

STORIES OF CHARLEMAGNE

AND THE TWELVE PEERS OF FRANCE

FROM THE OLD ROMANCES

By the

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OLIVER AND FIERABRAS.

PREFACE

I have endeavoured to tell in this volume the story of Charlemagne, the Charlemagne, it must be understood, not of history, but of Romance. The two personages are curiously different. Each writer of a romance had naturally a hero of his own. As he had to exalt this hero, he could hardly help depreciating the king. Charlemagne suffers by comparison with Roland and Reynaud very much as, in the Iliad, Agamemnon, the over-lord of the Greeks, suffers by comparison with the subordinate King, Achilles. The real Charlemagne was a very great personality, one that impressed his age as deeply as any man has ever done; in these stories he often appears petty, capricious, and obstinate. Then the romance writers were Frenchmen, and they make the great king a Frenchman, holding his court in Paris, and surrounded by great French lords. They began to write when the air was full of the crusading spirit, and their work is coloured accordingly. The enemy is always a Saracen or a follower of Mahomet. There could not be a more curious instance of this than is to be found in the story of the death of Roland. In the romance Charlemagne's rear-guard is destroyed by an overpowering force of Saracens. What really happened was that it was attacked, probably for the sake of plundering the baggage, by a gathering of mountaineers, who are called Gascons by the chroniclers, but were, in fact, Basques. Then, again, we find the romance writers in sympathy with the great feudatories, indicating the time before the French monarchy had become consolidated, when the king at Paris had all that he could do to hold his own against his powerful vassals, the Dukes of Brittany and Burgundy, and the English king.

The Charlemagne romances, as translated by Lord Berners and William Caxton, occupy twelve volumes in the Extra Series of the Early English Text Society. Some of these are variants of the same story. There is a romance of "Ferumbras," for instance, which gives substantially the same tale as that which occupies eleven chapters in this volume.

"Huon of Bordeaux," again, fills four volumes in the Extra Series. But the original *chanson* is contained in one of the four and is complete in itself. This, too, I have considerably compressed and shortened. The same process has had to be applied to all before they could be made acceptable to the readers of to-day. I hope that they have not lost their life and colour and human interest.

The stories of which I have made use are "The Four Sons of Aymon" (I-XI); "Ralph the Collier" (XII-XIII), a genuinely English production, it would seem, as no French original has been found; "Fierabras," taken from the "Lyf of Charles the Grete" (XIV-XXIV); "The Song of Roland" (XXV-XXXV), and "Duke Huon of Bordeaux" (XXXVI-XL). This has been put last in order, as it represents Charlemagne grown old and weary of power. The death of the great King is only mentioned as imminent in the romance which I have followed; I have added an abridged account of it from the contemporary biography written by Eginhard. The story of Huon is peculiarly interesting to us because it introduces the fairy King Oberon, who was to become so important a figure in English literature.

I have to express my obligations to the Introduction, written by Mr. Sidney Lee to the first part of "Duke Huon of Bordeaux."

ALFRED J. CHURCH.

Oxford, July 17, 1902.

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CHAPTER I

THE SLAYING OF LOTHAIR

King Charles held a great court in his capital city of Paris at the Feast of Pentecost. Thither came the Twelve Peers of France, and many other men of note, besides strangers from Germany, England, and other realms. One of the chief of the Frenchmen was Aymon, Duke of Ardennes, who brought with him his four sons, to wit, Reynaud, Alard, Guichard, and Richard. All these four were marvellously fair, witty, and valiant; but the fairest, wittiest, and most valiant was Reynaud, the eldest born. There was not in the world a man of so great strength and stature. It is of him and his brothers that this tale is told.

King Charles stood up, and said, "Brethren and friends, you know that by your help I have conquered many lands, and brought many pagans to confess the Christian faith. You know also that this has not been done without grievous loss on our part, and verily had not been done at all but for succour that we looked not for. But the succour that we looked for, that we had not, and notably from Duke Benes of Aygremon. This, then, is my purpose. I will send to Duke Benes, bidding him attend me this summer. And if he will not come, then I will besiege him in his town of Aygremon. And when he shall come into my hands, I will hang him, and slay his son Mawgis, and cause that discourteous woman, his wife, to be burnt with fire."

Duke Naymes said, "Be not so hot, my lord King. Send a message to the Duke by some prudent man, and when you shall have received his answer, then take counsel what you shall do."

"That is good counsel," said the King. But when he called for a messenger, no man answered, for many were of the Duke's kindred. Then he called his eldest son Lothair, and said to him, "Go to this Duke, and bid him come to me with his men-at-

arms by mid-summer next, or else I will besiege his city of Aygremon."

The next day Lothair departed, having a hundred knights with him, armed for battle. As they went they uttered many threatenings against the Duke, if he should not submit himself to the King.

It so chanced that a spy heard them talk in this fashion, and, making all haste, came to the Duke and told him. "There come messengers," he said, "from King Charles, threatening terrible things, and the King's own son is with them." Then the Duke asked his lords what he should do. One of them, Sir Simon by name, a good man and a wise, said to him, "Receive the King's messengers honourably. It is not well for a man, how great so ever he be, to fight against his sovereign lord. Many of your kinsmen have so dared, yet do not you." Said the Duke, "I am not fallen so low that I should follow such counsel. Have I not three brothers, princes all of them, that will help me against the King, and four nephews also, sons of Aymon, that are stout and valiant men?" So he would not listen to Sir Simon; no, nor yet to his wife the Duchess, though she was urgent with him to speak peaceably to the King's messengers.

By this time Lothair and his knights were come to the town of Aygremon. The Prince said, "See what a fortress is there! How strong are the walls! See, too, the river running at their base. There is no stronger place in Christendom. It cannot be taken by force, but haply by famishing it may be taken." One of his knights said to him, "My lord, you say true. This is a mighty prince, and he has a strong castle. It would be well if you could make him to be of good accord with your father." "You speak well," answered Lothair, "nevertheless if the Duke shall say anything that shall displease us, he shall be sorry there for." But the knight said softly to himself, "This is foolishness, and we shall pay for it with our lives."

So Lothair and his men came to the castle, and knocked at the gate. "Who are you?" said the porter. "We be friends,"

answered Lothair, "and we bring a message from the King." "Wait awhile," said the porter, "till I tell the Duke." So the porter went to the Duke and said, "There are come hither a hundred knights, with the King's eldest son at their head. Shall I open the gate?" "Open it," said the Duke, "we can hold our own, yea though the King himself should come with all his men." So the porter basted to open the gate. But the Duke said to his lords, "Here comes the King's Oldest son; if he speak wisely to us, wisely will we answer him; but if not, he shall not go free."

Then Lothair and his knights were brought into the hall, where the Duke sat among his lords, having the Duchess his wife by him and before him his son Mawgis. Now Mawgis was a great wizard.

Lothair said, "God keep King Charles and confound Duke Benes! My father says, 'Come to Paris with five hundred knights, and make good your want of service in the parts of Lombardy, where, for lack of your help, many valiant men came by their death. But if you fail in this thing, you shall surely be hanged, your wife burned with fire, and all your house destroyed.'"

Then might any one have seen the Duke change colour for anger. When he could speak, he said, "I will not go to the King. I hold of him neither land nor fortress; or rather I will go and waste his land till I come to Paris itself."

"Dare you so speak?" cried Prince Lothair, in a loud voice. "You know well that you are the King's man. I counsel you to do his bidding. Else you shall be hanged till the winds of heaven dry your bones."

When the Duke heard this he stood up on his feet in a great rage, crying to Lothair that it was an evil day for him on which he came to the town of Aygremont. Not a word of counsel would he take, when some of his knights would put him in mind of the King's might, and of how he was in truth the King's man, holding of him this very town of Aygremont. "Hold your peace!" he cried. "Never will I consent to hold aught of this man so long

as I can mount a horse or hold a spear." And he called upon his lords to lay hold on Lothair, and they durst not disobey him, but ran upon Lothair and the rest of King Charles's men. Then began as sore a battle as was ever fought in this world. For not only did the Duke's men that were within the palace assail the Frenchmen, but the inhabitants of the town, both merchants and craftsmen, hearing the uproar, beset the gates. These gates, indeed, the Frenchmen kept with great courage; but they were few in number, and the day went sorely against them. In the end, after that Prince Lothair had been slain by the Duke himself, there remained but ten of the hundred knights alive. These the Duke spared, on this condition, that they should carry his message to the King, and the message was this: "I will do no homage for my land, nor pay one penny of tribute. Rather I will come with forty thousand men, and waste your land, and burn your fair city of Paris." After this he delivered to them the body of Lothair, laying it in a cart drawn by two horses. And when the ten knights were quit of the town, and were come into the fields, they began to weep and lament, not for Lothair only, but also for themselves, for they feared the King. So they went on their way to Paris.

Meanwhile King Charles at Paris was not a little troubled. "I fear me much," he said to his lords, "lest some evil have befallen my son, for this Duke Benes is a savage man and a cruel." Then answered the Duke Aymon, "If the Duke shall do you any wrong, I will help you with all my heart. Here also are my four sons who will go with me." "That is well spoken," said the King. "Bring your sons hither." So the Duke brought them, and the King, when he saw them, loved them all, but Reynaud, who was the eldest, more than the other three. He said to his steward, "Bring hither the arms of King Certes, whom I slew at Pampeluna, and put them on him." And Ogier the Dane bound on his spurs, and the King himself girded him with his sword. This done, he dubbed him knight, saying, "God increase thee in goodness, honour, and worthiness!"

Reynaud, it should be known, had a very noble horse, Bayard by name, that had been given him by his cousin Mawgis. Never was there such a horse in the world, save only Bucephalus, that was the horse of Alexander of Macedon. When he was mounted on him he seemed such a knight as could scarce be matched in France or any other land. When they jousted in the lists, for the King held a tournament at St. Victor that was near to Paris, not one did so well as Reynaud.

The tournament being ended, the King returned to his palace in Paris. The next morning he said to his lords, Ogier the Dane, and the Duke Naymes and Turpin the Archbishop, "I am in fear for my son Lothair; he tarries long on this journey. I dreamed also last night that the Duke Benes had slain him." The Duke Naymes said, "Put no trust in dreams, for they are naught." The King answered, "Nevertheless, if the Duke have done this thing, he shall die."

While they were yet speaking, there came a messenger upon a horse, faint and weary and sorely wounded, and the King saw him pass the window where he stood. Then the King ran lightly down to the gate, his lords following him. When the messenger saw the King he saluted him in a low voice, and told him all that had befallen. And when he had ended his words, he fell to the ground in a swoon for grief and the pain of his wounds.

Great was the King's sorrow. He wrung his hands and tore his beard and his hair. His lords sought to comfort him, and Duke Naymes said, "Now bury your son with great honour at St. Germaine's, and when you have done this, gather together your army, and march against this Duke Benes."

Then the King and his lords rode forth from Paris, and when they had gone the space of two miles, they met the cart wherein was the body of Prince Lothair. And when the King saw the cart, he lighted down from his horse, and lifted the cloth that was upon the dead man. And when he saw how the head was severed from the body and the face sore disfigured with wounds

he cried aloud. And he said, "Oh, Lothair, my son, you were a fair and gentle knight. May God of His mercy receive you into Paradise!" Then his lords bore him up on one side and the other, and brought him to St. Germaine's. There they buried Prince Lothair with all honour.

CHAPTER II

HOW THE DUKE BENES CAME BY HIS END

Duke Aymon said to his sons, "We do ill to tarry here. The King is very wroth and not without cause, with your uncle Duke Benes, and will wage war against him, in which matter he will of a certainty ask your help. But we cannot fight against our own kinsfolk. Let us therefore depart to our own country."

So the Duke and his four sons departed, and came to the land of Ardennes. The Duchess was right glad to see them. Nevertheless, when she was aware of the reason of their coming she was greatly troubled. To the Duke Aymon she said, "My lord, you have done ill to leave the King without license given, for he is your natural lord, and you have received much good at his hands. You have brought away your sons also, whom he has of his goodness promoted to the order of knighthood. This was not well." "Lady," said the Duke, "we left the King because my brother Benes had slain the Prince Lothair, and we are afraid." "For all that," answered the Duchess, "do you serve the King and obey him, for to do so becomes a true man." Then said the Duke, "I would lose my castle and the half of my land, if only my brother Benes had not slain the Prince Lothair."

In the meanwhile the King was greatly troubled, not only by the death of his son, but also by the departure of Duke Aymon and his sons. "See," said he, "how these men whom I promoted to great honour have betrayed me. Verily, if I lay hands on them they shall die. But first I must punish this villain Duke Benes. I will make war on him this very summer. In the

meanwhile they that desire so to do may go to their own homes, but let all be here on Midsummer Day."

Tidings of these things came to the Duke Benes, and he sent to his brethren, Gerard and Bron, that they should come to his help. These came with many men, so that the Duke had now a very great army. So, having great confidence in his strength, he set out for Troyes in the region of Champagne. Meanwhile, there came to the King at Paris Duke Richard of Normandy, with thirty thousand men, and also the Earl Guy of Heron, and the Duke of Brittany; also many other lords and knights from Gascony, Burgundy, Flanders, and other parts. These all pitched their tents in the meadows of St. Germain.

When all things had been prepared, the King and his army set out, his purpose being to besiege the town of Aygremont. When they had marched many days, there came to Ogier the Dane, who led the van of the army, a messenger riding in hot haste. He asked, "Whose is this army?" When they told him it was the army of King Charles, he said, "I would fain speak with the King." So they brought him to the King, and he delivered his message, which was from Aubrey, lord of Troyes, and to this effect; that Duke Benes and his two brothers had come up against the town of Troyes with a very great host, and would most certainly take it unless the King should come to his help. When the King heard this he commanded that the army should leave marching to Aygremont, and should turn aside to Troyes. And this was done, and in no long time the King and his army came to a place from which they could see the town of Troyes.

When Gerard of Roussillon, that was brother to Duke Benes, heard that the King was now near at hand, he said to the Duke, "Let us go without delay against the King." This saying pleased the others, and they rode till they saw the King's army. And Gerard rode forth before his men, crying, "Roussillon! Roussillon! "On the other hand, Ogier the Dane rode out from the King's army, his spear in rest, and smote a knight, Ponson by name, so that he fell dead upon the earth. Meanwhile Gerard

slew one of Ogier's knights. So the battle waxed fiercer and fiercer. Duke Benes, charging at his horse's utmost speed, overthrew the Lord of St. Quintin. On the other side, Duke Richard of Normandy did many valiant deeds, slaying, among others, a certain knight that was Gerard's nearest friend. "I shall have no peace," said Gerard, "till I have avenged my friend," and he put his spear in rest and would have charged at Duke Richard. But his brother Bron said to him, "Have a care; here comes King Charles with all his men; if we abide his coming in this place it will go ill with us." While he was speaking a certain knight in the company of Duke Richard slew Gerard's nephew before his face. Then Gerard sent a message to Duke Benes that he was in a great strait, and must have help forthwith.

When the Duke Benes heard this, he made haste to come, bringing a great company with him, and the battle grew yet more fierce. After a while Duke Richard of Normandy rode at Duke Benes, piercing his shield with his spear, and bruising him sorely on the body. Also drawing his sword he smote the Duke's horse so stoutly that it fell dead. But the Duke himself sprang lightly from the ground, and fought right valiantly on foot, slaying sundry of those who thought to take him alive. And anon his men brought to him another horse. And still the battle grew fiercer and fiercer.

Then came King Charles himself, his spear in rest, and smote Gerard on the shield so strongly that he overthrew both man and horse. Then had Gerard perished but for his two brothers Benes and Bron, who with no small trouble drew him out of the press. This indeed they did, but the battle went against the men of Aygremont. Right glad were they when the sun set, and this was about *Compline* time, for the days were now long.

When Duke Benes and his brothers came together after the battle they had much debate as to what should be done. Gerard counseled that they should renew the battle on the morrow, but the others deemed otherwise. "Nay," said the Duke Bron, "we shall fare ill if we do this. My counsel is this: let us choose thirty knights, the most prudent that we can find. Let

them say on our behalf to King Charles that we beg him to have mercy upon us, that the Duke Benes shall make such amends for the slaying of Prince Lothair as may be agreed by the lords of the two countries, and that hereafter we will be his true liegemen." To this counsel the others agreed. Forthwith they sought out the thirty knights, the most prudent men that they could find. These, when it was day, they sent as an embassy of peace to King Charles. And Gerard gave them this counsel that before they sought audience of the King they should seek out the Duke Naymes, and beseech him to plead their cause with the King, "for the Duke," said he, "is a lover of peace."

In due time the thirty knights, bearing despatches in their hands, were brought into the presence of the King, and delivered their message to him. When King Charles heard these words he looked at the men frowningly, and in great wrath. Then he said to him that was their chief and spokesman, a certain Sir Stephen, "Surely, Sir Stephen, your Duke had lost his wits when he slew my dear son Lothair. And now, when he says that he will be my man, does he speak the truth? What say you?" "I will answer for him," said Sir Stephen. Then King Charles went with his lords into a chamber apart, and took counsel with them what should be done. Then the Duke Naymes said, "My advice is that you pardon them. They are valiant men, and you had better have them for friends than for enemies."

Then King Charles called the thirty knights, and said to them, "I pardon Duke Benes and his brothers. Only I will that he come to me at the Feast of St. John next ensuing, with ten thousand men well equipped for war."

When the messengers brought back this answer the brothers greatly rejoiced. Duke Gerard said, "It is meet that we should ourselves go and thank the King." So they put off their fine array, and went, having but a single garment apiece, and with bare feet, and four thousand knights went with them in the same plight. When they came before the King he spoke to them in peaceable words, but he had anger in his heart, especially against Duke Benes, as will be seen hereafter.

Some seven days before the Feast of St. John Baptist the Duke Benes set out from Aygremont that he might present himself according to his promise before King Charles. Meanwhile the King was holding his court in Paris. To him came one Guenes, who was his nephew, saying, "Sire, Duke Benes is on his way hither with a company of knights. Now is the time to take vengeance on him for the murder of Prince Lothair." "That were treachery," answered the King, "for we have given our word to him. The Duke also is a great man and has powerful kinsmen." "I heed not that," said Guenes, "I have kinsmen also that are as good as he." "Certainly it were treachery," said the King again; "but do as you will, only mark that I do not consent thereto."

So Guenes departed, having four thousand men with him, and met the Duke and his company in the Valley of Soissons. So soon as the Duke saw him, he was aware of his evil purpose. "I held that the King was a true man, but now I see that he practises treachery against me. Now would that I had with me Mawgis my son, and the four sons of my brother Aymon. I shall have great need of them this day." And in this indeed he spake truly, for there was a great battle. The Duke and his knights did valiantly, but what could their valour avail against so great a multitude? First, the Duke's horse was killed, and when he rose to his feet, Guenes, being mounted on a very swift charger, made at him, and ran him through with a spear, so that he fell dead upon the plain. When the Duke was dead there was a great slaughter of his knights. Ten only were left alive, and these were spared upon this condition, that they should take the body of the Duke to his town of Aygremont, even as the body of Prince Lothair had been taken by ten of his knights to the town of Paris. Great was the grief in the town of Aygremont when the body of the Duke was taken thither. But Mawgis said to the Duchess his mother, "Have patience awhile, my dear mother. The King shall pay dearly for this his treachery. And in this I know that my kinsfolk will help me."

CHAPTER III

HOW IT FARED WITH THE BRETHREN

At Pentecost King Charles held a court at Paris to which with others came Duke Aymon and his sons. Said the King to Aymon, "You and your sons are very dear to me. Therefore I am minded to make Reynaud my steward." "I thank you," answered the Duke; "yet this I will say that you did a grievous wrong in that you suffered my brother Benes to be slain, when he had a safe-conduct under your hand. Nevertheless I forgive you." "Remember," said the King, "that Benes slew my son Lothair. Let us set one deed against the other, and speak of them no more." "So be it," answered the Duke. But his sons were not so minded, for they came forth out of the company, and Reynaud spake for them, "Sire," he said, "we are not of our father's mind, for we hate you with a great hatred." The King, being very angry, cried, "Away out of my sight, foolish boy; were it not for this company I would set you so fast in prison that you should not move hand or foot."

After these things the whole company went to the Church to hear mass; and after mass they sat down to dinner, but Reynaud would not sit down, so angry was he. After dinner, Berthelot, that was nephew to the King, said to Reynaud, "Come here, play me at chess." So these two sat down to play. When they had played awhile, there arose a dispute between them. So hot was the dispute that Berthelot called Reynaud by an ill name, and smote him on the face, whereupon Reynaud, lifting the chess board, that was of massy gold, smote Berthelot upon the head so strongly that he fell down dead. When the King knew this he cried in great wrath, "Lay hold on this Reynaud. By St. Denis he shall not go out of this place alive." Then the King's knights would have laid hold on him, but his brothers and kinsfolk defended him, and there was such a strife in the palace as had never before been seen. In the end Reynaud and his brothers, with Mawgis their cousin, escaped out of the palace,

and mounting their horses fled to Dordogne, the King's knights following hard upon them. As for Reynaud he was in no peril, for his horse Bayard was as swift as the wind, but with the others it went hard. Then Reynaud turned upon the knights that pursued and slaying four of them, gave their horses to the others. So they came safe all of them to Dordogne, where dwelt their mother the Duchess. She, fearing greatly for their lives, would have them take all her treasure, and depart. So they departed, with many tears, and coming into the forest of Ardennes built for themselves a castle which they called Montanford. A great fortress was it and a strong, for it was built upon a rock and defended on all sides with great walls, and furnished with a great store of provisions.

When the King heard of what they had done, he required of his barons that they should help him to take vengeance for his nephew Berthelot. This they promised to do. "Only," said they, "let us go to our own land that we may make ready." To this the King consented. So they departed and came back to Paris in due time with their men. After this the King departed and marched as quickly as he might to the castle of Montanford.

Now it chanced that Reynaud's three brothers were returning from the hunt when they saw the King's host. "Who are these?" said Guichard. Richard, who was the youngest of the brethren, answered, "This is the King's host, for I heard it said that he was coming to take vengeance upon us. But now let us show ourselves to be men." So they and their companions rode to meet the vanguard of the King's army. And Guichard laid his spear in rest, and charged at the Earl Guyon, who was leader of the vanguard, and smote him so strongly that he fell dead to the ground. Thereafter there was a fierce battle, and it went hard with the King's vanguard, so that scarce one of them escaped. But the three brothers got back safe into the tower, and were greatly commended by Reynaud for their valour. And now the King besieged the castle. "I will take it," he said, "by force or by famine." But the Duke Naymes counselled him to demand Guichard of his brother. "If Reynaud yield him up," said he,

"then this matter shall be settled peaceably and without loss." "That is good counsel," said the King, and he sent the Duke Naymes with Ogier the Dane to make their demands. But when Reynaud heard it, he was full of anger, and said, "My lords, but that I love you, surely I had cut you to pieces for bringing so evil a message. Think you that I will do so base a thing as to yield up my own brother? tell the King that I care not a penny for his threatenings; as for you, get you away out of my sight." So the two peers departed with all speed, and told the words of Reynaud to the King.

Then the King set guards at each of the three gates of the castle, and the commander of the guards at the third gate was the Duke Aymon himself, for, of his loyalty to the King, he made war against his own sons.

When Reynaud saw the guards that the King had set at the gates, he said to his men, "These men are worn and weary with travel, and it were but small glory to overcome them now. But when they are somewhat rested, then we will set upon them." And when the men heard him so speak, they judged that he was a very gallant, noble knight.

After a while, Reynaud said, "The time is come, else the King will think that we fear him. Sound the trumpet, and we will let him see what manner of men we are." So the trumpet was sounded, and Reynaud and his men issued from the castle gate, and the King's men on the other hand made themselves ready for the fight, and there was a very terrible battle. Reynaud and his men suffered much that day, for first the Duke Aymon wrought great damage to his sons' army, and then the Duke Fulk slew many, and the defenders of the castle had much ado to hold their own. Nevertheless they did so valiantly that at the last the King was fain to withdraw his men. Nor did he do this without great damage, for Reynaud came upon the army as it retreated, and slew many, and took certain prisoners. This done, the four brothers went back to their castle at Montanford.

But it passed the skill of man to hold the place against such odds as were brought against them. For the King, having gathered together a great multitude of men, surrounded the castle on all sides, and kept it close for a year and more. Then Reynaud sent a messenger to the King, saying, "I will surrender this fortress and myself also with my brothers, if the King will promise on his part that we shall have our lives and goods." But the King, moved by certain of his counsellors, would promise no such thing. And so for a while the matter stood; neither could the King win the castle, nor could the brethren go free.

After a while there came to King Charles a certain knight, Herneger by name, who said, "Sire, if you will give me this castle of Montanford for my own, and all the goods that are within, and the land about it for five miles, I will deliver to you Reynaud and his brothers within the space of a month from now." "Do this," answered the King, "and you shall have what you ask."

Then Herneger, after he had first disposed a thousand knights in the mountains round about, rode up to the castle gates and said, "I pray you to let me enter, for the King seeks my life. I have something to tell Sir Reynaud that he will be right glad to hear." So the porter opened the gate, and let Sir Herneger pass within.

When Reynaud heard that there was a strange knight in the castle, he came and inquired of his business. Herneger said, "The King seeks my life, because I spake on your behalf." "How does the King fare?" said Reynaud. "Has he good store of victuals?" Herneger answered, "He and his army are well-nigh famished. They will not tarry long in this place, and when they depart you may get much spoil by pursuing them." That is good to hear," answered Reynaud. "If the King fail of his purpose this time, the opportunity will not soon come again." Then he and his brethren and Herneger the traitor sat down to supper and made good cheer.

When all the knights were fast asleep, the false Herneger rose from his bed and armed himself. Then he cut the cords of the draw-bridge, and let it fall, and he slew also the guards that kept watch on the wall. When he had done this, the knights who were disposed upon the mountains came up, being led by Guy of Burgundy, and, finding the gates open, entered in and slew all that they could find. Truly it had gone ill with the four brethren that night but for the horse of Alard that woke them out of their sleep. For some of the guards had been slain, and some who should have watched were drunken, and the brethren had been surprised but for the loud neighing of the horse. When Reynaud saw that the enemy was within the castle, he and his brethren took their places in the tower, and, when the tower was set on fire, they took their stand in a certain pit and defended it right valiantly against all the King's men. After awhile, the other knights that were in the castle taking heart and coming to help them, they drove out the enemy from the castle, and shut the gates and raised the drawbridge. The next day Reynaud said to his brothers, "So far we have done well, and have been delivered beyond all hope. Nevertheless here we may not stay, for all our provision of food has been burnt by fire. Let us depart, therefore, while we can." So they left the castle not without much sorrow. Alard and Guichard were in the vanguard with a hundred knights, and Reynaud and Richard brought up the rear with all the rest of their folk.

That night they passed through the army of the King without hurt or hindrance. But for many days to come they had no rest from their enemies, nor of all that pursued them was there one that did them more damage than did Aymon their father. At last things came to this pass that there was no one left alive of all their followers. Their horses also were in a sore plight, for they had nothing to eat save only such roots as they could find in the ground. Nevertheless the horse Bayard was plump and strong, while the others were so lean and weak that they could scarce stand. A wonderful beast was he in this as in other things, being as well nourished by roots as other horses are wont to be by hay and corn.

As for the knights they were ill to see, for their armour was eaten away with rust and their skins dark with hunger and want.

Then said Reynaud to his brothers, "What shall we do? As for myself I had sooner die as becomes a knight than perish here of hunger and cold." Alard said, "My counsel is that we go straight to our lady mother in Ardennes. For though the King and his lords hate us, and even our father is set against us, yet I am persuaded that our mother will not fail us." "You give good counsel," said Reynaud; and to this the other two agreed.

That night the brethren set out, and travelling without stay came to the city of Ardennes. When they were in sight of the walls, Reynaud said to his brethren, "We did ill to take no surety of our father, that he give us not into the King's hands." "Fear not," answered Richard. "I am assured that our lady mother will keep us safe." So they entered the town. But no man knew them, so strange were they to look upon, and the townsfolk asked them, "Of what country are you?" "You are too curious," answered Reynaud, and they rode to the palace.

Now the Duke Aymon chanced to be hawking that day by the river, and the Duchess was in her chamber, where she was wont to sit, in much grief because she had no tidings of her children. After a while she came from her chamber into the hall, where the men sat, but she knew them not. Nay so black were they and foul to look upon that she was in no small fear of them, and was minded for a while to go back to her chamber. But soon she took courage, and greeted the men, saying, "Who are you, Christian men or pagans? Maybe you are doing some penance. Will you have some alms from me or clothing? methinks you need them much. Gladly will I do you this service that God also may have mercy upon my own children." And when she thought of her sons, and how she knew not whether they were alive or dead, she wept aloud.

When Reynaud heard her weep, he was himself greatly moved, and wept also. And the Duchess looking on him more

closely was not a little troubled, so that she had almost fallen to the ground in a swoon. But when she came to herself she looked again and lo! there was a scar on his face that he had from a fall when he was a child. So she knew him again, and cried, "O my son Reynaud, how comes it that you are so greatly changed, you that were the fairest knight in all the world? "Then she looked about her, and knew her other sons also, and took them one by one in her arms, both rejoicing and lamenting. So she wept and they wept also.

And now came a yeoman to say that the dinner was served. So the Duchess and her sons went to the table, and sat down and made good cheer.

As they sat, the Duke came in from his hawking, and said "Who are these men that are so strange to look upon?" "These are your children and mine," answered the Duchess. "See what they have suffered, living in the woods. I beseech you deal kindly with them." But the Duke hardened his heart against his sons, because he would be true to King Charles. And there was much dispute between them, so that Reynaud had once half drawn his sword from its sheath. Only Alard stayed him, "Set not your hand against him, for that is against God's commandment." In the end peace was made between father and sons in this fashion. Aymon said, "I cannot abide in the house with these men, for that were against my oath to King Charles. But you, my wife, have much gold and silver, and horses and harness and armour. Give to your sons so much as they will take." Having said this, he departed from the house and his knights went with him.

Then the Duchess called her sons to her. First she commanded that they should make baths ready for them. And when they had bathed, she gave them rich apparel of all that they needed. This done she showed them the Duke Aymon's treasure and bade them take of it as much as they needed. Nor did they fail so to do. For Reynaud made such provision of men and arms that he gathered together a great company of soldiers.

The next day, just as they were about to depart, came Mawgis their cousin, telling of how he had taken three horses of the King, laden with gold and silver. "And of this treasure," said he to Reynaud his cousin. "I am ready to give you the half."

So they departed together, and the Duke Aymon met them as they went, and gave them his blessing, and "See," said he to the three, "that you obey your brother Reynaud, for he is good at counsel." To the Duchess, when she was nigh distracted at the departure of her children, he said, "Be not troubled over much; we shall see them come again in great prosperity and honour."

CHAPTER IV

THE COMING OF ROLAND

Reynaud and his brothers, with Mawgis their cousin, came in their riding to Poitiers, where it was told them that John, King of Gascony was hard pressed by the Saracens. Reynaud said to his comrades, "Let us go to the help of the King." To this they consented, and so coming to the city of Bordeaux were joyfully received by the King and his courtiers.

Not many days after, the King of the Saracens came to Bordeaux, and Reynaud and his comrades went forth from the city to attack him. Then followed a great battle, and the Saracens fled, whom Reynaud pursued so hotly that all his friends counted him to have been slain. Great, therefore, was their joy when Reynaud came back, not only safe and sound, but bringing with him the King of the Saracens, as prisoner, for he had taken him in single combat. Thereupon, King John, holding that he could not honour too greatly so valiant a knight, yielded to him a fair hill whereon was a castle, and gave him also his sister in marriage. This castle Reynaud made very strong with towers and the like, and called it Montalban; and for a while the brothers had peace.

It befell that King Charles, going on a pilgrimage, saw this same hill with the castle built upon it, and much admiring, would know who dwelt there. When he heard that it was the castle of the sons of Aymon, he was very wroth, and sent an embassy, of which Ogier the Dane was the leader, to King John, demanding that the brothers and their company should be delivered to him. "I will do no such thing," said the King. Thereupon King Charles said to his barons, "You see how this man defies us. Come now, we will go to Paris, and hold a council of the whole realm, and consider how we shall deal with him."

When the Council was assembled, the King stood up, and set the matter before them. Then the Duke Naymes spake in this fashion; "Sir, we are wrong in this war; let us have peace for five years; after that, if you are so minded, we will fight again." This counsel angered the King greatly, but while he doubted what he should say, there came to the palace a young man, very fair, and well arrayed, with thirty squires following him, and did obeisance to the King. "Tell me your name," said Charles. "Sire," answered the stranger, "my name is Roland, and I am your nephew, being son of your sister that is married to the Duke of Milan." "You are welcome," said the King. "To-morrow I will make you a knight and you shall make war upon these traitors, the sons of Aymon." "That I will do right willingly," answered Roland, "seeing that Reynaud slew my cousin, Berthelot."

On the morrow the King made Roland a knight. But while they sat at the feast, there came a messenger saying that the city of Cologne was beset of Saracens. Said Roland to the King, "Let me go against these infidels," and the King answered, "You shall go." So Roland went with twenty thousand men well armed and fell upon the Saracens, and took from them spoils and prisoners, and overcame their King in single combat, bringing him back to Paris and delivering him to the King.

The King said to Duke Naymes, "How did Roland, my nephew, bear himself in the battle?" "Never did knight bear himself better," answered the Duke, "only he needs a horse that

should carry him well when he is fully armed. I counsel you, therefore, to make a proclamation that there shall be a race of all the best horses in your realm, and that you will give to the horse that shall prevail your crown of gold, and five hundred marks of fine silver, and a hundred rolls of silk." "This is good counsel," said the King, and he caused proclamation to be made, and the lists to be set up.

Now it chanced that a yeoman of Gascony, being in Paris, heard the proclamation, and going back to his own country told the matter to Reynaud and Mawgis. When Reynaud heard it, he laughed and said: "Now shall the King see as good a race as ever was run in the world, for I will go to Paris with Bayard and win this prize." "I will go with you," said Mawgis, "and your brethren also, and we will have with us some knights well armed."

So Reynaud and his company set out, and when any one would know who they were, they said that they were from Bearn, and that they were journeying to Paris to run their horses in the King's race. When they were now near to Paris, Mawgis, being a great magician, took a certain herb that he knew, and when he had pounded it with the pommel of his sword, and tempered it with water, he rubbed Bayard therewith, so that he became all white. And he took another herb that he knew and therewith caused Reynaud to look like a youth of twenty years. When the others saw Reynaud and his horse, how changed they were, they laughed aloud. Then Reynaud and Mawgis parted from them, and went on alone to Paris with Bayard the horse.

Meanwhile, the King had sent the Duke Naymes, and Ogier the Dane, and another, with a hundred knights to keep the road from Orleans, that none might pass without their knowledge. There they abode, not a few days, suffering much from hunger and thirst. "What do we here?" said Duke Naymes. "Does the King hold us to be fools that he makes us tarry here for nothing?" "You say well," said Ogier the Dane, "let us go back." But even as he spake, they were aware of two men on horseback. Said the Duke, "That horse is Bayard, but that he is

of another colour." When the men were near, the Duke said to them, "Who are you?" Mawgis answered, "My name is Sousser, and I come from Peron, and this is my son, but he speaks no French."

The Duke said to Reynaud, "Man, know you anything of Reynaud, the son of Aymon?" Reynaud answered him with strange words that no man could understand. "What devil taught thee to speak such strange French? Maybe 'tis Latin, but thou art more like to a fool than to a bishop." And he suffered the two to pass in peace.

When they came to Paris some ill fellow saw them, and cried in a loud voice, "This is Reynaud, son of Aymon," at which saying many ran together. Thereupon the villain, growing bold, caught Bayard by the bridle. But the horse smote the man on the breast with his fore foot, and killed him.

Then the two rode on, and took a lodging in an inn; where when they bedded their horses, Mawgis took a thread of silk and waxed it well and after bound the fore feet of Bayard. Said the host, "Why do you this? The horse can run but ill being so bound. But tell me who is the knight; had he more years he were like Reynaud the son of Aymon." Mawgis answered, "I bound the horse's feet because he is given to fighting. As for his rider he is my son." But it chanced that, not long after, Mawgis named Reynaud by name, and the host heard it and said, "This beyond all doubt is Reynaud who slew the King's nephew. Truly, before I sleep, I will tell the matter to the King." Reynaud heard the man speak and straightway slew him. Thereat there was no small outcry, but the two knights mounted on their horses, and mingling with the crowd, so escaped.

After mass the King and his lords went down to a certain meadow that is by the river Seine, where the race should be run. And the two knights went with him, but Bayard having his foot bound halted much. Then said one knight, "See here the horse that will win the prize," and another said, "Verily, he will win, if God so favour him." And they laughed him to scorn.

When the trumpets sounded for the starting of the horses they all ran. When Mawgis saw this, he lighted from his horse and cut the thread of silk that was bound about Bayard's foot. And Reynaud spurred his horse, saying to him, "Bayard, we are far behind, now it is time for you to haste." When Bayard heard his master so speak, he understood him as well as though he had been a man. Straightway he held up his head, and stretched forth his neck, and ran so fast that he speedily passed all the other horses. When the King saw this he said to Richard of Normandy, "This white horse is marvellously swift, and he is like to Bayard, the horse of Reynaud, son of Aymon."

Reynaud, having prevailed in the race, took the crown of gold, but the silver and the silk he disdained. Then having the crown in his hand, he rode back to the palace where the King sat with his lords. The King said to him, "I will give you for your horse such treasure as will content you." Reynaud answered: "Sire, I have angered you many times, and slain your men, and now I carry away your crown. Know that I am Reynaud, son of Aymon. Seek elsewhere for a horse that you may give to Roland your nephew. But Bayard you shall not have." So saying he spurred his horse, and rode away, and when he had travelled certain miles, then came Mawgis on his black horse. So these two returned to the castle of Montalban, and were received with great joy.

CHAPTER V

OF THE TREACHERY OF KING JOHN

King Charles said to his knights and barons, "See now how this villain Reynaud has deceived me, and carried away my crown. Devise some means by which I may recover that which I have lost." "You must besiege," said the Duke Naymes, "his castle of Montalban." So the King gathered together a great army, so great indeed that provisions failed them. After Easter he set out from Paris, and in due time came to Reynaud's castle, Montalban.

The King had made Roland captain of his host. When Roland therefore saw the castle, he being even overbold, said to the King, "Let us assault this place without delay." But the King answered, "Not so, we will first try them, whether they will yield up the place peaceably." He sent therefore a messenger who should say to Reynaud, "The King bids you yield up your castle and also your brother Richard. If you refuse he will take it by force, and hang up both you and him." Reynaud answered, "I am not one that betrays friends. But if the King will assure to us our lives and our castle we will yield ourselves to him." To this the King would not consent. Therefore he besieged the place meaning to reduce it by famine, for he perceived that it could not be taken by force.

It fell on a certain day that Roland, seeing that there were many birds by the river, was minded to go hawking. So he went with Oliver his comrade (this Oliver was a very noble knight, and a close friend to Roland) and a company of knights, the bravest of the host. This was seen by a certain spy, who told it to Reynaud and Mawgis. Mawgis said, "Cousin, you will do well to attack the King's host, for they are not thinking of battle." So these two issued forth from the castle and four thousand knights with them.

Turpin the Archbishop was in charge of the King's host. When he saw the enemy come forth from the castle, he was not a little troubled. First he called to Ogier the Dane that he should arm himself, and afterwards to the other barons and knights that they should make ready for battle.

First Reynaud slew a certain knight of the King's army. When Turpin the Archbishop saw this he spurred his horse against Reynaud. The two met with so great force that the spears of both were broken in pieces; but Reynaud being the quicker to draw his sword dealt the Archbishop so grievous a blow that both he and his horse were well-nigh brought to the ground. Then cried Reynaud, "Father, are you that Turpin that boasts himself so much? By my faith you were better singing mass in some church than fighting with me." The Archbishop was much angered at these words, and made at Reynaud with all his might. But neither he nor Ogier the Dane nor any one of the King's men could hold their ground that day against the sons of Aymon. And when Mawgis and his knights came forth from the wood where they lay in ambush, and assailed the King's host on the flank, then the Frenchmen fled, not without great loss, especially at the crossing of the river. The knights from Montalban pursued them for a mile or so, and Mawgis took the golden dragon that was on Roland's tent (for Roland had not yet come back from hawking) and set it on the great tower of Montalban, so that all men might see it. When the King saw it he said, "Now has Roland taken the fortress of these villains." But when he knew the truth, he was well-nigh beside himself with rage.

Meanwhile King John was not a little troubled in mind. For he said to himself, "How will these things end? These five knights, for all that they are brave warriors, cannot always prevail against the power of the King." So he called his barons to a council, and demanded their advice. One said one thing, and another another, but the greater part had little love for Reynaud. Of these a certain old man that was called Earl Antony was the spokesman. He said, "I know this Reynaud, of how haughty a temper he is. His father had but a single town, and now he holds

himself so high that he disdains to be the King's man. And now you have nourished his pride, giving him your sister to wife. And the end will be that he will take your kingdom from you, and have it for himself. If you would save yourself from such dishonour, deliver him and his brethren to the King."

When King John saw that this counsel pleased the greater part of his barons, he was much troubled in mind, and wept for grief and shame. Nevertheless he called his secretary to him, and said, "Now write to the King and say that, if he will leave wasting my land, I will presently deliver to him the sons of Aymon and Mawgis their cousin. If he will send to Vancouleurs, there he will find them, clothed with mantles of scarlet trimmed with fur, and riding upon mules." So the secretary wrote according to these words in a letter, and gave the letter to a knight that he might take it to King Charles. When the King had read the letter, he was very glad. And he delivered to the messenger of the King a letter wherein he had written what it was in his mind to do, namely, to send Ogier the Dane with a company of knights who should take the brethren prisoner. Also he sent from his treasury four mantles of scarlet, trimmed with fur.

When King John had received the letter with the mantles, he commanded a hundred knights to make themselves ready to ride with him to the Castle of Montalban. When he was come to the castle his sister came forth to greet him, but when she would have kissed him, as her custom was, he turned his face aside, saying, "Pardon me, my sister, I have an ill tooth that troubles me sore." Not long after the brethren came back to the castle, and when they heard that the King was there, they took each his horn and sounded a welcome. When the King heard the sound, he thought no little shame of himself, yet did not turn from his purpose. When he saw the brethren, he said to them, "I have spoken for you to King Charles, and he has promised that if you will go to the plain of Vancouleurs riding on mules, clad in scarlet mantles which I will presently give you, with flowers in your hands and with-out arms, he will make peace with you. For

as soon as you shall cast yourselves at his feet, he will pardon you and give you again your lands."

There was not a little debate among the brethren on this matter, for Reynaud was minded to go, but the others were unwilling. The wife of Reynaud also was set against the journey, telling him of a terrible dream that she had dreamed. "I saw," she said, "a thousand wild boars come out of the forest of Ardennes. These fell upon you, and rent your body in pieces. I saw how Alard was slain by an arrow by Frenchmen, and how Richard was hanged on an apple tree." "Hold your peace," said Reynaud. "He that puts his trust in dreams has but little faith in God. Think you that your brother will betray us? Does he not send eight of his chief barons with us for surety." To his brethren he said, "If you are fearful then will I go alone."

So the four went their way to Vancouleurs, not without fears, for Reynaud himself doubted to what the matter might grow. Now the plain of Vancouleurs was a solitary place, where four ways met, with forests on every side, in which forests, by command of the King, many hundreds of knights lay in ambush, ready to issue forth and fall upon the brethren. Of these knights Ogier the Dane was the chief, and was not a little in doubt how he should bear him, for on the one hand he was near of kin to the brethren, and on the other he was bound in duty to perform the command of the King. Sometimes he was inclined one way, and sometimes another. First he suffered the brethren to pass unharmed when he might have taken them at a disadvantage in a narrow road; afterwards, when they were in the plain, he himself led his knights against them.

When the brethren found that a great treachery had been practised upon them, they prepared to defend themselves, having first confessed their sins to each other, for lack of a priest to whom they might confess. Great deeds did they that day, but not without suffering many things. First Guichard was taken prisoner by the King's men and bound upon a horse. Yet Reynaud delivered him from captivity. Then Richard was grievously wounded by Gerard Lord of Valence, and came very

near to death, but him also Reynaud, than whom there was never greater fighter in the world, rescued before it was too late. And indeed it was in Richard's counsel that the brethren found deliverance. For when he opened his eyes, having before been in a swoon, and saw Reynaud, he said to him, "See you that rock yonder that is so high and strong? If we can win thither, we shall be safe from our enemies, at least for one while. Nor do I doubt that Mawgis, who knows things that are hidden from other men, knows in what plight we are, and will bring us help presently."

And Alard lifted Richard from the earth, and laid him upon his shield, and carried him to the rock, Reynaud and Guichard holding back meanwhile the King's men with such strength and valour as have never been surpassed, for they fought as men who have no hope for their lives, but think only how they may make most havoc among their enemies. And now again did Ogier the Dane render them good service. Truly they had scarce won their way to the rock but for this, for when they were most hardly pressed he drew back his own company the length of a bowshot. "You can deal with these men without me," said he to the King's barons. "It were better that I should not meddle with them any more, seeing that they are my kinsmen." And so somewhat by favour of Ogier, but chiefly by their own valour, the brethren won their way to the rock.

Now the rock had four faces. Of these Reynaud kept two, so strong was he, and Guichard one and Alard one. As for Richard he was so spent with loss of blood that he lay upon the ground and could render no help. After a while an evil chance fell upon them, for Guichard was so sorely wounded in the thigh that he could no longer stand upon his feet. He cried to Reynaud, "Let us yield ourselves to the King, seeing that neither Richard nor I can help you any more." "This is to speak as a coward," answered Reynaud. "I would not yield myself for all the gold and silver in the world, no nor for Bayard my horse, though I love him better than all other things. And, indeed, what were the profit of yielding ourselves? We should of a certainty be hanged by the King, and it were better to perish here than to die in so

shameful a fashion." When Guichard heard these words he was greatly troubled in spirit. "You are right, brother," he said. "Cut me now the half of my shirt into strips and I will bind up my wounds as best I may, and so make shift to help you against our enemies." This he did; so these three still held the rock against the King.

Meanwhile Mawgis knew how his kinsmen had been betrayed, and made haste to succour them. He saddled the horse Bayard, and rode with a great company of knights as fast as might be to the place where the brethren were. Great was Reynaud's joy to see him; while he was yet a long way off he knew him, not so much for himself as for the horse Bayard on which he rode. Swift as a swallow was Bayard, every stride was of thirty feet at the least. When Richard heard it, he said to his brother, "Lift me up in your arms that I may see him." So Reynaud lifted him up, and when he saw Mawgis and Bayard coming up as a storm comes he said, "The sight makes me whole again."

Ogier the Dane was glad to see that help had come to his kinsmen. "See you these men?" he said to the Frenchmen, "we cannot stand against them; let us retreat." But while he was speaking, Mawgis came upon him, so swift was the horse Bayard, and defied him. "Ogier," he said, "you came of true men, but you are yourself untrue," and he spurred Bayard against him, and smote him on the breast with his spear so stoutly that he broke both shield and corslet. What would have been the end no man can say, for Ogier on his part was not backward, but now the horse Bayard, knowing that his master was near, carried away Mawgis in his own despite, and came and knelt before Reynaud. Then Mawgis lighted down from him, and greeted the brethren most lovingly.

As for Ogier and the Frenchmen, not being minded to stand against the new-comers, they rode back to the river Dordogne, Reynaud crying out to his kinsman, "Ho! cousin! have you then left being a soldier and become a fisherman for eels or salmon?"

When they had crossed over the river the Frenchmen blamed Ogier the Dane, for that he had favoured the brethren, while Ogier, on his part, was greatly troubled, knowing that they spake truly, and yet that the brethren held him in no regard for all that he had done. These things so wrought upon him that he mounted his horse and swam back across the river. When he had come to the other bank, Reynaud, having ridden down to the river on Bayard to meet him, said, "Cousin, surely we have had enough of fighting; let us be content therewith." But Ogier answered, "You have blamed me for treachery, and my own friends say the same thing. I would rather be slain than endure such reproaches."

Reynaud said, "So be it." And the two charged at each other and met with so great a shock that both were thrust from their saddles and fell to the ground. Before they could raise themselves, for both received no small damage, the two horses, Bayard and the other, fell to fighting. Then Ogier, knowing that Bayard was the stronger by far of the two, would have smitten him with his sword. Reynaud, on the other hand, hindered him. And when Mawgis and the brothers, that is to say, Alard and Guichard, for Richard was too sorely wounded, saw this, they made all haste to come. When Ogier perceived them, he had no choice but to mount on his horse and flee. Then Reynaud cried after him, "Come back if you will and fetch your saddle," for the girths had been broken when the two jousting together, "and I will greet you in such a place that Charlemagne with all his men could not help you." So Ogier passed over the river once again, and Mawgis with the brethren went back to the rock where they had left Richard.

CHAPTER VI

OF THE CRAFT OF MAWGIS

When King John of Gascony heard all the trouble that had befallen the brethren, on the one side, and the Emperor and his knights, on the other, he could not rest, so much did his conscience trouble him. So having bidden farewell to his sister Clare, Reynaud's wife, he sought a certain Abbey, and there took a monk's habit. But a certain man that was a spy was aware of the matter, and told it to Roland. Also he said that the brethren and Mawgis were journeying to Montalban. Then Roland, having first called Oliver, said, "We will go now and fight with the sons of Aymon, and we will take four thousand men only with us, so that we shall have no advantage over them, inasmuch as they have five thousand well horsed and well armed."

Said Ogier the Dane, "I will go with you and see how you fare, and I promise that if you lay hands on them I will lend you a rope."

Roland first came to the Abbey, and said to the Abbot. "You have here in a monk's habit a certain John, whom men call King of Gascony. Deliver him to me that I may hang him as a thief." And when the Abbot would not consent, Roland entered the cloister, and took King John by force, the man being known to him, and set him on a horse, with his face to the tail. The King said to a certain knight whom he knew, "Go now to Reynaud and say that I am in sore straits." Sir," said the knight, "I doubt whether Reynaud will so much as stir a foot to help you." Nevertheless he consented to go.

Now Reynaud had come by this time to the castle of Montalban. But when his wife the Lady Clare came forth to meet him, he would not suffer her to come near to him. "Go," he said, "to your false brother John." The children also, for he had two sons, he spurned away. "I will have none of this evil brood,"

said he. But when the Lady Clare swore by all the Saints that she had no knowledge of her brother's wickedness and fell in a swoon at his feet, and his brothers also made intercession for her, his heart was softened, and he consented to receive her again. As they sat at meat there came the knight from King John. He said, "King John is in sore straits. Roland has taken him prisoner, and is steadfastly purposed to hang him. The King knows that he has sinned grievously against you, nevertheless he prays that you will help him." Then cried Alard, "If Roland hang that traitor, he will do well." But Reynaud said nothing.

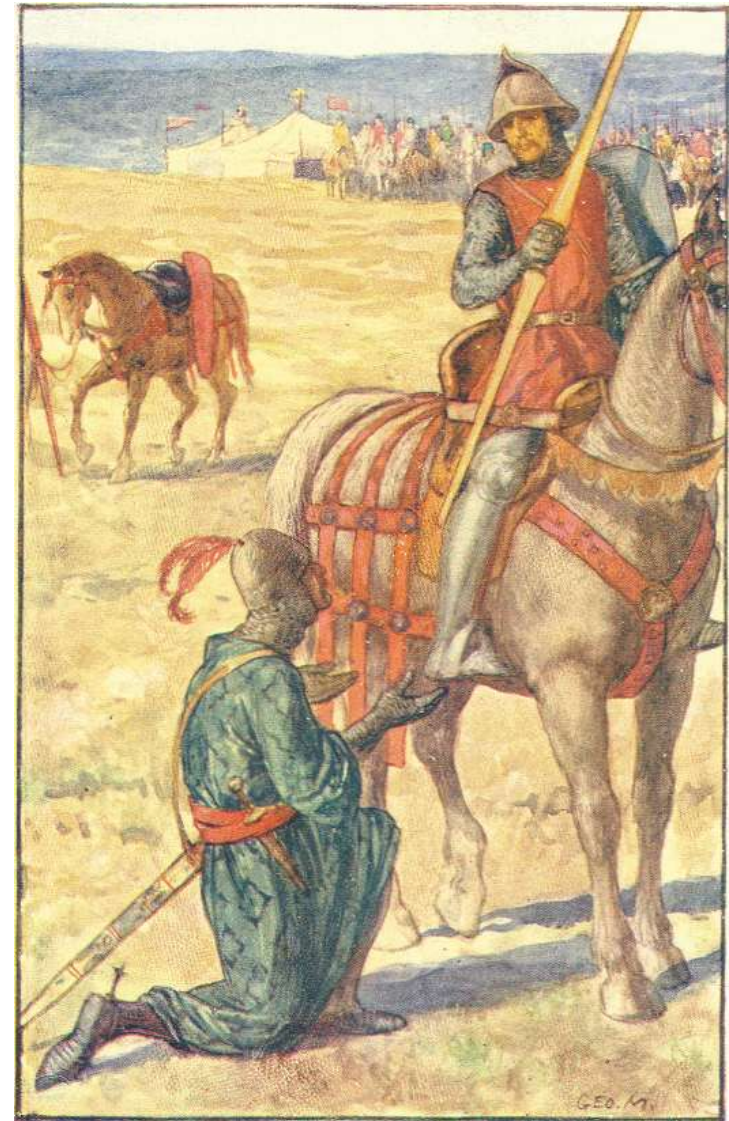
When he had thought a long while he began to speak, telling all the story of his life, how he had himself done wrong to others, and how he had suffered many things, and was bound to show mercy rather than hardness. "King John," he said, "would have betrayed me, but he did it for fear of King Charles. It becomes me to help him in his need."

To this the brethren consented, though not willingly. So they set forth, having six thousand men on horseback, and one thousand on foot, and before they had gone many hours' journey there came Roland and Oliver and Ogier the Dane, having King John with them, as has been said.

When Ogier saw them, he greatly rejoiced. "If one had given me a thousand marks in gold," he said, "it had not pleased me so well as that Roland should meet the brethren and Mawgis and learn of what quality they are." To Roland he said, "See now what you have desired so long. If you take these men alive the King will give you great thanks therefore, and you will have Bayard for your own, and the war will be ended." Roland answered "Ogier, you say not this in kindness, but I will do my best."

Reynaud, on the other part, when he saw Roland and his company, said to his brothers, "Stay you behind till you are wanted. I will make trial of this great Roland." And when they would have kept him back he said, "I know that he is the strongest knight in all the world. Nevertheless I will meet him,

for mine is the right cause and his the wrong. Therefore I shall certainly prevail."



REYNAUD KNEELING TO ROLAND.

When the two armies were now near, Oliver said to Roland, "these men are too many for us." "Not so," answered Roland, "the Gascons are but cowards." "Maybe," said Turpin the Archbishop, "but they have a good leader this day, and a valiant man has ever valiant men to follow him."

Roland, liking this talk but little, rode forth to meet Reynaud. But Reynaud, when he was now at the distance to charge, lighted down off Bayard, and fixing his spear in the earth, tethered his horse, and running forward knelt before Roland and said to him, "I pray you to have pity on me, for you are of kin to me. I will give you Bayard my horse, that is the most precious thing I have, and my lordship of Montalban, if you can make the King to be at peace with us. Further, I promise that I will leave France for the rest of my days, and go to the Holy Land with my brothers and Mawgis, and there make war upon the Saracens."

Roland was much troubled at these words, and said, "I would that it might be, but the King will not make peace except you deliver to him Mawgis." "Mawgis," said Reynaud, "is not one that a man can give or take. And now seeing that I have humbled myself in vain let us two settle this matter. There is no need that others should shed their blood, but we only. If you overcome me then shall you take me to the King, that he may do with me as he will; but if I, on the other hand, overcome, then will I take you to Montalban, but you shall suffer no harm or shame."

To this Roland consented, but his friends would not suffer it to be so. So the two armies met together in battle, and many were slain on both sides, but in the end Reynaud and his men prevailed over Roland and his army. Nevertheless Reynaud suffered this great loss and damage, that his brother Richard, having assailed Roland, was overthrown and taken prisoner.

When Reynaud heard these tidings he was greatly troubled, and would have given himself up to King Charles, if he might so deliver his brother. But this the others would not suffer.

Then said Mawgis, "Trouble not yourselves about Richard, I will set him free. Do you go to Montalban." But they doubted how he should do this, and were in great heaviness.

Meanwhile Mawgis disguised himself in such a fashion that no one could know him. By eating of a certain herb he made himself much bigger to see, and with another herb he darkened his face almost to blackness. Then he put on him the habit of a pilgrim, having a mantle and hood, and great boots on his feet, and a staff in his hand. This done, he conveyed himself with more speed than if he had ridden the swiftest of horses to the King's camp, for he was a magician, as has been said. This speed he used that he might be beforehand with Roland. When he was come to the Camp, he watched till the King came forth from his tent, and said to him, "God keep you, Sir, from all treason!" Now the King, having been deceived many times, said, "Who is this knave? Does he compass some treason?" For a while the false pilgrim made no answer. But then, as one that takes courage to speak, he said, "Sir, you may see that I am a poor man that has more need of health than of compassing treason. I am newly come from Jerusalem, where I worshipped at the Holy Sepulchre, and now I must go to Rome and to St. James of Compostella, but I am in great trouble. Yesterday, as I was passing over the river Gironde with ten men that I had to guard me, there fell upon me some thieves that slew all my men and took all that I had. These thieves told me that they were the four sons of Amyon, and one Mawgis, their cousin. And when I asked them why they dealt so hardly with me, they answered that they were in such sore need at their castle of Montalban that they could not choose but rob all wayfarers. Then they beat me and let me go. And now, Sire, I pray that you will avenge me of these robbers."

The King answered, "Gladly would I avenge you if I might, but I can do nothing against these men." And the false pilgrim said, "If I cannot have help of man, yet surely I shall have it of God." The King said, "This seems to be a godly man." And he turned to his lords. "It would be a good deed to give this

pilgrim alms." And he commanded his steward to give him twenty pounds in silver.

When Mawgis received the money, he said to himself, "Surely you shall have a reward for this." But aloud he said, "I pray you, Sire, to give me some meat, for since yesterday I have neither eaten nor drunk." And the King commanded that he should be served with the very best.

So Mawgis ate and drank; he said nothing, but looked very earnestly at the King. And Charlemagne said, "Tell me, pilgrim, why you look so earnestly upon me?" The false pilgrim answered, "Sire, I have travelled in many lands, but never saw I, whether among Saracens or Christian men, so godly and courteous a prince. Now, therefore, of all the pardons that I have I will give you half." "That," answered the King, "is a fair gift. I take it willingly." So the false pilgrim gave him his staff to kiss for a token. And now came Roland with Richard his prisoner. But before he had audience of the King, the Duke Naymes and other Barons said to him, "It will be ill done if you deliver Richard to the King. Let him depart in peace." "That," answered Roland, "I will do right willingly if I may."

But a certain yeoman that was standing by heard the, Barons and Roland talking together, and told the matter to the King. And he, coming forth from his tent, when he saw Richard, cried, "Villain, now that I have you, I will see that you are hanged by the neck," and he smote him with his staff. Then Richard leapt upon the King, for he had been unbound, and the two wrestled together and fell to the earth. But the Barons laid hands upon them and held them apart.

When Mawgis saw how the King had smitten Richard, he had much ado to keep still. Nevertheless he restrained himself, making a sign to Richard, and when Richard knew him he was glad, being sure that he should be delivered by his means.

After this Mawgis departed from the King's camp, and went with all speed to Montalban. Being come there, he said to

the three brethren, "Richard is yet alive, but he is in great straits. Come and deliver him while there is yet time." Thereupon they all set out. But when they were come near to the camp, and had hidden themselves in a wood that was hard by, it so happened that for weariness they all fell into a deep sleep. And this thing came near to the undoing of Richard.

Meanwhile the King called his Barons together. First he said to Berenger, Lord of Valois, "I will make you quit of all service to me if you will take this knave Richard and see that he is hanged." Berenger answered, "You love me little, my lord King, if you make such a demand of me. I will not do this thing."

Then the King said to another of the Barons, "You hold Bavaria of me, and are bound to serve me with three thousand men. I will quit you of this service if you will hang this knave Richard." "I will not hurt the man," answered the Earl.

Then he turned to Ogier the Dane and said, "Now, if you would prove me your love, hang this fellow." "Nay," answered Ogier, "I will not, and, moreover, I hold any man to be my enemy that shall harm Richard."

At the last he said to Turpin the Archbishop, "Hang this Richard, and I will make you Pope of Rome." "Sire," answered Turpin, "to do so would be against my priest's duty."

At last the King prevailed with a certain knight, Ripus by name, that he should do this deed. So this Ripus, having put a halter about Richard's neck, led him to the gallows which had been set up outside the wood. And when Richard would have given him gold he would have none of it. Only he suffered that a priest should shrive him, to whom indeed Richard confessed more sins than he had committed in his whole life, so gaining a little time, for he yet looked for help. And when the shriving was ended, then he begged for time wherein he might make his prayers, nor could Ripus say him nay.

And now, when he was in the greatest need, did the good horse Bayard help him, for he, having such wit as never horse

had before, seeing that Reynaud his master was fast asleep, smote with his hoof on his shield that he woke him, and he, looking up, the gallows being hard by the wood, saw Richard now beginning to mount the ladder that was set against the gallows. Then he leapt on Bayard's back, and made all haste to deliver Richard, Mawgis and Alard and Guichard following him with all the speed they could use.

As for Ripus and his men, they could make no stand against the brothers and Mawgis. Many were slain, and the rest were right glad to fly. Then Reynaud took the bodies of Ripus and fifteen of his knights that lay dead upon the plain and hanged them on the gallows that had been set up for Richard.

CHAPTER VII

MORE DEEDS OF MAWGIS

When Reynaud had accomplished the delivering of his brother Richard, he sent the greater part of his company back to Montalban, but he himself remained with the rest, being minded to do some great thing against King Charles. And this he did, for making his way into the camp with his comrades, he came to the King's tent. Cutting the cords, so that the whole tent fell to the ground, he laid hands on the golden Eagle that was on the great pole in the middle, a thing so costly that no man could tell the price thereof. In this Mawgis helped him.

But this adventure had nearly turned out to the great disadvantage of the brothers and Mawgis. For Mawgis was not content with the taking of the Eagle, but would have slain the King. He made his way into the inner part of the tent where the King lay, and said to him, "Sir King, you have troubled us over long, slaying my father and doing us all manner of mischief. And now you shall die." So saying, he thrust at the King with his spear; but the King turned about, and the spear was thrust into the bed two feet and more. Then was King Charles sore afraid,

and cried out for Roland. When Mawgis heard this he looked round, and lo! Reynaud and the brethren were gone.

When he found himself to be alone, then, for all that he was as stout a warrior as ever bare arms, he was not a little troubled, and turned to flee. But many of the King's knights pursued him, and hindered him from escaping, and at the last Oliver overthrew him, casting him down from his horse to the ground, so that he was fain to yield himself prisoner. And Oliver took him to the King's tent.

When the King saw him, he was very glad, and said, "Now, you false thief, you shall pay for all the villainies that you have done." "Sir King," answered Mawgis, "you have me in your power and you can work your will upon me. Nevertheless, I will counsel you for the best. Make peace, and you shall have the best knights in all the world to serve you. But if you slay me, you shall get from the deed no profit but much harm."

The King said to his Barons: "Now cause that they make a gallows, so that I may hang this Mawgis or ever we sup." "Sir," said the Duke Naymes, "I advise you to wait till the morrow. Your enemies will mock you, saying that you durst not do this man to death in day-light for fear of them." But the King answered, "I should be shamed, indeed, if this fellow should escape."

When Mawgis heard these words, he said to the King, "If this is what you fear, I will give you my word that I will not go away without taking leave of you in due form." "But who will be your surety?" said the King. Then Mawgis looking round, saw the twelve Peers, and he said to Oliver, "Sir, when I yielded myself to you, you promised to be surety for me to the King." Then he turned him to Roland, and made the like request and so with all the Twelve. And the Peers consented to his request, and stood surety for him.

Then Mawgis said to the King, "I am hungry, give me some meat." "Can you eat," said the King, "being in such a plight?" But the Duke Naymes said: "The man that has eaten is

better prepared for all things." "So be it," said the King; "but where shall the fellow sit?" "He should best sit by you," said Roland. "You say well," answered the King, "for indeed I cannot trust him to be elsewhere."

After supper the King commanded that the Twelve Peers should watch Mawgis through the night. Nor was he even then content, for he called for irons, and bound the man's hands and his feet. And the key of the irons he kept. "Now," said he, "you shall not escape me, you false thief." "Think you so?" said Mawgis. "Nevertheless, I shall be at Montalban to-morrow before prime." And the King was so wroth, that he would have slain the man forthwith, only the Peers hindered him.

This done, they sat down to play at the tables, and at chess, and at other games. After a while they all felt a great desire to sleep. Whereupon Mawgis began to work upon them with his magic. First he made their sleep to be stronger by far, so that the King and the Peers and the whole company were altogether mastered by it. Then with another charm he loosed the collar from his neck and the fetters from his legs. Then seeing that the King had fallen with his head awry, he took a pillow and set it under him. Also he took from him his sword Joyous, and from Roland his sword Durendal, and the sword which Oliver carried, Hautclere by name. Also he took much treasure out of the King's treasury. When he had so done, he took a herb that he had, and rubbed the King's nose and lips with it, and said, "Wake, Sir King, I said that I should not go without taking leave. Now, therefore, farewell," and he vanished out of the place.

When the King came to himself, he was so angry as never man was before. He would have woke the Peers, but could not, so fast asleep were they. Then he bethought him of a certain herb that he had brought from over-seas. This he rubbed on the nose and mouth and eyes of the Peers, and they awoke forthwith. Said the Duke Naymes, "Where now is Mawgis?" "He is gone," answered the King, "and by your fault, for ye hindered me when I would have hanged him." "Did you see him depart?" said Oliver to Roland, "No, by St. Denis," answered Roland. But

the King said, "I saw him go with my own eyes." "Then you should have warned us," said Roland, and as he spake he put his hand to his side and missed his good sword Durendal. And when the Peers found that their swords were gone they were fairly distraught with anger.

The next day the King said to his Barons: "Go now to Reynaud, and tell him that if he will give back to me my golden Eagle and my crown, and my sword Joyous, then I will grant him a truce for two years. Ogier shall take this message, and the Duke Naymes and Turpin the Archbishop."

So these mounted their horses and rode to Montalban. When they were come to the gate, they called the porter and said to him, "We be knights of the King, and would fain speak with Sir Reynaud." So the porter told the thing to the brethren.

Richard went to the gate and saluted them courteously, and brought them into the castle, where they were honourably received by Reynaud and the Lady Clare, Alard also and Guichard helping. Then Ogier delivered his message, and Reynaud said, "Tarry here, my lords, this night, and we will give you an answer in the morning." To this they consented. So a great feast was prepared, and they sat down and were right royally entertained.

The next day the Duke Naymes said to Reynaud, "What answer do you make to the King?" Reynaud answered, "I will do as he desires."

When Ogier the Dane heard this, he was glad, and thought within himself, "Now will the King be greatly pleased. Maybe there shall be not a truce only, but peace. If I can move Reynaud to come back with us to the King, the two may well be reconciled." So he told his thought to Reynaud and Reynaud consented to it.

The next day they set out. Ogier and the Duke Naymes went on with all speed they might use to the King's camp; but Reynaud and Alard followed slowly with Turpin and another.

In the meanwhile a certain spy, having knowledge of the whole matter, made haste to tell it to the King, and this he did before that Ogier and the Duke were come to the camp. When the King heard it, he said to Oliver: "Take with you two hundred knights, and ride with all haste to the river of Besancon, where, if you use diligence, you will find Reynaud and Alard. Lay hold of them and bring them hither to me."

So Oliver rode with his knights, and when he was come to the river, he found Reynaud on foot and Bayard his horse so far from him that he could not mount him; so he was taken unawares. Then he turned to Turpin and that other in great anger, saying, "Villains, you have betrayed me." "Sir," answered Turpin, "I swear to you that I am innocent in this matter."

Reynaud said to Oliver, "Remember you how I helped you at Vancouleurs when you were borne to the ground, giving you again your horse and helping you to mount." "I remember it well," answered Oliver. "No man shall harm you if I can hinder him. Nevertheless I must take you to the King." So they set out to go to the camp.

But the Duke Naymes and Ogier and Oliver and all the Peers made entreaty to the King, that he would make peace with the brethren. But he hardened his heart against them. "You waste your breath," he said, "I will do the thing that I choose, though you all shall say me nay;" and turning to Reynaud he said, "You shall not cheat me as did that false thief Mawgis, for I will cut you into pieces and burn the pieces with fire." "Sir," answered Reynaud, "you shall not do so, God being my helper."

The King, being thus defied, turned him to Ogier, and said, "Ogier, will you take the part of my mortal enemy?" "That will not I," answered Ogier; "nevertheless I will defend my honour against all men, even against the King."

Then said Reynaud, "Sir, you have said that I am a traitor. Now know that I am no traitor, neither is there a traitor in all my house and kindred. And if any man say ought against me or my kinsmen, then will I fight with him, man to man." The

King answered, "I will prove my accusation against you by force of arms." Then Reynaud said again. "Sir, you speak as a King should speak. I give you my gage that I am as true a man as any that lives in the world." "I will take your gage," answered the King, "If so be you can find sureties." Then Ogier and Turpin and the Duke Naymes and another stood sureties for him.

Reynaud said to the King, "Are you content with these sureties." "That I am," answered the King. Then Reynaud would know with whom he should fight. "With me," said the King. But when Roland heard this, he said, "It must not be so, Sire; I will fight in your place." And so it was ordered. Then Reynaud, being mounted on Bayard, with the Duke Naymes and Ogier and other Peers, returned to Montalban.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW MAWGIS BECAME A HERMIT

Reynaud entertained the Barons that night in Royal fashion. The next day, after they had heard mass, he was minded to set forth, and he said to his brothers and Mawgis, "Tarry here and keep this castle." "Nay," said Alard, "we will come with you. Maybe you will have need of help." Alard has spoken well," said Ogier the Dane. Then said Reynaud to Mawgis, "You at the least will tarry here." "That will I do, fair cousin," answered Mawgis, "and be sure that Montalban shall suffer no harm through me."

Reynaud rode to Montfaucon, and there he found Roland waiting for him. Roland spake the first, and said, "Be sure, Sir Reynaud, that when you leave the field this day, you will so leave it that you will never again fight with me or any other man." "Such threatenings do not become so good a knight," answered Reynaud. Roland said again, "I am not here for peace, but for war. If you are wise you will keep yourself far from me." "You are overproud," answered Reynaud, "maybe I shall abate your high thoughts."

When Reynaud had spoken these words, he spurred Bayard and charged Roland, and Roland also charged from his side. With so great a shock did they come together, that their spears were broken to pieces. As for Reynaud, he was borne to the earth, his saddle girths breaking, and Roland's feet were thrust out of the stirrups. Then Reynaud rising quickly from the ground smote Roland a mighty blow with his sword, so that he scarce knew where he was. Nevertheless, drawing his good sword Durendal, he made at Reynaud, and dealt him a great stroke. Long and fierce was the battle between these two, for they both were as hardy knights as lived.

Then the Duke Naymes cried to the King, "This is ill done to send to their death two such valiant knights, who might do good service against the heathen. Bid them cease from their fighting, Sir King." But the King said nought.

Reynaud said to Roland, "Let us light down and fight afoot lest by chance we should kill our horses, for if we lose them we are not like to get their like again." With this Roland was content. So they lighted down from their horses and fought on foot. First they fought with swords, but neither one could get the better of the other. When Roland saw that he could not prevail with his sword he caught the other round the waist, and wrestled with him in the same fashion as the Northerners use. So they two strove together for so long a time as a man might take for the running of a mile. Then seeing that neither could throw the other they sat down, being utterly wearied; their helmets and shields were partly broken, and the ground whereon they had stood was trampled as if men had beaten corn thereon.

Then there came to pass a right wonderful thing. There suddenly fell upon the two so thick a cloud that neither could see the other. Then Roland, having bethought himself awhile, said to Reynaud, "Will you do me a courteous turn, and I will some day, if you should need it, do the same to you." Reynaud answered, "I am ready to do whatsoever you shall ask me." Then Roland said, "I will that you take me with you to Montalban, for I am persuaded in my mind that in this matter you have the right and I the wrong."

So Roland mounted his horse, and Reynaud mounted on Bayard, and they rode away side by side. When King Charles saw them he was not a little astonished, and leaping upon his horse he cried aloud, "Now shall I see who is on my side." And he hurried after the two knights, and many Frenchmen went with him.

By this time the King, having been baulked of his will once again, for he had counted it for certain that Roland would overcome Reynaud, was yet more steadfastly determined not to

give peace to the brethren; therefore he bade Duke Richard of Normandy ride on and guard the crossing over the river while he himself followed with all the host that he could muster.

So the King and his army came to Montalban and set up his tent before the great gates of the castle. One came to Mawgis and said, "The King is come with a great host, and has set up his tent before the great wall." "Take no heed of this," answered Mawgis; "if the King has done this thing he has done it to his own loss."

When Reynaud knew of the matter he told it to Roland, and Roland said, "I will now send to the King my uncle this message—that Reynaud has dealt with me right courteously; also that he and his brethren and Mawgis will give themselves and their castle into his hands if only he will promise to save us alive." "You speak well," said Reynaud; "I am content to do this."

Then they doubted who should take this message to the King. At last it was agreed that the Duke of Naymes and Ogier the Dane should take it. So these two went to the King where he sat in his tent before the great gates of the castle.

But the King hardened his heart, and would not listen to the Duke Naymes and Ogier. Nay more, he cried, "Flee from this place, ye villains! Reynaud shall have no peace with me till I have Mawgis to do with as I will." Then the Barons went back to the castle and told how they had fared. Reynaud said, "I wonder that the King is so hard of heart. But Mawgis I will not give to him; no, not though I should die for it."

Then they went to supper, and ate their meat with much cheerfulness. Supper being ended, Reynaud said to Mawgis, "Cousin, I pray you to watch this night, for on this hangs the lives of us all." "Sleep in peace," answered Mawgis, "for all shall be well."

When all the Barons were abed Mawgis took Bayard out of his stable and rode to the King's camp. When he was come

thither he cast upon all the host, by a charm that he had, a very deep sleep. This done, he went to the King's tent and took him out of his bed and laid him across Bayard, and carried him, still sleeping, to Montalban.

Mawgis went to the chamber of Reynaud and said to him, "Cousin, what would you give me if I should deliver the King into your hands?" "I would give you whatsoever you shall ask," answered Reynaud. "Promise me then that you will do him no harm," said Mawgis. Reynaud answered, "I promise." Then Mawgis led him to his own chamber and showed him the King asleep in his bed.

When Mawgis had delivered the King to Reynaud he went to the stable where he had left Bayard and rubbed the horse's back and head with straw, and kissed him, weeping the while. This done he put on him his pilgrim's garb, and having given the porter all the clothing that he had, went forth from the gate.

Mawgis journeyed till he came to the river Dordogne. This he crossed in a boat, and having passed through a pine forest that was on the other side of the river, came to a well whereby there was a little house with a spring before the door, in which a hermit might conveniently dwell. Having entered the house he saw an oratory and in it an image of Our Lady, and when he had knelt down before it he prayed that Our Lord would forgive him his sins. This done, he made a great vow that he would abide in that place for the rest of his life, eating only such wild things as were in the wood. This he did thinking that if he were away the King would make peace with the brethren.

CHAPTER IX

OF WHAT BEFELL AT MONTALBAN

There was great trouble and wondering when the brethren knew that Mawgis was not in Montalban. So they called the porter and asked him what he knew. The porter said, "Sir Mawgis went out on Bayard; in a little while he came back, having a man of great stature on the horse's neck before him, and went into the castle. Then he came forth again, poorly clad and on another horse. More than this I know not."

When Richard heard this he gnashed his teeth for anger, saying, "All this comes of the hatred that the King bears to us and to our kindred. Fain would I slay him," and he made as if he would draw his sword from the scabbard. But the others held him back, and they reasoned with him till he had promised to do no hurt to the King.

When they told what had happened to Roland and the other Barons they were not a little astonished, and Ogier the Dane said, "All this trouble comes through the King's rage against the brethren, for indeed it is beyond all measure. But now I trust there will be peace. In very truth there has been war too long, and many good knights have been slain."

And now the charm that Mawgis had laid upon the King came to an end, and he woke out of his sleep. And when he knew that he was in the castle of Montalban, being aware that this was of Mawgis's doing, he was yet more angry than before, saying that there should be no peace till Mawgis should be delivered to him.

When Richard heard him speak in this fashion he said, "Do you threaten us, Sire, in this fashion, being a prisoner and in our power?" But Reynaud said, "Be silent, my brother; let the King say what he will; 'tis for us to pray that he make peace with

us." Then the brethren and all the knights and Barons that were there, whether of one party or of the other, fell upon their knees before the King, and begged that he would make peace, but the King hardened his heart, saying, "There shall be no peace till Mawgis be delivered to my will."

Reynaud said, "My lord King, if you had my three brothers in your power, and were about to hang them, even then would I not deliver Mawgis to you. But besides this I know not where he is." "I do believe that he is in this very place," said the King. "I swear by my baptism," cried Reynaud, "that this is not so, and I know not whither he is gone."

Then again all the Barons made intercession with the King that he would grant peace to the brethren, and to Mawgis. But the King did not abate in his wrath by one jot. "I will have Mawgis, that I may work my will upon him."

When Reynaud heard these words he rose up from his knees, for before he had been kneeling to the King, and said, speaking to Roland and to the other lords that were of the King's part, "Seeing that the King has hardened his heart, and will have no mercy on me and my kinsmen, I do call you to witness that I will henceforth seek my right by all means that a true knight may lawfully use." Then he turned him to the King and said, "You may go in peace when you will, I will do you no hurt, for you are my sovereign lord."

When the King's Barons heard these words they were not a little astonished, not thinking that any man could deal so generously with his enemy. As for Richard, he was greatly displeased, and said, "Now have you let the enemy go; I fear me much that we shall all pay for this ill courtesy that you have shown to him with our lives." But Reynaud answered, "Be silent, brother; know that I will not compel the King to do that which is against his will. And now depart from my sight, for your high words please me not."

Then Reynaud called to him a gentleman of his household, and said, "Go now without any tarrying to the

yeoman that has charge of my horses and bid him bring me Bayard. I will that my sovereign lord should ride back upon him to his camp; better horse he could not have." So the yeoman brought Bayard, and the King mounted upon him and rode him to his camp, where the Frenchmen very gladly received him.

The King bade a squire take Bayard back to Montalban, whom, when Reynaud saw, he said to Roland and the other Barons, "My good lords, I know that the King is displeased with you for your love of me. Now therefore depart and make your peace with him. As for me, if I have aught against you, I forgive it with all my heart."

When the Duke Naymes heard these words, he would have kneeled to Reynaud, but this good knight would not suffer it. Then said the Duke, "Surely it cannot but be that the King's heart will be softened when he shall hear how nobly Reynaud has borne himself in this matter." "You say well," said the other Barons.

Then there were brought from the stables Roland's horse and the horses of the others. When they were now mounted there came forth from the palace the Lady Clare, and said to them, My lords, I do entreat you to make peace, if by any means it may be done, between the King and my husband, for indeed he bears a large heart, as you very well know." And the Duke Naymes answered, "Lady, we will do it if it may be." So he and his fellows took their leave of Reynaud and the Lady Clare with much sorrow, and rode to the King's camp.

The Barons made intercession to the King that he would accord peace to Reynaud, but he would not hear, but rather was more inflamed with anger than before against him and his kinsmen. First, he bade his men make an assault upon the castle. This they did with great zeal, bringing engines wherewith to cast stones and darts against it, and setting ladders against the walls by which they climbed up to the highest parts. But all these things availed nothing, but rather turned to the damage of the King's men, of whom many were wounded and slain.

When the King perceived that he could not prevail in this way he bade his men cease from assaulting the castle, saying, "If I cannot take the hold of these villains by force I will take it by hunger." He set therefore at every gate two hundred knights, who suffered no man to go out or enter in.

After a while there came to be a great famine in Montalban, so that a man could not buy food for silver or gold, and not a few perished with hunger.

When knowledge of these things came to the King's ears he rejoiced greatly, saying to his Barons, "This time, methinks, Reynaud shall not escape me. By St. Denis, I will hang him, and drag the false Richard at a horse's tail, and deal with Alard and Guichard in the same way.

But Roland and Ogier and the Duke Naymes were very sorry, and made supplication to the King, but he hardened his heart against them.

In the castle the famine was so sore that Reynaud and his people could scarcely keep life in them. Then the Lady Clare said to her husband, "We have more than a hundred horses in the stables, let us, therefore, cause one of them to be slain, that you and I and the children may have a morsel of meat, for indeed we have not had aught for these three days past." And when she had so spoken she fell down in a swoon at her husband's feet.

Then Reynaud went to the stables, and choosing one of the horses, commanded that it should be killed and dressed for food, and this was done, but it was a little thing among so many. And so they did till all the horses were eaten, save four, that is to say Bayard, and one horse of each of the brethren.

At the last it came to this, that there was nothing left to eat but these four horses only. But Richard said, "My horse you shall not have, no, not though we die all of us. Verily we had not been brought to this pass but for our folly when we had the King in our hands and suffered him to go free." When the boy Aymon, that was son to Reynaud, heard this, he said, "What profits it,

uncle, to speak of that which is past and gone? Besides this I do not doubt that the kindness which my father showed to the King will turn some day to his profit."

When Richard heard the boy speak so wisely he took him in his arms and kissed him, weeping the while, and said to Reynaud, "Let my horse be killed and given for meat to the Lady Clare and to the young boys my nephews, and to others that have need." And so it was done.

After a few days it came to this, that Bayard only of all the horses was left alive. And when the brethren would have had him also killed for food, Reynaud withstood them, saying that he would sooner die than that his horse should be killed. Yet when the Lady Clare besought him, and his children also, he yielded to them, saying that the horse should die. So he went to the stable, that he might do this deed himself. Yet when he looked upon Bayard, and had called to mind how many times the noble beast had saved his life, he repented him of his purpose. Then he gave him a handful of hay, for indeed there was nothing else that he could give, and went back to the Lady Clare and his brethren and said, "Endure till nightfall and you shall have meat. This I promise you," for he had a purpose in his heart.

Then he saddled Bayard, and came stealthily to his father's tent, that was in the King's camp, for he knew well where it was.

When Reynaud saw the Duke Aymon he said to him, "For pity's sake, my father, give me food, for my wife and my children and my brothers and all my people are dying of hunger. As I live there is but this horse Bayard that is left to us." But the Duke answered, "I have sworn an oath to the King that I will not give you any help by food or otherwise."

Reynaud said again, "My father, have pity upon your own flesh, for such we are. The King does us great wrong when he persecutes us in this fashion."

When the Duke heard these words he well-nigh fell into a swoon for pity. After a while he said, "You say truly that the King does you wrong. Now, therefore, light off your horse and go into the tent, and take whatsoever you can find, nor shall any man say you nay; but for my oath's sake, I may not give you aught." So Reynaud went into the tent, and took such things as he could find and laid them on the back of Bayard, and carried them to Montalban. That night they ate their meat in the castle with much gladness of heart.

The next day the Duke Aymon called his steward and said to him, "Take now the three engines that the King commanded me to make for assailing the castle, and fill them, not with stones, but with flesh, both salt and fresh, and with loaves of bread, and with other victuals, and cause that they discharge these things into the castle." And the steward did as the Duke commanded him.

When the King heard what the Duke Aymon had done he was very angry, and sent for him to his tent. And when the Duke came he said to him, "How are you so bold that you feed my mortal enemies. Verily you shall lose your head for it." The Duke answered, "Sire, if you should burn me by fire yet will I not fail my children. They are no thieves or murderers, or traitors, but as good and true knights as are in all the world."

When the King heard the Duke speak in this sort, he made as if he would have struck him. But the Duke Naymes stood forth and said, "Sire, I would counsel you to send the Duke to his house. You cannot look for him to be with you in this matter, that he should see his children die before his eyes." Then the King said to the Duke Aymon, "Get you out of my camp forthwith, for you have done me more harm than can well be told." And the Duke answered, "I will do your bidding willingly." But before he went, he said to the Peers: "My lords, I commend my children to you. See, I pray you, that they come to no harm."



REYNAUD AND BAYARD.

The King commanded that all the engines of war should be broken, for he feared lest others also of the Barons should throw victuals into the castle. So Reynaud and his men had peace, for no man made assault upon the castle. But after certain days, the provisions being all consumed, the famine was as sore as it had been at the first.

Alard said, "My brother, we cannot live longer without meat." Then Reynaud took a sword in his hand and went to the stable, having it in his heart to slay his horse. And when Bayard saw him, for he had not come thither for many days, he made good cheer. Then Reynaud said, "I were cruel indeed if I did thee harm, good beast that thou art." But Yonnet, who was his younger son, said, "Father, do you chose that my mother and my brother should die, and Bayard live ? "

Then Reynaud was much troubled, doubting what he should do. Then he bethought him of a thing that he might do. He called for a basin, and took blood from the horse, and this being mixed with other things of which they had a little he prepared a mess, by which the Lady Clare and the children were a little sustained. This he did for four days, but on the fifth day the horse was grown so feeble that there came no blood from him at all. And now it seemed as if all hope were gone.

Reynaud and his kindred and his house being in these straits, there came an old man who would speak with him. "Sir," said he, "you have done as well as could have been done by any man in keeping this castle, but now you can do no more. But listen to me. I was at the building of this place many years ago, when I was but a young child. And I mind me that the lord that builded it made a secret way by which a man might escape if he was so minded. This way I will show you, and you can depart from this place by it without danger."

Reynaud was right glad to hear this thing so that he forgot his hunger. Then he took his horse, which, indeed, could scarce stand for feebleness, and all the folk that were left in the castle; and they entered the secret way that the old man showed

them. When they had gone a part of the way, Reynaud saw that they had not with them King John of Gascony. He said, "We have done ill to leave King John. It would be shame to us were he to die like a starving wolf that has fallen into a pit." So he went back and brought him. The others had small pleasure to see him, for even the Lady Clare, that was his sister, spake sharply to him saying, "Brother, you have done me such damage that you well deserved to die." But Reynaud said, "I have sworn homage to the King, and I must needs save him." And when the others heard these words, they confessed that Reynaud's thoughts were more worthy of a Christian man than theirs.

So having gone along the secret way for a while, they came to the end, and having issued forth found that they were in the Wood of the Serpent. Many things they suffered as they went, yet for hope's sake and by help of such wild fruits as they gathered on the way they bear up. And so with much toil and trouble they came to Ardennes, and were received with much gladness.

CHAPTER X

HOW PEACE WAS MADE

It happened about seven days after these things that the King rode by the castle, for he would fain know how the besieged fared. When he could see no man on the walls, he was not a little astonished, and going back straight-way to the camp called his Barons together and told them of this matter.

The Duke Naymes said, "We must find out what has overtaken these people; let us feign to make an assault." So they feigned to make an assault, but no man came forth to defend the castle. Then the King said: "They are all dead of hunger," and he commanded that a long ladder should be set against the walls. By this certain of the Peers mounted, Roland being first of all, and after him Ogier the Dane and Oliver. But finding no man they descended on the other side and opened the gates that the King might come in.

So the King came in; but when he saw neither man, woman, or child in the whole place he was much astonished. And as he searched he found the secret way, which when he had seen he cried, "This has that false knave Mawgis done. Verily he will break my very heart for anger." But the Duke Naymes answered, "Not so, my lord; this way has been made many years."

Then by commandment of the King, Roland and a company of men went by the secret way till he came to the Wood of the Serpent. Nor were there wanting signs that many people had passed that way. So he returned to the castle and told what he had seen to the King, and the King with his host tarried awhile in Montalban.

A messenger came to the King, with tidings of the brethren. He said that he had seen them keeping a great court at

the city of Ardennes, and that they had much treasure with them, and a great company.

When the King heard this he swore by St. Denys that he would not rest in his bed till he had besieged Reynaud and his company. So he commanded his Barons that they should make ready their baggage and march with all the haste they could on to Ardennes, and this they did.

When Reynaud was aware of their coming he swore a great oath that he would not suffer himself to be besieged. "Rather," said he, "would I fight with the King in the open field; verily, if by chance he should come into my hands I would not have pity on him as I did in past time." "Now, my brother," said Richard, "you speak as a man; if it come to fighting I will not fail of my duty." And Guichard and Alard said the same.

Then Reynaud ordered his host in a very skilful fashion, and mounting on Bayard rode towards the van of the King's army. When the King saw him coming, he grew so mad with rage that he was ready to fight with him, man to man. When the Duke Naymes perceived this, he said, "Sire, what mean you to do? It were folly to fight with these men. Rather make peace with them. For whether we prevail or they, there were a grievous loss of brave men, such as shall never be recovered." "Have done with such counsel," said the King, "I had rather be torn in sunder than make peace with these villains. Speak to me, therefore, no longer on this matter, but do you bear the Oriflamme of France as becomes a noble knight." "That will I do," said the Duke. "Verily, there is no man so old but that he will get hot in battle."

Then the hosts joined in battle, and the fight grew fiercer and fiercer. First Reynaud and the brethren drave back the King's hosts. With his first blow Reynaud clave a knight's head to the teeth, and with his sword shore the head of another clean from his neck. Then with a loud voice he cried, "Ardennes," and the courage of his men waxed so high that the King's men could in no wise stand against them.

When the King saw this he charged with all his might against his adversaries, slaying a knight at each blow. And when his spear was broken, he drew his sword, and did therewith marvellous deeds of arms. Never did he bear himself more valiantly than he did that day.

When Roland saw how his uncle fought in the very front of the battle, he was greatly afraid lest some mischance should befall him. Wherefore, spurring his horse, he made all haste to help him. The rest of the Twelve Peers did the same, and the King's host was stayed up against Reynaud's men. From prime to noon the battle was so equal that no man could say whether this side or that prevailed. But when the sun began to move to its setting, Reynaud's men began to give way, being fewer in number and spent with fighting. Then Reynaud said to him that bear his standard, "It is time to rest, carry the standard homeward."

When the King perceived this, he cried with a loud voice, "They fly; follow them with all speed; suffer them not to escape." This thing was the cause of no small damage; for Reynaud and his brothers and the knights that were of his side turned upon them that followed and slew many, and took prisoner Richard, Duke of Normandy. Him they carried into Ardennes and shut to the gates.

Roland went to the King and said, "The brethren have taken Duke Richard; lest, therefore, he come to any harm, offer conditions of peace. Remember, Sire, that you have now made war upon the sons of Aymon for fifteen years. Truly, had you done as much against the Saracens as you have done against them, you had brought them by this time under the Christian faith."

The King said, "Speak no more of peace; it shall not be save on conditions that you know. As for the Duke Richard they will not dare to harm him."

So the King laid siege against the city, and brought up great engines of war against it, expecting that Reynaud would

deliver it into his hands, for he thought that by this time his strength must be well-nigh spent. But when many days had gone by, and there came no messenger from the town, he began to doubt within himself. So he called his lords together, and said to them, "It troubles me that we have no tidings of Duke Richard." Roland answered, "Sire, I marvel that you do not perceive the truth. The Duke Richard we shall never see again, unless you make peace with Reynaud and his brethren."

When the King had considered the matter awhile, knowing that Roland had spoken truth, he said, "Go now, three of you, to wit, Duke Naymes, Ogier the Dane, and Roland, with olive branches in your hands, and say to him, 'Thus saith the King, deliver to me Mawgis into my hands, and I will give you peace; you and your brothers shall have your lands again, and your two sons I will receive at my court, and I will make them knights with my own hands.'"

The three Barons went, with olive branches in their hands, and delivered the King's message to Reynaud. He answered, "My lords, I am glad with all my heart to see you; nevertheless I marvel much at the King's message. He demands that I shall give over Mawgis to him. Now all the world knows that I have not Mawgis to give or not to give. Truly I have lost him, and better friend or kinsman never was, by the King's cruelty and hardness of heart. Return therefore to the King and say, 'Mawgis I have not to give, nor would I give him if I had. As for the Duke Richard, I will hang him to-morrow over the chief gate at Ardennes.' And you, come no more on such an errand to me. I promise you that if any man come hereafter with such a message from the King, I will smite off his head."

So the three Barons returned to the King, and told him the words of Reynaud. And Roland said, "Sire, take it not ill, if I tell you that for your pride you will cause the Duke Richard to die. These sons of Aymon are the best knights in all the world, and they have asked peace of you, not once only but many times, and you have hardened your heart against them." The other Peers spake to the same intent. But the King would not listen to them.

"Not so," said he, "they will not dare to hurt the Duke; verily, if they do such a deed I will hang them all with my own hand."

The next day Reynaud said to his brothers, "It is manifest that the King will not give us peace. I am resolved, therefore, to do him all the harm I can, and first I will hang the Duke Richard before his eyes and the eyes of all his host."

So Reynaud caused that a gallows should be set up over the chief gate of Ardennes. When this was done he sent ten yeomen to fetch the Duke. Now the Duke sat in his chamber playing chess with Yonnet, that was son to Reynaud. One of the yeomen said to him, "Sir Duke, come forth, for Reynaud has commanded that you be hanged forthwith." When the Duke heard him speak in this fashion, he disdained to make any answer, but said to Yonnet, "Play you quickly, for it is time that we go to dinner." When the yeomen saw that he paid no heed to them, they laid hands on him, one on each side, saying, "Rise up, Sir Duke, for you are to be hanged in despite of the King." When the Duke perceived that the men had hold of him, having one of the chess pieces in his hand, to wit, the Queen, with which he was about to give mate to Yonnet, he drew back his arm and gave one of the men such a buffet on the head as killed him outright. After this he took a rook from the board, and gave another yeoman such a stroke that his skull was broken; to a third he dealt a great blow with his fist and slew him. The others seeing how their fellows had fared, fled forthwith out of the chamber. Then the Duke said to Yonnet, "My child, you are fairly mated; as for these fellows they are drunken, I take it, to use me in such a fashion; but they have had their deserts," and he called to a servant that was there, saying, "Cast now these churls out of the window," and the man cast them out, fearing much, lest he should be dealt with in the same way.

When Reynaud and his brethren heard what the Duke had done, they went to his chamber in great wrath, and said, "Why have you slain my yeomen?" The Duke answered, "There came to my chamber ten churls saying that you had given commandment that I should be hanged, a thing which I could in

no wise believe. For this cause I drave them out of my chamber, slaying some of them—I know not how many. Now if I have done amiss you can do to me what you will. But I judge the matter thus, that if these churls suffered at my hand the blame lies rather at the door of them that sent them on this errand."

Reynaud said in great wrath, "Believe it or no, as you will, but I am steadfastly purposed to have you hanged before the eyes of the King and his army." And he caused the Duke to be bound.

When the Duke perceived that Reynaud was truly purposed to deal with him in this fashion, he said, "Suffer me now to send a messenger to the King." "You shall send him," said Reynaud. So the Duke sent a messenger bearing two messages, to the King one, and another to the Peers. To the King he said, "I pray you, Sir, if you ever loved me, to make peace with Reynaud. If he have done aught amiss against you I will be his surety, and will answer for him that he shall make amends." To the Peers he said, "Show now to the King that if he suffer me thus to die, he shall do himself such dishonour as shall never be done away."

When these messages were delivered (but the King knew not that Richard had sent to the Peers) there was great debate, for the King hardened his heart as he had done before, and the Peers were urgent with him that he should turn from his anger. And the strife between them waxed so hot that the Peers departed from the King, taking their men with them, so that day the King's host was made the smaller by forty thousand men.

When the messenger came back with these tidings, how that the King was still hardened but that the Peers had departed from him, Reynaud was greatly moved, and turning to Duke Richard he said, "I pray you, my good cousin, pardon me for the great shame that I have done you." The Duke answered, "I blame you not. Rather do I blame the King for his cruelty and hardness of heart." Then Reynaud caused him to be unbound, and said,

"Stand here by me, my cousin, and we will see what the King will do."

And now the King was at last brought to a better mind, for he said to a knight that waited on him, "Ride now as fast as you may, and when you come to the Peers tell them that I will listen to their counsel." So the knight rode with all speed, and when he had overtaken the Peers he delivered to them the King's message. And they came back to the camp.

The King said, "Go now to Reynaud and say to him, 'The King gives you peace on these conditions. You shall go in pilgrim's garb to the Holy Land, and on foot, begging your bread. You shall leave me your horse Bayard. On the other hand, I will restore to your brothers all their lands.'"

So the Duke Naymes went to Ardennes and told to Reynaud the King's conditions. Reynaud answered, "I accept them with my whole heart." Then he went to the stable, and took Bayard from his stall, and delivered him to the Duke Naymes. This done he took his banner, and raised it on the wall of the castle to be a token of peace. After this he went to his chamber, and, putting off his rich apparel, clad himself in poor garments, and took a pilgrim's staff in his hand, and so made ready to depart. But first he took leave of his wife, the Lady Clare. So sad at heart was she that she fell down at his feet like to one dead. When she had come to herself he said, "Take not this thing so much to heart. As for me I have such joy at the making of peace that the time of my banishment seems to be past already. Now may God have you in His keeping!" And he kissed her right tenderly, and went his way.

When the Lady Clare saw him go she fell again into a swoon, and this so sore that her gentlewomen deemed that she was dead. When she revived she said, "O Reynaud, my lord, there was never husband so good as you. Well I know that I shall never see you again." Then she went to her chamber, and took off her rich garments and clad herself poorly, saying, "This will I wear till my lord shall come again in peace."

As for Reynaud, his brethren and Duke Richard of Normandy and many others went with him a long way. But he said after a while, "My friends, you make my going the harder to me; I were better alone. Return now to Ardennes and comfort my wife and my children."

So they took leave of him with many tears.

CHAPTER XI

OF REYNAUD'S END

It must now be told in a few words what Reynaud did in the Holy Land, and what befell him afterwards.

First, then, when he was come to the city of Constantinople, he lighted by chance on his cousin Mawgis, who was lying sick in a certain house. So much did Mawgis rejoice to see Reynaud, that he was straightway made whole of the sickness that he had. Then the two went on together, and coming to Jerusalem, did excellent service for the true faith, delivering the city out of the hand of the Sultan of Persia, who had taken it by treachery.

This done the two departed, for they would not take any reward, and came to Rome. There they confessed their sins to the Pope, and having received absolution, made their way with all the speed they could to the city of Ardennes, where the brethren and all the people received them gladly.

Reynaud said, "I marvel much that I see not here either my wife or my children." Richard answered, "Your sons are at Montalban in all health and prosperity." "That is well," said Reynaud, but perceiving that his brethren were troubled, he bade them tell him the truth, for "I see," said he, "that you have heavy tidings." Then said Alard, "We may not hide from you that your wife, the Lady Clare, is dead. For when you left, she sorrowed

continually, weeping both by day and by night, and so wasted away that she died."

Reynaud said, "Take me now to the place where you buried her." So they took him to the church wherein was her sepulchre. As he stood there weeping, there came to him his children, for they had been brought from Montalban, and kneeled down before him. And Reynaud kissed them and said, "See that you be good men, for I fear that I shall not be long with you."

Ten days afterwards he and his two sons and Mawgis departed from Ardennes, and came to Montalban. As for Mawgis, he returned to the Hermitage where he had dwelt at the first, and died there after seven years, being much honoured as a holy man.

Not long after the Duke Aymon died, bequeathing much wealth to his children. All this Reynaud divided among his brethren, keeping for himself the castle of Montalban, and this for a time only, for he was resolved to give up all worldly things.

In Montalban, therefore, he dwelt awhile, with his two sons, teaching them and training them in all honourable and godly ways. When he saw that they were each instructed in arms and in all other things that a good knight should know, he bade his steward furnish them with goodly clothing and arms and all other things needful. This done, he charged them that they should bear themselves honourably. "Be courteous," he said, "to all ladies; reverence those above you; be ready to help those that are in need; love your neighbour; so shall you have praise of all men." And when he had said these words, he bade them farewell, not without tears.

How these two fared at the King's Court, how they were in great favour with the King, and how they overcame their enemies—for the children of a certain lord that had hated their father sought to do them an injury—cannot be told in this place. Let it suffice to say that they prospered exceedingly.

Now must be told the end of Reynaud. When he saw that his sons were well established in dignity, he departed from Montalban and journeyed to the city of Cologne, in which city there was now in course of building a very fair church. He said to the master-mason, "Let me now serve the masons with such things as they need." The master-mason said, "Sir, you are more like to a king than a labourer, and it shames me to set you to such work." Reynaud answered, "Say not so; I will serve with a good will." And the man was well content to have it so.

After a while, the master-mason said to him, "See you those poor men that seek to carry a stone yonder? Go you and help them, for they are but weaklings." So Reynaud went; he said to the men, "Go and do what else is appointed of you, for I will deal with this stone." So he carried the stone to its place, though it were of such a bigness that four men could scarcely handle it. And after this he fetched other stones and mortar, and these in such plenty that the masons had much ado to deal with them.

When it was evening the masons came to be paid, and each man's wage was five pennies. But when the master-mason saw Reynaud, he said, "You shall have twenty pence, for you have laboured so as I have never seen any man labour. And you shall have as much every day." "Nay," answered Reynaud, "give me one penny only, that I may have wherewithal to keep me, for I work not for wages, but for the love of my God."

Then Reynaud found a lodging in the town, and bought for himself one pennyworth of bread, and of this and some water he made his supper. The next day he went to his work, and this he did many days, taking for his wage but one penny only.

But the other masons grew jealous of him, because that he was much better and stronger than they. So they laid a plot against him, and on a certain day when he slept they slew him, and having put his body into a sack, they cast it into the river.

Of the marvellous things that happened in respect of this said Reynaud, they that will may read elsewhere. Let it suffice to

say in this place that the body was found after certain days and was honourably buried in the church of Cologne, and that year by year a feast is held in the memory of the Lord Reynaud, for indeed he was a very perfect, gentle knight.

And now it remains only to tell of the horse Bayard that was delivered, as has been said, to the King. When the host, returning to Paris, came to the river Meuse, a millstone was tied about his neck, and he was cast into the river. Some have said that this was done by command of the King; but this is not a thing to be believed. In any case, the good horse was not harmed, for he brake with his feet the stone from off his neck, and swimming to the shore, escaped to the forest of Ardennes, where he lived for many years, but suffered neither man nor woman to come near him.

CHAPTER XII

HOW RALPH ENTERTAINED THE KING

On the feast of St. Thomas, which is four days before Yule, King Charles rode out of the city of Paris with a great company of princes and nobles. As they rode across the moor a great tempest from the east fell upon them. So fierce was the wind and so heavy the rain, that they were scattered over the country, nor could they tell, the day being well nigh as dark as night, whither they were going. Of what befell the rest of the company there is no need to tell; this tale concerns King Charles only.

As he rode in sore plight, not knowing where he might find shelter, he was aware of a churl, who was leading a mare carrying two great panniers. "Now tell me your name," said the King, "They call me Ralph the Charcoal-burner," said the man. "I live in these parts—my house is seven miles hence—and I earn my bread with no little toil, selling coals to such as need them." "Friend," said the King, "I mean you no ill, for I judge you to be an honest man." "Judge as you will," answered Ralph, "I care not." "I am in sore need of a friend," said the King; "for both my horse and I are ready to perish, the storm is so fierce. Tell me then where I can find shelter." "Shelter!" said Ralph, "I know of none, save in my own cottage, and that is far hence in the forest. But to that you are welcome, if you care to come with me."

The King was right glad to hear these words. "That is well," said he, "God reward you for your goodness." "Nay," answered the churl, "keep your thanks till they have been earned. As yet you have had from me nothing, neither fire, nor meat, nor dinner, nor resting-place. To-morrow when you go you can thank me, if you be so minded, with better reason. To praise first, and, may be, to blame afterwards—that is contrary to

sense." "So shall it be," said the King. So they went their way, talking as they went.

When they were come to the house Ralph called with a loud voice to his wife, "Are you within, dame? Come out, open the door without delay. My guest and I are shivering with cold; such evil weather I have never seen." The good wife, when she heard her master's voice, made all haste to the door, knowing that he was a man of a hasty temper. "You are welcome home," said she to Ralph; and to the stranger, "You are welcome also." "Kindle a great fire," said Ralph, "and take two capons of the best, that we may have good cheer," and he took the King by the hand, and would have him go before him into the house. But the King stood back by the door, and would have the charcoal-burner pass in before him. "That is but poor courtesy," said the man, and took him by the neck and pushed him in.

When they had warmed themselves awhile by the fire, which was blazing in right royal fashion, Ralph cried to his wife, "Let us have supper, Gillian, as quickly as may be, and of the best, for we have had a toilsome day, and may well have a merry night. Never have I suffered worse weather or been so near to losing my way as when I met with this stranger here."

In no long time, when they had washed themselves, the supper was ready. "Now, friend," said Ralph, "take the dame by the hand, and lead her to the board." And when the King held back, he cried, "Now this is the second time," and smote him suddenly under the ear with his right hand, so strongly that he staggered half across the chamber, and fell to the ground. When the King rose, and indeed he could scarcely stand, "Now, Gillian," said Ralph, "take him by the hand and go to the table as I bid you." To his guest he said, "Now this is the second time that you have been lacking in courtesy, first by the door, and then at the table. Will you not do as you are bid? Am not I the master of my own house?" The King said to himself, "These are strange doings. Never have I been so dealt with in all my life." Nevertheless for peace sake he did as he was bid, and giving his hand to the dame, led her to the table. So they sat, the charcoal-

burner on one side of the table, and the King and dame Gillian on the other. Right good cheer they had, fat capons, and bread, and wine of the best. Truly they wanted for nothing.

Said the churl to the King, "Sir, the foresters in this place threaten me much about the deer. They say that I am ever bringing down the fattest of the herd. They will hale me, they say, to Paris, and bring me before the King, and make complaint against me. Say what they will, why should I not have enough for myself, aye, and to set before a guest? And now, my friend, spare not; there is enough and more." When they had well eaten, Ralph said to his wife, "Now, Gill, send round the cup. I will drink to my friend, and he shall drink to me." So the dame handed the cup, and the two drank to each other. Then, supper being ended, they sat by the fire, and the Charcoal-burner told many merry tales. When it grew late, he said to the King, "Tell me now where you live." "I live at Court," said he, "where I have an office with the Queen." "And what is your office?" "I am gentleman of the Queen's bed-chamber." "And what is your name?" "My name is Wymond; Wymond of the Wardrobe they call me. And now, if you will come to Court, I can doubtless serve you, for I will see that you have a good sale for your fuel." Said Ralph, "I know not where the Court of which you speak may be." But Charles urged him, saying that the King and Queen would be in Paris to spend Yuletide together, and that there would be much merry-making, and that without doubt he would sell his fuel to great advantage. "You seem to talk reason," said Ralph, "I will come. And now let us have another cup, and so to bed." So the collier and the dame led him to another chamber, where there was a bed handsomely furnished, and closed in with curtains. When they saw that he was well served and had all that he needed, they bade him good-night, and the King thanked them for their courtesy.

The next day as soon as it was light, the King rose from the bed and dressed himself without help, for, indeed, he had neither valet nor squire. Then his palfrey was brought to him, which when he had mounted, he called to Ralph, where he lay,

for he would take his leave in friendly fashion, as was fitting in one that had had such good cheer. When the churl was roused, he said to the King, "Now tarry awhile till this evil weather be ended." "Nay," answered the King, "I must needs to my work and office; Yuletide is now at hand, and he that is found wanting will be greatly blamed. And now call thy good wife that I may pay her for the shelter and good cheer that I have had." "Nay," cried Ralph, "that shall never be; to think that I should take pay for sheltering one that is of the Court of the King Charles!" "So be it," answered the King; "but at least if you will not take pay, come to the Court with a load of fuel as soon as may be; I warrant that if you will do so, you will make good profit of your goods." "That will I," answered Ralph. "I would fain see how coals sell at court. And now tell me your name once more, lest I forget it."

Then the King rode away, nor had he travelled long when Roland and Oliver, with a thousand men after them, met him. They had come forth to search for him, and right glad were they to find him. So they turned their horses' heads and journeyed back to Paris. When they were near the town, Turpin the Archbishop came forth from the gates to meet them with a great company of bishops and priests and others giving thanks to God that their lord the King was come again to Paris. And when they had come to Paris, they went to the Church of St. Denis, where there was service. And after service they went to the Palace, and kept their Yule feast with much mirth and plenty of good things. For one-and-twenty days did they feast. Never had such a Yuletide been kept in the land of France.

CHAPTER XIII

HOW RALPH WENT TO COURT

The next day, Ralph, having thought much on what he had undertaken, loaded his mare, as he was wont to do, with two panniers full of coals, and made ready to start on his journey to the court. "This is not of my counsel," said Gillian his wife; "this journey will not be to your profit. Remember the shrewd blow that you dealt him. Keep from the Court, say I." "Nay, Gill," said the Charcoal-burner, "I must have my way. I promised that I would go, and go I will, whether my going be for profit or for harm." So he loaded the panniers and went his way to the Court.

Meanwhile King Charles had not forgotten the matter. He called Roland to him, for, indeed, there was no man whom he trusted more, and said to him, "To-morrow morning take your horse and your harness, and watch well the road by which we went on the day that I was lost, and if you see anyone coming this way, whatever his errand may be, bring him with you to this place, and take care that he sees no one before he sees me."

Roland wondered much what the King might mean, for it seemed a strange thing that on the very day of Yuletide, when a man should rest, he should be sent on such an errand. Nevertheless he took his horse and his harness and rode forth early in the morning, and watched the roads as he had been commanded. For a long time he saw nothing either far or near; but a little past midday he saw the Charcoal-burner come driving his mare before him with two panniers filled with coals. The sight pleased him well; so he rode up to him with all the speed that he could. The man saluted him courteously, and Roland, in his turn, also saluted him. Their greetings ended, he said to the man, "Come now to the King; let nothing hinder you." "Nay," said Ralph, "I am not so foolish. This is a jest, Sir Knight, and it is ill courtesy for a knight to jest with a common man. There be

many men better than I that come and go to Paris, and the King has no thought of them, whether it be morning or night. If you are in mind to trick me, I can hold my own, for all that I am ill-clad." "This is but foolishness," said Roland, "the King has straightly commanded that you should be brought to him." "Nay," answered Ralph, "I am on my way, according to promise made to one Wymond, and to him I will go and to none other." "Have done with your Wymond," cried Roland, "I must take you to the King as the King has commanded."

So they wrangled a long time, and still the churl was firmly set that he would go to Wymond and to none other. "And where dwells this Wymond of yours?" said Roland. "He dwells with the Queen at Paris, if his tale be true." "If that be so," answered Roland, "seeing that I know well the Queen and her ladies, and you are on your way to them, I will trust to your going. Only you must give me a pledge that this is truly your purpose." "Nay," said the Charcoal-burner, "I will pledge you no pledge. And as for you, get you out of my way, or it will be the worse for you."

Roland said to himself, "Now this is but folly to continue any longer with this fellow." And he took his leave of the man full pleasantly. But Ralph liked not such ways; for he thought that this knight that was so gaily clad had him in scorn. "Come hither, Sir Knight, to-morrow when we can be alone together, you and I; surely you shall see how I will deal with you."

Then Roland rode back to the King. By this time Mass was ended, and the King had put on his robes. "You are well come, Sir Roland," said he, "have you done my errand?" "Sire," answered Sir Roland, "I went as you gave me commandment, and watched the ways, but saw no man, but one only." "And who was this one?" asked the King. "He," said Roland, "was but a churl that had with him two panniers of coal." "Why did you not bring this said churl to me, as I bid you? It may be you durst not."

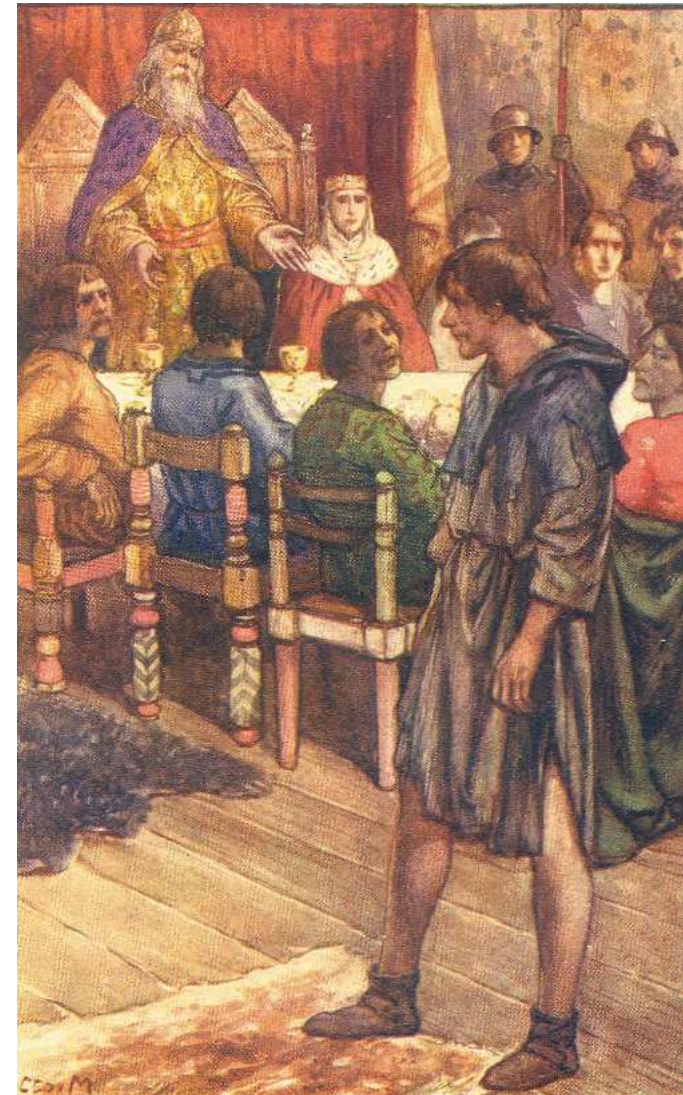
Roland saw that the King was wroth, and was not a little glad to go forth from his presence. Going forth he met a porter, "Whither go you, lazy loon?" said he. Said the porter, "There is one at the gate, a churl that has a mare and two panniers of coals, and he clamours to be let in at the gate" "Whom does he want?" said Roland. The porter answered, "He asks for one Wymond." Then Roland said, "Go back to your place, porter, and open the gate and bid him enter. But say that it does not lie within your office to go to this Wymond, but that he must himself seek him."

So the porter went back to the gate and opened it, saying to the Charcoal-burner, "Enter, man; but I have no leisure to seek for this Wymond for whom you ask. You must seek him yourself." Said Ralph, "If you will not seek the man, I must needs do it myself; see you then that no harm come to the mare and the coals, and I will look for Wymond, for certainly it was he that bade me come hither."

So the Charcoal-burner went his way through the palace asking for Wymond. There was not one that knew the man, or had so much as heard the name. They seemed to Ralph to lack courtesy; nevertheless he would not cease from his quest, nor was there any one of whom he failed to inquire. After he had passed through many chambers he came to one that was more splendid than all that he had seen before. It was a great hall finely painted and hung about with tapestries, and there the King sate at dinner in great state. On the table were many dainties, and there was a store of dishes, both silver, and gold, and many other adornments. "Here is royalty enough," cried Ralph. "If I could only have speech with Wymond, I would away, for this methinks is no place for a simple man." And still he went on. Many sought to put him back, for he seemed to press on in an unmannerly fashion; but he was a stalwart man that gave as much as he took.

At last, after not a little trouble, he got sight of the King, where he sat in state at the table. "See," he cried, "that is Wymond, yonder, the man whom I seek. Well do I know him, though, indeed, he is otherwise clad than when I last saw him.

Now he is in cloth of gold. Truly he must be some greater man than he said. Alas, that I have been wiled hither. Truly this man has beguiled me." When the King heard this he laughed.



RALPH IN THE PALACE OF CHARLEMAGNE.

Ralph looked about on the company that sat with the King, for many worshipful men were there. But when he saw the Queen, then he was greatly troubled. "Lady," he said, "I am sorely troubled to see your fine attire, so splendid is it. Now if I can but escape hence this day, nothing in the whole world shall bring me hither again."

And now, dinner being over, the King rose from the table; and he told before the whole company how he had fared with the Charcoal-burner. The churl quaked as he heard the tale. And he said, "Would I were on the moor again this very hour, and the King alone, or any one of his knights, be he the bravest and strongest of them all."

Then the lords laughed aloud. Some, however, were angry, and would have had the man hanged. "What is this churl," said they, "that he should so misuse the King?" But Charles would have none of such doings. "He is a stalwart man, and can strike a hard blow. Heaven forbid that I should harm him. Rather will I make him a knight." So he dubbed Ralph the Charcoal-burner a knight, and gave him a revenue of 300 by the year, and "the next fee in France that shall come into my hands, that," said he, "will I give you. But now you must win your spurs." So the King gave him his armour and arms, and sixty squires of good degree to be his company. And Ralph was in after time a very perfect, noble knight, and did good service to the King.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW FIERABRAS DEFIED KING CHARLES

Balan, who was admiral of the Moors in Spain, had a son, Fierabras by name, who was the most marvellous giant that ever was born of woman. There was no man that could be matched with him for height, and bigness of limb, and strength of body. This Fierabras was King of Alexandria, and ruled the whole land of Babylon from the Red Sea eastwards. Russia also he possessed, and Cologne; he was lord, moreover, of Jerusalem, and had possession of the Sepulchre of our Lord. It happened on a certain day that this man came riding furiously to the camp where King Charles lay with his army, and asked that some one should come forth and fight with him. No man answering him or coming forth, he fell into a great rage and sware by his god Mahomet that he would not depart from the place till he should have done battle with some Christian man; but still no one came forth to him. Then he cried with a very loud and terrible voice, "King of Paris, send out to me your strongest and bravest knight, be he Roland, or Oliver, or Thierry, or Ogier the Dane, that he may fight with me. Nay, and if you will send out against me six or seven of your strongest knights, I swear by my god Mahomet that I will not refuse to fight with them all. But if you will not send out any man, then I will assuredly assail your camp before nightfall this very day, and strike off your head, and lead away Roland and Oliver as prisoners. You have come into this my land without cause, and verily you shall depart without honour."

When he had thus spoken he lay down under a tree, and having tied his horse to one of the boughs, took off his armour. This done, he cried to the King, "Send now Roland or Oliver to fight with me. And if these dare not come alone then let two others come together with them; and if the four be afraid let six come. Ten kings have I slain already in single combat; there was

not one of them, for all that they were mighty men of valour, that could stand against me."

When King Charles heard these threatenings and challenges he said to Richard of Normandy, "Who is this knight that speaks so boldly?"

Duke Richard answered, "This, my lord King, is the strongest of all men born of women, and he is persuaded that there is no king in the whole world that is a match for him."

"For all that," said the king, "I will find one of my knights that shall encounter him. But tell me his name."

"His name," answered Duke Richard, "is Fierabras. He is an infidel, and has done much harm to Christian men. For he slew our lord the Pope, and hanged many holy men and women, and to this day he holds possession of the holy Sepulchre of our Lord."

"I am the more firmly resolved," said the King, "hearing what you say, that one of my knights shall meet him." Thereupon he turned to Roland and said, "I pray you, dear nephew, go forth and meet this Turk in battle."

But Roland answered him, "Not so, fair uncle; why should I do your bidding in this matter? Do you bear in mind what happened but yesterday, when we were so near to being taken by the heathen, how they fell upon us with fifty thousand men and how we the younger knights bore the burden and brunt of the day and suffered many grievous wounds, so that Oliver my comrade was brought near to death, and indeed, but for your help, we had all perished? And do you remember further how last night, when we were resting in our tents, you, being full of wine, declared stoutly that your old knights would have borne themselves better than we of the younger sort had done? Now it shall be seen how these said old knights shall stand up against this heathen man, for indeed of the younger no one will go forth against him."

When the King heard this he smote Roland his nephew in the face with his gauntlet so sharply that the blood gushed out abundantly. Thereupon Roland drew his sword and would have smitten his uncle had he not been held by the bystanders. And the King cried, "Now, this is a most monstrous thing for any man, much more a kinsman. Seize him, for he shall die the death for this wickedness." But when the courtiers made as if to lay hands upon him Roland cried, "Now, if any man touch me I will cleave his head in two." Nor did any man dare to come near him. But Ogier the Dane said, "Now, Roland, you did ill to threaten your uncle, whom you are bound to honour above all men." "It is true," answered Roland. "I was greatly provoked; nevertheless I repent of my deed."

The King said to the Peers of France, "I am much troubled in this matter. First Roland my nephew, that should have been zealous to help me, threatens to slay me, and then there is no man that is willing to do battle with this pagan."

"Take courage, my lord King," said the Duke Naymes, "some one will be found to do you this service." But the King refused to be comforted.

Now Oliver lay sick in bed, for he had been sorely wounded in battle. But when he heard how the King and Roland had fallen out, and how Fierabras had defied the King and his army, and no man had gone forth to meet him, he straightway rose from his bed and began to stretch and try himself to see whether by any means he could bear his armour. In so doing he made his wounds bleed afresh. But when he had bound them again as best he could, he said to Garin his squire, "Come, bring me my arms, for I will go out and meet this pagan." Said Garin the squire, "Now, my lord Oliver, have pity on yourself. You will compass your own death." Oliver answered, "Do my bidding, for this is an occasion of honour that no man should miss." So Oliver put on his armour, Garin helping him. This done, he took his sword, Hautclere by name, which he loved above all things. Then they brought him Ferraunt his horse, ready saddled and bridled. And Oliver leapt lightly into the

saddle without so much as touching it, and put his shield into place, and took a spear very long and sharply pointed. Then he struck his horse with his spurs, and Ferraunt leapt up under him. It was a noble sight to see, so gallant was the knight and so brave the steed.

Oliver rode up to the King's tent and saluted him, saying, "My lord, I have served you faithfully for these three years past without reward or wages. I pray you, therefore, that you give me this day the thing I shall desire of you." The King answered, "Most noble Earl, I will do this with a good will. There is not in this land of France a city or town or castle that I will not give you at your desire." But Oliver said, "My lord King, I ask neither towns nor castles, but only this—that you suffer me to do battle with this pagan."

When the other knights heard this they were not a little shamed that a wounded man should take up the challenge, while they themselves held back. "What is this," they said, "that Oliver, who was hurt well-nigh to death, would now go forth to battle!" As for the King, he said, "Now, Oliver, you have surely lost your wits. You know that you have been sorely wounded, and yet you will run into a worse danger. Go back to your bed and rest; assuredly I will not suffer you to do battle with this pagan."

Then Ganelon, who was afterwards the traitor, rose up in his place and said, "Sir, this is against the custom of France that you should deny Oliver his request." The King was very angry and said, "Ganelon, you are not well disposed in this matter. If this be as you say, then Oliver shall fight with this pagan, and if he fight, then he can hardly escape death. But mark you this: I swear by my faith that if he be slain or taken in this battle, then not all the gold in the world can save you from a shameful death; aye, and all your house shall perish with you."

"Sir King," said Ganelon, "may God and Our Lady keep me!" but to himself he said secretly, "Now God forbid that Oliver should come back safe. Rather may this pagan smite off

his head!" But when King Charles saw that he could not hinder Oliver from doing battle with Fierabras, he said, "Now may God be with you, and help you, and bring you back with joy!" and he reached to him his glove, which Oliver took with much pleasantness and humility.

But Reyner, that was father to Oliver, when he saw his son ready to go forth, came to the King, and knelt down at his feet, and cried in sore trouble, "Now, my lord King, have pity on my son and me. He is young and presumptuous, full of pride and ambition, but so sorely wounded that he cannot fight; forbid him, therefore, to go forth." But the King said to Reyner, "What I have given I may not withdraw." Then Oliver stood up and spake with a loud voice, "Sir King and all you lords of France, if I have offended any man in word or deed, I pray him to forgive me." There was not a man but wept to hear these words. The King himself wept, and commended him to the keeping of God.

Oliver rode forth and came to the tree where Fierabras lay at ease and unarmed. The giant did not so much as look at him, but turned away his head, for he despised Oliver as being but little of stature in comparison with himself.

Oliver said to him, "Awake, you have called me many times this day; lo! now I have come. And first tell me your name." Fierabras answered him, "I am Fierabras, of Alexandria. It was I that destroyed the city of Rome and slew the Pope, and carried away the holy things. And Jerusalem is mine, and the place where, as you say, your God is buried."

Oliver said, "If these things are true, it is time that you should suffer due punishment for your misdeeds. But enough of talking. Make ready and arm yourself, or else, by the God in whom I believe, I will smite you where you lie!" When Fierabras heard him speak so fiercely, he began to laugh, and said, "You are a bold talker, but first tell me who you are, and of what rank." Oliver answered, "Before night come, pagan, you shall know full well who I am. But now hear this: my lord the King has sent this message by my mouth: "Renounce Mahomet your

God, and all other idols, and believe in the true God that made heaven and earth and all that is therein. Meanwhile take your choice of two things: either depart out of this country, taking nothing with you, or stand forth and fight with me."

Fierabras said, "Fellow, you are not able to meet me, even were I without arms. But tell me now thy name and lineage." Oliver answered, "My name is Garin, and I am a poor knight; King Charles has sent me to do battle with you; make ready, therefore, for battle." But Fierabras would not consent. "Now tell me, Sir Garin," said he, "why Roland, or Oliver, or Ogier the Dane, who are all, men say, of high renown, have not come out against me." "They have not come," answered Oliver, "because they think too meanly of you."

This he said with such vehemence that his wounds opened again. When Fierabras saw the blood he said, "Are you perchance wounded, Sir Garin?" "Not I," answered Oliver; "this blood that you see comes from my horse where I spurred him." But Fierabras saw that the blood was not from the horse and said: "You speak no truth when you say that you are not hurt. This is no horse's blood but of your own body that I see. Now drink of this flagon of balm that I took from the city of Jerusalem. When you have drunken you shall be whole in body, and then you shall be fit to defend yourself in battle." But Oliver would have none of it. "This," said he, "is but folly."

CHAPTER XV

HOW OLIVER FOUGHT WITH FIERABRAS

Fierabras, seeing that he must needs fight, said to Oliver, "Come now, help me to arm myself." Said Oliver, "Can I trust you?" "Yea," answered Fierabras, "that can you: never have I been traitor to any man, nor ever will." So Oliver armed him; he helped him to don first a suit of leather of Arabia and after this a coat and habergeon of steel, and an helmet richly garnished with jewels for his head. Was ever such courtesy in this world, Oliver helping this pagan to arm, whom, being unarmed, he might full easily have slain, and the pagan having pity upon Oliver as not being his match in fighting and all the more when he saw that he had been wounded? Would that there were more of such courtesy between Christian men!

When he was armed, Fierabras took the three swords that he had, Pleasance and Baptism and Grabon, all being of so fine a temper that there was no armour made but they could break through it. The three were made by one of three brothers; another of these three made three more, of which Durendal, the sword of Roland, was the most famous; and yet another brother also made three, of which it suffices to name Hautclere that was the sword of Oliver, and Joyous that was one of the chief treasures of King Charles. On his shield he had the image of his god, Apollyon to wit, to whom when he had commended himself, he yet once again besought Oliver to depart. And when Oliver had again refused, saying that he trusted to prevail by the help of his God, Fierabras said to him, "Now as you are a Christian man, I adjure you by the font wherein you were baptized and by the cross to which your God was nailed, to tell me truly your name and lineage."

Oliver answered, "You could not have adjured me by greater things than this same font and cross; know therefore that

I am Oliver, the son of Reyner, close comrade of Roland, and one of the Twelve Peers of France."



OLIVER AND FIERABRAS.

Then said Fierabras, "I knew that you were no poor and unknown knight, but a great warrior and a famous, so great was your courage. But you are wounded, and it would be dishonour to me should I overcome you by means of your weakness." But Oliver answered him fiercely, "Enough of these idle words; when we come to fight together you shall see that I am no dead man. Nevertheless as you are a courteous knight, I will require you once again to forsake Mahomet and your false gods, and submit yourself to be baptized. So shall you have Roland and King Charles for your friends." "Nay," said Fierabras, "but this is folly. Let us address ourselves to battle without more delay."

Then did these two champions lay their spears in rest and make ready to charge. When the men of France saw this they were in great fear lest some mischance should befall Oliver; as for the King, he hid his face in his mantle and kneeling before the crucifix embraced it, weeping the while, and crying,

O Lord, I beseech Thee keep Oliver and suffer not the Christian faith to be dishonoured by his downfall." Meanwhile the two warriors met in the shock of battle, and that so fiercely that the, sparks flew from their spearheads when they smote on the shields, and that the shafts of both were broken. The reins dropped from their hands, and they were both so astonished that they scarce knew where they were. But then coming to themselves they drew each man his sword. And first Oliver with Hautclere smote Fierabras so fiercely on the helmet that he shore off a great portion of it, and the jewels wherewith it was garnished fell to the ground. Nor was the force of the blow yet spent: it reached the giant's shoulder, but the cuirass which was of stout leather of Cappadocia, stayed it; nevertheless the giant's feet were thrust out of the stirrups, and he came very near to being overthrown. And all the men of France cried with one voice, "Blessed Mary, what a mighty stroke has Oliver dealt to this pagan!" "'Tis true," said Roland, "would I were with him this day!" Then Fierabras, in his turn, smote Oliver with his sword Pleasance on the helmet. From the helmet it glanced down and grievously wounded the Christian's horse. Then Oliver was

not a little dismayed, and commended himself to God and the Virgin. Which, when Fierabras heard, he said, "I am ill content to have so hurt you. Hardly shall you see the sun set this day, for already you grow faint. But this has befallen you because you are already wounded. Be wise therefore and leave the battle while there is yet time." But Oliver would have none of such counsel. Therefore they fell to fighting again, and this so fiercely that the armour of the two of them was well-nigh broken to pieces.

When the King saw this, and perceived that Oliver was in no little danger, he was greatly troubled. He prayed aloud, saying, "O Lord God, now keep the valiant Oliver, that he be not slain or taken. Verily, if aught happen to him, I swear by my father's soul that I will burn every monastery and church and altar in the land." But the Duke Naymes rebuked the King, saying, "Speak not thus, Sir King. Rather pray to God that of His goodness He will help Oliver." And the King said, "You are right; I spake foolishly."

Meanwhile the two champions continued to fight fiercely, more fiercely than befitted prudent or experienced warriors. Oliver especially was so carried out of himself that his hand grew numb with the frequency of his blows, and at last his sword flew out of his hand. Straightway he ran to regain it, putting his shield over his head to cover himself from the enemy's blows. But this did not avail him, for Fierabras smote twice on the shield, and so mightily that he brake it into pieces, and the breastplate under it also. And Oliver durst not go forward to take up his sword, for he feared greatly what the giant might do to him. When the men of France saw in what straits he was, they made as if they would arm themselves and go to his help. But this King Charles would not suffer. "Not so," said he; "God can save him and maintain him in the right, and He will do so."

Then the others abode in their place. But now Fierabras began to jeer and scoff at Oliver, "Now I know that you are vanquished, for you dare not put out your hand to take your

sword for fear of me; no, you would not stoop to the ground to gain the wealth of the whole world. Now hearken to me: if you will deny your faith and declare that your God is no god, and believe in Mahomet, then I will give you my sister Floripas in marriage, than whom there is no fairer maid upon earth, and we two will conquer France or ever this year shall have passed, and I will make you King of one-half of this realm." Oliver answered, "Now God forbid that I should listen to such folly. These your gods are no gods at all, and have no goodness or strength." Fierabras said, I see that you are firmly set in your mind not to do these things. Now there was never man on earth who has given me such trouble of mind as have you. But now take up your sword; for without it you can have no more strength in battle than a woman." "That will I not do," answered Oliver. "I will not take my sword by your courtesy. My life and death are with God; and I will win my sword by fair fight or not at all."

Thereupon Fierabras came against Oliver, having his sword Pleasance in his hand. Then was Oliver in a great strait, for he had no sword, and his shield was cleft in twain, and his armour grievously broken. But God had mercy upon him, and put it in his head to look about him. And looking he saw the horse of Fierabras, and on the saddle two swords, Baptism and Grabon. Whereupon he made haste and laid hold on the sword Baptism. And when he had possessed himself of it, he said, "King of Alexandria, now the time of reckoning has come. See, I have one of your swords; you must take good care lest it be your destruction." When Fierabras saw what Oliver had done, he changed colour and said, "O Baptism, my good sword, what is this? Never did better weapon hang by my side or by the side of any man living upon earth." Then he said to Oliver, "You are, I well know, an honourable knight. Come, now, take your own sword and give to me that which is mine." "Not so," answered Oliver; "I will make no agreement with you, save this: that I will do my best to slay you, and you shall do the same with me."

And when he had said this, Oliver ran at Fierabras as fiercely as a lion that leaps upon its prey. Nor was Fierabras

slow to meet him. Indeed, he smote him so stoutly that he brake through his helmet, wounding the knight's head. Seeing this he cried, "Now you are wounded, Sir Oliver. Never more shall you see King Charles or Roland; so shall I at last have my desire." But Oliver answered, "Be not so proud nor boast overmuch. I have a good confidence that I shall either slay you or conquer you." Then he made a feint to strike the pagan on the head; and Fierabras, raising his shield over high to cover himself from the blow, left his side unguarded, which Oliver, quickly perceiving, drove his sword with all his might into the pagan's side. And the man fell with the blow, so mighty was it, for Oliver dealt it with all his strength that so he might put an end to the fight.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW OLIVER AND OTHERS WERE TAKEN PRISONERS

Fierabras, knowing himself to be vanquished, cried to Oliver, "I crave your mercy, noble knight, and I pray that I may be baptized; for how can I refuse to believe in the God by whose help you have now overcome me? Therefore I surrender myself to you, and beg for your protection." When Oliver heard him speak and saw in what a strait he was, he had great compassion on him, and laid him under a tree, and so bound up his wounds that he stanch'd the bleeding. When he had done this, Fierabras said, "Now, noble sir, carry me away from this place, for of my own strength I cannot go." Oliver answered, "Nay, but you are of so great a weight that I may not take you." Then said the giant again, "Take me to the King, for verily I am very near my end. And if you cannot bear me, then take my horse and mount thereon, and lay me across the saddle, and put my sword by thy side. And mark this: there lie in wait in that wood yonder 40,000 men—soldiers of mine, whom I set there this very day, bidding them there abide till I should return from the battle." Oliver was ill-content with these words; nevertheless he took the giant and

laid him across the saddle of his horse, and went his way. Then there charged from the wood a great host of pagans, among whom was a certain Brullant, and another, Sortybrant by name.

When Oliver saw these he struck his spurs into his horse, but the beast was so heavily burdened that he could not go so fast as the enemy pursued. When the men of France saw this, they made all haste to go to the help of Oliver, Roland first of all, and Richard of Normandy, and Guy of Burgundy, and Duke Thierry, and as was meet, Oliver's own father, Duke Reyner. Meanwhile Brullant, having outstripped his companions, came near, for he rode a horse that was as swift as a greyhound. Then Oliver said to Fierabras, "Now, Sir King, I must needs put you down, and this I do with much discontent. But you see that I am in a great strait, for if these men overtake me then shall I of a certainty be slain, and King Charles will never see me more." Fierabras answered, "Noble Oliver, will you now leave me? Surely I shall be in very evil case if you so desert me." Oliver said, "Nay, but I will not leave you, and will fight for you with all my strength to the very end." So saying he put upon himself the pagan's breastplate, which was in better case than his own, and took his sword Hautclere in his hand, and turned himself to meet the enemy. Thereupon came Brullant the Saracen riding fiercely at him, and struck him in the breast with his spear, so that the shaft brake; but Oliver was wounded. When Fierabras saw this he said, "Sir Oliver, you have done enough for me; now take thought for yourself. But lay me first somewhere out of the way, if it may be." So Oliver laid him under a tree out of the way. And when he had done this he saw a great multitude of Saracens about him on every side. Seeing, therefore, that there was no way for him to escape, he prayed to God that it might be granted to him not to die at that time, but rather to live till he should come to his end in company with Roland his comrade. After this he drew Hautclere his sword, and smote the first man that he encountered—he was the son of the greatest lord that was in the army of the Saracens—and cleft his body to the breast, so that he fell down dead. Whereupon Oliver took his shield, for his own had been broken to pieces. This done he charged the

enemy; one of the leaders he slew at the first stroke, and not a few afterwards. He bore himself right bravely, but it was not in mortal man to prevail against such a host. First his horse was slain under him, and though he rose again from the earth and stood upon his feet, and dealt many mighty blows, slaying many, yet he was overcome by the strength and number of the Saracens. His shield was broken in thirty places, and his breastplate pierced through with darts, and his body wounded many times. At the last, being overcome by weariness and great bleeding, he fell to the ground. Then the Saracens took hold of him as he lay, and bound him with cords, and blindfolded his eyes, and setting him on a horse, so carried him away. All this time he did not cease to cry out for help, calling by name on King Charles and on Roland, who was his comrade. Nor did these turn a deaf ear to his cries, but came with all haste to help him, if it might be. And among them was Roland, and Ogier the Dane, and Guy of Burgundy, yes, and King Charles himself. There was not one of them but slew a Saracen, but Oliver they could not rescue, because they that had him in charge fled with all speed, so that the men of France could not by any means come up with them. Nor was this all the trouble, for many of the Christians were slain, and others were taken prisoners, as Gerard of Montdidier and Geoffrey Langevin. These the Saracens bound to horses and carried away with all haste. When Charlemagne saw this he was so angry that he well-nigh lost his wits. "Help! help!" he cried to the men of France. "Will you not save your comrades? It will be an ill day for France if these men are carried away into captivity." Nor were Roland and his comrades slow to do the King's bidding, for they spurred their horses, and pursued after the enemy, seeking if by any means they might deliver the prisoners. And ever Roland was in front, having his good sword Durendal in his hand. Many blows did he deal with it, and few were they that were smitten and yet lived. For the space of five miles they followed after the Saracens, and still as they followed they slew, but nevertheless they could not come up with Oliver and the rest of the prisoners, so quickly did they who had them in charge carry them away. As for Roland, though

he swore that he would not turn back before he had delivered his comrades from captivity, yet he was constrained to depart from his purpose, for now the night began to fall, and no man knew by which way he should go. So the King, seeing that there was much danger lest the Saracens should lay an ambush for his army, bade them halt and turn back to the camp. And this they did very unwillingly.

As King Charles rode back, he found Fierabras lying under a tree much spent with the bleeding of his wounds. When he saw him, he said, "I have good cause to hate you, pagan that you are, for you are the cause whereby many of my men have been slain and taken prisoners, among them Oliver, than whom there is no one in the whole world dearer to me."

When Fierabras heard these words, he sighed and said, "Most noble King, I pray you of your mercy to pardon me and cause to be made a Christian man, so that, if I should be healed of my wounds, I may do all that is in me to advance the Christian faith, and to deliver the Holy Sepulchre. And now I beseech you to order that I may be baptized without delay."

When the King heard him speak in this fashion he felt a great compassion for him, and bade his knights carry him to a convenient lodging. And when the men of France saw of how great stature and beauty he was, they marvelled much, for indeed, when he was without his armour, there was no fairer man to be seen in all the world. Then they sent in all haste for Turpin the Archbishop, who when he was come baptized him in the name of Florin. Nevertheless he was still called Fierabras to the day of his death. Then the King sent his physicians and sages to search out his wounds, who having examined him, when they found that he had not been hurt in any mortal part, affirmed that he would be whole again in the space of two months.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW OLIVER AND HIS COMRADES FARED.

The Saracens that had charge of Oliver and the other knights did not halt till they came to a rich city, Aygremore by name. Being arrived there they made a great braying of trumpets at the gate. Balan, who was father to Fierabras, hearing this came to the gate, and seeing there Brullant, said to him, "Tell me, Brullant, my friend, how you have fared. Have you taken King Charles, and put his Peers to flight?" Brullant answered, "I have no such tidings for you, Sir Admiral. We have been discomfited by King Charles, and Fierabras your son was overcome in single fight by one of the King's Barons, and has been made a Christian man."

When the Admiral heard this, he was greatly troubled, and fell into a swoon. Being recovered from this, he made a great complaint of his ill-fortune, and lamented over his son, as one who never having been vanquished before had now suffered defeat. And at last, so great was his rage, he cried, "Now if this be true, and Fierabras my son is lost to me, verily I will strike out the brains of this false god Mahomet, who having promised me so much has fulfilled so little." And he threw himself in an agony upon the ground.

After a while, his anger having now somewhat cooled, he said to Brullant, "Tell me now, was Fierabras my son vanquished by one of these knights whom I now see before me? If it be so, show the man to me." So Brullant showed to him Oliver, and Balan was fain to admire him, so tall he was and strong and fair. Nevertheless he cried, "Bring him hither to me, and I will cut him to pieces." When the others understood that it was his purpose to put Oliver to death, they were greatly troubled. But Oliver comforted them saying, "We are not in such ill case as you think. But mark this one thing that I counsel you.

Tell not your true names to the Admiral. If he once knows that we are Peers of France, he will have no pity upon us, and we shall die." But the Saracens knew not what he said. After this Balan commanded that the prisoners should be brought before him, having been first bound with cords and blindfolded. This being done, he said to Oliver, "Tell me now your name and country, and mind that you say nothing that is false."

Oliver answered, "I am a poor knight, Eugenes by name, born in Lorraine, my father being a yeoman, and these my comrades whom you see are poor knights also, and we have taken service with the King, hoping thus to get advancement and reward." Balan was very wroth to hear this. "I thought," he cried, "that I had five of the best and bravest knights in France, and that having these I possessed, as it were, the keys of France." And he said to his chamberlain, "Strip these men of their raiment and bind them to that pillar yonder, and bring me darts well pointed with iron that I may shoot at them for my sport." But Brullant stood up and said, "Sir Admiral, I beseech you to hear me; it is now eventide, and too late to do justice in proper form; your lords and councillors also are not here; delay therefore this matter to the morrow, when the thing shall be known and your judgment better approved, for that these men rightly deserve such punishment I do heartily believe. Consider also that King Charles may be willing to give up Fierabras in exchange for these knights. Wherefore you would do well to keep them without harm."

"This is good counsel," said the Admiral. "Send for Brutamont, and let him take these men in charge." Now Brutamont was keeper of the King's prison.

Then Brutamont thrust these French knights into the prison, which was a dungeon so deep that no light could enter it. A horrible place it was, in which were nourished serpents and toads and all manner of venomous beasts, and there was a most evil stench in it. Also the water of the sea flowed in when the tide was high, and at this time it was so deep in the dungeon that it came up even to the shoulders of the prisoners. As for Oliver

the salt water made his wounds, which were many and grievous, to smart beyond all bearing. He was therefore in evil case, and most certainly had died but for Gerard of Montdidier, who kept him up so that he should not drown. And indeed they were all in great peril of drowning, and doubtless had so perished, but that there were in the dungeon two pillars, fifteen feet or thereabouts in height, upon which they climbed, lifting up Oliver also, for of his own strength he could not have done it. Loudly did he lament, crying out that his father Reynier should never more see him alive. But Gerard comforted him, saying, "It is not for a brave knight to complain. Let us rather trust in God. Nevertheless I wish that we had each of us a good sword in his hand. I vow to God that we would slay not a few score of Saracens before they should put us again into this dungeon."

Now the Admiral had a daughter, Floripas by name, a very fair damsel, and not yet married. She was of a reasonable stature, and as bright as a rose in May. Her hair was like shining gold, and her eyes bright as the eyes of a falcon, and the eyebrows above them fine and straight, her nose shapely, her cheeks well rounded, fair as a fleur-de-lys, but with delicate colour of rose; her mouth small and delicate with a chin suitably fashioned, and her shoulders straight and her bosom of a most dainty curve. She was clad in a robe of purple brodered with gold, of noble aspect, and of such a virtue that no one wearing it could be harmed by any poison. Such was Floripas to behold. So fair was she, that if a man had fasted for three days or four and should then look upon her, he should be as well satisfied as with abundance of meat and drink.

The maiden hearing the complaints of the French knights felt a great pity for them. So she went from her chamber to the hall, and twelve maidens that waited upon her followed. And when she came to the hall she found a great lamenting, and asking the cause she heard that her brother Fierabras had been vanquished in battle and taken prisoner. Thereupon she cried aloud, and wept bitterly, and all that were in the hall wept with her.

After that the maiden's grief was somewhat spent, she sent for Brutamont the jailer, and demanded of him who were these men that he had in the dungeon. "Madam," said he, "they are French knights, servants of King Charles, and they have wrought great harm to our people, and done dishonour to our gods. This also they have added to their crimes, that they have helped to slay Fierabras your brother. One of them there is who is as seemly a man as ever I beheld; 'twas he, I am told, that prevailed over your brother." Then said Floripas, "Open now the dungeon, for I would fain know how they fare." But Brutamont answered, "Not so, madam; the place is foul and loathsome, and so dark that you could see the men. Also your father has strictly charged me that I should suffer no one to come near to the prison, and least of all a woman, seeing that many are deceived and shamed by women."

Floripas was very wroth to hear such words, "Thou evil beast!" said she; "dost use such speech to me?" And she called her chamberlain and bade him fetch her a staff. Which when he had brought, she smote Brutamont the jailer so mighty a blow upon the head that he fell to the ground a dead man.

Then Floripas bade them light a torch and open the door of the prison. And when she saw the prisoners how they had climbed upon the pillars, as has been told, she said, "Tell me now, my lords, who you are and how you are named." Oliver answered, "Fair lady, we are men of France, and knights of King Charles, and having been brought hither have been put by the Admiral into this horrible dungeon. Better had we been slain in battle than that we should rot in this place!" Floripas, who for all that she was not a Christian woman, was of great courtesy and compassion, said to them, "Now I promise that I will take you out of this prison, only you must engage to do what I demand of you." And Oliver said, "That will we do, madam, right gladly. We are true men and faithful, nor have we ever been aught else, nor will be. Give us arms in our hands, and set us where we may fight with these Saracens. Verily they shall be ill content with us."

"Now," answered Floripas, "methinks you boast overmuch. Here are you in prison, and you boast yourself against them that are at liberty. 'Tis better for a man to be quiet than to talk so foolishly." Then spake Gerard, "Lady, he that is so kept in prison will oft use light words that he may forget his pain." Then Floripas said to Gerard, "You excuse your fellow right courteously. I trow that you have a flattering tongue wherewith to win a maiden's heart." You speak truly, lady," cried William the Scot; "you shall not find his peer for three hundred miles and more."

After this Floripas sent her chamberlain to fetch a rope, which she let down into the dungeon. When the prisoners saw it they put it first round Oliver, and Floripas and her chamberlain drew him up out of the water with no little labour. After him the others were drawn up more easily. Having so rescued them, she took them by a secret way into her own lodging, which was a very fair and spacious abode, marvellously adorned with all manner of paintings, as of the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, with woods and mountains and living creatures of all kinds, made, as some will have it, by the son of Methuselah. This dwelling stood on a black rock, altogether surrounded by the sea, and near to it was a garden of which the flowers and fruits never failed. There were precious herbs also which availed to cure all manner of sickness and maladies, save only the malady of death.

Now Floripas had a governess, by name Maragonde. Maragonde said to the maiden, "Madam, I know these Frenchmen well. That is Oliver, son of Reyner, the same that has vanquished Fierabras your brother; that yonder is Gerard of Montdidier, and this William the Scot. Now may Mahomet send his curse upon me if I do not straightway tell your father, the lord Admiral." When Floripas heard these words she changed colour, being moved to much anger, which nevertheless she hid. Then she called the woman to come to her where she stood by a window; when she was come she struck her to the ground with a great blow, and calling her servant, bade him throw her into the

sea, for she much feared her father and his malice. "Go now, spiteful wretch," said Floripas when she saw Maragonde sink in the water, "You have your reward."

This done, she greeted the Frenchmen right courteously, and when she saw how Sir Oliver was covered with blood, she gave him a draught of a certain herb that is named Mandegloire, which when he had drunk he was immediately made whole. Then the knights were refreshed with baths and were furnished with goodly apparel, and had entertainment of meat and drink. And when they were satisfied, she said to them, "My lords, I know full well who you are, that this, for instance, is Sir Oliver who vanquished Fierabras my brother; yet I have showed you this great kindness, nor this without danger to myself. Now there is a certain knight in France whom I have long loved, Guy of Burgundy by name, he is the goodliest man that ever I saw, and is of the kindred of Charlemagne and of Roland. I saw him at Rome when my father the Admiral took that city, and then and there gave him my heart, when he had struck down to the earth a certain Lucifer that was chief of the pagan warriors. For the sake of this Guy I will become a Christian, and if I may not have him to my husband, I will never marry. Now therefore I beg that you will help me in this matter." Then said Gerard of Montdidier, "Madam, give us arms, and we will put the Saracens to flight." But Floripas was prudent and said, "Rest awhile, my friends, for it will need much counsel before it can be seen what you had best do."

CHAPTER XVIII

OF THE BRIDGE OF MANTRYBLE

Duke Reyner could neither eat nor drink for the grief that he had about his son; and when he could no longer endure this trouble, he came to King Charles and made his complaint. "Oh, sir," he said, "I am like to die of grief for my dear son Oliver. If I have no tidings of him then I must needs perish, or go myself to seek him." The King when he heard these words was full of pity, and sent for Roland, and said to him, "Fair nephew, you must go on the morrow to Aygremore, and get speech of Balan, and say to him, and that full plainly, that he must straightway deliver up the holy things that he has, and also set free those my knights that he has in keeping. And if he refuse to do these things, then tell him that I will most surely hang him as a thief." To this Roland answered, "Fair king and uncle, send me on no such errand, for if you do, you will never see me more." Then spake the Duke Naymes, "Take heed, Sire, what you do. You know what a valiant man is your nephew Roland. If you send him, he will return no more." Said King Charles, "Then you shall go with him, bearing the letters that I shall send to the Admiral." And then others of the Peers, as Duke Thierry and Ogier the Dane, stood up in their place, and said the same thing, then the King swore a great oath, even by the eyes in his head, that they also should go. So he did to six of the Peers. Last of all he spied Guy of Burgundy and said to him, "You are my cousin and nearest to me in blood, you shall be the seventh with these six to take my message to Balan the Admiral. You shall say to him that I purpose to baptize him, that he holds of me his whole kingdom, and that he must deliver up to me the holy things." Said Guy of Burgundy, "My lord, I pray you send me not on this errand, for if you will send me I am assured that you will never see me again." But the King took no heed. On the morrow the seven came and stood before him and said, "We crave your leave to

depart; if we have done wrong to any in this company we pray his pardon, and if any have wronged us, him we pardon." At these words all that were there began to weep for pity. The King said, Well beloved, I commend you to God; may He have you in His keeping!" Then they went their way.

Meanwhile in Aygremore the Admiral was in great trouble and doubt. He sent, therefore, for fifteen Kings of the Saracens, that they might advise him. When they were come the fiercest of them, Maradas by name, said, "Sir Admiral, why have you sent for us?" Balan answered, "I will tell you truly: Charlemagne is on his way hither. He says that I hold my kingdom of him. Now he were better advised to sit still and rest his old body, and pray in his churches, and eat such food as he has. Go you, therefore, and demand of him my son Fierabras, and bid him do homage for his kingdom, or I will come with one hundred thousand men, and constrain him." Maradas liked not the matter, but said that he would go. So did the others also; so they armed themselves and departed.

So these two companies both went their way, and in no long while approached one to the other. And first Duke Naymes espied the Saracens, and said, "See now these Saracens are coming against us with a great force; advise what we shall do. Roland said: "Be in no haste, my lords. There be but twenty of them, or, at the most thirty; let us ride straight against them," and this advice seemed good to them all.

After this Maradas rode out from the company of the Saracens, and said, "It is an ill fortune for you, being Christian men, that you have met with us." "That is foolishly said," answered Duke Naymes. "We come from King Charles bearing a message to Balan your master." Maradas said again: "For all that you are in danger. Will any one joust with me?" "That will I," said Duke Naymes. "You are overbold," answered Maradas. "I would willingly fight with ten such as you. Hear you now, all of you; let no one move from his place; I will overcome you all, and give you to my lord the Admiral."

Roland, when he heard these words, was well-nigh beside himself with anger, and cried, "Before the sun set, thou shalt see what we can do." Then he charged at Maradas in great fury, and Maradas charged also. Each brake the corselet of the other with his spear's point; but Roland dealt Maradas such a blow that he brake his helmet from off his head, and then, quickly recovering himself, smote him on his bare skull and cleft it to the brain, so that he fell down dead. Then the other knights fell upon the rest of the Saracens and slew them, one only escaping, who did not draw rein till he came to the Admiral. Said the Admiral, "You have come back with good speed. What have you done?" And the King that had escaped answered, "It has gone very ill with us; we encountered seven Knights of France, who said they were King Charles's men. They ran upon us, and had such mastery over us that I only escaped to tell the tale." When the Admiral heard, he well-nigh died of grief and rage.

After the battle with the Saracens Roland and his fellows rested awhile in a meadow that was nigh at hand. And the Duke Naymes said, "It were well that we should return to King Charles and tell him how we have fared. I take it he will be well pleased." But Roland said, "Do you talk of returning, Sir Duke? So long as I have my good sword Durendal in my hand I will not return. We will do our message to the Admiral as the King commanded. Come now, let us take each one a head of a pagan in his hand and present them to the Admiral." "You are out of your wits, Sir Roland," said the Duke Naymes; "if we do so, we shall surely be all slain." But the others were of Roland's opinion; therefore each man took a head of a pagan in his hand, and they went their way.

So they journeyed till they came to the Bridge Mantryble. When the Duke Naymes saw the bridge, he said, "This is Mantryble, and on the other side of the bridge lies the town of Aygremore, where we shall find the Admiral." Then said Ogier the Dane, "We must first pass the bridge, and it is a very dangerous place. There are in it thirty arches, and on it are

great towers, and the walls are so wide that ten knights can ride abreast upon them. And in the midst of it is a great draw-bridge, which is let down and pulled up with ten chains of iron. And under the bridge there is a river, which they call Flagot. This river flows as fast as a bolt flies out of a cross-bow; so fierce is the current that no boat or galley can by any means cross over it. And the Keeper of the bridge is a giant, Gallafer by name, a very terrible monster to behold. He is armed with an axe of steel with which to smite down any one that may presume to pass over the bridge against his will."

Then said Roland, Do not trouble yourselves, my lords. As long as it shall please God to keep me, and I have Durendal in my hand, I care not one penny for any pagan, be he giant or other. This porter I will slay, if he seek to hinder me." But Duke Naymes said to Sir Roland, "This is foolish talk; it is not wise to give one blow and to receive a score. Leave the matter to me, and I will deal so with the porter, that he will let us pass over the bridge without any trouble."

So when they came to the bridge, the Duke Naymes rode before them. He was an old man, and his hair was white, so that it became him to ride first. The porter said to him, "Whither do you go with this company, and what is your errand?" The Duke answered, "We are messengers from King Charles, and we go to Aygremore with a message to Balan the Admiral. He has not driven all evil men out of his country, for on our way we met some fifteen villains who would have taken from us our horses and our lives. But we took such order with them that they will not trouble us any more. See, here are their heads."

When the porter heard these words he was well-nigh out of his wits with anger. He said to the Duke Naymes, "Hear me; you must pay your toll for the passing of this bridge." The Duke answered, "What is the toll. We will content you." "It is no little, this toll," said the porter. "You must pay thirty couple of hounds, and a hundred damsels, and a hundred falcons in their cages, and a hundred horses, and for each foot of each horse a piece of gold. Also you must give me four pack-horses laden with gold and

silver." The Duke said, "All this and more you will find in our baggage, which comes after us. You shall have your toll by noon. Of a truth there are many more things than you say, as hauberks, and helmets, and good shields. You shall take of them as much as you will." This Gallafer the Porter believed, so boldly did the Duke speak, and he let them pass by the drawbridge. Then Roland laughed out, and said, "Sir Duke, you have indeed kept your word; "and when they had gone a little further Roland espied a Turk that was coming across the bridge, and without ado he lighted down from his beast, took the Turk by the middle, and threw him over the wall of the bridge into the river. When the Duke Naymes, looking behind him, saw what he had done, he said, "Surely the devil is in this Roland; he has no patience in him. If God does not keep us he will bring us all to our death." And indeed Roland was of so high a courage that he took no count of time or place; wherever he found his enemy he would forthwith avenge himself on him.

CHAPTER XIX

OF THE DOINGS OF FLORIPAS

In due course the French knights came to the town of Aygremore, and having entered by the gate, came, a Saracen guiding them, to where the Admiral sat in the shade of a tree. The Duke Naymes said to his companions, "I am the bearer of the King's letter, and I therefore will speak first." At this Roland was ill content, desiring greatly to have this office for himself. But the Duke would not suffer it; "Nay," said he, "speak not one word; you cannot keep yourself in bounds; if you have your way you will bring us all to death before sunset."

So the Duke spake first, beginning in this fashion, "Now may God Almighty save and defend our mighty Lord King Charles, and confound Balan the Admiral and his subjects. For these have borne themselves to us most dishonourably, seeking to take from us our horses and other possessions." When the Admiral heard these words, he had much ado to keep under his anger. Before he could make answer to the Duke there came the one King who had escaped from the Frenchmen, and told him saying, "These are the same eight villains that slew the Kings; avenge yourself on them." Balan said, "Let them be for the present," and turning to Duke Naymes, he said, "Finish now your message." The Duke answered that he would gladly do this, and so proceeded: "The great and noble King of France bids you render to him the crown of thorns with which our Lord Christ was crowned and the other Holy Things. Also he commands you to set free certain knights of his whom you hold in prison; which things if you fail to do forthwith he will cause you to be hanged by the neck till you die." Balan said, "You have reviled me with violent words; but I have heard you courteously. Go now, and sit down by yonder pillar, and let these others speak, whom I have not yet heard."

Then came Richard of Normandy, and spake the same words. When the Admiral saw him, he said, "You are like to Richard of Normandy, the same that slew my uncle Corsuble. Go and sit you down till I have heard your fellows." After Richard came the others, saying the same words, and other words like to them. But none spake more fiercely and proudly than Roland, who, after that he had bidden the Admiral render the Holy Things and the knights his prisoners, added, "And see that you give up these same prisoners in good case; Otherwise King Charles will have you hanged by the neck as a thief."

Balan cried in a rage, "These are proud words. Now I swear by Mahomet and Termagant that I will not eat till you are hanged." But Roland answered, "Then methinks you will keep an overlong fast. Say what you will; I count you to be of no more worth than a dead dog."

Last of all came Guy of Burgundy, who, after he had delivered the message said, "I counsel you, Sir Admiral, to submit yourself to my lord the King. Take off your coat, and your hose and your shoes, and go in your shirt only, carrying on your back the saddle of a horse, and rest not till you come to the presence of King Charles, when you shall confess your misdoings, and pray for mercy. Which things if you do not, you will assuredly be hanged or burnt with fire."

When he had heard all these words the Admiral was not a little wroth. He called, therefore, Brullant and Sortibrant, and others of his counsellors, and said to them, "What shall we do with these men?" Sortibrant answered, "Let them be cut in pieces. And when you have slain them, gather together all your armies, and go to Mormyond, where King Charles is at this present, and take him, and put him to death." When the Admiral heard this counsel he agreed to it, and commanded that preparations should be made for the slaying of the French knights.

But the Princess Floripas was aware of all that had been done. Therefore, coming into the hall, she saluted her father, and

said to him, "Who are these knights that are set yonder by themselves?" The Admiral answered, "They are knights of France who have reproached me with very evil words. What shall I do with them?" Floripas said, "I advise you to smite off their heads with as little delay as may be, for they have well deserved it. Afterwards burn their bodies outside the city."

The Admiral said, "This is good counsel; it shall be done forthwith. Go now to the prison, and bring thence the other knights that are there. So shall they all suffer death together." "Good father," answered Floripas, "it is now time for dinner. You cannot commodiously do this justice till you have dined." But her purpose was to persuade her father with fair words so that he might bring all the Frenchmen together. She said therefore, "Father, give these knights into my keeping. They shall be well guarded. And after dinner you shall do justice upon them in the presence of your people." To this the Admiral consented. But Sortibrant, who knew that women are changeable and inconstant, said to him, "It is not a wise thing to put such trust in a woman. You will know by many examples how men are deceived by them." Floripas was greatly angered at these words of Sortibrant, and said to him, "You are a traitor, perjured and disloyal. I would give you such a buffet on your face that the blood would run down amain, were it a seemly thing for a maid to do."

Their debate being ended, Floripas took the French knights to her lodgings. As they went, the Duke Naymes said, "Who ever saw so fair a woman as this? Of a truth the man who should do battle for love of her would be well inspired." But Roland was angry, and said, "What devil prompts you to speak of love; this is not the time for such talk." And the Duke answered, "Sir Roland, I too was once a lover." But Floripas, saying they did ill to dispute among themselves, took them into her lodgings, and shut to the door. Then Roland and Oliver embraced with much joy. The other knights also were right glad to come together again. And, indeed, it was a marvellous thing; but what will not a woman's wit effect in the attaining of that

which she greatly desires? For it has been told that Floripas had great love for Guy of Burgundy, and was willing to be baptized if only she might have him to her husband.

When the knights had finished their greetings, Floripas said to them, "My lords, will you promise me on your honour that you will help me to attain that which I desire?" The Duke Naymes answered, "That, madam, will we do right willingly. And you may trust that we will keep faith with you." Then Floripas asked the Duke by what name he was known. And when he had told her she asked the names of the others. And when she came to Roland and had heard that he was Roland, son of the Duke of Milan and nephew to King Charles himself, she kneeled down at his feet. And when he had raised her up right courteously, she said to him, "I love a certain knight of France, Guy of Burgundy by name, and I would have tidings of him." "Madam," answered Roland, "he is here in this very place; there is not more than four feet of space between him and you."

Then Roland said to Guy of Burgundy, "Come hither, Sir Guy, to this maiden and receive her right gladly, as is fit." But Guy answered, "God forbid that I should take a wife except she were given me by King Charles himself." When Floripas heard him she changed colour, being very angry, and said, "If this be so, then I swear by Mahomet that all these knights shall be hanged on a gibbet." Then said Roland to Guy, "I pray you do this damsel the pleasure that she would have." So Guy consented to her will. And Floripas said that now she had the thing she most desired, and kissed him, not on the mouth, for that she durst not, being yet a pagan, but upon the cheek and chin. After this she opened a great chest that she had in her chamber, and spread a fair cloth of silk, and on this she laid the crown of thorns and the nails with which the Lord's feet were pierced. "This," she said, "is the great treasure which ye have so much desired to see." Then the knights went up and kissed the Holy Relics reverently, not without tears. After this the things were put up again into the chest where they had been before.

CHAPTER XX

OF THE DOINGS OF THE FRENCH KNIGHTS

As the Admiral sat at dinner there came into the hall the chieftain who was named Lucifer, and was a special friend to the Admiral. He said, "Is it true, as I have heard, that Fierabras, your son, who was the very best knight in the whole world, has been overcome and taken prisoner?" "It is true," answered the Admiral, "I will not hide the thing from you. A French knight, whom may Mahomet confound, overcame him. But we have taken five of King Charles's knights; seven other knights came hither bearing a very insolent message to me from the King, all these therefore are in prison. I gave them into the hands of Floripas my daughter, and she has shut them up in prison."

"Sir," said Lucifer, "this was not well done of you, to trust these prisoners to a woman, for women are apt to change, and to turn from one thing to another. If it please you I will go and see in what condition they are."

Then said the Admiral, "That is well counselled; go and see, and when you return make my daughter to return with you."

So Lucifer went, and when he came to the chamber where Floripas was he did not seek to have the door opened to him, but smote it so stoutly with his foot that he brake down the bolts and bars.

When Floripas saw this she was very wroth, and said to Roland, "This violence is ill-pleasing to me, Sir Roland, all the more because this man that has done it should have been my husband, though I loved him not. I pray you avenge me of this wrong."

"Be content, fair lady," answered Roland, "this fellow shall be made to know of his misdoing ere he depart hence. Never did he pay so much for the making of a lock as he shall

pay for the breaking of it." Meanwhile Lucifer entered the chamber, and coming up to the Duke of Naymes, who was bareheaded, took him by the beard, and drew him to himself so roughly that he had well-nigh thrown him to the ground. "Whence come you, old man?" said he, "Tell me the truth." The Duke told him, "I am Duke of Naymes, and I am a councillor of King Charles, from whom I have come, with these lords whom you see, bringing a message to the Admiral. And because what we said was not to his liking, he has made us prisoners. But now take your hand from my beard, you have held me long enough. And be sure that I say not all that I think." The pagan answered him, "May be the Admiral will forgive you your folly. But come, tell me truly of your countrymen, how do they bear themselves, and what games do they play?" The Duke answered, "When the King has dined every man may go where he will. Some ride on horses, and some go into the fields, and some play at chess or tables. In the morning every man hears Mass when it is said; they are wont also to give alms to such as are in need. And in battle they are not easily to be overcome."

Lucifer said, "Old man, you dote; these things are naught; say, can your folk blow at the great coal?" "I never heard of the great coal," said the Duke. Then said Lucifer, "I will teach you the manner of it," and he came near to a great fire that was in the chamber, Roland making a sign meanwhile to the Duke that he should bear with the man's way. Then Lucifer took the biggest brand that was on the fire, and blew it so strongly that the sparks flew about abundantly. "And now," said he to the Duke, "You must blow also." Thereupon the Duke took the coal, and blew it so strongly that the flame came near to the pagan's face, and burnt his beard. Lucifer was almost out of his wits for anger, but before he could as much as speak the Duke smote him with the brand upon the neck so strongly that the bone was broken, and the man fell dead upon the floor. "By my faith," said Roland, "you can play, right well at blowing of the coal. Now blessed be the arm that struck that blow." The Duke said, "Blame me not, my friends, for ye saw how the man trifled with me." Then said Floripas, Sir, you are worthy of all honour.

Lucifer, I reckon, will have no more desire to play with you at the great coal. Nor will he wish to marry me. For indeed that was his purpose. Verily I had rather died the most villainous death than have had him for my husband."



BLOWING THE GREAT COAL.

After a while Floripas, being a woman of wise counsel, said to the knights, "This Lucifer that is now dead was a man

much beloved by my father, who doubtless is even now waiting for him to come to dinner. As soon as it shall be known that he has been slain, you will be assailed; and if you be vanquished, not all the gold in the world will redeem you from death. Arm yourselves, therefore; and, being armed, wait not till you are assailed in this place, but issue forth and yourselves assail the Admiral's palace, and be sure that you do this in such fashion as to become masters of it."

This counsel seemed good to the Knights. So they armed themselves, and went forth, bold as lions and fierce as hungry wolves, and the time of going forth was the hour that is between day and night. First of all went Roland, and slew King Corsablis; next came Oliver, and he also smote a king, Coldro by name; great was the slaughter, for the Saracens were taken as they sat at meat. Many were killed and not a few leapt from the windows and so perished. As for the Admiral he escaped most narrowly; for as he leapt from a window Roland dealt a great blow at him with his sword, and the sword made a hole of a foot deep in the marble stone of the window. "Brother," said Oliver, "the Admiral has escaped from you." "You say true," answered Roland, "and I am but ill content." But the Frenchmen made themselves masters of the palace, and having shut fast the gates, were safe. But this was like to trouble them, that they had no meat.

Now the Admiral had lighted in a ditch, and now began to cry to his men that they should draw him out. And this service Brullant and Sortibrant did for him. And when he was drawn out, Sortibrant said to him, "Sir Admiral, did I not say to you that you should not trust a woman? See now what has happened. Another day you had better believe me. Keep by the tail of an old dog, and you will not go out of the way." The Admiral said, "Sortibrant, reproach me no more. I will be avenged of these men before many days be passed." "That is well," answered Sortibrant, "but now the night is far spent. I would counsel you to do nothing before the morrow." With this the Admiral was fain to be content. But he made great lamentation over Lucifer.

As for the Frenchmen, he vowed that he would drag them at the tails of his horses, making sure that they could not hold out, because they had nothing to eat, nor could their King send them any help, "for" said he, "all help must needs come over the bridge Mantryble, and that bridge we hold."

The next day the Admiral having assembled a great host, began to assail the castle with stones from slings and poisoned darts. In this way they did but little damage, but the knights and the maidens in the castle were sorely pressed for want of food, nor did any one suffer more than Floripas herself, who was grieved not for herself only, but for the knights also, and for the maidens that waited on her. When Guy of Burgundy saw this, he said to his fellows, "It is now three days since we had any bread. 'Tis a grievous thing to endure; and I suffer more for these damsels than for myself. It were better to die than to endure this pain. Let us, therefore, sally forth, and get for ourselves some victuals." This counsel pleased all the Frenchmen.

But Floripas said to them: "Now I see that the God whom you worship is of little power, seeing that he suffers you to remain in such straits. Now, if you had worshipped our gods, they would, beyond all doubt, have furnished you with abundance of meat and drink." Roland said, "Madam, let us see your gods. If they have such power as you say, we will surely worship them." Then Floripas took the keys, and took the French Knights to a place that was under the castle, where the gods were set in great state, Apollo, to wit, and Mahomet, and Termagaunt, and Jupiter, and others with them. Very splendid was the place, and full of gold and jewels. Guy of Burgundy said, "Here is store of gold: did King Charles possess this, he could set up the churches that have been overthrown."

Floripas said: "Sir Guy, you spake blasphemy against the gods; do you now worship them, that they may be inclined to help you." Sir Guy answered, "Madam, I cannot pray to them, for it seems to me that they are all asleep and take no heed of what may be said." So saying he smote the image of Jupiter that it fell to the ground, and Ogier the Dane smote another of the

images. When they were all brought to the ground, Roland said to Floripas, "Madam, these gods are of no power and avail nothing." After this the maiden believed in them no longer,

After these things, Floripas having swooned for trouble and hunger, the knights sallied forth. And Roland said, "Now some one must keep the gates that we may be able, when the occasion comes, to enter it again. Let the Duke Naymes therefore keep it, or Ogier the Dane." The Duke said, Think you, Sir Roland, that I am of estate so poor that I will serve as your porter? Assuredly I will not do so. Old I am, but yet I can ride my horse in battle, and my sinews are well set, and I have enough of strength to fight my enemies." "You shall do as you will, Sir Duke," said Roland. No man desired to take the place. Nevertheless, at the last Thierry abode with Geoffrey to keep the gate.

Meanwhile the Admiral, sitting at a window, saw how the Frenchmen came forth to battle. He sent, therefore, for Sortibrant and Brullant, and said to them, "I see that the Frenchmen are coming to fight. If they be not all slain, I shall be very ill content." Then the Saracens, of whom there was a great host, assailed the Frenchmen, but could not stand against them. Roland, having his sword Durendal in his hand, did great deeds of valour. Nor were the knights beaten back, even though King Clarion, who was the Admiral's neighbour, came to his help with 15,000 men. That day, therefore, the knights fought with much glory. And when the battle was ended, there came to them a marvellous good fortune. For they saw that there passed by the castle twenty beasts laden with provender, bread to wit, and wine, and venison, and a store of other victuals. These were on their way to the Admiral, but the French knights straightway slew the escort, and drove the beasts into the town. This thing, however, was not accomplished without much toil and trouble.

Now the trouble was this. The French knights were so hard pressed by a multitude of Saracens that followed King Clarion that some were slain, as the Duke Basyn and Aubrey his son, and that Guy of Burgundy was taken prisoner, his horse

having been killed under him. The Saracens blindfolded him and led him away, King Clarion meanwhile scoffing at him and saying, "Cry and bray as you will, my fair friend," for Guy called upon God to help him, "nothing will avail you. This day I will deliver you to the Admiral, and to-morrow you shall be hanged." The Frenchmen did marvels of valour, but they could not stand against the multitude of their enemies, and were constrained to take refuge within the Tower.

CHAPTER XXI

OF GUY OF BURGUNDY

The Frenchmen, being now safe in the Tower, refreshed themselves with food, for they had fasted long, as has been told. As they sat at meat, came Floripas and said to them, "Tell me now; where is Guy of Burgundy, that was to be my husband? I saw him sally forth out of the gates with you; has he returned with you?" Roland answered her: "Floripas, think not that you will see him again. The pagans took him out of our hands, notwithstanding all that we could do; and how he will fare in their hands we know not." When Floripas heard these words, she fell down as one dead. When she came to herself she cried aloud with a lamentable voice: "Lords of France, if Guy be not given back to me I will give up this Tower to my father before two days are over." Then Roland comforted her saying, "Be not troubled, lady, you shall see Sir Guy again in no long time. This also I say. You will not bring him back by weeping and lamenting. Be strong now, and take comfort, and also, for you are weak with long fasting, eat of this food." Then Floripas and her ladies were content, and took something to eat.

Meantime Guy was brought before the Admiral. He was much changed in face, being pale and wasted, seeing that he had not eaten for three days. Also he was troubled to think of the danger in which he stood. He had been spoiled also of his arms. For all this it was manifest that he was a very gallant knight.

Balan asked him his name and country. Guy answered: "Admiral, I will tell the truth without fear. I am Guy of Burgundy, subject to King Charles, and cousin to Roland the Valiant."

The Admiral answered, "I know you over well, Sir Guy. For seven months past my daughter has had great love for you, a thing which is most displeasing to me. Verily for this cause I have lost many good men, that you and your companions have slain. But tell me truly who are these knights that were with you in the Castle? "Then Guy told him the names of the knights, the last of all being the name of Duke Basyn. "Him," said he, "you have slain, but be assured that you will pay right dearly for his death." When he said these words, a Saracen that stood by smote him on the mouth so that the blood gushed out. Thereat Guy was greatly moved with anger, so that he lay hold of the Saracen by the hair with one hand and with the other hand smote him upon the bone of his neck so fiercely that the man fell down dead before the Admiral.

At this deed the Admiral was greatly enraged, and cried out that Guy should be closely bound. At which word all the Saracens that were in the chamber fell upon him and beat him so sorely that he would have been shortly slain, but that the Admiral himself cried out that he was not to be put to death in such a fashion. Then the Saracens bound his hands, and the Admiral bade his men fetch Brullant and Sortibrant and others of his council. "Friends," said the Admiral, "advise me what I shall do with this prisoner who sets me at nought most shamefully." Sortibrant said, "I will give you good counsel concerning him. Set up a gallows-tree near to the moat of the Tower in which the French knights abide, and make as if you were going to hang this prisoner. But first cause that a thousand Turks well armed and fit for battle be hidden in a secret place near to the said tree. Be sure that the Frenchmen, when they shall see that their comrade is about to be hanged will come forth to succour him, and when they be come, then shall your Turks that are in ambush fall on them and take them."

This counsel pleased the Admiral much. He caused, therefore, the gallows-tree to be set up, as Sortibrant had advised, and set the Turks in ambush, more than a thousand, that the thing might be made more sure. After this he bade thirty Saracens lead Guy to the tree, beating him sorely with their staves the while. His hands were bound behind his back, and there was a great rope about his neck, and he knew himself to be in evil case. He did not cease to commend himself to God; also he cried out to the Barons of France, and especially to Roland, that they should help him.

Now Roland stood at a window whence he could see the gallows-tree set up. And he said to his comrades, "What means, think you, this gallows-tree that these Saracens are setting up?" Then the others looked, and the Duke Naymes said, "Without doubt they are about to hang our comrade Guy of Burgundy." He had scarcely spoken when they saw Guy led by the Saracens, bound and stripped. Floripas also saw this thing, and cried to the Knights, "Oh, my lords, will you suffer Guy that is your comrade to be thus shamefully done to death before your eyes? If he perish in this fashion I will leap from this window and so die." And she came to Roland and kneeled before him, and kissed his feet, and cried to him, "O, Sir, help this Guy whom I love, or else I am a lost woman. Arm yourselves, I pray you, and I will cause your horses to be made ready, so, if God pleases, you will be in good time." Then Roland and his fellows armed themselves in great haste, and went forth from the Tower, and mounted their horses. And Roland said to them, "Let us now keep together as much as may be, and be ready to help each other as each may be in need, for otherwise we shall hardly win back to this place, for we are but ten in number, and they are many."

Floripas said, "My lords, I pray you not to tarry, but first I will bring you the Crown of Thorns." So she went to her chamber and brought there from the Holy Crown. This all the knights kissed with much reverence, and so issued forth from the

Tower with a good courage. When they were gone, Floripas and her damsel lifted the bridge and shut fast the gates of the Tower.

The Frenchmen rode in good order towards the place where the gallows-tree was set up, the Saracens being busied with Guy whom they had now brought thereto, with the rope round his neck. When Roland saw this, he cried out, "Hold, traitors; this thing shall not fall out as you hope. You have begun a deed of which you shall surely repent." Thereupon he charged at them with such fierceness that the hardiest of them turned to fly; yet they fled not so fast but that Roland killed twenty out of the thirty. When the Saracens that lay in ambush saw this, they rose up from the place where they lay hid, a certain Conifer, a pagan of marvellous strength, being their leader. This Conifer cried out, "Ho, ye French knaves, come you to succour this malefactor? Verily you shall be hanged along with him." Roland was very wroth to hear such villainous words, and charged fierce as a hungry wolf, with his sword Durendal drawn in his hand. Nor did Conifer for his part draw back, for he was a great warrior. He dealt a great blow on Roland's shield that went nigh to beat it down. Nevertheless Roland slew him, cleaving his head in twain. This done he ran to the gallows and cut the cords with which Guy was bound, and afterwards stood by him till he had armed himself. This he did, taking the dead pagan's arms and mounting on his horse. But this was not easily done, for all the Saracens that had lain in ambush were coming upon them, and they were sore pressed.

But Guy wrought marvels of valour, as one who having narrowly escaped from death, fought with great cheerfulness of heart. Floripas also, who stood at a window of the Tower, saw him, and cried out to him that he should bear himself as a man. When Ogier the Dane heard this, he said to his comrades, "Hark to this noble damsel, how bravely she bears herself. We will not go back to the Tower till we have done all that was in our mind to do." Then they charged the Saracens yet again; Roland being still in the front, and driving the pagans before him, for they flew

from him on all sides. Thence the Frenchmen made their way to the bridge and so again into the Tower.

When the Admiral perceived this, he was much troubled, and asked his counsellors again for advice. Sortibrant said to him, "Let every man that is here present make himself ready for battle and let all the siege engines be prepared, and all the trumpeters stand prepared to blow a great blast on their trumpets. The Frenchmen are but few, and when they shall be aware of this great multitude they will be overcome with fear." To him Brullant answered: "My friend, this that you say is but folly. You will not frighten these Frenchmen in this fashion, no, not though we had all the horns and trumpets in the world. Is not Roland there, the mightiest knight that now lives, who slays any man that dares to join in battle with him? They are all great warriors, but Roland is of such greatness that if the rest were his match they would drive the Saracens out of Spain. There is no man that could stand against them, and as for our gods, it is long since they have given us any help." The Admiral was very angry to hear such talk and would have struck Brullant with his staff, but Sortibrant held both his arms, "Let be your anger; we should do better to take counsel together how we may break down this Tower that the Christians hold."

Then the Admiral gathered all his men together, so many in number that they covered the ground a mile every way. But of more avail than all these multitudes was a certain magician, by name Mahon. He had two siege-engines of marvellous power, which were so contrived that they who worked them could not be hurt by the enemy.

Thus did the Saracens gain possession of the first defences of the Tower; yet having won them, they could not long hold them, for the French knights did their part right bravely, hurling down from the upper parts stones and darts, and all kinds of missiles, and these so strongly that no man could stand against them. The maidens also armed themselves, and did the like.

But the magician had yet other devices to use against the Christians. He said to the Admiral, "Let me have some of your men to wait on me, and I will speedily deliver these Christians into your hand." And when he had made all things ready, he discharged out of his engines against the walls a fire so marvellous that the very stones began to burn. The Frenchmen were sorely dismayed at this, and began to say to each other that they must now surely quit the Tower. But Floripas said to them, "My lords, be not afraid. I have something wherewith to quench the fire." Then she went and took certain herbs, and mixed them in wine, and the knights threw the wine on the fire, and it was quenched immediately.

When the Admiral saw this he was out of his wits with anger, and when Sortibrant told him that this was of his daughter's doing, he vowed that she should die an evil death. Then said Sortibrant, "Bid your horns and trumpets sound again, and send your men to attack the Tower once more. By this time the Frenchmen must be so wearied that they will be overcome. And they have neither stones nor iron to cast at us." Thereupon the Saracens made yet another assault on the Tower; so fierce was it that the air was as it were dark with arrows and darts and stones, great portions of the walls fell down, and the knights were greatly troubled. "Now," said they, "we must needs be vanquished, for our defence is broken down." But Floripas bade them be of good courage. "My lords," said she, "this Tower is yet strong enough to hold out. Besides, though you have no more stone or iron, yet my father's treasure is here, wedges and plates of gold, wherewith you may slay the pagans as well as with stones, aye and better too." Thereupon Guy of Burgundy, in great joy, kissed her.

Then Floripas, going to the treasure-house, showed the gold to the knights. This they took and cast against the Saracens, to their great discomfiture. Moreover, the Saracens, when they saw the gold, left off fighting against the French, and began to slay each other. The Admiral, when he saw this, cried with a loud voice to his captains, "Cease now from the assault, for it

turns to my great loss; see now how my treasure which I have gathered with much pains is scattered about. This treasure I had entrusted to the keeping of Mahomet my god, and see how he has failed me. Verily, if I could but have him in my hands, he should suffer pains for this!" Sortibrant said to him, "Be not angry, my lord, with Mahomet. He has done as well as it lay with him to do; doubtless he was asleep when your treasures were spoiled. These Frenchmen are so crafty that they can do what they will."

That same night, as the Admiral sat at his supper, Roland spied him from a window where he lay to rest himself. He said to his comrades, "I see Balan at his supper with his lords; he is taking his ease, and it would be to our great honour if we make him rise up from his meat." The other lords were of the same opinion. They armed themselves therefore, and issued forth from the Tower. But the Admiral was aware of their purpose, and he sent against them his nephew, Espoulart by name, who was a very strong and valiant knight. Espoulart rode against the Frenchmen, and encountering Roland smote him on the shield so great a blow that he was well-nigh stunned, but his flesh was not wounded. Roland, in his turn, unhorsed him, but the Saracen was so nimble that forthwith he mounted his horse again. But Roland smote him again, and so sharply that the man wist not where he was. As he was falling to the ground Roland caught him right deftly, and laid him across his horse and carried him away.

When the Admiral saw this he cried out in a great rage that they should rescue his nephew. This the Saracens would willingly have done, but they could not; many were hurt and many slain, and at last all the Frenchmen escaped into the Tower. When they had shut to the gates they asked Floripas who he was that they had taken. Floripas said to them, "This is Balan's nephew, a rich man and a powerful. If ye would vex my father, put him to death." The Duke Naymes answered, "Nay, we will not put him to death. We will keep him, and if should happen that one of us be taken prisoner, we will make an exchange."

CHAPTER XXII

OF RICHARD OF NORMANDY

On a certain day after these things Richard of Normandy said to his fellows, "How long are we to abide shut up in this Tower? I am sure that at the last we must perish by the hands of these Saracens. It would be well, therefore, that we send a messenger to King Charles, telling him that if he would not have us perish he must send us help." The Duke Naymes said, "This, Sir Richard, is but foolishly spoken. There is no man here that will dare take this message. Know you not that the whole land is covered with the Saracens, so that as soon as the messenger is parted from us he will be slain by them?" And Floripas said, "My lords, you are safe while you abide in this place; make yourselves, therefore, as happy as you can." But Duke Thierry was ill-content with such counsel, "We are shut in here, my lords," said he, "and our happiness must be but brief. Let us inform the King of our condition, that he may come to our help."

Ogier the Dane answered as the Duke Naymes had answered, that there was no man who would go on such an errand. "Nay," cried Roland, "say not so. I will go." But the Duke Naymes answered, "That would be ill done, Sir Roland; you must not go hence; the Saracens would not have so much fear of us by a half as now they have if you were gone." Then others proffered to go, as William the Scot, and Gerard, and Guy of Burgundy, this last being willing with all his heart, but Floripas would not suffer it.

At last Richard of Normandy spake thus: "My lords, you know that I am nobly born, and that I have a son of full age to bear arms, and fit to stand in my place. Now if it should chance that I am slain in taking this message, this my son would hold my heritage and do service to King Charles." So it was concluded that Richard of Normandy should take the message to

the King. Roland said to him, "Sir Richard, promise now that you will not tarry in any place till you come to the King, saving if you should be hurt or taken prisoner." And Duke Richard promised it should be so. Having so promised, he said, "Let us consider now how I may get away from this place unseen of the men-at-arms, for if they espy me I cannot escape."

Roland said, "My counsel is this. Let us sally forth from the Tower, and assault the Saracens with all our might, and while they are busied with us then shall Duke Richard steal away, for he well knows the country." To this they all agreed, not without tears, for they knew that the Duke had taken upon himself a very perilous enterprise.

The next day, when this thing should have been done, the French lords found that the gates of the Tower were so closely beset by a multitude of Saracens that no man could by any means go forth. And this was so for the space of two whole months. At the end of this time, the Admiral having gone a-hunting, and the watch of the bridge being negligently kept, the knights mounted their horses and issued forth. So soon as they were seen of the Saracens, there was a great blowing of horns and trumpets, and a multitude of men ran together to do battle with the knights. While they were so engaged Duke Richard secretly departed. After the Duke had ridden awhile, the road being very steep, for it was on the side of a mountain, his horse was sorely spent, and he was constrained to halt. And as he halted two of the Saracens, to wit Sortibrant and Brullant, espied him, and said to King Clarion, who was a very notable warrior, "See you, Sire, that man yonder. Of a truth he is one of the Frenchmen that are shut up in the Tower yonder. Without a doubt he is taking a message to Charlemagne. Now, if we do not hinder him in this his journey it may well turn to our great loss." When King Clarion heard this he armed himself without delay, and mounted on his beast—a marvellous beast that could gallop thirty leagues and not grow weary—and pursued after Duke Richard, and other Saracens went with him.

When Duke Richard, looking behind him, saw the Saracens following him, he was greatly troubled, for what could one man do against so many? Nor was it long before the pursuers came up with him, King Clarion leading them. The King said, "By Mahomet, you shall never deliver this message." Duke Richard spoke him fair, "What trespass have I done? I have never offended you or taken your treasure. Suffer me, therefore, to go in peace. Render me this service, and be sure that I will repay it many fold." But Clarion answered, "I would not do this, no not for half the treasure of the world."

When he heard this, Duke Richard turned to meet the enemy. King Clarion smote him on the shield, but could not break it through, so stiff and strong was it. But the Duke, on the other hand, smote him full on the neck, and shore off his head cleanly with one blow. It flew a whole spear's length, so great was the stroke. Then the Duke, leaving his own horse, took King Clarion's for himself; never before had he ridden such a horse, so strong was it and so swift. He could have borne seven knights in armour, and never sweated a drop; as for swimming rivers, there never was beast like him. Then the Duke said to his own horse, "Farewell, my good horse; I am grieved that I cannot take thee when I will. God in heaven help thee to escape these Pagans, and come again into the hands of Christian men, whom thou mayst faithfully serve in great straits, even as thou hast served me." So saying he went on his way.

When the other Saracens came up and found King Clarion lying dead upon the ground they made great lamentation over him. Some would have taken Duke Richard's horse, but the beast would not suffer them to come near him but galloped as fast as he could to the place from which he had come. And, indeed, thither he came in a very short space of time. First the Admiral saw him, and cried aloud, "Now by Apollyon my god, this is well done of Clarion my nephew; without doubt he has slain the messenger of the Frenchmen, for see his horse is coming." And he bade his men catch the horse. But this they could not do, for the creature won its way to the gates of the

Tower, and these the knights opened to receive him, lamenting much, for they had no doubt but that Duke Richard had been slain.

Nevertheless, Floripas bade them be of good cheer. "Stay your tears," she said; "as yet you know not the whole matter."

Meanwhile the Saracens that had accompanied King Clarion came back, bearing with them the King's body. When the Admiral saw it he swooned, not once only but four times, so that he seemed like to a dead man. The Saracens stood about, and made a great lamentation, so that the Barons began to take heart again, and Floripas, being well acquainted with the Saracen tongue, said, "Now I perceive the truth. Duke Richard has slain this man and taken his horse, for indeed there is no better horse in all the world. This lamentation that you hear is for this ill fortune."

All the Barons were glad when they heard these words, and Oliver said to Roland, "Now this is good news. I am sure in my mind that we shall safely return home. I had not been more sure had I been in the strongest castle in all France. God bless Duke Richard, for he has borne himself right bravely." And all the other knights agreed to his speech.

Meanwhile the Admiral called to him one of his favourites, by name Orage, saying to him, "Now take a dromedary and ride with all speed to Gallafer that keeps the Bridge of Mantryble, and say to him from me, "You suffered the messengers of King Charles to pass over, whereby I have suffered great damage. And now there goes a messenger to the King from the knights that are shut up in this Tower; wherein if you fail, you shall pay for it with your life." Orage said to the Admiral, "I will do your bidding with all speed, for I can take in one day such a journey as other men take in four." And he departed forthwith on his dromedary.

When he came to the Bridge Mantryble, he said to Gallafer, "The Admiral is ill content with you, because you suffered the messengers of King Charles to cross the bridge.

They have done him great damage, holding his chief Tower, and therein his gods and Floripas his daughter, and have slain many of his servants. And now there comes a messenger from these same men, who is on his way to Charlemagne to seek for help. Keep him, therefore, from crossing the bridge, which thing if you fail to do, you will surely die shamefully." When he heard these words, Gallafer, the giant, was greatly enraged, and made as if he would smite Orage with a staff, but they that stood by hindered him. Then he mounted to the top of the Tower, and sounded his trumpet, so that many thousands of men assembled. Also the drawbridge was lifted.

Meanwhile Duke Richard considered within himself by what means he might cross the bridge, and was in great perplexity, "for," said he, "I do not see how I may win forward, nor may I return, and so fail in my promise to Roland. Now may God help me in my need." And looking about him, he saw how the whole land was covered with multitudes of Saracens, of whom some were now but a little space behind him. The foremost of these called to him with a loud voice, saying, "Now turn you, Sir Messenger, for your hour is come."

Duke Richard was ill content to hear such boasting, and, turning himself quickly, came upon him unawares and smote him so grievously that he fell dead to the earth. Then he took the Saracen's horse by the bridle and rode down to the river's bank. And lo! the stream ran as swiftly as a bolt from a cross-bow, with a noise like to thunder. And when he saw this and heard the roaring of the water, he commended himself to God.

While he looked, lo! a white hart came to the river-side, and the river, which before had been so much below the bank as a man may conveniently cast a stone, began to rise, and so continued till it came to the very top of the bank and even overflowed it. Thereupon the white hart entered the water, and Richard, commending himself to the protection of God, did the same, and swam safely to the other side.

Meanwhile King Charles, being in great trouble about the knights whom he had sent with a message to the Admiral of Spain, called together his counsellors and told them what was in his mind, saying, "I am greatly troubled because that no report has come to me concerning the knights that I sent. I know not what to do, save that I will put off this crown, which I am not worthy to bear." Said Ganelon, "My lord, I will give you good counsel. Let us return forthwith to France. This town of Aygremore is too strong for us. And the Admiral is a great warrior, and has also all the Saracens and Pagans in the world to help him. And now that Fierabras, his son, has been made a Christian by you, he is even more evilly disposed to you than he was before. Let us therefore go back to France. It is true that many valiant peers and knights have perished, but they have left children behind them, and these, when they have grown to man's estate, will do those things wherein their fathers have failed. So shall we recover the Holy Things, for which, indeed, I feel great sorrow, and avenge also Roland, the good knight whom I am persuaded you will never see more."

When the King heard this he fell into a swoon for the space of an hour. When he came to himself he asked his lords again for counsel, for he was loath to go back and leave Roland and the other Peers without help.

But Ganelon and all that were of his kindred, and all that followed him, gave him the same counsel as before. "There are twenty thousand of us," said Ganelon, "that have sworn not to go any further." But the King said, "What shall my crown profit me, if I do this base thing, and leave these my knights to perish without help! He that gives me such counsel loves me but little." Then said Reyner, that was father to Oliver, "Sire, if you listen to these men you will do this realm of France such damage as may never be undone." But Aloys, one of the friends of Ganelon, answered, "You lie, Duke Reyner; were it not that the King is here, this is the last word that you should say. For indeed who are you that you take so much upon yourself? Your father was a man of low estate." Then Reyner waxed so wroth that he smote

Aloys to the ground. Thereupon there was great tumult and quarrelling, and there would have been bloodshed had not the King been there. "For," said Charles, "any man that shall draw sword in this place shall be hanged as a thief, though he be of the highest estate." So after a while the King, Fierabras helping, made peace, but "first," said he, "Aloys that spake so scornfully of Duke Reyner must crave pardon." And this Aloys did, but sorely against his will. Nevertheless the counsel of those who were for going back prevailed; for Geoffrey of the High Tower, than whom there was no man more worshipful in the King's court, was urgent that it should be so. Then the King consented, but with much sorrow, and all the nobler sort among his lords were greatly troubled that this should be done. So the signal of retreat was given.

Scarcely had the army set forth, when King Charles, chancing to cast his eyes eastward, saw one on horseback, with a sword drawn in his hand, that was riding with all the speed to which he could put his horse. Thereupon he called a halt, "for," said he, "if my eyes fail me not, this is Richard of Normandy. God grant that he brings tidings of Roland and of the other Peers!"

As soon as Duke Richard was come to where he stood, the King asked him concerning Roland and the Peers. Then Duke Richard told him that they yet lived; also he told him concerning Floripas and the Holy Things, but that the knights were straitly besieged. "Can they hold out," said Charles, "six days? If so they shall be delivered." "It may be," answered Richard. "But they have no victual save what they can win with their swords; the Admiral also has a mighty host of Saracens about the Tower." Also he told him about the bridge Mantryble, and of the great giant that kept it. "This bridge," said he, "we must pass by subtlety, for by force we cannot. Now I have devised a plan by which this may be done. Let some of us clothe ourselves as merchants, having our armour and arms under our cloaks, and let the rest hide themselves in a wood hard by, and be ready armed for battle. So when we shall have gained the first

gate, I will blow on my horn, and at this signal you shall ride up with all the speed you may."

The King greatly approved this counsel. Thereupon five hundred knights disguised themselves as merchants. They made great bundles of hay and grass, which was to serve as merchandise. Every man also was well armed under his cloak, Duke Richard was their leader, and with him was Duke Reyner and others of great repute.

CHAPTER XXIII

HOW THE BRIDGE MANTRYBLE WAS WON

When King Charles and his men had hidden themselves in a wood that was hard by, Duke Richard and his company came to the bridge, driving pack-horses before them, laden, as has been said, with false merchandise. But when the knights saw the River Flagot, how swiftly it ran and with how great a roaring, and the bridge how perilous it was to pass, and the gates how they were barred with iron, they were not a little troubled. Richard said, "I will go before. Do you follow me, and when you have passed the first gate throw off your cloaks and smite with your swords. And whatever may happen, see that you fail not one another." And to this they all agreed.

Gallafer, the keeper of the bridge, stood by the first gate holding a great axe in his hand that had an edge on every side. He was a giant of great stature, with fiery eyes and skin as black as pitch, more like to a devil than to a man. The Admiral was his nephew, and loved him greatly, trusting him so that he made him warder of the bridge and ruler of all the countryside.

When the French knights came near he said to them, "Strangers, who are you?" Duke Richard answered, "We are merchants who travel to the fairs, Mahomet helping us, with drapery and other goods for sale. We would fain tarry awhile at Aygremore; also we have gifts, many and precious, for the

Admiral. These others that you see are my servants, and know not your language. Tell me, therefore, what we had best do and by what way we should go." Gallafer answered, "Know now that I am appointed by the Admiral of Spain to be keeper of this bridge. And because there have passed over it certain knights who paid no toll, and also a messenger who won his way in wonderful fashion across the river, and slew also my own kinsman King Clarion, my master has straitly charged me that I should not by any means suffer any man to pass the bridge unless he be known to me." When Gallafer had said so much, Duke Richard bowed his head to him right courteously, and having so done, passed through the first gate, three others, of whom Duke Reyner was one, following him.

When Gallafer saw them he doubted what this might mean. "You are overbold," said he, "to come so far without leave of me." And he drew up the bridge. "And now," said he, "do you four surrender yourselves. I will send you prisoners to my lord the Admiral, who will deal with you as he shall please. And now let me see what you have under your cloaks, for you seem to me to have some evil design." When he had so spoken he laid hold of one of the four, and turned him about four times. Then another, Raoul by name, who was cousin to him on whom Gallafer had laid hands, cried, "Why do you deal so with my kinsmen?" And he struck at the giant with his sword, but could not hurt him, save to cut off a portion of his ear Thereupon the two dukes, Reyner and Richard, drawing their swords, smote him with all their might. But they also availed nought, for the giant was clad in the skin of a serpent, that was harder than any coat of mail. The giant, on the other hand, smote at Raoul with his axe. But Raoul saw the stroke coming, and leapt lightly aside, so that the axe fell and hurt him not; but it cleft a stone of marble on which it lighted into two parts. Then said Duke Reyner, "What shall we do with this giant, for a sword avails nothing against him?" And he took in his hand the great branch of a tree, and smote him to the ground. Thereat the giant made a great and terrible cry, and the Saracens that followed him came

running. Thereupon Richard let fall the drawbridge, and the five hundred sought to pass over it.

But the Saracens met them at the gate, and there was a great fight, wherein many were wounded and many slain. Then Duke Richard sounded his horn three times. When King Charles heard it he rose up forthwith from his ambush in the wood, and all the Frenchmen with him, and made for the bridge with all the speed they might use. And foremost of all was Ganelon, that was afterwards the traitor. Foremost he was, and gallantly did he bear himself that day. King Charles also showed himself a good man-at-arms. They died that day whomsoever he smote with his good sword Joyous.

The King saw the giant Gallafer on the ground with his great axe in his hand wherewith he had slain thirty Frenchmen, and he commanded that he should be slain, for he yet breathed. But not yet was the bridge won, for a great multitude of Saracens came up to help them that kept it. Among them was a giant, Amyon by name, who called to King Charles, saying, "Where is the King? It were better for him, dotard that he is, to be at Paris than here."

When the King heard this he dismounted in great wrath, and ran at the giant, and smote him with Joyous so rudely that he fell to the ground nigh cut in twain. At this the Saracens were not a little confounded. Nevertheless, they pressed upon the King and his men with darts and bullets and arrows. Then the King cried to his lords and knights for help. Many answered his call; nevertheless he was so hard pressed that there was scarce any hope left to him. Then the Duke Richard bade him be of good cheer, "for," said he, "if every man will but do his utmost this day we shall not fail." And he pressed on, and his comrades with him. Nor did Ganelon hold back, though there were some that gave him evil counsel, as Aloys, who said to him, "See, now, how the King is beset. It were well for us if he should not find deliverance. Leave him now, and let us go back to France, where we shall be masters without contradiction from any man." But Ganelon answered, "Now, may God forbid that we should

betray our lord, of whom we hold all that we possess." Aloys said, "You are but a fool, seeing that you will not take your revenge when you may." But Ganelon would have none of his counsel.

As these two were talking, Fierabras came up, being now healed of his wounds, and asked where was the King. Aloys answered, "He is within the gate, and I take it by this time that he is dead." Fierabras cried, "What do you standing here? Why do you not help him in his need?" And he cried out, "Come all of you to the help of the King!" and a great multitude of Frenchmen came at his call. Great deeds did Fierabras that day, and Ganelon also, so that they two did more than any other to win the town.

Nevertheless there yet remained something to be done. For when Amyot, the giantess that was wife to Amyon, heard the cry of the townsfolk, she ran forth from her house, having a sharp scythe in her hand, and fell upon the Frenchmen in a great rage, and slew many of them. When King Charles saw what destruction she wrought he called for a cross-bow, and shot a bolt at her, aiming it so nicely that it struck her between the brows and slew her. It was seen that as she lay upon the earth she vomited forth fire from her throat, but she never moved more.

So the town of Mantryble was won. King Charles found much treasure therein, which the Admiral had laid up there, trusting that it should never be taken. Of this he made a bountiful distribution to his army, so that all were well content. This done, he appointed Havel and Raoul to keep the town, with five thousand men under them. Also he caused all his army to be assembled, and went to the top of a hill to survey them. And when he saw how many there were—for there were a hundred thousand men—he thanked God that had given him such power. And he made ready to march against the Admiral.

CHAPTER XXIV

OF THE END OF BALAN THE ADMIRAL

Meanwhile it was told Balan that Gallafer had been slain and the Bridge Mantryble taken. He was as one out of his wits with rage, and, crying out to his god Mahomet that he was accursed and recreant, he smote the image with a club that he held in his two hands and brake it down. Nor was this ill done, seeing that such things are of no use or profit. Nevertheless Sortibrant reproved him, and bade him repent of such injurious deeds. "That cannot I do," answered the Admiral, "seeing that this Charles has won my strong city of Mantryble." Sortibrant said, "Send a spy, Sir Admiral, that you may know what King Charles is doing; afterwards, let us march together against him, and if we prevail over him then shall you hang him and his people without mercy, and you shall cut off the head of your son Fierabras, for the help that he has given your enemies."

This the Admiral said that he would do. First he humbled himself before his gods, and vowed that he would offer to them a thousand pounds of fine gold. This done, he bade the trumpets sound to gather together the Saracens. These brought great engines of war with which to throw great stones against the Tower. And this they did to such good purpose that they made three great breaches in the wall by the least of which a cart might have passed. But Roland and Oliver stood over with their shields and stopped the way. Then cried the Admiral, "Friends, if you would have my love, do your duty, and bring this Tower to the ground. Verily, when I shall have taken it, I will burn with fire this ill daughter of mine, Floripas."

When they heard these words the Saracens came on more fiercely than ever. And now the Frenchmen held but the last portion only of the Tower. Then Roland bade his comrades fight with good courage, "or," said he, "we shall not over live this

day." As for Oliver, he was for sallying forth. It were better," said he, "to fall honourably in the midst of our enemies than to be done to death in this place." And Ogier the Dane and other lords were of the same mind. But Floripas would not that they should do this. "You promised, said she, "that you would do nothing against my will. And I bid you stay within." And this they did, holding the breaches as best they might, and driving back the Saracens.

After a while Balan saw his daughter where she stood at a window with certain of the knights, and reproached her for her disobedience, and threatened that he would burn her with fire. But she answered nothing, only shook a stick that she had in her hand as if she would have beaten him. Then the Saracens, at his bidding, assaulted the Tower yet more fiercely, and the Frenchmen took the idols that were in the Tower, images of Apollo and Mahomet and others, and threw them down upon the Saracens to their great damage. When he saw this Balan swooned with rage, but, coming to himself, bade the Saracens assault the Tower yet again with all their might. And this they did so fiercely that the Frenchmen were well-nigh in despair.

When they were in this strait the Duke Naymes, going to an upper window in the Tower, saw the ensign of St. Denis in the valley beneath, and called to his fellows that they also should come and see it, "for," said he, "without doubt the King is coming to help us." The Saracens also perceived it; whereupon King Coldro counselled the Admiral that he should send an army to hinder him from coming to Aygremore.

That day the King and his army lodged in the open field, for their tents they had left at Mantryble. In the morning the King sent for Fierabras and said to him, Dear friend, now that you have been baptized, I love you better than before. If, then, your father consents to be baptized and to deny Mahomet and his false gods I will establish him in his kingdom, and take not a penny of his goods. But if he will not, then shall he die without mercy." And he asked counsel of his Peers whom he should send with this message to the Admiral. Said Richard of Normandy,

"Ganelon would do this errand as well as any man, should he be willing."

So King Charles sent for Ganelon, and gave him the message to be delivered to the Admiral; and Ganelon was well content to go. He armed himself, therefore, and mounted his horse that was named Gascon, and went his way. When he came to the valley where the army of the Saracens lay, the guards laid hold of him, but perceiving that he carried a message, straightway let him go. So coming to the tent wherein the Admiral abode, he spake with a loud voice: "The noble Charles, King of France, sends this message: If you will renounce Mahomet and all false gods and receive the true faith, you shall keep all your land and worship, and shall be honoured and loved of all Christian men. But if you will not, then you shall surely die." So Ganelon spoke. But Balan, when he heard these words, was very wroth, and made as if he would strike him. Then Ganelon drew his sword and smote Brullant where he stood by the Admiral's side, and, leaping on his horse, rode away.

The Duke Naymes saw him from a window in the Tower, and said to Roland and Oliver, "Who is this knight that rides so fast." They judged that he was none other than Ganelon, and Roland cried aloud, "God grant that he fall not into the hands of the enemy." And as he spoke, Ganelon turned upon the Saracens, and slew two of them, of whom the brother of King Sortibrant was one. When Oliver saw this he said to Roland, "See you this? That is a good knight. I love him in my heart. Would God I were with him where he is." But when the Saracens came near to the army of the King they left chasing Ganelon.

When the King knew how his message had sped he commanded that they should set the army in array. This they did, parting it into ten divisions. The Saracens also prepared for battle. And first Brullant rode forth and challenged the King to combat; nor did he hold back. So these two met and the King slew Brullant, and many other Saracens also. Nor did the Saracens lack great warriors, such as King Tenebres, a famous Turk, who slew John of Pontoise and many others. But him

Duke Richard overthrew; Duke Reyner slew Sortibrant; and Balan the Admiral slew Huon of Milan, and went near to slaying Milon, but that Ganelon and his men saved him, though not without much damage to themselves. Nor, indeed, would they have so prevailed but for the help of Fierabras.

And now the knights that were in the Tower, seeing the army of their countrymen, came forth, and taking each man a horse, whose rider had been slain, charged the Saracens. These being taken, as it were, both before and behind, fled, as doves fly before a hawk. And Balan fled with them, but being overtaken was made prisoner.

When the Admiral was brought to Charles, the King said, "Will you forsake your false gods, who indeed have profited you nothing, and accept the true faith ? If you will do so, you shall suffer nothing, either in your person or in your goods." "Nay," said the Admiral, "that will I not." Then Charles drew his sword and said, "If you yield not you die." And Fierabras, kneeling down, prayed that his father might be spared. Then Balan consented to be baptized. Nevertheless, when he came to the font the evil spirit in him rebelled, and he spat in the font, and went near to slaying the bishop that should have christened him; for he took him by the middle, and would have drowned him in the font. When the King saw this he said, "Verily this evil-doer must die." Nevertheless Fierabras entreated him to have patience, and, turning to his father, would have persuaded him even yet to baptism. "Nay," said Balan, "that will I never do, and you are a fool, my son, to ask such a thing. Would I were on horseback; then would I show these villains what is in my heart." When the King heard this he said, "Who will slay this fellow ? "

"That will I," answered Ogier the Dane, and he smote off the Admiral's head with a stroke of his sword.

After this said Floripas to Roland, "Sir Knight, remember how you promised to help me to that thing which I most desire." Thereupon Roland said to Guy of Burgundy, "Bring to mind the promise which you made to Floripas, the Admiral's daughter,

that you would take her to wife." "That will I do right willingly," said Guy, "if the King consent."

So Floripas was baptized, King Charles and Duke Thierry being her sponsors, but her name was not changed. Afterwards the bishop married her to Guy of Burgundy. As for Guy he was made King of the land; part he gave over to Fierabras, who held it of him; but Charlemagne was overlord of the whole country.

CHAPTER XXV

HOW GANELON WENT ON AN ERRAND TO KING MARSILAS

For seven years King Charles the Great tarried in Spain. He conquered the whole land from the sea to the mountains, saving Saragossa only, of which Marsilas, a heathen, was King. Marsilas called together his nobles, and said to them, "This King Charles will be our destruction, for we have no longer an army wherewith to meet him. Give me counsel, as wise men should, so that I may be saved from death or disgrace."

Now the wisest of the heathens was a certain Blancandrin, a man valiant in war and good at counsel. "Fear not," said he, "fear not, O King. Send a message to King Charles promising him faithful service and friendship. Send also a present to him. Let there be lions and bears, and dogs, seven hundred camels, and a thousand falcons. Send also four hundred mules laden with gold and silver, that King Charles may have wherewithal to pay his soldiers. And tell him that if he will return to France, you will follow him, and there, on the Feast of St. Michael, will be converted to the Christian Faith, and will be his vassal in all honour. If he ask for hostages, let him have them, ten or twenty, as he may desire. See, I offer my own son to be one of them, whatever may befall him. Better that they should lose their heads than that we should lose our lordship and our

lands, and be brought to beg our bread." And all the chiefs of heathenry said: "It is well; we will willingly give the hostages."

Blancandrin spake again: "By this right hand and by this beard I swear that the end of the matter will be this : You will see the French raise their camp in all haste and go back to their own land. On the Feast of St. Michael King Charles will make a great entertainment. But when he neither sees you nor hears any tidings of you, he will fall into a great rage, and will smite off the heads of the hostages. If it be so, it is better that they should lose their heads than that we should lose this fair land of Spain." And all the chiefs of heathenry said: "It is well said; so let it be."

Then said King Marsilas to certain of his lords—ten they were in number, and these the most villainous of the whole company—"Take olive-branches in your hands, and go and say to King Charles, 'King Marsilas prays you to have pity upon him. He promises that, before a month is past he will come with a thousand loyal followers, and will receive the faith of Christ, and will become your vassal in all honour. Also he says, that if you seek for hostages you shall have them.'" Then the King gave the ten lords ten white mules, whereon to ride. They had reins of gold and saddles of silver. So the ten lords departed from Saragossa, and came to King Charles at the city of Cordova.

They found King Charles in great mirth and joyfulness. He had newly taken the fair city of Cordova, having broken down the walls and towers with his engines of war, and with the city he had taken a great spoil of gold and silver. Of the people, too, there was not one but had to make his choice between Christian baptism and death. Now he was sitting with his barons in a great orchard. Some played at cards, and some of the graver sort at chess, and the young men fenced with each other. As for the King himself, he was sitting under a thorn on a great chair of gold, a right noble man to see, with his long, white beard. When the heathen ambassadors saw him they lighted down from their mules, and paid him homage. Then said their leader, Blancandrin, "Glory to the name of God! Our master, King Marsilas, bids us say that, being persuaded that the law by which

you live is the law of salvation, he would fain win your favour even by the half of his treasures. He sends therefore lions and bears, camels and falcons, four hundred mules laden with gold and silver, wherewith you can pay all your soldiers. Moreover, he says that when you shall have returned to your own country he will follow you thither, and will be obedient to your law, and do you homage for his kingdom of Spain."

When King Charles heard these words he bent his head as one deep in thought. So he tarried awhile, for his speech was never hasty. At last he spoke: "You have said well. But your King has long been my enemy. How can I trust these promises?" Blancandrin made answer, "You shall have hostages, Sire—ten, fifteen, twenty, as you will. My own son shall be one of them, and the others shall be of the noblest of the land. So you may rest assured that at the Feast of St. Michael next ensuing my master shall come to you at your palace at Aachen, and shall there consent to become a Christian."

"He will do well," said King Charles; "'tis thus only that he shall save his soul." Then he commanded that the white mules should be put into stalls, and that a tent should be pitched in the orchard, and the ambassadors have such entertainment as was meet.

The day following King Charles rose early, and having heard mass sent for his nobles, for he would do nothing without the counsel of the wise men of France. So the nobles came, Ogier the Dane among them, and Turpin the Archbishop, and Count Roland, and with him Oliver, his closest friend, and Ganelon, the same that was the traitor.

Then said the King, "My lords, King Marsilas has sent an embassy to me with many and rich gifts, lions and bears, and camels, and abundance of gold and silver. Only he makes this condition—that I go back to France; and he promises that he himself will come thither, even to Aachen, and will there profess himself a Christian and also do homage for his kingdom.



THE AMBASSADORS OF KING MARSILAS.

But whether he speaks the truth, that I know not. What think you, my lords?"

Then stood up the Count Roland, and said, "'Twere madness to trust this King Marsilas. Have we not been in this land of Spain for now seven years, and has not this King Marsilas always borne himself as a traitor? Did he not send fifteen of his heathens each with an olive-branch in his hand, and did they not make this same profession for him? You took counsel of your nobles, and you sent him—so ill-advised were you—two envoys. What did King Marsilas? He took their heads from them. What I counsel, Sire, is, that as you have begun this war, so you carry it to an end. Lead your army to Saragossa, lay siege to it, spend, if need be, the rest of your days before it, but take vengeance for the brave men whom King Marsilas did to death."

King Charles sat with his head bowed, and spake no word good or bad. Then rose up Ganelon, and said, "Sire, I would have you take no advice, except it be to your own advantage. King Marsilas has sent to you, saying that he is ready to profess our faith and to hold the kingdom of Spain as your vassal. He who would have you refuse such an offer knows nothing of business affairs. Counsels of pride are not for mortal men. Have done with folly, and listen to the words of the wise."

Then stood up the Duke of Bavaria; snowy white was his beard and hair. King Charles had no better counsellor than he. "Sire," said he, "Ganelon has given you good advice. You will do well to follow it. You have conquered King Marsilas in this war, taken his castles, broken down his walls, burnt his towns, and put his armies to flight. Now he begs for mercy from you. Surely 'twere a crime to ask too much. Remember, too, that he is ready to give you hostages. Send one of your nobles to treat with him, for indeed it is time this war should have an end." So spake the Duke of Bavaria, and all the men of France cried out, "The Duke has spoken well."

"But," said King Charles, "whom shall we send?" "I will go," answered the Duke, "if it so please you. Give me the gauntlet and the staff an ambassador should have. "Not so," said King Charles, "you shall not go. I would not have so wise a counsellor so far away. Sit you down. 'Tis my command"; and he spake again, "Whom shall we send to King Marsilas, my lords?" "I will go," cried Count Roland. "Nay," said Oliver, "you are of too fiery and fierce a spirit. I fear that you would but ill-manage such a business. 'Tis better that I should go, if it so please the King." "Be silent, both of you," said the King, "neither of you shall have a hand in this matter. By this white beard of mine, I declare that no one of the Twelve Peers shall go on this embassy."

Then stood up Turpin the Archbishop. "Sire," said he, "you have been in this land of Spain now seven years, and your nobles have suffered for your sake many labours and sorrows. Give me the gauntlet and the staff; I will go to this Saracen, and say somewhat to him after my own fashion."

But Charles answered him in great anger. "By this beard you shall not do it. Sit you down again, and speak not till I bid you. And now," he went on, "my lords, choose you for yourselves one who shall go on this errand. Let him be a man of counsel, who can deal a blow also, if need should be."

Then said the Count Roland: "Whom should we choose but Ganelon? You cannot find a better than he." And all the men of France cried: "It is right that he should go, if the King will have it so."

Said King Charles to Ganelon: "Come hither, Ganelon, and take this gauntlet and this staff. The voice of the men of France has chosen you. You heard it." But Ganelon liked not the matter at all. "This is Roland's doing," he cried. "Never, so long as I live, will I love Roland again, no, nor Oliver, for that he is Roland's friend, nor any one of the Twelve Peers, for that they also love Roland. Here, under your eyes, Sir King, I defy them

all." "It profits not to be angry," cried King Charles. "If I bid you, you must go."

"Yes," answered Ganelon; "I perceive that I must go to Saragossa, and he that goes thither comes not back. Remember, Sire, that I have your sister to wife. We have one son; a fairer child you could not see. One day, so he live, he will be a gallant knight. I leave him my lands. Have a care for him, I entreat you, for I shall never see him more." "You have too soft a heart," said King Charles. "If I bid you, you must go."

Ganelon was in great trouble of mind. He turned him to Roland, and said, "What means your wrath against me? 'Tis you, as all men know, that have put on me this errand to King Marsilas. 'Tis well. But know that if God suffer me to return, I will bring upon you such trouble and sorrow that you shall remember it all the days of your life." "This is but folly," answered Roland. "All the world knows that I care nothing for your threats. Nevertheless, seeing that there is need of a wise man to take this message of the King's, I am ready to go in your stead."

"You shall not go," answered Ganelon. "You are not my vassal, nor am I your lord. I will go to Saragossa, to King Marsilas. But be sure that there will be something wherewith I may solace myself." When Roland heard this he laughed aloud, and Ganelon grew so full of anger that his heart was fain to burst. "I hate you," said he to Roland,— "I hate you! for you have made this evil choice light on me." But to Charles he said. "Behold me, Sire, I am ready to do your will."

"Ganelon," said the King, "listen to me. Say to King Marsilas, that if he will come and own himself to be my vassal and receive holy baptism, I will give him half the kingdom of Spain; the other half is for Count Roland. But if he will not do this thing, then I will lay siege to his city of Saragossa, and when I shall have taken it I will bring him by force to my city of Aachen, and will pass judgment on him and he shall end his days in sorrow and shame. Take this letter, which bears my seal, and

give it into the King's right hand." So saying he reached out the gauntlet to Ganelon with his right hand. But when Ganelon reached out and would have taken it, it fell to the ground. "This is an ill starting," said the men of France, "this message will be the beginning of many troubles." "You shall hear of them in good time," answered Ganelon. To King Charles he said, "Sire, give me leave to depart, since I must needs go, 'twere well to lose no time." "Go," said the King, "for our Lord Christ's honour and for mine." And with his right hand he made the sign of the cross, and gave him absolution. At the same time he gave him the ambassador's staff and the letter.

Then Ganelon went to his house and clad himself in his finest armour. On his feet he fixed his spurs of gold, and by his side he bound his good sword Murgleis, and he mounted his charger Tachebrun. His uncle Guinemer held the stirrup for him. Many gallant knights wept to see him go. "O Sir," they cried, "this is an ill return for all the service that you have done to the King. Never should Count Roland have had such a thought. Send us, my lord, in your stead."

"Nay," answered Ganelon. "Why should I doom so many gallant men? Let me rather die alone. Do you, my friends, go back to fair France. Carry my greetings to my wife and to my son. Keep him safe, and see that his possessions suffer no loss." So saying, he went on his way to Saragossa.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE TREASON OF GANELON

Before he had travelled far, Ganelon overtook the Saracen ambassadors, and, indeed, Blancandrin had delayed his journey that this might be so. Said the Saracen, "What a wonderful man is your King Charles! He has conquered Italy, and New Rome and Germany, and is ready to lay his hands on England. But why is he bent on persecuting us?" "Such is his will," answered Ganelon, "and there is no man of such stature as to be able to contend with him." "You are brave men, you lords of France," said Blancandrin, "but you serve your master ill when you give him such counsel. You will bring him to destruction, and many others with him." "Nay," said Ganelon. "I am not one that deserves such blame, nor indeed does any man deserve it, except Roland only. Of a truth this will bring him to shame at the last. Now listen to me. The other day the King was sitting under a tree when Roland came to him clad in his cuirass. He had taken great spoil at the town of Carcassonne. In his hand he had an apple. "Take this," said he to his uncle the King. "As I cast this apple at your feet so will I cast at your feet the crowns of all the Kings of the earth." Such pride must surely have a fall. Every day he exposes himself to death. I would that some one would slay him. We shall never have peace but at the price of his life."

Blancandrin answered, "This Roland must be hard of heart if he would subdue every nation and lay his hands upon every country. But on whom does he count to help him in so vast an enterprise?" "He relies on the French," said Ganelon. "There is nothing that he refuses them, neither gold, nor silver, nor chargers, nor mules, nor silk, nor armour. To the King himself he gives as much as he desires. I doubt not that he will conquer the world even as far as the sun rising."

The Saracen cast his eyes on Ganelon, and saw that he was of a fair countenance, but had an evil look. And Ganelon, when the Saracen's eyes were upon him, felt his whole body tremble from head to foot. Blancandrin said, "Are you minded to revenge yourself on this Roland? If you be, deliver him up to us. King Marsilas is a right generous giver, and will willingly share his treasures with you." Thus the two talked together, and by the time that they came to Saragossa they had agreed together to seek the means by which Roland might come by his death.

The King of Spain was sitting under a pine-tree on a throne that was covered with silk of Alexandria. There were thousands of his people around him, but not a word was said, so greatly did they all desire to hear the tidings that Ganelon and Blancandrin might be bringing with them.

Blancandrin came forward and stood before King Marsilas holding Ganelon by the right hand, and said, "In the name of the Prophet, health, O King. We delivered your message to King Charles. He lifted his hands to the sky and gave thanks to God, but he made no other answer. Nevertheless he has sent to you one of his chief nobles, who is a great man in France. 'Tis from him you will hear whether you will have peace or no." "Let him speak," said the King, "and we will listen."

Ganelon stood a while, thinking within himself. Then he began to speak, nor could any one have spoken better. "Health, O King, in the name of God, the God of Glory, to whom all honour is due. Hear now what King Charles commands. You must receive the Christian Faith. Then will he grant unto you half of the land of Spain to be held of him. The other half he grants to the Count Roland. Verily you will have a proud companion! If this please you not, then he will lay siege to Saragossa, will take you captive and carry you to Aachen, where he has his Imperial Throne. There shall sentence be pronounced upon you, and you will end your days in shame."

The King's face was changed with anger when he heard these words. He had a gilded staff in his hand, and would have

struck Ganelon therewith, but that by good fortune his people held him back. When Ganelon saw it, he drew his sword two fingers' breadth out of the scabbard. "Sword," he said, "thou art fair and bright. So long as I have thee in my hands the King of France shall not say that I perished alone in the land of strangers; no verily, but their best warriors shall have paid for my death with their blood."

And now King Marsilas had been persuaded to sit down again on his throne. "You had put yourself in evil case," said his Vizier to him, "had you struck this Frenchman. Rather you must listen to his words."

"Sire," said Ganelon, "I will put up with this affront, but never will I consent, for all the treasures that there are in this land, nay, not for all the gold that God has made, not to speak the words that King Charles has commanded me to speak." And he threw to the ground his mantle of sable, covered with silk of Alexandria; but his sword he kept, holding its hilt in his right hand. "This is a noble baron," said the heathen chiefs.

Then Ganelon spoke the same words as before, and when he had ended them, he gave King Charles's letter into the King's hand. Now King Marsilas was a scholar, having learnt in the schools of the heathen. So when he had broken the seal of the letter, he read it from end to end; and having read it, the tears came into his eyes with rage, and he pulled his beard, and cried with a loud voice, "Listen, my lords, to this foolishness. Charles, who is King of France, bids me remember the two ambassadors whom I beheaded, and commands me, if I would redeem my life, to send him my Vizier. If I fail in this, he will be my enemy for ever."

All held their peace save the King's son, who cried, "Ganelon has spoken as a fool speaks; verily he deserves to die. Deliver him to me, and I will deal with him."

But Ganelon drew his sword, and stood with his back to a pine. King Marsilas stood up from his throne, and went into the orchard hard by, bidding the chief of his counsellors follow

him. When they were assembled there, Blancandrin said to the King, "You do ill to deal harshly with Ganelon. He has pledged his faith to serve us." "Bring him hither," said the King. So Blancandrin brought him before the King, holding him by the right hand.

"My lord Ganelon," said Marsilas, "I was ill-advised when in my anger I sought to strike you. I would make amends for the wrong with these skins of martens which I have purchased this very day. They are worth more than five hundred pieces of gold." Then the King hung them about Ganelon's neck. "I accept them," said he; "may God Himself make it up to you for your bounty!"

Said the King, "Believe me, Ganelon, that I greatly desire to be your friend. Come, now, tell me about Charlemagne. He is an old man, is he not? One who has lived his life? He must be two hundred years old. Over how many countries he has passed! and how many blows has he taken on his shield, and what mighty kings has he brought to beg their bread! When, think you, will he be tired of waging war? Surely 'tis time that he should be taking rest at Aachen."

Ganelon answered, "You do not know King Charles the Great. No man is a better knight than he, so say all that know him. As for myself, I cannot praise him enough; I had rather die than cease to be one of his barons. But for his ceasing to make war, that cannot be so long as Roland lives. There is no such knight in all the East. A right valiant warrior, too, is Roland's companion, Oliver; right valiant are the Twelve Peers also. Of a truth King Charles need fear no man alive."

"But," answered the King, "there is no people that can be compared with mine. Four hundred thousand horsemen I have with whom to fight against King Charles and his Frenchmen." "Yet," said Ganelon, "it is not thus that you will answer him. Rather will you lose thousands and thousands of your soldiers. Listen now to my counsel. Give the King money in abundance; give him hostages. Then he will go back to France, and so going

he will leave behind him his rearguard. In the rear-guard I know well will be Roland, his nephew, and Oliver, who is Roland's companion. And being there, they are doomed to die. So will the great pride of King Charles have a fall. Never again will he rise to wage war against you.

"Ganelon," said the King, "tell us more plainly yet how I shall slay this Roland." Ganelon answered, "He and twenty thousand men of France will be in the rear of the King's army. It is your part, my lord, to gather your whole host. Send against them first a hundred thousand of your Saracens. I do not deny that they will be destroyed, but, on the other hand, the men of France will receive great damage. Then engage them in a second battle. It is not possible that Roland should escape both from one and from the other. And if he be slain, then you have taken from King Charles his right hand. France will have no more her marvellous armies; never again will King Charles lead such hosts into battle. So Spain will at last have peace."

"Swear that this shall be," said the King; and Ganelon swore that it should be on his sword Murgleis. Then they brought to the King a great book in which was written the law of Mahomet, and the King made a great oath upon it, that if by any means it could be so ordered, Roland should die and the Twelve Peers with him. "May our purpose be accomplished!" cried Ganelon.

Then the chiefs of the heathen came one after another to Ganelon with gifts in their hands. First came a certain Valdabrun. "Take this sword," he said; "no man has a better. The pommel and hilt are worth a thousand crowns. Let it be the pledge of our friendship. Only help us to bring Roland to his death." "It shall be done," said Ganelon.

Then came one Chimborin. "Take this helmet," he said; "no man has a better. See this great carbuncle that glitters on the vizor. Only help us to slay Roland." "It shall be done," said Ganelon.

Then came Queen Branimonde. "Sir," said she, "I regard you greatly. My lord and all his people much esteem you. I would send to your wife two bracelets. They are of amethysts, rubies, and gold. Your King has not, I well know, the like." Ganelon took the bracelets from her hand, and he stowed them in his riding-boot.

King Marsilas said to his treasurer, "Have you made ready the presents that I purpose to send to King Charles?" The treasurer answered, "They are ready: seven hundred camels laden with gold and silver, and twenty hostages, the noblest in the land."

And now the King would bid farewell to Ganelon. "I love you much," said he. "You shall not fail to have the best of my treasures, if you will only help me against Roland. Now I give you ten mules' burden of gold of Arabia, and every year you shall have the like. And now take the keys of this city, and give them to King Charles; when you present these treasures to him deliver to him also these twenty hostages, only see that Roland be put in the rearguard." "'Tis my thought," cried Ganelon, "that I tarry here too long." Thereupon he mounted his horse and rode away.

CHAPTER XXVII

OF THE PLOT AGAINST ROLAND

And now King Charles had come on his homeward journey to the city of Volterra (Count Roland had taken it and laid it in ruins three years before). There he awaited Ganelon and the tribute of Spain, and before many days had passed the traitor came. "Sire," said he, "I greet you in the name of God. I bring you the keys of Saragossa, also great treasure which King Marsilas has sent you, and twenty hostages, the noblest in the land. King Marsilas also bids me say that he is not to be blamed because he does not send the Vizier. The Vizier, with many thousands of armed men, took ship—I saw them with my own eyes—because they were not content to accept the law of Christ. But before they had sailed four leagues, there came suddenly upon them a great storm of wind, so that their ships sank. You will never see them more, for they were all drowned. As for the King himself, you may rest assured that before this month is spent he will follow you to France, and that he will receive the law of Christ, and will become your vassal holding the kingdom of Spain from you." "Thanks be to God for all these blessings," cried the King. And to Ganelon he said, "You have served me well, and shall have due recompense."

Then the trumpets sounded, and the army went on its way to France. That night the King had a certain dream in his sleep. He thought that he stood in the pass of Cizra, holding in his hand an ashen spear, and that Ganelon laid hold of it and shook it in such a fashion that it was broken into a thousand pieces, and the fragments flew up to the sky. After this he had another dream. He was in his chapel at his city of Aachen, and a bear bit him so cruelly on the right arm that the flesh was broken even to the bone. After the bear there came a leopard from the Ardennes, which made as if it would attack him. And lo! a greyhound came forth from the hall, and ran to him with great

bounds. First the greyhound laid hold of the bear by the right ear, and then it assailed the leopard furiously.

"'Tis a great fight," cried they who stood by, but no one knew who would prevail.

The next day the King called his lords together. "You see," said he, "these narrow passes. Whom shall I place to command the rearguard? Choose you a man yourselves." Said Ganelon, "Whom should we choose but my son-in-law, Count Roland? You have no man in your host so valiant. Of a truth he will be the salvation of France." The King said when he heard these words, "What ails you, Ganelon? You look like to one possessed. But tell me—who shall command my vanguard?" "Let Ogier the Dane be the man," answered Ganelon. "There is no one who could acquit himself better."

When Count Roland knew what was proposed concerning him, he spake out as a true knight should speak. "I am right thankful to you, my father-in-law, that you have caused me to be put in this place. Of a truth the King of France shall lose nothing by my means, neither charger, nor mule, nor pack-horse, nor beast of burden." "You speak truly," said Ganelon; "I know it well." Then Roland turned to him again, and said, "Villain that you are, and come of a race of villainy, did you think perchance that I should let the gauntlet fall, as you let it fall when you would have taken it from the King?"

Then Roland turned to the King and said, "Give me the bow that you hold in your hand. It shall not fall from my hand as the gauntlet fell when Ganelon would have taken it from your hand." The King said to Roland, "Nephew, I will gladly give you the half of my army. That will provide for your safety without fail." "Not so, my lord," answered Roland, "I need no such multitude. Give me twenty thousand only, so they be men of valour, and I will keep the passes in all safety. So long as I shall live, you need fear no man."

Then Roland mounted his horse. With him were Oliver his comrade, and Otho and Berenger, and Gerard of Roussillon,

an aged warrior, and others, men of renown. And Turpin the Archbishop cried, "By my head, I will go also." So they chose twenty thousand warriors with whom to keep the passes.

Meanwhile King Charles had entered the valley of Roncesvalles, his vanguard being led by Ogier the Dane. High were the mountains on either side of the way, and the valleys were gloomy and dark. But when they had passed through the valley, then they saw the fair land of Gascony, and as they saw it they thought of their homes and their wives and daughters. There was not one of them but wept for very tenderness of heart. But of all that company there was none sadder of heart than the King himself, when he thought how he had left his nephew Count Roland behind him in the passes of Spain. Duke Naymes, who rode beside him, said, "What troubles you?" "There is cause enough," answered Charles. "I fear me much that this Ganelon will be the ruin of France. Did he not cause me to leave Roland behind me in the passes? And if I lose my nephew when shall I find his like again?" And he told the Duke of his dream, how Ganelon had broken the spear that he held in his hands.

And now King Marsilas began to gather his army. He laid a strict command on all his nobles and chiefs that they should bring with them to Saragossa as many men as they could gather together. And when they were come to the city, it being the third day from the issuing of the King's command, they saluted the great image of Mahomet, the false prophet that stood on the topmost tower. This done they went forth from the city gates. They made all haste, marching across the mountains and valleys of Spain till they came in sight of the Standard of France, where Roland and Oliver and the Twelve Peers were ranged in battle array.

The nephew of King Marsilas rode to the front of the army and said to his uncle, "Sire, I have served you faithfully, enduring much labour and trouble, fighting many battles, and winning not a few victories. And now all the reward that I ask is that you suffer me to smite down this Roland. I will slay him with the point of my spear if Mahomet will help me. So shall I

deliver Spain from the enemy, these Frenchmen will give themselves up to you, and you shall have no more wars all the days of your life."

When King Marsilas heard these words, he reached out his hand, and gave his gauntlet to his nephew. Then said the young man, "You have given me a noble gift, my uncle. Now choose me eleven of your nobles, and we will fight with the Twelve Peers of France."

The first that came forth to offer himself for the battle was Fausseron, the King's brother. "My lord nephew," said he, "we will go together, you and I—between us we shall win this victory. Woe to King Charles's rear-guard. We will destroy it to a man."

The next that stood up was Corsablis, King of Barbary. He was an evil man and a treacherous, but that day he spoke as a loyal vassal of the King. "This is no time," he said, "for drawing back. If I find Roland, I will attack him without delay." After him rose nine other chiefs, till the number of champions was accomplished, twelve against the Twelve Peers of France.

The Saracen champions donned their coats of mail, of double substance most of them, and they set upon their heads helmets of Saragossa of well-tempered metal, and they girded them-selves with swords of Vienna. Fair were their shields to view, their lances were from Valentia, their standards were of white, blue, and red. Their mules they left with their servants, and, mounting their chargers, so moved forwards. Fair was the day and bright the sun, as their armour flashed in the light and the drums were beaten so loudly that the Frenchmen heard the sound.

Said Oliver to Roland, "Comrade, methinks we shall soon do battle with the Saracens." "God grant it," answered Roland. "'Tis our duty to hold the place for the King, and we will do it, come what may. As for me, I will not set an ill example."

CHAPTER XXVIII

HOW THE HEATHEN AND THE FRENCH PREPARED FOR BATTLE

Oliver climbed to the top of a hill, and saw from thence the whole army of the heathen. He cried to Roland his companion, "I hear a great sound of men coming by way of Spain, and I see the flashing of arms. We men of France shall have no small trouble there from. This is the doing of Ganelon the traitor."

"Be silent," answered Roland, "till you shall know; say no more about him."

Oliver looked from the hilltop, and saw how the Saracens came on. So many there were that he could not count their battalions. He descended to the plain with all speed, and came to the array of the French, and said, "I have seen more heathen than man ever yet saw together upon the earth. There are a hundred thousand at the least. We shall have such a battle with them as has never before been fought. My brethren of France, quit you like men, be strong; stand firm that you be not conquered." And all the army shouted with one voice, "Cursed be he that shall fly."

Then Oliver turned to Roland, and said, "Sound your horn, my friend, Charles will hear it, and will return." "I were a fool," answered Roland, "so to do. Not so; but I will deal these heathen some mighty blows with Durendal my sword. They have been ill-advised to venture into these passes. I swear that they are condemned to death one and all."

After a while, Oliver said again, "Friend Roland, sound your horn of ivory. Then will the King return, and bring his army with him, to our help." But Roland answered again, "I will not do dishonour to my kinsmen, or to the fair land of France. I

have my sword; that shall suffice for me. These evil-minded heathen are gathered together against us to their own hurt. Surely not one of them shall escape from death." "As for me," said Oliver, "I see not where the dishonour would be. I saw the valleys and the mountains covered with the great multitude of Saracens. Theirs is, in truth, a mighty array, and we are but few." "So much the better," answered Roland. "It makes my courage grow. 'Tis better to die than to be disgraced. And remember, the harder our blows the more the King will love us."

Roland was brave, but Oliver was wise. "Consider," he said, "comrade. These enemies are over-near to us, and the King over-far. Were he here, we should not be in danger; but there are some here to-day who will never fight in another battle."

Then Turpin the Archbishop struck spurs into his horse, and rode to a hilltop. Then he turned to the men of France, and spake: "Lords of France, King Charles has left us here; our King he is, and it is our duty to die for him. To-day our Christian Faith is in peril: do ye fight for it. Fight ye must; be sure of that, for there under your eyes are the Saracens. Confess, therefore, your sins, and pray to God that He have mercy upon you. And now for your soul's health I will give you all absolution. If you die, you will be God's martyrs, every one of you, and your places are ready for you in His Paradise."

Thereupon the men of France dismounted, and knelt upon the ground, and the Archbishop blessed them in God's name. "But look," said he, "I set you a penance—smite these pagans." Then the men of France rose to their feet. They had received absolution, and were set free from all their sins, and the Archbishop had blessed them in the name of God. After this they mounted their swift steeds, and clad themselves in armour, and made themselves ready for the battle.

Said Roland to Oliver, "Brother, you know that it is Ganelon who has betrayed us. Good store he has had of gold and silver as a reward; 'tis the King Marsilas that has made merchandise of us, but verily it is with our swords that he shall

be paid." So saying, he rode on to the pass, mounted on his good steed Veillantif. His spear he held with the point to the sky; a white flag it bore with fringes of gold which fell down to his hands. A stalwart man was he, and his countenance was fair and smiling. Behind him followed Oliver, his friend; and the men of France pointed to him, saying, "See our champion! "Pride was in his eye when he looked towards the Saracens; but to the men of France his regard was all sweetness and humility. Full courteously he spake to them: "Ride not so fast, my lords," he said; "verily these heathen are come hither, seeking martyrdom. 'Tis a fair spoil that we shall gather from them to-day. Never has King of France gained any so rich." And as he spake, the two hosts came together.

Said Oliver, "You did not deem it fit, my lord, to sound your horn. Therefore you lack the help which the King would have sent. Not his the blame, for he knows nothing of what has chanced. But do you, lords of France, charge as fiercely as you may, and yield not one whit to the enemy. Think upon these two things only—how to deal a straight blow and to take it. And let us not forget King Charles's cry of battle." Then all the men of France with one voice cried out, "Mountjoy!" He that heard them so cry had never doubted that they were men of valour. Proud was their array as they rode on to battle, spurring their horses that they might speed the more. And the Saracens, on their part, came forward with a good heart. Thus did the Frenchmen and the heathen meet in the shock of battle.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE BATTLE

The first that rode forth from the array of the heathen was Ælroth, nephew to King Marsilas. Good were his arms, and his horse was both swift and strong. Grievous were the reproaches that he uttered against the men of France. "Are you come," said he, "ye robbers of France, to fight with us to-day? Know ye not that he who should have helped you has betrayed you? Verily, a fool was your Emperor to leave you in these passes, for the honour of fair France has perished to-day, and the great Charles has lost, as it were, the right arm from his body. So shall Spain have peace at last."

Roland heard these words with great grief in his heart. He spurred his steed with spurs of gold, and smote the heathen warrior with all his might. He brake his shield in twain, and severed the mail of his hauberk, and clave his body into two parts. A mighty stroke it was, and Roland cried aloud as he dealt it, "Learn now, thou wretch, that King Charles knows well what he does. He loves not treason or traitors. It was well done of him to leave us in these passes. France shall have no loss of honour this day. Strike, men of France, strike! The first blood is for us; these dogs of heathen shall suffer for their misdeeds."

Then came forth a Duke from the host of the Saracens, brother to King Marsilas, Fausseron by name. Never was a man on the earth more insolent and villainous. When he saw that his nephew was dead it cut him to the heart. He rushed out of the crowd, and, shouting out the battle-cry of the heathen, hurled himself on the ranks of France. "Fair France," said he, "shall lose her honour this day." Great was the rage of Oliver when he heard these mischievous words. He struck his spurs of gold into his charger's flanks, and smote Fausseron with a right knightly blow. His shield he shore in twain, and burst the links of his hauberk,

and hurled him dead from his saddle. "Lie there," he said. "Who cares for thy threats, thou coward!" And, turning to the Frenchmen, he cried, "Strike, friends, strike! and we shall conquer the enemy. Mountjoy! 'Tis the King's own battle-cry!"

Then came forth another King, Corsablis by name. From the distant land of Barbary he came. He cried to his fellows in the army of the heathen, "Easily can we bear up the battle. Few are these Frenchmen, and of no account. Not a man of them shall escape, nor shall Charles their King help them. Verily the day has come for them to die." Turpin the Archbishop heard him—not one was there in all the heathen host whom Turpin more hated—and charged him, spear in hand, and bore him dead to the ground.

Full many of the heathen warriors fell that day. Not one of the Twelve Peers of France but slew his man. But of all none bare himself so valiantly as Roland. Many a blow did he deal to the enemy with his mighty spear, and when the spear was shivered in his hand, fifteen warriors having fallen before it, then he seized his good sword Durendal, and smote man after man to the ground. Red was he with the blood of his enemies. Red was his hauberk, red his arms, red his shoulders, aye, and the neck of his horse. Not one of the Twelve lingered in the rear, or was slow to strike, but Count Roland was the bravest of the brave. "Well done, Sons of France!" cried Turpin the Archbishop, when he saw them lay on in such sort.

Next to Roland for valour and hardihood came Oliver, his companion. Many a heathen warrior did he slay, till at last his spear was shivered in his hand. "What are you doing, comrade?" cried Roland, when he was aware of the mishap. "A man wants no staff in such a battle as this. 'Tis the steel and nothing else that he must have. Where is your sword Hautclere, with its hilt of gold and its pommel of crystal?" "On my word," said Oliver. "I have not had time to draw it; I was so busy with striking." But as he spake he drew the good sword from its scabbard, and smote a heathen knight, Justin of the Iron Valley. A mighty blow it was, cleaving the man in twain down to his

saddle—aye, and the saddle itself with its adorning of gold and jewels, and the very backbone also of the steed whereon he rode, so that horse and man fell dead together on the plains. "Well done!" cried Roland; "you are a true brother of mine. 'Tis such strokes as this that makes the Emperor love us."

Nevertheless, for all the valour of Roland and his fellows the battle went hardly with the men of France. Many lances were shattered, many flags torn, and many gallant youths cut off in their prime. Never more would they see mother and wife. It was an ill deed that the traitor Ganelon wrought when he sold his fellows to King Marsilas!

And now there befell a new trouble. King Almaris, with a great host of heathen, coming by an unknown way, fell upon the rear of the host where there was another pass. Fiercely did the noble Walter that kept the same charge the new-comers, but they overpowered him and his followers. He was wounded with several lances, and four times did he swoon, so that at the last he was constrained to leave the field of battle, that he might call the Count Roland to his aid. But small was the aid which Roland could give him or any one. Valiantly he held up the battle, and with him Oliver, and Turpin the Archbishop, and others also; but the lines of the men of France were broken, and their armour thrust through, and their spears shattered, and their flags trodden in the dust. For all this they made such slaughter among the heathen that King Almaris, who led the armies of the enemy, scarcely could win back his way to his own people, wounded in four places and sorely spent. A right good warrior was he; had he but been a Christian but few had matched him in battle!

He came to King Marsilas, where he stood among his princes, and fell at his feet; for indeed there was no strength left in him. "To horse!" he cried, "my lord, to horse! You will find the men of France worn out with the slaughter that they have wrought among us. Their spears are shattered and their swords broken; a full half of them are dead, and they that are left have no strength remaining in them. It will cost you but little to take

vengeance for the multitudes whom they have slain. Believe me, my lord, these Frenchmen are ready to be conquered."

Then King Marsilas bade his host advance. A mighty army it was, divided into twenty columns, and the trumpets sounded the charge. Never was heard such a din in the land! "Oliver, my comrade," said Roland, when he heard it, "this traitor Ganelon has sworn our death. But if he compass it, surely our King will take a terrible vengeance. But as for us, we must do our duty as good knights, for verily this battle will be no child's play. Strike thou with thy sword Hautclere, and I will strike with my sword Durendal. Many a time have we wielded them side by side; many a victory have we won with them. Verily if we fall this day, these pagans shall not despise us."

The Archbishop, on his part, spake words of comfort to his people. "Let no one think of flight," he said; "never shall these heathen make songs upon us. 'Tis better far to die in battle. And if we die, as well may be, there is this of which I can assure you: the gates of Paradise shall be open to you. To-morrow, if so it be, you shall have a place among the saints." Then the men of France took fresh courage and made themselves ready for the battle.

King Marsilas said to his people, "Listen to me. This Roland is a great warrior; it will be no easy thing to conquer him. One battle we have fought against him and not prevailed; now will we fight another; if need be, and you will follow me, we will fight even a third. Of these twenty columns ten shall set themselves in array against the men of France, and ten shall remain with me. As I live, before this day is over, the power of King Charles shall be broken." So saying he gave a banner, richly embroidered, to the Emir Grandoigne; "Lead your men against the French," said he; "this shall be your warrant from me."

So the King abode where he was on the hilltop, but Grandoigne descended into the plain, having his banner carried before him. "To horse!" he cried, and the trumpets sounded, and

the host moved on to the battle. And the French cried when they saw it, "Now what shall we do? Curses on this traitor Ganelon, who has sold us to the heathen!" But Turpin the Archbishop bade them be of good courage. "Bear you as men!" said he, "and God shall give you the crown of glory in Paradise. Only know that into Paradise a coward can in nowise come." "So be it," said the men of France, "we are few indeed, but we will not fail of our duty."

The first to charge from out of the ranks of the heathen was Chimborin, the same that had given to Ganelon the helmet with the great carbuncle on the vizor. His horse, Barbemouche by name, was swifter than a sparrow-hawk or a swallow. He rode at full speed, levelling his lance at Engelier the Gascon, and smote him through shield and hauberk so stoutly that the spear stood out of his body on the other side. "These French-men are easy to conquer," he cried. "Strike, comrades, strike, and break their rank!" But all the Frenchmen cried out, "This is a grievous thing that so brave a warrior should be slain!" Said Roland to Oliver, "Comrade, see Engelier the Gascon is slain; we had no braver knight in the host." "God grant that I may avenge him," answered Oliver, and struck spurs into his horse. In his hand was his trusty sword Hautclere, its blade red with blood. Therewith he smote Chimborin so mighty a blow that he slew both man and horse. Next he slew the Duke Alphais. Eight other Arab warriors he struck down from their saddles, and in such sort they would never join in the battle any more. "My comrade is in a goodly rage," cried Roland; "these are the blows that make King Charles love us. Strike, men of France, strike and cease not!"

The next that rode forth was the Emir Valdabrun, the same that had given to Ganelon the sword. He was a great ruler of the sea. Four hundred ships he had, and there was not a sailor but complained of his robberies. The same had taken by treachery, and slain the Patriarch of Antioch with the sword. This man smote Duke Samson, breaking with his spear both shield and hauberk, and so did him to death. "So shall all these wretches perish," he cried. And the men of France were sorely

dismayed. When Roland saw that the Duke Samson was dead, he rode fiercely at Valdabrun, and smote him so mightily with his great sword Durendal that he clave in twain helmet, head, and body, and saddle, and the very backbone of the horse, so that both fell dead together, both man and horse.

After this Malquidant, son of King Malquid of Africa slew Ansol. Him the Archbishop speedily avenged. Never priest that sang mass was so sturdy a warrior as he. With one blow of his good Toledo sword he slew the African. "He smites sore, does the Arch-bishop!" cried all the men of France when they saw the deed.

After this Grandoigne who was the leader of the host of heathen entered the battle. Five knights, valiant men of war all of them, he slew one after the other, so that the men of France cried, "How fast they fall, these champions of ours!"

Roland heard the cry, and it went near to break his heart, so great was his wrath. He rode straight at Grandoigne, and these two met in the middle space between the hosts. Among the heathen no man was braver or better at arms than Grandoigne, but he was no match for Roland. They had scarce met in the shock of battle when Roland with one mighty blow cleft him to his saddle, aye, and slew the horse on which he rode. Many other valiant deeds he wrought that day, nor did Oliver lag behind, nor Turpin the Archbishop, riding on the famous horse which he took from the King of Denmark. But though these and others also bore themselves right bravely, such was the multitude of the Saracens that in the end it carried all before it. Four times did the host of the Saracens advance, four times did the Frenchmen beat it back. But when it advanced for the fifth time, things went ill for the Christians. Great was the price at which they sold their lives; but scarcely threescore were left.

CHAPTER XXX

HOW ROLAND SOUNDED HIS HORN

Count Roland saw how grievously his people had suffered and spake thus to Oliver his comrade: "Dear comrade, you see how many brave men lie dead upon the ground. Well may we mourn for Fair France, widowed as she is of so many valiant champions. But why is our King not here? O Oliver, my brother, what shall we do to send him tidings of our state?" "I know not," answered Oliver. "Only this I know—that death is to be chosen rather than dishonour."

After a while Roland said again, "I shall blow my horn; King Charles will hear it, where he has encamped beyond the passes, and he and his host will come back." "That would be ill done," answered Oliver, "and shame both you and your race. When I gave you this counsel you would have none of it."

Now I like it not. 'Tis not for a brave man to sound the horn and cry for help now that we are in such case." "The battle is too hard for us," said Roland again, "and I shall sound my horn, that the King may hear." And Oliver answered again, "When I gave you this counsel, you scorned it. Now I myself like it not. 'Tis true that had the King been here, we had not suffered this loss. But the blame is not his. 'Tis your folly, Count Roland, that has done to death all these men of France. But for that we should have conquered in this battle, and have taken and slain King Marsilas. But now we can do nothing for France and the King. We can but die. Woe is me for our country, aye, and for our friendship, which will come to a grievous end this day."

The Archbishop had perceived that the two were at variance, and spurred his horse till he came where they stood. "Listen to me," he said, "Sir Roland and Sir Oliver. I implore you not to fall out with each other in this fashion. We, sons of France, that are in this place, are of a truth condemned to death,

neither will the sounding of your horn save us, for the King is far away, and cannot come in time. Nevertheless, I hold it to be well that you should sound it. When the King and his army shall come, they will find us dead—that I know full well. But they will avenge us, so that our enemies shall not go away rejoicing. And they will also recover our bodies, and will carry them away for burial in holy places, so that the dogs and wolves shall not devour them."

"You say well," cried Roland, and he put his horn to his lips, and gave so mighty a blast upon it, that the sound was heard thirty leagues away. King Charles and his men heard it, and the King said, "Our countrymen are fighting with the enemy." But Ganelon answered, "Sire, had any but you so spoken, I had said that he spoke falsely."

Then Roland blew his horn a second time; with great pain and anguish of body he blew it, and the red blood gushed from his lips; but the sound was heard yet further than at first. The King heard it, and all his nobles, and all his men. "That," said he, "is Roland's horn; he never had sounded it were he not in battle with the enemy." But Ganelon answered again: "Believe me, Sire, there is no battle. You are an old man, and you have the fancies of a child. You know what a mighty man of valour is this Roland. Think you that any one would dare to attack him? No one, of a truth. Ride on, Sire, why halt you here? The fair land of France is yet far away."

Roland blew his horn a third time, and when the King heard it he said, "He that blew that horn drew a deep breath." And Duke Naymes cried out, "Roland is in trouble; on my conscience he is fighting with the enemy. Some one has betrayed him; 'tis he, I doubt not, that would deceive you now. To arms, Sire! utter your war-cry, and help your own house and your country. You have heard the cry of the noble Roland."

Then King Charles bade all the trumpets sound, and forthwith all the men of France armed themselves, with helmets, and hauberks, and swords with pummels of gold. Mighty were

their shields, and their lances strong, and the flags that they carried were white and red and blue. And when they made an end of their arming they rode back with all haste. There was not one of them but said to his comrade, "If we find Roland yet alive, what mighty strokes will we strike for him!"

But Ganelon the King handed over to the knaves of his kitchen. "Take this traitor," said he, "who has sold his country." Ill did Ganelon fare among them. They pulled out his hair and his beard and smote him with their staves; then they put a great chain, such as that with which a bear is bound, about his neck, and made him fast to a pack-horse.

This done, the King and his army hastened with all speed to the help of Roland. In the van and the rear sounded the trumpets as though they would answer Roland's horn. Full of wrath was King Charles as he rode; full of wrath were all the men of France. There was not one among them but wept and sobbed; there was not one but prayed, "Now, may God keep Roland alive till we come to the battlefield, so that we may strike a blow for him." Alas! it was all in vain; they could not come in time for all their speed.

CHAPTER XXXI

HOW OLIVER WAS SLAIN

Count Roland looked round on the mountain-sides and on the plains. Alas! how many noble sons of France he saw lying dead upon them! "Dear friends," he said, weeping as he spoke, "may God have mercy on you and receive you into His Paradise! More loyal followers have I never seen. How is the fair land of France widowed of her bravest, and I can give you no help. Oliver, dear comrade, we must not part. If the enemy slay me not here, surely I shall be slain by sorrow. Come, then, let us smite these heathen."

Thus did Roland again charge the enemy, his good sword Durendal in his hand; as the stag flies before the hounds, so did the heathen fly before Roland. "By my faith," cried the Archbishop when he saw him, "that is a right good knight! Such courage, and such a steed, and such arms I love well to see. If man be not brave and a stout fighter, he had better by far be a monk in some cloister where he may pray all day long for our sins."

But Roland cried again, "Strike home, men; have no mercy on these heathen dogs." So saying he charged the enemy, and on the other side King Marsilas came out to meet him. A great warrior was he, and his horse was fleeter than a falcon. First he slew Beuvon of Burgundy, and Ivan, and Gerard and other two: five knights he met, five he slew, but the sixth was the Count Roland himself. "Curse upon you!" cried the Count; "you have slain my comrades; verily you shall not go scatheless hence." Thereupon with one blow he smote off his right hand, and with another he shore off the head of the king's son Jurfalew. "Help us, Mahomet!" cried the heathen. "How these villains fight! They die rather than fly from the field of battle!" And King Marsilas, throwing down his shield upon the ground, fled

from out the battle, and thousands fled with him, crying aloud, "Verily, the nephew of King Charles has won the day."

But alas! though the King fled, the Caliph remained. He was King of Carthage and of the whole land of Ethiopia. Chief of the black race was he, and a mighty man of valour. Fifty thousand warriors followed him; blacker than ink were they all, and with nothing that was white about them save only their teeth. "We have but a short time to live," cried Roland, when he saw the new host advancing to the battle. "But cursed would he be that does not sell his life dearly! Strike, comrades, strike! Let what will befall us, France shall not suffer disgrace. When the King shall come to see this field of battle, for one of us that he shall find dead there shall be full fifteen of the Saracens. He cannot but bless us for such valour." And Oliver cried aloud, Ill luck to all laggarads!" And the men of France that remained threw themselves upon the enemy.

But the heathen, when they saw how few they were, took fresh courage. And the Caliph, spurring his horse, rode against Oliver and smote him in the middle of his back, making his spear pass right through him. "That is a shrewd blow," he cried; "I have avenged my friends and countrymen upon you."

Then Oliver knew he was stricken to death, but he would not fall unavenged. With his great sword Hautclere he smote the Caliph on his head and cleft it to the teeth. "Curse on you, pagan. Neither your wife nor any woman in the land of your birth shall boast that you have taken a penny's worth from King Charles!" But to Roland he cried, "Come, comrade, help me; well I know that we two shall part in great sorrow this day."

Roland came with all speed, and saw his friend, how he lay all pale and fainting on the ground and how the blood gushed in great streams from his wound. "I know not what to do," he cried. "This is an ill chance that has befallen you. Truly France is bereaved of her bravest son." So saying he went near to swoon in the saddle as he sat. Then there befell a strange thing. Oliver had lost so much of his blood that he could not any more see clearly

or know who it was that was near him. So he raised up his arm and smote with all his strength that yet remained to him on the helmet of Roland his friend. The helmet he cleft in twain to the vizor; but by good fortune it wounded not the head. Roland looked at him and said in a gentle voice, "Did you this of set purpose? I am Roland your friend, and have not harmed you. "Ah!" said Oliver, "I hear you speak, but I cannot see you. Pardon me that I struck you; it was not done of set purpose." "It harmed me not," answered Roland; "with all my heart and before God I forgive you." And this was the way these two friends parted at the last.

And now Oliver felt the pains of death come over him. He could no longer see nor hear. He clomb down from his horse, and laid himself upon the ground, and clasping his hands lifted them to heaven and made his confession. "O Lord," he said, "take me into Paradise. And do Thou bless King Charles and the sweet land of France." And when he had said thus he died. And Roland looked at him as he lay. There was not upon earth a more sorrowful man than he. "Dear comrade," he said, "this is indeed an evil day. Many a year have we two been together. Never have I done wrong to you; never have you done wrong to me. How shall I bear to live without you?" And again he swooned where he sat on his horse. But the stirrup held him up that he did not fall to the ground.

CHAPTER XXXII

HOW ARCHBISHOP TURPIN DIED

When Roland came to himself he looked about him and saw how great was the calamity that had befallen his army. For now there were left alive to him two only, Turpin the Archbishop and Walter of Hum. Walter had but that moment come down from the hills where he had been fighting so fiercely with the heathen that all his men were dead; now he cried to Roland for help. "Noble Count, where are you? I am Walter of Hum, and am not unworthy to be your friend. Help me therefore. For see how my spear is broken and my shield cleft in twain, my hauberk is in pieces, and my body sorely wounded. I am about to die; but I have sold my life at a great price." When Roland heard him cry he set spurs to his horse and galloped to him. "Walter," said he, "you are a brave warrior and a trustworthy. Tell me now where are the thousand valiant men whom you took from my army. They were right good soldiers, and I am in sore need of them."

"They are dead," answered Walter; "you will see them no more. A sore battle we had with the Saracens yonder on the hills; they had the men of Canaan there and the men of Armenia and the Giants; there were no better men in their army than these. We dealt with them so that they will not boast themselves of this day's work. But it cost us dear; all the men of France lie dead on the plain, and I am wounded to the death. And now, Roland, blame me not that I fled; for you are my lord, and all my trust is in you."

"I blame you not," said Roland, "only as long as you live help me against the heathen." And as he spake he took his cloak and rent it into strips and bound up Walter's wounds therewith. This done he and Walter and the Archbishop set fiercely on the enemy. Five-and-twenty did Roland slay, and Walter slew six,

and the Archbishop five. Three valiant men of war they were; fast and firm they stood one by the other; hundreds there were of the heathen, but they dared not come near to the three valiant champions of France. They stood far off, and cast at the three spears and darts and javelins and weapons of every kind. Walter of Hum was slain forthwith; and the Archbishop's armour was broken, and he wounded, and his horse slain under him. Nevertheless he lifted himself from the ground, still keeping a good heart in his breast. "They have not overcome me yet "; said he, "as long as a good soldier lives, he does not yield."

Roland took his horn once more and sounded it, for he would know whether King Charles were coming. Ah me! it was a feeble blast that he blew. But the King heard it, and he halted and listened. "My lords!" said he, "things go ill for us, I doubt not. To-day we shall lose, I fear me much, my brave nephew Roland. I know by the sound of his horn that he has but a short time to live. Put your horses to their full speed, if you would come in time to help him, and let a blast be sounded by every trumpet that there is in the army." So all the trumpets in the host sounded a blast; all the valleys and hills re-echoed with the sound; sore discouraged were the heathen when they heard it. King Charles has come again," they cried; "we are all as dead men. When he comes he shall not find Roland alive." Then four hundred of them, the strongest and most valiant knights that were in the army of the heathen, gathered themselves into one company, and made a yet fiercer assault on Roland.

Roland saw them coming, and waited for them without fear. So long as he lived he would not yield himself to the enemy or give place to them. "Better death than flight," said he, as he mounted his good steed Veillantif, and rode towards the enemy. And by his side went Turpin the Archbishop on foot. Then said Roland to Turpin, "I am on horseback and you are on foot. But let us keep together; never will I leave you; we two will stand against these heathen dogs. They have not, I warrant, among them such a sword as Durendal." "Good," answered the Archbishop. "Shame to the man who does not smite his hardest.

And though this be our last battle, I know well that King Charles will take ample vengeance for us."



ON THE FIELD OF RONCESVALLES.

When the heathen saw these two stand together they fell back in fear and hurled at them spears and darts and javelins

without number. Roland's shield they broke and his hauberk; but him they hurt not; nevertheless they did him a grievous injury, for they killed his good steed Veillantif. Thirty wounds did Veillantif receive, and he fell dead under his master. Roland stood alone, for the heathen had fled from his presence, alone and on foot. Fain would he have followed after the enemy; but he could not. Then he bethought him of the Archbishop; when he looked, he saw him laid upon the plain. He unlaced his helmet and took the corslet from off him, and bound up his wounds with strips of his shirt of silk, and taking him in his arms laid him down softly on the grass. This done, he said to him, "Dear friend, suffer me to leave you awhile. All our comrades, the men whom we loved so much, are dead. Yet we must not leave them lying where they are. Listen then. I will go and seek for their bodies, and I will bring them hither, and set them in order before you." "Go," said the Archbishop, "and come back as soon as you may. The field is left to me and to you. Thanks be to God for the same!"

Then Roland went to seek his comrades. Alone he went, and passed over all the field of battle. He searched the mountains, he searched the valley. There he found the dead bodies of Gerier and of Engelier the Gascon, of Berenger and of Otho; and of others also. All the Peers of France he found where they lay. Then he carried them one by one and set them all on their knees before the Archbishop. Turpin could not choose but weep when he saw these brave comrades dead. He raised his hand and gave them his blessing.

Friends," said he, "an evil fate has overtaken you in this world; may the God of glory receive you in the world to come!"

Now Roland went again and searched the plain till he found the body of his comrade Oliver. Under a thorn he found it, and he raised it tenderly in his arms, and brought it back to where the Archbishop sat, and put it hard by the other Peers of France. And Turpin gave him also blessing and absolution. This done, Roland said with many tears, "Oliver, my brave comrade, never was there a better knight than you to break a lance, and

shatter a shield, to give good counsel to the brave, and to put to shame traitors and cowards." And when he had said this he looked round on that fair company of the dead, and his heart failed within him. Such goodly knights they were, and so dear to him, and now they were gone. And he fell in a swoon upon the ground.

When the Archbishop saw him fall he reached out his hand and laid hold of the horn. There was a spring of water in the place, and he would fain give a draught to his comrade. Gathering all that he had of strength together, he lifted himself from the ground, stumbling and staggering he went, but his strength did not suffice for the task; before he had gone the length of a furlong he fell staggering to the ground, and the agony of death came upon him.

Roland came out of his swoon and lifted himself from the ground. He looked down and he looked up, and lo! on the other side of his dead comrades, stretched on the green grass, lay the great prince, the Archbishop. His life was well-nigh spent. "I have sinned," he said, and he clasped his hands and lifted them to heaven, and prayed to God that he would take him into Paradise. And with these words he died. This was the end of Turpin. Never was there a man who dealt with the heathen with mightier blows or weightier discourse. May the blessing of God be upon him!

When Roland saw that the Archbishop was dead, his heart was sorely troubled in him. Never did he feel a greater sorrow for comrade slain, save Oliver only. "Charles of France," he said, "come as quickly as you may, many a gallant knight have you lost in Roncesvalles. But King Marsilas, on his part, has lost his army. For one that has fallen on this side there has fallen full forty on that." So saying he turned to the Archbishop; he crossed the dead man's hands upon his breast and said, "I commit thee to the Father's mercy. Never has man served his God with a better will, never since the beginning of the world has there lived a sturdier champion of the faith. May God be good to you and give you all good things!"

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE DEATH OF ROLAND

Now Roland felt that death was near at hand. In one hand he took his horn, and in the other his good sword Durendal, and made his way the distance of a furlong or so till he came to a plain, and in the midst of the plain a little hill. On the top of the hill in the shade of two fair trees were four marble steps. There Roland fell in a swoon upon the grass. There a certain Saracen spied him. The fellow had feigned death, and had laid himself down among the slain, having covered his body and his face with blood. When he saw Roland, he raised himself from where he was lying among the slain and ran to the place, and, being full of pride and fury, seized the Count in his arms, crying aloud, "He is conquered, he is conquered, the famous nephew of King Charles! See, here is his sword; 'tis a noble spoil that I shall carry back with me to Arabia." Thereupon he took the sword in one hand, with the other he laid hold of Roland's beard. But as the man laid hold, Roland came to himself, and knew that some one was taking his sword from him. He opened his eyes but not a word did he speak save this only, "Fellow, you are none of ours," and he smote him a mighty blow upon his helmet. The steel he brake through and the head beneath, and laid the man dead at his feet. "Coward," he said, "what made you so bold that you dared lay hands on Roland? Whosoever knows him will think you a fool for your deed."

And now Roland knew that death was near at hand. He raised himself and gathered all his strength together—ah me! how pale his face was!—and took in his hand his good sword Durendal. Before him was a great rock, and on this in his rage and pain he smote ten mighty blows. Loud rang the steel upon the stone; but it neither brake nor splintered. "Help me," he cried, "O Mary, our Lady. O my good sword, my Durendal, what an evil lot is mine! In the day when I must part with you, my

power over you is lost. Many a battle I have won with your help; and many a kingdom have I conquered, that my Lord Charles possesses this day. Never has any one possessed you that would fly before another. So long as I live, you shall not be taken from me, so long have you been in the hands of a loyal knight."

Then he smote a second time with the sword, this time upon the marble steps. Loud rang the steel, but neither brake nor splintered. Then Roland began to bemoan himself, "O my good Durendal," he said, "how bright and clear thou art, shining as shines the sun! Well I mind me of the day when a voice that seemed to come from heaven bade King Charles give thee to a valiant captain; and forthwith the good King girded it on my side. Many a land have I conquered with thee for him, and now how great is my grief! Can I die and leave thee to be handled by some heathen?" And the third time he smote a rock with it. Loud rang the steel, but it brake not, bounding back as though it would rise to the sky. And when Count Roland saw that he could not break the sword, he spake again but with more content in his heart. "O Durendal," he said, "a fair sword art thou, and holy as fair. There are holy relics in thy hilt, relics of St. Peter and St. Denis and St. Basil. These heathen shall never possess thee; nor shalt thou be held but by a Christian hand."

And now Roland knew that death was very near to him. He laid himself down with his head upon the grass, putting under him his horn and his sword, with his face turned towards the heathen foe. Ask you why he did so? To shew, forsooth, to Charlemagne and the men of France, that he died in the midst of victory. This done he made a loud confession of his sins, stretching his hand to heaven. "Forgive me, Lord," he cried, "my sins, little and great, all that I have committed since the day of my birth to this hour in which I am stricken to death." So he prayed; and, as he lay, he thought of many things, of the countries which he had conquered, and of his dear Fatherland France, and of his kinsfolk, and of the good King Charles. Nor, as he thought, could he keep himself from sighs and tears; yet one thing he remembered beyond all others—to pray for

forgiveness of his sins. "O Lord," he said, "who art the God of truth, and didst save Daniel Thy prophet from the lions, do Thou save my soul and defend it against all perils!" So speaking he raised his right hand, with the gauntlet yet upon it, to the sky, and his head fell back upon his arm and the angels carried him to heaven. So died the great Count Roland.

CHAPTER XXXIV

HOW CHARLEMAGNE SOUGHT VENGEANCE

Not many hours after these things King Charles came to Roncesvalles. It was a grievous sight that he saw; there was not a foot of earth on which there lay not the body of some Frenchman or heathen. And the King cried aloud, calling the dead men by name. "Where are you, Roland?" he said; "and you, Oliver?" "All the Twelve Peers whom he had left behind to guard the passes he called, but no man answered. Charles wept for sadness of heart, and his nobles wept with him; there was not one of all that company but had lost son or brother or comrade or friend. Then spake up the Duke Naymes, "Sire," said he, "see you that cloud of dust, two leagues away? 'Tis the dust of a great multitude, even of the heathen army. Ride, Sire, and take vengeance for these warriors whom you have lost."

"What!" answered the King, "are they already so far? Then must we make haste, for they have robbed me of the very flower of France." Then he turned to his nobles, and called four by name, and said to them, "Guard this field, these valleys and these hills. Let the dead lie as they are, but take good care that no beast of the field touch them, nor any follower of the camp. Make sure that no one lay a hand upon them till I come back." And the four answered, "So will we do, Sire;" and the King left with them a thousand horsemen for a guard.

This done, he made haste to pursue the army of the heathen. The day was drawing to sunset, but yet he overtook the

enemy before darkness fell. Some say that God wrought a great miracle for the King, staying the sun in the heaven, till he should have avenged him of his enemies. Be that as it may, this is certain, that he overtook the Saracens and slew them with a great slaughter. Many fell by the sword, and they who escaped the sword threw themselves into the river, the river Ebro, and thus perished by drowning. And the men of France cried, mocking them, "You have seen Roland; but it has not turned to your good."

And now the night came on, and the King said, "We must think of our camp; 'tis over-late to return to Roncesvalles." "It is well," answered his nobles. So they unsaddled their horses, and laid themselves down on the green grass and slept. None kept watch that night. As for the King, he lay down to rest in a certain meadow, his spear by his pillow, for he would not be far from his arms. His good sword Joyous was on his side. It was a marvellous weapon, for it had in its hilt the iron of the spear with which the side of the Lord Christ was pierced as He hung upon the cross. For a time the King thought with tears about the good knights whom he had lost, Roland his nephew, and many another who had fallen on his field. But at last his weariness overcame him, and he slept. And as he slept he dreamed two dreams. In the first dream he saw how there gathered a great tempest in the heavens, with thunders and lightnings and hail and wind, and how this fell upon his army, and how the lances caught fire, and how the shields glowed with heat, and the corslets rattled with the stroke of the hail. After this he saw how a multitude of wild beasts, bears, and leopards, and snakes, and monsters such as griffins rushed upon the host as to devour them. And he heard the men cry, "Help us, King Charles, help us!" But when he would have gone to help them a great lion out of the forest flew on him. Then he and the great beast wrestled together. But who prevailed, he knew not. He did not wake from his sleep, but his dream was changed. And the second dream that he dreamed was this: He thought he was at his palace at Aachen, and that he sat upon steps, holding a bear that was bound with a double chain. And in his dream he saw how that there came out

of the forest of Ardennes thirty other bears who spake each with the voice of a man. "Give him back to us, Sire," they said. "It is not right that you should keep him so long. He is our kinsman, and we must help him." And then—this was his dream—a fair greyhound came and attacked the greatest of these wild beasts. But who was the conqueror in this conflict also, he could not see. After this King Charles awoke from his sleep.

Meanwhile King Marsilas came in his flight to Saragossa. He gave his sword and his armour to his servants, and laid himself down in sore distress upon the green grass under an olive-tree. He had lost his right hand, and was faint with the bleeding. Loudly did his Queen Branimonde lament over him. As for his servants they cursed King Charles and the land of France, and vehemently reproached their god Apollyon. "Villain of a god!" they cried, "why dost thou put us to such shame? Why dost thou so confound our King? This is an ill return to those who do thee honour." So saying they took from the god his sceptre and crown, and brake him to pieces with their staves. Never before was a god so ill-treated of his worshippers.

Then said the Queen to herself, in the midst of her tears, "Now a curse upon these gods who have failed us in the day of battle. We have the Emir only who can help us. Surely he cannot be so base as not to fight against these men of France!" So King Marsilas sent an ambassador praying him for help. "Of a truth," he said, "if you fail me I will cast away my gods, and take upon me the faith of Christ, and make peace with King Charles."

When the Emir heard this he gathered together the people of his four kingdoms, and put them on board a fleet of ships, and set forth to sea. Quickly did they come to the land of Spain; nor did they halt till they came to the city of Saragossa. Then the servants of the Emir spread on the grass a carpet of white silk, and on it they set an ivory chair. The Emir sat upon it, and his chiefs stood round about.

"Listen!" said the Emir, "This Charles has troubled the land of Spain too long. I will attack him in his own country, even

in France. Nothing shall hinder me from bringing him to my feet or slaying him." And as he spake he struck his knee with the gauntlet of his right hand. Then he called to him two of his chiefs and said, "Go now to King Marsilas and say to him: I come to help you against the men of France. Come and pay me homage, and I will make war upon King Charles, even in his own land of France. Verily if he do not fall at my feet and beg for pardon, and renounce the faith of Christ, I will tear his crown from his head. Take him also, for a token, this gauntlet and this staff of gold." And all his nobles cried, "It is well said."

So the two envoys went, carrying, one the gauntlet and the other the staff. When they had passed through the gates of Saragossa, they saw a great multitude of men lamenting. "The gods have dealt ill with us," said they; "our King is wounded to the death, and his son is dead, and Spain will be the prey of the Christian dogs." When they were come to the palace they made their salutations, saying, "Now may Apollyon and Mahomet have King Marsilas and Queen Branimonde in their keeping!" "Nay," said the Queen, "what folly is this? Our gods have deserted us. See what they suffered to befall the King my husband." The envoy answered, "A truce to such words! The Emir our master bade us say, 'I will deliver King Marsilas; as for this Charles, I will attack him in his own land of France. This gauntlet and this staff he sends for a proof of his words.'" Queen Branimonde made answer, "You have no need to go to France. Here in this land of Spain you may meet King Charles, and of a truth you will find him a great warrior."

Then said the King, "You see, my lords, that I am in evil case. I have none to come after me, neither son nor daughter. A son I had but yesterday, but the Count Roland slew him. Say to your master for me, I yield you this land of Spain; only guard it against the Christians! And bid him come to me; I will give him useful counsel about King Charles; and take him the keys of this city of Saragossa. As for Charles he is encamped by the river Ebro, seven leagues hence. There will the Emir find him, for of a truth the men of France will not refuse the battle."

Then the envoys returned to the Emir, and told him all that happened—how King Charles had left Roland and the Peers to guard the passes, and how they had been slain, and what great loss King Marsilas had suffered, and how he yielded to him the whole land of Spain, and how King Charles and his men were in camp by the Ebro. Then the Emir commanded his men that they should make ready for the march. "Make haste," he said, "or these Frenchmen will escape us."

Meanwhile King Charles had made search for the body of his nephew, the Count Roland, and for the others that had fallen with him. And when these had been found, he caused that the rest should be buried with great honour, but three of the bodies, Roland, to wit, and Oliver, and Turpin the Archbishop, he commanded to be set aside. The hearts of these three were taken out of their bodies and wrapped in silk, and then enclosed in coffins of white marble. But the bodies were wrapped in deer-skins, with store of spices, and set each in a carriage, that they might be taken to the town of Blois.

When these things had been done, there came two envoys from the Emir, bearing this message. "The Emir brings against you a great army from the land of Arabia. Take heed, therefore, for he will make proof of you to-day, whether you are indeed a man of courage."

The King made no answer to these words, save that he cried to his men, with a loud voice, "To arms! To arms!" Then without delay he armed himself, donning his corslet and lacing his helmet, and taking in his hand his good sword Joyous, and when he had mounted his good steed he rode forth in front of his army. "Never was more kingly man!" said all the army. And the King said, as he looked upon the army, "Who would not trust such men? If only these heathen stand their ground, surely they shall pay dearly for the death of Roland." "God grant it be so!" said the Duke Naymes. Then the King called to him two lords: "You shall take the place of Roland and Oliver; one of you shall carry the sword, and one the horn." And after this he set his whole army in array.

Meanwhile the envoys of the Emir returned to him. "We have seen King Charles," they said. "He is brave, and brave are they that follow him, nor will they fail the King. You will have to do battle with them. Therefore arm yourself." "That is good news for all that are of a good courage," said the Emir. "Sound the trumpets, that my people may make themselves ready." A mighty warrior was he, with deep chest and broad shoulders, over which his hair fell in curls, with fair face and shining eyes; of his courage he had given proofs without number. What a gallant knight he had been, were he but a Christian man! He had a sword of renown, which he called Precious, and a great boar-spear, Matté by name. A gallant knight also was the Prince Malprime, his son. "Forward, Sire," said the Prince to his father. "Shall we see King Charles to-day?" "Yes," answered the Emir, "for he is a brave man, and all speak of him with honour. Nevertheless, now that he has lost the Count Roland his nephew, he can scarcely hold his ground before us. Yet we shall have a great battle to fight. "Be it so," said the Prince. "I ask from you the honour of striking the first blow." "It shall be yours," said the Emir.

Then the Emir set his battle in array, so that the two hosts stood over against each other. There was neither hill nor valley nor forest between them; each was in full sight of the other. Splendid and terrible they were to view, so brightly shone the helmets and bucklers and shields and spears. And bright and clear was the sound of the trumpets; but the brightest and clearest of all was the horn of Charles the great King. And first the Emir rode forth in front of his army. "Follow me!" he cried to his army, "I will show you the way." And he brandished his spear, turning the point towards the King of France. And King Charles, on his part, when he saw the Emir, and his standard, the Dragon, borne after him, cried with a loud voice, "Lords of France, you have fought many battles, and now there is yet one more for you to fight. See, then, this host of heathens. Many they are in number. But what matters the multitude of them? Follow me!" Thereupon he spurred his charger. The good steed bounded forward, and all the men of France cried out, "A brave man is

our King; not one of us will fail him." The first that dealt a blow to the enemy was the Count Rabel. Spurring his horse, he charged Torlen, the King of Persia, and struck his shield fairly with his spear. The good steel pierced shield and corslet, and the King fell dead upon the field. "Strike! strike for Charles and the Right!" cried all the men of France when they saw the Persian fall.

On the other side the Prince Malprime, son to the Emir, rode forward on his white horse, charging into the midst of the army of France, and striking down warrior after warrior. "See!" cried the Emir, "see, my son, how he is seeking for the King of the French! There is no better soldier than he. Follow him and the victory shall be yours, and all the prizes of victory, lands, and castles, and gold and fair women." Nor did the chiefs of the heathen delay to charge. Fiercely did they ride forward, and the battle raged over the plain. When the Duke Naymes saw how the Prince Malprime was breaking the ranks of France, dealing death at every blow, he charged him, spear in rest. He drave the point through the upper rim of his shield and through his corslet, deep into his side, and laid him dead on the field. But when King Canaben, who was uncle to the Prince, saw what had befallen his nephew, he rode at the Duke, and, drawing his sword, dealt him a great blow on the helmet. Half of the helmet and laces wherewith it was laced were shorn off by the stroke, and the edge of the sword touched the flesh itself. The Duke yet clung with one arm to the neck of his horse; if the heathen deal him another such blow he is lost. But, thanks to God, King Charles came to his help. He struck King Canaben through the vizor of his helmet with his boar-spear, and with the one blow laid him dead to the ground.

Elsewhere in the field the Emir wrought great havoc in the ranks of France, slaying chief after chief, among them the old man Richard, Duke of the Normans. Behind him followed many heathen knights. Many valorous deeds they did. Where the Emir led the ranks of the heathen there the men of France suffered grievous loss, and now there came one who brought

him tidings of ill. "The Prince Malprime, your son, is slain," said the man; "also King Canaben, your brother, is slain." The Emir had well-nigh died of grief to hear such evil news; but he called to him one of his wisest counsellors. "Come near," said he; "you are loyal and wise, and I have ever followed your counsel. Tell me now, will the day go for the Arabs or for the men of France?" "Sire," the sage replied, "you are in evil case. As for your gods, look not to them for help. Call now your Turks and Arabs, and, above all, your Giants to the front. With them you may yet win the day."

Then the Emir put his horn to his mouth and blew a call, loud and clear. The Turks and the Arabs and the Giants answered thereto. Mighty warriors they were, and fierce was the charge they made; so fierce that they brake the army of France in twain. But when Ogier the Dane saw what had befallen the King's army he said to him, "See you how the heathen are breaking our ranks and slaying our men. If you would bear your crown where it should be borne you must strike with all your might."

Then the King rode forward, and with him the Duke Naymes, and Ogier the Dane, and Geoffrey Count of Anjou. All quitted themselves as good knights, but there was none who bore himself so bravely as Ogier the Dane. Many he slew, among them the heathen knight who carried the Emir's standard. Sore discouraged was the Emir when he saw his standard in the dust, but the heart of King Charles was high with hope. "Sons of France, will you help me?" he cried. "'Tis a wrong even to ask us," said they; "cursed be he who shall not strike with his whole heart!" And now, as the day drew to the evening, these two met in combat, King Charles and the Emir. Fierce was the encounter between them, and many and sore were the blows they dealt the one to the other. At last it chanced that the bands of each man's saddle was cleft through, so that they fell both to the ground. Quickly did they rise to their feet, and drawing their swords, closed fiercely in fight. It was, indeed, a battle to the death. First the Emir spoke, saying, "King Charles, you have slain my son;

you have wrongfully invaded my land. Yet if you will pay me homage I will grant it to you to hold in fief." "That were a foul disgrace," King Charles made answer; "never will I grant to a heathen either peace or life. Become a Christian, and you shall have all that I have to give." "These are but idle words," answered the Emir; I had sooner die." And as he spake he dealt King Charles a mighty blow upon the helmet. The sword brake the iron, and shore away a palm's breadth of the scalp. The King reeled in his place, and had well-nigh fallen to the ground. But God willed otherwise, for the angel that guarded him whispered in his ear, "Charles, what doest thou?" And when he heard the angel's voice he thought no more of danger or death. Gathering all his strength into one mighty blow, he severed the enemy's head in twain. Down to the chin he cleft it, and the Emir fell dead upon the plain.

So soon as the heathen saw that their leader was slain they fled in hot haste, and the men of France pursued them even to the walls of Saragossa. There stood Queen Branimonde, with her priests about her, waiting and watching for news of the war. But when the Queen saw the multitude of them that fled she hastened to King Marsilas, and said to him, "O Sire, our people are vanquished, and the Emir is dead." When King Marsilas heard these words he turned him to the wall, and covered his face and wept. So great was his grief that his heart was broken in his breast, and he died.

As for the town, none of the heathen had any thought of defending it. They suffered the gates to be broken down without any hindrance, and the Queen surrendered to King Charles all the towers, great and small. Of a truth, he works well who works with God.

As soon as it was day King Charles bade his men break down all the things that the heathen counted holy. As for the people, they were brought to the water of baptism. Such as were not willing to be baptized into the faith, these the King caused to be hanged, or slain with the sword, or burnt with the fire. But the

greater part readily obeyed the King's command, and were made good Christians, one hundred thousand of them at the least.

After these things the King departed from Saragossa, leaving a thousand men to keep the town for him. He took Queen Branimonde with him; also he took the bodies of Roland and Oliver and of Turpin the Archbishop, and caused them to be honourably buried at Blois.

When King Charles was come back to the fair town of Aachen, it was told him that a fair lady desired to see him. So he commanded that she should be brought before him. When she came back she was Alda the Fair. She said, "Tell me, O King, where is the Earl Roland?" He is promised to be my husband. The King was greatly troubled to hear these words. He wept and tore his white beard. "My sister," he said, when he found his speech, "my dear sister. You ask me news of a dead man. But comfort yourself. Roland we shall see no more, but you shall have my son Lewis, he that is to be Warden of the Marches, in his place. "These are strange words," said Alda the Fair;" God and His blessed saints forbid that I should live now that my Roland is dead," and as she spake she grew deadly pale, and fell at the King's feet, and when they took her up, lo! she was dead. When the King saw this he called to him four countesses and bade them carry her to a nunnery that was hard by. All that night these noble ladies watched by her dead body; the day following she was buried by the altar with great honour.

CHAPTER XXXV

OF THE PUNISHMENT OF GANELON

The King sent messengers to all parts of his dominions, bidding all the judges learned in the law come to him at his palace at Aachen. So the judges came as he commanded, and were gathered together on the Feast of St. Silvester, which was the last day of December. When they were all assembled he bade the serjeants fetch Ganelon out of his prison, and bring him before the judges. When they had done this, the King said, "My Lords, I would have you judge this man Ganelon. He came with me when I went with my army to the land of Spain; he has robbed me of twenty thousand men of France; he has robbed me of Roland my nephew, whom we shall see no more, and of Oliver the courteous knight, and of the Twelve Peers of France—and all this he has done for the sake of money."

"It is true," said Ganelon; "may a curse fall on me if I deny it. But listen; Roland did me wrong in the matter of gold and silver. Therefore I sought to revenge myself upon him; and I compassed his death. That I confess; but I deny that I wrought any treason." So Ganelon spake, as he stood before the King. He was of a fair presence, and had been a noble knight if only he had been true of heart.

Ganelon spake again, saying, "I beseech you, my lords, to hear my defence. When I was in the King's army I served him loyally and well. But my nephew Roland cherished in his heart a great hatred of me, and would have done me to death. Did he not bring it about that I was sent on an embassy to King Marsilas? If I escaped, it was of my own contriving. Thereupon I bade defiance to Roland and to Oliver and to all his company, as the King and all here present will bear witness. This was revenge, I confess, but I affirm it was not treason."

Now there had come to the support of Ganelon thirty men of his kindred, of whom the chief was a certain Pinabel. A great orator was this Pinabel, when there was need of pleading a cause, and a good soldier also, when there was need of arms. To him said Ganelon, "I trust in you, and you only; you can deliver me from dishonour and death." "You shall have a champion," answered Pinabel; "the first man that shall pronounce against you the sentence of death, to him will I give the lie with the edge of this sword." Thereupon Ganelon fell at his feet and thanked him.

A great company from many regions were gathered together to the King at Aachen; men from Saxony and from Bavaria, and from Poitou, Normans, and French, and Germans from beyond the Rhine. And of all none had more favour for Ganelon than the barons of Auvergne. "Let the matter rest where it is," said they. "We will beseech the King to show mercy to Ganelon. Roland is dead, and all the gold and silver in the world will not bring him back. As for fighting, it is sheer folly." To this all the barons agreed—all save one, Thierry, to wit, that was brother to Geoffrey of Anjou. Thereupon the barons of Auvergne went to the King and said, "Sire, we beseech you, to hold the Count quit of this charge. Henceforth he will serve you with all good faith and loyalty. Suffer him to live, for he is a nobleman. As for Roland, he is dead and neither gold nor silver will bring him back."

"You are nothing but traitors, all of you!" cried the King in great anger. But when he saw how the barons favoured these words, he was greatly troubled. Thereupon Thierry, that was brother to Geoffrey of Anjou, stood before him, and said, "Trouble not yourself, my good lord. Beyond all doubt, this Ganelon is a traitor. Though Roland may have done him wrong, for your sake he should have suffered him to go unscathed. Therefore I pronounce sentence of death upon him, that he be hanged by the heels till he die, and that they throw his carcass to the dogs. This is the just punishment of traitors. And if any kinsman of his say me nay, then will I give him the lie with the

edge of the sword." So spake the Count Thierry, and all the men of France cried with one voice, "It is well said."

Pinabel, when he heard these words, came near to the King. "Sire," said he, "bid them cease from this clamour. The Count Thierry has given his judgment; I, for my part, say that he has lied. Let us put the matter to the trial of the sword." "So be it," answered the King; "but I must have hostages." Thereupon thirty kinsmen of the Count offered themselves. And the King, on his part offered hostages also.

First the two champions made confession and received absolution. Also they gave great alms to the poor. After this they armed themselves for the battle. There is a great plain near to the city of Aachen; on this the two champions met to do battle, the one for the good name of Roland and his comrades, the other for Ganelon. First they charged with their spears in rest. So equally matched were they that neither gained any advantage in the encounter. The spurs of both were broken; the corslets of both were broken through, and the belts of the horses were so torn that the saddles turned in their place. So the two champions were unhorsed. Quickly did they leap to their feet, and fall to with their swords. Mighty blows did they both deal, and the men of France were in great fear. Then Pinabel cried aloud, "Take back your words, Count Thierry, I will be your friend and comrade, and divide my wealth with you, if only you will make Ganelon friends with the King." "Far be it from me!" answered Thierry. "Never will I do such a thing. God shall judge between us." After a while he spake again; "Pinabel, you are a true knight, strong, and of a noble presence, and all men know your courage. Have done with this battle. I will make peace between you and the King. As for Ganelon, let him have his deserts." "God forbid," answered Pinabel, "that I should desert my kinsman." So the champions turned again to the duel. First Pinabel struck a mighty blow, and wounded Thierry on the right cheek, coming near to slay him outright. But God preserved him, for was he not champion of the right! Then Thierry, in his turn, smote his adversary. On the helmet fell the blow, cleaving it in twain, and

the skull beneath, so that the man's brain was scattered on the earth.

Then came the punishment. The King asked, "What shall we do with those that pledged themselves for the traitor's innocence?" "Let them be hanged," answered the nobles. And this was done. As for Ganelon, they lashed his limbs to four horses, so that he was torn into four pieces. This was the end of the traitor.

CHAPTER XXXVI

HOW KING CHARLES SENT HUON ON AN ERRAND

King Charles, being now advanced in years and desiring rest, was minded to lay down his power. He called, therefore, his Barons together and said to them, "I am weary of my kingship. Say now to which of my two sons, Charlot and Lewis, I shall resign it. For Lewis indeed is over young, and Charlot is not of such conditions as to be fit for such dignity. The Barons answered, "Sire, let us consider the matter by ourselves." So they went apart and considered it, and it seemed meet to them that Prince Charlot should be King.

Now there was among the Barons a certain Amaury, who was of kin to the traitor Ganelon. This Amaury said to the King, "It would be well to try the Prince Charlot. Now there is the Duchy of Bordeaux, whose Princes, Huon and Gerard, have not yet taken the oath to you. If you will give me some soldiers I will bring them prisoners hither, and your son Charlot shall have their land. This shall be his trial before he have the kingdom of France."

But the Duke Naymes, being both wise and true of heart, said to the King, "This is no good counsel of Amaury. The Princes are young, and, maybe, they have not failed in their duty

to you of set purpose, but rather unknowingly. Send therefore messengers to Bordeaux and bid them come to your Court. If they obey, well; but if not, then you shall deal with them by Amaury's counsel."

So the King sent messengers to Bordeaux, and the Princes received them with great honour. And when they had delivered their message, the Duchess said, "I thank the King; my sons will certainly come to do him homage when I shall have made them ready for their journey." So the messengers went back to the King and told him these words, and he was very glad, and said, "A good tree puts forth good fruit; Duke Sevyng of Bordeaux was a good man, and his sons are good men also. But as for this mischief-maker Amaury, I banish him from the land of France."

Then went Amaury to Prince Charlot and said: "I had thought to win for you the Duchy of Bordeaux. But the Duke Naymes has thwarted me. Nevertheless, the lands may yet be yours if only we can be rid of the Princes Huon and Gerard. Let us fall on them when they ride this way."

These two, then, lay in wait in a wood by which they knew the two should pass. Now Amaury's purpose was double, either that Huon and his brother should be slain, or if they should slay Charlot, then they should be accused to the King of this deed and suffer accordingly. So now he said to Charlot, "Yonder are Huon and Gerard; ride out against them, for they are but weaklings." To his men he said, "Let the Prince go alone; he needs not your help."

So Charlot rode forth and held the way by which the two brothers must pass. Then Huon said to his brother, "Go now and see what this knight demands; if he ask for toll, being master of the way, we will pay it." So Gerard rode forward. Prince Charlot said to him, "Who are you?" Gerard answered, "We are sons of Sevyng that was Duke of Bordeaux, on whom God have mercy." "Then," said the Prince, "you are sons of a villain. Sevyng took from me three castles, and I could never have justice of him.

Now, therefore, you shall suffer for this wrong." "Sir," answered Gerard, you see that I am without arms. It were a foul shame if you should slay me. But if you have suffered wrong we will make you amends." "I will have no amends," cried the Prince, "but vengeance." And when Gerard turned to flee, being unarmed, and fearing for his life, he rode at him and smote him with his spear, so that he fell to the ground as one dead.

When Huon saw this deed he was greatly troubled, thinking that his brother was slain. Spurring his horse, he rode with all haste, and overtook the Prince ere ever he came to the wood. He cried, "Who are you that have slain my brother without any cause?" Charlot answered, "I am son of Duke Thierry," for he would not be known; also he had disguised his shield, "and this I have done because your father took from me three castles, and I could never have justice of him." Huon said, "You are a false knight and a murderer, and I defy you." Then he wrapped his scarlet cloak about his arm and drew his sword, for other arms or armour he had none, and rode against the Prince. The Prince, on his part, spurred his horse and charged Huon with his spear in rest. He drove his spear through the cloak and through the gown that Huon wore, and through the shirt that was under the gown, but the body he missed. Huon, on his part, raising his sword in both his hands, smote Charlot as he passed so fierce a blow that he brake his helmet in twain. So, the steel entering his brain, he fell dead upon the ground.

Then Huon, lighting from his horse, searched for Gerard's wound, and finding that it was of less account than he had thought, bound it up with a strip of his shirt. Then he set him on an ambling nag that he had in his train, that he might ride the more easily. So the two went forward on their way to Paris, for Huon would make complaint to the King that, having a safe conduct, he had been so foully assailed.

Amaury's knights said to him, "What shall we do now? The Prince lies dead on the plain. It were ill done if he that slew him should be suffered to escape." Amaury answered, "We will take up the body and carry it to Paris, and so accuse him before

the King." So he and his knights followed Huon and his company, carrying the body of Charlot with them. Huon, when he was come to Paris, went in and stood before the King, and told him what things had befallen him. First he said, "Sire, see this my brother, how he has been wounded." And as he spoke he pulled aside Gerard's doublet and his shirt, and showed the wound beneath. And the lad fell in a swoon before the King and his lords, so great was the pain that he suffered. The King had a great pity for the wounded man, and bade fetch his own surgeon that he might dress the wound. He said also, "If I find out the man that has done this deed, I will deal with him in such fashion as shall never be forgotten."

After this Huon told the story how he had been assailed, and how he had slain his adversary. When the King heard it he said, "Now were this false knight my own son Charlot, whom I love with all my heart, I should not deny that he had met with his deserts."

While the King was yet speaking there was heard a great outcry in the street, for the body of the Prince was being carried through the town and the people lamented over it. The King said to the Duke Naymes, "Go now and see what this outcry may mean." So the Duke went, but when he came to the great gate of the palace there was the body of Prince Charlot lying on a shield and borne by four knights.

When the body was brought in and laid down before the King he said in a loud voice, "Tell me now who has done this deed and for what cause." Amaury answered, "The man who did this deed sits yonder. He is none other than Huon of Bordeaux." When the King heard these words he would have fallen on Huon and slain him, only the Duke Naymes and others of his Barons held him back.

Then said Huon to the King, "Believe me, Sire, that I knew not this knight to be your son; verily, had I known it I should not have come to make my complaint to you as I have

done this day. Rather should I have fled away and hidden myself as best I could."

Then said the Duke Naymes to the King, "Let now Amaury stand forth and tell us why he lay in ambush in the wood with your son, and what purpose he had in his mind."

And Amaury stood forth and told this tale: "Sir, your son sent a message to me, desiring that I should go a-hawking with him. So I went with him, only we went armed, for I feared the men of Ardennes lest they should fall upon us. It chanced that we came to a little wood, and there we cast our hawks, and one of the hawks was lost. While we sought for it there came by Huon and his brother, and Huon had the hawk on his fist. Then your son full courteously required his own again, and Huon for answer drew his sword and slew your son, which when he had done he rode away so fast that we could not overtake him; and now I challenge him to say that he knew not the knight that demanded the hawk to be your son."

Then said Huon, "I will prove that this Amaury is a false liar, and will make him confess that I knew not the knight whom I slew to be the King's son. And for my surety I give my brother Gerard, than whom there is none nearer of kin to me." Amaury on his part gave as surety two nephews that he had.

The King said to the Duke Naymes, "Let them prepare a field where these two shall fight, and till it be prepared shut them up in a tower, and let a hundred knights be ready to keep the field when it is prepared. For I will not suffer my son to be buried till the vanquished man be hanged, if he have not been already slain in the field."

When all was ready, the two champions took each his oath upon the holy relics that he had spoken the truth, and then made themselves ready for the fight. But men noted that Amaury, when he would have mounted his horse, stumbled so that he had well-nigh fallen to the ground. Then, after proclamation made that no one should presume under pain of death to make any sign to either of the combatants, the King

stood up and said, "My pleasure is that if no confession be made of the truth, then the vanquisher shall forfeit all his land and be banished from this realm." And from this judgment he would not depart, though the Duke Naymes and the other Barons did protest that the King was unjust.

After this the two knights joined battle. First they charged on horseback, breaking both of them their spears, and with so great a shock that their horses fell to the ground. Then both of them rose to their feet, and fought with their swords. First Amaury smote Huon on the helmet so strongly that he well-nigh stunned him. Indeed Huon was fain to rest for a space on one knee. When Amaury saw this, he cried, "Huon, you cannot hold out longer; it were well for you to confess your ill-doing." But Huon answered, "Be silent, false traitor," and he made as if he would strike him on the helmet; but when Amaury raised his sword to guard the blow, then Huon turned suddenly his stroke, and smote the man under his guard so that he lopped off his left arm. When Amaury saw that he was so disabled, he bethought him of a base device. He said to Huon, "I do confess that I spoke falsely and that you knew not that the knight was Charlot. Therefore I yield me to your grace. Come, therefore, and receive my sword, which I willingly yield to you." But when Huon came near to take the sword, Amaury smote him on the arm, thinking to do him the same damage that he had himself endured. This stroke he missed, yet made a great wound, so that the blood flowed down. Then said Huon, "Take this, false traitor!" and he slew the man with one stroke, but for repentance or confession there was no space of time.

Then said the King, "Did the vanquished man confess?" And when he heard that no confession had been made he said to Huon, "I banish you for ever from this realm. Never shall you hold one foot of land in Bordeaux or Aquitaine." Nor would he abate one jot from this sentence, for all that Huon begged him to have mercy, and the Duke Naymes with the other Barons were urgent with him that he should not do this great injustice. Nevertheless at the last when he saw that he was left alone, for

the Duke with his fellows had departed from the palace, he was constrained to relent somewhat from his purpose. So he called the Barons, saying, "Come back to me, for I must perforce yield to your desire." To Huon he said, for the young man knelt before him with much humbleness, "Will you do that thing which I command?" And Huon answered, "Sire, there is nothing in the whole world that I would not do at your bidding, if I might thereby be restored to your grace. Verily I would go to the gates of hell, as did Hercules, if you should send me thither." The King answered, "Maybe, Huon, I shall send you to a worse place than that to which went Hercules, for of fifteen messengers that have already gone thither there has not come back to me a single one. Hear then what I shall say: you shall go to the city of Babylon and enter the palace of Gaudys that is Admiral of the city when he sits at his dinner And you shall defy him, and shall take the sceptre from his hand. This sceptre shall you render into my hands. After this I will take you again into favour, and will give back to you your lands." The Barons said, "Sir, you must greatly desire the death of him whom you send on such an errand." The King answered, "Let him never come back to France except he bring the Admiral's sceptre with him." Nor would he grant him any further grace, save that ten knights should go with him. So Huon made ready to go.

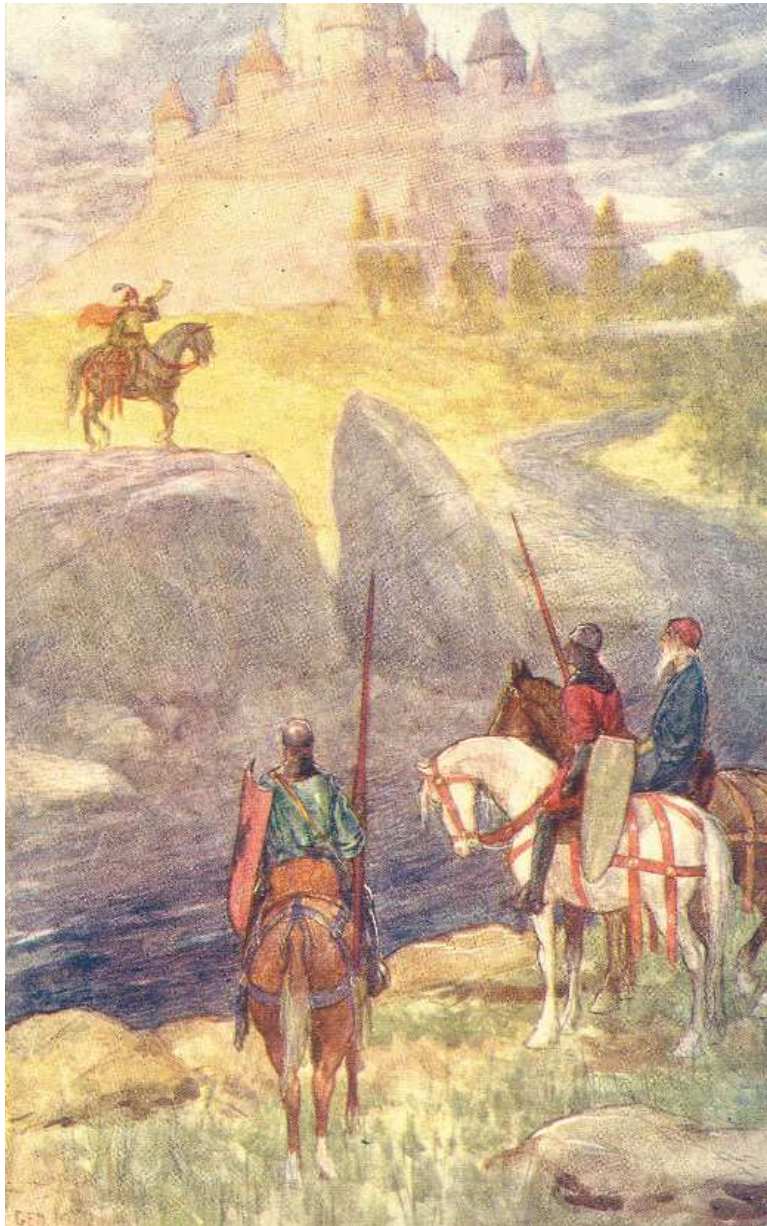
CHAPTER XXXVII

HOW HUON MET WITH KING OBERON

There is no need to tell all Huon's journeyings after he had departed from Paris. Let it suffice to say that he went to Rome and there received the blessing of the Pope; and that he took ship at Brandys, and, traversing the Inland Sea, so came to Holy Land, and, having landed at Jaffa, he came on the second day to Jerusalem. And he had for his comrade a certain Garyn, who was his mother's brother, for Huon was son to Duke Sevyn of Bordeaux. At Jerusalem, when they had worshipped at the Holy Sepulchre, Huon said to his uncle, "I thank you much for your great kindness in that you have borne me company so far. Now then return to your lady, my aunt, and to your children." "Not so," answered Garyn, "I will not leave you till you shall return yourself to your own land."

From Jerusalem they passed through the desert suffering much from heat and thirst. On their way they saw a hut, in the door of which sat an old man with a long white beard, who, when Huon saluted him in the name of God, first began to weep, and then caught Huon's hand, and kissed it many times. "'Tis thirty years," he said, "since I have seen the face of a Christian man. And now looking upon you I remember me of a noble peer whom I knew long since in the land of France, Duke Sevyn of Bordeaux. But now I pray you rest awhile."

So Huon and Garyn tied their horses to trees, and sat down and talked with the old man. And when Huon had told his story, then the old man related how he had been sent on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, because he had slain a knight in a tourney, and how on his way home he had been taken prisoner by Saracens and carried to Babylon, from which place he had escaped after two years. "But," said he, "I have not been able to return home, but have dwelt in this place ever since."



HUON MEETING WITH OBERON.

Huon said, "It is to Babylon that I go. Tell me now what road I should follow." The old man answered, "There are two roads to Babylon, one of forty days' journey and one of fifteen only. But the shorter road is beset by a certain Oberon, King of the Fairies. This Oberon is very pleasant to look upon, and his voice very sweet, but be sure that you do not speak to him, for he that speaks to him is lost for ever. Yet, if you will not speak to him, he will hinder your journey by his magic. I counsel you, therefore, that you take not the shorter way."

This counsel did not please Huon, who said, "If I can gain so much time by only keeping my tongue from speech, I will surely do so." "If this be your will," answered the old man, whose name, it should be said, was Gerames, "I will go with you."

The next day they set forth. At noon they rested awhile under an oak, and as they rested, Oberon came by, very richly clad in a garment garnished with precious stones, and holding in his hand a very precious bow. A horn also hung to his neck by two chains of gold. There never was such a horn in this world. One note of it could cure all kinds of sickness; another could satisfy hunger and thirst, yet another could lighten all heaviness of heart, and a fourth could draw any one that heard it even against his will.

As Oberon rode by, he blew a note upon his horn, and when he heard it, Huon forgot all the hunger and thirst that he had. And Oberon cried, "I pray you speak to me." But Huon, mindful of the counsel of Gerames, answered not a word, but rode away. Then Oberon in his anger blew again on his horn, and straightway there arose a great storm, so that they could scarcely win their way against it; after the storm there appeared a great river in their way, very black and deep, and rushing with a terrible noise; also on the other side of the river there appeared a very fair castle, which when they had looked on it awhile vanished out of their sight.

Gerames said, "Ride on now, taking no account of these things." And this they did. When they had ridden some five leagues, and had seen nothing more, Huon said, "We are well escaped from this Oberon." Gerames answered, "Not so; we shall see him again." And while he spake, they saw Oberon on the other side of a bridge by which they must pass. Huon said, "See, there is the devil who makes all this trouble." Oberon heard these words, and cried, "Sir, you do me wrong; I am no devil, nor of an ill nature, and I entreat you that you speak with me." But Huon answered him not a word.

After certain days, Oberon appeared again and said, "I conjure you by the name of God that you speak to me. I know who you are, and why you are come hither"—and he told him all that had befallen him, the slaying of Charlot and the anger of the King—"and be sure that you cannot accomplish the thing for which you are come, save by my help." "Sir," answered Huon, "you are welcome." And Oberon said, "You will win for yourself a great reward by those words."

He had scarcely said these words when there rose up before them a very fair palace, and in the palace there was a hall, and in the hall a table of gold, set with cups and plates and dishes and all manner of meats thereon. At this they sat down, and feasted joyously. And Oberon told Huon how he came to be as he was, for he was but as a child to look upon. "When I was christened," said he, "my father gave a royal feast to all the people, and called the fairies also. But one fairy was not called, and she, being greatly angered, said, 'This child shall not grow one whit after his third year.' But afterwards repenting said, 'Though this be so, yet there shall not be a fairer child than he.' And when they were satisfied, Huon said, 'Have we your leave to depart?' Oberon answered, 'You shall go when you wish, but first I would show you something.' And he said to a knight, 'Go, fetch me my cup.' So the knight brought him a cup. This Oberon took in his hands, and made over it the sign of the cross, and straightway the cup was filled to the brim with wine. "See," said he, "this cup. If a man be in deadly sin, there shall be never a

drop of wine in the cup when he holds it; but if he be out of sin, then it shall fill for him. Take it now and make a trial of it." Huon answered, "I count not myself to be worthy of such a thing; yet thus much will I say, that I do repent me of all that I have done amiss, and that I forgive all men what they may have done amiss to me." Then he took the cup in his hands, and straightway it was full of wine. Then Oberon said, "Take this cup, for you are worthy of it, and this horn also. But beware that you use it not except of necessity." And when he had looked upon Huon awhile, he said, "Huon, I love you well, but I foresee that you will suffer many things by reason of your folly." And he suffered him and his companions to depart.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

OF THE END OF THE FALSE DUKE MACAIRE

Huon and his companions rode on till they came to the city of Tormont. At the gate they met a man with a bow in his hand, who had been hunting in the wood. Huon saluted him in the name of God, and would know by what name the city was called. When the man heard the salutation, he said, "Sir, speak softly, I pray you; if the Duke of this city should know you to be Christian man, he would assuredly slay you. I am a Christian man myself, but keep it hidden for fear of my life."

"I am journeying to Babylon," said Huon, "and would fain tarry a night in the city, for I and my company are weary." "Sir," answered the stranger, "I counsel you not to tarry; should the Duke know of your coming, you would hardly save your lives." But Huon said, "The day is far spent, and we are weary. Nor does a wise traveller leave a good town." Then said the stranger, "If you are purposed to do this thing, I will take you to a lodging, where you shall be safe." So the man took Huon and his companions to the house of the Provost of the city.

Huon greeted the Provost, as he had greeted the man at the gate, and the Provost answered him in the same fashion: "Speak softly," he said, "for if the Duke should hear of this, you would be lost. Nevertheless you are right welcome to my house." Then he bade Huon and his companions enter, and when they had refreshed themselves, they supped with great plenty. Supper being ended, Huon said to Gerames, "Cause now that proclamation be made that any man in the city that will may come and sup free of all cost. And go you into the city, and buy bread and meat and other things needful, and I, with my cup, will give them drink." And so it was done, and there was never a beggar or vagabond in the whole city but came to the supper. And Huon ministered to them wine from the cup.

Now it should be told that the Duke of the city of Tormont was by name Macaire, and was uncle to Huon. But he had forsworn his Christian faith, and was full of hatred against all Christian men. About this time he chanced to send his steward into the city to buy provisions. But when the steward found that everything had been sold, he came again to his master, and said, "I can get nothing in the town for your supper. There is a young man lodged in the Provost's house that has bought all the victuals that were in the city, and has feasted therewith all the rogues and vagabonds in it." When the Duke heard this he said, "I will go and see this fellow." And he bade his knights arm themselves, and come with him. As he went there came one that had been at the supper, who said, "There is a young man that has a most wonderful cup. If all the people from the east to the west should drink thereof, it would not fail." Then the Duke said to himself, "I will have that cup." So he and his men went to the Provost's house.

When the Provost saw the Duke coming, he said to Huon, "Here comes the Duke; I know not how you will fare." "Trouble not yourself," answered Huon; and when the Duke came into the house, he said to him in a cheerful voice, "Sir, you are welcome." "What mean you by this tumult? Why did you bid

all these rogues to supper?" "Sir," answered Huon, "I am bound on a journey to the Red Sea; these poor folk I have thus entertained that they may pray for me that I may come back safely." "This is foolishness," said the Duke; "what will their prayers profit you if you lose your head?" "Sir," answered Huon, "be content. Sit down now with your knights, and sup with us; if I have done aught amiss I will make due amends."

So the Duke and his knights sat down, seeming to be content. And when they had supped, Huon serving them all the time full courteously, he took the cup and showed it to the Duke, saying, "Is not this cup empty?" "'Tis so," said the Duke, "I see nothing therein." Then Huon made the sign of the cross over the cup, and straightway it was full of wine. But when he gave it to the Duke, lo! in a moment it was empty. Said the Duke, "What magic is this?" "'Tis no magic," answered Huon. "Because you are in sin, therefore the cup became empty in your hands."

The Duke was not a little wroth; nevertheless he dissembled his anger, and said, "Tell me now your name and your kindred, and of what country you are." And when he heard these things, he said, Fair sir, you are my nephew; you should lodge nowhere but with me." I thank you, sir," answered Huon. But Gerames said, "'Tis safer lodging with the Provost."

On the morrow Huon would have departed, but the Duke said, "Tarry awhile, fair nephew, till my Barons shall come, for I would have them go with you to your journey's end." "I am content," answered Huon, "if you will have it so."

The Duke, purposing to slay his nephew, said to a certain Geoffrey, a knight who had come with him from France, and had also renounced the Christian faith, "Bring now five or six score of soldiers, and let them slay this Huon and all his train. Let not one escape, if you would not lose my favour." To this Geoffrey consented.

But when Geoffrey was gone out from the Duke's presence, he said to himself, "This is a villainous deed that the Duke would have me to do, the slaying of his own nephew. I

remember what great service this man's father, the Duke Sevyn, did me when I was in France, saving my life when I was overpowered by my enemies. It were a shameful thing to deal with his son in this fashion."

Now there were in the castle some six score prisoners out of the land of France who had been taken captive on the seas. Geoffrey, having charge of these prisoners, for he was in high authority under the Duke, went to the dungeons where they lay, and said to them, "Sirs, if you would save your lives, follow me." This they were well content to do. So he took them to the chamber where the arms were kept, and armed them all. Having done this he said, "Sirs, now it is time to show your courage, if you would have freedom instead of bondage." And he told them how the Duke had sent for pagan men to slay his nephew. "But you," he said, "when the time comes, will not slay but succour him."

So the prisoners, being clad in armour, and having swords by their sides, followed Geoffrey to the hall where the Duke and Huon sat at dinner; and when they had entered the hall, Huon said to his uncle, "Are these the Barons who shall conduct me on my journey?" for he was very desirous to depart. The Duke, thinking that Geoffrey had fulfilled his commandment, said, "Not so, my nephew; these are soldiers whom I have sent for that they may slay you."

When Huon heard this he stood upon his feet, and put his helmet on his head and prepared to fight for his life. Geoffrey, on his part, said to the prisoners, "Show yourselves men, fair sirs, and suffer not a single pagan to escape!" And the prisoners fell on the company that was gathered at dinner with the Duke, and slew them.

As for the Duke, when he saw how he had been deceived, he fled by a secret way that he knew, and, leaping from a window, so escaped. But Geoffrey and the Frenchmen shut to the gates, and drew up the drawbridge, thinking to defend

themselves in the castle, for they knew that the Duke would not be content till he had recovered it.

In no long time the Duke, having gathered together a great company of men, laid siege to the castle. He had engines of war with him, and ladders wherewith his men might climb on to the walls and make a breach with pikes and mattocks. And this the pagans did, and for all the valour of Huon and Geoffrey and the prisoners the castle was very like to be taken.

Gerames said to Huon, "Now, sir, it is time for you to blow your horn, for unless there come to us some help we shall scarce see another day." Huon answered, "I would willingly do so, but my horn I have not, for I left it with the Provost."

Meanwhile the Provost had come to the Duke, and said to him, "Sir, this is but ill counsel that you are pulling down your own castle. Make peace with your nephew on this condition, that he and his company straightway depart from out of your city. Let me go, therefore, and persuade him." "You shall go," answered the Duke.

So the Provost, coming to the castle gate, said that he greatly desired to see Huon, who coming, desired to know who he was. When he heard that he was the Provost, he said to him, "Now if you would serve me, give me the horn which I left in your keeping." "That is easily done," answered the Provost, and he drew it from his bosom and gave it to Huon.

Gerames, though he had counselled the blowing of the horn, when he saw Huon now ready to do so, repented, for he mistrusted King Oberon, and would gladly have done without his help. He said, therefore, to Huon, "Sir, I doubt whether you are even now in such a strait that you should blow the horn. Haply King Oberon would not desire that it should be done."

"What mean you?" answered Huon. "Shall I tarry till I am slain before I ask for help?" and putting the horn to his lips he blew it with all his might.

King Oberon heard the blast of the horn where he sat in his city of Mommure, and he said to himself, "Doubtless my friend has need of me; I wish that I were with him and ten thousand men with me." No sooner had he wished it than he and the ten thousand men were in the city of Tormont. A great slaughter did they make of the pagans, but they that were willing to be christened King Oberon saved alive. As for the Duke, he was slain without mercy, for he was an evil man, and had sinned against knowledge, and they hanged his body on a gibbet that was set upon the wall, that his end might serve as an example for others.

After these things Oberon took leave of Huon. At the same time he said, "I foresee that you will run into many dangers by your rashness. I counsel you, therefore, that you undertake no adventures but such as are necessary." To these words Huon answered, that when he departed from France, he had resolved that he would refuse no adventure, how perilous so ever it might be. "That is foolishness," said Oberon; "and mark this: if you blow the horn when you are on any of such adventures, I will not heed it, no, not though you should even break the horn in the blowing of it." "Sir," said Huon, when he heard these words, "you will do your pleasure, as I will do mine own." But Oberon answered nothing. So these two parted in anger.

CHAPTER XXXIX

HOW HUON, HAVING SLAIN A GIANT, CAME TO BABYLON

After these things it was told Huon that there was a certain tower not far from the city of Tormont, a very marvellous place where there dwelt a giant, Angolafer by name. The gate of this tower, for so the story ran, was kept by two men of brass, each of whom held in his hand an iron flail. These two beat with their flails without ceasing for one single moment, the one

striking while the other ceased; and this they did so quickly that not even a swallow could fly between them without taking harm. But if a man could by any means pass into the tower, and overcome the giant, then he would find treasures without end.

When Huon heard of these things, he thought in himself, "This is an adventure after my own heart." So he made his way to the tower. When he saw the men of brass striking with their flails, he wondered much how he might win by them. After a while he spied a bason of gold, tied with a chain to a marble pillar; on this he struck three great strokes with his sword, for he said to himself, "If I may come to speech with some human creature 'twere better than dealing with these men of brass." And so it fell out. There was a certain damsel in the tower, Sybil by name, whom the giant kept prisoner, and she, hearing the sound, ran to a window and looked out. When she saw Huon, she said, "Who is this? He is a fair knight. I judge him to be of France, for I see on his shoulder three crosses, gules; 'twere a pity that he should come to harm; yet what could fifty knights do against this giant? Yet if he is come for some good end, I would fain help him."

Now there was a handle which, being turned, stayed the beating of the flails. The Lady Sybil thought within herself, "Dare I do this thing? Yet it were better to die than to remain in this bondage." Also she heard the breathing of the giant, as of one in deep sleep. Thereupon she turned the handle, and Huon entered the palace. But when he passed from the gates to the hall, and from the hall to a chamber, and from this to other chambers, and saw no one, only dead men lying here and there, he was not a little astonished. After he had so wandered awhile, he heard the voice of a damsel that wept, which sound he followed till he came to the place where she sat. "Why weep you?" he said. "I weep," she answered, "because you are in great peril. Know that I am a Christian woman, though I have not talked with a Christian these seven years. My father, making pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, was shipwrecked in this place. Him, with all his train, the giant slew, but me he kept alive."

"Tell me, lady," said Huon, "who you are?" "I am daughter," she answered, "to Guynemer, that was Earl of St. Omer, and married to a sister of Duke Sevyng of Bordeaux." "Then," said he, "you are my kinswoman, for I am the elder son of the same Duke Sevyng;" and he greeted her full courteously. "And now I am on the way to the Admiral of Babylon, having been sent on an errand by Charlemagne. But tell me of this giant." "Nay," said she, "you would do well to depart while he sleeps." But Huon would have none of this counsel. "I should take to myself shame," said he, "if I should fear this villain." "If you are so minded," answered Sybil, "you will find him in the fourth chamber from this." When Huon was come to the fourth chamber, he saw the giant, a most monstrous creature to behold, asleep on a bed, and cried aloud, "Rise up, thou heathen dog, or I will strike off thy head!" The giant answered, "Not a hundred such as you would prevail over me were I armed; even now I fear you not." "Gird on your armour," said Huon, "I would not fight with a naked man." "That is bravely and courteously said," quoth the giant. "Tell me your name and country." Huon answered, "I am a poor knight of France, whom Charlemagne has sent on an errand to the Admiral of Babylon." "From that same Admiral," said the giant, "I have taken not one town only, but many. This tower I took from Oberon, who is a great Prince in these parts, and with it a suit of armour which no one may wear save he be without guilt. Now, for your courtesy, you shall try it, if you will."

Then Huon took the armour, and put it on him, and lo! he bare it easily. "I see," said the giant, "that you are a worthy knight; now that you have proved the armour, deliver it to me again." "That will not I," answered Huon, "not for twelve of the fairest cities that are between this place and Paris." "Friend," said the giant again, "if you will but deliver to me the armour, I will let you depart hence without harm; also I will give you a ring of gold which I had of this same Admiral of Babylon. Whoso has this ring can pass where he will."

"I owe you no thanks for the gift," said Huon, "for the ring I can take at my pleasure, when you shall have been slain." Thereat the giant, in great wrath, made at him with a falchion that he carried in his hand, but missing his stroke, he smote a pillar that stood hard by so sharply that the steel fixed itself in the stone. When Huon saw what had befallen, he smote the giant and struck off both his hands. The giant turned to flee, but the Lady Sybil, for she had come desiring to save the Christian knight, threw a staff between his legs so that he fell headlong to the earth: when Huon saw him lie thus, he smote off his head with one stroke of his sword.

This done, Huon looked forth from a window of the tower, and cried to his comrades, where they stood in no little fear, "Come up hither, I have slain the giant."

Then the Lady Sybil turned the handle as before, so that the flails were stayed and they entered the tower. The day being now far spent, they sat down to supper, and made good cheer.

On the morrow, Huon said to his companions, "Tarry you here in the tower with the Lady Sybil, for I will go to Babylon alone. If I come not again in fifteen days, then take ship, and depart to the land of France." But Gerames said, "Not so, my lord; we will tarry for you the space of a whole year." And to this they all agreed.

Huon, therefore, journeyed to Babylon. When he came near to the city, he perceived that the woods were crowded with wayfarers, some that went a-hawking and some that came back from their sport, and merchants, and travellers, with horses and carriages. He marvelled to see them, for they were strange of aspect to him; and they also marvelled at him, for the fashion of his armour was not the fashion of their country. So much was he occupied with the sight, that the giant's ring passed wholly from his mind, from which forgetting there came to him, as will be seen, much trouble.

When he came to the Admiral's palace, he cried to the porter that he should open the gate. The porter would know

whether he was a Saracen. "That am I," answered Huon, thinking that otherwise he would not be suffered to enter. So the porter opened to him. Then Huon straightway remembered the ring, and said to himself, "I have sinned in lying to this fellow, and this to no purpose, having the ring."

After this he came to a second gate, and a porter thereat, who opened to him at the sight of the ring; and after the second, a third, and after the third, a fourth, which he passed in the same way.

Being now in the very middle of the palace, he bethought him, "There are doubtless many Saracens in this place, and I only a Christian. 'Tis time to blow the horn and I may have help from King Oberon." Thereupon he blew a great blast.

King Oberon heard the blast where he sat in his palace. But he said to himself, "There has been a lie upon the lips that blew this horn, for the note is false. Though he burst his throat with blowing, I will not go to help him."

When the Admiral heard it, he said to his lords that sat with him, "There is a magician in the palace. Go bring him to me before he do us any mischief."

Huon was not a little troubled when he found that no one came to his blowing of the horn. "I am in an evil case," he said, "nor shall I see my people or my country any more. Nevertheless it becomes a man to keep a good courage." And when the Admiral's lords came to him, he took no heed of them, but walked straight forward, and they feared to lay hands on him.

When he came to where the Admiral sat, he made no obeisance, but drew his sword, and said, "I come from the great King Charles." Before he could say more, the Admiral cried aloud, "Seize me this villain!" And the lords made as if they would seize him. Then Huon took the ring from his finger, and showed it to the Admiral, saying not a word.

When the Admiral saw the ring, he said, "Leave this man alone; he is here of right." Then Huon said, "I am a Christian

man, and I come from the great King of the Christians. Hear, therefore, the message that he sends: 'Turn from your false gods; confess the faith of Christ; acknowledge that you hold your kingdom of me; and send me for token your royal sceptre. If you will not do these things, I will come with an army, and utterly destroy both you and your people.' This is the King's message, and I counsel you to take heed thereto."

When the Admiral heard these words, his anger passed all bounds. "Know," he cried, "that before you fifteen messengers have come to me making this same demand, and these fifteen have been hanged by the neck in the very same place; and you shall be the sixteenth." And he said to his men, "Seize me this fellow." Then Huon, setting his back to the wall, and drawing his sword, fought with all his might. Many he slew; but when he had fought for an hour or more, and the number of the enemy was increased rather than diminished, and he had grown faint with heat and toil, then he was constrained to yield. So the Saracens bound him, and set him before the Admiral.

The Admiral said to his lords, "What shall we do with this fellow?" and the lords answered with one voice, "Let him be slain forthwith." Nevertheless there was one lord, an old man, and held in great repute for his wisdom, who did not consent to this counsel. "Sir," said he to the Admiral, "our law forbids that any man should be put to death this day. I advise, therefore, that he be kept in custody for a year; after that we will take counsel about him again. Also there is another matter that I fain would know. How came this man hither? Ask him, my lord."

So the Admiral said, "Fellow, declare to me by what means you passed the gates." Then Huon said to himself, "I will speak no more falsehoods, though I perish for it." And he held up the ring, saying, "I passed the gates by virtue of this ring." And he told how he came by the ring, and how he had slain the giant in the tower.

When the old councillor heard these things, he said to the Admiral, "Sir, we ought to thank this man rather than harm him,

seeing that he has slain the giant that was wont to do us so much mischief." The Admiral answered, "I know not how to thank the man who brought me a message so insolent. But as to the keeping of him alive, it shall be done as you say. I will not depart from the customs of my forefathers. Let him be kept in prison for a space." So the Admiral's yeomen took Huon, and cast him into a dungeon that was under the palace.

Now it so chanced that when Huon was brought before the Admiral, the Admiral's fair daughter, Esclairmonde by name, was standing behind a curtain, where she could hear all the words that were said and could also see what was done, being herself unseen. This maiden, beholding Huon, and seeing how fair a knight he was, and how boldly he bare himself both in the fight and when he was brought before her father, conceived for him in her heart no small love. When, therefore, she heard that he was to be slain, she had much ado to refrain herself from crying out. But when she knew that he was to be put in prison for a space, she thought within herself how she might help him.

When it was now midnight, and every one in the palace slept, she issued from her chamber, carrying a torch of wax in her hand. When she came to the door of the dungeon, by good luck she found the jailor asleep, and taking his keys, opened the door of the dungeon.

She said to Huon, "Fair sir, I am Esclairmonde, and am daughter to the Admiral, and I saw you when you were brought before my father, and also when you fought against his men, and knew you to be a fair knight and a gallant. Now, therefore, I desire greatly to help you; nor is there anything which I would not do for your sake," speaking more boldly because the dungeon was a darksome place, and neither could she see the knight's face nor could the knight see hers.

When Huon heard the maiden thus speak, he said to himself, "Now must I be true as becomes a Christian man. I must tell this maiden that I, being a Christian man, may not have friendship with a Saracen; but of love I will not speak, lest it

should shame her." So he said, "Fair lady, for fair you must be, seeing that you are so gracious, I thank you much for your kindness, nor will I refuse such service as you may find it in your heart to render me. Only you must know that I, being a Christian man, can have no friendship with a Saracen."

The Lady Esclairmonde, hearing him thus speak, was filled with anger against him. "If you will not have me for a friend," she said, "verily you shall have me for an enemy, and will find that you have chosen the worst part." Then she went out from the dungeon, and said to the jailor, "See that this fellow have neither meat nor drink for three days." And the jailor said, "Lady, it shall be done as you command."

Before the three days were passed, Esclairmonde repented in her heart that she had done this thing. She went, therefore, to the jailor, and said to him, "Open the door, for I would speak with this prisoner." And when he had opened the door, she said to Huon, "Sir Knight, I do greatly admire your constancy, in that you hold out against hunger and thirst, which to many, I doubt not, are harder to be borne than any perils or hurts of battle. Hear me, therefore: I do promise that if I can escape from this land, I will be christened as soon as I come to any land where this may be done." Huon answered her, "You make me right glad, fair lady; I do thank you with all my heart."

Esclairmonde said to the jailor, "Now set before the prisoner meat and drink, and take such care of him as you best can. Only tell the Admiral that the man is dead of hunger." The jailor answered, "It shall be done as you desire."

CHAPTER XL

HOW HUON RETURNED

When Gerames and the Lady Sybil had tarried for three months in the tower, and had heard no tidings of Huon, they were greatly troubled and doubted what they should do. And while they doubted, it chanced that certain pagans came in a ship bringing tribute to the giant. When Gerames perceived them, he said to his company, "We do ill to tarry here, when Huon, it may be, needs our help. Let us take this ship, therefore, and sail over the sea till we come to Babylon." So they took the ship, the pagans not being able to hinder them.

When they were come to Babylon, Gerames led his company to the Admiral's palace, and went in and saluted him where he sat with his lords, saying, "Now may Mahomet, of whose gift both corn and wine come to the sons of men, preserve the Admiral Gaudys!" "Friend," said the Admiral, "you are welcome to this place. Tell me your name and country" "I come," answered Gerames, "from the city of Mombraunt, and I am son to King Ivoryn." Now Ivoryn was brother to the Admiral. The Admiral rose up from his place and said, "Then are you doubly welcome. Pray tell me how fares my brother, King Ivoryn?" "He is in good health," answered Gerames. "And who are these that are with you?" said the Admiral. "These," said Gerames, "are Frenchmen, whom the King took when they were sailing on the sea. He sends them to you for your sport, that on the feast of St. John Baptist you may set them bound to stakes in the meadow, and let the archers shoot at them, trying who shall shoot the best. This damsel whom I have with me shall, if it please you, be put with your daughter that she may learn the French tongue more perfectly." "All this," answered the Admiral, "shall be done as you desire. Now, for the present, put these caitiffs in prison, and see that they have enough of meat and drink that they die not of famine, as there lately died in this

place one Huon of Bordeaux. A fair knight he was, albeit he was a Christian."

When Gerames heard these words he was greatly troubled. Such was his anger that he had much ado to keep himself from running at the Admiral to slay him; but with a staff that he had, he smote the false prisoners that he had so hardly that the blood ran down. And they, for fear of the Admiral, durst not stir; nevertheless they cursed Gerames in their hearts. Said the Admiral, "Fair nephew, it seems to me that you have but little love for Christian men." "Even so, sir," answered Gerames; "three times a day do I beat them in honour of my God Mahomet." Then he led the Frenchmen to prison, beating them as he went, but none of them durst say one word.

As they went, they met the Lady Esclairmonde, who said, "Cousin, I am right glad of your coming, and now let me tell you of a private matter, if you will promise to keep it secret." "That will I do right willingly," answered Gerames. "Listen, then," said the damsel. "There came to this place some five months since a French knight, bringing a message from King Charlemagne. Him, my father, taking the message that he brought very ill, put in prison. I persuaded my father, for a reason that I had, that this Huon is dead of hunger, but in truth he is alive, and, indeed, is as well served with meat and drink as is my father himself."

Gerames made no answer, doubting what might be in the damsel's heart, and fearing that it might be a device for discovering the truth concerning himself. He spake no word, therefore, but thrust the Frenchmen roughly into the prison. Now the prison was so dark that Huon could not by any means discover who they might be that had thus been brought into his company. But in a short space he heard one of them lamenting his hard fate, and praying to the Lord Christ that He would succour them, "For," said he, "Thou knowest that we have done no wrong that we should be cast into this place, having come hither for the sake of our young lord Huon." When Huon heard this, he knew that they were Frenchmen, and said, "Tell me now,

fair sir, what has befallen you." So the lord told him his story. And Huon, when he had heard it, said, "I am Huon, safe, and in good health, thanks to the fair Esclairmonde, who is, indeed, a Christian damsel at the heart." Then the Frenchmen began to complain right bitterly concerning Gerames, saying that he was the worst and cruellest traitor on earth. "Nay," said Huon, "be content, Gerames has done all this to deliver us, as you will soon know for a certainty." And so it happened, for Gerames, having had more talk with the fair Esclairmonde, and having heard that she was well disposed in her heart to Huon and his companions, came that night to the dungeon, and declared the truth. "Only," said he, "we must wait awhile till there shall be a fitting opportunity."

After seven days there came to the palace a great giant, Agrapart by name, brother to Angolafer, whom Huon had slain. The purpose of his coming was to demand from the Admiral the tribute that had been paid by custom to his brother. Now the Admiral was sitting at dinner when he came, and the giant came to the table, and said, "You are a false traitor, for you harbour a villain that by some foul means slew my brother Angolafer." And when he had so spoken, he reached out his hand, and dragged the Admiral from his seat so rudely that the crown upon his head fell to the ground. This done, he himself sat down in the Admiral's chair, and said, "My will is that you pay me the tribute that you were wont to pay my brother, for that which was his has by right come to me. Yet I offer you this grace, you shall choose you two men who may fight a joust with me. If they can overcome me, then shall you and your land be free of your tax; but if I overcome them, then shall you pay the double."

When the Admiral heard these words, he said to his knights, "Now is the time that you may requite all the kindness that I have done you, and all the gifts which I have given you. And if gratitude be lacking, then I will say this also; if any man will come forth to fight in single combat with this giant, to him will I give my daughter Esclairmonde in marriage, and after my death he shall have all my lands for his inheritance."

For all this no man came forth, for the Saracens were sorely afraid of the giant. Then said Esclairmonde to her father, "Sir, it was told you that the French knight, Huon by name, whom you cast into prison, was dead of hunger. This is not so in truth. Huon yet lives, and I promise you that he will fight with this giant."

So the Admiral sent to the dungeon for Huon and his company. And when Huon was set before him, it could be seen that he was in good case, though somewhat pale because of being shut up. "You have found a good prison," said the Admiral. "Yea," answered Huon, "and I thank your daughter there for. But tell me now why you have sent for me." Said the Admiral, "See you that giant? He has challenged any man, yea, any two men, and I can find none that are willing to fight with him. Now, therefore, if you will fight with him and overcome him, then you and all your company shall return to King Charlemagne. Also I will give into your hands a present for the King; I will engage also to send him year by year a like present for head money; also I will bind myself to serve him with such a host as he may require. Verily I would sooner be his bond-slave than pay tribute to this evil giant. But if you rather choose to abide with me, then will I give you my daughter Esclairmonde in marriage, and with her the half of my kingdom."

"Sir," said Huon, "willingly will I fight with this giant. But first you must give me back my horn and my cup that were taken from me." "It shall be done," said the Admiral, and he commanded that they should give the horn and the cup to Huon. These Huon delivered to Gerames to keep for him. After this he armed himself for battle. And when the Admiral saw him duly equipped for the fight, he said, "This is as goodly a knight as ever I beheld."

When the giant and Huon came together in the field, the giant asked this question, "What is your kinship to the Admiral that you are willing to fight for him?" Huon answered him, "I am not of kin to him, I am a Frenchman born, and I slew your brother." "That is ill hearing," said the giant; "nevertheless I am

thankful to Mahomet that he gives me occasion to revenge my brother's death; yet, for I see that you are a brave man, if you will worship Mahomet, I will give you my sister in marriage—and she is a foot higher than I and black as a coal—and the half of my lands." Huon answered, "I will have none of your lands or your sister. It is time to fight."

Then the two, setting their spears in rest, charged at each other, and this so fiercely that their spears were broken in pieces and their horses borne to the ground. But the two leapt lightly to their feet, and next the giant would have stricken Huon with a great blow, but Huon leapt lightly to one side so that the giant missed his stroke. But Huon in his turn smote the giant in the helm, and cut off his ear. Then the giant was sore afraid and cried to Huon, "I yield me to you; I pray you to do me no hurt,"

The Admiral was greatly pleased with the victory, and Esclairmonde had even greater joy. When Gerames saw what had befallen, he said to the Admiral, "Know that I am no Saracen, no, nor nephew of yours, but I came to look for my lord, Huon of Bordeaux." The Admiral, when he heard this, said, "Of a truth it is hard to be aware of the craft and subtlety of these Frenchmen."

Meanwhile Huon came and delivered up the giant to the Admiral. The giant knelt down, and said, "I did think myself the most mighty man upon the whole face of the earth, and that not ten men could prevail over me, but now am I overcome by one only. Therefore I submit myself to you and crave your pardon." "My pardon you shall have," answered the Admiral, "if you will promise not to trespass against me hereafter, and will swear to be my man so long as you shall live." "I promise," and kneeling down in the sight of all, he swore he would be the Admiral's man.

These things finished, the Admiral and his chief lords, with the Frenchmen, sat down to dinner. At dinner Huon took the cup that Oberon had given him, and showed it to the Admiral saying, "See now what happens when I make this sign." And

when he had made the sign of the cross, lo! the cup was filled with wine. Then he gave the cup into the Admiral's hand, and straightway the wine vanished away. The Admiral greatly marvelled at the sight, and said, "You have enchanted me." "Nay, sir," answered Huon, "this is no enchantment. This thing is a sign that you are full of sin. And now I beseech you to forsake your false gods and to be christened. Verily if you will not do this thing, I will overrun your palace and your whole city with armed men." "Now listen," cried the Admiral, "to this overbold French-man! He hath lain in my prison for the half of a year, and now, forsooth, he will overrun my city with armed men. I marvel much where he will find them!" "Nevertheless," said Huon, "you had better do this thing." "I would not do it," answered the Admiral, "if Charlemagne and all his host were here."

Then Huon blew the horn. And Oberon heard it where he sat in his palace, and said, "Hark! there is the horn once more, and methinks it sounds true." And he wished, "I would be in Babylon with one hundred thousand armed men." And straightway it happened as he wished. So Oberon and Huon overran the city of Babylon. All that would not be baptized they slew, and among them the Admiral, who was stout in refusing to leave his false gods, and all that consented to be baptized he saved alive. And Huon took to himself the Admiral's sceptre, and then Oberon wished again, and straightway he and Huon and all his company and the fair Esclairmonde were on the shore of the sea. And he caused that a goodly ship should be ready to take them to their own land. So Huon embarked with the fair Esclairmonde and all his people; also they took with them the chief treasures of the city of Babylon.

Then Oberon bade farewell to Huon, saying, "See now that you tell the truth and keep you from sin; so shall you prosper all your days, and come to bliss when your days are ended. And now render me again the cup and the horn, for you need them no more."

Then Huon and his company and the fair Esclairmonde departed in the ship, and in time came to the land of France. There did Huon render to Charlemagne the Admiral's sceptre; and the King received him into his royal favour, and gave him back his lands. Then was Huon wedded to the fair Esclairmonde, and these two lived together in great happiness to their lives' end.

Not long after that Huon had been restored to his Duchy of Bordeaux, the Emperor Charlemagne died, having been seized by a fever, which, as being now old and worn out by many labours both in war and peace, he was unable to resist. There had been, it is said, many signs of his death—eclipses of the sun and moon, and other marvellous things. Also, when he was making his last expedition against the Danes, he saw a great light, as it were a blazing torch, pass through a clear sky and fall to the ground; and the horse on which he was riding fell to the ground with great violence. Also the palace in which he dwelt at Aachen was shaken by earthquakes, and in the Church which he himself had founded there happened this portent, that the word PRINCEPS, in the inscription which recorded this his munificence, so faded away that it could no longer be read. So Charlemagne died on the 28th of January in the year of Our Salvation, 814. He was buried in a sepulchral chamber in this same Church of Aachen. Many years after, the chamber having been opened, the body of the Emperor was found seated on a throne as if he yet lived, clothed with imperial robes, bearing on his head the crown, and grasping the sceptre in his hand, while by his side lay his sword Joyous, and on his knees was a book of the Gospels. In life he was of a tall and strong person, being seven feet in height. His eyes were large and piercing, his hair and beard long. He was of pleasant speech, and could speak other tongues besides his own. Writing he strove to acquire in his mature years, but could not learn the art. He was in truth a very noble and mighty prince.