. England was then in the throes of its struggle with Napoleon; the king had lost his reason, the Prince of Wales acting as regent; the only reason for rejoicing was that the inglorious career of George III. seemed nearing its end. Yet he survived for ten years more, not dying until 1820, and surpassing all predecessors in the length of his reign.

When, in the year 1887, Queen Victoria reached the fiftieth year of her reign, there were none of these causes for sorrow in her realm. England was in the height of prosperity, free from the results of blighting pestilence, disastrous wars, desolating famine, or any of the horrors that steep great nations in heart-breaking sorrow. The empire was immense in extent,

prosperous in all its parts, and the queen was beloved throughout her wide dominions as no monarch of England had ever been before. Thus it was a year in which the people could rejoice without a shadow to darken their joy and with warm love for their queen to make their hilarity a real instead of a simulated one.

It was in far-off India, of which Victoria had been proclaimed empress ten years before, that the first note of rejoicing was heard. The 16th of February was selected as the date of the imperial festival, which was celebrated all over the land, even in Mandalay, the capital of the newly-conquered state of Upper Burmah. Europeans and natives alike took part in the ceremonies and rejoicings, which embraced banquets, plays, reviews, illuminations, the distribution of honors, the opening in honor of the empress of libraries, colleges and hospitals, and at Gwalior the cancelling of the arrears of the land-tax amounting to five million dollars.

The fiftieth year of the queen's reign would be completed on the 20th of June, but in the preceding months of the year many preliminary ceremonies took place in England. Among these was a splendid reception of the queen at Birmingham, which city she visited on the 23rd of March. The streets were richly decorated with flags, festoons, triumphal arches, banks of flowers, and trophies illustrating the industries of that metropolis of manufacture, while the streets were thronged with half a million of rejoicing people. A striking feature of the occasion was a semi-circle of fifteen thousand school-children, a mile long, the teachers standing behind each school-group, and a continuous strain of "God Save the Queen "hailing the royal progress along the line.

On the 4th of May the queen received at Windsor Castle of the colonial governments, whose addresses showed that during her reign the colonial subjects of the empire had increased from less than 2,000,000 to more than 9,000,000 souls, the Indian subjects from 96,000,000 to 254,000,000, and those of minor dependencies from 2,000,000 to 7,000,000.

There were various other incidents connected with the Jubilee during May, one being a visit of the queen to the American "Wild West Show," and another the opening of the "People's Palace" at Whitechapel, in which fifteen thousand troops were ranged along seven miles of splendidly decorated streets, while the testimony of the people to their affection for their queen was as enthusiastic as it had been at Birmingham. Day after day other ceremonial occasions arrived, including banquets, balls, assemblies and public festivities of many kinds, from the feeding of four thousand of poor at Glasgow to a yacht race around the British Islands.

The great Jubilee celebration, however, was reserved for the 21st of June, the chief streets of London being given over to a host of decorators, who transformed them into a glowing bower of beauty. The route set aside for the imposing procession was one long array of brilliant color and shifting brightness almost impossible to describe and surpassing all former festive demonstrations.



NORTH FRONT OF WINDSOR CASTLE.

The line of the royal procession extended from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey, along which route windows and seats had been secured at fabulous prices, while

the throng of sightseers that densely crowded the streets was in the best of good humor.

As the procession moved slowly along from Buckingham Palace a strange silence fell upon the gossiping crowd as they awaited the coming of the aged queen, on her way to the old Abbey to celebrate in state the fiftieth year of her reign. When the head of the procession moved onward and the royal carriages came within sight, the awed feeling that had prevailed was followed by one of tumultuous enthusiasm, volley after volley of cheers rending the air as the carriage bearing the royal lady passed between the two dense lines of loyal spectators.

With a face tremulous with emotion the queen bowed from side to side in grateful courtesy to her acclaiming subjects, as did her companions, the Princess of Wales and the German Crown Princess, who had returned to her native land to take part in its holiday of patriotism.

Six cream-colored horses drew the stately carriage in which the royal party rode, the Duke of Cambridge and an escort accompanying it, while a body-guard of princes followed, the Prince of Wales being mounted on a golden chestnut horse and sharing with his mother the cheers of the throng. Preceding this escort and the queen's carriage was a series of carriages in which were seated the sumptuously appareled Indian princes, clothed in cloth of gold and wearing turbans glittering with diamonds and other precious gems. Prominent in the group of mounted princes was the German Crown Prince Frederick, who succeeded to the throne as Emperor Frederick III. in the following March and died in the following June, in less than a year from his appearance in the Jubilee. But there was no presage of his quick-coming death in his present appearance, his white uniform and plumed silver helmet attracting general admiration, while he sat his horse as proudly as a knight of old and was covered with medals and decorations significant of his prowess in battle. A gorgeous cavalcade of natives of India completed the procession, than which none of greater brilliance had ever been seen in London streets.

In the Abbey were gathered from nine to ten thousand spectators, of the noblest families of the land, and dressed in their most effective attire, while the lights brought out the glitter of thousands of gleaming gems. The queen herself, while dressed in rich black, wore a bonnet of white Spanish lace that glittered with diamonds.

As she entered the Abbey the organ pealed forth the strains of a triumphal march. There followed a Jubilee Thanksgiving Service, brief and simple, and special prayers by the Archbishop of Canterbury. As a finale to the impressive scene the queen, moved to deep emotion, embraced with warm affection the princes and princesses of her house, and, with a deep bow to her foreign guests, withdrew from the scene, to return to the palace over the same route and through similar demonstrations of enthusiastic loyalty.

All over England and Ireland and in the colonies the day was celebrated by joyous celebrations, and in foreign lands, especially in the United States, the British residents fittingly honored the festive occasion.

On the following day, in Hyde Park, London, the queen drove in state down a long and happy line of twenty-seven thousand school-children, who had been made happy by a banquet and various amusements, besides being given a multitude of toys. The special feature of the occasion was the presentation by the queen of a specially manufactured jubilee-ring, which she gave with a kind speech to a very happy twelve-year-old girl who had attended school for several years without missing a session.

There was also a review of fifty-six thousand volunteers at Aldershot, a grand review of one hundred and thirty-five warships at Spithead, and other ceremonies, one of the chief of which was the laying by the queen, on the 4th of July, of the foundation stone of the Imperial Institute in the Albert Hall, this Institute being intended to stand as a sign of the essential unity of the British Empire.

The well-loved queen of the British nation was to live to celebrate in health and strength another jubilee year, that of the sixtieth anniversary of her reign, a distinction in which she stands alone in the history of the island kingdom. George III., who came nearest, died a few months before the completion of his sixty years' period. Had he lived to fulfil it there would have been no celebration, for he had become a broken wreck, blind and hopelessly insane, a man who lived despised and died unmourned.

But Victoria, though nearly eighty years of age, had still several years to live and was fully capable of performing the duties of her position. No monarch of England had reigned so long, none had enjoyed to so great an extent the love and respect of the people, in no previous reign had there been an equal progress in all that conduces to happiness and prosperity, in none had the dominion of the throne of Great Britain so widely extended, and it was felt for many reasons desirable to make the Diamond Jubilee, as it was termed, the occasion for the most magnificent demonstration that either England or the world had ever yet seen.

In all its features the observance lasted a month. It was not confined to the British Isles, but extended to the dominions of the queen throughout the world, in all of which some form of festive celebration took place. But the chief and great event of the occasion was the unrivalled procession in London on the 22nd of June, 1897, an affair in which all the world took part, not only representatives of the wide-sweeping possessions of the British crown, but dignitaries from most of the other nations of the world being present to add grandeur and completeness to the splendid display.

To describe it in full would need far more space than we have at command, and we must confine ourselves to its salient features. It began at midnight of the 21st, at which hour, under a clear, star-lit sky, the streets were already thronged with people in patient waiting and the bells of all London in tumultuous peal announced the advent of the jubilee day, while from the vast

throng ringing cheers and the singing of "God Save the Queen" hailed the happy occasion.

When the new day dawned and the auspicious sunlight brightened the scene, the streets devoted to the procession, more than six miles in length, appeared one vast blaze of color and display of decorations, the jubilee colors, red, white and blue, being everywhere seen, while the medley of wreaths, festoons, banners, colored globes and balloons, pennons, shields, fir and laurel evergreens, and other emblems of festivity, were innumerable and bewildering in their variety.

The march began at 9:45, and came as a welcome relief to the vast throng that for hours had been wearily waiting. Its first contingent was the colonial military procession, in which representatives of the whole world seemed present in distinctive attire. It was a moving picture of soldiers from every continent and many of the great isles of the sea, massed in a complex and extraordinary display.

Chief in command, following a squadron of the Royal Horse Guards, rode Lord Roberts, the famed and popular general, who was hailed with an uproar of shouts of "Hurrah for Bobs!" Close behind him came a troop of the Canadian Hussars and the Northwest mounted police, escorting Sir Wilfred Laurier, the premier of Canada. Premier Reid, of New South Wales, followed, escorted by the New South Wales Lancers and the Mounted Rifles, with their gray sombreros and black cocks' plumes.

In rapid succession, escorting the premiers of the several colonies, came other contingents of troops, each wearing some distinctive uniform, including those of Victoria, New Zealand, Queensland, Cape Colony, South Australia, Newfoundland, Tasmania, Natal and West Australia. Then came mounted troops from many other localities of the British empire, reaching from Hong Kong in the East to Jamaica in the West, and fairly girdling the globe in their wide variety.

Among the oddities of this complex multitude we may name the Zaptiehs from Cyprus, wearing the Turkish fez and bonnet; the olive-faced Borneo Dyaks; the Chinese police from Hong Kong, with saucepan-like hats shading their yellow faces; the Royal Niger Hausses, with their shaved heads and shining black skins; and other picturesquely attired examples of the men of varied climes.

Such was the colonial parade, a marvellous display from the "far-thrown" British realm. It was followed by the home military parade, which formed a carnival of gorgeous costume and color; scarlet and blue, gold, white and yellow; shining cuirasses and polished helmets, waving plumes and glittering tassels; splendid trappings for horses and more splendid ones for men; horse and foot and batteries of artillery; death-dealing weapons of every kind; all marching to the stirring music of richly accoutred bands and under treasured banners for which the men in the ranks were ready to die.

Led by Captain Ames, the tallest man in the British army, followed by four of the tallest troopers of the Life Guards,—a regiment of very tall men—the soldierly procession, as it wound onward under the propitious sun, seemed like nothing so much as some bright stream of burnished gold flowing between dark banks of human beings.

The colonial and military parade having passed, there followed that part of the display to which all this was preliminary, the royal procession, in which her Majesty the Queen was once more to show her venerable form to her assembled people. Preceding the gorgeous chariot of the queen, with its famous eight cream colored Hanoverian horses, appeared its military escort, a glittering cavalcade of splendidly uniformed officers, its chief figures being Lord Wolseley, Commander-in-chief of the Army, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cambridge, the Duke of Connaught, the Duke of Westminster, and the Lord Lieutenant of London.

In the escort were also included foreign military and naval dignitaries, in alphabetical order, beginning with Austria and ending with the United States, the latter represented by General Nelson A. Miles, in full uniform and riding a splendid horse. The whole was bewildering in its variety. From Germany came a deputation of the First Prussian Dragoon Guards, splendid looking soldiers, sent as a special compliment from the Kaiser. But most brilliant of all was a group of officers of the Imperial Service Troops of India, in the most gorgeous of uniforms. Behind these came in two-horse landaus the special envoys from the various American and European nations.

The escort of princes included the Marquis of Lorne, son-in-law of the queen, the Duke of York, the Duke of Fife, and among notable foreign princes, the Grand Duke Servius of Russia, the Crown Prince Dando of Montenegro, and Mohammed Ali Khan, brother of the Khedive of Egypt, who rode a pure white Arabian charger.

The hour of eleven had passed when Queen Victoria descended the steps of the palace and entered the awaiting carriage, each of whose horses was led by a "walking man" in the royal livery and a huntsman's black-velvet cap, while the postilions were dressed in scarlet and gold coats, white trousers and riding boots, each livery having cost \$600.

Through miles of wildly enthusiastic people the carriage wound, the chief feature of its progress being the formal crossing of the boundary of ancient London at Temple Bar, where the old ceremony of the submission of the city to the sovereign was performed, the Lord Mayor presenting the hilt of the city sword—"Queen Elizabeth's pearl sword,"—presented by the queen to the corporation during a ceremony in 1570. The touching of the hilt by the queen, in acceptance of submission, completed this ceremony, and the carriage rolled on to St. Paul's Cathedral, where a brief service was performed.

The next stop was at the Mansion House, where the Lord Mayor presented the Lord Mayoress and the attendant maids of

honor handed the queen a beautiful silver basket filled with gorgeous orchids. The palace was finally reached at 1:45, when a gun in Hyde Park announced that the procession was over, and the great event had passed into history. An outburst of cheers followed this final salute and the vast throng, millions in number, broke and vanished, carrying to their homes vivid memories of the most brilliant affair the great metropolis of London had ever seen.

THE END.



WARWICK CASTLE.