



STORIES FROM
ENGLISH HISTORY
BY ALFRED CHURCH



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FROM
ENGLISH HISTORY

FROM JULIUS CAESAR TO THE BLACK PRINCE

BY THE
REV. A. J. CHURCH, M.A.
Sometime Professor of Latin in University College, London

With many Illustrations

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EDWARD THE CONFESSOR'S CHAPEL, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

PREFACE

There are a few matters in these "Stories" which seem to call for brief explanations.

I have put the story of the Roman conquest of Britain into the form of a dialogue, because I wished to give what we may suppose to have been the *British* way of looking at this event.

The legends of Vortigern and Arthur are supposed to be told by a bard. They are not historical, but have, it is probable, some historical foundation. Of course they could not have been omitted altogether.

It was equally impossible to omit the various picturesque anecdotes which occur from time to time in the story of England. At the same time, it would have been out of place in such a book as this to discuss their genuineness. The authority for them is of a degree which varies greatly. Curiously enough, one of the best authenticated, the story of Canute and his followers, is one of the least probable. The courtiers whom the King rebukes are of an Oriental type, not in the least like the sturdy Danes or Englishmen with whom he had to do. Another, the well-known anecdote of the intercession of Queen Philippa for the citizens of Calais, comes to us on good authority, for it is told in detail by Froissart, who was ten years old when it happened, and who may very well have heard it from the Queen herself, to whose service he was attached for a considerable time. Yet reasons apparently cogent have been given for doubting its truth. Sometimes I have taken occasion to tell these stories with a certain reserve. I wish to make special acknowledgements of obligation to Professor Freeman's *Norman Conquest* (Macmillan), to the *Dictionary of English History* (Cassell & Co.), and to the series of *English History from Contemporary Writers* (D. Nutt).

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A.J.C.

Ashley Rectory, Tetbury. Aug. 7, 1894

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CHAPTER I

CAIUS VALERIUS AND HIS GRANDFATHER

(*Time*, A.D. 85.)

CAIUS. It has been a great day at the school, grandfather. The Governor himself came in to see the classes. He heard us recite. Only think! I was chosen to do it in my class, though there are at least six of the boys who are older than I.

GRANDFATHER. What was the book, and what was the piece? But very likely I have never heard it.

C. Oh yes! you know it. You have heard me say it again and again. I don't think that there is any piece that I like quite so well. It was the "Shield of Aeneas," out of Virgil.

G. Well, and how did you get on?

C. Fairly well, I hope; at least the Governor praised me. He said something kind about my manner, and told me that I had caught the true Roman accent. And when he had gone through all the classes, and we were assembled in the hall, he made a little speech to the teachers and us. He thanked the teachers for their diligence. "You have done all," he said, "that I expected, and more; though," he went on, turning to us, and smiling, "you have had excellent material to work upon." We clapped our hands vigorously at that, as you may suppose. Then came our turn. "I am glad to see so many of you here," he said. "The first year, and, I think, the second, after this school was opened, I could hardly have found a corporal's guard, and now you would more than make a company. I don't want you to cease to be Britons, but I want to make you Romans. As Romans, you have the whole world before you."

G. Very fine! but for my part, if they would have kept their whole world, and left us our little island, I would have been well content.

C. But, grandfather, don't you like the Romans, then? I am sure they have done a great deal for us. The school, for instance. Why, they say that there isn't so fine a school in all Gaul. And the Governor—what a fine fellow he is! There is nobody like him.



THE ROMAN GOVERNOR.

G. True, my boy, true. Agricola, as they call him, is a fine fellow. He is the very best Roman I ever saw. And his people have done a great deal for us. Baths, theatres, temples, fine houses, fine clothes, and I don't know what else. What a change from things as they were! Baths indeed! The rivers and lakes were good enough for us; as for theatres, we were quite content with the old man who sat in the chimney corner, and sang to his harp; an oak tree served well enough for a temple; there wasn't a stone house in the whole island, a chief lived under timber, and mud served a common man's turn; while for clothes, skins kept us warm, with a shirt of wool in winter. As for the schools, they are, I confess, the best thing they have brought us yet. In old time only the priests knew anything; now

the gate is open. Still, I wish that we in Britain had never seen these strangers from the South.

C. But, grandfather, this is all very strange. You never talked to me in this way before.

G. No, my boy, and never shall again. But you are growing up. You are just about to put on the man's gown, are you not?

C. Yes, three days hence.

G. Then it is about time that you should hear the story of your country. When you were a child, it was of no use to trouble you; in a few days you will be a man, and ought to have a man's thoughts. Now listen.

First I must tell you something about your family. Up to this time I have purposely kept you in ignorance. Well, you and I are all that are left of it, and I, you must understand, am not your grandfather, as you have been used to call me, but your great-grandfather. Your mother died when you were born, just sixteen years ago; how her father died you will hear in the course of my story. He, you must know, was my eldest son. Well, I was a man of nine lustres, as the Romans put it—and it is, I must own, a convenient way of reckoning—when the Romans first came to our island.

C. Oh, grandfather, I have always thought that it was many more years than that, far more indeed than the very oldest man in Britain can possibly remember.

G. True, my boy, you are right in a way; what I meant was, *the first time they came to stay*. Of course the other was long before my time, or any one else's that is now alive.

C. Yes, it was in Julius Caesar's time, the very first of the Roman emperors, and there have been eleven since him, counting the one who is reigning now. Julius—the "Divine Julius" our teacher calls him—wrote about it. We often have a dictation from his book.

G. Well, I have often heard the whole story from some one who had to do with it, and that was my grandfather.

C. And can you remember what he told you?

G. Perfectly; I was about ten years old when he died. He was a very old man, as you may suppose, but quite clear in his mind, and remembering everything that had happened in his youth, though he had no memory for things of yesterday. He could not remember, for instance, the name of the slave who waited on him, nor my name. He would tell the same story over and over again, forgetting that he had told it perhaps an hour before. I heard what I am going to tell you I don't know how many times, and as I have got something of the same kind of memory as he had, now that I am old—not so old as he was, though, by ten years at the least—I can almost remember his very words.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST COMING OF JULIUS CAESAR

"I was just thirty years old," my grandfather said, "and had been made a captain in the King's body-guard, when we heard that a great number of ships were being collected on the opposite coast. Our people, you know, had come from there not many years before, and there were always a number of people going backwards and forwards between the two countries. The man who brought the news was a trader who used to carry tin from here, and bring back wine and other things that are better in Gaul than they are here. He told us that it was the Roman general who was gathering the ships, that he meant to bring over an army in them, and to conquer the island. We had heard of these Romans for some few years past; that they had been fighting in Gaul, and had conquered a great part of the country. Some of our young men had gone over and fought on the side of the Gauls. They said that these Romans came from a country

that was a long way to the south, that they were not very strong or big, much shorter in fact than the Britons or Gauls, but wonderfully good fighters, with excellent armour and weapons, and very skilful in using them. The King, when he heard this, held a council, and it was decided that envoys should be sent to the Roman general—Caesar was his name—to ask him what he wanted. They were not only to bring back his answer, but were to find out for themselves a number of things that it was well for us to know, as, for instance, how many soldiers Caesar had with him, and when he was likely to come. The envoys returned in a few days' time. Caesar had told them that the Britons had injured him by helping his enemies in Gaul. This they must not do any more, and, as a pledge that they would not, they must give him hostages and pay tribute. Besides this, they found out for themselves that the Romans expected to find great riches in the island, especially pearls, of which they think very much. Caesar had, they thought, about eight or nine thousand men with him. Other kings in the island had sent envoys who had promised to give what Caesar asked, but our men did not believe that they really intended to do so. A day or two after they came back, we saw a Roman ship sailing along about a mile from the coast. We heard afterwards that one of the Gauls who favoured Caesar was in it, and that he had come to find out what he could about us. That, of course, could not have been very much, as he never dared leave his ship.

"Our King never thought of giving hostages, or paying tribute, so he sent at once to his chiefs, and to the other kings within reach, telling them what he had heard and found out, and asking them for help. Before long, there were many thousands of men—at least three times as many as Caesar had—collected together. Meanwhile, there were men watching along the coast for the first sight of the enemy's ships. It was towards the end of summer when we heard of their coming. Our men were all within easy reach, and before the Romans were within a mile of the shore, all the cliffs were lined with foot-soldiers and horse-soldiers and chariots. Of course they saw that it was of no use trying to land where the cliffs were. They would have been soon

destroyed by our darts and stones. So they rowed along looking for a convenient place, and we followed along the shore. It was not difficult, even for the men on foot, to keep up with them, for the ships were mostly heavy, and the rowers could move them but very slowly. In about an hour and a half's time—it was then nearly noon—they found what they wanted, a place where the shore was low, and there was deep water almost up to the edge. Even then, they found it no easy matter to get to land. We could see them standing on the sides of their ships, while their officers seemed to be urging them to jump in. But they did not know how deep the water was, for it was thick with sand, and then they had their heavy armour on, and they did not like to make the trial, all the less because we were standing ready for them, some on the shore, and others knee-deep in the water. We began to think that there was not much to be afraid of, when, all of a sudden, we found ourselves pelted with such a shower of darts and stones that there was no standing against it. The darts came with a force that no one could possibly put into his throw, and the stones were of such a size—as big as a man's head some of them—that I could not have thrown them twice the length of a spear, and I was able to throw as far as most men in those days. I was knocked over myself; and should have been drowned, being in the water at the time, had not my brother carried me ashore."

C. Where did the stones come from?

G. From the machines, catapults they call them. You must have seen them. The old man did not know anything about them, when he told the story, nor did any one else in Britain till the Romans came again. But to go on with his story.

"I came to myself very soon, and then I saw that we had all been obliged to get out of reach of the darts and stones. Very soon afterwards, I saw a man with something shining in his hand jump from one of the ships into the water."

C. Ah! that must have been the Eagle. The extract that was read by the master the other day was about it. "The officer who carried the eagle of the Tenth Legion"—this is what it

was—"prayed to the gods that what he was going to do might turn out well for the legion, and said, '*Comrades, jump down, except you want to let the enemy have the eagle; I at least will do my duty to my country and my general.*' This he shouted at the top of his voice, and at the same time jumped down into the sea and began to carry the eagle in the direction of the enemy."



ROMAN SOLDIERS WITH THE EAGLE.

G. Caesar wrote that, did he? So my grandfather was not mistaken. But to go on.

"A number of men from all the ships followed him. Even then we made a good fight of it. They were better armed, but then they didn't know the ground as we did. However, whenever they were hard pushed, boats full of their own people came to help them, and at last they made their way to the shore, driving us before them. We could not stand against their arms. Their heavy iron swords broke ours into pieces, while ours could hardly make any impression upon their armour. We thought it a lucky thing that they had no horsemen to pursue us with.

"The next day the King held a council. We were all greatly discouraged. It seemed no use to fight with these strangers. If they could land in spite of us, when the advantage was so much on our side, what was the good of trying to meet them on equal terms? So we sent envoys to the general, saying that we would do what he wanted, that is, make our submission to him and give hostages. He gave us ten days to fetch the hostages.

"But before the time was out the Romans got into great trouble. On the fourth day after their coming there was a very high tide, which always comes on the day after the full moon, and a strong wind blowing on to the shore with it. They did not seem to know anything about high tides. The ships had not been drawn up on the shore out of the reach of the sea, and those that were at anchor had their cables so short that they were sunk. Some of our chiefs, who were in their camp, waiting for the hostages, when they saw what had happened, made the best of their way to the King. 'We have these people in a trap,' they said. 'Their ships are so damaged that they will not be able to get away. They have no provisions to speak of. And, besides, there are not nearly so many as we thought. Let us starve them out. If we do, we shall not be troubled with the Romans coming over here again.' The King thought that this was excellent advice; only if we were to do the thing properly, we must keep our plans secret. So the people were told to go in and out of the camp as usual, with various things to sell to the soldiers. But an ambush was laid in the woods, and when one of the legions came out of the camp next day, and began to help themselves to the corn in the fields, as their way was, we attacked them without any notice. We knew exactly where they would be, for they had reaped all the wheat except one corner at the further end. It was all the better for us, because it had woods round it except on one side.

"At first we had the better of them, for they had piled their arms in a heap, that they might have their hands free for cutting the wheat, and some of them had taken off all their

armour except their helmets. We killed a good many of them before they could get hold of their swords and spears. And when they did get hold of them they were all in confusion, and this made us more than a match for them, in spite of their iron arms and armour. But before we had done anything like all we wanted, we saw another body of them coming out of their camp, all ready for fighting. Their chief general was leading them himself. One of my comrades knew him at once, for he had been in the camp, and had seen him also two or three times on the other side of the sea. He wasn't very tall or strong to look at, but I could see that he had a face like a hawk, for at one time I was not more than a hundred paces off. All our people who had been across the sea said that he was a wonderful man to plan and scheme. No one ever found him off his guard. You see that even then he had suspected something, and had this new army ready to help his men. If he had not done this, I reckon that not many of the others would have got back to the camp. As it was, there was very little more fighting that day. They were glad to leave off without losing any more men, and we were not strong enough to attack them when they were prepared to fight.

"For some days after it rained so hard that it was not possible to do anything. Still we weren't idle. We sent messengers to all the kings and chiefs within reach, begging them to come to our help with all the men that they could bring. 'The enemy,' we told them, 'are not nearly as strong as we thought'—that we knew from their camp being so small. 'Now is the time to get rid of them for good and all. Most of their ships are broken to pieces, and they will not be able to get away, if they are beaten. We shall kill every one of them, and it will be a long time before their countrymen trouble us again.'

"Some of the chiefs would not help, but most of those that were at all within reach either came themselves or sent their sons or brothers with bands of men. Day after day they came flocking into our camp, till we had about three times as many men as they had. Even then some of us were against fighting. I was one of them. I thought it better to wait and starve them out.

You see they hadn't a great store of food with them, and they could not get more without running some risk. If we kept on the watch while they were foraging for provisions we must find them, sooner or later, off their guard. However, we were overruled, and the party that was for fighting had their way. It was just what the Romans wanted. The first fine day they came out of their camp, and drew up their men in order of battle. We attacked them, and what I had expected happened. We could not stand against them in an open fight. That day it was all the worse, because most of our side had never seen Romans before, and lost all heart when they found what they were like. They had been loud in boasting of what they would do, but they broke and fled almost as soon as they came to close quarters. In that battle we lost more men than on all the days before put together. This time the Romans had some horsemen, which they had never had before. There were not many of them, but they cut down numbers of our men in the pursuit.

"After this every one agreed that it would be better to make peace; so we sent envoys to the Roman camp. Caesar was fairly gracious to them. The only difference he made in his terms was that the number of hostages must be doubled.

"The next morning we had a great surprise—the Romans were gone! They had mended their ships all unknown to us, and now they embarked during the night. We knew nothing about it, for the fires were left burning in their camp. Besides, we were too busy attending to the wounded and burying the dead to heed what they were doing. Not long after we heard that they had got across the sea without losing any of their ships. More's the pity, I thought to myself, for I felt sure they would come again."

CHAPTER III

THE SECOND COMING OF JULIUS CAESAR

C. IT looks, grandfather, as if Caesar was afraid, his going off so quietly.

G. Well, my boy, it seems to me that he was afraid in one way, and was not afraid in another. He found out that he had not brought enough men, and that he had come too late, for it was close upon the stormiest time of the year. And then he knew what our people ought to have done, and what he should have done, if he had been in their place. No doubt he was glad enough to get safe back across the sea; I take it there was more danger in that than in anything else. And that he was really afraid I don't believe, for, you see, he came again. But to go on with my grandfather's story.

"There was great rejoicing and not a little boasting when we found the camp empty. 'They have had enough of it,' some of us said, 'we shall not see anything more of them.' That I never believed; their general, I was quite sure, was not a man to draw back from anything that he had set his hand to. And so it turned out.

"We were not left long in doubt about what he was going to do. Before the winter was over we heard from our friends on the other side of the sea that all the ships in the country were being brought together to the harbours on the opposite coast, and that a number of new ones were being built. Later on we were told that the soldiers were being brought up to the coast, and that there would be more than three times as many as had come the year before. All this looked very serious, and as if the Romans really meant to conquer the island this time. There was some talk among us of all the kings in the country joining their forces together; but it came to nothing, at least then. All that was done was to gather as big an army as we could find, and to watch the

coast. Some time after midsummer—the days, I remember, were beginning to get a little shorter—the fleet came in sight, at much about the same place where it had been first seen the year before. But they seemed, somehow, to be coming the other way. They had been carried too far; I suppose, by the tide, and were now coming back. As soon as we caught sight of the first ships, we made haste to get down to the beach where they had landed the year before. But when we saw what a multitude of vessels there was—there must have been nearly ten times as many as had come the last time—our men got fairly frightened. In spite of all that some of the chiefs could do to keep them at their post, they left the shore. In the end, the Romans landed without any one trying to hinder them. Afterwards we found that many of the ships we saw had no soldiers on board, but belonged to merchants. They had come with the army to buy and sell—buy any plunder that the soldiers might get, and sell them wine and other things. However, I doubt whether if we had tried to stop them from landing we should have done any good.

"They did not give us any rest. The very day of their landing, their general, without even waiting to pitch his camp, as we had expected that he would do, marched up the country after us. We tried to stop him at a difficult place, where he had to cross a river and then make his way up a steep hill; but it was of no use. We could not stand against him, and had to fall back upon a strong fort that had been built about twelve miles from the sea. It was now early in the morning, for the Romans must have started very soon after midnight. The camp was a very strong place, and could not be taken, we thought, in a whole moon, except by starving the garrison out. Well, it was, as I said, early in the morning when the Romans came up, and they had taken the place before noon. The soldiers covered themselves with their shields while they filled up the ditch first, and then made a mound against the wall. And all the time they did this there was no getting at them, they stood so close together and so firm. I don't suppose that we wounded more than two or three. After a while we gave up trying; in fact we left the place to be taken.



ROMAN SOLDIERS ATTACKING A FORT.

"That night we held a council. Some were for giving in to the Romans without any more delay. 'We can't make any head against them,' they said, and it really seemed as if they were right. But most of us were for holding out, but how this was to be done we could not think. At last I took courage to say what I knew a great many besides myself were thinking. 'If we are to save Britain from being conquered, I said, 'we must unite, we must have one general.' For a time there was silence. At last some one cried out, 'And who is this one general to be?' 'Who can doubt?' I said; 'it must be King Caswallon,' There was no silence after that, you may be sure. Some clapped their hands, but only a few, many hissed or groaned. There was not a man in all Britain so hated and feared as King Caswallon. He was never quiet, but always trying to get hold of something that belonged to his neighbours, or to do them a mischief in some way. Still, as I said, he was the only man, because there was no one else who

had anything like the power, no one else who was great enough for the others to submit to him. People will obey a man whom they hate so long as they fear him; but they won't obey one whom they despise. Well, there was much talking, but at last all agreed that King Caswallon was to be asked to take the chief command.

By good luck we had some time to get our men together, for the Roman general had to go back to see after his ships, which had been damaged by a storm—so our spies told us. By the time he had finished looking after them, King Caswallon came up with his men. His cavalry and his chariots were the best in Britain, and we hoped that he would have better success than we had had. And so it turned out for a time. First there was a fight of cavalry, and the Roman horsemen followed our men so far into the woods that they were entangled. The King saw this and cut off a good many of them. A few days afterwards he found them quite off their guard. They were busy fortifying the camp, and seemed not to have any notion that we were in the neighbourhood. We crept up close to them under cover of the woods, which somehow they had forgotten to watch, and fell on the companies that were nearest to us. These we put to flight; two new companies, which we heard afterwards were reckoned to be the best soldiers they had, hardly did any better; we broke right through them, killing a good many, and carrying off the body of one of their chief officers. We lost hardly any of our men.

There was one thing, you know, in which we had the better of them, and that was our chariots. These had great scythes fastened to their axles, and did a great deal of damage to the enemy. Our men used to drive them up at full gallop, and it was very seldom that they did not manage to break through the Roman line with them. I have seen a dozen chariots go clean through a division. After a time they got more used to them, for they were wonderfully brave men. Then they took to killing the horses. But to the very last, the first rush of the chariots made a great impression upon them.

"Of course we were greatly encouraged by our success. Unluckily, it made us too bold. A few days afterwards we tried a regular pitched battle with the enemy, and were terribly beaten. As they had now a great number of cavalry, they pursued us a long way and killed a great many of our men. The next day half or more of those that escaped went away to their homes. They had had enough of fighting with the Romans.

"Very soon after this the Romans marched to the river Thames. That was then King Caswallon's boundary on the south. It could only be forded in one place, and that not at all easily, the water was so deep and the stream so strong. Besides, to make it all the harder, a number of stakes had been driven into the bed of the river. I was not there at the time, but I heard what happened afterwards from some one who was present. They did not stop for a moment when they came to the water's edge, though the stream was running strong, and the other bank was covered with men. They went into the river at a run, foot-soldiers and horse-soldiers mixed together. It was so deep that the men on foot had only their heads above the water. Even that did not stop them, nor, as you may suppose, did the men that were posted on the other bank. In fact, none of them stayed till the Romans got across. They said there was no standing against such wonderful soldiers.

"After this King Caswallon did not try to meet the enemy in open fight again. He sent all his foot-soldiers home, keeping only some of the horsemen and chariots. With these he followed the Romans on their march. Neither man nor beast was left in the open country; all were driven into the woods; and as soon as ever a Roman soldier left the main body to get a little plunder or to look for provisions—and they had not much food beyond what they could get in this way—he was sure to be cut off. The King could not stop the enemy from going on; still, they lost many men in this way.

"However, they did our people a great deal more harm than we could do them. There was not a village anywhere near their line of march that was not burnt, nor a house or field that

was not plundered, no, nor a fruit tree that was not cut down. Then some of our tribes began to fall off and make peace with the Romans. The first to do so were the Trinobantes. Caswallon had killed their king, and driven his son into banishment. They made a treaty with Caesar, sending him hostages, and a quantity of corn for his army. Others did the same. From some of their envoys the Romans learnt the way to Caswallon's chief town. It was a difficult place to find, with woods and marshes all round it, but these traitors sent the Romans a guide. It was a strong place, as we had been used to reckon strong places, but the Romans made very short work with it; they attacked it on two sides at once, and the King's people did not wait for them, but made the best of their way out. The King and his tribe lost thousands of cattle there.

"Then Caswallon tried his last chance. He sent orders to the kings on the sea-coast that they were to try to destroy the ships. If that could be done Caesar would certainly have to go back. They did what they were ordered to do, but it was of no use. The fortification round the ships was too strong and too well protected. The kings were beaten back and lost many men.

"After this there was nothing left for Caswallon but to make peace. This he found easy enough, for Caesar was very anxious to get away, because he had heard bad news from the other side of the sea. The King had to give hostages, and he agreed to pay a tribute every year. Part of this tribute the Romans took away with them, but the rest they never got. Caesar had plenty to do in Gaul, as we heard from our friends and kinsmen over there, and though he sent once or twice to ask for what was owing, he never did anything else."

That was my grandfather's story. Well, the Romans never came again till about forty years ago, though I remember that there was talk about their coming once or twice when I was a young man.

CHAPTER IV

KING CARACTACUS

C. WELL, there is not much difference, after all, between your grandfather's story and what Julius wrote. I asked my teacher to let me read it all, for I had heard only parts of it before. He offered to lend me the book, but I was afraid to borrow it, lest it should come to some harm. He said that there was not another copy in all Britain, and that he should have to send to Lugdunum in Gaul for it. Perhaps Julius makes one think that he did more in Britain than was really the case; but on the whole his story agrees wonderfully well with your grandfather's. But now tell me what you yourself remember.

G. So I will. We were threatened by the Romans several times before they actually came. Once the Roman Emperor came as near as the opposite shore of Gaul. Our king Cunobelin had banished his son, and the worthless fellow went to the Emperor and pretended to give up the kingdom to him—of course it was never his to give. The Emperor—he was more than half a madman I have been told—marched his legions down to the sea, drew them up in order of battle, and then set them to picking up shells. "Spoils of the ocean" he called them, and had them solemnly sent to Rome and laid up in the chief temple. Three years afterwards they came in earnest. The Emperor—not the one I spoke of, he had been murdered—himself came with them, though I doubt whether he had much to do with the fighting. However, he or his general took King Cunobelin's town. That did not finish the war; there was fighting for several years in the south and west of the country. The last to hold out was the brave King Caractacus. He too was conquered in the end. The fact is, we Britons are not a match for these Romans. Man for man, we are as brave, and certainly taller and stronger. But then they have far better arms, and they are better disciplined. There was a great battle somewhere in the west. Our people had a very strong

position. They were posted on a hill, with a thick wood on either side and a river in front. And there were three or four times as many of them as of the Romans. I have heard that the Roman general himself was afraid to attack; but the soldiers went on, almost, I may say, in spite of him, and stormed the place. Our people, you see, had no breast-plates, and their wicker shields were not of much use against a heavy Roman sword. And then their own swords and spears were mostly of bronze. You, my boy, are used to see everything made of iron, but it was not so at the time that I am speaking of, thirty or forty years ago. Iron weapons cost so much that only the chiefs had them. The common people used bronze; and bronze, I need not tell you, is no match for iron. Well, as I said, the King's camp was taken, and his wife and children with it. His brothers gave themselves up. As for the King himself, he managed to escape.



ROMAN SOLDIERS CROSSING A RIVER.

C. And what became of him?

G. He took refuge with a neighbour, Queen of the Brigantes. She put him in prison, and gave him up to the Romans.

C. What a wicked woman!

G. Yes, indeed; but what can you expect of a creature who sent away her husband, one of the best soldiers that ever was in Britain, and married the driver of her own chariot?

C. And what did the Romans do with him?

G. They behaved better to him than is their custom. He was taken to Rome and brought before the Emperor. I saw one of the soldiers who was on guard that day, and he told me the whole story. The Emperor sat on one seat, with the flags of the Roman legions round him, and his wife on another, just as if she were his equal. We Britons, you know, would as willingly have a queen as a king, but the Romans don't hold with us in that; they don't take such account of women; but this was one who thought herself equal to any man, and her husband was, by all accounts, a very poor creature. Well, as I said, the King was brought, and told to answer for himself, he and his brothers and all his family. The rest threw themselves on the ground and begged for their lives. But he would not stoop to do such a thing. What he said was something like this: "If I had chosen to submit to you, I might have been your friend and not your prisoner to-day; but I preferred to be my own master. I thought that I was strong enough to be so; you have shown me that I was wrong, and you have the glory of it. And now, you can do what you will with me. If you kill me, there is nothing more to be said; if you pardon me, your generosity will never be forgotten." Pardoned he was; but they never let him come back to his own country. They were afraid, I suppose, that he would make trouble.

C. And you took no part in this war?

G. No; we had nothing to do with it. You see, when King Cunobelin's town was taken, my master, whose country

was not far off—it lies to the north, as you know—thought it best to make terms with the new-comers. I and three other chiefs were sent as ambassadors to the Roman generals with presents and hostages. The Romans always asked for hostages, and a good plan it is for what they want. Ah! they have a clever way of managing the people they have to do with. But it is a terrible thing for those who have to give them. My own son—my second boy—was one of them. He was taken away to Italy, and died, I heard, of a fever, about a year afterwards. They put a tribute upon us. However, it was not very heavy, and, anyhow, we had peace and quiet as long as we paid it. As for the King, my master, he was fairly charmed with the strangers. He went to Rome, and when he came back, nothing would satisfy him but he must have everything in Roman fashion. Ah! if he could only have foreseen what was to come! Happily for him, the trouble, as you will hear, came after his days.

CHAPTER V

BOADICEA

One thing that my master learnt at Rome was this. It seems that many rich men leave part of their money to the Emperor, and the rest to their wives and children, or, it may be, to other relatives and friends. They think that if the Emperor gets a share for himself, he will, for very shame, let the others have what belongs to them. Well, this was how my master arranged matters. The Emperor was to have a third of all his property; his wife, Queen Boadicea, was to have the same, and his daughters the same. Poor man! he was sadly mistaken if he thought that this would do them any good. As soon as the breath was out of his body, the Roman officers broke into the house. They must see, forsooth, that the Emperor had his proper share. I can't tell you the wicked and shameful things they did. They plundered the whole place; they beat the Queen most cruelly with rods; even that was not the worst. Then the whole country broke out

into a blaze of fury. As you may suppose, this was not the first wickedness or cruelty that the Romans had done; there was scarcely a village that had not suffered something at their hands. The Queen went through the country calling the people to arms, and they flocked in thousands after her. Other tribes joined us, and before that moon was out we had full twenty thousand fighting men, and it was just the right time for us to make an effort. Almost the whole of the Roman army had been taken away by the Governor on an expedition against the Island of the Priests—it lies a little way off the western coast—and our part of the country was left almost without a single soldier. I myself thought that the time was come, though I ought to have known better. Sooner or later, the Romans were bound to beat us. However, at first everything went well; we began by marching against Camalodunum. It is, as you know, what they call a colony, a place to which old soldiers are sent when their time is up. They are half soldiers and half farmers, living in the town, and farming the land round it, or rather making the people to whom it once belonged farm it for them. There had been a new batch of them just come to the place, and indeed it was the lawless doings of these new arrivals that had been the cause of a great deal of the trouble. They were not in the least prepared for our coming. The walls had never been finished; in fact they had scarcely been begun. A walled town, you see, is not pleasant to live in, and they had no idea but what they were perfectly safe. They would have as soon expected their very cattle to turn against them as the people of whom they had made slaves. Before long, deserters from the town came into our camp. They told us that the whole place was full of confusion and fear. It was not only the rebellion that made them afraid: there had been signs of some great trouble to come. The statue of Victory that stood in the great square of the town had fallen down, with its face turned in a strange way, just as if it had tried to fly. Curious sounds had been heard in the senate-house, and dead bodies had been found on the sea-shore when the tide was down. All this encouraged us, just as much as it discouraged them. They told us, too, that they had sent to the nearest station for help, and the

officer in command could let them have no more than a couple of hundred men, and these only half armed. No one tried to stop us on the way, and when we came to the town, we had only to walk in. The walls, as I told you, were little more than begun. There was only one strong place in the town, and that was the Temple of the Emperor.

C. What do you mean, grandfather, by "the Temple of the Emperor"?



ROMAN SOLDIERS FORTIFYING A PLACE.

G. Why, they make gods of their emperors when they are dead. Indeed they do something like it while they are still alive. So they had made a god of Claudius—that was the Emperor, you know, who conquered King Cunobelin—and built a temple to him, and had priests who sacrificed to him. That, by the way, was one of their ways of robbing us. They appointed the rich men in the country priests of the Emperor, and made them pay so much for the honour as pretty nearly to ruin them. Well, as I said, this temple was the one strong place in the town,

and it might have been made, with scarcely any trouble, very strong indeed. But nothing had been done; there was neither ditch nor rampart, only the bare walls. No one would have thought that they were old soldiers, who ought to have known all about these things. They hadn't even sent away the women and children. The temple was crowded with helpless people. The soldiers could hardly have moved for them. And, of course, the provisions could not have held out for any time. Anyhow, the place was taken on the second day. That night there was not a house standing or a soul living in all the colony. Oh, boy, it was an awful sight; I hope that I shall never see another such.

The same night our spies—of course we had spies everywhere, as the whole country was friendly to us—brought us the news that a Roman legion was on its way to relieve the colony. They knew nothing about its having been destroyed, for, naturally, while we heard everything they heard nothing. So we laid an ambush for them in a wood, about five miles from the colony, through which they would have to pass. They came marching along without any scouts in front, just as if there was not an enemy within fifty miles. We rushed out on them, and it was all over in less than an hour. Hardly a single infantry soldier escaped, and we took no prisoners. The general and his horsemen had to ride for their lives. The next day we began our march on London. When we had got about half way our scouts came racing up with the news that the Roman legions were on their way back. I was with the Queen when she heard it. I saw her eyes lighten. "Good," she said, "we will serve them as we served the legion to-day. March on." We marched, the people flocking in with arms in their hands at every village that we reached. We expected, of course, to find the Romans at London. It was by far the richest town in the province—what it is now does not give you any idea of what it was then—and we felt sure that the Governor would not let us get possession of it without a fight. But he did, and it was very well for him that he did. If he had tried to keep it, his army must have been destroyed. It was far too small to defend so big a place. I heard afterwards that the London merchants—Roman citizens many of them—begged and

prayed him to stand by them, but he would not. All that he could do for them, he said, was to let the able-bodied men come with him. All their wealth beyond what they could carry, all the old and the sick, and the greater part of the women and children were left. Well, I don't like to think of what happened. I would give a good deal if I could forget it. Enough to say that what had happened to Camalodunum happened to London. It was said that seventy thousand poor creatures perished, many of them our own countrymen too, for no other fault than that they had made friends with the Romans. Of course our people had a great many wrongs to avenge, but to do it in such a fashion—and what that fashion was I should not like to tell you—was too horrible. Another Roman town about twenty miles from London was destroyed, and then came the end. Of course the Queen could not keep her army together for a very long time. They ate up everything in the country round, and indeed were in a fair way to be as much hated by the people as the Romans themselves. It was necessary for her to get back to her own capital, and to do that she had to fight, for the Governor had posted himself in a strong place on the way. But I must put off telling you what happened to another day.

CHAPTER VI

BOADICEA (*CONTINUED*)

C. You promised, grandfather, to finish the story of the Queen.

G. You shall hear it, though it was a miserable business from beginning to end. Well, after the Roman towns had been destroyed, many of our people, not so much the Queen's own tribe as those that had joined in afterwards, began to slip away with their plunder. I dare say some of them hoped to get off free whatever might happen. However, there were quite enough left to do all that was wanted. Indeed, to tell you the truth, I believe that we should have fared much better if we had had only half

the number. A great mob of all sorts such as we had, many of them with more of the robber than the soldier in them, was not good for much. It was too confident at first, and too easily frightened afterwards. However, we did not think so then. You see we had never really tried what the Roman soldiers were like. The legion we destroyed on the way to London was taken by surprise, and had no chance of showing what it was like. After that there had been no fighting at all, only plundering and slaying helpless people. And we certainly seemed to be more than a match for them. Our scouts told us that the Governor had no more than ten thousand men. He had sent—so they said—to the commander of a camp in the west to bring all the troops that he could spare, and the man had refused. That encouraged us, as you may suppose, not a little. Some of the Romans, we could see, were afraid.

C. But what a foolish thing for him to do, grandfather!

G. Yes, indeed, my boy. What could he have hoped to do if the main body had been destroyed? He killed himself afterwards, so ashamed was he of having been so cowardly and foolish. However, as I said, it gave us no little confidence. There was scarcely one among us but believed that there would not be a Roman soldier alive at the end of the day. Soon after daybreak we were ready for the battle. Before we moved forward the Queen drove in her chariot through the army, and spoke to every division—it was divided, you must understand, by tribes, and not a little jealousy and quarrelling was there about places.

C. What was she like, grandfather?

G. The very noblest-looking woman that I ever saw. She was taller than most men—indeed there were not many in the whole army that overtopped her. There was a stern look on her face, and a fierce light in her eyes, though I can remember a time when she was as sweet and gentle a lady as there was in Britain. But many things had happened since then. Her hair was of rich golden red, and fell in great waves down to her hips. Round her head it was kept together by a circlet of gold. She had a tunic,

with crossbars of bright colours on it—you seldom see such a thing now that the Roman dress is so much in fashion—and a military cloak over her shoulders. In her right hand she held a spear.

C. Can you remember what she said, grandfather?

G. Every word, and shall to the day of my death, or as long, at least, as I remember anything. But I shall not repeat it. What good would it be if I did? The Romans are our masters, and it is best to be content with them. Anyhow they are the best that we are likely to find. But you shall hear the last thing that she said, because it was so like her. "We must conquer," she said, "nor do I see how we can fail. But if not, what then? DIE, that is what a *woman* means to do; I leave it to *men* to live and be slaves."

The Queen had left her own people to the last; and as the division to which I belonged was on the extreme right of the army—she began her progress through the divisions at the left—when she had finished her speech to us the battle began. Our men rushed forward helter-skelter, as if they were going to simply run over the enemy, as a herd of cattle might run over a man. And there was such a cloud of javelins, darts, arrows, stones, as, I should think, had never been seen before. The Romans simply stood where they were, and bore it. They held their shields over their heads, but no man moved an inch from his place. If a man was struck down—and though hundreds of missiles missed where one hit, some of them were; I myself saw several fall—the gap was filled up in a moment. This went on for about an hour. By the end of that time we had spent all our stock of breath and of weapons. Then there happened something that I suppose no one had looked for. The legion charged. It was in close order, something like a wedge, and marched, I may say, like one man. There was no standing against it. It broke through our loose ranks as a hatchet breaks through a piece of wood. And then their light-armed soldiers and their horsemen finished what the legion had begun, for they cut down those that fled, or tried to fly, for it was very hard to get away from the battlefield.

There were rows of wagons in our rear, in which the women and children were carried. Poor things! they had come to see a fine sight, as they thought. But it turned out to be something very, very different.



ROMAN SOLDIERS IN BATTLE.

C. And what happened to the Queen?

G. It was no fault of hers that she did not die on the field of battle. If a woman ever sought for death, she did. But it was not to be. Towards the end of the day she was wounded, and fainted with loss of blood. While she was in this state her charioteer drove her off the field. It was a long time before she rightly came to herself. When she did she would have killed herself; but her servants put everything out of her reach. You see they wanted to make favour with the Romans by giving her up to them. The Governor would have paid a high price, no doubt, if he could have got hold of her alive. Of course you have read in your histories about the Roman triumphs, as they call them. It would have been a fine thing for the Governor to take such a woman as the Queen through the streets of Rome. I doubt whether they had ever seen her like before. However, they did

not get their way. She managed to get at some poison, and killed herself in that way.

C. So that was the end of the great Queen! And now tell me about my own people.

G. Your grandfather was killed in the battle, and I was taken prisoner. We were in the same chariot. Of course I never expected or indeed wished for anything but death. But they spared my life; I had been able to save a few people when London was sacked, and they were grateful for it. One of them in particular, a very rich knight, made great interest with the Governor for me. He found it a very hard matter, for Paulinus—that was the Governor's name—was as hard and stern as a man could be. But Paulinus was recalled, and some one less stern and strict was sent out in his place. Then I received my pardon, and with it a share of my property, which, of course, had been confiscated. At the time I would sooner have died, but afterwards I was reconciled to life. My son, your grandfather that is, had left a daughter, who was then a girl of ten years old or so. It was a great comfort to me to have her with me; she was all that was left to me, for my second son had died, as I told you, in Italy. When she was eighteen, she married a Roman officer, who had bought some property in the island. I thought that I should spend my last days with her and her husband, but it was not to be. The year after their marriage there were awful troubles all over the world, and they reached even to our poor home out here. First the Emperor at Rome was killed, or rather driven to kill himself. Then the general that was chosen to come after him was murdered by the soldiers in the streets of Rome. The soldiers of Rome put up an Emperor of their own, but the army in Germany would not have him, and chose their own general. He won the victory, after some very fierce fighting. And then the army in the East had their turn. Why should not they have their Emperor, they said, as well as any one else? And it so happened that they had a really good man at their head. Vespasian was his name. Many years before he had been a soldier in this country, and had distinguished himself very much, and my son-in-law

had served under him then, and had got to like and admire him very much. And now, as soon as he heard what had happened, nothing would content him but that he must hurry over to Italy, and do what he could to help his old chief. I could not blame him, but all the same I wished with all my heart that the thought had never entered into his mind. But he was ambitious, I suppose, as well as grateful. He had thought that he was content to farm, and hunt, and fish, but it was not so; as soon as he had the chance of something more he took it. Well, there was some sharp fighting in Italy before Vespasian's party won the day, and my granddaughter's husband went through all of it without getting as much as a scratch. And just in the last battle of all, at the very end of the day, when they were making their way into Rome, he was killed by a wounded man, who struck at him from the ground. The news killed my poor granddaughter. You were born on the day when it arrived, and she just lived long enough to kiss you.

Now, my dear boy, you will not wonder that I do not altogether love these Romans. Still, they are here, and you must make the best of them. My time is short, and the future does not concern me; but you have your time to live, and the better friends you are with your masters, the more you will prosper.

CHAPTER VII

THE STORY OF VORTIGERN

There had been a battle at the Ford of the river Wye between Griffith, one of the Princes of Wales, and the West Saxons. The Welsh had won the day, not a little by the help of the young Prince Constantine, who had come from the British kingdom of Cumbria, in the hope of marrying the sister of Prince Griffith. As they sat at the feast after the battle, the talk of the chiefs turned upon the old days when the Britons dwelt in peace in their land before the Saxons from the Eastern seas had come to vex them.

"Tell me," said Prince Constantine, turning to Hoel the minstrel, "tell me how these troubles began. I have heard the tale as it is told in my own country, and I would willingly hear it as it is told in yours."

"Prince," said Hoel, "I can refuse nothing to so valiant a fighter; but it is a tale of sorrow and wrong, and ill suited for a feast."

"Speak on," said Constantine; "your story shall teach us to grow wiser and better."

"Know then," said Hoel, "that for a time after the Romans left us, things went well in Britain."

"Stay," cried the Prince, "you must pardon my ignorance; but tell me why these Romans left us. Did we drive them out?"

"Not so," answered the minstrel; "they needed their armies elsewhere, for they were themselves hard pressed by their enemies. Well, as I said, things for a time went well. But our fathers had forgotten how to fight, nor did they rightly know how to govern themselves. And hence came our troubles. These began with King Constans, a good man, doubtless, but one who, having been a monk, cared little for the things of this world, and committed all the affairs of his nation to a certain noble, Vortigern by name. This man was possessed with a great ambition, having it in his mind to become King himself. To this end he laid his plans. First he asked the King to give him the charge of his treasures and of his strong cities. 'Your enemies, Sir,' he said, 'have the purpose of invading Britain, and I would keep these things safe for you.' The King granted him his request, not suspecting any evil; but Vortigern put into these strong places men of his own choosing, who would be ready to do what he desired. Next he said to the King, 'I hear that the Picts are about to attack us, bringing with them allies from beyond the sea. Now my counsel is that you increase the number of your own guard.' 'Do as you will,' answered the King. 'Have I not left all things to you?' 'Then,' said Vortigern, 'the best men that we can have for this purpose are the Picts themselves. I will

hire a hundred of them, for they will not only serve as a guard, but will also spy upon their own countrymen, if they should have any design against us.' Constans consenting, as he consented to all things, Vortigern hired these Picts, receiving them into the King's household, and feeding them sumptuously, and giving them many gifts. After he had thus won their hearts, he said to them, 'I have it in my mind to leave this island of Britain, and to look for a better estate elsewhere. Here my revenues are so small that I cannot support even fifty men, much less a hundred.' The Picts said to one another, 'Why do we suffer this man to live? Why do we not kill him, that Vortigern, who is far worthier than he, may have his crown?' Thereupon they broke into the chamber of the King, and slew him. His head they cut off, and carried it to Vortigern. But he, pretending that the thing was done without his knowledge, commanded that they should be bound and put to death. There were some, however, who believed that he was guilty in this matter. The Picts also desired to avenge the slaying of their countrymen. And besides these things, the young brothers of King Constans, who had been carried across the sea by their tutors when the King was killed, were now preparing to return and to claim their kingdom by force of arms. Thus it came to pass that Vortigern was in great straits. Being in this condition, he heard that three galleys, full of armed men, had come to the coast of Kent, under the command of two chiefs, Hengist and Horsa by name. Vortigern commanded that these strangers should be brought into his presence. When they had come, he asked them of what country they were, and for what purpose they had visited his kingdom. The chiefs made this answer, 'It is the custom in our country, that from time to time, when the number of our people is greater than the land can feed, our princes gather all the youth of the nation into one place. This being done, they cast lots who shall go into other lands wherein they may earn their own livelihood. This year the lot fell upon us, and we are come hither to offer you our service.'

"To this Vortigern answered, 'I am rejoiced at your coming. I am hard pressed by many enemies. If, therefore, you

will help me against them, I will entertain you honourably in my kingdom, will give you good wages for the present, and will settle you hereafter on lands which you can cultivate for yourselves.'



A SAXON SHIP.

To this the new-comers gave their consent. Not many days afterwards the Picts invaded Britain with a great army, and Vortigern went against them with his men, taking with him the Saxons, for so the strangers were named. In the battle that was fought the Britons had scarcely need to do anything, for the Saxons, by their own strength, turned the Picts to flight. Vortigern now gave to the Saxons certain lands in the east country. Thereupon Hengist said to him, 'You have yet many enemies, my lord. Shall I send for more of my countrymen, for of a surety we shall need them?' 'Send for as many as you will,' said Vortigern, 'they will all be welcome.' Then Hengist spake further: 'I have yet another thing to ask. You have given us land sufficient; suffer us also to build a fortress, which may be called after my name, for this is an honour which is my due, seeing that you or yours commonly possess it.' Vortigern answered, 'This may not be; you are strangers and pagans, and know not the

customs of the land. Were I myself inclined to it, my nobles would not suffer it.'

"To this Hengist answered, 'Give me so much as this, O King, to wit a piece of land so large as may be surrounded by a bull's hide, with which I may do what I will.'

" 'Let it be so,' said Vortigern.

"Then Hengist cut up a bull's hide into thongs; these he fastened together in one piece, and surrounded with it a piece of land which he had chosen for himself as being the most strongly placed in the whole country. This was afterwards called Thong Castle.

"After this the messengers which Hengist had sent to his own country returned, bringing with them eighteen ships full of the bravest soldiers that they could find. These the King took into his service; and at the same time went to see the castle which Hengist had built for himself. Being here entertained at a royal banquet, he was waited upon by Hengist's daughter, Rowena, for she had come with the fresh company of warriors, having been sent for by her father. She had come out of her chamber, carrying in her hand a golden cup full of wine. This she offered to the King, making at the same time a low courtesy, and saying, 'Lord King, I will drink your health!' Then she drank to his health, and the King also drank to her. Now Rowena was very fair, and the King loved her greatly, so that he would have her father give her to him for wife. This Hengist, by the advice of his lords, consented to do. 'Only,' he said, 'you must give me for her your kingdom of Kent.' This the King consented to do, bringing upon himself thereby great hatred from his nobles and from his three sons, for he had three by his former marriage that were now grown to manhood.

"And now more and more of the Saxons came from over the sea, the King either inviting them, or at the least suffering them. At this the Britons were so much disturbed that they took away his kingdom from him, and set Vortimer his eldest son to rule in his stead. Vortimer was a very brave and skilful soldier,

and conquered the heathen in many battles till they were well-nigh driven out of the country. But this worthy Prince was cut off in the flower of his days, for his step-mother Rowena contrived that a draught of poison should be given to him, from which draught he died.

"When Vortimer was dead, the Britons restored the kingdom to Vortigern, and he, his wife urging him, sent a message to Hengist that he should return to Britain. 'Only,' he said, 'come back with a small company of men, lest there should be strife between you and my people.' But Hengist took no heed to this counsel, but brought as great a multitude of men as he could by any means gather together. At this King Vortigern and his people were greatly troubled, and were resolved to oppose them by force of arms. Of this resolve Hengist heard by means of his daughter, and thought how to deceive the Britons and their King. This they did in this fashion. A messenger came to Vortigern and said, 'Hengist has brought all his host with him, thinking that Vortimer was yet alive, and being minded to make himself secure against their attacks, But now that he knows for certain that Vortimer is dead, he submits himself and his people to your arbitration. Cause such as you will to stay, and send such as you will away.'

"This pleased Vortigern, for being ruled by Rowena his wife, he desired that Hengist should remain in Britain. It was therefore agreed that the chiefs of Britain and the Saxons should meet together at a certain place that is now called Amesbury, for the settling of these matters. But Hengist commanded his followers to hide long knives under their garments, and when he should say the words, '*Draw your daggers!*' to slay each man his neighbour. Thereupon whilst they were talking together Hengist got hold of Vortigern by the cloak and cried, '*Draw your daggers!*' Thereupon the Saxons fell upon the princes of Britain, who suspected no such thing, and so carried no arms, and slew them to the number of four hundred and sixty.

"As for Vortigern, Hengist did not slay him, but kept him in prison, nor would release him till he had yielded up as the

price of his liberty all the chief and strongest places in Britain. As for this unhappy Prince, when he was released he departed into the western parts of the island, much repenting that he had brought the heathen Saxons into the island of Britain. Nor did he escape due punishment, for Ambrosius, son of Constans, having been anointed King over Britain, sought to avenge upon him his father's death. And this he did, for having found him shut up in a very strong tower, and failing to take the place in any other way, set fire to it and consumed it and all that were in it. Thus did Vortigern die."

CHAPTER VIII

THE STORY OF KING ARTHUR

"You said truly," cried Prince Constantine, when Hoel had brought his tale to an end, "that you had a sad story to tell, Let us now, if the hour be not too late, nor you over weary, hear something of a more cheerful kind. Tell us about the great King Arthur."

"Most willingly," answered the minstrel; "were the night altogether spent, and I worn out with weariness, yet I could not refuse to speak of Arthur the Flower of Kings.

"When Ambrosius, son of Constans, was dead, his brother Uther reigned in his place. When Uther's wife was about to bear him a child, the wise man Merlin, knowing that this child would be a son, and would grow to be a great king that should deliver Britain, prayed the King that the child might be delivered to him so soon as it was born. For he knew by his art that this was the best thing that could be done for the child. The babe, therefore, was wrapped in cloth of gold, and delivered by two ladies, to whom the King had given this command, into the hands of Merlin himself, who was standing at the castle-gate in the disguise of a poor man. Merlin carried the babe to a priest, who christened him by the name of Arthur. This done he took

him to the house of a certain knight, Sir Hector. Sir Hector's wife nourished him, and there he lived many years, being reckoned as one of Sir Hector's children, for none knew who he was in truth, save only Merlin and the King.

"Uther, having fought bravely with the Saxons, who all this time were spreading their power more and more over Britain, became so sick that he was ready to die. His knights came to Merlin, and inquired whether there was any remedy for the King's sickness? Merlin made answer—

" 'Remedy there is none; this sickness is to death. Nevertheless, be ye present all of you to-morrow, for the King will speak before he die.'

"So on the morrow all the knights came and stood by the King's bedside. Then Merlin said with a loud voice, 'My lord, is it thy will that thy son Arthur shall be King after thee?' Uther turned him about, and said in the hearing of them all, 'I will; the blessing of God and my blessing be upon him.' And having said this, he died.

"The nobles and knights, when they had buried the King, departed each to his own country. Each assembled as many men as he could, desiring to obtain the kingdom for himself, for they said, 'Who is this Arthur of whom the wizard Merlin speaks? Is he indeed son to King Uther? And even if he be, why should a boy rule over us?' So they were divided among themselves, and the Saxons prevailed still more, wasting the land on every side.

"Seeing this, the chief Bishop in Britain, by Merlin's counsel, called together all the nobles and knights, that they might learn who was ordained of God to be King of Britain. Being gathered together, therefore, they prayed for a sign, and suddenly there was seen before the door of the church a great stone with a sword in the midst of it, and on the sword was written in letters of gold, 'Whoso pulleth out the sword from this stone is rightful King of Britain.' Many tried to pull it out, but none could move it even a little. Then ten knights were chosen to watch the stone and the sword.

After these things a great tournament was held, to which among others came Sir Hector with his eldest son Sir Key, and Arthur also, who passed for Sir Hector's son. It so chanced that Sir Key found that he had come without any sword. Turning, therefore, to his brother Arthur, for such he thought him to be, he said, 'I pray thee, fetch me my sword.' So Arthur rode back with all haste to the house, but found it locked. Whereupon he said to himself, 'I will take the sword that is by the church-door, for my brother shall not go without a sword to-day.' So he came to the church. Now the knights that had been set to watch the stone and the sword had gone all of them to the tournament; so Arthur, knowing nothing of the matter, took the sword by its handle and lightly pulled it from its place. Not once or twice only but many times was this trial made, for the nobles and knights would not believe that this lad was their rightful King. But the end was always the same; none but Arthur could put the sword back into its place, or pull it therefrom. So at last, with consent of all the people, he was crowned King.



SAXON WARRIORS.

"And now, being established in his kingdom, he set himself to overthrow the Saxons, who had taken the occasion of the divisions among the people of Britain to advance their power more and more. First he rode with all his hosts to York, where Colgrin the Saxon lay with a great army. With him he fought a

great battle, in which many were slain on both sides; at the last he drove Colgrin into the city and there besieged him. Then came Colgrin's brother Baldulph with six thousand men, to help him; but Arthur fell on him unawares, and scattered his enemies. Nevertheless Baldulph made his way into the city, for he shaved his head, and disguised himself as a jester, and so passed through King Arthur's camp, and on coming to the walls, was drawn up by ropes into the city.

"After a while there came news to the King, as he watched the city, that there had come six hundred ships, and had landed a countless army of Saxons on the eastern coast of Britain. So the King left besieging York, and marched to meet them, having with him his nephew Hoel, King of the Britons that live in Gaul. The Saxons were now besieging Lincoln. There Arthur fell upon them, and after a fierce battle defeated them, killing more than six thousand men. Those that remained fled into a wood that was close by, and there defended themselves bravely. But when the King, having cut down the trees, had made a barricade and so shut them in, they asked for peace. And when they had agreed to give up all the gold and silver that they had, and to sail away in empty ships, promising that they would never return, and giving also hostages for the fulfilment of this promise, the King suffered them to depart. But when they had been but a few hours at sea, they repented them of what they had done. They did not indeed return to the place which they had left, but sailed southward and westward, landing at last in Devonshire. Thence they marched inland, ravaging as they went, till they came to the town of Bath.

"When the King heard of their falsehood he was very wroth, and swore a great oath that he would not rest till he had driven these deceivers out of Britain. Then he marched with all his forces to Bath.

"When he came to the place he dressed himself in his armour. On his head he put a helmet adorned with a dragon of gold; he girded himself with his sword Excalibur, and in his hand he took the great spear that he called Ron. Having done this

he put his men in order, and led them out against the enemy, who had taken up their place on the side of Badon Hill. All that day the two armies fought, but the Saxons stood their ground, nor could King Arthur, for all his fierceness, drive them from their place. That night both the hosts lay down upon the hill.

"The next day the King led his army again to the attack, and this time he drove the Saxons before him till he gained the top of the hill. From that he drove them again down the other side till they were utterly scattered. Thus did King Arthur that day deliver Britain.

"Of the other things that the King and his knights accomplished, and how at the last he was overcome by treachery, I have not now time to tell, for the night is far spent, and chiefs who have fought as ye fought to-day must sorely need rest."

So Hoel ended his tale.

We need not ask how far the minstrel's story was true. Perhaps, like most minstrels' tales, it was half poetry; but such tales kept alive among the Britons the recollection of the times of confusion which followed the departure of the Romans, and the memory of a great British chief, who stopped for a while the progress of the Saxons in the West of England.

CHAPTER IX

HOW ENGLAND BECAME CHRISTIAN

Whatever success the Britons may have had, it did not last very long. The English, Saxons, Jutes, and others—afterwards all called English—came pouring over from the countries about the mouths of the Elbe in North Germany, and the Britons could not stand against these daring sailors and fierce warriors. Fifty years after the battle of Badon Hill the Britons had been driven to the western side of the island, and all the rest

of England, and part of the South of Scotland, belonged to the invaders.

The Romans during the latter part of their stay in Britain had become Christians, and the Britons, who imitated their masters in everything, were Christian too. But the English, Saxons, and Jutes were all heathen, and now the greater part of Britain, which had been Christian, was turned again to heathenism. I must now tell you how these brave heathen were converted.

In the year of our Lord 572 or thereabouts, Ethelbert, King of Kent, who was the most powerful prince in the southern parts of England, married a certain Bertha, daughter of the King of Paris. Ethelbert was a heathen, as all the English folk were in those days, but he promised that his wife, being a Christian, should be allowed to worship God in her own way. More than this, he permitted a certain bishop from France to come with her, and he gave them a church in Canterbury, which was the chief town of his dominions. This church had been built by the Romans, before they left the island.

About eight years after these things happened, a certain Roman named Gregory had his heart wonderfully turned to the work of preaching the gospel in this country. He was a man of noble birth and of great wealth, and he had founded a monastery in Rome, named after St. Andrew, of which monastery he was himself the abbot or chief. One day, as he walked through the marketplace of the city, he saw among the various kinds of merchandise three boys, who were to be sold for slaves. They were of a fair complexion, with long flaxen hair, things to be noted in a country where the folk are mostly dark. Struck with pity for their hard lot, he asked of the slave-merchant from what land they came.

SLAVE-MERCHANT. "From Britain, where all the people have this same fair complexion."

GREGORY. "Are the people of this strange country Christians or Pagans?"

SLAVE-M. "They are Pagans."

GREGORY. (*heaving a deep sigh*). "Sad is it to think that creatures so full of light should be slaves of the Prince of Darkness! But say, of what nation are they?"

SLAVE-M. "They are *Angli*. "

GREGORY. "*Angli!* Rightly are they called *Ang(e)li*, for their faces are as the faces of angels, and they should with the angels be fellow-heirs of the kingdom of heaven. But from what province of this island of Britain do they come?"

SLAVE-M. " From Deira."

GREGORY. "It is well again. They are delivered from the ire of God (*de ira* = from the ire or anger) and called to His mercy. And who is the King of this region?"

SLAVE-M. "Ella is his name."

GREGORY. "Then Alleluia shall be chanted in his kingdom."

The abbot went straight from the market-place to the Bishop of Rome, and begged permission to go and preach the gospel to the inhabitants of this far-away island. The Bishop granted the request, and Gregory set out. He knew, it would seem, that his going would not be liked by his fellow-citizens. Accordingly, he made his departure as secret as possible. But what he had expected happened. As soon as the people missed him, they burst in upon the Bishop, as he was worshipping in the church of St. Peter, and demanded with loud cries that their beloved Gregory should be given back to them. The Bishop had to yield; messengers were sent after Gregory, and overtaking him at the end of his third day's journey compelled him to return.

The good abbot never forgot his purpose of bringing his dear "Angels" to the knowledge of Christ; but he had to wait a long time before he could carry it out. Ten years after he saw the three fair-haired boys in the market-place, he was himself made Bishop of Rome. That seemed to make the thing more hopeless

than ever, for the times were full of trouble, and Gregory had work without end to do at home. Then it seems to have occurred to him, that what he could not do himself he might do by means of another. Accordingly he chose out forty men from among the monks of his old monastery, and putting the prior, whose name was Augustine, at their head, sent them to preach in Britain.



MONKS BEARING A CROSS.

Augustine and his company set out on their journey, but when they got as far as the South of France their hearts failed them. Every one gave them terrible accounts of the Pagans that had come over and conquered the island of Britain. Nowhere, it was said, was there a people so savage and barbarous. The missionaries stopped on their way, and sent their leader Augustine back to Rome, with a petition to Gregory that he would release them from their task.

Gregory refused to listen. He was one of the men who do not spare themselves any trouble or danger, and expect others to be like themselves. He sent Augustine back with a letter full of

exhortation. "Do not shrink," he said, "from your duty. Go on, with God to help you. The harder the work, the greater the reward." At the same time he gave them letters to the bishops of France, who were told to give them all the help they could. The company started again, and made their way to the sea-coast. There they provided themselves with interpreters who knew the English tongue, and crossing the Channel, landed at Ebbe's Fleet in the Isle of Thanet.

As soon as they were on shore they sent a messenger to King Ethelbert. They had come, they told him, with good news, news of glory in heaven, and of a kingdom that should have no end in the presence of God.

The King sent back a friendly answer. "I shall be glad to see and talk with you. But do not come for the present beyond the river Stour."

Though he was thus disposed to be friendly with the new-comers, he was greatly afraid of them. He even made a point of not meeting them in any house, but in the open air. Under a roof they might put a magical spell upon him. In the open air, he thought, he would be more safe. Accordingly he arranged that the first meeting should take place under an oak, a tree which his own people held to be sacred. Augustine and his companions came up from the shore in solemn procession. One attendant carried in front a silver cross; another followed behind holding up a picture, done in colours and gold, of the Crucified Christ. As the missionaries moved along, they chanted a solemn prayer for themselves and for the people to whom they came to preach.

Augustine then declared the message which he had to deliver. He could himself speak no language but Latin, while the King and his people knew only their own English tongue. But the interpreters whom the missionaries had brought with them translated the preacher's words as he went on. Augustine explained the picture, telling his hearers how the Son of the One God in heaven had come down to earth, had died for the sins of a

guilty world, and had thus opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.



SAXON KING IN COUNCIL.

When the preacher had finished, the King made a very friendly answer. "You promise good things," he said, "but there is much in what you say that I do not understand, nor can I engage to give up at once the customs of my fathers. Nevertheless, you are welcome; you are free to worship God in your own way; if any of my subjects wish to follow you, I will not hinder them."

After this the missionaries formed another procession, and again chanting solemn prayers, marched to the royal town of Canterbury, where they took up their abode in dwellings which the King gave over to their use. The more the King heard of their teaching and saw of their holy life, the more moved he was. In the end, before a year had passed from their coming, he declared his conversion. On Whitsunday, the second day of June, in the year 597, he was baptized. His people soon followed his example. 'On Christmas Day in the same year ten thousand converts were baptized in the Swale, at the northern end, where it joins the Medway.

CHAPTER X

HOW ENGLAND BECAME CHRISTIAN (*CONTINUED*)

But how about the "Angels" of Deira, for Deira was a long way from Ethelbert's kingdom of Kent?

Many years—nearly fifty from the day when the three fair-haired boys stood in the market-place of Rome—were to pass before they heard the good news of the Saviour Christ. King Ella, whose name had made Gregory think of the word Alleluia, died about three years before Augustine came to England. He left a son, Edwin by mime, but this son did not succeed him in his kingdom, which was seized by a powerful noble of the land. Edwin had to fly for his life, and took refuge at the court of a certain Redwald, King of East Anglia. This was more than twenty years after his father's death. Redwald was, in a way, a Christian; perhaps King Ethelbert, who was his overlord, had compelled him to make a profession of belief. But he was not single-hearted, for he still kept the temples of the false gods open. The usurping King of Deira sent messengers to Redwald, with promises of reward if he would give up Edwin to him, and threats of war if he should refuse. Redwald was almost persuaded either to kill his guest or to give him up to his enemies. Edwin knew the danger he was in. A friend had told him what the King was thinking of, and had promised to tell him of a safer place of refuge. But Edwin would not listen to him. He said that he did not believe that King Redwald would betray him; "if he is minded to do so," he went on, "I would sooner die than wander about any more." The friend then left him, and Edwin sat in front of King Redwald's palace till it grew dark, thinking how unhappy he was. Suddenly he became aware that a stranger was standing by him; and looking up he saw a man in a strange dress, whose face he did not know.

"Why sit you here?" said the stranger.

EDWIN. "It matters little where I sit."

STRANGER. "I know your name, and the cause of your trouble. What will you give me if I turn King Redwald's heart to befriend you?"

EDWIN. "All that I have."

STRANGER. "And what, if I give you victory in battle, and the kingdom that is yours of right?"

EDWIN. "I will give you myself. But who are you?"

STRANGER. "That cannot yet be known. But remember your promise, when you next feel this sign."

And the stranger put his hand upon Edwin's head, and so vanished out of his sight.

Almost at the same moment Edwin's friend came out of the palace, and told him that King Redwald had changed his mind, and was now resolved not to give up his guest, even if by so doing he should bring war upon his kingdom.

And indeed war did follow. The usurper was defeated, and Edwin came into his father's kingdom of Deira.

Nine years afterwards, King Edwin sent envoys to Eadbald, son of Ethelbert of Kent, asking for his sister Ethelburga to wife. At first Eadbald would not consent, for Edwin was yet a Pagan. Afterwards, remembering, it may be, how his own mother, Bertha, had helped to bring Ethelbert his father to the faith, he let her go. Only he took Edwin's promise that she should be suffered to worship God according to her conscience, and he sent a certain Paulinus with her. This Paulinus had been sent by Gregory some twenty years before to help Augustine.

The next year Edwin was nearly slain by a murderer, sent by the King of Wessex. The man struck at the King with a poisoned dagger, but a faithful servant that was standing by

threw himself between, was pierced by the dagger, and so died in his master's stead. So the King escaped, but he well-nigh lost his wife that same day—it was Easter Day in the year 626—so frightened was she by what had happened to her husband. However, both she and her baby lived. When the King began to thank his gods for this mercy, thinking that it was of their giving, Paulinus told him that it was not so, but of the mercy of the Saviour Christ, to whom he had prayed, he said, for the Queen's life. "Let me punish this wicked King of Wessex," said Edwin, "and I will myself follow Christ." And to show that he meant what he said, he suffered Paulinus to baptize the child. She was christened the next Whitsunday, by the name of Eanfled.

The King of Wessex was punished for his wickedness; but Edwin still delayed to declare himself a Christian. At last Paulinus came to him, and laying his hand upon his head, as the stranger had done ten years before, asked him whether he remembered the sign, and bade him, seeing that he had received all according to his desire, fulfil his promise. After this Edwin lingered no more; only he would call a council of his chiefs, and lay the thing before them, so that, if it might be, all the nation might turn to the true God and to His Christ, together with their King. So the priests and nobles met in council.

First there rose in the assembly one Coifi, who was the chief of the priests, and spake in this fashion: "The gods to whom we give our prayers and our sacrifices give us, it seems to me, nothing in return. No one of all the people has been more diligent in worship than I, yet many have been more happy and more prosperous. If this new doctrine promises us more, I say that we should follow it."

After him rose another, an ancient chief, and said: "The soul of man, O King, seems to me like unto a bird that flies into some room where you and your lords are sitting at supper. Out of the darkness it flies, and for a brief space sees the light and feels the warmth, then it passes into the darkness again and is seen no more. So it is with the soul. It comes out of the dark, we know not whence; for a few years it tarries among the things we

know; then it goes again into the dark, we know not whither. If the new doctrine gives us light about the things unseen, I will leave all to follow it."

At last the King said, "Who will profane the temples of the gods?"



SAXON KING AND HIS RETINUE.

Coifi the priest answered, "None is fitter for this task than I, who have served them these many years." Then he mounted a horse, and took a spear in his hand—both things unlawful for a priest—and tilting at the idol of the chief temple overthrew it.

On Easter Day in the year following King Edwin was baptized, and multitudes of the people followed him, till it seemed as if all Deira and the rest of the North country was turned to Christ.

But there was trouble to come. Penda, King of Mercia, who was a heathen, leagued himself with a British king, and these two meeting Edwin in battle, overthrew him and slew him. Then all the land seemed to turn away from the faith of Christ

and to become heathen again. As for Paulinus, he fled to Kent by sea, taking with him Queen Ethelburga and her children.

But the light was not put out for long. Only when it began to shine again, it came from another place. The year after Edwin's death, Oswald, son of that same usurper whom Redwald and Edwin had overcome and slain, came back to his father's kingdom. He had been an exile in Scotland for these seventeen years, and had there learnt to follow the Christian faith. He sent therefore for some one who should teach his people. First came a certain Cormac, but he was a man of a harsh temper, and could do nothing. Going back to those that sent him, he said, "These English are so stubborn and barbarous that it is useless to teach them." "Nay," said one of those that heard him, Aidan by name, "you did not follow the Apostles' command, and feed the babes with milk, but would give them strong meat, which they could not bear." Aidan, therefore, was sent in his place, and with the help of King Oswald brought again all the North country to the faith of Christ. So, after some sixty years, Gregory's hopes for the "Angels" of Deira were accomplished.

CHAPTER XI

KING ALFRED

We have heard in the last two chapters of several kingdoms, Kent, for instance, Deira, East Anglia, Mercia, Wessex. There were others which I need not name, two or even three more, so that this time, roughly the two hundred and fifty years between 577 and 827, has been called the "Time of the Seven Kingdoms," or the "Time of the Eight Kingdoms." But there never were eight or even seven kingdoms at once. One rose and another fell. But in 823 Egbert, King of Wessex, made himself over-lord over all the kingdoms of England; we may say, in fact, that he was King of England. He died in 836, but before the end of his reign the Danes, people from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, began to come into England, and to fight against

the English, just as the English had come and fought against the Britons. King Alfred, whose story I have now to tell you, was a great defender of England against the Danes.

Alfred was the youngest of the four sons of King Ethelwulf, the son of Egbert. Of all the sons he was the most fair to look at, and the most gracious in speech and act, and the most obedient to his elders. He was strong of body, though troubled to the end of his life with frequent sickness, and skilful in the use of arms, and in hunting. It happened by some chance that he was never taught to read. Teachers were few in those days, and the times were full of trouble; yet he would listen to the minstrels and others when they sang or repeated poems, and this with so much attention that though he had read nothing he could remember much. At last he learnt to read, and in this way. When he was about thirteen years old his mother showed to him and his brothers a book of poetry which she had in her hand and said, "I will give this book to him who shall most quickly learn it." These words greatly moved him, especially as he was much delighted by the beauty of the first letter, which was finely painted in colours and gold. "Will you really give this book," he said to his mother, "to him who will soonest understand it and repeat it to you?" She was glad to hear him speak in this way, for before she thought that he did not care to learn. "Yes," she said, "I will give it." So the young Alfred took the book, and did actually learn to read it, and to repeat it. The man who tells this story was a Welshman, Asser by name, who had been brought up in the school which was kept by the monks of St. David's. He was a friend of Alfred's, and wrote, for the most part, of his own knowledge. Among other things, he tells us how Alfred used to lament that when he was young and had both time and ability to learn, he could find no teachers, and that afterwards he was so much troubled by frequent sickness, and by the cares of his kingdom, and by continual attacks from the heathen, that is to say the Danes, that he could find no leisure. Nevertheless it is true that he both read and wrote more than any of the kings that were before him or that came after him.



DANISH WARRIORS.

The Danes gave the English folk but little peace in those days. When Alfred was twenty years old—it was the very year in which he married his wife Alcswith, a noble lady of East Anglia—they came to Nottingham, which was one of the chief towns of Mercia, and took it, whereupon the King of Mercia sent to King Ethelred praying for help. This the King willingly gave, marching thither with a great army of West Saxons, and Alfred, who was his brother, went with him. The Danes would not come forth from the town to fight, nor were the English able to break down the wall. So peace was made, and the two brothers returned to their own country.

Two years afterwards there was a great slaughter of the English in the East country. Edmund, who was King of those parts under Ethelred, fought against the Danes, and was defeated, and many of his people were slain. When the day was lost, the King, having escaped from the field, hid himself under a bridge. But one passing by espied him, for his spurs, which were

of gold, shone in the moonlight; so he was taken to the camp of the Danes. And the chiefs of the heathen would have given him his life and kingdom if he would deny his Lord Christ. The King, refusing, was first scourged, and then set up as a mark for the archers to shoot at, and so died. The place where he suffered for his faith is called St. Edmundsbury to this day, and his name is remembered on the 10th day of November in every year. These things happened when Alfred was twenty-two years of age.



THE MARTYRDOM OF KING EDMUND.

In the year following the heathen came into the West country and took the town of Reading, from which one part of their army went forth to plunder the land, while another built for defence a great rampart between the Thames and the Kennet, for the Kennet flows through Reading town. Three times within the space of ten days did the Englishmen and the Danes fight together. The first battle was at Englefield; there a certain Ethelwulf, who was Alderman of Berkshire, led the Englishmen and won a great victory, slaying one of the Danish earls and the greater part of their army. Four days afterwards the second battle was fought hard by Reading town; the King was there, and Alfred, and the Alderman. First the English had the better, slaying such of the heathen as they found outside the walls; but when those that were within sallied forth, then the English fled,

and many were slain, and among them the Alderman. And again, after four days, there was yet a third battle. The Danes had made for themselves a camp on the top of a hill that was named Ashdown, or the Hill of the Ash. By this time many of their countrymen from other parts had joined them, so that now they had a very great army, with two kings and many earls to lead them. The kings were with one part of the army, and the earls with the other. On the other hand, the English also divided their army into two parts; one of these was led by King Ethelred and the other by Alfred. The English were on the lower ground, and marched up the hill to attack the Danes, Alfred leading the way, for the King tarried long in his tent till the priest had finished saying mass. Then the Danes came out of their camp to meet them, and there was a fierce battle, more especially round a certain stunted thorn, which Asser, who tells the story, says he had seen with his own eyes. At last the Englishmen won the day; one of the kings was slain, and five earls, and all the hill was covered with dead bodies. As for them that were left, they fled to their stronghold at Reading, the English pursuing them and slaying them on the way till it was dark. Nevertheless the Danes gathered together another army within fourteen days after this battle of Ashdown, and fought with Ethelred and Alfred near to Basing, and won a victory over them. After Easter in this year Ethelred died, and Alfred became king in his stead, being then twenty-three years of age. Nor had he been king for more than a month when he had to fight with his enemies again. This time also he was beaten. Nor was this the end. Ten battles in all did he fight—so say the chroniclers—in this first year of his reign.

After this the land had rest for a while. For Alfred, seeing that he could not stand against the Danes, and that his people were worn out by war and other troubles, made peace with his enemies. They made an agreement with him that they would not come again into his kingdom. Doubtless he persuaded them so far by giving them money. However this may be, there was peace in the land for four years. Then the troubles began again, and increased year by year till, when Alfred was twenty-nine years old, they came to their height. The Danes sailed up the

Severn with a fleet carrying a great army of men, till they came to the town of Gloucester. There they landed, and marching across Gloucestershire and Wiltshire came to Chippenham. So strong were they, that the King could not even gather an army to meet them. Some of the English fled over the sea to France; most of them submitted themselves to the invaders. Only Alfred himself was left with a few of his nobles. With these he fled far into the West country, to a place between the two rivers Parret and Tone. It was an island in those days, and men called it the "Isle of the Nobles," because Alfred's companions, though they were of noble birth, worked with spade and pickaxe to fortify the place. There he abode with his few faithful followers for a year.

The island itself did not furnish food sufficient for the King and his company, so that they were constrained to seek it from the country round about. On one of his journeys, Alfred took shelter in the house of a certain cowherd. The cowherd's wife was baking cakes on the fire, while the King sat by the hearth mending his bows and arrows. While she was busy about other matters, the cakes began to burn, the King taking no heed of them. Then the woman turned and rebuked him—

"Ca'sn thee mind the ke-aks, mon, an' doossen zee 'em burn?
I'm boun thee 's eat 'em vast enough, az zoon az tiz tha turn."

At the year's end, Alfred felt that the time was come to make a struggle for freedom. The men of three shires, Wiltshire, Somersetshire, and Hampshire, met together at a place called Egbert's Stone

Two days afterwards a great battle was fought, and the Danes were beaten. Many were slain on the field; the rest fled into a fort which they had made. Then Alfred besieged them, keeping them so close that at the end of fourteen days they asked for peace. The conditions of peace were these—"Guthrum, the leader of the Danes, was to become a Christian, and his chief nobles with him. The Danes were to depart from Alfred's dominion, but they were to have a large region in East Anglia for their own. For the time to come, the two nations were to live

together as friends, and to be governed by equal laws." These conditions were fulfilled. King Guthrum and thirty men, who were the chief nobles of the army, were baptized. For the King, Alfred himself stood godfather, giving him the name of Athelstan. This done, the Danes marched away, and for fifteen years the land had peace.

What King Alfred did for his people during this quiet time it would take long to tell; nor indeed do we know all for certain. He made good that which the Danes had destroyed. He caused the roads to be restored, and the bridges that had been broken down to be built again. Towns and cities that had been wasted by war he repaired, and caused the fields to be cultivated again. The laws that the kings before him had made, he considered with care, keeping such as seemed to him to be wise, and rejecting such as were not good. He built or restored many churches, and put clergy into them that they might teach the people. And because there were no learned men in his own kingdom, he brought such from other countries. Not a few books did he write with his own hand, for all the cares of his kingdom could not hinder him from study. Nor did he forget to provide, so far as it was possible, for the better defence of the kingdom. He took care that when the people were called together to fight against an enemy, they should do so quickly and in good order; and he built better and swifter ships of war than had ever been known in England before.

For the last eight years of his reign, the King had to fight many battles both by land and sea with his old enemies. But he had done so much in making both his soldiers and his ships better, that not once did he fail to overcome his enemies. And the kings that came after him, Edward the Elder, who was his son, and Athelstan his grandson, continued with even more success to drive back the Danish invaders. Alfred died "six nights before All-Hallow Mass," that was on October 26, in the year 901 (All-Hallow Mass is All Saints' Day), worn out with toil and sickness. All his life he had suffered grievously in his body. He was but fifty-two years of age.

CHAPTER XII

HOW KING ATHELSTAN FOUGHT AT BRUNANBURGH

Edward, surnamed the Elder, came after Alfred his father, and was—so men said—as good a leader in war and ruler in peace; and after Edward came Athelstan his son. To him his grandfather Alfred had showed special favour, giving him a purple cloak, and a belt adorned with jewels, and a sword in a scabbard of gold. And when he grew to be a man, and was crowned king—this was done when he was thirty years old—he showed himself a very wise ruler. None of the kings before him had been so great, for all the land, both English and Welsh, acknowledged him to be their over-lord.

But in the thirteenth year of his reign, the Danes, the Scots, and the Britons made a great league against him. Their leaders were Constantine, King of Scots, Anlaf the Dane, whose father had been King in Northumbria, Olaf, also a Dane, King of Dublin—for the Danes held Dublin in those days, and for many years afterwards—the King of Cumberland, and not a few English who were discontented with their master. All these gathered a vast host in the north, and thither King Athelstan marched to meet them.

While the armies lay encamped over against each other, Anlaf the Northumbrian, seeking to know what Athelstan proposed to do, disguised himself as a minstrel, and so made his way into the tent of the King. There he played and sang, while Athelstan and his nobles sat at their meal, and while he seemed to be resting from his playing and singing, he listened to their talk. The meal ended, the King gave him a silver piece. This he buried in the earth, disdaining to keep that which had been given him as hire for service. But one who had been a soldier under him in former times, saw the Prince while he was burying the

money, and knew him again. The man kept silence till Anlaf had gone back to his own camp, then he told the English King what he had seen. "Why did you delay?" said the King. "Had you been quicker, we had caught him." The man made answer, Sire, the same oath that I have sworn to you, I swore once to Anlaf. If I had betrayed him, you might have looked for me to betray you. But now, if you will listen to my advice, change the place of your tent." The King changed it, and it was well that he did so, for the camp was attacked that night, and a certain bishop, who, being newly come thither, pitched his tent in the place where the King's had been, was slain.



A MINSTREL.

For two days more King Athelstan waited till the help that he looked for had come up. Then he gave battle to the enemy. Never, since the coming of the English into Britain, had there been a fiercer fight than was fought that day. The men of Mercia and the men of the West Saxons stood side by side, and turned the enemy to flight. Five kings of the Northmen and seven earls fell that day, and Constantine fled back to his own

country, and the Danes from Dublin, such as the sword had spared, crossed the sea again.

"Full many a stalwart warrior lay
Upon the field of death that day,
By swarthy kite devoured, and torn
By raven with its beak of horn,
And lordly eagle, plumaged white,
And hawk that follows still the fight,
And the grey wolf, whom evening brings
From forest depths to feed on kings."

After this King Athelstan increased still more in honour and power. He ruled his people also with much prudence, making many wise laws. He caused justice to be done without fear between men, and made provision for the poor.

In the year 941 he died, being then forty-six years of age, and was buried in the Abbey of Malmesbury, to which abbey, as to the town of Malmesbury, he had given great gifts. To this day, the "commoners" of this place enjoy certain lands which the King bestowed upon the townsmen for services that they rendered him in his wars.

CHAPTER XIII

THE STORY OF KING CANUTE

About forty years after the death of the brave Athelstan, the kingdom of England came to a boy whose name was Ethelred. He was but ten years old when he became king, and during all his reign he and his people were in great trouble. So ill did he rule that men called him the "Unready." Every year the Danes grew more and more powerful. Sometimes the King tried to drive them out of England by force of arms, but he was often defeated. Sometimes he bribed them by large sums of money to go away. They took the money and went away, but very soon came back again. At last he tried what was the very worst and

most wicked way of all. He sent secretly to the rulers and magistrates throughout the kingdom that on a certain day—it was the 13th day of November in the year 1002—"all the Danish men in England should be slain." These Danish men were living in peace among the English; many of them had married English wives. On the morning of this day this evil deed was done; all indeed were not killed, but many thousands were, and women also, and among these the sister of King Sweyn of Denmark. The last thing that this lady said was this: "*My death will bring many wars upon England.*" And so indeed it came to pass.

Year after year the Danes came and ravaged the land. Sometimes King Sweyn came with them, sometimes he sent other chiefs. At last, eleven years after the death of his sister, he came with a fleet greater and more splendid than had ever been seen before. The beaks of the ships were of brass, and under the beaks were figure-heads, finely carved and painted, of men and bulls and dolphins. On the mast-heads were figures of birds and dragons to serve for weathercocks, and the sterns were adorned with golden lions. The King brought with him his son Canute, of whom I am to tell in this story.

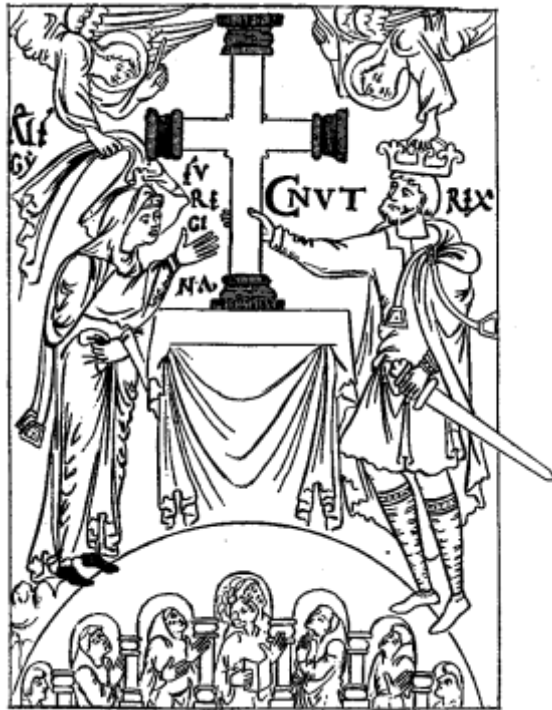
For six months or more King Sweyn went through the land with his army, doing such damage as no army had ever done before. The English could not stand up against him; as for King Ethelred, he fled over the sea to France. Sweyn indeed was King of England, but the crown was never put upon his head, for on Candlemas Day he died suddenly. Of the manner of his death the men of the time told this story. I have spoken before of a certain town in the East country which was called St. Edmundsbury, after King Edmund. There had been built in the town a house for monks, in honour of the King. Sweyn sent messengers to say that he would burn both the town and the monks' house with fire, and slay all their inhabitants, unless he should receive a great ransom for their lives. And when the people of the town sent to the King at Gainsborough, in the county of Lincoln, praying that he would not ask so great a sum of money, for that they were not able to pay it, he said the same

things again with greater violence. When he had spoken, it seemed to him that King Edmund suddenly appeared in the midst of the council, no man seeing him except himself, and that he thrust him through with a spear of gold that he carried in his hand. Men said also that before he died he sent for his son Canute, and bade him rule England prudently and justly.

The Danes chose Canute to be King, but the English were not content that a foreigner should reign over them, and sending to Ethelred, where he was in France, prayed him to come back. So Ethelred returned, and marching into the East country where Canute still was, compelled him to take to his ships and sail away. The next year he came back with more ships and men than before, and there was war again till Ethelred died. Thereupon Canute was crowned King by command of an assembly that met at Southampton, but Ethelred's son, Edmund, who was called Ironside by reason of his valour, was also crowned in London. Canute sailed up the Thames, having a fleet of more than three hundred ships. When he came to London he found that he could not pass the bridge, so strongly was it held against him. Thereupon he caused a canal to be dug on the south side of the river, and by this took some of his ships to the other side of the bridge. But when he tried to take the town, the citizens beat him back from the walls, killing many of his men.

After this the two Kings met in battle at Sherston. Edmund put his best and bravest warriors in the front line, and he himself took his place in front of all, for none was better or braver than he. All day long the two armies fought, neither winning the victory. That night they rested on the field of battle, and on the morrow, when the day dawned, they fought again. And now the English began to drive back their enemies, when there went through the army the report that King Edmund had been slain. It was a traitor that set the report about. When King Edmund heard it, he mounted to the top of a hill, and taking off his helmet, showed himself to the people, that they might see that he was yet alive. It is said also that seeing the traitor who had first told the false news, he threw his spear at him. He

indeed warded it off with his shield, but it pierced the man that stood by his side, and wounded two others also, so great was the strength of the Ironside.



KING CANUTE AND HIS QUEEN.

Seven times in that year did Edmund fight with Canute, and the last and fiercest fight of all was at Assandun. Canute made as if he would get to his ships, and Edmund seeing this charged him sword in hand at the head of his men. And now again the English might have won the day, but that a traitor, the very same that had spread the false report of the King's death, fled from the battle with his followers. So their line was broken; nevertheless they still held out, even till the end of the day, and till far into the night. Then at last Edmund the Ironside was constrained to leave the field. That day the flower of the English race perished.

Even so King Edmund did not lose heart. He gathered together another army, and would have fought again, but that all the land was weary of the war. So these two, Canute and Edmund, met on an island in the Severn, and agreed to divide the kingdom between them; Edmund was to rule the South, Canute the North. But before the year was out King Edmund died, some said of poison, and the whole kingdom came to Canute, for it had been agreed that whoever of the two should live the longer, should have the whole.

And now Canute the Dane set himself with all his heart to become a true English king. The traitor that had played King Edmund false was rightly punished for his wrong-doing. It is said that he even boasted to the King that he had not only deserted Edmund in the hour of need, but had also slain him. Thereupon the King cried out, *"Therefore you shall die, for you are guilty of treason both to God and to me."* And the traitor was slain. When Canute was crowned King, he swore that he would do justice between man and man, and that he would himself be obedient to the laws. And this he did. So, when in a fit of rage he slew with his own hand one of the "house-carles," he declared that he would pay the fine that was set on the shedding of blood. In those days when a man was slain, the slayer paid a fine according to the rank of the man. So the King said to the house-carles, "Say what fine I must pay for the killing of your comrade." And when they, fearing to judge the King, would not say, he fixed the fine for himself, making it nine times greater than what it should have been of right. And what the King did for himself, that he commanded all that were in authority under him to do for others. The poor were to be protected against the wrong-doing of the rich; all men were to be judged justly but with mercy; above all, Englishmen and Danes were to live at peace with each other, forgetting all grudges and injuries.

And as he did his duty to man, so he did it also to God, judging that it was from Him that he had his kingdom; this he showed in the manner that I will now tell. On a certain day, when he was at the very height of his power, he commanded that

they should set his royal chair on the sea-shore. On this he sat, his courtiers standing about him. Then he spoke to the tide as it flowed, "Thou art my subject, and this land on which I have set my chair is mine; never hath there been any one that refused to obey my bidding, and having so refused, escaped without punishment. I command thee therefore that thou come no further on to my land, and that thou presume not to wet the garments and limbs of thy lord." And when the tide, rising after its wont, came up and had no respect to the King's command, but wetted his feet and his legs, then the King, leaping from his seat, cried aloud, "Let all men know henceforth that the power of kings is an empty and foolish thing, and that no one is in very truth worthy to bear this name of King, saving Him only whose bidding the earth and the sea and all that in them is obey according to everlasting laws." After that day Canute would never again put his crown upon his head, but put it on the image of the crucified Christ.

The King greatly honoured the clergy, and gave great gifts to churches and abbeys. At Assandun, where he vanquished King Edmund, he caused a church to be built, that was notable for being built of stone, for in those days they were mostly built of wood. On the church of St. Edmund and on many others he and his Queen Emma bestowed much wealth. Among these was the great Church or Cathedral of Ely. They say that one day as he was passing in his boat by this church he made these verses that follow

"The Ely monks sang clear and high,
As King Canute was passing by;
'Row near the doors and hear them sing,'
Cried to his knights Canute the King."

Minstrels he loved greatly, and rewarded with generous gifts, as will be seen from this story. Among those who came to his Court was a certain man from Iceland, where in those days poetry and learning greatly flourished. When the King came into the hall he said, "I see one here who is not of this country; he has the look of a poet, yes, and of a fighter too, for I would sooner

have him as my comrade in battle than any other man here." When the minstrel from Iceland heard these words he sang these verses—

"To Cnut the Dane I tune my lay;
English and Irish own his sway,
And many an island in the sea;
So let us sing his praise that he
Be known of men in every land
To where heaven's lofty pillars stand."

This done he said to the King, "Suffer me to speak a poem that I have made in your honour." "You shall," said the King, "at our next meeting." So the next day there was a great gathering. When the poet from Iceland repeated his poem, the King highly praised it, then he took off from his head a Russian cap that he wore; it was brodered with gold, and had golden knots to it. "Fill this with silver," said he to his Chamberlain, "and give it to the poet." This the Chamberlain would have done, but because there was a great crowd of men, he had to reach it over their shoulders. So the silver was turned out of the cap on to the floor. But when the poet stooped to pick it up, the King said, "Let it be; the poor will be the better for it, and thou shalt not lose."

King Canute died when he was but little more than forty years old. His subjects greatly lamented him, for never was a king who better kept his oath to deal truly with his people.

CHAPTER XIV

HAROLD THE EARL

Godwin, son of Wulfnoth, was a great man in the days of King Canute and of King Edward. Six sons he had, and a daughter that was married to King Edward, and of these sons the second in age was Harold. This Harold was made Earl of East Anglia when he was twenty-four years of age; his brothers also had Earldoms, so that Godwin and his sons between them ruled three-fourth-parts of the realm of England. But after six years they fell under the displeasure of King Edward, for they were against the Normans, for whom the King had a great favour. As for Harold, he fled to Ireland with his brother Leofwine. Thence he came in the year after with a fleet, and landing at Porlock, which is in the county of Somerset, fought and won a battle with the people of the country. Thirty thanes, for so they called knights in those days, were slain, and a multitude of common men. Thence Harold, with whom went Leofwine, sailed to the Isle of Wight, where he found Earl Godwin, his father. Thence the three sailed eastward to Kent, and from Kent up the Thames to London. They lay with their ships on the south side of the river, and on the north side were King Edward's men. Earl Godwin sent an embassy to ask that he and his sons should be suffered to return. For a while the King said No, the Normans about him so advising, but when it was manifest that the people would have the Earl and his sons come back, he yielded, and the Normans fled for their lives.

Thus Harold got his Earldom again, and in the year after, his father dying suddenly, the Earldom of Wessex. So he grew in power and in favour with the King and people. A great warrior he was, and tall and strong, a comely person, and of gentle manners.

But, after a while, he had an unlucky adventure which brought him in the end great trouble. He took sail with certain companions, being minded, it would seem—for he had his dogs and hawks with him—to have some sport in hunting. When he had been a short time at sea—it was from some port in the English Channel that he had sailed—a storm began to blow, and cast his ship on the coast of France, near to the castle of a certain Count Guy. One of the fishermen of the place chanced to know him. This man went to the Count Guy, and said to him, "Give me twenty pounds, and I will show you a prisoner who will pay you willingly twenty pounds for his ransom." Thereupon the Count rode with all haste to the coast, and caused Harold and his companions to be seized and carried to a castle that he had some miles distant from the sea. But one of the men that waited on Harold escaped, and flying to William, Duke of Normandy, told him the whole matter, which William, for certain reasons of his own, was right glad to hear.

William, as will be seen from what is said of him in another place, was set on winning the kingdom of England for himself, and he thought it a most fortunate thing that chance should have put the Earl Harold within his reach, for there was not a man more likely to be chosen King than he. He sent, therefore, with all haste to the Count, commanding him to bring the English prisoner that he had taken. This the Count, who was not a little afraid of Duke William, did without delay, and receiving as much as he had hoped to get by way of ransom, was well content. As for Harold, it was a bad exchange for him, for, as will be seen, he was likely to pay more for his liberty than he would have paid to Count Guy. The Duke indeed showed much hospitality to him, taking him as his companion when he went a-hunting, and on an expedition that he made about this time against the people of Brittany. There was no better entertainment that one man could give to another in those days than to give him a part in some fighting. But when Harold was wishful to go home, then Duke William showed what was in his mind. "I shall not let you go," he said, "till you have sworn to be my man, to help me to the best of your power so long as King Edward shall

live, and to acknowledge me as King of England when King Edward shall die." This and other things Harold promised, not seeing in what other way he could get his liberty, and judging doubtless that a promise made under compulsion does not bind him that makes it. But the Duke, not forgetting that Harold might so excuse himself, required that he should confirm his promise by an oath. This Harold did not refuse to do. He laid his hand upon a book of the Gospels that had been set on what seemed to be a table, and swore that he would abide faithfully by his word. But when he had so sworn, the Duke uncovered that on which the book had lain, and lo! it was a chest full of the bones of saints and such-like things. Then Harold, it is said, turned pale and trembled, seeing what he had done without knowing.



KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

Not many months after this Harold had another great trouble, this time with one of his own house. Tostig, the brother

that was next to him in age, had for some ten years or more been Earl of Northumbria. But he had abused his authority both foolishly and harshly. Had he been the wisest of men, his task had not been easy, for he was an Englishman, and his people, for the most part, Danes. But he was hasty and violent, and would have his own will, whether it was just or not. Often too he would leave his Earldom to live at Court, where King Edward held him in great favour. At last, in the year 1065, Tostig having caused two nobles of Northumbria to be put to death, the people rebelled against him and drove him out. At first the King, who loved him well, was minded to bring him back, even by force. But Harold, having conferred with the leaders of the insurrection, and heard the accusations that were brought against Tostig, judged otherwise. So his Earldom was taken from Tostig, and he himself banished.

And now Edward, whom men called the Confessor for his piety and goodness, was like to die. He had caused to be built a great church at Westminster, spending on it, so men said, a tenth part of the whole wealth of the kingdom. This having been finished, was consecrated on Innocents' Day (Dec. 28, 1065). The King was hindered from being present by his weakness, but he was well content to die when he knew that the work was done. Eight days afterwards he was very near to his end. There were in the chamber with him his wife, the Queen, Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, the Keeper of the palace, and Harold. The Archbishop asked him, "To whom do you leave your kingdom of England?" Then the King stretched out his hand to Harold, and said, "I commend her" (meaning the Queen) "and the whole nation to thy protection." Having said so much, and received the Holy Communion, he passed away.

The next day King Edward was buried in his new church (where his bones remain to this day), and Harold was crowned King of England in this same place. When the Archbishop (not Stigand, as it should be noted, but Ealdred of York) put the crown upon his head, he asked of the people assembled, "Do you choose Earl Harold, son of Godwin, for your King?" All

answered with a great shout, "We choose him." Thereupon the Archbishop duly anointed him, put the crown upon his head, and the sword in his hand, he having first sworn that he would observe the laws of the kingdom. So Harold, son of Godwin, was made King, and had the honour for "forty weeks and one day" (Jan. 6-Oct. 14.).

CHAPTER XV

HAROLD THE KING

Not many days had passed after Harold was thus chosen and crowned King of England, when ambassadors came from William of Normandy, demanding of him that he should fulfil the promises that he had made and confirmed with an oath. To them Harold answered, "The kingdom is not mine to give up; I hold it from the people of England." William had not looked for any other answer, and began without any delay to prepare for taking the kingdom by force. He gathered a vast host together, as is told elsewhere, and Harold, on his part, prepared to resist him with all his might.

While the King thus waited for the coming of the Normans, there reached him tidings of a great danger that was threatening him and his kingdom in the north. Earl Tostig had made alliance with Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, and these two had landed in Yorkshire, and were about to march southward, ravaging the country as they went, unless they should be hindered. So Harold set forth without delay, taking his house-carles with him, and gathering as he went such as were willing to go with him. These house-carles, I should say, were the King's own guard. His other soldiers were called together when they were wanted, and went back to their homes and their work when the need was past, but the carles were with the King always. There were some three thousand in all. By the time that Harold, whom I must now call the English Harold, had reached Yorkshire, Harold of Norway and Tostig had vanquished an

army that the earls of the north led against them, and after taking York had pitched their camp at Stamford Bridge, which is by the river Derwent. Harold rode through York, where the people received him gladly, and went on to attack the enemy. On his way, it is said, he and his companions met Harold of Norway and Earl Tostig. Said Tostig to his brother, "What will you give me if I consent to make peace?" "Your Earldom," said Harold, "and more besides, if you want it." "And what will you give to my ally, Harold of Norway?" "Seven feet of English ground for a grave, or, for he chances to be very tall, perchance a foot more." Tostig turned away, for he was ashamed to make terms for himself only. It is said also that Harold of Norway, who had stood apart while the two talked together, not knowing who it was that was speaking with Tostig, was angry when he heard that it was the English King. "Why did you let him depart unhurt?" said he to the Earl.

In the end Harold of England fell upon the enemy before they expected him. They had pitched their camp on both sides of the Derwent, the Bridge of Stamford joining the two. Earl Tostig's men lay on the side that was nearer to York. These made haste to escape across the bridge, and were greatly helped by a stout champion who held it against all the Englishmen. So valiantly did he fight, though he was one only against many, that they could not drive him from his place, till some one going under the bridge thrust at him with his spear through the timbers, and so slew him. Then at last the Englishmen crossed the bridge. While this was doing, Harold of Norway put his men in array. Very fierce was the fight that followed; but in the end both the King of Norway and Earl Tostig were killed, and with them a certain Irish king who had leagued himself with them, hoping to get plunder from English folk. Nor did many of the army escape, for they were twenty miles and more from their ships, and all the country was raised against them, and had no fear of them now that they were beaten men.

Nevertheless, they whom Harold of Norway had left to guard the ships escaped with their lives. They had made a strong

earthwork round the ships (which may be seen to this day near to Riccall on the river Ouse), and Harold the King judged it best not to attack them, knowing that he could not take the place without great loss of men. So he offered them conditions of peace, namely that they should depart unharmed, but should first swear that they would never come back to England as enemies, and should also leave certain hostages, as pledges of their good faith. This they did, and so departed, carrying with them the dead body of their king.



SAXON KING AND HIS ARMOUR-BEARER.

CHAPTER XVI

HAROLD THE KING (*CONTINUED*)

While King Harold remained in York, to which city he returned after the battle, that he might rest himself and his army, there came a messenger from the south in hot haste with news that William, Duke of Normandy, had landed in England with a great host of men. This was, as near as can be judged, on the first day of October. Not an hour did the King tarry in York after he heard the news, but journeyed in haste to London, taking with him such of his house-carles as were still fit for service. And as he journeyed he sent messengers to gather fresh soldiers to his standard. Few, indeed, came from the earldoms of the north, but from the shires of the south there was gathered together to London, as the writers of the time tell us, "an innumerable multitude of Englishmen." With these he marched to meet the army of the Normans, and pitched his camp on a hill that was then called Senlac, but now Battle, in memory of the great fight that was then fought. As for the Normans, they lay at Hastings, which was about six miles distant from Senlac Hill.

But first it should be told what the King's brothers, Gurth and Leofwine, would have had him do, and how he answered them. "Let us go," they said, "and meet Duke William: we have made no promise and taken no oath to him, and can therefore fight with a free conscience. And if we are beaten, then he will have to deal with you, so that all will not be lost by one battle. Also you should lay waste all the country between the sea and London, that the Normans may find nothing wherewith to feed themselves and their horses." But Harold refused their counsel. "I myself will meet William of Normandy," he said; "and I will not lay waste any fields of Englishmen."

On the fourteenth day of October, about nine o'clock in the morning, the great battle began. King Harold had made his

post on Senlac Hill as strong as he could, with a ditch and a triple palisade. In the middle of the line he and his two brothers with the house-carles took their place round the Royal Standard. These were armed with helmets and coats of mail, and had for weapon the Danish battle-axe. On either wing were the men who had come in from the southern shires, leaving the plough or the forge to fight for King and country. Some had swords and shields, but many were but ill armed, carrying but pikes and bill-hooks and scythes.



SAXON SPEARMAN AND ARCHER.

Before the first line of the Normans rode a champion, Taillefer by name, who was both a minstrel and a skilful man-at-arms. As he rode he sang the song of Roland, and threw up his lance in the air and caught it again. He came close to the English lines, and struck down first one champion that came out against him, and then another, but was himself struck down by a third.

The Normans were ranged in three divisions. William with his knights being in the middle of the line, advanced, as being themselves the strongest part of the army, against King

Harold and his chosen men. On the left wing were the Bretons and the men of Poitou; on the right the French and others. And in each division there were knights, and heavy-armed foot-soldiers, and archers.

First of all the archers came forward, and shot a volley against the English line. This done, they fell back, not being armed for close combat. After these the foot-soldiers came up to the palisade, and sought to break through it, but in vain. And when these could do nothing, the Norman knights themselves charged but could not break the English line, for this fought behind a defence. Man for man, too the Englishmen were taller and stronger than their enemies.

The first loss that the English suffered was from their own fault. The Bretons, coming against them on the left, turned and fled, and King Harold's men, seeing this, charged from out their defences, and pursued them down the hill. They slew, indeed, many, and, so fierce was their charge, drove back even the Norman knights. And when there went abroad a rumour that Duke William himself had fallen, there were some that thought that the battle was won. But when the Duke, uncovering his head, rode through the ranks, showing that he was yet alive, and the knights recovering themselves, rode forward, and the Bretons took courage again and ceased from flight, then the English suffered in their turn, losing many before they could get back to their defences.

After this Duke William himself, with his brothers Robert and Bishop Odo—a stout fighter for all that he was a bishop—and a great company of his knights, charged against the middle of the English line. Then great deeds of arms were done, for Gurth, thrusting with his spear at the Duke, wounded his horse, and was himself struck to the ground by a blow of the Duke's iron mace. Leofwine also was slain by a Norman knight. But the Englishmen, though troubled at the loss of these brave champions, still held their ground.

Then the Normans feigned to flee, and the Englishmen left their defences to pursue them. Again, as before, when they had rushed out after the Bretons, they suffered great loss, the enemy falling upon them as they were scattered. And, besides this, the palisade being left without defenders, the Normans were able to get within. Yet even then King Harold and his men stood firm. So close was their array, that though a man was slain, his dead body could not fall to the ground, but was kept up by the living.

So the battle might even then have been won, or at least ended on equal terms for both, but that King Harold himself was slain. The Norman archers, by command of the Duke, shot a flight of arrows into the air, and one of these as it fell wounded the King in the eye. He fell at the foot of the Royal Standard, and there, for the life was still in him, the Norman knights battered him to death with many blows. The men that had come from the shires fled from the field, but the house-carles still fought where they stood, not asking for quarter, till all were slain. That day well-nigh all the nobles of the southern shires that were able to bear arms fell with their King, and many priests also of high and low degree, for when they came to count up the slain they found not a few tonsured heads among the English. The number of them that fell has never been known. Of the Normans there were slain fifteen thousand, that is, a fourth part of their whole army: of the English, doubtless, many more. The body of the King was buried on the sea-shore. "He guarded the coast while he lived," said Duke William, "let him guard it still, now that he is dead." But afterwards it was taken away and laid in the church of the abbey which he had founded at Waltham in Essex.

CHAPTER XVII

WILLIAM, DUKE OF NORMANDY

William, who was afterwards called the Conqueror, was the son of a certain Robert who was Duke of Normandy. It was said that, having been laid when he was born on the floor of the room, he took firm hold of the straw that covered it—for in those days straw was used for carpet even by rich and noble people. It was thought that this was a sign that when he should grow up he would be a great conqueror, who would keep fast hold of everything on which he might lay his hand.

When the boy was seven years old, his father the Duke called together the nobles of the country, and said to them, "I am resolved to journey to the place where our Lord Christ died and was buried. But because I know that this journey is full of dangers, I would have it settled who should be Duke in my place if I should die." The nobles answered him that it would be far better that he should stay at home, and do his duty in ruling his Duchy. But Duke Robert would not be persuaded. He was steadfastly resolved to go. And that it should be settled before he went who should succeed him all were agreed. Thereupon he brought before the nobles his young son William. "This is my son," he said; "he is but little, but he will grow; he is one of your own race, and he has been brought up among you." The Norman nobles were but ill pleased, for the boy's mother was nothing better than a tanner's daughter. Nevertheless they agreed to do as the Duke wished, for there was no one else whom they could agree to choose. Therefore they took the oaths and did homage to him. So Duke Robert set out, and died not many months afterwards on his journey.

The nobles, though they had sworn to have the young William for their Duke, were but little disposed to keep their oath. All through Normandy there was confusion and trouble;

every man did as he pleased, making war upon his equals, and oppressing those who were below him. They slew with the sword, or poisoned first one and then another of the men who had charge of the young Duke, and more than once they came very near to killing the lad himself. Again and again did his mother's brother, Walter by name, save him by taking him from his castle, and hiding him in the cottages of the poor.

But now he was growing up and able to take care of himself. So, when a certain Thurstan, by the help of some French soldiers, seized the castle of Falaise, the young William, calling all loyal Normans to his help, attacked him, and had it not been for the coming of night, would have taken the castle by storm. Thurstan, seeing that he could not hold the place, gave it up, and was suffered to depart, on condition that he should never return to Normandy.

When William was about twenty years of age, all the nobles of Normandy made a great conspiracy against him. First they tried either to seize or slay him. It chanced that he was hunting at a certain castle of his. One night, when he had fallen into his first sleep, his jester burst into his room with his staff in his hand, and awoke him, crying out, "If you do not rise and fly for your life, you will never leave this place a living man." Thereupon the young Duke leapt from his bed, dressed himself in haste, and mounted his horse. All that night he rode for his life. It was moonlight, and so he could see his way. There was a river to be crossed, but he came to it where the tide was low, and so he was able to pass it without danger. The ford by which he crossed was afterwards called "The Duke's Way." At sunrise he came to a certain place named Rye, where there was a church and castle. The lord of the place was one Hubert, a loyal man, who had no part in the conspiracy. Hubert was standing at his gate, and seeing the Duke ride by at full speed, called to him and asked why he rode at such haste. "I am flying for my life," said the Duke. Thereupon he ordered a fresh horse to be brought for him, and bade his three sons ride with him for a guard, not

leaving him till they had lodged him safely in his castle at Falaise.

And now Duke William, not having sufficient strength among the loyal men of Normandy to meet the rebels, sought help from his over-lord, Henry, King of the French. King Henry granted his petition, and gathering soldiers from his own people, marched to help the Duke. It was not long before the two armies, the King and the Duke on the one side, and the rebels on the other, met in battle.



NORMAN SOLDIERS.

There was a certain lord among the rebels named Ralph. He was a powerful man, having among his followers one hundred and twenty knights, each with a banner of his own. This man had sworn that he would smite the Duke wherever he might find him. But now he began to repent of what he had done. It seemed to him a shameful thing to stand in arms against his rightful lord, and all the more so because the Duke had never done him any wrong. His knights also urged him to return to the Duke, while divers of those with whom he had conspired exhorted him to keep faith with them, and promised him great reward for so doing. For some time he stood doubtful; only he kept his men apart both from the one army and the other. When William saw what he was doing, he said to King Henry, "Those

yonder are the men of Ralph of Tessar; he has no grudge against me; I doubt not but that they will soon be on my side." And so indeed it turned out, for Ralph took the advice of his knights. He bade them stay where they were, but he himself galloped across the field, and riding up to the Duke, struck him with his glove. Thus he performed his oath. Afterwards, when the battle was joined, he charged with his men against the rebels.

Fierce was the fight that day, a battle of knights against knights. Nowhere was it fiercer than where King Henry of France fought at the head of his men. Twice was the King struck down from his horse, and each time the warrior that struck him was himself slain. As for the Duke, he bore himself most bravely, and with better fortune than the King. He slew the most stalwart champion of the rebels with his own hand. As this man rode in the front rank, as if to challenge any that might dare to attack him, William charged him, using, not his lance, as was constantly the custom, but his sword. With this he smote the champion such a blow between the throat and the chest that the man fell dead from his horse.

Soon the rebels fled on every side. Many were slain in the battle, and many fell in the flight, but yet more perished in a flooded river which they were compelled to cross. The very mill-wheels, it is said, were stopped by the bodies of the dead.

It was on this day that William earned for the first time the name of Conqueror.

After this he sought to win for his wife, Matilda, daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders. It has been said that he courted her in a very strange fashion. First, for such is the story, he made his suit in a peaceable way through her father. Her answer was this: "I had sooner be a nun than the wife of a low-born man." When William heard this, he mounted his horse, and taking with him a few companions, rode to Bruges, in which town the lady was then living. He found her coming back from church, and leaping from his horse, seized her by the hair, and beat and kicked her. But when next Count Baldwin inquired of

his daughter whether she was willing to take any man for a husband, she made this answer; "No husband will I have, except it be William the Norman."

However this may be, it is certain that the Pope forbade the marriage. There was some kindred between the two, and such were not permitted to marry except by special leave of the Pope. But William took no heed of the Pope's forbidding. Matilda became his wife; and, after awhile, the Pope granted him pardon.

There is no need to tell again what has been told already in the foregoing chapters; how William, getting Harold into his possession, made him swear to be his man; how he gathered together a great host, and coming to England, conquered King Harold in a great battle on the hill of Senlac. It is said that when he was leaping from his boat to the shore, he stumbled and fell. His companions were greatly troubled at this mishap, which seemed to them a bad beginning of the enterprise. He who had so great a thing to accomplish in England should not, they thought, stumble and fall so soon as he touched its shore. But William did not lose heart for a moment. Lifting up his hands, which were full of earth, he cried in a loud voice, "See! I have taken possession of this land of England."

The story of the battle also has been told; but this may be said, that as no man had more to win in this same battle, so no man bore himself more bravely. Many a warrior did he smite to the ground with the great mace which he was wont to carry; one of them was a brother of King Harold, one of the bravest and most stalwart warriors on the English side. Nor did he fail either in prudence, or such skill as a general should show. It may be said that, beyond all doubt, Harold and his Englishmen would have won the day at the battle of Senlac, had not William, Duke of Normandy showed himself so excellently good a soldier and leader.

CHAPTER XVIII

WILLIAM, KING OF ENGLAND

For one-and-twenty years did the Conqueror reign in England. Not a little good did he do in his new kingdom. First of all, so strong and resolute was he, he made all men, however great and powerful they might be, understand that they must obey the laws. He caused equal justice to be administered between man and man. He forbade all buying and selling of slaves. He brought not a few learned men into the country, caused the clergy to do their duty better, and greatly encouraged the building of splendid churches.

Nevertheless the English people suffered many things at his hands. For, first, he was constrained to reward those who had helped him to win the kingdom, nor could he so reward but by spoiling others of goods and lands. Few indeed were the parishes throughout the whole country in which an Englishman was not dispossessed of his estate that it might be given to some follower of the King.

Then the English people again and again rebelled against him, and, being subdued, were, almost of necessity, severely treated. Lastly, he himself became more stern and more cruel, more selfish, more bent on having his own way and following his own pleasure without care or concern for others. Doubtless it was a good thing for England that it should have been conquered, even, one may say, that it should have been conquered by William of Normandy. Nevertheless it was but little of this good thing that came to the Englishmen of that time.

The trouble began with the very day on which Duke William was crowned, to wit the Christmas of the year in which he came to England. Fearing lest the people of London, who were ill-disposed to him, should attack him, he posted round the Abbey of Westminster, in which he was to be crowned, a great

body of Norman soldiers. At the very moment when the Archbishop was putting the crown upon the King's head, asking the English that were in the church whether they were willing to have William, Duke of Normandy for their king, and the people had answered that they were so willing, there was a great cry outside. The soldiers had fallen upon the houses of the citizens, and had begun to plunder and set them on fire. The English that were in the church fled for their lives, and the Normans made haste to get their share of the spoil. So William was left alone in the church with the bishops and clerks. Still he would not have the matter delayed, and so was crowned. But when he swore that he would rule as justly as had any of the kings that had reigned before him, he added these words, "So that the people be true to me."

Many times did the English people rise against their Norman King. The fiercest of all their rebellions was in Northumberland, and this was most cruelly punished. He laid waste the whole land from north to south, from east to west. Every house was burnt with all that was in it; the stores of corn and hay and other food for man and beast were destroyed; the very animals were driven into the flames and burnt. For years to come the fields in many parts lay desolate, and the towns were without inhabitants.

This land of Northumbria he laid waste in his anger; to another region of England, in the south, he did the same for his pleasure. Of all things, that which William loved the best was hunting, and in order that he might enjoy this sport without hindrance, he cleared in the county of Hampshire a great space of land—thirty miles it was from end to end. Before it had been a flourishing region, fair and fertile, with many houses and churches. Now it was laid waste, given over to the beasts that the King loved to hunt. There seemed to be a curse on the place. Here one of the King's sons, Richard by name, was killed, struck by the bough of a tree, as he was hunting a stag; here, as will be told in the next chapter, another son, William, who reigned after

him, met his death; here a grandson also perished by the chance blow from the arrow of a companion.



A NORMAN KING HUNTING.

As he grew to be an old man, trouble upon trouble came upon William; nor had there ever been known, either in England or in Normandy, a darker time than the year in which he died. Grievous storms destroyed the harvest, so that many men died of hunger; many towns with their churches were burnt, London among them, with its great cathedral of St. Paul's; many evil deeds were done, and there were many wars. As for William himself, he met his death in a war that he waged with King Philip of France. They were at variance about a certain district on the border of France and Normandy. The French King had taken possession of it, but King William claimed it as his own. He had been lying sick at Rouen, the chief town of the Duchy, and had been angered by a foolish jest of King Philip's. Rising from his bed, he rode forth to take vengeance. He wasted all the

land that was in dispute between him and the French King, and when he came to the chief town that was in it, he burnt it, churches as well as houses, to the ground. As he rode among the ruins, his horse put its foot on a piece of burning wood and stumbled. The King was thrown forward on the saddle and so grievously hurt, for he was very heavy, that he had to be carried home. There he lay dying for some weeks, and as he lay, he sorely repented him of his many misdeeds, confessing that he had caused the death of many thousands of innocent people, and had taken away their possessions by force from many. Two of his sons were with him—the eldest, Robert by name, had been banished. When he came to speak of who should have his kingdoms after him, he said, "Robert must have Normandy; it is his of right. As for England, I cannot give away that which is not mine, but my desire is, if it may be, that William, who has ever been faithful to me, may have it." Then said Henry, his youngest son, "And what dost thou give me, my father?" "Five thousand pounds of silver from my hoard," said the King. "But what good shall the silver do me, if I have no place in which to dwell?" The King answered, "Be patient, my son, and let thy elders go before thee." The King then bade William set out at once for England. Henry also left his father that he might make sure of getting his treasure. After this the King made provision for the building again of the churches which he had caused to be destroyed; he commanded that the rest of his treasure should be given to the poor, and for the building of churches and the like uses. Certain rebels whom he had cast into prison he ordered to be released. And so, having done what he could to make his peace with God and man, the Conqueror died.

But it was not to be that he should be buried in peace. As the body was being carried to the grave a fire broke out, and seemed likely to destroy a great part of the town. Most of those that followed the coffin left their place in the procession that they might save their possessions. Nor was this all. When the preacher had spoken of all the great deeds of the dead man, he said, "Let all that are here present pray for his soul; let them beg that God may forgive his trespasses against Him; let them

forgive themselves anything in which he may have trespassed against them."

When he had said these words, a certain knight stood forward and said, "On this very ground whereon ye now stand, once stood my father's house. This man, whom ye are burying here to-day, took the land away from him by force and against all right, and built this church upon it. I now claim it for my own, and forbid you to bury the body of this robber within the borders of my lawful inheritance."

Thereupon the bishops inquired of them that stood by whether these things were so. When they heard that the man had spoken the truth, they covenanted with him that he should sell to them so much land as was needed for the grave for sixty shillings, and they promised that in due time they would pay him the full price for the whole. Thus was the Conqueror buried.

CHAPTER XIX

THE RED KING

As the Conqueror had desired, when he lay dying, that his son William should have England, so it came to pass. Seventeen days after his father's death he was crowned King, having first sworn that he would maintain justice and mercy throughout the realm, and that he would duly preserve all the rights of the Church. He was not indeed permitted to possess himself of this great inheritance altogether in peace. Some of the great nobles were ill-pleased that William should be King in the place of Robert the eldest son, who was of an easier temper, and might be ruled by them; it vexed them also that a division should be made between Normandy and England. For these reasons they rebelled against King William, Robert also sending across the sea some soldiers to help them. The King thereupon resorted to the English for help, promising them that their taxes should be lighter, that the laws should be made better, and more justly

administered. This help the people willingly gave, so that the rebellion was speedily brought to an end.



THE KING'S SHIP.

But when the Red King—for so they called him from the colour of his hair and his face—felt that he was safe upon his throne, he broke all his promises. Never had England a king more careless of his word, more given to oppression, never one that had less regard either for God or for man. He was especially greedy of money, not caring by what wrong and injustice he got it, and spending it when got in all extravagant and wicked ways. Thus when a bishopric or an abbey became vacant by the death of its possessor, William would not suffer any one to be elected or appointed, but took all the revenue for himself. In this way, when the good Archbishop Lanfranc, who had crowned him, died, he kept the archbishopric vacant for four years, taking all the revenues for himself. Only when he fell sick, believing that he was about to die, he repented, and gave the office to a certain monk, Anselm by name, who had reproved him for his wickedness, and exhorted him to repent. But when he recovered, he forgot all his good resolutions, and persevered in his evil ways till the very day of his death. The manner of his death was this. He died, as more than one of his house had died before, in the New Forest. He had passed a restless night, so disturbed by

bad dreams that he called for his servants to watch by his bedside.

Before the sun rose one of his attendants entered his chamber, and told him of a dream which a certain monk had had, which seemed to mean some evil that was to happen to the King. William laughed. "The man," he said, "dreams like a monk; give him a hundred shillings." Nevertheless, by the advice of his servants, he gave up the intention that he had of hunting, and remained at home. But after dinner he changed his mind, and rode out into the Forest. Before long he was left alone, his companions having gone different ways in the pursuit of game. What happened afterwards was never known for certain. It was commonly reported at the time that one Walter Tyrrell, shooting at a deer, struck a tree with the arrow, which, glancing off, wounded the King to death; and that he, seeing what he had done, rode off at full speed to the coast, where he took ship, and sailed to the Holy Land. But Walter Tyrrell, when he came back to England, took a solemn oath that he had not been that day in that part of the Forest, and had not even seen the King. That he was murdered by some one seems likely, for indeed there were many that had reason to hate him. A peasant, passing through the Forest about sunset, found the King lying dead upon the ground, with an arrow in his breast. The man put the body into his cart, and carried it to Winchester. There it was buried the next day, in the Cathedral, but without prayer or hymn.

Two good qualities the Red King had, and, as far as we can see, two only. He was faithful and obedient to his father, who regarded him more than his other sons. And he was brave. This story is told of him, that having heard that a certain noble in his dominions abroad had rebelled against him, he took horse forthwith, crying out, "Let all that love me follow." When he reached the coast, he found the weather very stormy, and the captain of the ship in which he wished to cross the sea was unwilling to set sail. "Hold thy peace, man," said William, "kings are never drowned."

CHAPTER XX

THOMAS BECKET, THE CHANCELLOR

The Red King was succeeded by his younger brother Henry, who was surnamed Beauclerc, or Good Scholar, for he had been better educated than princes commonly were in those days, knowing even something of Latin; and he did something for the better government of England. His son and heir William was drowned, and on his death the succession to the Crown was disputed between his daughter Maud, who married, firstly, Henry V., Emperor of Germany, and secondly, Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, and Stephen of Blois, whose mother was Adela, daughter of the Conqueror. Then followed a time of great trouble, but in 1153, Stephen's son Eustace having died, it was agreed that Stephen should reign for the rest of his life, and Henry, son of the Empress Maud, should be king after him.

Henry II., who already possessed Normandy and Maine, received with his wife Eleanor the great province of Aquitaine, and had more of France than the King of France himself. What troubles came from these possessions in France to him and to others will be seen hereafter. But the story that I have to tell of this King concerns a famous Churchman.

Not a few wonderful things are said to have happened to this Thomas while he was a boy. His father, who had given him over to be taught by certain priests who dwelt at Merton in Surrey, came one day to see him. When the boy was brought into his presence, he fell down before him, and did him reverence. The Prior cried out, "Foolish old man, what doest thou? dost thou fall at thy son's feet? That surely he should rather do to thee." But the father answered—not indeed in his son's hearing—"I know what I do: that boy will be great in the sight of the Lord."

Once when he was at home for holiday he had a marvellous escape from death. There lodged with his father a certain knight, who spent his time in hunting with hawks and hounds. Thomas would often go with him, having a great liking for this sport, in which when he grew up he also spent such leisure as he had. One day the knight went out according to custom, and Thomas followed him on horseback. They had to cross a certain swift stream. There was indeed a bridge, but it was so small and narrow that it could be safely passed only on foot. Below this bridge there was a mill with a wheel, towards which the stream ran with a very fast current, having a steep bank on either side. This bridge the knight, intent on his sport, and careless of danger, crossed first on his horse, and Thomas, fearing nothing, followed him. But when he came to the middle of the bridge, suddenly his horse stumbled, and both he and his rider fell into the stream. Here the two were parted by the violence of the current, and the boy was carried downward, nor did there seem any hope but that he would be either drowned or crushed by the wheel. But when he was now on the brink of death, the man that had charge of the mill, knowing nothing of what had happened, suddenly shut off the water from the wheel. Meanwhile the knight and his company were following down the stream with piteous cries. These the man at the mill heard, the noise of the wheel being stopped. Coming forth he thrust his hand into the water, and drew Thomas to land scarce breathing and but half alive.

Thomas, growing up, obtained the favour first of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and then of the King, who made him Chancellor, he being then thirty-seven years of age.

When he was Chancellor, many nobles sent their sons to be in his house. These he caused to be duly trained and taught. Some he sent back to their parents fit to be good and true knights, and some he kept with himself. The King put his own son, Henry, in his charge.

No man ever did the duties of his office more honestly and diligently than did Thomas. The King, the clergy, the

nobles, and the people alike honoured him for his greatness of mind and his many virtues. With the King he had a close friendship; and when business was done, they would play together like two boys of the same age. They sat together in church, and they rode out together. One day they were riding together in the streets of London, the weather being very cold. The King saw an old man coming, poor, in thin and ragged clothing. Whereupon he said to the Chancellor, "Do you see him?" The Chancellor answered, "Yes, I see him." *THE KING*—"How poor he is, how feeble, how poorly clad! Would it not be a most charitable deed to give him a cloak, warm and thick?" *THE CHANCELLOR*—"Verily it would; and you, my King, should have care that he have it." Meanwhile the man came up. Said the King to him, "Wilt thou have a good cloak, my friend?" The poor man, not knowing who these two might be, thought that he jested. Then said the King to the Chancellor, "You shall do this great charity." And laying hold of the cloak which he wore—it was new, and very fine, of scarlet and grey—he strove to drag it from him. The Chancellor strove to keep it. Then there was a great commotion and noise, and all the knights rode up, wondering what this might mean, for the two were pulling with both their hands, and more than once seemed likely to fall from their horses. At last the Chancellor suffered the King to have his way, that is to pull off the cloak and give it to the poor man. Then the King told the story, and there was great laughter among the knights.

In the third year of his office, Becket went on an embassy to the King of France, to make a contract of marriage between his King's son Henry and the daughter of the King of France. Never did ambassador go more splendidly equipped. He had two hundred men on horseback, all of his own household, knights, esquires, clerks, serving-men, and young nobles whom he had trained in his house. All were clothed as became their rank. As for Becket, he had four-and-twenty changes of raiment and many garments of silk and fur, and robes and carpets such as the chamber and bed of a bishop are wont to be adorned with. He had also hounds and birds of all kinds such as kings and

nobles are wont to use. He had light carriages, drawn each by five strong horses. Of these, two bore nothing but beer, "a liquor made of corn with water, which the French greatly admire, for it is clear, and of the colour of wine, but better in taste." In one carriage was the furniture of his chapel, in another that of his chamber, and in a third that of his kitchen. Others carried meat and drink and divers other goods. He had twelve horses, and eight chests full of gold and silver plate, and many clothes and books, and other matters. Each horse had its own groom; under each wagon was a dog chained, strong enough, it was said, to overcome a lion or a bear. And on the back of each horse was a tailed monkey. When the Frenchmen, rushing out of their houses, asked who this was and whose the train, it was answered to them, "It is the Chancellor of the King of the English, going on an embassy to the King of the French." Then said the Frenchmen, "Marvellous is the King of the English, whose Chancellor goes thus grandly." Nor was he famous for these things only. When afterwards there was war between the two kings, the Chancellor had seven hundred knights of his own household, and many others. And he himself met in single combat a valiant French knight, and striking him down, spoiled him of his horse.



BECKET MADE ARCHBISHOP.

When he had been Chancellor for seven years, the King sent for him, and told him that he was minded to make him Archbishop of Canterbury. Thomas was greatly unwilling that this should be. "I know," said he, "that if this be done, you will soon turn away your love, and regard me with the bitterest hatred. Already you do many things in respect of the Church which I like not. And now there will be stirred up endless strife between us." These words did not alter the King's purpose. Thomas, therefore, having been duly chosen, was made Archbishop, having being first ordained priest, for before this he was a deacon only.

CHAPTER XXI

THOMAS BECKET, THE ARCHBISHOP

What Becket had said, soon came to pass, for he fell out with the King. It would be long to tell all the causes of quarrel between them, but the chief was this, that the King desired to put the clergy under the common law of England, while Becket would have them judged by a law of their own, or by the Pope. Once did Becket give way, but he soon repented of having done so, and this made the King even more angry than before. At last the King called him to come before an assembly of the earls and barons of the kingdom. When these were about to pronounce sentence against him, he refused to hear. "I am your father," he said, "you are laymen only. I will not hear your sentence." Then he arose from his place, and went bearing his cross to the door. One of the King's friends following him called out that he was a traitor. Thomas turned on him and said, "Were I a knight, mine own hands would prove that thou liest." He mounted his horse, and rode back to the monastery where he lodged, but could scarcely manage his horse or carry his cross for the multitude that thronged about him and asked for his blessing. After this he sat down to meat with a cheerful spirit, the chamber where he was being thronged with people. In the book that, according to

custom, was read during the meal, came by chance the text, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another." Hearing these words, he looked to one of his friends, as if taking these words to himself. That night he fled. Not without much toil and danger did he reach a place of safety. For a time he went afoot; not being used to this travelling he often tottered and fell. His companions besought a boy whom they saw to hire something for the holy man to ride. The boy ran to the nearest village, but was absent so long that Thomas's companions began to fear that he had betrayed them. At last he came back leading with him an ass, which, for a bridle, had a wisp of hay, and lacked a saddle. Still they were forced to be content; so, throwing a cloak on the beast, they made the holy man ride. For two miles he rode, then, thinking it both easier and more respectable to go on foot, he walked for the rest of the way with his companions. They passed a certain knight standing at the door of his house with a hawk upon his wrist. When he saw four men dressed as clerks going by, he looked at them closely, and said, "One of these is either the Archbishop of Canterbury, or very like to him." To whom one of Thomas's companions answered, "Didst ever see the Archbishop of Canterbury travelling in such fashion?" Some say that Thomas was in greater danger of being known because, as was his manner, he looked lovingly on the hawk. At another place the landlord of an inn knew him by the slenderness of his hands, and by the kindness with which he gave portions of food to the children. As for the King, he was greatly enraged, and not being able to harm the Archbishop, banished all his kindred from England. It would be long to tell how the quarrel went on. At last it seemed that the two were reconciled. Thomas went to meet the King, and the King ran forward from the crowd, and saluted him, and talked to him in so friendly a fashion that it might have seemed there had been no enmity between them. But it was more a show than a reality. "Trust him not," said the King of France, "my Lord Archbishop, unless he gives you the kiss of peace." And this the King never gave.

After this Thomas went back to England, but he would not give way one jot in the matter that was in dispute, and he put under the ban the bishops and others that had held with the King. When he came to Canterbury the people and the clergy received him with all honour. From Canterbury he went to London, and there also he was most honourably received.



DISPUTE BETWEEN HENRY II. AND BECKET.

When the King heard of these things, how that the bishops had been excommunicated—this the bishops themselves crossed the sea to tell him—and how great multitudes of the people went out to do honour to the Archbishop, he was greatly enraged. First he asked of the bishops, "My lords, what shall I do?" They answered, "It is not our part to tell you what must be done." But one of them said—it was the Archbishop of York—"My lord, as long as Thomas lives, you will have no peace nor quiet, nor will you see another good day." Then the King cried, "I have nourished and promoted to honour sluggish and wretched knaves who are faithless to their lord, and suffer him to be tricked in such infamous fashion by a base clerk."

Four knights of the household, hearing the King speak, and seeing how great was his rage, agreed together that they would kill the Archbishop, and departed for England, sailing

from different ports. These four were Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Richard Brito.

Meanwhile the Archbishop had come back to Canterbury. On Christmas Day he preached to the people, taking for his text the song of the Angels of Bethlehem, "Peace on earth to men of good will." At the end of his sermon he said that the time of his departure was at hand, and as he said this he wept. There was heard also throughout the church weeping and wailing, while the people murmured, "Father, why dost thou desert us so soon?" Afterwards when some one said to him that there had been in Canterbury, among the archbishops, one martyr, St. Alphege, he answered, "It may well be that in a short time you will have another." Nevertheless, when he sat down at table with his friends, he was merry after his custom.

On the fourth day after Christmas, that is the day following the Feast of the Holy Innocents, the four knights came to Canterbury. They pretended that they came by order of the King, and so had gathered a band of followers. It was past the dinner-hour when they arrived, and the Archbishop had risen from table, and had gone into an inner room to do some business. They who had waited upon the Archbishop were themselves dining, and invited the knights, whom they knew as being servants of the King, to sit down with them. The knights refused, saying that they had business with the Archbishop. He consenting to see them, they were brought into the chamber where he was. They sat down without saluting him, and when he greeted them courteously, they answered him with anger. The Archbishop changed countenance, knowing that they had come for his hurt. Then Fitz-Urse, who seemed to be the ringleader among them, said, "We have somewhat to say to thee by the King's command; shall we tell it here before all?" The Archbishop, knowing what they were about to say, answered, "These things should not be spoken in private, but in public." The doorkeeper thereupon called back those who were in the chamber—for the Archbishop had commanded them to go out. But for this the knights would have killed him there and then,

striking him with the shaft of the cross, which stood by, which they afterwards confessed. Then said Fitz-Urse again, "The King, after peace had been made between him and you, sent you back to your see, as you desired; now you have added new insults to the old, excommunicating those who have been on the King's side. Say, then, are you ready to answer for your misdeeds in the King's presence? It is for this that we have been sent."

THE ARCHBISHOP. "I have had no thought of doing wrong to my lord the King. But it is not just that he should be angry because the people come to meet me, and follow me when I go through cities and towns, seeing that they have been deprived of my presence these seven years past. Yet even now I am ready to satisfy him if I have done aught amiss. And as for the bishops, it was not I but the Pope that passed this sentence upon them."

THE KNIGHT. "Nay, but it was your doing that he passed it. Absolve them."

A. "I do not deny that it was of my doing; but those whom the Pope has bound I cannot absolve."

THE K. "It is the King's command that you depart forthwith from this place with all your men. There can be no peace with you from this day."

A. "Cease your threats; never again will I put the sea between me and my church. He that wants me shall find me here."

THE K. "What the King has commanded, that will we cause to be done."

A. "If any man shall break the laws of Christ's Church, I will not spare him."

THE K.(springing up from their seats). "You have said this to the peril of your life."

A. "Do you come to kill me? I have committed my cause to the Judge of all."

FITZ-URSE. "In the King's name we command all that are here to hold this man, lest he should escape before the King shall have had full justice on his body."

When he had said this they went out, but the Archbishop followed them to the door, saying, "Here shall ye find me." Then returning to his place, he sat down and comforted his people, exhorting them not to fear. He had not been more cheerful if they had come, not to kill him, but to invite him to a bridal. The knights quickly came back armed with swords and axes and other weapons. Meanwhile the doors of the chamber had been barred; and they, finding that it was not opened to their knocking, turned by a private way through the orchard till they came to a wooden partition. This they cut through with their axes. The servants and clerks, frightened by the noise, fled in all directions; but certain of the monks urged the Archbishop to flee into the church. He refused, remembering that he had said that the knights should find him there. The monks then said that it did not become him to be absent from the church when Vespers were being said—for it was now the time for Vespers. And when he still was unwilling to leave the place, they laid hold of him, and dragged him by force, not heeding his cries that they should let him go, till they had brought him to the church. When he came, the monks stopped saying Vespers, which they had begun, and ran to him, rejoicing that he was yet alive. But when they would have shut and barred the doors, he forbade them. "It is not meet," he said, "to make a fortress of the house of prayer; though it be not shut up, it is able to protect its own." When he had said this, the knights entered the church, having their drawn swords in their hands.

All that were in the church now fled seeking shelter, some at the altars, some in hiding-places. Three only remained with the Archbishop. And indeed he might easily have escaped, for it was evening, and the crypt was at hand, in which were

many dark recesses. Also there was a door hard by, and a winding stair which led to the roof of the church.



MURDER OF BECKET.

The knights cried out, "Where is Thomas Becket, traitor to the King and realm?" When there was no answer, they cried again, "Where is the Archbishop?" At these words he came down from the winding stair, for he had been dragged thither by the monks, and said in a clear voice, "I am here, no traitor, but a priest; why do you seek me? I am ready to suffer in His house, Who redeemed me. Far be it from me to flee from your swords." So speaking he turned to a pillar, on one side of which there was a chapel of the Blessed Virgin, and on the other a chapel of St. Benedict.

THE KNIGHTS. "Absolve those whom you have excommunicated."

ARCHBISHOP. "They have not given satisfaction, and I will not absolve them."

THE K. "Then shall you die, and receive your deserts."

A. "I am ready to die, so that I may obtain liberty and peace for the Church by my blood; but in the name of God I forbid you to hurt my people."

The knights laid hands on him, seeking to drag him out of the church, that they might kill him outside, or, it may be, carry him away prisoner. But he clung to the pillar. Fitz-Urse laid hold on him, but the Archbishop called him by an ill name, and said, "Reginald, touch me not, you owe me subjection." Fitz-Urse answered, "I owe no subjection to any, against my fealty to my lord the King."

Then Thomas, seeing that his hour was at hand, inclined his neck as one that prays, and joining his hands together, commended his cause and the cause of the Church to God, and to Saint Mary, and to Saint Denys. Thereupon Fitz-Urse, fearing lest he should be rescued by the people, leapt upon him suddenly, and smote him on the top of the head, wounding by the same blow the arm of a certain monk, Edward Grim by name, who was holding the Archbishop round the body. Another knight dealt him a second blow on the head, but still he stood firm. At the third blow, he fell on his knees and elbows, saying in a low voice, "In the name of Jesus, and the protection of the Church, I am ready to embrace death." Then the third knight, with a stroke of his sword, cut off the crown of the head, so that the blood and the brains together flowed out on the floor of the church. With the knights there was a certain clerk, who for his ill life was called Maucclerc. He put his foot on the dead man's neck and scattered both blood and brains over the pavement. When he had done this, he called out to the others, "Knights, let us away, this man will rise up no more."

The King was greatly troubled when he heard of what had been done. There was nothing that he would not do to show his grief. He even went to the cathedral, and kneeling down in the place where Becket had been slain, submitted to be scourged by one of the monks.

CHAPTER XXII

KING RICHARD'S CRUSADE

The Crusades were expeditions undertaken by Christian nations at various times between the years 1095 and 1268, for the purpose of recovering out of the hands of its Mahometan conquerors the city of Jerusalem. The name *Crusade* is derived from one of the words which mean *cross*. This is in Latin *crux*, and in one kind of Old French *crois*, as in Modern French it is *croix*. Those who went on these expeditions were said to "take the cross," because they wore this as a badge, to show that they were going to redeem from the power of the unbelievers the city where Christ suffered on the cross.

The First Crusade was announced by the Pope in 1095. A monk called Peter the Hermit, in the following year, set out with a great number of men to the Holy Land. They were not prepared for the expedition, and nearly all perished before they got there. There were three other attempts of the same kind in that year, all of which failed, but in August 1096 the real Crusade, under Godfrey, Count of Bouillon, set out. Nearly three years afterwards, Jerusalem was taken, and Godfrey was made king.

The Second Crusade began in 1146 and ended in 1149. In 1187 Saladin, Sultan of Egypt, took Jerusalem. To recover it again out of his hand the Third Crusade was resolved upon in 1188 by Henry II., King of England, and Philip, King of France, who were joined by Frederic, Emperor of Germany. The war with Saladin was begun by the siege of Acre. This was the Crusade which Richard of England joined soon after the death of his father, Henry II. (July 1189).

There were six other Crusades. I shall tell you about the ninth and last in the story of Prince Edward.

When King Richard—who was called Cœur de Lion, or Lion's Heart—put the army which he had gathered together on shipboard that they might go to the Holy Land, he made rules for their good behaviour, and set punishments for such as should offend. These were—

1. If a man slay his comrade on shipboard, let him be bound to the dead man and cast into the sea.
2. If a man slay his comrade on shore, let him be bound in the same way and be buried alive.
3. If a man draw his knife to strike another, or strike him so as to shed blood, let him lose his hand.
4. If a man strike another with his open hand, let him be dipped three times in the sea.
5. If a man revile another, let him pay an ounce of silver for each reviling.
6. If a man be found guilty of stealing, let him be shaven, and boiling pitch poured on his head, and feathers be shaken from a pillow on the pitch, and he be put ashore as soon as may be, that all may know him for a thief.

The King took his pilgrim's staff and scrip from the hands of the Archbishop of Tours. They say that when he leant on the staff, it immediately broke under him. He lingered long on his way, first in Sicily, and afterwards at Cyprus, to which island he went seeking the lady to whom he was about to be married, for the ship in which she sailed had been carried thither by a storm.

In the meanwhile they who had been besieging the city of Acre had suffered much from war and disease and famine. They began to besiege it on the 22nd day of August. Six weeks or thereabouts after this came Saladin, Sultan of Egypt, with a great army, desiring to drive away the Christians from before the town. A fierce battle was fought. At first Saladin was driven back, losing his camp, and not a few of the best of his soldiers,

while the Christians also lost many. But before the day was over, Saladin recovered himself and drove back the Christians in their turn to their camp. There the Grand Master of the Temple was slain with eighteen of his knights. As for Saladin, he lost his eldest son and his nephew, and many others. After this, there came fresh soldiers to the army of the Christians. These now fortified their camp, for they were in no small danger. On the one side was the city of Acre, with a strong garrison that was always prepared to sally out against them, and on the other side was Saladin the Sultan, having an army such as had never before been gathered together in that land, so far as any living man could remember. They were also in great need of provisions, for nothing could be brought to them except by way of the sea. So it happened that, as winter came on and the weather grew bad, and the number of men in the camp was very large, the famine was sore. A loaf that had been sold for one shilling before the coming of the new soldiers was sold for sixty, and the price of a horse was more than forty pounds of English money. Some were slain by the enemy in the siege, and some taken prisoners, but a greater number by far perished with hunger and disease.

At last, on the fifth day of June in the year 1191, King Richard sailed from Cyprus on his way to Acre. Two days after, he met on the sea, not far from the harbour of Beyrout, a great ship. The King, doubting to whom it belonged, sent one of his officers in a boat, to inquire who commanded it. He brought back word that it belonged to the King of France. But when the King approached, he could hear no word of French, nor see any Christian banner or token. It was a very large ship, and very strongly built, having three great masts, and its sides covered with green and yellow hides. One of the sailors said that he had been at Beyrout when the ship was loaded, and that he had seen the cargo which had been put into her, namely, a hundred camel-loads of arms of all kinds, bows, spears, and arrows, together with machines for the throwing of darts and stones. There was also, he said, a great store of provisions, and a number of men, eight hundred chosen Turkish soldiers, and seven Saracen

commanders. Besides these stores and men, there was, he said, a great store of Greek fire, and two hundred deadly serpents.



RECEIVING THE PILGRIM'S STAFF.

The King, hearing this, sent another messenger. This man brought back the answer that the strangers were men of Genoa bound for Tyre. While he was doubting what this contradiction might mean, one of the seamen confidently declared that the ship belonged to the Saracens. "Cut off my head, or hang me on a tree, if I do not prove this beyond all doubt. Send a galley to follow them without any word of greeting, and see what they will do."

Thereupon the King sent a galley after the strange ship at full speed. When it came near without offering any greeting, the sailors began to hurl arrows and darts at the crew. When Richard saw this, he commanded that a general attack should be made upon it. But this was no easy matter, so well was the strange ship manned, and with such force did the missiles fall upon the Christians, being hurled from a vessel of so great a height. Our men, therefore, began to falter, and to relax their efforts. The King, seeing this, exclaimed, "What! will you let that ship escape unharmed? After winning so many victories, will you give way like cowards? Verily you will all deserve to be hanged on gallows if you suffer these enemies to escape."

Thus encouraged, our men leapt into the sea. Some of them bound the helm of the strange ship with ropes, so that it could no longer be steered. Others climbed up the sides, and scrambling over the bulwarks fell upon the Turks. At one time they had driven them into the forepart of the vessel, but others coming up from the hold drove the boarders back, killing some and compelling the rest to leap overboard.

And now the King, seeing that the ship could not be taken, with its stores and crew, without great loss, ordered his galleys to charge the enemy and pierce it with their beaks. Accordingly, drawing back a space, they drove against it with all their might, and pierced its sides with their iron beaks. The ship was stove in and began to sink. Thereupon the Turks leapt into the water, where many were slain and many drowned. But the King spared some thirty-and-five of them, namely the officers, and such as were skilled in the managing of engines of war. All the others perished; all the stores were lost, and the serpents were drowned. Verily, if that ship had got into the harbour of Acre, the town would never have been taken.

Certain Saracens, who had been watching what took place from the hills, carried the news to Saladin the Sultan. He, in his rage, plucked the hairs out of his head, crying, "Now I have lost Acre." Through all the hosts of the Saracens there was

great weeping and wailing, for in that ship all the flower of their youth had perished.

The next day King Richard came to Acre. When the news of his coming reached the garrison they began to talk of giving themselves up, for they knew how great a warrior he was. Saladin too was willing to make peace, and he sent to the two kings—for the King of France was there also—pears of Damascus, an abundance of other fruits, and other presents. He would willingly have made peace with them, but Richard was resolved to have Jerusalem given to him, and this Saladin would not do.

At this time a certain Christian sent messages, written in Greek and Latin and Hebrew, from within the walls, from which the besiegers learnt much about the counsels of the enemy, but who this Christian was they did not know, either then or after the taking of the town.

CHAPTER XXIII

KING RICHARD'S CRUSADE (*CONTINUED*)

The besiegers were greatly encouraged by the coming of King Richard. "This is the man," they said, "for whom we have waited so long. Now that he is come, the assault will speedily be made, for he is the best of all the warriors in Christendom." But their hopes were delayed for a time by the sickness which came upon him a few days after his coming. This sickness held him for ten days or more. The King of France also suffered from the same, as did others in the host. The Count of Flanders was so ill that he died.

As soon as the King of France was recovered of his sickness, he busied himself with setting up engines of war in such places as seemed best. There he kept them at work day and night. To one of these engines, that was of great power, he gave the name of "The Bad Neighbour." The Turks within the city had

one with which they answered this, calling it "The Bad Kinsman." Often did they destroy King Philip's engine, but it was as often repaired. At last it broke down a great part of the chief wall of the city, and shattered also a certain tower which was called the "Accursed Tower." The Duke of Burgundy had also an engine, as had the Knights of the Temple, and the Knights of the Hospital of St. John, with which they did very great damage to the Turks.

Besides all these, there was a stone-sling which was called "God's Stone-sling." Near to this a certain priest preached continually, begging money for its repairing, and for paying those who gathered stones for it. King Richard himself had two stone-slugs, marvellously made, with which he could hit the mark at an incredible distance. Another engine he had that was called "The Belfry," covered with closely-fitting hides, so that it could not be burnt with Greek fire, nor destroyed by stones. 'Tis certain that a single stone discharged by one of the King's engines slew twelve men. This stone was sent for Saladin to look at.

The King of the French had also various implements and engines of war. One of these was a contrivance made of hurdles, strongly bound together, and covered with raw hides. Under this the King would sit, his cross-bow in his hand, watching if any Turk should show himself on the walls. One day the Turks threw a quantity of Greek fire on to this thing, aiming at it at the same time with a stone-sling. Between the two, it was utterly destroyed, to the great wrath of the King, who in his rage proclaimed, by the voice of a herald, a general assault for the next day.

On that same day Saladin had declared that he would cross the trenches and destroy the whole army of the Christians. He did not keep his word, but sent his lieutenant in his place. Under his leading, the Turks attacked the trenches with great fury, and were as firmly resisted by the French. The Turks, dismounting from their horses, advanced on foot. The two sides

fought hand to hand, using swords, daggers, two-handed axes, and clubs furnished with iron teeth.

Meanwhile the men that had been set by the King of France to make mines had reached the foundations of the walls, and filling the space which they had made with logs, set them on fire. At last the wall—the beams on which it rested being burnt through—gave way, sloping by degrees, but not falling flat. The Christians ran up to make their way into the town by this place, and the Turks, on the other hand, ran up, resolved to drive them back.

In this fight a certain Alberic Clements did a very noble thing. Seeing that the French were labouring much but doing little, he cried out, "To-day I will either die or, with God's leave, enter Acre." Thereupon he climbed up by the ladder to the top of the wall, and there stood, slaying many of the Turks, who rushed upon him from all sides. But when others sought to follow him, the ladder broke, for it could not bear the number of those that crowded upon it. Some were crushed to death, others were grievously wounded. As for Alberic, he was left alone on the wall, and there perished, pierced by wounds without number.

King Richard was now so far recovered from his sickness that he could turn his thoughts to the taking of the city. He caused a shed made of hurdles covered with hides to be brought up to the ditch outside the city wall. In shelter of this he put some of the most skilful of his crossbow-men. He was himself carried to the place on silken cushions, and lay there using his cross-bow, with which he was very skilful. Many of the Saracens did he slay with his bolts.

After this, that his men might be encouraged the sooner to make a breach in the wall, he proclaimed that he would give two gold pieces to every one who should pull a stone from the wall near to the Accursed Tower. This bounty he increased to three and even four gold pieces. Many stones did the young knights with their followers draw out, though the Turks attacked them fiercely all the while. The Turks themselves were in their

turn assailed by the machines. These hurled the stones with such force that no armour could stand against them.



SHOOTING WITH THE CROSS-BOW.

At last, when the tower had in this way been brought to the ground, the King's men-at-arms attempted to take the town by storm. But the Turks came up in great numbers to resist them. At close quarters they fought with each other, hand against hand, and sword against sword. But as the English were few, and the Turks increased in number, the men-at-arms were compelled to retreat. Some were slain with the sword, and not a few perished by the Greek fire, for the Turks used this abundantly.

The next day the leaders of the Turks offered to give up the city on condition that all the garrison should be suffered to depart with their arms and their goods. The King of France was willing to accept the condition, but King Richard would not enter an empty city after so long a siege.

Not long afterwards the city was surrendered on the terms that follow. The Turks should restore the Holy Cross,

should give up such Christian captives as they had, and should pay a great sum of money for their lives, they being suffered to go whither they would without arms or food, and carrying nothing but their shirts. They should also surrender, as hostages for the due performance of these terms, the noblest of their number.

CHAPTER XXIV

KING RICHARD'S CRUSADE (*CONTINUED*): THE KING OF FRANCE GOES BACK

After these things, the King of France left the Crusade and went to his own country. He said that it was better that there should be one king rather than two to command the army. But some would have it that he went to lay hands on the possessions of a certain great noble that had died during the siege of Acre. He left a part of his troops behind him.

King Richard built again and strengthened the walls of Acre. This done, he marched to Joppa. On the way, Saladin made a fierce attack on his rear-guard, but was beaten with such loss as he had not suffered for forty years before. The King found Joppa deserted by the Saracens. There he had a narrow escape of his life. He walked into a garden about a mile from the town, and falling asleep after his walk, he was attacked by a company of the enemy. Jumping immediately upon his horse, which a squire was holding not far away, he defended himself sturdily against the assailants. But he was in great danger. One of his attendants was taken prisoner, and another killed. One of the two horses, also, which had been taken for his use, was captured and its driver killed. The King fought his way through the enemy, but he left behind him a very costly girdle, ornamented with gold and precious stones. The horse was sent back by Saladin's brother.

After this the King took a great caravan which was coming from Babylon with provisions and arms for Jerusalem. His spies brought him tidings of its coming; so, taking five thousand picked men with him, he fell upon it as it was on its way about sunrise. Nearly all the soldiers that guarded it were killed, and three thousand camels were taken, with four thousand horses and mules, and an immense quantity of booty.

Every battle that the King fought he won, and every town that he attacked he took; but the great thing for which he had come on the Crusade, the delivering of Jerusalem out of the hand of the unbelievers, he could not accomplish. He came near to the Holy City indeed, as near as the village of Bethany, which is but two miles away; but the city itself he did not attempt to take. They say that he would not even look at it, since he could not deliver it, as he had desired. He himself laid the blame upon the King of France, who had drawn back from the work. Nevertheless, there were some who said that he might have done more had he been more steady in his purpose, and that he was in truth weary of the task which he had undertaken.

The King went back to Acre, intending to take ship, and so return to England. When Saladin heard this, he marched with all haste to Joppa, and fell upon the town. This he took, the garrison, and so many of the inhabitants as were able, taking refuge in the citadel. So soon as the news came to the King, he set out to help them. The main part of the army he sent by land, going himself with seven galleys by sea. When he came to Joppa he found the shore covered with enemies, and his knights advised him to wait till the army should arrive. While the council was being held, a priest swam out from the town to the King's ship. They asked him how things were in the town. He answered, "Many of the people have been slain by the unbelievers, but some have fled into the tower, and still hold out." When the King heard this, he cried, "Cursed be the man who will not follow me!" and leapt into the water. Many followed him; nor did the enemy on the shore wait for his coming, but fled, leaving the town.

The next day King Richard led out some three score knights and two thousand foot-soldiers by one of the gates of the town. He commanded the men to kneel with one knee upon the ground; they held with one arm a shield that covered the body, with the other a lance, the end of which was firmly fixed in the ground. Behind the line of the kneeling men were the engines that cast the arrows, each with two men to manage it. One man put in the arrow, another pulled the string. Seven times did Saladin's horsemen charge the line, and seven times were they beaten back. Then King Richard himself charged in turn. Never did a warrior bear himself more bravely. He bore down every champion that came against him. He saved from captivity knights of his own army that had been thrown from their horses and taken prisoner. When the enemy surrounded him, he cut his way out from the midst of them. While he was so fighting, his horse was wounded, and Saladin's brother, perceiving it, sent another one for him to ride.

After this day the enemy gave up the siege of Joppa; but the King fell ill of a fever. So weak did he become, that he was content to ask for a truce, and this Saladin was willing to grant. It was agreed that there should be peace for three years, and Saladin promised that pilgrims should be suffered to visit the Holy Sepulchre without being harmed or hindered.

So soon as his sickness permitted, the King returned to Acre and then took ship. When he was about to pass out of sight of the shore, he turned to it, and stretching out his arms said, "Most Holy Land, I commit thee to the care of the Almighty. May He grant me life, that I may return and save thee from the bondage of the unbeliever!"

After various adventures the King was thrown by a storm on the coast of Austria. He had put on a pilgrim's dress, and had suffered his beard and hair to grow, and so hoped to pass unknown through the country. He knew that the ruler of the land had no good-will to him, for they had quarrelled during the siege of Acre. He sent, therefore, his page to a neighbouring castle with a present to the prince of the place, asking that passports

might be given to Baldwin and Hugh the merchant, pilgrims returning home from Jerusalem. The lad took with him a fine ruby, as a gift to the prince. When the prince saw this, he cried out, "This is a king's gift. It is King Richard himself. Tell him that he may come to me in peace." But the King was afraid that some evil might be done, and having bought horses for himself and his companions, he fled in the night. The horses were not sufficient for all; eight of the company remained. The King and seven knights escaped. When they came to the dominions of the next prince—he was brother of him that saw the ruby—a Norman knight that was in the prince's service knew the King, and warned him of his danger. Then the King fled again, taking with him one knight only, and a lad that knew the language of the country. For three days they travelled, neither entering any house nor buying any food; but on the fourth day, all their store being spent, they sent the lad to market. The townspeople, seeing the money that he showed, asked him about his master. "He is a rich merchant," said the lad; "and he will be here in three days." The King was now ill, and could not travel. When the lad went again to the market, the townspeople seized him and tortured him till he told his master's name, and the place where he was. So Richard was caught, Leopold, Duke of Austria, taking possession of him, and putting him into a prison. After a while the Duke sold him to the Emperor of Germany, and the Emperor, when he had kept him in prison for more than a year, set him at liberty, receiving from England a ransom of more than £200,000.

Richard was made prisoner on December 20, 1192, and set at liberty on February 4, 1194. There is a very pretty story of how his favourite minstrel, Blondel by name, found out the place where he was kept in prison. He went about singing the first bar of a song which the King and he had composed between them. When at last he got to Richard's prison, he sang the first bar as usual, and was answered by the King singing the second. But this story seems not to have been written till hundreds of years after King Richard's time; and we may suppose it to be like the British minstrels' stories of Vortigern and King Arthur, partly

fanciful, and partly true, for King Richard really was put in prison, and was fond of music and poetry.

Five years after his release, Richard was shot in the shoulder by an archer, as he was besieging a castle in France. The wound was not in itself mortal, but was so ill treated by an unskilful surgeon that the King died.



RICHARD IN PRISON; AND RICHARD WOUNDED.

CHAPTER XXV

MAGNA CHARTA

King Richard was succeeded by his brother John. Of all English kings he was the worst,—worse even than the Red King, being not only wicked, but weak. Yet from this weakness and wickedness there came, as we shall see, great good to the English people.

The chief nobles of England, seeing that no trust could be put in the King, and that his wrong-doing and oppression became worse from year to year, met together at St. Edmundsbury in the county of Suffolk, to devise means how they might best secure the liberties of the people. Having agreed together upon what things they should ask for this end, they also came to this resolve, that they would ask them at the Christmas next following, when the King should hold his court, to keep Christmas, as was the custom in those days.

This done, they went up, one by one, to the altar, and took an oath that if the King should refuse the things for which they asked, they would make war upon him, nor consent to peace till he should have granted them. At Christmas they could not get to speak with him, for he knew that they meant to ask what he was very loth to give; but twelve days afterwards they saw him and made their demands. After a while, it was agreed that the matter should be put off till Easter.

When Easter came the King was no more willing to yield than he had been before. He sent messengers to the nobles to ask them to write down their demands. But when he saw the paper, he cried out, "They might as well ask my crown of me! Shall I give them liberties that would make me a slave?" But when he heard that London had gone over to the party of the nobles, with whom, I should say, was Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, he thought it better to yield, though he was resolved in his heart to go back from his promises as soon as he should be

able. Therefore, on the 19th day of June, in the year 1215 (being the seventeenth year of his reign), King John and the nobles met on an island in the Thames, called Runnymede, that is between Egham and Staines, and signed what is called the Great Charter. By this it was provided, among other things—

1. That the Church of England should be free.
2. That the King should not oppress the nobles, nor the nobles such as were under them.
3. That London and the other cities and towns of the kingdom should enjoy the freedom which they had before possessed.
4. That causes of law should be tried in a fixed place.
5. That weights and measures should be the same everywhere.
6. That the King should not sell, or refuse, or postpone the doing of justice.
7. That every free man should be safe both for his person and his property from all damages, except such as might be done by the lawful judgment of his equals, or by the law of the land.

For all that remained of his life the King tried to undo what had been done by the signing of the Charter. He declared war against the nobles; he hired soldiers from abroad to fight for him, and he obtained from the Pope a declaration that the Charter was null and void. On the other hand, the nobles sent to the oldest son of the King of France, if he would come over and help them. So there was civil war in the country—Englishmen fighting against Englishmen. But about twenty months after the signing of the Charter the King died. He was marching from Lincoln to King's Lynn, which is on the south side of the Wash, and in crossing the Wash he lost his baggage with all his treasure. Not many days after—on October the 19th—he died, but whether from trouble of mind, or from poison, or from some

natural disease, is not known for certain. As for the Charter, the Kings of England have often tried to set it aside, but have never succeeded in so doing. One after another they have been forced to confirm it, and it is the foundation of English liberty.



ROMAN NOBLES.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE STORY OF PRINCE EDWARD

When King John died, his son Henry III was a boy of ten years old. He reigned for fifty-six years, longer than any English sovereign, except George III. and Queen Victoria. When he was married, at the age of thirty, he had been King for twenty years already.

His eldest son was born on the 18th day of June, in the year 1239, and had the name of Edward given to him, to the no small pleasure of the people. For near a hundred and fifty years the kings had had French names, as William and Henry and Richard and John. But Edward was an English name, and the King that bore it would be English. He grew to be a tall and handsome youth, a brave soldier, one who loved to do justice, and who kept his word.

In his youth, while his father was alive, Prince Edward had many troubles. For the King was weak and favoured foreigners, as, for example, the kindred of his wife. These he put in offices of State, and handed over to their keeping the strongest castles in the land. After a while the nobles of the land banded themselves together, and compelled the King to banish the strangers from England, and to put the castles into their hands. There was also to be a council of twenty-four who were to manage all the affairs of the kingdom. The King took an oath that he would do these things, and abide by the agreement which he had made. This oath Prince Edward also took.

After a while, the King, finding that the nobles had all the power in their hands, desired to depart from his agreement, but Prince Edward was not willing, for he was steadfast in keeping all the promises that he made. After much strife and contention it was settled that King Louis of France should be made judge of the whole matter, and then, having heard the

cause of the King on the one hand and of the nobles on the other, should decide between them. These, therefore, he heard, and afterwards gave his judgment, which was this: "Let the agreement be annulled, and let the King have his castles again and his government as before." The nobles were greatly displeased at this judgment and would not accept it; but Prince Edward, feeling that he was now quit of his oath, took sides with his father, a thing which he had before been unwilling to do.

And now war broke out. It was proclaimed on the 3rd day of April, in the year 1264; and on the 13th day of May in that year the two armies met in battle, near the town of Lewes in Sussex. Simon de Montfort, who called himself Earl of Leicester, commanded the army of the nobles, while the army of the King was led by the King himself and his brother and Prince Edward, this last being at the right end of the line.

It so chanced that a great company of the Londoners were ranged in that part of the line which was opposite to the Prince. Now some months before, the men of London had grievously insulted the Queen, the Prince's mother, pelting her with stones and mud, as she came up the river Thames in her barge. The cause of their anger was that they blamed her more than any other for the favour shown to foreigners, as has been said before. The Prince was eager to take vengeance for this insult, and he charged the men of London with great fury, breaking their line, and driving them before him with much slaughter.

But while the Prince was pursuing his enemies, which, indeed, he did with more zeal and fierceness than was expedient, Simon de Montfort, who was skilful as a general before all the men of his time, fell upon the other part of the King's army, and overcame it. Many fled, many were slain, and not a few were taken prisoners.

That night Simon de Montfort sent certain friars to the King with this message: "I greatly desire peace; to the end that it may be made, I will set free all the prisoners whom I have taken.

As for the matters that are in dispute, let us appoint six wise and honourable men to decide what shall be done. Only for a pledge let the King and Prince Edward give themselves into my keeping."



RIDERS.

When he heard this, the Prince, who had before desired to renew the battle on the next day, consented to become a prisoner. For a time Simon carried him about whithersoever he went. But after a while he escaped in this manner. A certain noble who visited him sent him as a present a very swift and strong horse. This on a certain day he bade a servant take out as if for exercise, only the man was to take care that wherever the Prince might be, the horse should be near at hand. The Prince then proposed to the men that were with him, watching him that he did not escape, that they should ride races. This they did, but when the horses of all were well tired, the servant came bringing with him the horse which he had in his charge. On this the Prince mounted and rode away, at the same time bidding farewell to his guards, and saying that he had had enough of their company. For a while they pursued him, but were easily

outstripped. And when, having gone some way, they saw a party of horsemen come forth to greet him, they perceived that he was now out of their reach, and so returned to their own people.

So soon as the Prince was at liberty, many left the side of the nobles and joined themselves to him, so that day by day he grew stronger and they weaker. At last the end came about in this manner. The Prince came by surprise on the army which Earl Simon's son was leading to the help of his father. He and his men should by right have taken up their abode in the Castle of Kenilworth, but for comfort's sake they lodged in the village; nor, so careless were they, did they set any guard. The Prince's men fell on them while they slept, for it was scarcely dawn. Some were slain, some taken, and many fled without their arms, and also in a single garment. Among the prisoners were twenty knights with their banners.

Having done this, the Prince made as if he would march northward. But when the Earl Simon's spies had gone to him with this news, he turned suddenly to the east, and so approached before Earl Simon was aware. But when he had come so near that his men must needs be seen, he put in the front of his army the banners which he had taken. When Simon saw them, he said, knowing them to be the banners of his own friend, "It is well; my son comes to my help." Being thus deceived, he suffered the Prince to take up a strong place upon a hill that was near, without seeking to hinder him.

In the meanwhile one Nicholas, that was the Earl's barber, climbed to the top of a church-tower that was close by, and when he saw what had happened he cried out, "My lord, this is not your son's army, as you think, for I see in the front the Prince's banner, and on one side the banner of the Earl of Gloucester, and on the other the banner of Roger Mortimer." Thereupon the Earl himself went up to the top of the tower, and when he saw them, he said, "They come on right skilfully; but they have learnt it from me." And when, looking further, he saw how many there were of them, and how he must needs be surrounded, he said again, "The Lord have mercy on our souls!

our bodies belong to the Prince." His son would have had him flee while he had yet time, but the old man was not willing. "Far be it from me," he said, "so to end an honourable life!" There was no hope of victory; not only was the Prince's army by far the stronger, but the greater part of Earl Simon's men fled when they saw the enemy approach. He, with many nobles and knights about him, stood firm, and for some time Prince Edward, for all that he could do, could not break the line. But when the Earl of Gloucester came upon him from behind, there was an end of the battle. Earl Simon himself was killed, as were most of his comrades and followers; few were spared that day, for the hatred between the two parties that fought was very bitter, as it always is in civil war. King Henry himself, who was with the Earl's army, was at one time in no small danger, being attacked by his son's soldiers. Not till he cried out, "I am Henry of Winchester," did they leave him alone.

And now the Prince set himself to establish peace and order throughout England. Those that had taken part with Earl Simon were punished with fines; but none were put to death, for Edward was always inclined to mercy. But when the civil war was ended, much still remained to be done. In many parts of the country there were men who had taken occasion by the late troubles to plunder their neighbours. It is said that the Prince, having heard of one of these, named Adam Gordon, who had his hiding-place in part of the New Forest, went to seek him. When he found him he challenged him to fight, bidding his followers leave them alone. Both were strong and skilful in arms, but at last the Prince wounded his adversary, who thereupon gave himself up and was pardoned. From that time this robber became a faithful follower of Prince Edward.

And now, all things being quiet, the Prince bethought him of a vow which he had made, namely, that he would make a journey to the Holy Land. It so happened that at this time King Louis of France was preparing a Crusade. He was glad to have so valiant and skilful a soldier with him, and persuaded the Prince to join him. As for King Louis, he never reached the Holy

Land. He and his army went to Tunis, in Africa, where he died of the plague, as did many of his soldiers. Prince Edward waited long for him, but at last, losing all hope of his coming, went with such men as he had, scarcely a thousand in all, to his journey's end. The town of Acre, which alone remained of all that had been won by the Christian armies, was besieged by the Turks, and hard pressed. The Prince, while he waited for King Louis, had promised the garrison that he would help them, and was resolved, according to his custom, to keep his word. Some of his followers would have persuaded him to return to England, and some actually left him. But the Prince would not be persuaded. "Nay," said he, "to Acre I will go, though none but my groom go with me." Setting sail, he reached Acre just in time to save it from being taken. The garrison had agreed to surrender the town to the Turks on the fourth day, unless help should come to them before. Many Christians now joined the Prince's army, till he had nine thousand men. With these he marched to the town of Nazareth, and took it by storm.

Not long after this he narrowly escaped death. An assassin, sent by the enemy, made some pretence of having a message for him, and so got into his tent. He then stabbed him three times with a dagger. Then the Prince leaping up threw him to the ground, and killed him with his own dagger. But, though the wounds were not mortal, the surgeons that waited on the Prince could not heal them, and, fearing lest perchance the dagger had been poisoned, began to fear for his life. He saw that they whispered, and said, "Why do you whisper? Can I not be cured? Tell me without fear." They said, "We can cure you, but you must suffer great pain." "And then you promise that you will cure me?" "Yes, we promise." "Then I put myself in your hands. Do with me what you will."

Not many days after this the enemy sent messengers to treat for peace, and the Prince, seeing that he had not sufficient strength to accomplish that for which he had come, namely, to take the city of Jerusalem, consented.

Peace having been made, the Prince set out on his return to England. While he was on his way, he became King, his father having died. Everywhere he was received with great honour, excepting at one town in Burgundy. The Count of this place invited him to a tournament, and Edward, though he had been warned that some evil was meant, did not refuse to go. At the tournament the Count himself encountered the King, but, though he was very tall and strong, gained no advantage over him. Being angered at this, he threw away his sword and lance, and catching the King round the neck, sought thus to drag him from his horse. This he could not do, but was himself dragged from his saddle, when the King spurred his horse. Edward, wroth at such behaviour, which was contrary to the rules of a tournament, beat the knight as he lay upon the ground with the staff of his lance; nor would he receive the Count's sword, when he would have submitted himself, but bade him give it into the hands of a man-at-arms. The Count's followers were much enraged by this, and fell upon the English. What had begun as a game was turned into a fight, and not a few were killed. Then, when the Burgundian knights had been driven off the field, the townspeople took up their cause, and wounded many of the English, nor would they cease till the King threatened that he would burn the town.

The history of King Edward cannot be conveniently told in this place. It must be enough to say that he conquered Wales, which country has remained since his time a part of England, and that he came near to conquering Scotland, and that he was as wise a king as ever ruled this realm. But of what he did, and of what laws he made, with the consent of the people—for that he looked for this is a notable proof of his wisdom—you will read elsewhere.

CHAPTER XXVII

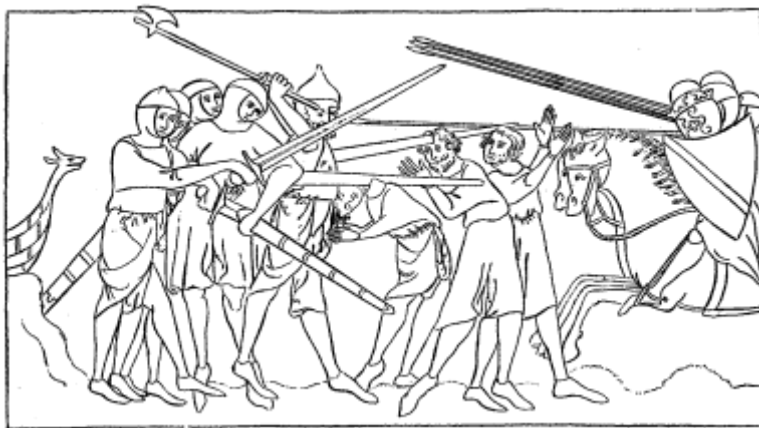
THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN

Edward I set his heart on making one kingdom of the island of Great Britain. First he conquered Wales; and to his son Edward, who was born just then in the Welsh town of Carnarvon, he gave the title of Prince of Wales. Then he set himself to bring Scotland under his power. When it was doubtful who ought to be king, he was asked to decide, and he decided in favour of John Baliol, who was ready to acknowledge him as his superior. But the Scotch people were very unwilling to submit. John Baliol revolted, and Edward marched into Scotland, deposed him, and put English garrisons into the strong places. The Scotch rose against them under William Wallace, and defeated the English at Stirling (this was in 1297 A.D.). Then King Edward marched again into Scotland, defeated Wallace at Stirling (1298), and conquered the country. The Scotch rose again under Robert Bruce. Edward was about to invade the country a third time when he died (at Burgh-on-Sands, in 1307). When he was dying he entreated his son (afterwards Edward II) to carry on the war. It is said that he commanded that his bones should be carried in a chest with the army, so that even after his death he might still be helping to carry out his purpose. Edward II paid no attention to these requests, but gave up the expedition. For the next seven years Robert Bruce became more and more powerful, and the English weaker. King Edward twice invaded Scotland, but both times failed to do anything. He was very unlike the great king his father, being careless and fond of pleasure; and thus all that Edward I had gained in Scotland was lost by his son. So England and Scotland remained separate kingdoms for three hundred years more.

The English garrison in Stirling Castle, which was now almost the only strong place that was held in Scotland for King Edward, was hard pressed by the Scotch. Its commander offered

to give it up to the besiegers, if he did not receive help by Midsummer Day (June 24). This was in the year 1314. When King Edward heard that the castle was in danger, he sent out messengers calling all the soldiers in England to meet at Berwick-on-Tweed on the 11th day of June. Besides the English there was to be a great body of soldiers from Ireland. Altogether nearly one hundred thousand men assembled at Berwick. Robert Bruce had not been able to collect half as many.

King Edward now marched forward to relieve the castle (which was about ninety miles from Berwick). He reached it on Sunday, the 23rd of June, one day before the time on which it was to surrender. Robert Bruce had drawn up his army in three squares; these three made one line, which reached from the brook of Bannock to the castle. Behind them was a fourth division, in which were the Highlanders and the men of the Western Isles and Bruce's own followers. In front of the line he caused some pits to be dug; in these sharp-pointed stakes were fixed, and they were covered over with brushwood.



KNIGHTS AND MEN-AT-ARMS IN BATTLE.

King Edward, as soon as he came in sight of the castle, sent a body of cavalry which was to make a round, and so getting past the line of the Scottish soldiers, to relieve the castle.

Bruce saw what was going on, and blamed his nephew Randolph for letting the English horsemen pass him. "Randolph," he said to him, "a rose has fallen from your crown." Randolph at once rode off with a body of Scottish cavalry, and charged the English furiously. At one time it seemed as if they would be too strong for him, and Sir James Douglas went with part of the second division to help him. But just as he came up, he saw that the English were giving way; thereupon he held his soldiers back. "We will not make the glory of these brave men less," he said. Bruce himself did a gallant deed that day. An English knight, Sir Henry de Bohun, rode out of the English line, mounted on a war-horse. Bruce went out to meet him; all could see that he was king by the crown on his helmet. He was riding on a small palfrey, and he was armed with a battle-axe. The English knight rode furiously at him with his spear in rest; but Bruce avoided the stroke, and, rising in his stirrups as the knight passed him, struck him a great blow on his helmet. The battle-axe was shattered to pieces, but the helmet was broken in, and Sir Henry de Bohun fell dead to the ground. This happened on the day before the battle.

Early on Midsummer Day the first line of the English army began to move forward; a little behind came the main body, which was led by King Edward himself. As they advanced, they saw the whole line of the Scottish army kneel down. A priest was praying to God to help them in the battle, and all the soldiers kneeled as they joined in the prayer. "See!" cried some of the English; "they are begging for mercy." "Yes," answered one of the knights, "they are begging for mercy; but it is from God." And now it could be seen how well Bruce had chosen his place. The English army was more than twice as large as the Scottish; but only a part of it could get near the enemy. Some of the divisions had nothing to do with the fighting from the beginning to the end of the battle. They could not get near enough to strike a blow. Still there were some who fought well. There was a body of archers who poured their arrows fast and thick into the ranks of the Scottish soldiers, and struck many of them to the earth. When Bruce saw what damage they were

doing, he sent a company of horsemen to charge them from the side. The archers had no swords with which to defend themselves, and when they were attacked in this way, they could not hold their ground, but broke and fled. The English line first stopped, then wavered, then began to fall back. When Bruce saw this he led his own division forward. The English knights charged fiercely; but many of them fell into the pits. Their horses were lamed, and they themselves thrown. Still the Englishmen, being brave men, and accustomed to win battles, held out. Then, all of a sudden, there appeared upon the hills what seemed to be a new Scottish army. They were only the servants and camp-followers; but they had banners with them, and shouted like soldiers. This was more than the English could bear. For all that their leaders could do, they turned and fled. The slaughter was terrible; for there had been war between the two nations for many years, and there were many things to avenge. Twenty-seven barons, two hundred knights, and thirty thousand men were killed that day. As for King Edward himself, he fled from the field of battle; for sixty miles he rode almost without stopping, except to change his horse. When he reached Dunbar, he got on board ship, and went by sea to Berwick. The brave knight who was with him turned back, after seeing him safely off the field, rode back, charged into the middle of the enemy, and so was killed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HOW KING EDWARD III. WON THE BATTLE OF SLUYS

It has been said already, in the story of Becket, that the King of England at one time "ruled more of France than the King of France himself"; and that these possessions led in the end to a great deal of trouble. Time after time the English were called upon to fight for the provinces in France, and a great

many lives were lost and much treasure spent. But the worst trouble of all came in this way.

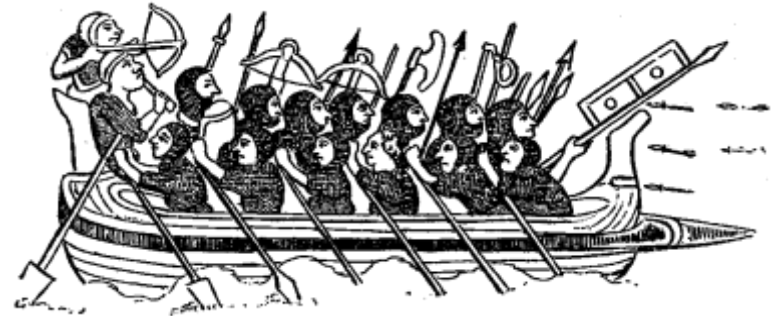
Edward II., the weak king who was defeated at the battle of Bannockburn, married Isabella, daughter of Philip IV., King of France. This Isabella was a very wicked woman—she was called the "she-wolf of France"—but worse than all the harm she did herself, was that which came from being the French king's daughter. This made her son, Edward III., claim the kingdom of France for himself. It came about thus. Philip IV. left three sons, Louis, Philip, and Charles. Each one of these became king in turn, but none of them left a son, only daughters. Now by the law of France (called the Salic Law) it was forbidden that a woman should reign. So when Charles IV, the youngest of Philip IV.'s sons, died, Philip de Valois succeeded him, as being the nearest male heir, though he was Charles's second cousin only. But Edward III., by the advice of his Parliament, claimed the French crown as son of Isabella, Charles's sister. He said, "Philip of Valois is second cousin only to the King; I am his nephew; so, being more nearly related to him, I have a better right to succeed him." He of course was obliged to allow that a woman could not succeed, not only because that was quite certain in itself, but also because otherwise Joan, daughter of Louis, Philip IV.'s eldest son, would have had a better right than he. But he maintained that though a woman could not herself succeed, her son might inherit, and that when the three sons were dead, the daughter's son had the best right.

This claim caused wars between France and England that lasted for a hundred years. The first great battle that was fought I am now going to describe.

Two days before Midsummer Day in the year 1340, King Edward set sail with his whole fleet from the Thames, and made straight for Sluys, which was a seaport of the country called Flanders. The King had it in his mind to help the men of Flanders against the French. Now at Sluys there lay more than one hundred and twenty large ships, and many small ones with them. On board of these were forty thousand men; some were

sailors, and others fighting men and archers from Picardy and Genoa. Certain knights commanded them, and a famous sailor whom they called "Blackbeard." The King of France had commanded that they should lie at anchor, waiting for the King of England, that they might hinder him from going any further. When the fleet had almost got to Sluys, the English saw so many masts standing before them that it seemed as if it were a wood. The King said to the captain of his ship, "What can these be?" The man answered, "I take it that this must be that fleet of Normans which the King of France keeps at sea. These are they that have done you so much harm, burning your good town of Southampton, and taking your large ship the *Christopher*." To this the King made answer, "I have now for a long time desired to meet with these men; now, please God and St. George, we will fight with them. In truth they have done me much mischief, and I will revenge myself on them, if it be possible." Thereupon the King caused all his ships to be drawn up in line. The strongest he put in front, and on the wings the ships in which the archers were embarked. Between every two vessels with archers was placed one with men-at-arms. Other ships, full of archers, he kept in reserve. These were meant to give help to any that might seem to need it. Besides sailors and soldiers, there were in the fleet many ladies from England, countesses, and baronesses, and wives of knights and gentlemen, who had come to attend upon the Queen, for the Queen was at this time in Ghent. To guard these ladies with all care, the King had appointed three hundred men-at-arms and six hundred archers. When the King and his marshal had set the fleet in order, they hoisted all their sails, so that they might have the sun behind them, for before it had been shining in their faces. This they thought would be against them. When the Normans saw them tack, at first they wondered what this might mean. Afterwards they said, "See, they take good care to turn about, for they are afraid to meddle with us." And indeed the English had before been sailing straight towards them, and now changed their course. When the Normans knew that the King was on board, seeing his banner, they were very glad, for they were very eager to fight with him. So they put their vessels

in order, a thing which they did well, being brave and skilful seamen.



CROSSBOW-MEN IN A BOAT.

First of all they made the *Christopher*, a big ship which they had taken from the English the year before, fall upon the King's fleet. They had filled it with fighting men, and had put trumpeters on board. With this the battle began, very fiercely. Archers and crossbow-men shot with all their might at each other, and the men-at-arms engaged hand to hand. And that they might not be separated by the moving of the vessels, they had large grapnels, and iron hooks with chains, which they flung from ship to ship to moor them to each other. The *Christopher*, which, as has been said, came first of all the French fleet, was taken again, and all in her were either killed or made prisoners. The English, having taken her, filled her with archers, and sent her against the men of Genoa.

Never was battle fiercer and more murderous than this. And, indeed, fights at sea are more deadly than fights on land, for none can flee; every man must stay where he is and meet his fate. From early in the morning until noon did the battle last. But though the English were hard pressed, for the enemies were four to one, besides being men used to the sea, in the end they won the victory, being somewhat helped by ships that came to them from the harbours on the coast hard by. Scarcely one of the Normans escaped with his life.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE BATTLE OF CRÉCY

In July 1346, six years after the battle of Sluys, Edward III. landed at La Hogue in Normandy. His plan was to march eastward and join the Flemings (people of Flanders), who were in alliance with him, and who had themselves invaded France. He got as far as Rouen, but found there that the bridge over the Seine had been broken down, and that King Philip of France was on the opposite bank with a large army. Edward then marched towards Paris, as if he were going to attack it, and when the French king followed him, suddenly turned back, and got across the Seine. He then marched on and came to the river Somme. Here again all the bridges had been broken down. Three times he tried to cross the river, but in vain. At last a peasant told him of a ford over the river known as Blanchetaque (from the white stones in the bed of the river). He crossed by this, but not without a fight. Marching a few miles further on he came to a place called Crécy, about ten miles from the ford of Blanchetaque, which is between Abbeville and the sea. Here he determined to fight, and waited for the French king, who was following him with an army much larger than his own. For when King Edward came to Crécy, he said, "Let us post ourselves here; we will not go further till we have seen our enemies. And indeed I have good reason to wait for them in this place; for this is the inheritance of my mother, which was given to her for a marriage-portion, and I am resolved to defend it against my adversary King Philip."

Here then the King pitched his camp. That evening—the day was Friday—he gave a supper to the earls and barons of his army. When they were gone, he fell on his knees and prayed to God that, if he fought with his enemies on the morrow, he might come out of the battle with honour. The next morning he and the Prince of Wales received the Holy Communion, as did also the

greater part of his army. After this he commanded that the army should be drawn up in three divisions. In the first he placed the young Prince of Wales, with the Earls of Warwick and Oxford, and many other nobles and knights. In this division were about eight hundred men-at-arms, two thousand archers, and a thousand Welshmen. There were in all about eight thousand nine hundred men, of whom about half were archers.

The army having been thus ordered, the King mounted a small white palfrey, and rode at a foot's pace, having a marshal on either side, throughout all the ranks, encouraging and entreating the army that they would guard his honour and defend the right. When he had gone through all the battalions, it was ten o'clock in the forenoon. He ordered that every man should have his meal, and drink a glass after. So the men ate and drank at their ease, sitting on the ground, having their bows and helmets before them on the ground, that they might be the fresher when the enemy should come.

The King of France and his army had lodged that night at the town of Abbeville, so that by the time they came near to the English they had marched already six miles or more. Four knights rode on to see what they could find out about the English, and these, when they returned, counselled King Philip that he should advance no further that day, but quarter them for the night where they were. "For," said they, "if you will wait till the rear shall come up it will be late, and your men will be weary, but the enemy will be fresh and in good order. Take then your own time, and be sure that they will wait for you." This counsel seemed good to King Philip, and he commanded that it should be done accordingly. So the marshals rode, one to the front, and the other to the rear, crying, "Halt, banners, in the name of God and St. Denys!" The front indeed halted, but the rear pushed forward, saying that they would not be behind any. And when the front saw this, then they advanced also, and neither the King nor the marshals could stop them. So the army marched on till they came within sight of the English. Then the front ranks fell back, to the no small fear of them that were

behind, who thought that the fighting had already begun. As for the confusion and bad ordering of the French, no one could say how great it was, who did not see it.

The English, on the other hand, when they saw their adversaries approach, stood up from the ground on which they were sitting without fear, and fell into their ranks. The first so to do was the Prince's division, having the archers in front and the men-at-arms in the rear. On either wing was a part of the second division, drawn up to give him help, if it should be needed. As for the third division, with which was the King himself, it was the hindermost of all. So the English stood in good order, but the French came on just as it seemed good to them, each man going his own way.

When the King of France first saw the English, his blood began to boil, and he cried to his marshals, "Order the Genoese forward and begin the battle." These Genoese carried cross-bows, and they were some fifteen thousand in number. But they were very weary, for they had marched eighteen miles that day, clad in armour and carrying their cross-bows. They told the Constable of France, "We are not in fit condition to do much this day." Thereupon he cried out, "This is what one gets by employing such scoundrels, for when there is most need of them, then they fall off." About this time there was a very heavy rain, with thunder and lightning. Also there was an eclipse of the sun; and before the rain a great cloud of crows was seen to hover over the two armies, making at the same time a great noise. Then the sun shone out, but so that the Frenchmen had it in their faces, and the Englishmen on their backs. The Genoese being by this time somewhat in order, approached the English, and set up a loud shout, with which they thought to frighten their adversaries. But the English stood still and took no heed. Then the Genoese shouted again and came a little forward; but the English never moved. A third time they cried out, holding their cross-bows forward, and began to shoot. Then the English archers also advanced, taking one step forward, and shot their arrows with such force and quickness that one had thought it snowed. When

the Genoese felt the arrows piercing through heads and arms, and through their armour, many of them cut the strings of their cross-bows and cast them on the ground and fled. When the King of France saw them flying, he cried, "Slay these rascals, for they do but hinder us." Then the men-at-arms dashed in among them, and slew many of them; and all the while the Englishmen shot where the press was thickest; the men-at-arms and their horses were pierced with the arrows, and fell in the midst of the Genoese; nor when they had fallen could they recover themselves; so thick, of a truth, was the press that they overthrew each other. The Welshmen also went on foot with their long knives among the men-at-arms, and slew many, both earls and knights and squires, a thing at which King Edward was afterwards much displeased, for he had sooner that they had been taken prisoners.

In this battle was slain a very valiant man, the King of Bohemia. When he heard how the battle had been ordered, he asked, "Where is my son, the Lord Charles?" His people answered, "We know not, but we believe that he is fighting." (The Lord Charles had come to the battle, but when he saw that it was likely to turn against the French, he departed.) Then said the King, "Gentlemen, you are all my people, my friends, and my brethren-in-arms this day; therefore, as I am blind, I beg of you that you will lead me so far into the battle, that I may be able to strike one stroke with my sword." The knights answered that they would forthwith lead him as he desired. And that they might not lose him in the crowd, they fastened all the reins of the horses together, and putting the King at their head, that he might have his wish, so advanced towards the enemy. Then the King made good use of his sword, and his companions also fought most gallantly. So far did they go with the press that they were all slain. On the morrow they were found upon the ground, with their horses all tied together.

None fought on the side of the French more valiantly than the Constable of France and the Earl of Flanders. These two, with their companies, came to the place where the Prince's

division stood, and fought there right valiantly. There too the King of France would fain have joined them, but could not, for there was a hedge of archers between him and them.

Here must be told an adventure of a certain knight that followed Sir John of Hainault. The King of France had given that day a very handsome black war-horse to Sir John, who mounted his own standard-bearer upon the beast. The horse ran away with its rider, and passed through the English army from front to rear without receiving any hurt. Then, as it was about to come back, it stumbled and turned the knight into a ditch, hurting him greatly. In truth, the man would have died but for his page, who had followed, and found him in the ditch without any power to raise himself out of it. This he now did with the page's help, and so returned safe to his own people, though not by the same way as that by which he came. He had fared worse, but that the English did not quit their ranks that day to make prisoners.

Before the battle had continued any long time, a number of soldiers, Frenchmen, Germans, and men of Savoy, broke through the archers of the Prince's division, and came to blows with the men-at-arms. The Prince had been hard pressed at that time but for the second division, which came quickly to his help. But before their coming, the leaders of the Prince's division, seeing the danger they were in, sent a knight in great haste to the King, who had taken his stand near a windmill on a hill. The knight said, "Sir, the lords that are about your son are vigorously attacked by the French; they entreat, therefore, that you would come to their help with your battalion, for if the number of the enemy should increase, they fear that the Prince will have too much to do." The King answered, "Is my son dead, or wounded, or felled to the ground?" "Nay, sir," said the knight, "he is not so; but he is so hard pressed by the enemy that he has need of your help." "Then," the King answered, "return to him and to them that sent you hither, and tell them from me that they do not send to me again this day, or look for my coming, so long as my son shall live; tell them also that they suffer him this day to win

his spurs, for I am determined that, if it please God, all the glory and honour of this day's battle shall come to him, and to them into whose hands I have committed him." The knight returned and delivered this message to the lords. It greatly encouraged them, and they repented that they had asked for help.

As the day drew to an end, the King of France had but sixty men with him. Then Sir John of Hainault, who before this had given him a fresh horse, when that on which the King rode had been slain with an arrow, said to him, "Sir, retreat while you have the chance; do not expose yourself thus to danger; if you have lost the battle to-day, yet another day you will be conqueror." So saying, he laid his hand on the bridle of the King's horse, and led him away by force; for this was not the first time that he had begged him to retreat.

By this time the Frenchmen were altogether in confusion, and their army broken up into small bands, which wandered up and down without any leader, and falling in with the English, were mostly destroyed. The English did not stir from their place to pursue or to take prisoners; but when, about the time of vespers, they heard no more shouting or crying, or voices of men calling to their lords, they considered that they had won the victory. As it grew dark, they made great fires and lighted torches. King Edward, who all that day had not put on his helmet, then came down from his post, and, with his whole battalion, advanced to the Prince of Wales. He took him in his arms and kissed him, saying, "Sweet son, God give you grace to go on as you have begun; you are my son, for you have acquitted yourself well this day; you are worthy to be a king." Thereat the Prince bowed very low, humbling himself before his father.

That night the English offered thanksgiving to God, for that He had given them the victory; this they did without any rioting, for the King had forbidden all noise or riots.

On the day that followed, that is, Sunday, there was so great a fog that one could not see a hundred yards. The King sent out a company of five hundred lances and two thousand archers

to see if there were any bodies of French collected. This company fell in with a division that was coming from Abbeville to join King Philip, having been told that he would not fight before Sunday. They thought that the Englishmen must be their own countrymen, and hastened to join them. When they found out the truth there was a short fight, but the French soon turned and fled in great disorder. Many were slain; indeed, had it not been for the fog, not one would have escaped.



EDWARD III. AND THE BLACK PRINCE.

The same thing befell a company that was coming to the help of the French King, under the command of the Archbishop of Rouen. For a time they held their ground, for there were brave knights with them, but in the end were almost all slain. Many

other bands that came from the towns round about perished in the same way. 'Tis said that there were slain on this Sunday morning four times as many men as had perished in the battle.

When the King knew that the French had no thought of collecting another army, he sent two lords, with three heralds, and two secretaries to count the dead. These were all the day about their work, coming back to the camp as the King was about to sit down to supper. Their report was that they had found eighty banners, and the bodies of eleven princes, twelve hundred knights, and thirty thousand common men.

CHAPTER XXX

HOW CALAIS WAS TAKEN

King Edward had won the Battle of Crécy, he laid siege to the town of Calais, which he was especially desirous of taking because the inhabitants had been accustomed for many years to do great damage to English ships in the Channel. The King did not attack the town, for it was too strong, but he blockaded it, knowing that sooner or later hunger would compel the inhabitants to surrender, unless indeed the French King should come to their help, and of this, after winning so great a victory at Crécy, he had not much fear.

First he encamped his army, building for their better lodgings houses of wood. These made, as it were, a town, being laid out in streets. Twice a week a market was held, where provisions and all kinds of merchandise could be bought, for traders came to it from England and Flanders. As for the Governor of Calais, when he saw what the King was doing, he sent a great number of the poorer people, with women and children, out of the town. King Edward suffered them to pass safely, and gave them besides a dinner and two shillings in money to each of them.

After a while the King, finding that the people of Calais received supplies by sea, caused a large castle to be made, so strong that it could not be destroyed, and fortified it with all kinds of instruments of war. This he set up between the town and sea, and put in it a garrison of forty men-at-arms and two hundred archers. By this the harbour of Calais was guarded so closely that nothing could go in or out without being either taken or sunk.



BESIEGERS.

Meanwhile the King of France, being very unwilling to lose his town of Calais, had gathered together a very large army—two hundred thousand men, it was said—for its help. But finding that he could not come near to the town, for King Edward had very skilfully guarded all the approaches, he sent certain nobles with this message: "Sir, the King of France desires to say that he has come to give you battle, but cannot find any means of approaching. Will you send some of your counsellors that they may confer with counsellors that he shall himself send,

and choose some place where a battle may be fought." The King of England made this answer: "I have been here some twelve months, and have spent here some great sums of money; by this time, also, I have accomplished so much that I must in a very short time be master of the town of Calais. Therefore I am not inclined to do what the King asks, or to give up that which I have gained. If he and his army desire to pass, they must find some way for themselves."

After this two Cardinals came from the Pope, endeavouring to make peace. So much they accomplished that four nobles of the English and as many of the French met together and deliberated. But they could come to no agreement. In the end the King of France departed, and disbanded his army.

The people of Calais, seeing that all hope of help was lost, and being hard pressed by hunger, desired their Governor to ask for conditions of peace. This the Governor did, but King Edward would grant no conditions whatever. "You must give up yourselves," he said, "to be dealt with as I will. Such as I please I will suffer to ransom themselves, and such as I will I will put to death." But when the English nobles and knights heard this, they said to the King, "You set, Sire, a bad example if you put these people to death; nor shall we, when you bid us go to any of your castles, obey you so cheerfully, fearing lest the King of France may deal with us in the same way, if we should be taken." The King answered, "I will not hold out against you, but on this I am resolved; six of the chief citizens of Calais shall come to me with halters round their necks, their heads and feet bare, and the keys of the town and castle in their hands. With these I will deal as I please."

There was great trouble in the town when this message was given, for how should the six be chosen? At last one Eustace de St. Pierre stood up and said, "It would be a grievous thing that the whole town should perish. I, therefore, trusting to find grace with God, if I die for my townsmen, offer myself as first of the six." Then five others offered themselves.

These six, therefore, with the Governor, went to the King, the Governor riding on a pony because he was wounded. They fell on their knees before him, and begged for mercy. The King would not listen, but commanded that their heads should be cut off. In vain did his chief counsellors beg him to change his purpose, saying that his reputation would be greatly injured, if he should show himself so unmerciful. At last his wife, Queen Philippa, fell on her knees before him, saying, with tears, "I pray you, Sire, for the love that you bear for me, to have mercy upon these men." To her the King answered, "Ah, lady, I could wish that you had been in any other place than this to-day. Nevertheless I cannot refuse the thing which you ask in this way. I give you, therefore, these men to do with them as you please." Thereupon the Queen commanded that they should be taken to her apartments, and should be well clothed and fed. After this, giving to each six nobles, she sent them away.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE GREAT BATTLE OF POITIERS

Philip, who was king when the Battle of Crécy was fought, died in 1350, and John, his eldest son, succeeded him.

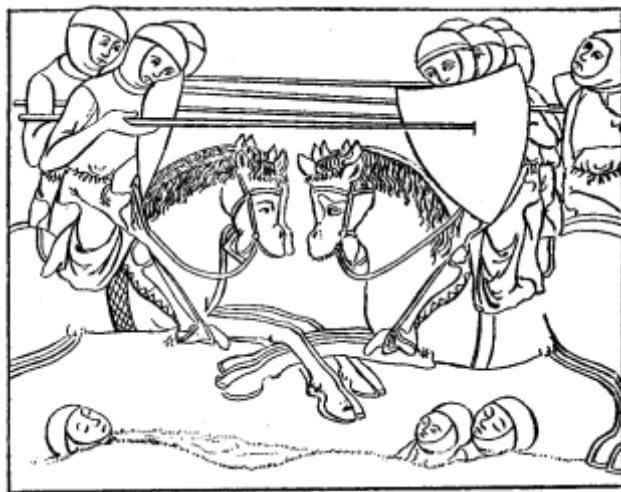
In 1355 King John, hearing that the Black Prince had come out of Bordeaux, and had ravaged the country far and wide, gathered a great army, which he posted in such a way that the English could not return to Bordeaux without fighting. He made three divisions of his army, in each of which were sixteen thousand men. This done, he said to three of his knights, "Ride as near to the Englishmen as you can; see how many there are; observe whether or no they are in good spirits, and find how we can best attack them." Then he rode himself, being mounted on a white palfrey, to the head of his army, and said thus, "You have often threatened what you would do to the English if you could find them. Now I will lead you to them, so that you can revenge yourselves for all the harm they have done you; for be sure that

we shall not now part without fighting." Those that heard him answered, "Willingly will we meet them, God helping us." When the knights came back, they said, "We have seen the English, and find that there are two thousand men-at-arms, four thousand archers, and fifteen hundred footmen. These make one battalion only; but they are well and skilfully posted." "How shall we attack them?" said the King. The knights answered, "On foot, except that there should be three hundred of the boldest and best fighters in your army, well armed and well mounted, to break, if possible, the body of archers, for their archers are posted in front." The King said, "So it shall be." And he rode with his two marshals through the army, and chose out three hundred knights of the greatest repute in the army. Nineteen knights also were chosen who clad themselves in armour like the King's armour.

When the French were just about to advance, a certain Cardinal came to King John, and said, "Sir, you have all the flower of France with you, and the English are but a handful of men. It would be greatly to your honour if you could gain them without a battle. Let me go to the Prince and show him in what great danger he is." King John said, "Go, but make haste." So the Cardinal rode to the camp of the English, and spoke to the Prince, who said that he was ready to listen to any reasonable terms. All that day—it was Sunday—the Cardinal rode backwards and forwards between the two armies. But he could not bring them to an agreement, for the King of France would be content with nothing short of this, that the Prince and a hundred of his knights should surrender themselves; and the Prince and his counsellors would not consent to any such thing.

When the Prince saw that there would be no agreement, he said to his men, "We are but few compared to our enemies. But be not therefore cast down, for victory does not always go with numbers, but as it may please God. If we win this day, great will be our glory; if we die, I have a father and brothers, and you have kinsmen, who will avenge our deaths. And now I entreat you to quit yourselves like men; as for me, if it please God and St. George, you will see me behave myself as a brave knight."

After this the battle began. The battalion of three hundred French knights that should have broken through the English archers, first advanced. But the archers, being on the sides of the lane by which they came, began shooting upon them so well and fast that their horses, smarting from the wounds made by the arrows, could not go forward, but turned about. Their riders could not manage them, but were thrown, and such as were thrown could not rise again, such was the press. Some indeed of the knight's esquires broke through the hedges, but, even so, they could not reach, as they desired, the battalion of the Prince. This battalion, then, being beaten, fell back upon those that were behind, and these again on the second division, and when those in the second division heard what had happened, many of them mounted their horses and rode off. Now the Prince had posted three hundred men-at-arms and as many archers on a hill that was close by. This he did that they might be ready to fall on the second division of the French, if they should see occasion. And this they now did, seeing the division falling into confusion. And here again the English archers did infinite service, for they shot so thickly and well that the French did not know whither to turn themselves to escape the arrows.



KNIGHTS IN BATTLE.

When the English men-at-arms saw that the first division of the French was beaten, and the second fallen into disorder, they mounted their horses, which they had ready at hand. Then Sir John Chandos, who had been by the Prince all the day, said to him, "Sir, sir, now push forward, for the day is ours; God will certainly put it in our hands. Let us make for the King of France, for the chief of the battle will be where he is; I know well that his valour will not suffer him to fly. He will remain in our hands, if it so please God; but we must do our best. You have said, sir, that you would show yourself a good knight to-day." The Prince said, "Go forward, Sir John; you will not see me turn my back this day, but I will be always among the foremost." Then he turned to his banner-bearer, and said, "Banner, advance!" And this the knight did. Very fierce and crowded was the fight in that part of the field. Many a knight was beaten down from his horse, and if any one fell, he could not rise again, unless he was helped well and quickly. And all the while the English archers shot so well that none dared to come within reach of their arrows.

And now the second division was in full flight, and there remained the third only, which the King of France himself commanded. A good knight did the King prove himself; had but a fourth part of his followers behaved themselves as well, he had won the day. Many a valiant stroke did he deal with his battle-axe, for it was with this that he fought and defended himself. But there were only a few that stood by him. The greater part fled as fast as they could, hoping to find shelter within the walls of Poitiers. But the men of Poitiers shut the gates of the town, so that there was a great slaughter on the causeway before the gates. In such terror were the French, that many gave themselves up for prisoners as soon as they saw an Englishman. There were many English archers that day that had four prisoners, or even five or six. As for the King, there was much pressing to take him; all desired to have such a prisoner, and cried out to him, "Sire, surrender yourself, or you are a dead man." But the one that had the good fortune to take him was a young squire, Denis de Morbeque by name. He was a Frenchman by birth, but served the King of England, having been banished for killing a man in a

quarrel. Chancing now to be very near to the King, he pushed through the crowd, for he was very strong, and said to the King in good French, "Sire, Sire, give yourself up." The King answered, "To whom shall I give myself? Where is my cousin the Prince of Wales? If I could see him, I would speak to him." Sir Denis said, "He is not here; but give yourself up to me, and I will lead you to him." Thereupon the King gave him his right glove, and said, "I give myself up to you." Still there was much pushing, many crying out, "It was I that took him."

Meanwhile the Black Prince, by the counsel of Sir John Chandos, had pitched his banner, that his men might join together again, for they were much scattered. The banner was placed on a high part, and a tent of crimson silk was pitched for the Prince. He took off his helmet and sat down, and his knights brought him some wine. Every moment the crowd in the place grew greater, as the knights came back and brought their prisoners with them.

When his marshals came back, the Prince said to them, "Where is the King of France?" They answered, "We do not know for a certainty; but he must be killed or taken prisoner, for he has now left his division." Then the Prince bade two of his nobles take their horses and ride over the field that they might get certain news of him. Accordingly the two rode to a small hill, from which they might get a view of the plain. Thence they saw a crowd of men-at-arms on foot, which were coming towards them very slowly. The King of France was in the midst of them, and in great danger, for the English and the Gascons had taken him from Denis, and were disputing who should have him. One would bawl out, " 'Tis I that have got him," and others would reply, "No, no; we have him." The King said, "Gentlemen, take me quietly to the Prince, and do not make a riot about me, for I can make all of you sufficiently rich." The barons set spurs to their horses, and riding up to the crowd, asked what was the matter. "It is the King of France," was the answer; and as many as ten knights and squires declared that he was their prisoner. Thereupon the barons commanded all to draw

aside, forbidding any to approach, under pain of instant death, unless they should be called. This done, they dismounted, and making a profound reverence to the King, led him to the Prince.

When evening was come, the Prince gave a supper in his pavilion to the King of France, and to the princes and barons who had been taken along with him. The Prince himself served the King's table, and would not sit down at it, though they urged him to do so. "I am unworthy of such an honour," he said, "nor does it become me to sit at the table of so great a king, or so valiant a man as he has shown himself to be this day." Further he said, "Do not make a poor meal because God has not granted you your wish to-day; my father will show you, I know, all honour, and will arrange your ransom reasonably. I think, too, that you may be thankful that this day has not ended as you wished; for you have had occasion to surpass all the bravest knights on your side. And this I say, not to flatter you, but because it is the judgment of all on our side that have seen you." At the end of this speech there were murmurs of praise from every one, and the French said that the Prince had spoken nobly and truly, and that if God should grant him life, he would be one of the most gallant princes in Christendom.

King John was taken to England, the Prince giving one hundred thousand florins to be distributed among the barons of Gascony, who believed themselves to have a share in the prisoner. He rode through London in great state, and was lodged in the Savoy Palace, and afterwards in various places, his abode being frequently changed for fear of an escape. In 1360 he returned to France, it having been agreed that a ransom of 3,000,000 crowns should be paid for him; the value of this in English money being £1,125,000. Other conditions were made. The King found that he could not fulfil these, and he returned to England, where he died a few months afterwards. The Black Prince, who was twenty-six years old when he won Poitiers, died in 1376, a short time before his father.