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INTRODUCTION

The author of this work makes no pretense of originality in the telling of these stories of olden times. They have been gleaned from many sources, and are the common heritage of all who love to write them anew and hear them again. Only the words belong to the story teller; the story itself is as old as the race.

In the lapse of years and with the much telling of these stories there is no longer a line between fact and fiction. How much is true and how much is false does not matter; the story itself is the thing, and one need not worry whether it really happened or not. Much of it is palpable fiction, but much of it is true. Let us not be too critical of a story when it is a few hundred years old.

At any rate, the stories herein contained are a part of the great inheritance that the boys and girls of this day have received from the past, and to which they are entitled in all fullness and freedom. If the reading of them shall add anything to the enjoyment or to the information of those who are always young in heart because they always thrill at romance and adventure, the writer of these old time tales will be amply repaid.

LAWTON B. EVANS

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CHAPTER I

JEROME AND THE LION

Jerome was such a holy man that we have come nowadays to call him St. Jerome. With some other monks, he built a monastery at Bethlehem, the place where Christ was born. Here he devoted himself to the making of books and the writing of letters, as well as to good deeds for the people in the neighborhood.

He and his brethren were very poor, having sold everything they had and given much of it away to those in need. Some said to him, "Brother Jerome, what will you do after all your money is gone?" He replied, "I have no fear of the future. What I give away now will come back to me in my old age."

One day he was sitting in his cell with some other monks when a lion entered the door. The monks arose in great fright, some of them jumped out of the window and others hid themselves as best they could. Jerome sat quietly and waited to see what the lion would do. The great beast looked around doubtfully and then limped toward Jerome, holding up his paw.

Jerome took the lion's paw in his hand, seeing that it was badly swollen. At length, he discovered a thorn stuck in the soft pad of the lion's foot, which must have given the shaggy beast a great deal of pain. Jerome managed to pull out the thorn with a pair of pincers. He then bathed the lion's paw with warm water in which he had put some herbs and tied a linen rag around it to protect it from the dirt. The look of pain vanished from the lion's eyes and he lay down at Jerome's feet.

Jerome expected him to leave, but the lion showed no such intention. He shook his tail and looked into the face of his benefactor as if to say, "I have found a good place and a good friend and I intend to stay."

Jerome pointed to the door, but the lion shook his tail again and took no notice. The other monks came back and saw what had happened. Jerome turned to the lion and said to him, "If you have made up your mind to live with us, you must do as the rest of us. You cannot live here in idleness. If you want to become a monk you must work. Are you willing to stay on those terms?"

The lion waved his tail and shook his paw as if to say, "Yes, I am going to stay and am willing to work as soon as my paw gets well."

Jerome then said to him, "If you stay with us it will be your duty to accompany my donkey to the forest every day and protect her from robbers and wolves while she brings back firewood for the monastery." Again the lion waved his tail as if he understood, and agreed to his part of the contract.

In a few days the lion's foot was well and he began his duties. Every morning the donkey started out to the forest accompanied by an old man who was to gather wood. The lion went along and kept watch on all sides for danger to his charges. While the old man gathered the fagots and loaded them into panniers on the donkey's side, the lion would lie on the ground, seeming to say, "You can work in safety, for I have my eye on all the forest and nothing can hurt you." When the panniers were full the lion guarded the donkey and the old man back to the monastery, where all three of them were fed and their day's work was over.

One morning, however, the sun was very hot in the forest and while the old man was gathering wood, the lion lay down and fell asleep. Two men who had been watching them through the bushes crept out and bound a cloth around the old man's mouth and slipped a bag over the donkey's head, so that

they could not utter a sound. Then the robbers took them away, leaving the lion asleep on the ground.

When the lion awoke he stretched himself and yawned and looked around for the old man and the donkey. "It must be late," said he to himself. "I wonder what has become of the donkey and the old man; they must have wandered away somewhere." The lion searched everywhere for his charges, but could not find them.

At last he came across some footprints in the soft earth. He saw so many footprints that he knew the robbers had seized the old man and the donkey while he was asleep and carried them off. "Ah, woe is me!" cried the lion. "I have betrayed my trust. What shall I say to the holy father who cured my foot?" With a heavy heart, the lion crept slowly home.

When he entered the cell of his master, Jerome turned to him and said, "Why are you alone and where is the old man and the donkey?" The lion bowed to the earth and hung his tail between his legs.

"You have eaten the donkey and the old man," said Jerome, "and have betrayed my trust. Now you must take the place of the donkey, wear the panniers on your back and some one will drive you every day to the forest for wood." And so it was. The king of beasts had to take the place of the lost donkey and every day was driven to the forest and back again with wood for the monastery.

The summer passed and the spring came. Caravans went by with camels laden with rich products of Damascus on their way to Egypt. Sometimes the caravans would stop at the monastery for water and rest. One day the lion was standing near a group of trees while he was being loaded with wood for the monastery. The crackling of twigs caused him to turn around. He saw a caravan come up with great camels loaded with goods, and the donkey with them.

Recognizing his old friend, the lion gave a bound forward, overthrowing the man who was loading him,

scattering the wood in every direction. The donkey leaped forward to greet his friend and they met with every demonstration of joy and affection. The lion then drove all the camels and drivers before him to the monastery, and if one of them looked around, he showed his teeth and growled so fiercely that they trembled with fear.

In this way they reached the monastery. The lion and the donkey went at once to the cell of Jerome, where the master was engaged in copying a manuscript. The lion roared, the donkey brayed, and the master ran out to see what was the matter. He recognized the donkey, and seeing that the lion had gathered all the camel drivers, he turned to them and said, "You are the ones who have stolen my donkey and taken away my old man. I shall have you punished and I shall ask forgiveness of this noble beast for the injustice I have done him."

The drivers fell upon their knees and confessed that they had stolen the donkey and carried away the old man. They cried out in alarm, "Holy Father, spare our lives! The old man is safe in Damascus and here is your donkey. Do not allow the lion to devour us, but rather forgive our sins and let us depart in peace."

Jerome thought a while and said to the camel drivers, "I shall spare your lives and you may depart, but let this be a lesson to you not to take that which does not belong to you." The lion and the donkey listened very attentively, and saw the camel drivers depart. They were satisfied with this arrangement and went off together to get their food and then lie down and tell each other of their adventures.

And this is the reason why in all the pictures of St. Jerome we can see a lion lying contentedly at his feet.

CHAPTER II

THE SAINT WHO STOOD ON A PILLAR

Simeon was the son of poor parents, who in early times had learned to forsake their heathen gods and had become pious followers of the new religion of Christ. The little boy was engaged as a shepherd to tend the sheep of a farmer, who lived near his home. He was very careful of his sheep, keeping them from wild beasts by day and driving them safely home at night. When the winter came he herded his sheep carefully into their fold, and then he had much time to do as he liked.

One day Simeon entered a church, and after listening to the words of the good priest, he knelt down to pray. As he prayed, a vision came to him of the life of a saint. He arose, determined to devote himself entirely to good deeds. He spoke to the priest about it. The good father counseled him, "Enter a monastery, my son, where you will forget the world, and spend your life in peace and prayer."

Simeon bowed his head and went home very thoughtfully and quietly, but said nothing to his mother about what had happened. That night in his sleep, he had a dream in which he thought he was digging the foundation of a great building. A voice said to him, "Dig deep, dig wide, so that the building may be large and strong."

All night long the boy thought he was digging and digging till at last the voice cried, "Stop, you have dug enough; now build your house."

When he awoke he arose and put on his clothes and stole out of the cottage and ran off to the monastery, where he told the priest he had come to stay, though he was only a boy. The priest, after hearing his story, told him he might remain in the monastery on trial. Simeon moved to the monastery and became very devout. He soon trained himself to do without

food and remain upon his knees for two or three days at a time. This astonished the good father so much that he thought the boy must be inspired by God, for none of the priests could fast so long or pray so long as the boy Simeon.

After staying two years in the monastery he said to the good priest, "I am going to leave the monastery and go into the desert and live there by myself. I do not need much food and as for clothes, I have enough to last me for a long time." Accordingly he went into the mountains near by and built a small stone house for himself and began the life of a hermit.

At the end of three years Simeon had trained himself to stand all day in one spot and to keep awake all night with his mind intent upon one thing, and to do without food for days at a time.

Then he decided to leave his hut and go farther into the mountains, so he took with him a chain thirty feet long. Two men met him on the way and asked, "Brother Simeon, what will you do with that chain?"

Simeon replied, "I intend to tie myself to the mountains, so that I cannot get away, even if I should so desire."

After he reached the spot that he had selected, he built another hut of stone and fastened his chain to a big boulder. He was still a young man, but he looked very strange to the people who passed that way, chained to a stone and preaching all the time. Some one brought him a little goat's milk every day, and in the winter time others brought a few fagots to make a fire. His hair grew long and his clothes grew ragged and he became dirty, but he did not care. All this was to him the sign of a very holy life.

At last a bishop came by and saw the crowd standing around to hear the wild-eyed young man preach. The bishop asked him, "Brother Simeon, why are you chained to a rock?"

Simeon answered, "So that I cannot move from this place."

The bishop replied, "If you need a chain to keep you from going astray, you are not a real Christian, for real Christians need no chains to bind them."

Simeon thought a moment and said, "Bishop, you are right, I have not thought of it in that way; my own will should be stronger than any earthly chains. I pray you to send a man to remove these bonds."

Therefore, the bishop sent a man from the village to strike off the chains so that Simeon could depend upon his own will thereafter to keep him from going astray.

The crowds kept coming to see the strange young man and to hear him preach. At last they became so large that Simeon decided to build a pillar upon which he could stand. At first the pillar was only nine feet high and on top was a platform three feet square, just big enough to stand on but not big enough to lie down on.

Simeon climbed upon this platform and stood there day and night, never sitting down. What little sleep he had he took standing.

After a while, he decided to build his pillar higher than nine feet, and so he built it up, stone by stone, until at last it reached thirty feet, and some even say it went as high as sixty feet. Probably it did not reach as high as that, but we know that it was a high pillar upon which Brother Simeon stood. People gave him the name of Simeon Stylites, which means Simeon of the Pillar.

"Now," said Simeon to himself, "I shall stand here till I die. I am above the earth and no one can reach me, but everybody can hear me."

How he managed to live upon the top of this platform and to sleep standing up, and how much agony of body he suffered, nobody ever knew, but there he stood, month after

month and year after year, getting older, wilder and more and more ragged. The hot sun by day, the cold winds by night, even the rain did not disturb him nor alter his purpose.

"I am here to preach the word to all who come," said he; "I am sustained by the Lord and upon this spot I shall stand until the end."

On one occasion a man who came to hear him pray sat and listened at the foot of the pillar all day until he grew tired and slept. In the morning when the man awoke the saint was still praying. The man said he counted twelve hundred vows made by the saint before he himself fell asleep.

One day the saint on the pillar thought he saw a Chariot come down from heaven as if to take him away. The chariot was borne upon a cloud of fire and in it were angels. The saint exclaimed, "At last the angels have come to take me away." So as the chariot came near the pillar, he lifted his foot to step in. But the chariot vanished, leaving the saint with his foot uplifted.

"Ah! the heavenly vision has gone," Simeon exclaimed, "but I will live here on this pillar and stand upon one foot till the vision comes again." And so he stood with one foot uplifted, balancing himself as best he could upon the pillar.

The sun and the rain did not make him alter his position. Thus he stood for a whole year with one foot uplifted waiting for a chariot, but the chariot did not come. What torture he endured no one will ever know, for his mouth uttered no word of complaint.

The story of the saint spread far and wide. Crowds came to the pillar to hear him preach and prophesy. His brother hermits became jealous of his fame. A body of them came out of the desert, ragged and foot-sore, to see him and to hear what he had to say. They decided to trap him if they could and see if he were an impostor. After listening to him prophesy, the leader said, "Brother Simeon, the Lord has sent

us here to tell thee to come down from thy pillar and dwell on the ground."

The saint, standing with uplifted foot and face turned to heaven, thought a while and replied, "If it is the Lord's will that I come down from this pillar I will do so."

But as he put his foot to the platform as if he would descend, the hermits exclaimed, "No, Brother Simeon, we but jest with thee. The Lord sends thee no such message through us. Stay where thou art and preach thy word."

Simeon stayed on. He was now an old man, for he had been upon the pillar for thirty years. His hair was long and matted, his clothes were in rags. His body was brown with exposure and dirt; still he did not complain or show any intention of coming down. Every morning he lifted up a little basket of food and a bottle of milk for his daily sustenance. At last he grew so weak that he could not raise the basket to his pillar and those who came to hear him preach could not hear his voice.

One day the watchers at the foot of the pillar saw the feeble fool totter and the eyes close. The legs that had been stiff from standing now began to tremble and the old saint swayed upon his pillar. While those who were watching held their breath in awe, the venerable old saint tottered upon his platform, his form crumpled, and he fell to the ground dead.

CHAPTER III

THE SCOURGE OF GOD

The Huns were a fierce and warlike tribe who had come from Asia into Europe and settled on the lands lying north of the Danube river. Early in the fifth century they had a famous king named Attila. He was only twenty-one years old when he was made king of the wildest tribe of warriors that the world then knew.

The writers of that time described this savage chieftain as a monster in appearance, short, ill-formed, with a big head, flat nose and dark complexion. His shoulders were broad and square, and his body was very powerful. He had the habit of rolling his eyes as if to inspire terror in those who beheld him.

Near the place where Attila lived there was a cave in the mountain, in which dwelt a hermit, old and wrinkled, with long gray hair and beard, who mumbled to himself all the time. No one knew his name or where he came from.

Soon after Attila was chosen king of the Huns he went to the hermit and, desiring to know something of his own future, asked, "Oh, hermit, thou art wise and canst see into the future! Tell me what lies before me. Shall I be a great king and conqueror, or shall I die unknown and unhonored?"

The hermit gazed at the heavens awhile and then at the ground. Finally he said, "Oh, king, I see that thou shalt lead mighty hosts to many victories! Thou shalt defeat armies and destroy cities. The grass shall not grow where thy horse's feet have once trod. Women shall weep and children shudder when thy name is mentioned. Thou shalt be called 'The Scourge of God,' but in the midst of thy victories, and soon after thou hast married the woman thou lovest, the hand of death shall smite thee suddenly and without warning."

Attila fled from the cave in horror. He had not yet thought of his bloody career and was too young to consider death with any feeling but dread. But the more he thought of what the hermit had said, the more he was reconciled to his career. Walking with his attendant one day, he said, "I shall lead the Huns against the Romans in Gaul, and blood shall flow in the rivers. My name shall be a dread upon the earth, for so the gods have decreed. Send forth the order for the Huns to be prepared for war."

With this he set about gathering the best men from the various tribes and organizing them into an army. They were terrible men, grim, hairy, bloody, riding horses like demons, and brandishing spear, axe and sword with ruthless ferocity. Nothing they liked better than war and bloodshed, and so they hailed the order of Attila with joy. It was not long before their leader, fiercer now than any of his men, had them trained to do his bidding.

It so happened that one of the king's shepherds, noticing blood dripping from a wound in the foot of one of his cattle, followed the trail of blood that the animal had left in the grass. At last he saw the sharp point of a sword sticking out of the earth. Quickly he dug up the sword, carried it to Attila, and told him how he had come by it.

Attila was artful and seeing his advantage, said, "It is a gift of the gods, the sword of Tiew, who is the god of war. With it I shall never be defeated. No enemy can stand before it when I wave it over a field of battle."

The king assembled his followers and consecrated the heavenly gift by building a great fire and sacrificing sheep, oxen and probably the lives of some of his prisoners. All the while his own men circled the great blazing pile with hideous noises and war-like dances.

His army was now ready and he marched into the countries belonging to the Romans. The Rhine river was no obstacle to his advancing host of over a half million savage

men. Attila rode a beautiful black horse, and at his side was the sword of Tiew. When he saw the Rhine before him he waved his sword, and cried out, "In with you, men and horses! Let those swim who can. Bridges and rafts must be built for the baggage," and so the great host passed over the Rhine in their invasion of France, which was then called Gaul.

Dismay prevailed everywhere. Long peace had made the people rich and forgetful of warlike deeds. They became an easy prey to the terrible Huns. Towns were attacked and destroyed and the inhabitants killed without mercy. "The Scourge of God is upon us!" cried the people and fled before the advance of the devastating hordes.

Twenty towns lay in ruins, and Attila was approaching Paris. The people were about to desert their city, when a young shepherd girl named Genevieve spoke to them, saying, "Forsake not your homes and your town. I have prayed for deliverance and God has answered my prayers. Attila will turn aside and Paris will be saved."

The people remained in the town, and strange to say, Attila let Paris alone on his march through Gaul. His hordes came to Metz and destroyed not only every house, but also all the women, children and the priests. The able-bodied men were reserved to be sold as slaves.

At last Attila reached Orleans, the city which he designed to make the capital of the domain he intended to establish in Gaul. Upon the fate of Orleans rested the success of his great invasion. Its walls had been strengthened, and behind them lay a body of soldiers determined to defend the city to the utmost. Besides, an army had now been formed in Gaul to meet the terrible Huns and drive them back, if possible.

This army was commanded by a Roman general, Aetius, who was a skilled and valiant soldier. He gathered all the men he could, and started in pursuit of Attila. But it took time to assemble an army, and the siege of Orleans had begun

by the time that Aetius was ready to begin his march. In that city all was terror and dismay. It seemed doomed to fall before the assaults of the invaders.

The savage Huns were battering at the walls of the city. Day and night their awful battle cries rang out, with dire threats of what was in store for the people when the city fell into their hands. Inside the feeble garrison fought the best it could, and the women knelt in the chapels and in the streets, praying to the saints for deliverance.

In their prayers they were sustained by a valiant and wise churchman, Anianus, who kept up the courage of the people by his hopeful words. "The saints will hear your prayers, and Orleans will not fall into the hands of Attila," was his cry to the people every day.

The siege was fierce, the defence brave and obstinate. "If we can just hold out till the army of Aetius comes we shall be saved," was the encouraging advice of Anianus. He counted the days, and hours with great anxiety. A sentinel was posted on the walls to watch for the advancing army, yet hours and days went by and no signs came of the army to help the besieged people.

Despair settled down on Orleans. The Huns were making inroads in the walls. The defences were giving way under the blows from the battering rams. The city could not hold out much longer. At last came a day when it deemed that all hope was at an end. In a few hours the walls would fall, or the gates be battered in, and the slaughter would begin.

Anianus sent the sentinel to the walls to look for the army of relief, but the man came back bearing no good tidings. "Go again," said the bishop, "and strain your eyes to catch the first gleam of spears and then cry out the news."

The sentinel stood motionless, watching the horizon, while arrows flew around him, and the battering rams hammered on the walls beneath him. At last he cried, "A mist! a cloud! it moves! it comes nearer! I see the gleam of steel and

the color of banners! It is the host of Aetius coming to our relief!" and he ran back crying the good news.

The people heard him and set up a mighty shout of relief and defiance. "God has not forsaken Orleans! He will take away the Scourge from our gates!" But at that moment the gates fell with a great crash. Attila and his men rushed in to begin the destruction of the city.

Houses were being broken into and the pillage had begun, when suddenly the cry arose, "The Romans! The Visigoths! They are behind us, and on our tracks!"

Attila heard the cry and sent a messenger to inquire its meaning. The messenger returned, saying that a mighty army was marching forward, and would soon be at the walls of the city.

"Sound the bugles for my men to assemble!" cried out the savage leader in great alarm.

The bugles sounded. The Huns ceased their plunder, and came in haste to inquire the cause of the assembly. Attila had already made up his mind to retreat, and at once ordered his army to abandon Orleans.

"Leave your plunder and your prisoners, and get beyond the walls at once, or we shall be caught like rats in a trap," was his order, and the Huns swarmed out of the city faster than they had swarmed in.

Hardly had they left before Aetius and his army marched in through the very breaks in the walls that the invaders had made. Orleans was safe, and the people fell on their knees and gave thanks that they were spared the awful fate of falling into the merciless hands of Attila and his men.

The Romans now pursued Attila as he fled. When the Huns reached the plains of Chalons they made a stand. The battle that followed was one of the decisive battles of the world, for it decided the fate of Western Europe.

At first it seemed as if the Huns would win. Led by Attila and riding furiously on their wild horses, they broke through the center of the Roman army and slew Theodoric, the king of the Goths. But Torismond, the young and valiant son of the king, raised a terrible war cry and descended from a hill where his men were placed and fell like a thunderbolt on the Hun army.

The fortunes of the battle changed and the Huns were driven back, step by step. Night alone saved them from total extinction. It was said that nearly three hundred thousand men were slain in this great battle, but that is probably an exaggeration.

When darkness came on the fighting ceased. Attila ordered all the baggage, saddles and rich equipment of the army to be placed in one great funeral pile. "If they attack me on the morrow, I shall set fire to this pile and leap into the flames. They shall not take me alive."

The night was an anxious one for the savage chief. Aetius was too exhausted to move against the Huns, and so the expected attack did not come. Attila retreated, crossed the Rhine, and Gaul was saved from the Scourge of God.

CHAPTER IV

THE VANDAL HORDE

Genseric was lame in one leg, so that he limped when he walked. Besides that, he had the look of a very ordinary person, so that one would be surprised to hear the remark, "There goes Genseric, one of the most cruel leaders that ever strode a horse or swung a battle-axe."

But so it was, for of all those who had ruled over the fierce tribes that had moved down from the shores of the Baltic to overrun Europe, none were fiercer in battle or more crafty in leadership than this very Genseric. His tribe had

moved into Spain and after having lived there many years chose Genseric, when he was twenty-one years of age, for their king.

It is not certain how he came by his lameness, for he was in all sorts of adventures from the time he was born. He may have been thrown from a horse, because he was a fierce and daring rider, or he may have been hurt in one of the many battles in which he was engaged, for there was hardly a day when he was not riding in pursuit of some enemy or leading his savage warriors on a long pursuit of game.

Across the Mediterranean, on the coast of Africa, were the Roman provinces, governed by Boniface. Many a time Genseric had looked longingly across the waters and said, "All I need is a chance to cross this strait and lead my men against those Romans. I would like to teach them a lesson."

The emperor of Rome at this time was a mere boy, and the government's affairs were ruled by his mother, Placidia. Placidia had a bad adviser, who disliked Boniface. The man said to her one day, "Boniface, governor of Africa, is a traitor, and I have good reason to think that he intends to make war against Rome. I advise you to dismiss him and order him to come before you to answer charges that I shall make."

Now the treacherous adviser wrote to Boniface, saying, "The empress will send you a letter ordering you to come to Rome. I advise you not to do so, for she will have you put to death."

Boniface believed what was written to him and refused to return to Rome as Placidia had ordered. Naturally he was quite incensed at this treatment, which he did not deserve, and in his rage sent a messenger to Genseric, saying, "If you will lead an army across the straits of Gibraltar to Africa you will find me willing to surrender my forces into your hands."

When Genseric received this letter he was much delighted, for he longed to attack Rome and take from her

some of the rich countries she had conquered as well as to despoil her of the treasures she had accumulated.

Accordingly, all over Spain among the Vandals there was much gathering of arms and horses and making ready for a great invasion of Africa. Ships were prepared, provisions were stored and Genseric rode among his tribes calling them by name and ordering them to meet him at a certain place ready to plunder the Roman provinces. His call was wild and fierce:

"Across the sea to Africa, across Africa to Italy, through Italy to Rome, and the treasure house of the world shall be ours! Each of you shall be richer than a king!"

The wild leaders responded with fierce joy, and with lust of conquest they crossed into Africa. The Roman forces retired before them and the conquest of the African coast was an easy matter.

It happened, however, that Boniface received word from Rome of the deception that had been practised on him, and assurances that Placidia intended him no harm. But it was too late. He had opened Africa to the Vandals and their march upon his provinces was irresistible. Approaching Genseric, he said, "You have conquered a large part of Africa already. I think you should be satisfied. Now retire to Spain and leave us in peace."

Genseric sternly refused. "Never shall I go back to Spain until I am master of Africa. Then I shall master Italy, and finally Rome."

Boniface replied, "Prepare, then, for battle, for I shall drive you out of these provinces."

Shortly afterwards a great battle was fought between the Romans and the Vandals in which the Romans were utterly defeated. They fled to their towns, but they were driven out into the wilderness and the towns were destroyed. Genseric burned the churches and buildings, laid waste the country, cut

down all the trees and slew every inhabitant that came within reach of his men. Total destruction and death was the rule of the Vandals whenever they took a town, and so the word vandal came to mean one who cruelly and wantonly destroys valuable property.

Many years passed, and Genseric had all of Africa in his possession, for he took the city of Carthage, which he made the capital of his kingdom. Then he built great fleets and sailed over the Mediterranean, capturing the trading vessels of the Romans. He plundered the towns and murdered people, so that his name became a terror in all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean.

A Roman ship came one day to Carthage with a messenger from the Empress Eudoxia, the widow of the emperor of Rome. The messenger entered the palace where Genseric was holding court, and said, "Oh, king, I bear a message from the Empress Eudoxia! She and her daughter are in danger of being thrust out of her possessions and she invites you to come with an army to Rome and take the city. She and her friends will open the gates to your host."

Genseric sprang to his feet with a cry of joy. Seizing his sword, he exclaimed, "Tell your empress that I have long looked for such an invitation. My army shall be in Rome within a month."

But while Genseric accepted the invitation, it was not to protect Eudoxia or her daughters, but rather because he saw at last a chance to lead his Vandal host into rich countries.

In a short while a great fleet and a great army sailed across the Mediterranean bearing the fierce warriors of Africa to the Roman coasts. They were blood-thirsty men and their loud cries frightened the people along the shore. As they came near the mouth of the Tiber word was passed up to Rome:

"The Vandals are upon us! The Vandals are upon us!" Maximus, who had usurped the government and was very much of a coward, made ready to flee from the city and

advised the senate and people to do the same. At this the people were so enraged that they stabbed him to death and threw his body into the river. In three days Genseric and his army were before the gates of Rome. With loud cries they demanded entrance.

"Open the gates! Open the gates!" cried Genseric himself. "I demand the surrender of Rome, and if my army is opposed I shall beat down these walls and not one soul shall be left alive."

With great fear and trembling the people crowded upon the walls of the city and saw far over the plain the vast horde of Vandal troops shaking their spears and uttering angry cries. This was too much, and so the people rushed to the gates of the city and opened them, falling on their knees before Genseric, praying him not to murder them.

Now Rome was a wealthy and beautiful city and there was plenty of plunder for the Vandals. They spent fourteen days in their work of destruction. The temples and public buildings, private houses and palaces were ransacked and great quantities of gold and silver and jewels and furniture were piled in the streets and carried out beyond the walls to be transported to Africa.

Sad to relate, hundreds of beautiful and priceless works of art were destroyed. Many old statues and splendid carvings were carried away to the Vandal ships. Many of the ships, however, that conveyed the treasures of Rome to adorn the palaces of the Vandals in Africa, foundered at sea under their precious freight, and so the waves of the Mediterranean now hide priceless treasures of beauty that are lost to the world forever. What the Vandals could not carry away they broke up or mutilated, and in this way many beautiful marble statues were broken and thrown into the marshes and even into the bed of the Tiber or were carried beyond the walls of the city and buried, to be recovered hundreds of years afterwards as examples of the wonderful art of those days.

The Vandal king put to death a number of Roman citizens and carried away thousands of them to act as servants or slaves to his own nobles in Africa. As for Eudoxia and her daughters, he took them to Carthage. One of the daughters afterwards married Genseric's eldest son.

The Vandals retired to Africa, but still continued to attack and plunder the towns along the Mediterranean coast. A few years after the capture of Rome a Roman emperor gathered an army and built a fleet to carry troops to Carthage. Before sailing with his army he wished very much to see with his own eyes what kind of people the Vandals were. He dyed his hair and disguised himself so that no one could tell that he was the emperor, and in this way he went to Carthage and asked for an audience with Genseric.

"I have come from the emperor of Rome himself, to talk about peace," said he. "The Roman army is great and powerful, and Genseric is ruler of this part of the world. Let us be friends."

Genseric talked awhile with the pretended messenger and had him royally entertained, but gave him no answer. In a short while the pretended messenger disappeared, having obtained all the information he desired. Genseric never knew who the ambassador was.

Finally the Roman fleet appeared in the bay of Carthage, but it suffered the fate of all the Roman fleets of those days; that is to say, the Vandals sunk and burned nearly all the ships.

All the efforts of the Romans to stop the ravages of the Vandals failed. Genseric and his host held sway over Africa and a large part of Italy, and for many years lived upon the plunder of the people. Genseric lived to be an old man and it was said that during his entire life he had never yielded one foot of the land that he had once invaded, but to this day the word "vandalism" is a reproach and a stain upon the name of those who are cruel and wanton in war.

CHAPTER V

KING CLOVIS BECOMES A CHRISTIAN

Clovis was the first king of France. In his youth he was a heathen and worshipped the god Wodin; but later in life he became a Christian and made France a Christian country.

His father was chief or king of a small tribe of Franks, fierce German warriors who were constantly engaged in war with the invading Romans. Clovis was only fifteen years of age when his father died and he became chief of his tribe.

There was a Roman governor, Syagrius, still left in France, who looked with contempt upon the young Clovis, whom he thought a boy, and so he announced himself as Prince of Soissons. When Clovis heard of this he determined that no Roman should be prince in his neighborhood. Accordingly he went to battle with Syagrius and defeated him. Syagrius fled and took refuge in Spain with Alaric the Visigoth.

Clovis sent a messenger to Alaric with these words:

"Return to me at once the Roman fugitive or I shall march my armies on you. You must choose between me and him."

Alaric at once decided that Clovis was the better ally, so he sent Syagrius back. As soon as Clovis had Syagrius in his power he put him to death, according to the barbarous fashion of those days.

Clovis was now twenty years of age and made up his mind that if he could subdue a Roman force he might as well subdue the whole country and become the king of all France. Accordingly he marched through the country conquering as he went, plundering everything that came in his way, particularly churches. France was still a heathen country, but there were

many Christians in the land and their churches were the places where they deposited much of their wealth, such as crosses of gold and silver, decorated with precious stones, rich altar cloths and rare vases.

In a church at Rheims there happened to be one lovely vase. Along with other treasures this vase fell into the hands of Clovis and his soldiers. The bishop of the church sent messengers to Clovis with these words:

"I beg you to spare the vase, which we consider particularly holy. Take all else you find, but that I would have for my own."

Now the spoils of battle or the riches of a plundered town belong to the conquerors, and according to the custom of those days everything was put into a large pile and was divided by lot. When the booty from the church of Rheims was collected at Soissons, Clovis addressed his soldiers as follows:

"Take what you like for your own and you shall have it without protest from me, but I wish this vase as my share."

All the soldiers shouted their consent and began to divide the booty among them. One man there was, however, who stood with evil countenance, because he did not like his king and was always opposing him. This man stood forth and said, "No. Let the king have his just and lawful share. To whomever the vase falls by lot, let it be his."

To this the king objected, whereupon the soldier seized his heavy battle-axe and struck the vase, breaking it in two parts.

King Clovis said nothing. He accepted the insult quietly and took up the broken vase and gave it to the bishop's messenger, saying that he was sorry that it could not be returned to him just as it was taken from the church.

But Clovis did not forget the insulting words and deed of the soldier, and later on at the muster of the army he found fault with the man's armor.

"Your arms are worse cleaned than any other soldier's. Neither your lance nor your sword nor your battle-axe is fit for war." Saying this he seized the warrior's battle-axe and threw it on the ground.

The astonished soldier stooped over to pick up his battle-axe which was lying in front of the king. The king swung his own battle-axe and striking the man upon the head, killed him at a blow, exclaiming, "Thus thou didst to the vase at Soissons!"

Soon Clovis made himself master of nearly all of France. He then wished to marry and so searched out a royal family. He had heard much of the beauty of the young Princess Clotilde, and decided to make her his queen. She was the daughter of a former king of Burgundy and was as gentle as she was beautiful. In addition to that, she was a Christian.

Clovis sent a friend of his to see her and offer his hand in marriage. The friend disguised himself as a wandering beggar and with his staff and wallet made his way to the court of Clotilde's father. There, as a homeless wanderer, he asked for food and shelter.

Clotilde, being generous and pious according to the custom of those days, washed the feet of the weary traveler. When she was bending over him he whispered that he had great news for her. "My master and king, Clovis, desires that you shall become his queen and told me to show you this ring that I bring with me in token of his good faith."

Clotilde was astonished and pleased. She took the ring and told the messenger that it would be well for Clovis to send for her at once, for her father had other suitors in mind and that she would be married shortly to some other if not to King Clovis.

When the messenger returned to Clovis and delivered the message of Clotilde, he told the king that she was the most beautiful creature that he had ever seen and that he must hasten to secure her or he would be too late. Clovis at once sent a formal demand for the hand of the princess, threatening war if his suit was refused. Her father, who did not want war, decided to let the princess go, so she traveled on a litter all the way to Soissons with a guard of men attending her.

Clotilde's father changed his mind soon after his daughter had left, just as she feared he would. But Clotilde thinking that she might be pursued, begged the officers in charge to let her mount a horse and travel at greater speed. This was done and when the pursuers overtook the litter they found it empty. The princess by that time had reached Soissons and was married to Clovis.

Of course they lived happily ever afterwards, as they should, but there was one thing in the mind of the beautiful queen which gave her a great deal of distress and that was that her husband was a heathen and worshipped heathen gods, while she was a Christian. She longed for his conversion, but for many years longed in vain.

Clovis was kind to her and let her worship as she chose, but insisted that he should have the same privilege. When their first son was born it was baptized in a Christian church. Shortly afterwards it was taken ill and died. Clovis, who looked upon the child as his heir, reproached the queen, saying, "Had he been baptized to my gods he would have lived. It is your God that has taken him. My god would have left him here."

His next son was baptized in the same way, and he, like his brother, became ill, but did not die. Clovis was then in doubt whether it was his god or Clotilde's God which had saved their second child. Still he would not become a Christian, but clung to his worship of Wodin. Finally at Cologne, in a great battle between the Germans and the French, the great leader was hard pressed. The fate of the

battle was going against the king and everywhere the French were losing ground. Clovis, in great despair, did not know what to do. He thought of his wife's religion and cried out on the battle-field, "Oh, Christ, whom Clotilde, my beloved queen, worships as the Son of God, I call upon Thee at this time! All the other gods have forsaken me and there seems to be no power to help me. If I should have victory over these foes I will believe in Thee and I shall be baptized in Thy name."

Turning to the battle once more victory settled upon his arms. The German chief was killed, all of his men threw down their arms, kneeling upon the ground, praying to Clovis to spare their lives. It was a great victory and Clovis was now the undisputed king of France.

He did not fail to keep the promise made upon the field of battle. He went to Rheims, where a good bishop explained to him the Christian faith and offered to baptize him. As the rough warrior marched up the aisle of the church and saw the glittering lights and heard the singing of the choir, he turned to the bishop and asked, "Is this the kingdom of heaven that you spoke of?"

"No, replied the bishop, "but this is the road which will lead you there."

On Christmas Day in the year 496 three thousand of the warlike savages of King Clovis were baptized. Those who preferred to worship their old gods were allowed to do so, but were told that they must join another tribe. Thenceforth Clovis was a Christian king.

For fifteen years Clovis continued his career of victory. He conquered all of his enemies and established himself in Paris, which he made his capital. There he died and his good queen, Clotilde, buried him in a church she herself had built.

Thus the prayers of a good woman not only made a Christian of her husband, but introduced Christianity into the country over which they both ruled.

CHAPTER VI

A CAMEL DRIVER BECOMES A PROPHET

Many hundred years ago there lived in Mecca, a city of Arabia, an old couple who were poor, and who had a son named Mohammed. In spite of their poverty they were very proud, for they were descended from princes. One day the father of Mohammed said to him, "My son, though I am too poor to leave you any of the goods of the earth, I leave you that which is better. In your veins flows the blood of the princes of Arabia. Never forget it."

Soon after this the old man and his wife died, and Mohammed went to live with his uncle, a kind-hearted man named Abu Talib. The uncle was not rich, nor was he poor, and as many others of that day, made a living by trading in sheep and camels. So the boy learned to look after the sheep, and after awhile learned to ride the camels and to drive them through the streets of Mecca.

When he was fifteen or sixteen years of age his uncle took him on journeys to different parts of Arabia. On their journeys Mohammed had charge of a train of camels, and gave orders about loading and marching, resting and feeding. He soon became so skillful as a camel driver, that his uncle said, "Mohammed, you are the best driver in Mecca. I shall recommend you to my friends and they will send you on long and important missions."

Mohammed replied, "I shall always be faithful and honest in my work and words. When I give my promise, I shall abide by what I say."

And so it was. Mohammed became known in Mecca for always telling the truth and never breaking a promise. In fact, the people of that town gave him a name, Eli Amin, which means, "the true and faithful one." If they wanted to

know the facts about any camel that was offered for sale they would send for Mohammed, and if he knew anything he would tell them and they believed him. Now, much of the trade of Mecca was carried on by camels that went in caravans from town to town, and even to the sea coast, bearing on their backs the rich wares of the Arabians, to be loaded on ships and sent to the cities of Europe. Mohammed at sixteen years of age had charge of many of the caravans, rich in valuable goods and worth large sums of money.

The long lines of richly laden beasts would wind slowly over the desert, hill and valley, the drivers urging the camels forward and keeping a sharp lookout for robbers on the way. At night the caravan would draw up by a well, or spring, and the camels huddled on the ground, close together for warmth and protection. Mohammed always hid his wallet of money and his letters to the merchants, and slept very lightly for fear of marauders, but nothing ever happened to him, and the traders always received a full return of their accounts from the faithful camel driver. One merchant would say to another, "Is Mohammed in charge of your caravan?" If the answer was yes, the one would remark, "Then you need have no fear. They will return safely, and every coin will be accounted for."

Mohammed was too poor to go to school, and too busy to get any kind of education. He could not read nor write, but he had a good memory and a fine mind for business. Whatever he once heard he could always repeat with accuracy, and remembered the details of every transaction. Mohammed had reached twenty-five years of age when one day he was walking in the market place of Mecca, and the chief camel-driver of a wealthy woman approached him, saying that his mistress desired to speak with him. Mohammed hastened to the place where the woman lived and presented himself at her door. He was young and strong, with a fine face and a noble air.

The woman said to him, "The traders tell me you are a skillful driver of camels, and can be trusted with a caravan. I

have much business between Mecca and the coast and I desire you to give me all of your time and your services."

Mohammed was delighted and immediately engaged himself to the wealthy woman. He was all the more pleased to do so because she was not only wealthy but lovely, and seemed to look with unusual favor upon the young man himself. Mohammed served his mistress well, while more and more responsibility was put upon him.

At last he was relieved of managing the camel train and was taken into the house and had much to do with the business affairs of his employer. The result is easily imagined. Mohammed and his mistress fell in love with each other.

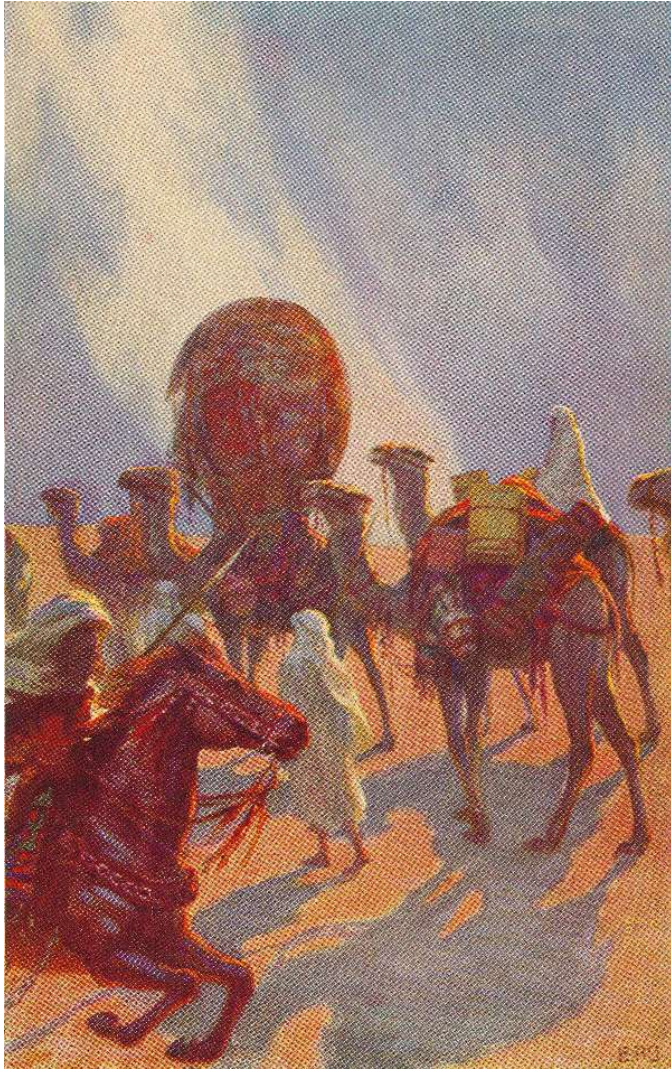
One day Mohammed said to her, "Though I am poor and a camel driver yet I would have you know that in my veins is the noble blood of an Arabian prince. If you will marry me I shall make you a good and faithful husband."

His mistress smiled and took his hand, and so they were married.

Mohammed was ever faithful and religious, and being now the husband of a wife who was wealthy, he had sufficient time to devote himself to the contemplation of religious affairs. Of course, he still continued to attend to his wife's business, but he had much time to watch the priests, and to learn about the new religion of Christ which was beginning to spread all over the world.

Very few of the Arabians at that time were Christians. Nearly all of them worshipped idols and some of their practices were very barbarous indeed. Mohammed was not satisfied with the religion of Christ and he abhorred the worship of idols to which most of his people were bound.

He became more and more serious and felt the need of being alone. One day he said to his wife, "I shall go into Mt. Hira and there spend several weeks in prayer and meditation."



THE LONG LINES OF RICHLY LADEN BEASTS WOULD WIND SLOWLY
OVER THE DESERT.

Accordingly he provided himself with food and repaired to the mountain and dwelt in a cave. All day long he sat quietly looking at Mecca and revolving in his mind the eternal facts of life and death. Many hours he spent upon his

knees. One time as he prayed he felt the presence of the Angel Gabriel near him. The angel spoke to him long and earnestly and told him many things about the new religion which he was to teach his people.

Mohammed went to the mountain a number of times and prayed in the cave. Every time he went the angel came to him and told him more and more about the new religion, till at last Mohammed felt that the angel had told him enough to put into a book, whereupon the angel said, "Now go and deliver all this news to your people. Tell them that there is but one God and that Mohammed is His prophet."

Now you will remember that Mohammed could neither read nor write, but he had a good memory, so he told all these things to some learned men who wrote them in a book. The book was called the Koran. This book became the Bible of the Mohammedans and remains so to this day.

When Mohammed told his wife of the vision he had in the mountain, she fell upon her knees and said, "Truly there is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet."

He then went into the market place and began to preach to the people. Many of them laughed him to scorn, especially when he reviled the idols that they long had revered. The leading men of Mecca said that he was a dreamer and spoke of foolish things. There were a few poor people and some slaves that believed what he said and accepted the new religion.

Mohammed went on preaching, regardless of the insults of the people. He spoke every day, saying that the Angel Gabriel had spoken to him, and then he would tell the people what they must do and what they must believe. Sometimes when he was speaking great crowds would press around him just as they always do around preachers who have a vision of heavenly things. In the vehemence of his oratory his face would grow pale and his body would tremble and his eyes would be fixed upon the skies. He would then tell the

people that he saw a vision and that heavenly voices were speaking to him.

You can easily see the effect this had upon the multitude. His fame went all over Arabia and crowds came far and near to hear him preach. At last the chief people of Mecca began to be alarmed and annoyed at the stir that Mohammed was making. They said, "This street preacher is stirring up the people. He is preaching a strange doctrine and soon will upset all our faith. He is an impostor that must be rebuked."

So his enemies gathered secretly and resolved to put him to death, saying that he was an enemy of his country and should not be allowed to revile their gods as he was doing. He had other enemies in Mecca who told him that he must cease his preaching in the market place or be stoned to death. To this Mohammed replied, "If not in Mecca, then in some other place of the earth."

Accounts of his preaching had long since reached Medina, and the people there sent him word, "Come to Medina and preach to us here. What Mecca rejects, Medina will rejoice in."

Mohammed secretly left his native city and with a few faithful companions fled to Medina. The time of his flight from his native city was the turning point in the history of the Mohammedans. It is called the Hegira and is said to be the beginning of the Mohammedan Era. In fact, with the Mohammedans everything dates from the Hegira (A.D. 622), just as the Christians date everything from the Birth of Christ.

At Medina he was received with great demonstrations of joy. A great church, called a mosque, as all Mohammedan churches and places of worship are called, was built for him. In Medina he lived for the rest of his life and from this city the Mohammedan religion spread over Arabia.

It was the belief of the Mohammedan religion that it was right to make converts by the sword, that war on unbelievers was righteous and that those who died in the holy

wars were especially favored in the world to come. Therefore, Mohammed, who was a warrior as well as a prophet, raised an army and fought many battles with unbelievers of Arabia. He marched against his native city. His followers surrounded the town and cried out, "We come in the name of Mohammed and demand you to abandon your idols and accept his faith. There is but one God and Mohammed is His prophet."

The people, more in fear than in conviction, opened the gates to Mohammed, and he and his army marched in. He then made all the people join his religion and destroy their old idols. It was not long before all Arabia and many other countries were converted to the Mohammedan religion, and they have remained so until the present day.

After a while Mohammed died and was buried in Medina, a town which has ever since been sacred to the Mohammedans. His followers believe that his body has never changed its appearance since he died, and the story is told that his coffin hangs somewhere between heaven and earth, being too sacred to rest upon earthly soil.

Mecca, however, is also a sacred city of the Mohammedans, because it is the birthplace of the prophet. Every year that city is visited by great crowds of pilgrims and every Mohammedan once in his life must make a pilgrimage to Mecca. It is required of all the followers of the prophet that they pray five times a day and each time they must kneel with their faces toward Mecca.

In all Mohammedan cities there is a mosque and on top of each mosque is a tower. At the hour of prayer there is an officer of the church, called a muezzin, who goes to the tower and in a loud and solemn voice calls the people to prayer. As soon as the call of the muezzin sounds over the city, everybody stops, no matter what he is doing, and kneels with his face toward Mecca and bows to the ground and says, "There is no God but our God, and there is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet."

CHAPTER VII

WHAT IT MEANT TO BE A KNIGHT

We read so much of knights of the olden times, and hear so much of them even in this day, that it is well for us to know what it meant to be a knight. We do not have knights nowadays such as they had hundreds of years ago, but at one time it was the great ambition of every boy to be a knight, and of every girl to have a knight devoted to her service.

To begin with, one had to be of noble birth to become a knight. No ordinary peasant boy could hope to win such honor. The son of a lord, or of another knight, when he was seven or eight years of age was taken from his father's castle, and put into the castle of some other lord, there to be trained in his duties.

Now, a castle was a gloomy stone building, with strong walls to defend it against its enemies, often surrounded by a moat or a ditch of water over which drawbridges connected the land with the castle. These castles were sometimes placed on high cliffs, or by the side of deep waters, or on an island, or indeed any place where they could be defended easily.

On the top were towers from which the approach of an enemy could be detected, and from which the defenders of the castle could hurl stones or shoot arrows at the attacking party. Inside were many rooms for the lord and his attendants to sleep, eat and live, and places for the soldiers to be cared for. There were also dungeons for prisoners, treasure rooms for the captured booty, wells for water, storerooms for food, and stables for the horses. A castle was not only a home, but was also a fortress.

In such a place the little boy who was to become a knight was brought to live. He was at first called a page. Before he could become a squire there was much for him to

learn. Up to the time that he was fourteen or fifteen it was his business to wait upon the ladies of the castle. He had to go on errands for them, and attend them when they went hunting or hawking. He had to learn to be very polite and obedient, for it was one of the rules of knighthood that a knight should be most respectful to women and obey all the laws of his order.

There is an old book which tells how a boy who wished to become a knight must behave. When he entered a room he was expected to kneel before his lord, or the ladies, and to say, "God speed you!" with all modesty. He had to stand up very straight and not lean on any post or touch any chair, and not speak until he was spoken to.

He had to attend the lord at his meals, and bring a basin of water for the hand washing and hold a towel ready for use, for in those days there were no forks or knives, and several persons had to dip into the same trencher.

When the page's time came to eat he must not lean on the table, or drop any food on the cloth, or throw any bones on the floor. If he were eating with an older person, or one of higher rank, he must dip into the trencher first, but must be careful not to take any choice piece of meat or bread.

The boy was not taught to read or write, but he was taught to play the harp and to sing the songs of heroes, and love songs to the ladies. He must play chess and backgammon, for these were accomplishments no gentleman could do without. He learned his catechism, said his prayers, and paid great respect to the Church and to his religion.

Out of doors the page had many things to learn. He accompanied his lord to battle, but was never in danger, for he was not yet allowed to come near the fighting line. He generally waited around the lord's tent, serving him at table and preparing his bed at night.

Of course the page was taught to ride a horse. Riding was a serious business with a knight, and not merely a pleasure. He had to practice leaping over ditches and fences

and low walls. He had to spring into the saddle without touching the stirrup, and to stay on his horse at the most furious gallop. In fact, he had to learn to be a part of his horse and to be as safe astride as he was afoot. This knowledge would serve him in after years when he fought in battle or in tournaments.

An important part of the boy's training was in the art of hunting, the use of the bow and arrow, and the tracking and killing of deer, wild boars, and other animals in the forest. Also he was taught the art of hawking. He had to learn the different kinds of falcons, how to train them, and how to throw them upon their prey.

For instance, a falcon had to be carried on the wrist or the forearm, which must be held parallel to the ground and in front of the body, but not touching it. The arm had to be held level and at right angles so as to give the bird a good perch. When the time came for a flight the falcon was unchained and the hood over the eyes was removed, and the quarry designated. The bird was then dexterously thrown into the air, and started upon his pursuit of other birds, or smaller animals in the field.

When the page became old enough he was made a squire. More service was required of him, and his exercises became more severe. He still served his lord at table, but he was now allowed to bear the first cup of wine. He still brought water for the hand-washing and carried all the meat.

He now had to learn to leap farther, run longer distances, and climb steeper cliffs than when he was a page. It was his duty to bear hunger and thirst, heat and cold without complaint, and to keep awake through long nights of watching. It was no simple life he had to live, for often the squires fainted from their over-exertion.

The time soon came for the young squire to put on armor and to wield a sword and to carry a lance. The armor was made of links of steel, and covered his entire body, but

was often padded within to keep it from chafing the flesh. Still it was very heavy and burdensome, especially when the weather was hot. It took a strong body to carry it, when engaged in battle or in any contest.

The squire was taught to wield the great battle-axe, how to fence with his broadsword, and how to ride with his lance in position for striking his adversary's helmet or shield. His own face was covered with a steel helmet, with a visor in front that could be lifted whenever he wished to expose his face.

When his master went to the field of battle, it was the duty of the squire to attend him, and to carry his shield and take care of his armor. The squire was now admitted to the very field of battle and stood by the side of his lord and lent him aid.

If the lord was unhorsed the squire must see that his horse was caught or that the knight was remounted; if the horse was killed the squire must provide another; if the lord lost his sword or lance the squire must have other weapons ready at hand.

If the knight took a prisoner it was the squire's duty to take him back to camp and give him to the attendants for safe holding. If the knight was getting the worst of the combat, the squire had to come to his aid, especially if he was attacked by several at one time. In this way, the squires often fought with one another.

If the knight were taken prisoner, it was the duty of the squire to rescue him, if possible; if he were killed, the squire took his body from the field of battle, and saw that his lord was given an honorable burial.

Within a few years the squire was ready to be made a real knight. After a night of vigil at the tomb of some saint or of a departed knight, the squire said his prayers and bathed himself in purifying waters. He then put on his full armor and

presented himself before the king, or his lord, to be dubbed a knight.

Kneeling before the king, or his lord, he received a light blow with a sword on his shoulders, or the back of his neck, with these words:

"In the name of God, of Saint Michael, and of Saint George, I dub thee knight. Be brave, ready, and loyal. Arise, Sir Knight."

The newly-made knight arose and was ready for all the duties of his order. Mounting his horse, taking his shield and sword in hand, he rode about the castle receiving the congratulations of his friends, and bestowing gratuities upon the priests and the servants of the castle.

It was the sworn duty of all knights to protect the weak and helpless, to see that justice was done to the poor and oppressed, to be loyal to their castle lords and kings, to defend women and children from insult and injury, and to be faithful to the lady of their choice.

There were plenty of adventures for the knights in those rough days of war and violence. Any knight in quest of adventure need only to ride forth to find all the adventure he wanted. He might discover that some fair maiden had been carried away from her friends, and he could rescue her; or that some poor peasant had had his cattle stolen and he could seize the robbers and punish them; or that some castle was attacked by an enemy and he could join one party or the other, as his fancy took him.

If all were peaceful he might still find amusement in tilting at some castle where he called for entertainment. Appearing at the gate he would call to the porter, "A knight awaits without and would joust with any knightly inmate."

The word was passed through the castle that a joust was to take place. Ladies, knights, squires, pages and servants then repaired to the tilting-ground, which was a green, level

spot within the courtyard, surrounded by grassy banks for the ladies and spectators.

The knights took their places, one at each end of the green lawn, the ladies and spectators waiting with eagerness the contest. The contestants mounted their horses, closed their visors, couched their lances, and spurred their steeds forward.

They came together in the center with terrific shock, lance striking shield or helmet, each trying to unhorse and disarm his antagonist. The joust was repeated until one of the knights was thrown from his horse and declared defeated by the judges, or owned himself overcome.

Sometimes in the towns, or at the castles, there were great gatherings in which tournaments were held for prizes, and at which many knights gathered from far and near. There were days of feasting and revelry, the tournament grounds were decorated with great magnificence, while the knights vied with one another in feats of arms.

When all was ready for the lists the heralds cried, "Come forth, knights, and do battle for your lady loves," and the splendid cavalcade moved into the grounds. The horses were in superb trappings, their harness blazing with color and jewels. The armor shone in the bright sun, while from helmets and lances fluttered the glove or ribbons of some fair lady in whose name the knight was to do battle.

The knights were in two groups, one at each end of the lists. The trumpet sounded, the ropes were lowered, and the knights bounded forward, with heads bent low and lances aimed at their antagonists. The minstrels played, the ladies shouted and waved their hands, and called out to their champions. The earth shook with the tramp of many feet, there was the din of arms and the crashing of spears as the horses and men came together. Then the ground was strewn with unhorsed men, and often blood mingled with the dust, and there were groans of wounded men.

But all this made good warriors of the knights and trained them to be fearless in real battle, and in defence of any cause they espoused. Their principles were noble, though their practices were at times cruel and bloody. We can well at this day remember the worthiness of their vows, and forgive the warlike lives they led.

CHAPTER VIII

BERTHA WITH THE BIG FOOT

The Lady Bertha was very beautiful and very good. There were two things that troubled her, however; she was tall, and one foot was larger and longer than the other. She was not really a giantess, nor was her foot a deformity, but still everybody called her Bertha with the Big Foot.

One day after the household duties of the castle were over, and she sat sewing with her cousin, Aliste, and other girls of noble birth, there was the sound of a trumpet at the gate, and the noise of horses, and of men's voices. Shortly after, the voice of her father, the Count Charibert, was heard.

"Summon the Lady Bertha," he said. "A message has come from the Mayor Pepin, who demands her hand in marriage. Let her attend me in the hall at once."

Bertha and her maids went down the grand staircase and entered the hall. The attendants bowed low before her, and one of the messengers who had just arrived spoke up and said, "My master, the Mayor of the Palace, has heard of the beauty and virtue of the Lady Bertha and wishes to know if she will do him the honor of marrying him and becoming the first lady of the land."

Bertha was by no means delighted, but she was a dutiful daughter and turning to her father, replied, "It shall be as my father, the count, decides. If he wills it so, I am ready to depart and marry the Lord Pepin, Mayor of the King's Palace."

You may be sure the count was pleased with such a prospect for his gentle daughter, for Mayor Pepin was a great lord and was destined one day to become king of France.

In three weeks a great cavalcade of spearmen and attendants started from the count's castle to Paris, where lived Lord Pepin. With Bertha went Aliste, her cousin, and her uncle, Viscount Tybus, and his wife, the parents of Aliste.

Now the viscount and his wife as well as their daughter Aliste were jealous of the beauty and high rank of Bertha, and were resolved to deprive her of her good fortune. So they began to talk in her presence.

"I hear Pepin is a very terrible man, a regular monster, who is cruel to his wives and beats them," said the viscount.

"He has had five wives already," said the viscount's wife. "Two of them he has beheaded, two he has smothered, and one he has drowned in burning oil. He is a Bluebeard, for he kills every wife he has."

"I wish some one would save our dear Bertha from his hands," cried Aliste. "I would be willing to take her place if I could, for I love her so, and what matters it if Pepin should slay me if Bertha could be saved?"

All of this was untrue, of course, but it terrified the poor Bertha until she trembled on her horse and came near falling to the ground.

"Oh, unhappy me!" she cried; "what have I done to merit such a fate? Is there nothing you can do, my uncle, to avert this disaster? Of what was my dear father thinking that he should deliver me to such a monster?"

"Be calm, my dear child," replied Count Tybus. "We shall yet think of some way to save you. Let me talk with Aliste and your aunt, that we may devise some scheme to rid you of this odious marriage."

The count and his wife drew aside and talked together in low tones. Aliste was with them. Together they laid a plan to turn the fears of the Lady Bertha to their own good fortune.

Approaching the still weeping girl, they said, "Bertha, you are dearer to us than our own daughter, and we are willing for her to take your place and marry this dreadful Pepin. Therefore let Aliste be Bertha and you be her handmaiden. The Lord Pepin has never seen either of you and knows no difference. If she dies at his hand we must be content, but at any rate you shall be saved."

Bertha listened to this proposal without any suspicion of the motives of her relatives, and after pondering a while consented that Aliste should take her place and become the bride of the Lord Pepin, while she herself would be known only as her attendant.

Before the cavalcade reached Paris the change was made. Aliste put on the rich bridal robes of Bertha, and rode at the head of the procession, while Bertha sat at her feet in the modest garb of a woman-in-waiting. In this way they approached Paris and rode up to the gates of the palace, where already lights began to flare and minstrels were playing rude music.

Lord Pepin thought little of the appearance of his bride. He was content upon an alliance with the great Count Charibert, and it mattered little to him whether the count's daughter was black-haired and high-tempered, or golden-haired and sweet of nature. The marriage was celebrated in great state, and poor little Bertha was kept far in the background so that the Lord Pepin never saw her at all.

But Bertha saw him and said to herself, "He does not look like a dreadful monster at all. Nor is he so crafty and cruel. He is far better looking than what I was led to believe. I wonder if he can be so wicked as they say."

Now the Count Tybus, having safely married his daughter to Lord Pepin, resolved on getting rid of Bertha

entirely. So he hired a man to take her deep into the forest of Mans and there to leave her to the mercy of wild beasts. Thus he hoped to secure his daughter firmly in her position as bride of the Mayor of the Palace.

One night as Simon the forester and his wife sat in their cabin in the heart of the great forest they heard a sound as of a voice, a low moaning cry outside.

"What can that be, wife?" asked the forester. "Here there are no sounds but the roar of the wolf and the growl of the bear. I thought I heard a child's voice without." So saying, the old forester and his wife opened the door cautiously and peered into the darkness. All was still outside, and they could see nothing.

Bringing a torch they searched the path, and to their amazement found a fair-haired girl lying a few rods from their door, all crumpled up, and fainting from hunger and weariness.

"In God's name what is this?" exclaimed the forester. "A girl, and in such a plight! Quick, wife, lend a hand or she will die!"

Soon they had the fainting girl inside the cabin and by the fire. When she had eaten some food and was revived in her strength she told a sad story of how her uncle had deceived her, and had turned her over to a hired soldier to be slain in the wood, or left to be devoured by the wolves. The soldier had not killed the fair girl, but he had left her to wander in the forest, until, worn out with fatigue and exhausted by hunger, she saw the light of the cabin and had cried out for help as she fell fainting in the path.

Bertha concealed her real rank from the good forester and his wife, and was content to remain in the cabin in the woods and be the servant girl of the forester's wife.

Meanwhile, Aliste was living in all the glory of a wife of a Mayor of the Palace, though she was by no means the

sweet-tempered girl that Lord Pepin had been led to expect. In fact, she often gave way to fits of anger that made those around her declare she was quite ugly and unworthy to be the wife of a great man.

Back in the castle of Count Charibert, the Countess Blanche, the mother of Bertha, became lonely and longed to see the face of her beloved daughter.

"My lord, I beseech you, let me journey to Paris, that I may again see my daughter Bertha, wife of the Mayor of the Palace," said she one day to her husband.

"Thou art foolish to ask such a thing," replied the count. "Your daughter is now so high in state that she would care little for either of us."

But the Countess Blanche was not to be turned aside. So it came about that she set out for Paris, escorted by horsemen, and attended by her women as became the wife of a count.

As she neared the palace she smiled upon the people and said to them, "I am the mother of the mayor's wife. I pray you tell me of my daughter."

"Your daughter is a fiend, a witch, a tyrant. She does nothing but storm all day and beat her servants with rods," they told her, which greatly distressed the countess, for she knew that Bertha must have changed greatly since her marriage, if what they said was true.

Lord Pepin welcomed the Countess Blanche at the palace gate. "And where is my daughter?" asked she. "Fares she well, and makes she a good and dutiful wife, my lord? She was ever gentle and loving at home and I hope her great good fortune has not spoiled her temper."

Lord Pepin said his wife was not well and begged not to be seen by her mother. In fact, she had given orders not to admit the Countess Blanche to her rooms at all.

"My daughter not see her mother!" cried the countess. "Here is something wrong. I shall see her as is my right," and sweeping past the guard she made her way to the room where Aliste had shut herself up, fearing exposure of the fraud she had practiced.

As she drew near the room she heard an angry voice berating a serving woman : "I shall not see her, I tell you, I shall not see her! I shall cover myself in bed with these draperies first!"

The countess threw open the door as Aliste jumped into the bed. But alas! the draperies were short and Aliste's feet were exposed beyond the cover.

"This is not Bertha. This is not my daughter," cried out the countess to the attendants who followed her into the room. "My daughter has one large foot and one small foot, while this woman has two large feet; what means this?"

With that she pulled the draperies aside. Aliste sprang from the couch and the two women faced each other.

"You are not Bertha, you are Aliste, her cousin. You have deceived my Lord Pepin. You are an impostor and a vile woman!" exclaimed the countess. "And now where is my daughter and what has become of her?" she asked of Lord Pepin.

The mayor was in a great rage. "What trick is this you play me, woman? Who are you and why have you deceived me?" he cried in his wrath.

Aliste fell on her knees and confessed all her deception. Nothing could save her, however, and the mayor had her shut up in a convent and sent her guilty father and mother to the gallows.

But where was Bertha? No one knew, therefore no one could tell. The soldier who had taken her to the forest was silent as to his part in her disappearance. The mayor became

gloomy and stern, and followed the chase to rid himself of the shame he had endured, and to forget the loss he had suffered.

One day deep in the forest the mayor had brought to bay a great wild boar. The beast attacked the hunter, who was alone, and after a terrible fight inflicted many wounds upon the mayor, though the boar was finally killed. As the great hog fell dead it bore down the mayor with its huge body and pinned him to the ground.

Weak with loss of blood the mayor almost fainted with the heavy weight upon his chest. At that moment, a fair-haired girl ran from out the forest, seized the mighty beast by the legs and pulled him off the almost exhausted man. It was not a moment too soon, for the mayor was almost suffocated.

As he rose from the ground and turned to the girl he saw her standing barefoot before him. Looking at her feet he exclaimed in amazement, "Bertha, my lost Bertha! At last I have found you!"

"My Lord Pepin!" said the girl, and knelt on the ground before him.

It did not take long for Lord Pepin to carry Bertha back to his palace and make her his wife. There was great rejoicing at the event, and there would have been more if the people could have known that she was to be the mother of Charlemagne and of a line of kings that for two hundred and fifty years reigned over France.

CHAPTER IX

STORIES OF CHARLEMAGNE

Charlemagne was one of the really great men of the world. He reigned forty-three years, took part in fifty-three campaigns, and finally became ruler over nearly all of what we now know as Europe. He became master of France, Germany, and a large part of Italy, and extended his domains from the Pyrenees to the Oder River. His life was so full of warfare and romance that he is by far the most picturesque character of mediaeval times.

Many of his campaigns were against the Saxons, a warlike and half savage race who gave him much trouble to subdue. In one of these campaigns he tore down their favorite idol called the Irminsul, which was a great wooden image that stood high up on one of their mountains overlooking their valleys and villages, and before which they were accustomed to bow and to which they would make sacrifices. Charlemagne hacked the idol to pieces and threw it down, to the great consternation of the barbarians, who thought immediate destruction would follow his unholy act.

Charlemagne was accustomed to wage war against his enemies and at the point of the sword force them to become Christians. He required of all the Saxons that they be baptized in the rivers near by the battlefields where they were conquered. In this way thousands of the Saxons were forced into the rivers, where they were baptized and made to profess the Christian faith. But this did the Saxons little good, for they knew nothing whatever of the new faith to which they were pledged.

In order to induce the Saxons to be peaceably baptized and become Christians, Charlemagne hit upon the device of giving every convert a clean white shirt. So many appealed for

shirts that the supply gave out and he had to resort to a coarser kind of yellow shirt, which was not so pleasing to the gaudy barbarians.

One giant chieftain came up to be baptized and was offered a yellow shirt. He replied disdainfully, "I have been baptized already twenty times and received twenty white shirts. I refuse to be baptized any more and will have nothing to do with a religion that is so stingy with its clothes."

In spite of the fact that Charlemagne conquered the Saxons it was like fighting a forest fire. When they were conquered in one place insurrections would break out elsewhere and so Charlemagne was kept moving for nearly thirty years before he finally subdued that country. At one time he was so exasperated with their leaders for breaking their promise of obedience and their vows of baptism that in his resentment he gathered forty-five hundred of them on the banks of a river and had them all beheaded. This was very unChristianlike treatment, but those were barbarous times and Charlemagne was a stern soldier.

In addition to being a great warrior Charlemagne was fond of study and books. He invited learned men to come to his court and had them teach his subjects. He had schools in his own palace, one for his soldiers and people and the other for the children, and he himself is said to have studied with some degree of diligence. He was very fond of music and was said to have introduced the first organ into France. The story is told that an old woman actually died of joy the first time she heard the organ played, thinking the music was from a heavenly choir. The emperor was fond of singing and made the priests use the church chants. It is said that he composed a hymn himself which is still in use.

One of the most learned men of the times, named Alcuin, came to his court as a teacher. Not only the children of the rich but also the children of the poor were required to attend school. Noticing that the children of the poor progressed more rapidly than the children of the rich, he spoke

angrily to the lazy sons of his rich dependents and said to them, "You think because you are rich and are the sons of the great men of my kingdom that your birth and wealth will protect you in my favor. I will let you know that you stand in need of learning more than those who are poor and dependent. You think only of your pleasures and of your dress and play, but I attach no importance to your wealth and to your station, and if you idle your time when you are young you will be worthless when you are old."

So anxious was the emperor himself to get information and to become a learned man that he had some one to read aloud to him while he ate. He lived very simply, eating nothing but plain, wholesome food and drinking nothing but water. His dress was simple, and while his courtiers were adorned in silks and satins, he himself used only plain, strong materials that could stand the rain and sunshine.

Though he was master of half of Europe he took great interest in the small matters of his kingdom. As he went through the country he would examine the accounts of his farmers and made them keep strict watch over their expenditures. He built roads, established markets and made the people use measures and weights. It is said that Charlemagne's foot became the standard of length of the country, his foot being twelve inches long and the inch being the width of his thumb. In this way we still use the word "foot," each foot being divided into twelve inches, each inch being the width of the emperor's thumb and twelve of them being the length of the emperor's foot.

Charlemagne was at one time engaged in a bitter quarrel with the king of Denmark. In those days for kings to quarrel was for their countries to go to war, and so it was not long before the armies of Charlemagne and those of the king of Denmark came together in deadly conflict.

Now there was none who could stand against Charlemagne. In spite of the fact that the Danish king was a brave leader and his followers were fierce fighters, the victory

perched upon the banners of France. On the field of battle the Dane confessed himself defeated. He said to Charlemagne, "Behold, my lord, I confess myself beaten in fair battle; demand what tribute you will that I should pay."

Charlemagne had all the wealth that he wanted and nearly all the land that he could rule over. After demanding tribute, he took the king's son, Holger, as a hostage.

Holger was a youth of wonderful strength and daring. When he was born, six fairies had come to his cradle and each of them had brought him a gift. One of them brought strength, one brought courage, one brought him beauty of person and so on. The last one foretold that he would never die, but would dwell forever in Avelon.

Holger entered the service of Charlemagne and became a very valiant knight. So long as his father kept the treaty of peace, Holger followed the emperor in his wars and was very much at liberty. But it so happened that the king of Denmark broke the treaty that he had made, which angered Charlemagne so much that he at once confined Holger in prison. In this prison he was attended by the governor's daughter, a beautiful maid, whose name was Bellisande.

She saw the handsome knight walking about the prison-yard and was attracted to him. Holger himself was no less allured by her youth and beauty and it was not long before he fell in love with her, and they were secretly married.

Charlemagne himself was about to engage in another war, for he was always at war with somebody. He wanted the help of all his knights and thought of Holger whom he shut up in prison. "Send to the governor of St. Omar and order him to send Holger at once to me; I need the help of his strong arm," demanded the emperor. Accordingly Holger took leave of his young wife and appeared in the camp of the king.

For more than a year the war continued and Holger returned to France with his king. He heard that his father, the king of Denmark, had died. He also heard that he was the

father of a little son and that Bellisande was waiting for him at the home of her father in St. Omar. He went to the camp of Charlemagne and told the king, saying to him, "My father, the king of Denmark, is dead, and I should reign in his stead. I pray you, my lord, that I should go and take my crown, and with me I should take my wife and my infant son."

Charlemagne heard the story of the knight's marriage and cheerfully allowed him to return to his own country and there assume the reins of government. When he reached Denmark, he ruled so wisely that he was adored by all his subjects. He was such a good king that even to this day the common people declare that he is not dead, but that he is in Avalon, the home of heroes, or else asleep in the vaults of Elsinore, and that some day he will awake to save his country in the time of its need.

After many years spent in Denmark, Holger returned to France, bringing with him his son, now grown to be a strong young man. This young man had a dispute with Prince Charlot, the son of Charlemagne, over a game of chess. The dispute became very bitter and the young Dane began to use abusive words. Prince Charlot seized a heavy chess board, brought it down upon the head of his antagonist, with the result that Holger's son, of whom he was very proud, was killed with the blow.

Holger himself was very indignant. Approaching the king, he said, "Prince Charlot has murdered my son and I demand that he be delivered into my hands for punishment. I shall mete out to him the same blow he dealt my son, and demand him at your hands."

Charlemagne turned to Holger coldly and said, "A young man's quarrel, in which I bear no part. Why should both be dead, when I need men?" Holger turned upon the king in wrath and grossly insulted him, telling him, that a king who did not punish a murderer was not better than one himself. Seizing his armor and mounting his horse, he fled the court

before he could be arrested. He took refuge with Didier, king of Lombardy, with whom Charlemagne was then at war.

Charlemagne and his army marched into Lombardy. Holger and Didier stood upon an old tower anxiously watching the approach of the enemy. Didier had never seen Charlemagne and greatly dreaded his coming. He turned to Holger, who knew the face and form of the king, and anxiously inquired of his appearance. From the lofty tower the watchers saw a vanguard of the army and Didier turned to Holger, and asked, "Is Charlemagne among them?" and Holger answered, "No."

Then came the clergy in full panoply, riding upon splendid horses and making a great display. This impressed Didier so much that he turned to Holger, and again asked, "Is Charlemagne among that host?"

Still Holger answered, "No."

Then the watchers saw a great host of knights with shining armor and long steel lances glancing in the sunshine. Their horses were richly caparisoned and covered with steel. Didier turned to Holger, and said, "Surely Charlemagne is among that host?" And Holger answered, "No."

At last the king really appeared in his steel armor, riding a magnificent horse, and holding aloft his invincible sword "Joyeuse." He was escorted by the main body of his army, who were terrible fighting men.

So bright was the armor of the king and so fierce was the flashing of his sword that the very sight of Charlemagne struck terror into the hearts of the watchers and even Holger was overcome with fear. Turning to the king of Lombardy, Holger said, "Behold, this is the man you look for and whom I have insulted!" So overcome was Holger himself that he fell fainting at the feet of his host.

The Lombard king was soon overpowered by Charlemagne, but Holger himself escaped from the castle in

which he was besieged. Thinking he had escaped pursuit, he lay down near a fountain and went to sleep, where he was discovered by a body of knights, and was captured.

Upon being led before Charlemagne, he said to Holger, "Holger, I forgive your insult to my kingly estate and I would have you become again my knight; therefore I beg you lay aside your demand that I shall turn over to you Prince Charlot, whom you know is my only son and whom I could not yield even to the king of Denmark, that he should be slain."

Holger, whose wrath and courage had again returned, looked the king in the face and said, "I shall be satisfied with nothing else, a prince for a prince, a king's son for a king's son. My son is dead and yours should follow him."

That night an angel appeared before Holger and said to him in a vision, "You do wrong to insist that Charlemagne yield you his son. These be warlike times and your son is now in Avalon awaiting you, where you both shall not be dead, but shall live forever."

With that Holger rose and went to the king's tent, and kneeling by his bed begged of him forgiveness, and swore fidelity to him forever afterwards.

CHAPTER X

CHARLEMAGNE AND THE MAGIC RING

Charlemagne was a great and good king, of whom many wonderful stories are told, some of which are true, and many of which are mythical. He belonged to the age of heroes when people ascribed to those they admired far greater traits than they could possibly possess and of whom wonderful stories have been brought down to us at the present day.

When Charlemagne's third wife died, he married a beautiful eastern princess by the name of Frastrada. Now, this princess was possessed of a magic ring, whose power was such that the wearer of it or even the possessor of it became irresistible. When the princess saw the great Charlemagne on one of his travels she put the ring on her finger and at once Charlemagne was her devoted slave, and kneeling before her, said, "Madam, I have never beheld so beautiful a creature. I beg you to share with me my throne and my domains. My heart is entirely yours and I beg you to come at once with me to my castle in France." To this Frastrada agreed and they were happily married.

With great pomp and ceremony was she installed in her new home and so long as she wore the magic ring Charlemagne gave every evidence of devotion and love. Frastrada was a gentle and beautiful queen and deserved all the affection that the king lavished upon her.

At length the queen fell dangerously ill. She felt that she was going to die. On her hand she still wore the magic ring, which she would not remove under any circumstances. When she looked at it she said to herself, "After I die, some one else will wear this ring and have the affection of my lord and king. Would that I could take it with me beyond the grave."

Saying this, and almost with her dying strength, she slipped the ring from her finger and concealed it in her mouth. Shortly afterwards she breathed her last.

Solemn preparations were made to bury the dead queen. It was intended to inter her body in the cathedral of Mayence, but Charlemagne was so overcome with grief that he refused to part with the body of the beloved queen. He neglected all matters of state and sat day after day in the room where her body was placed, unwilling to have her buried.

The trusted officer of Charlemagne was Archbishop Turpin. Seeing the distress of his king he said to those around him, "Surely our master is under the influence of some strange spell. I suspect that the dead queen, lovely and beautiful as she was, in death holds him with the same magic power we have suspected she exercised over him when she was alive."

The archbishop resolved to discover the secret of Frastrada's power. Slipping into the room where the king sat overcome with fasting and weeping, he found him wrapped in slumber. He searched the body of the queen carefully and at last in her mouth he discovered the magic ring, which he had long thought to be the source of her power over the king.

It was but the work of a moment to secure this ring and slip it on his own finger. Just as he was about to leave the room the king awoke, and in awaking was completely relieved of the spell which bound him to his queen. He glanced with a shudder at her body and ordered her to be buried.

On the other hand, the archbishop became the object of the king's most ardent desire. He flung himself most passionately upon the neck of the archbishop, saying, "You shall never leave me, for I now transfer to you the affection I gave my dead wife. I shall be inconsolable in your absence."

With the power of the magic ring which Turpin wore, he induced the king to eat and drink and to cease his mourning and to resume the reins of government which he had almost abandoned. Turpin became the object of his unbounded

admiration. This soon became a weariness and vexation to the old archbishop. He tired of the protestations of undying affection and wished to be rid of the king but did not well know how it should be done.

Turpin was advanced in years and Charlemagne was in the vigor of youth and strength. The king made Turpin accompany him everywhere, even on his hunting expeditions, made him sleep in the same tent, and when he awoke in the morning he inquired, "Where is Turpin?" When he started upon the chase, he said, "Saddle a horse for the archbishop." When he sat at meat he said to those around him, "Prepare the best food for my beloved Turpin," and he would not close his eyes at night without knowing that the archbishop had lain down near him.

The archbishop became weary and worn. This was a little more than he had counted on, and so he decided to get rid of the ring which was the source of all his trouble, but he did not know how to do this for fear it would fall into unscrupulous hands and the king be ruined.

The unhappy minister slipped away from the king one moonlight night, stole silently out of the imperial tent, and wandered alone in the woods, thinking of his misery. As he walked thus, he came to the opening of the forest and found himself beside a lake on whose surface the moonbeams played with silvery softness.

The archbishop sat down and began to consider. "What shall I do in the plight in which I find myself? The king follows me everywhere I go and makes my weary body attend him at the chase and the banquet as though I were as young as he. Would that I had buried the queen with the ring in her mouth." Thinking thus to himself he slipped the ring off his finger and the thought struck him that the best way to dispose of it was to consign it to the waters of the lake, where it could be hidden forever.

In a moment the ring was thrown far into the lake and the archbishop walked back to the king's tent and soon fell asleep.

The king awoke the next day and turned an indifferent eye upon the archbishop and said to him, "You may return to your duties, my friend, for I shall not need you any longer at my table. I can see that you are much worn in following me in the chase. You are my trusty counselor and I shall send for you when I need you, otherwise you are at liberty."

Charlemagne seemed unusually restless that day and appeared to be seeking for something that he had lost. Calling for his followers, he blew his horn and started upon his daily hunts. About noon he lost sight of his suite in the pursuit of game, and finding himself in an open spot, he dismounted and threw himself down upon the grass beside a beautiful lake.

As he gazed upon the waters he became enamored of the spot. "What beautiful water! What a charming place to dwell forever!" exclaimed Charlemagne. "There must be something within these waters to cure the restless spirit and make one long to linger here forever."

His followers found him gazing upon the water, softly lapping it in his hands and looking abstractedly into its depths. With difficulty they persuaded him to leave the spot. Only Turpin knew that the magic ring which had been thrown into this lake was the charm which had engaged the king's devotion, and he told no one of what had happened.

Before Charlemagne consented to leave the spot and return to his tent he said to those around him, "It is here that I shall build a chapel and shall call it Aix-la-Chapelle." In after years this was accomplished, to the satisfaction of the king, and the building thus erected was the beginning of his favorite capital.

CHAPTER XI

CHARLEMAGNE AND THE ROBBER

Charlemagne had a great castle on the Rhine, in which he loved to live. Here he could watch the beautiful river and the far-off hills and mountains, and in the deep forest could find game for himself and his friends.

One evening when he had fallen into a deep sleep an angel appeared to him in his dreams. The angel was clothed in great splendor, and around its head was a bright light. Approaching the bed of the sleeping monarch, the angel said, "Arise, great Emperor, and clothe thyself, and take thy helmet and sword. It is the will of fate that thou goest forth secretly and alone, and steal something from thy own people."

Charlemagne awoke much astonished. The dream seemed strange and wonderful. So impossible was it that an emperor should be commanded to become a robber, that he lay down and went back to sleep.

Again the angel appeared as before, standing by the side of his bed. This time it stretched forth its hand, and spoke sternly, "Arise, Emperor, as I have ordered thee! Do not tarry. Get thee into the forest and steal for thyself and thy kingdom. Thou shalt repent it forever if thou disobeyest my words." With that the vision was gone.

Charlemagne awoke from his sleep, and rose from his bed, for he dared not disobey the words of the angel, though he thought the mission was ill suited to one of his station.

"Why should I turn robber in my own forest, or on my own land?" thought he. "All I need do is to ask for what I desire, and it is mine. One can hardly steal his own." However, the emperor put on his clothes, then his armor, his helmet and

his sword, and went forth in the dead of night, not allowing anyone to know that he had left the castle.

This precaution was not necessary, however, for as he passed along the halls all his knights were fast asleep; even the stable guards were asleep. The only creature awake was his own horse, which neighed loud and long at the approach of his master.

Having mounted his horse Charlemagne rode out of the castle gates. He took his way to the nearest forest saying to himself, "It is evidently the will of the Lord that I shall turn robber this night, but as I am bewildered in my mind as to how this is to be done, I shall gladly meet with Elbegast, the famous thief, who lives in this forest. I feel sure he could help me this night."

Wondering what he was going to do and whom he was going to rob, the emperor rode on into the forest. At last, by the feeble light of the moon, he saw a single knight approaching him. The knight also seemed to have perceived Charlemagne, for he rode forward, and soon they stood facing each other.

The strange knight was clothed in black armor from head to foot. He rode a black horse, covered with a black cloth. He looked at the emperor inquisitively, as if he would like to know who it was that rode so late at night through the forest. On the other hand, the emperor was equally curious about the knight clothed in black.

"I wonder whether this be the evil one or not," reflected Charlemagne. "I have heard strange stories in my day of dreadful things happening to late wanderers in these forests. Perhaps I had best find out whether this black knight be not the devil himself."

With that the emperor laid hand upon his sword.

But the black knight was the first to speak. "Who are you, that in full armor wander about by night unbidden in this

forest? Are you some servant of the king, come to discover whether Elbegast be in this wood that you may trap him?"

The emperor held his peace and the strange knight continued, "If you seek Elbegast, whom men call a thief, I tell you you seek in vain. He is swifter than the wind, more cunning than the fox, and knows more of this wilderness than the wolves and deer that inhabit it."

Charlemagne now spoke up. "My ways are my own, and not for you to question. No one but the emperor demands an account of my going or my coming. If my words or my presence here do not suit you, you may draw your sword, for I shall give you what satisfaction you desire." Whereupon Charlemagne drew his sword and stood at guard.

The black knight was not a moment behind him. His own sword flashed in the moonlight, and the two were soon in desperate battle. Blow after blow was delivered by the emperor, and was returned with force by the stranger. At last the stranger struck Charlemagne so fiercely upon the helmet that his own sword fell in pieces, and he stood defenceless before the emperor.

"I do not wish to slay a defenceless man," said Charlemagne to his antagonist, "but you will declare yourself or I shall slay you as you stand."

The black knight replied, "Sir Knight, I am the thief Elbegast. I have lost all my property, and the emperor has driven me out of my country. I find my living by stealing and robbery. Now do with me what you will."

"Ah!" said Charlemagne. "If you are Elbegast, the thief, you can prove your gratitude for my sparing your life by helping me to steal. I have come to rob the emperor, and in this business you can aid me. Come, we will make common work, for I also am a thief—at least, for this night."

"I will not rob the emperor," said Elbegast, "though he has taken my property and banished me from my home. I shall

not hurt my sovereign. I only rob those who have amassed fortunes unjustly."

Charlemagne was secretly delighted with these words, but did not disclose who he was. At length he spoke.

"Do you know then any one whom we can rob this night, whose unholy treasure is rightfully forfeit for the foul means by which it was gained?"

"There is Count Eggerich, who has caused much loss to honest men, and I fear is even now plotting against the life of our emperor himself. Indeed, I was on my way to his house when I met you on the way," said Elbegast.

"Lead on," said Charlemagne, "we will lighten him of his load."

Soon they reached the count's castle, where with great dexterity, Elbegast broke a hole in the wall, crept through, and bade Charlemagne to follow him. They found themselves in the count's room, but not without making a slight noise. The count, who was a light sleeper, said to his wife, "I hear a noise as of some one creeping into the house. Perhaps there are robbers in my castle; I will get up and see."

He rose, lit a torch, and searched about the halls and rooms. But the emperor and Elbegast had already slipped under the bed, where they remained concealed until the search was over. The count then went back to bed, not suspecting that there was any one in hearing.

The countess said to her husband, "My dear husband, there were no robbers in the house, as you have found out. I suspect it is your mind that is disquieted, and that does not allow you to rest. Confess to me that you have some dreadful plan on foot that keeps you from sleeping. Perhaps I can aid you in your designs."

The count replied to his wife, "Since to-morrow is the time appointed for the purpose I have in mind, I do not hesitate to tell you that I have sworn, with twelve of my knights, to

murder the emperor. He has forbidden us making camps on the roads and taking toll of passers-by. Nobody knows of our intention, and I warn you not to mention it on pain of death."

Charlemagne did not miss a word of this conversation. As soon as the count and his wife were asleep he and Elbegast did not hesitate to rifle the house of all its valuables, and the emperor hastened home. He put his horse in the stable, and regained his apartment without his absence being noted.

In the morning he called his council around him and said to them, "I dreamed last night that Count Eggerich, with twelve of his knights, would come to my castle to-day with the intention of murdering me. They hate the peace of the country that I have enforced. Be sure to have a troop of armed men ready to seize them."

About noon Count Eggerich and his knights came riding into the court of the castle. The gates were closed behind them, and armed men surrounded them.

"What does this mean when I have come to see my emperor?" cried the count in alarm, and with apparent indignation.

"What does this mean, when you come to see the emperor?" asked the leader of the armed men, tearing the clothes of the count and his knights aside, and disclosing the weapons they had brought with them.

The count had no answer to make and was led before the emperor, who told him all the details of his shameful plot. The count thought his wife had betrayed his secret, but he had no chance to find out, for within an hour he and all his men were swinging from the limbs of a tree in the courtyard of the castle. As for Elbegast, he was received with honor and forgot his old life of a robber in the forest.

CHAPTER XII

ROLAND BECOMES A KNIGHT

Charlemagne had a sister named Bertha, who was very much in love with a young knight, Milon by name.

Charlemagne knew that Milon was poor and obscure, and said to his sister, "Why do you desire so unworthy a match? Your suitor is poor and unknown, and you would be laughed at in this court where all the knights have many possessions and are well known for their bravery and many deeds of adventure."

To this Bertha had but one answer and that was enough for her and the poor knight, Milon. "My lord and king, my heart chooses Milon. I shall wed no other."

The king stormed at his sister and drove her from his court. "If you will choose Milon, then you choose between him and me, and this court. Go live with him in his poverty and if you find consolation in his love, you are welcome to it. I shall have none of you or him henceforth." And the angry king sent his sister away, but she went gladly, for Milon was waiting outside.

For a number of years Bertha and her knight were very happy. Of course, they were poor and long since forgotten by her brother, the king, and those who waited on him. But Bertha cared very little, for was not Roland, her young son, the image of his father, and was not his father a brave and gentle knight, even if he did not have the favor of the king?

Milon would say to his son, "Roland, you will some day be a knight, for you are nephew to King Charlemagne; you must never forget your mother, who is a gentle lady, nor must you do anything unworthy of a knight." The boy looked very solemn, and promised his father to do as he said.

Now Milon was at one time engaged in rescuing some persons from a dreadful flood. The waters were coming in vast waves and many lives were in danger. The brave Milon spurred his horse into the angry waters, but was overcome in the rush of the flood and was carried beneath. He perished in the knightly act of serving others, and poor Bertha and the young Roland were left alone in the world.

Bertha was at last reduced to great extremity of want and hunger. She had no food, while Charlemagne was feasting with his lords not far away. Roland looked angrily into his mother's wasted face, and thought bitterly of the king's abundance, and of his cruelty toward his sister, the boy's mother.

"I shall go to the king, my uncle, and tell him my mother needs food. I shall not be afraid, for she is a gentle lady, and since my father is gone, I am the only knight she has to defend her."

So saying, Roland marched off to the castle, into the banquet hall, and up to the table where the king was feasting. Without saying a word the boy took a dish of meat from the table and started away with it.

The servants started to stop the lad, but the king, somewhat amused, called out, "Let the lad alone. Such assurance as that betokens courage, and perhaps he needs the meat more than these here, who, by my sword, have eaten enough."

Soon Roland returned, and this time he marched boldly up to where the king was seated and took his cup full of rich wine. This was a little more than Charlemagne had counted on, and so he challenged the lad, saying, "What means this, my son, that you take the king's meat and then the king's wine? Do you not know that this is the royal table?"

Roland, not a bit abashed, replied, "This meat and wine are for my mother, a gentle lady in distress. I am her cupbearer, her page, and her knight. She is in need, and I am

out for her succor. Not having anything at home, I came to find it here."

"And who is your mother?" asked the king.

"My mother is the Lady Bertha, your sister, my lord. My father was the brave knight, Milon, now dead. I am your nephew, Roland, who hopes some day to be a knight in your service." And Roland bowed low with the reverence which his father had taught him was due the king.

The king was greatly moved. He had forgotten his sister entirely. Turning to the young Roland, he ordered him to go to his mother and bring her at once to court. It was not long before Bertha appeared. She and her son knelt before the king, who took her by the hand and raised her from her knees.

"My sister and my nephew," said the king, "my heart reproaches me for the wrongs I have done you both. Bertha shall live in peace and plenty hereafter and Roland shall be a page in my service."

And thus Roland came to the court of Charlemagne.

Another version of the story is that Milon was not really drowned, but that he became reconciled to Charlemagne, and came with Bertha to live at the king's castle and followed him as a knight, and that Roland was the squire of his own father. Either version makes a good story, and one may take his choice.

If we accept the latter story we find Milon and Bertha with Roland, now grown into a fine young squire of fifteen or sixteen years of age, following his father in all his adventures.

Charlemagne heard that the robber knight of the forest of Ardennes had a priceless jewel which was set in his shield. The king called his own knights together, and ordered them to go forth separately, each with his own squire, or page, and find the robber knight. Having overcome the robber in battle, the knight must bring the jewel to the king himself.

A day was set for the return of the knights whether they were successful or not, and the king promised to give each one a patient hearing. The knights set forth, Milon among them, accompanied by Roland, his squire and armor bearer. The forest of Ardennes was searched high and low, each knight hoping to meet the robber knight and win the jewel.

Milon spent many days in a vain search for the knight, when one day, exhausted by a long ride, he dismounted from his horse, removed his heavy armor, and lay down under a tree. Soon he was fast asleep with Roland keeping watch by his side. It came into Roland's mind that he might win renown himself, if he could ever meet the robber knight alone. Carefully he put on his father's armor, seized his sword, sprang on his horse, and rode into the forest in search of adventures. He had not gone very far when he saw a gigantic horseman approaching, and by the glittering stone set in his shield he recognized the robber of which all the knights were in quest.

Up to this time the robber had been invincible. Roland called out to him, "Halt, Sir Knight, and yield thee to my arms, or else prepare to meet my charge."

The robber knight laughed in scorn, lowered his visor, and placed his lance at rest. Roland prepared for the charge, and put spurs to his horse. Both steeds sprang forward and the men came together in the forest with a great noise. For the first time in his life the robber knight was unhorsed and fell to the ground.

In a great rage the knight sprang up and drew his sword. Roland quickly dismounted and met his advance. For a long hour they fought, blows resounding on the armor, until both combatants were nearly exhausted. By a gallant stroke the sword of Roland pierced the joints of the robber's armor and the keen blade entered his bosom.

In a short while the robber was dead, and Roland, wrenching the jewel from the shield, concealed it in his breast. Riding back to his father, who was still asleep, Roland took off

his armor, and removed all dust, and blood, and other signs of conflict. When the knight awoke he had no idea his son had been engaged in a deadly combat.

Resuming the quest Milon soon came upon the dead body of the knight. "Ah! someone has been ahead of me, and slain the robber, and taken his jewel. I shall now have to report to the king that while I slept another was fighting his enemies," said he.

Sadly Milon rode back to the court, and waited for the other knights to return, wondering which one had brought back the shining jewel. One by one they came in, but judging by their downcast looks none of them was victorious.

The day came for Charlemagne to receive them. Seated on his throne he bade the knights enter and relate their adventures. One after another approached him, and all told him of how they had scoured the forest, and had at last found the robber knight slain and the jewel gone, but no one knew who the victorious knight was.

Milon came last of all. His brow was lowered, and he hesitated in his step. Behind him came Roland, bearing a shield in the center of which shone the radiant jewel. Milon knew nothing of this, for Roland had kept his secret.

Milon began his story, saying that he had also found the dead giant, and the jewel gone, but had no idea who the knight was that had slain the robber.

The king laughed and said, "Sir Milon, look behind you and behold the jewel for which you have been seeking."

Looking around, to his astonishment he saw Roland bearing his shield, and the blazing stone in the center.

Roland now told his story, at which all were amazed, and some envious. The king, however, was delighted, praised his nephew for his skill and bravery, and made him a knight. Roland became one of the most famous of the paladins that were attached to the service of Charlemagne.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEATH OF ROLAND

Many years ago very few people could read or write or knew anything about books. What books the world had were written by hand with infinite patience and care, for the art of printing was not known until about fifty years before America was discovered. In fact, it is said that Charlemagne himself, the great king of France, though he had learned to read, could never write very well. He tried hard to learn to write and even took the tablets to bed with him that he might practice when he awoke, but he made small progress.

In those days people were accustomed to learn the stories of their heroes from wandering minstrels, who went about from place to place entertaining the great barons in their castles, and the people in the market-place, reciting stories of past times. Of course, these stories finally wandered far from the truth, but doubtless in the beginning were founded upon fact.

In this way a great many of the traditions of the ancient world have come down to us, though we cannot vouch for the truth of many of them. One of these traditions is called "The Song of Roland." The wandering minstrels invented part of it and doubtless added deeds and incidents that they knew would please the French people. Some parts of the story we know are not true, but in all probability much of it is. We have already learned the story of how Roland became a knight; we are now to learn how he came to die.

Marsil was king of the Saracens and was holding his court in the groves of Saragossa. One day he said to those around him, "Charlemagne has been in Spain for seven long years and has wrought much harm to my people. I hear he is

two hundred years old and is still valiant and terrible as a warrior. What shall we do to rid us of his presence?"

One of his counselors, who was very shrewd, replied, "I advise, my master, that you send a message to this Christian king, that you offer him large sums of money and send him many curious ornaments, as well as bears and laces and greyhounds; also send him seven hundred camels, a thousand hawks, and many mules laden with gold and silver. But above all, promise him that you will become a Christian and be baptized in the name of his God, if he will withdraw his army from Spain."

Marsil decided that this was good advice. He sent ten Arab lords, each one on a snow-white mule, bearing the most expensive gifts to Charlemagne. When they came to the town where the king was, they found him surrounded by many lords of France, among them his beloved nephew, Roland, who was the bravest of all the French knights. There were also the Count Oliver, the dear friend of Roland, and Turpin, the archbishop. Among his guard there was a traitor named Ganelon, who had married Roland's mother and who bitterly hated his stepson.

After the Saracen lords had delivered their gifts, and asked for peace and a withdrawal of the French army from Spain, Charlemagne turned to his counselors and asked for advice. His lords agreed with one voice that the heathen king should not be trusted and that he did not want peace. Ganelon was the only one who advised otherwise.

Charlemagne, however, listened to Ganelon, who told him that he knew that Marsil was a heathen but that he could be trusted; that he really wanted friendship and that he would become a Christian if Charlemagne so desired. He advised him to accept the proffers of friendship and to send a French hostage in token of faith.

Ganelon said to the king, "I would that you would send Roland and Oliver and the archbishop, Turpin, who are

doubtless eager to be sent as hostages, for that would please Marsil."

The three followers of the king were eager to go, not suspecting the treachery of Ganelon, but Charlemagne was not willing to part with any of them. Turning to Ganelon, he said, "No, I shall send none of them. You shall be the hostage."

When Ganelon arrived at the court of Marsil he was received with every demonstration of regard. Marsil said to him, "It is strange that Charlemagne, so old, desires war. I should think that with his age and possessions he would lay aside the business of war and take himself to more peaceful pursuits."

To this the traitor Ganelon replied, "Charlemagne will not cease from war as long as Roland breathes. He and Oliver and Turpin, three of his most valiant paladins, ever persuade him to arms."

He then told Marsil that Roland was a most valiant knight and that he would command the rear-guard of the French as they marched over the mountains back into France from their last incursion. He advised Marsil to send an army in pursuit, in spite of his promise of peace. After Charlemagne and the main body had gotten safely through the pass of Roncesvalles, it would be easy for the Saracens to fall upon the rear-guard and there destroy them. Thus Ganelon was a traitor to the king and plotted the destruction of his own countrymen.

Charlemagne accepted the terms of peace, believing that the Saracens were sincere, and broke up his camp in Spain. He took with him much of the booty he had plundered and ordered the trumpets to sound for the homeward march. The great host crossed the fertile plains, and rode into the mountain pass, leaving the three valiant paladins with twenty thousand men to guard the rear.

Charlemagne rode forward with his army, leaving Roland, Oliver and Turpin behind, though he knew they were

in peril if Marsil should prove false. In fact he had been warned in a dream not to trust the Saracens and had wished to leave a larger guard with his three paladins, but Roland had said to him, "No, my lord, twenty thousand is enough. We are more than a match for our enemies."

Soon the tramp of the French army died away in the distance and Roland, Oliver and Turpin were left in the pass with twenty thousand men. Then Roland heard the noise of the mighty host advancing from the Spanish side of the mountain. Oliver sprang to a high point and to his great dismay saw the army of the Saracens. Their helmets were flaming with inlaid gold, their spears were streaming with pennants. He could not count the mighty mass that was coming upon the little army. Marsil had proved false, and had laid an ambush in the pass of Roncesvalles.

Oliver ran to Roland and cried, "Marsil has broken his word and the Saracens are upon us. Sound your ivory horn that the king may hear the blast and send back a part of his army to our rescue."

Now, this horn of Roland's had a very magic power. Whenever Roland blew it, it could be heard many leagues away and he had often used it to call assistance. But now he was too proud to call for aid.

He sat upon his horse and drew his golden hilted sword that he had named Durinda, and calmly awaited the onset of the Saracens without fear of the result.

Again his friends besought him to blow his ivory horn, but again he refused, saying to those around him, "I shall not sound my ivory horn for it never shall be spoken of me that I blew a blast to call aid against a heathen enemy."

The archbishop sat upon a rock where he could see his army and absolve them from their sins. The twenty thousand soldiers knelt upon the ground and the brave archbishop told each man that he must fight his best against the foe as a penance for his sins.

The cry of the French was "Montjoie," which for long had been the battle cry of France. The fight raged very fiercely. It is said that Roland and Oliver and the archbishop killed a thousand men. So great was the slaughter that the Saracens turned and fled in dismay.

When Marsil heard of the battle raging so terribly and the slaughter of his men he led out even a greater army against Roland and his soldiers. Still Roland refused to let Charlemagne know that he was in danger. So terrible was the slaughter that only three hundred of the French were left alive. Another onset of the Saracens and only sixty were alive.

At last Roland agreed to sound his horn, which he placed at his lips and blew a mighty blast. The sound rolled around the mountain peaks and was heard for thirty miles away. The king in his tent heard the sound and cried, "The horn of Roland, blown only in the time of need! Our men battle and are in danger. Let us go to them at once."

Ganelon, the traitor, who had been allowed to return from the camp of the Saracens, was standing near the king, and when he heard the far notes of the horn sounding on the evening air the second time, and even the third time, he tried to persuade Charlemagne that there was no danger. But Charlemagne was deceived no longer. He knew then that Roland needed him. Ordering Ganelon to be bound and guarded, he called his men and flew at once to the rescue.

But Ganelon's treason had succeeded. Help came too late to Roland and Oliver and Turpin, for of the sixty followers that were left, now only three remained and they were the three brave men whose story we are telling. Oliver was the first to die. Roland came to him quickly and found him blinded by blood and fainting with exhaustion. Soon he clasped his friend's hand and passed away while the Saracens were making their assault.

Archbishop Turpin was the next to die, and then came Roland's turn last of all, falling in the midst of a pile of slain.

A Saracen discovered him and attempted to take away his sword, Durinda, with the hilt of gold and jewels. Roland revived for a moment and struck the heathen on the hand with his magic horn. The horn was broken and the gems and gold that ornamented it were scattered on the ground.

Fearing lest this sword that was given him long since by an angel should fall into heathen hands, Roland, with his dying grasp, struck it on a rock, but the magic sword would not break nor would its keen edge be bent and dulled. Roland fell back exhausted upon the ground with his sword and horn beside him. When Charlemagne arrived all his host were slain and his three paladins were cold in death.

The king took a dreadful vengeance on the Saracens, pursuing them back to Spain and slaying them to the last man. A sad procession, bearing the bodies of Roland and Oliver and Turpin, moved slowly back to France, where they were received with great lamentations by all the people. The traitor Ganelon was bound between four horses and pulled apart by them as they ran across a field.

This is the tradition of the death of the brave Roland as we have it from those who told it in the olden days.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW NORMANDY CAME BY ITS NAME

The Vikings were the fierce sea-kings and pirates of Norway. Instead of staying peaceably at home, as they should, they swarmed out of their own land and plundered every seacoast town in Europe. The savage men of the North built sturdy boats, with long sharp prows, and stout sails, manned them with rowers and sailors, and filled them with bloodthirsty men. Then with wild songs they sailed into the storm, far out into the seas of darkness, across to Iceland, and even to the shores of America, plundering and fighting, a scourge and a terror to all lands.

Along the coasts, and up the rivers they sailed. When near a village they uttered their fierce war cries and leaped into the surf, swords in hand. The people fled in dismay to the swamps and hills. The pirates then burned the houses, killed what people they could find, destroyed the crops and carried off the cattle. Wherever the Northmen passed, only dead bodies, smoking ruins, and wasted lands remained, and wolves prowled unhindered in search of human food.

At one time a famous Norse pirate named Hastings ravaged the coast of Italy. He had heard of Rome as a rich and magnificent city, but had only a dim idea of where it was or what it was like. His wild rowers landed near Lucca, and thought they were at Rome so wonderful appeared this beautiful city.

Not able to storm the walls, Hastings decided to capture the city by stratagem. The people of Lucca were celebrating Christmas, but had a vague fear of the strange vessels, filled with fierce-looking men, which were lying out in their harbor. Word was sent to the authorities that the fleet had no hostile intent, all that the sailors wanted was decent

burial for their chief, who had just died. After the burial they would sail away, and would do no harm to the people.

Glad to be rid of them so easily, and willing to give Christian burial to a savage chieftain, the people opened the gates of the city to admit the solemn procession of the strangers from the ships. A long coffin, draped in black cloth, was carried on the backs of a dozen men. Behind them marched a large body of stalwart Northmen apparently bowed in grief. The people of Lucca stood aside to let the procession pass. With slow steps the procession moved along, chanting the death songs of Norway, until the church was reached, and the coffin placed in front of the altar. The priests stood ready to take their part in the ceremony. The solemn warriors were arranged in order and the people crowded the church and the court outside. The chant was about to begin, and all was still for a moment.

To the consternation of the people and to the horror of the priests, the supposed corpse sprang out of his coffin, sword in hand, and uttered the fierce war cry of the Northmen. With one blow he crushed the skull of the priest who stood, book in hand, ready to bury him, and turned upon the others. The seeming mourners threw aside their cloaks, drew their swords, and a carnival of death began in the sacred edifice.

Rushing from the church the freebooters lost no time in looting the town of its treasures of gold and silver, and did not hesitate to cut down all who stood in their way. Before the people could recover from their terror and surprise the pirates had escaped to their ship carrying with them valuable booty and many women and maidens to become slaves in far-off Norway.

Other brave and daring chieftains led the Vikings on their forages. The most famous was called Rollo, the Walker, because he was such a giant that no horse could bear his weight. Still on foot he was capable of deeds of endurance that few could equal on horseback.

Rollo collected seven hundred ships from Norway, bound for the fair land of the Franks. He had his eye on Paris, and the beautiful country between that city and the sea. His fleet reached the mouth of the Seine and started up the river. On all sides the peasants fled as they saw the terrible array of ships, filled with grim warriors with long beards and fierce eyes, and heard their terrifying war cries.

"The Vikings! The Norsemen! They are on their way to Rouen and Paris!" was the message passed up the river by swift runners who bore the news of coming disaster.

The bishop of Rouen heard the news with dismay. Calling his chief men together, he said to them, "Let us open the gates of Rouen to these Vikings, otherwise they will batter down our feeble walls and enter anyhow. I have heard that with all his fierceness Rollo is capable of a kind deed."

This advice seemed good. In fact, there was nothing else to do. A body of citizens went humbly to Rollo's camp, which had been made before Rouen, and said to him, "We are at your mercy, and surrender without resistance. Spare our lives and our town. Why destroy that which is now yours?"

Rollo was a good-natured giant, after all, and replied, "I shall harm nothing in your city, but be sure you do no violence to my men. I am not responsible for them if there is treachery."

The gates of Rouen were opened and the Vikings marched in. It was a beautiful city, the like of which was not in all Norway. The Northmen rested and feasted, and by Rollo's orders treated the people kindly. "Some of these days I shall come here to abide," remarked the great leader, as he felt the soft air and thought of the wild winters of his own Norway. And so it was, as we shall see.

Paris was up the river Seine and Rollo did not forget that that city was his object. After a short stay in Rouen he ordered his men into the boats, and again the river resounded

with the cries of the sea kings, and again the peasants along the banks fled from the oncoming ships.

Count Eudes of Paris was warned of his danger. Long before the Vikings had reached Paris two strong walls were built around the city, which, of course, was much smaller than it is at the present day.

Rollo was surprised and angered at the opposition he met. He was accustomed to little else than fleeing men and an open village. He thundered at the gates of the town, "Open for Rollo and his men, or by the gods of Norway you shall all be put to the sword." The only answer he received was a defiant cry from within the city and a shower of heavy stones from the walls.

"Open these gates for the men of Norway, or I shall feed you to the wolves." This time the answer was a quantity of boiling oil and pitch, which, when it fell, made his men howl with pain and rage.

Rollo retired to think it over. Being sea rovers and accustomed to the sword only, they were not prepared with battering rams and scaling ladders and armor, which were necessary in besieging a town. The only thing he could think of was a tower which he proposed to roll up to the walls and so fight on a level with the Parisians.

Accordingly, in a few days, the tower was made. On top was a large platform for holding soldiers. It was placed on high wheels and the men dragged it close to the walls. The only trouble was that the platform did not hold enough soldiers, and those who were on it were soon killed by the archers from the walls. Those who tried to climb the tower were overcome by showers of stones, or shot down by the arrows of the defenders of the city.

Rollo withdrew his tower and sat down to a regular siege of Paris. "If I cannot drive them out, I shall starve them out," said he, and ordered his men to surround the city and see that no one went out or came in. For thirteen months the siege

continued, until the Parisians were sorely in need of food. The people were almost starving and many of them clamored for the city to surrender.

"Never!" declared Count Eudes, the brave defender. "I shall go through the Norman lines this very night and get help. Never shall it be said that I surrendered to the barbarians of the North."

The night was dark and stormy. A blinding rain had put out all the fires and the sentries had found shelter where they could. The Norman camp was dark and still and no noise was heard but the wind and the beating of the rain. The count knew every road around Paris and every by-path through the woods. Slipping through the gates, he wound his way among the tents of his foe and in a short while was mounted on a horse and galloping for assistance.

He finally reached the king of France and told him the state of siege that Paris was in. It did not take long for the king to assemble an army and start on his way to repel the enemies of his kingdom. It had not occurred to him before that the count needed his aid. In less than a week after Count Eudes had reached the king, an army of Franks was before Paris.

Rollo saw them coming and counted his men. They were few in number and weakened by sickness and weariness of waiting. They were the kind that grew hardy when battling with stormy seas, but grew weak when confined long to camp or land. So Rollo retired with his Northmen to Burgundy, where we lose sight of him for twenty-five years. He probably went to Norway and continued his career of plundering and devastation. At any rate, the Franks thought they were free of the Northmen for all time.

But in this they were mistaken. The years passed and the Vikings were as busy as ever disturbing the peace of the coast towns and venturing farther and farther up the rivers into the interior of Europe. At last Rollo appeared again, this time a little older, but still as warlike and fierce as ever. He had not

forgotten Paris, nor Rouen, nor the fair land of the Franks. Oftentimes amid the storms of the sea, and the snow of the Norway winters, he thought of the vineyards of France and the fertile fields along the banks of the Seine.

Rollo had many ships filled as before with wild soldiers, who sang the songs of conquest as they came down the coast. At last they entered the Seine, passed Rouen, and were again on their way to Paris, plundering the towns and killing the people. By this time Charles the Simple was king of France. He was called Simple because he did not have much sense, but he had enough to know how to deal with those rude men who were over-running France.

Charles sent a message to Rollo proposing that they have a talk about peace. "There is enough land here for us all. Why quarrel over its division?" was the message to the bold Viking. Rollo agreed to the conference, and so the king and the giant Northman met to talk it over. The king and his men were on one side of a little stream, while Rollo, surrounded by his Viking chiefs, stood on the other side. The king said, "What is it you desire that you come destroying our town and terrifying our people?"

The Viking answered, "Let me and my Northmen live in Rouen and in the land of the Franks. Give us these fertile fields and we will be your vassals and become your subjects. We wish to have this part of France as the land of the Northmen."

The king agreed, for there was not much else to do. Rollo was to have ten thousand square miles of territory for his domain, with Rouen as his capital. The king agreed that his daughter should be given to the Viking as his wife, and that henceforth Rollo should acknowledge Charles as his sovereign.

Rollo received the territory from Charles with great ceremony. It was in due feudal form so far as the monarch was

concerned, and Rollo swore to attend his lord in wars and to keep the peace at home.

Nothing remained to be done to complete the transfer of land except the ancient ceremony by which the vassal was to kneel and kiss the king's foot. Rollo was very indignant. "Never have I bowed the knee to living man, much less will I kiss the foot of such a one as Charles the Simple!" and he refused to do the act of homage.

The bishop of Rouen explained to him that it was only a form and that it should be done to make the transfer binding. Rollo then called one of his big soldiers to him and said, "You take my place and kiss the king's foot, and mind you do it with a will." The man obeyed, but when he knelt to kiss the king's foot, he seized it with both hands and lifted it so vigorously that the king was sent sprawling backwards on the ground, amid the laughter of the Northmen, who thought it was a great joke. Rollo himself laughed until his sides shook. "I hope your majesty is satisfied," said he.

The discomfited king arose with what dignity he could assume, and proclaimed Rollo his vassal and his son-in-law. He had sacrificed his dignity, but the Northmen had sworn peace, and that was what the king most desired.

The new settlers soon showed their intention of laying aside their barbarian customs and taking on the civilization of the Franks. Led by Rollo, they rebuilt the churches and monasteries and restored the towns, and accepted the Christian faith. The name of Northman was no longer a terror, but was softened to Norman, and the land was called Normandy.

Rollo, the pirate, founded a long line of Norman chiefs or rulers, who were called the Dukes of Normandy. Under their rule their territory became one of the most civilized and prosperous portions of France. Six generations later one of their dukes crossed the English channel and conquered the territory of England, and to this day his descendants are kings and queens in Europe.

CHAPTER XV

OLAF, THE BOY VIKING OF NORWAY

Olaf was only thirteen years old when his father, the king of one of the small countries of Norway, was put to death by the queen of Sweden with cruel tortures. When Olaf heard of how his father had been treated he vowed a great oath against Sweden to avenge his father's death.

His mother, Queen Aasta, fitted out a great dragon-ship, or war vessel, for her young son, and manned it with the toughest and hardiest warriors and sailors in all Norway. Olaf himself, though only thirteen, was large and fearless and his men had great respect for him, calling him Olaf, the King, though he had no land to rule over. But he was of Viking blood, the sea was his home and war was his most loved occupation.

With fire and sword the Boy Viking and his sea rovers ravaged the coasts of Sweden. Nothing could stay their hand. With every burned building and every slain man Olaf would cry out, "Vengeance for Harold! the death of my father is atoned for in blood!" And his men would raise their fierce war cries until the affrighted villagers fled far inland.

At last they came to Sigtun, which was the old name for Stockholm. Through the marshes and along the winding channels of the narrow straits their ships had made their way, until they anchored by the very gates of the town. Clambering over the walls, the pirates swarmed into Sigtun, and soon were holding high carnival in the halls of the Swedes.

But the king of Sweden was not idle all this time. His fleet was in fast pursuit of the marauders. While Olaf and his men were making merry in Sigtun a swift runner came bearing the news of approaching disaster.

"The ships of Sweden are upon us! The sea straits are already filled with their long prows. The way out is blocked, and they are a hundred to one!" was the startling cry.

Olaf laughed disdainfully. "Does he think to catch the sea-wolves of Norway in a trap? We are not so easily caught as he thinks. To your ships, ye Vikings, and let us show our teeth to the Swedish hounds!"

The men hurried to their ship and put out over the narrow strait, but they were too late. Across the passage the king of Sweden had stretched great chains and no ship could pass.

"I have trapped the wolves that are devouring our land," said he gleefully, when he saw the Norwegian ships coming.

Olaf saw the obstruction and shook his fist at the Swedish fleet. "You think I am caught, do you?" he cried. "There are more ways than one for Olaf to take his wolves out of a trap."

Turning to his old helmsman he said, "Can we cut that chain and fight our way through?"

The old helmsman shook his head and replied, "You could not cut that chain with our prows, and if you did there are many ships to our one."

"Then we will bite our way across the Swedish fen," said the young king. "Ho, ye sea-wolves of Norway, steer for the marsh and let the Swedish hounds think we are run aground!"

All night long Olaf and his men worked in the mud cutting a way through the marsh to the open sea. By daylight the canal was ready and the waters of the sea rushed in to fill it.

"Lift your anchors and unship the rudders and hoist the sails. All hands to the oars, and pull for the open sea and

Norway!" were the lusty orders of the boy pirate. Up came the anchors and the rudders were unshipped to prevent their scraping the bottom of the marsh. A breeze from behind filled the sails and the rowers bent to their work.

With a great rush the tide and the wind carried them on to the open sea, to the dismay of the Swedish king, who thought it was a miracle, and that some saint was lifting the Norwegian ships over the marsh.

And so Olaf escaped from the trap of his pursuers and to this day the Viking's canal is still shown to those who are interested in stories of the old days.

After awhile word came from England that King Ethelred, the Unready, was calling for help to fight the Danes that were overrunning his country. This suited Olaf and his men, for they were ever ready for war and adventure. Therefore it was not long before his ships sailed up the Thames and came near to London town, where the Danes had already appeared and where the people were already in great distress.

King Ethelred heard the war horns of the pirates and greeted their dragon-ships with great joy. "You come in good time, King Olaf," said he, "for the Danes have built a great fort of earth and timber at Southwark, and have taken possession of London Bridge, so that we may neither pass up nor down the river, nor cross over to attack them."

"Why, then, we must pull down London Bridge, so that they shall all perish by our hands," replied the Boy Viking with great enthusiasm.

"Impossible!" replied Ethelred. "The Danes swarm upon it and will crush any boat that comes near. There is no force here strong enough for such a feat."

But Olaf was not unready like the weak king, and said to him, "Place your ships by the side of mine and you shall yet see London Bridge fallen down."

The old bridge was not the great structure of the present day, but a wooden bridge, wide enough for two wagons to pass and supported on piles driven into the river bed. On the bridge the Danes had fortified themselves, thinking they were secure against attack.

Olaf ordered great coverings like roofs to be made for the decks of his ships. For this purpose he tore down houses, and used the wood. Under these coverings or roofs he knew his men could work and fight, and still be protected from the stones and arrows of the Danes on the bridge above them.

When all was ready he gave out the order, "Lower all sails and take out the oars, and all hands pull for the bridge."

The Danes were greatly astonished when they saw those floating houses on the water, from the roofs of which their stones rolled into the river, and which their arrows and spears could not pierce. When the ships came to the bridge they anchored. The Danes hurled great stones upon them, and tried to break through the covering, but their efforts were in vain. Olaf and his men were safe under the stout wood of the English forests.

"Now for the cables! Wrap them around the piles, over and over, and tie them well," were the orders that were issued to the men.

In spite of the thunder of rolling stones, and the noise of spears striking the roof, and the cries of the Danes, the sturdy sailors of Norway wrapped their strong cables twice around the piles of the bridge. One by one they were fastened to the ships, the Danes above not knowing what was going on.

Then Olaf shouted his orders above the noise of the stones and the spears, "Man the oars, and pull with all your might! Down stream and steady all! Let the cable out and pull with a mighty tug!"

With a great shout the rowers cast loose their ships from the bridge, dragging the cable ends with them, leaving

the other ends tied to the wooden pilings. The ships gathered speed as the rowers bent their mighty arms; the Danes uttered a great cry as they saw their impending fate; the cables stretched, tugged, and with a mighty lurch the piles gave way and London Bridge came tumbling down.

The Danes upon the bridge fell into the water, and many were drowned in their heavy armor. Some few fled into Southwark where they were easily captured. There was great rejoicing by the people, and who knows but that the song of "London Bridge is fallen down" may have been first sung upon the day when Olaf showed Ethelred how to outwit an enemy?

Again Olaf and his men sailed away in quest of adventure. Along the French coast they spread consternation and created havoc. Towns were destroyed, spoils were gathered, ships were sunk, until at last the sea rovers lay at anchor in the harbor of Bordeaux, waiting for a fair wind to take them to the land of Jerusalem.

One day Olaf lay asleep in his cabin. Suddenly he dreamt a wondrous dream, in which a great figure of a man with a terrible countenance appeared before him. The vision spoke to him as follows:

"King Olaf, thou art too brave and too noble for the deeds of a pirate. Thy country of Norway needs thee now more than the land of Jerusalem. Son of Harold, turn again to thy home and to thy mother, for thou shalt be crowned king of all Norway."

The vision was gone and Olaf awoke. He called his old friend, the helmsman, and told him of the vision and described the man who had appeared to him.

"It is thine own uncle, whom my eyes have beheld in life," said the old sailor. "I take it as an omen that Norway stands in need of Olaf, and that our ships should be turned homeward."

"Then homeward we go, and the kingdom of Norway shall be mine," shouted the young pirate, for he was only sixteen or seventeen years old at the time, and being a king was very much to his liking.

Now the king of all Norway, Earl Eric, had just died. For thirteen years he had held the kingdom away from the rightful heir, and so when his son Hakon came to rule in his stead, there were many who declared that the rule of the usurpers should be at an end. Olaf had been warned in a vision, and was on his way to claim a throne that could just as well be his as Hakon's.

The Boy Viking's dragon ships came in sight of the shores of Norway. A bold challenge was sent to Hakon to make good his claim to the throne, for Olaf was come to demand it of him. Hakon made haste to meet his antagonist, for he also was young, and would like to be king.

Hakon had one warship and Olaf now had only two of all the fleet that once had sailed with him. But those two had been tried by storm and battle, and the men on them were sea-worn veterans.

"It is an easy task to trick such a sailor as Hakon. We will turn him over in the sea," said Olaf with a laugh.

Thereupon he ordered a stout cable to be laid between the two ships, each end attached to a capstan. The ships then stood on either side of the strait through which Hakon's one ship must pass, the cable lying on the bottom across the strait and between the ships. All war gear was carefully removed and the men went below so that the vessels of Olaf looked like two harmless merchantmen lying quietly at anchor.

On came Hakon's one warship seeking for the foe. The banners were flying, the horns were sounding, and Hakon himself was on deck. The rowers pulled between the harmless looking merchant ships, on their way out to the open sea, where they supposed Olaf was lying in wait.

There was a quick stir on the supposed merchant vessels. The capstans began to revolve rapidly; there was a creaking of chains and a rush in the water. Suddenly the ship of Hakon stopped amid stream and one end began slowly to rise out of the water caught by the ever-tightening chain. Higher and higher rose the stern of the doomed boat, until her prow plunged into the water and she sank to the bottom of the strait. Olaf and his men laughed loud and long at the overthrow of their enemy.

King Olaf took all the men he could out of the water, Hakon among them, and made them prisoners. The next day he ordered Hakon to be brought before him.

The two were of the same age. Hakon was fair and well mannered, while Olaf was darkened by exposure and rough with the wild life of piracy.

"I am thy prisoner," said Hakon. "Do with me what thou wilt. One can die bravely as he has lived. Speak thy will and let me know it quickly."

But Olaf had no heart to slay his captive. Looking at him intently he replied, "Earl Hakon, I intend thee no harm. Do thou but kneel and confess me king of Norway and thou shalt be free."

The young earl bowed low and said, "Thou art King Olaf indeed, and henceforth I am thy vassal."

And so Hakon took the oath of allegiance, and departed to his uncle, King Canute, of England. Olaf sailed into Norway and in less than a year's time was crowned king of all that country. He turned out to be so wise and able a ruler and did so much good for his people that in after years they made him a saint, and the shrine of Saint Olaf is still to be seen in the cathedral of the old town where the Boy Viking was crowned king.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CID WINS HIS NAME

Rodrigo Diaz was born of a good family in Spain; in fact, his family was almost as good as that of King Ferando himself. Rodrigo's father was named Diego, but at the time our story begins he was an old man, weak and infirm of body, but still very sensitive about his honor.

It happened that Diego fell into a dispute with Gomez, a powerful warrior, who, in a moment of anger, struck Diego in the face. The old courtier was too feeble to resent the insult and retired to his home to brood in solitude over the offence which had been paid him.

Rodrigo was a mere boy at the time and by no means a match for Gomez, but he said to his father, "I shall resent the insult to my house, for on me alone can you depend for vengeance. Give me your sword and I shall ask nothing but a fair field and the justice of heaven."

Saying this, he took his father's sword and found Gomez, whom he challenged to mortal combat. Gomez looked at the youth and replied to his challenge, "I do not fight with boys, but since you wish to meet me I shall on the morrow break a lance with you."

When the day came for the battle so careless was Gomez and so valiant was Rodrigo that the youth's lance passed through the warrior's body, killing him outright and wiping out the insult done to his father.

When Diego heard of the vow of his son and how his house had been avenged of the insult, he told his son to sit at the head of the table, which was a sign that he was then the head of the house. Shortly after this the old man died, and Rodrigo really did become the head of the house.

Gomez had a daughter named Ximena. She went to King Ferando and threw herself at his feet, demanding justice. Seeing Rodrigo among the courtiers she denounced him for slaying her father and bade him take her life also as she had no wish to survive her parent.

Several times this appeal was repeated, only to be refused by the king. Each time she noticed with increased favor the comeliness of Rodrigo and each time he noticed the beauty of the daughter of the man he had killed. The last time she came she threw herself before the king and with downcast eyes said, "My lord, the king, I now forego my thoughts of vengeance on Rodrigo, for he did right to avenge the insult upon his father. My heart has changed towards him and I now beg that you will give him to me in marriage."

The king had suspected for some time that Rodrigo and Ximena had fallen in love with each other. Sending for Rodrigo, he told him of the strange request of the fair young woman. Rodrigo accepted her on the spot and their marriage was celebrated with much pomp and ceremony.

Rodrigo took his wife home and gave her to his mother to care for. After this he bade her good-bye, saying, "I am going to win five battles and then I shall consider myself worthy of your love." And then he asked the king to allow him to make a pious pilgrimage to Compostella. He set out with a band of twenty knights. The king had given him land and presents at the time of his wedding, so that now he was quite rich and traveled in great state. Nevertheless, he was always mindful of the needs of others and distributed much charity on his way.

The story goes, as he traveled along the highway, he saw a leper who had fallen into a quagmire and who cried out, "Help me, my lords and knights, or I will perish in this bog. I am a poor leper and I am sore in need."

The knights halted and looked at the awful object in the mire by the road. All of them spurred their horses to ride

away, but Rodrigo remained still. He alighted from his horse and helped the leper out of the quagmire and to the surprise and alarm of his knights put him on his horse and carried him to the inn. At this the knights were still more alarmed and surprised.

At the evening meal the knights, with frowns, kept away from the sick man, but Rodrigo shared his dish with him. He even did more; he ordered beds to be prepared for the company and in his own chamber ordered a bed to be made ready for himself and the leper. After bathing the leper, he shared with him his best linen and put him carefully to bed and lay down by him and was glad to notice that the sick man dropped into a comfortable sleep.

About midnight he awoke and reached out his hand to find his companion, but the bed was empty. Somewhat alarmed, he arose and called for a light and looked everywhere in the room to find the leper, but nowhere could he be found and the party again retired to their sleep. Shortly afterwards, while Rodrigo was still awake wondering at the strange occurrence, he saw standing before him an angel in white garments and it said to him, "Art thou awake or asleep, Rodrigo?"

The knight answered, "I do not sleep. But who art thou that bringest such brightness and so sweet an odor?"

The angel answered, "I am St. Lazarus. I was the leper to whom thou didst so much good, and because thou didst this for me and for His sake thou shalt gain honor in every way. Thou shalt be feared by thy enemies, thou shalt die an honorable death and thy name shall be immortal."

The angel disappeared and Rodrigo fell upon his knees and prayed for the remainder of the night. The next day he went on his pilgrimage, distributing alms and kind words on the way.

After awhile King Ferando died and Don Sancho reigned in his stead. Rodrigo was ever a faithful knight, never

failing in bravery and in justice or in alms-giving to the poor and needy. By this time he had many followers, and the people of Spain looked upon him as their most valiant leader. In many battles with the Moors he took much booty and for himself accumulated great riches and power.

So just was he that he quarreled with Don Sancho, his king, over some matter of injustice, which made the king banish him from his kingdom for a while. Rodrigo withdrew with his followers, surrendered all his possessions to the king and swore that he would never trim his beard for the rest of his life. After awhile, Don Sancho realized the mistake he had made and called him back from his exile and restored him to power.

To show the influence he had over his knights the story of Martin Pelaez, the Coward, is told. When he was engaged in the siege of Valencia, Martin Pelaez came to him and joined his band. He was a big, strong fellow, with a warlike appearance, but Rodrigo knew him to be a coward and a braggart and was not much pleased at his coming. Still, he thought he could make a good knight of him and let him stay.

Every day parties were sent out to fight the Moors who came forth from Valencia. One day Pelaez, who belonged to one of these parties, seeing all the knights fighting very hard and thinking that no one would notice him, ran away and hid until Rodrigo and his men came back to dinner.

Now it was the custom at meals, that Rodrigo, being the chief, should eat alone at the high table. At the next table sat the bravest and most renowned knights, while at the third table and still lower were placed those knights who had won no fame in arms. On the day of this adventure Pelaez having washed his hands, boldly walked in and was about to take his seat among the brave knights at the second table.

Rodrigo, however, had seen him run away, and so he took him by the hand and led him to his own table, saying,

"You are not fit to sit with these men, but I will have you sit with me."

Pelaez was so much astonished that he could make no reply, but not knowing that Rodrigo had detected his cowardice he held his head very high and sat at meat with his leader.

The next day there was another battle in which Rodrigo watched Pelaez to see if the lesson had had any effect. In the midst of the fight, however, the poor coward turned and ran home so as to hide himself again. This did not escape the eye of Rodrigo, though he did not show that he had noticed it.

At the afternoon meal Rodrigo took Pelaez by the hand and led him up to his own table, saying to him, "My friend, your valor is so great you deserve to eat with me out of the same dish." Then turning to the knights he spoke in praise of Pelaez, though for the life of them they could not tell wherein he had been so brave or what he had done.

Pelaez listened, but was finally much ashamed of himself. He thought he saw through the motives of his leader and said to himself in an undertone, "The next time I shall be worthy of this."

The next day a great encounter took place and, strange to say, Martin Pelaez was in the very front ranks of the knights, fighting with so much skill and bravery that his companions looked upon him with wonder and said to themselves, "Now we see why he deserves such praise from our master."

He killed many Moors with his own hands, and those who escaped reported that Rodrigo had engaged the devil to fight for him, for they never beheld such terrible features or heard so awful a voice or felt so weighty a sword as those of the one they called Pelaez.

At the evening meal Rodrigo took no notice of him, and Pelaez quietly walked in and sat down at the last table, but

the valorous knights arose as one and called out, "Here is your place, Martin Pelaez; sit here with those who best defend the honor of Spain." From that time forth Martin Pelaez was one of the bravest knights in Spain and one of the best friends Rodrigo had.

After a long siege, Valencia fell into the hands of Rodrigo and his followers. Here he established himself with all his knights and soldiers and sent to the king rich gifts, which he had taken from the Moors in their many battles around the city. He was now beginning to feel his years and longed to see his family again, so he sent for his wife and his daughters, who came to live with him at Valencia.

The months passed quietly and nothing came for a while to mar his peaceful life. The next spring, however, the Moors came again and besieged the city in great numbers. Rodrigo made preparations for a long siege, laid in a great store of provisions and strengthened the walls of the city.

Early in the morning Rodrigo led his four thousand knights to fight against fifty thousand of the savage Moors. His wife and daughters watched the battle from the towers of the city, saying they had never seen him in battle and wished to know what a battle was like. When they saw the long beard of Rodrigo, which had now grown white, waving around while he sat astride his horse, Babieca, they well understood why his men rallied around and called out, "The Cid! The Cid!" which means the chief.

At the end of the day only fifteen thousand of the Moors were left alive out of the fifty thousand which were encamped before the city in the morning. So terrible was the slaughter that every knight who returned from the battle looked as if he had been washed in blood and all the horses' flanks were dripping with the red gore of the battle.

A great deal of treasure was left on the field by the Moors. Rodrigo captured the Moorish king's sword, Tizona;

also a wonderful tent of the Moorish chief and many gold and silver ornaments.

The next day he sent presents to the king of Spain, which, when they arrived, excited the envy and jealousy of the other knights at the court.

"Surely," they said, "this knight Rodrigo, or the Cid, as his followers call him, must be as great as our king himself." And they looked with evil eyes upon the messengers.

But the king rebuked them sternly, saying, "If you had been as faithful in my service, and as valiant in battle against the enemies of my kingdom, as he whom his soldiers call the Cid, I should feel safer in my own household, and more secure on the throne of my ancestors."

CHAPTER XVII

THE LAST DAYS OF THE CID

Rodrigo, the Cid, was firmly established in Valencia and was living happily with his wife, Ximena, and his two daughters, Elvira and Sol. The kings of Aragon and Navarre had requested his two daughters in marriage, and great preparations were being made to celebrate the happy occasion. The Cid was very rich and very powerful, and the bridegrooms were of high degree. Eight days were spent in public rejoicing before the marriage took place, and for eight days afterwards there was nothing but festivity and splendor.

So rich was the Cid that everyone ate out of silver dishes and was loaded with presents. There were bull-fights and tournaments and diversions of all kinds, so that Valencia seemed to be one vast pleasure ground during the time of the festivities. After the marriage ceremony the kings of Aragon and Navarre took their wives home, and so far as history records, they lived happily ever afterwards.

Now it must be known that at this time Spain was about half Christian and half Moor. The Christians lived in the northern part of Spain, the Moors lived in the lower part of Spain, and there was constant war between them. The Cid tried to keep peace between the two nations and avoid strife and bloodshed, but he could not avoid war altogether. After five years of peace and prosperity at Valencia, a messenger came from Morocco bearing this message:

"The king of Morocco, with all of his soldiers, demands Valencia, and if the Cid refuses to surrender the city, they will capture it and destroy the inhabitants."

When Rodrigo heard these words he was much troubled, because he knew he was growing old and was not the warrior that he had once been, yet he knew that everything depended upon him. However, he assembled his own people and told them of the message and sent back these words of defiance:

"Tell the king of Morocco that we shall not surrender Valencia to him, and that if he comes to take it he will find the Cid ready to do battle."

Now there were many Moors in Valencia, and Rodrigo was by no means certain of their loyalty, so he sent them without the city walls and made them remain in the suburbs while he was preparing the defences of the city.

As he lay awake one night, devising ways and means to overcome the king of Morocco, a great light shone about him and a sweet odor seemed to fill the room. There stood by his bed a man in white garments, carrying keys in his hand. The man asked, "Art thou asleep, Rodrigo?"

Rodrigo answered, "Nay, I sleep not. But who art thou that askest me?"

The man in white carrying the keys replied, "I am St. Peter, who comes with more urgent tidings than those which thou hast heard from the king of Morocco. I have come to let

thee know that within thirty days thou shalt leave this world and go to that wherein there is no end."

At this Rodrigo was much disturbed, and said to St. Peter, "But shall I leave my people in their distress, and shall the king of Morocco take vengeance upon those who are innocent? I pray thee, leave me here that I may defend them one more time, then I will go with thee."

St. Peter then made reply, "Thou shalt win the battle over the Moorish king, thou shalt be dead at the time, and no dishonor shall come near thy body." And with that he vanished.

The next day Rodrigo called his men together and told them with much sorrow of what had happened, and promised them that the king of Morocco should be vanquished and that Valencia would be safe.

Now the noble Cid fell ill and grew weaker day by day, and news kept coming that the hosts of Morocco were approaching the city. Preparations went on for its defence, however, and the Cid gave all necessary orders. Calling his nobles around him he said, "I beg of you not to let me be taken in battle, for though the vision declares I shall defend Valencia, though dead, I beg that my body be not the spoil of the Saracens." Weeping, his followers promised him what he asked.

Rodrigo made preparations for his death. For seven days before he died he took nothing but balsam and myrrh and rose-water, a little each day, with the effect that his skin became fresh and fair, though his strength ever failed. The day before he died, he called the bishops and his family and his friends around him, and gave them directions what to do with his body.

"After I am dead," said he, "wash my body with rose-water many times. Let it be dried and then anointed with myrrh and balsam from yonder caskets, which I have kept for many years, and which will preserve my body from decay. Let

there be no lamentations made for me, lest when the Moors arrive, they discover that I am dead."

Then he gave them other orders, and shortly afterwards lay upon his couch and breathed his last.

Three days after he died his enemies arrived before the gates of Valencia, and demanded audience with the Cid. The inhabitants, according to instructions, made no lamentations, but went about with great noise of rejoicings and warlike preparations. Day by day the Moors waited for them to come out and do battle, and finally began to make engines to batter down the walls. In the meantime, there was a sound of trumpets and much marching and noise inside the city, as if preparations for war were being made.

When all was ready, the gates of the city were opened, and a strange procession marched out to do battle with the Moors. There were many valiant knights and men-at-arms, and in the midst of them there was the Cid's famous horse, Babieca, and on it rode the Cid, in all the appearance and panoply of war. His body had been embalmed and anointed as he directed, and his skin looked fresh and fair. His eyes were open, and his long, flowing beard looked as warlike as ever. No one could tell but that he was alive. He was fastened upon his horse and his sword, Tizona, was in his hand. Two knights led his horse and another one bore his banner by his side.

As soon as the army saw their noble leader again in the saddle, they cried, "The Cid! The Cid! Our Cid leads us to victory."

He sat upright in the saddle and looked over the field of battle, and no one could tell that he was dead. Those who stood near him remarked the clearness of his skin and his open and fearless eyes.

The battle began with great fierceness and his own knights, who knew that they were fighting for their dead master, and who felt that he was still watching them, attacked the Moors with great violence.

There was a Moorish queen among the enemy, so skilful with the bow that she was called "The Star of the Archers." The knights fell upon her tent and in the onslaught she was killed.

With their battle-cry ringing over the field, they spread panic among the Moors, who began to waver. Then Babieca, the steed that had so often borne the Cid in battle, pawed restlessly and snorted his own battle-cry. Thinking that the Cid was about to descend upon them as of old, the Moors, in great panic, turned and fled. Thousands were killed and many were drowned in the water before they could reach their ships. The Cid looked on with unseeing eyes, while Babieca wondered why her master did not thunder into the very midst of the battle.

The next day a cavalcade carried the Cid, still on his horse, to the church of St. Peter, near Burgos. King Alfonso, hearing of the death of his friend, came to the funeral, as did most of the knights and nobles of Spain. The procession entered the church and the body of the great leader was placed upon a frame that had been made for it, and set before the altar. The king, seeing him so fair and lifelike, said to those around him, "He should not be buried. Let him sit upon his ivory chair at the right of the altar."

And so they seated the leader in the chair of state, and there he sat for ten years before he was moved to his final resting-place.

Every year, upon a certain anniversary, there was given a great feast at the church where the Cid was buried, and multitudes were fed and the priests addressed the crowd. On the seventh anniversary of the death of the Cid, a strange thing happened. The church had been filled with people, the abbot had spoken to them, and the crowd had departed, all save one, a Jew.

The Jew remained in the church and stood looking at the Cid as he sat there in his ivory chair. The old warrior had

not changed in all these years. His skin was still fresh and lifelike, his eyes were still open, so powerful was the embalming preparations of Egypt. The temptation came to the Jew to do that which no man had ever dared to do, that is, to pull the long, gray beard of Rodrigo. The Jew put out his hand and was about to carry out his purpose, when, quick as lightning, the Cid's dead hand grasped the sword, Tizona, and drew it a little way from the scabbard. The Jew screamed aloud at this uncanny act, and fell to the ground. The others rushed in and bore him away, and then he told his story. When they returned, they saw that the Cid's hand had fallen upon the hilt of his sword, and there it remained until he was placed in his tomb.

When ten years had passed, it was judged best to place Rodrigo in his own vault. Still seated in his own chair, he is resting there to this day, perhaps with his face as fair and lifelike and his eyes still open, as they were in the days when he faced the enemies of Spain.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LORELEI

The Rhine has ever been the center of many romantic and partly historic legends in which nymphs and fairies, as well as lords, knights and robbers have played their part.

The river is very beautiful as it winds its way through the mountains, with tall cliffs on either side. The waves dash over rocks and whirl into pools, and calm themselves into long smooth reaches, so that one easily believes himself in fairy-land. For hundreds of years legend and history have formed about the river, so that one cannot tell how much is true and how much is fiction in the stories he hears.

One of the best known and most charming legends is that of the water nymph, Lore, who at Lei, a rock in the river, had her residence. Hence the place has been called Lorelei.

The nymph was very beautiful, as she appeared on the rock to the boatmen passing by. She had long, flowing hair which she combed with a golden comb. Around her form was draped a green veil, the color of young leaves in the spring. Her eyes were very bright, her face was fair, and the songs she sang made all the boatmen stop and listen to their sweetness. Never was a creature more alluring and beautiful than she, as she sat upon her rock in the early morning light, combing her golden hair and singing her songs to the birds and the fish and to men who came near her way.

She was by no means an evil fairy, for the people told stories of how she often appeared at the houses of the sick and gave them healing herbs for their complaints, and of how she nursed the little babies back into health when they were ill, and sometimes cured the cattle of their diseases. She was a good fairy to all those who meant well.

But she was dreaded by evil-doers, and by those who tried to reach her place on the rock. To those who came near her and mocked her, or tried to land at the foot of her rock, there happened dreadful things, for at her bidding the waves would open and the boats would go down never to be seen again.

Sometimes those who impudently landed and tried to seize her, were led away on a long chase through the briars and bushes and it was with great difficulty they found their way out again, and some of them never did.

In those days there lived on the Rhine in a great castle the Count Bruno and his handsome son Hermann, a youth of twenty years, the flower of chivalry and the joy of his father. Often the young knight had heard of the wonderful nymph, Lorelei, and every time he saw the rocks he wished to see the nymph herself, to whom he felt strangely drawn.

Scarcely a day passed that he did not come near the rock where the nymph showed herself, but for a long time his quest was in vain. One evening, as he sat in a grotto near the foot of the mountain, singing a low love song, he cast his eyes upwards toward the rock where the nymph was accustomed to sit. To his great joy he saw a wonderful light, which gathered closer and closer and finally became the beautiful form he had longed for so earnestly.

Overcome with emotion he cried out, "My beautiful, now at last I have seen you. Depart from me no more." With that he held out his hands, letting his harp fall to the ground. The nymph seemed to bend over him lovingly and look at him tenderly and even called his name. Hermann sank senseless to the ground, unable to stand the gaze of so much loveliness.

With the dawn he arose, and in feverish excitement returned to his father's castle. From that time he was a changed man. He wandered about like a dreamer, thinking only of the beautiful fairy. As often as he had a chance he directed his steps toward the banks of the river, and whenever the maiden

was there she smiled at him so sweetly, that it was with difficulty he restrained himself from leaping into the water.

The old count saw with much concern the change in his son. He thought it was due to some unhappy passion, but did not know the cause. One day Count Bruno said to Hermann, "My son, I perceive that you are sad, and I judge you wish to be away at the wars, where you can win your spurs as a knight. Therefore you will make ready to go to the imperial camp and enter the service of some knight who will teach you the art of war."

Hermann made no reply, but he dared not disobey his father's commands. It would have been a disgrace for him to refuse to prepare for the life of a knight, which was the ambition of every young man of his age.

The evening for his departure came. All things were ready, even his horse had been prepared with saddle and bridle for his master's mounting. But Hermann could not leave without one more look at his beloved maiden, and one more glance from her beautiful eyes. He took with him his young squire, and entering a boat, glided down stream to the fateful rock where the nymph awaited him.

The moon shone brightly that night. The steep banks of the river took on the most fantastic shapes, and the tall trees seemed to wave at the young man as his boat floated down the river. At last he came near the rock and heard the roar of the water as it rushed around the banks. His attendant cried out in alarm, "My master, beware! The river is dangerous to-night, and the waves are angry. We shall be dashed to pieces."

But Hermann laid aside his oars and took up his harp, and began to sing his song of love. As he sang there was a tumult of voices above and below the waters as of many crying in distress. To this Hermann paid no heed. The boat glided on and he still sang his song of love.

When they came in sight of the rock, there stood the maiden in all her loveliness, beckoning Hermann to beware or to come on, one does not know which.

With a staff in her hand she turned to the waves and called them to her service. They mounted higher and higher, the boat was split in pieces, and Hermann disappeared beneath the waters, never to be seen again.

The squire, however, was thrown on the shore, and soon made his way back to the castle and told his tale to the unhappy father. The old count was overcome with grief and rage.

"I shall take the wretched maiden with my own hands, and deliver her into the fire. She has lured my son to his death," said he, beside himself with fury.

The next day he hastened, with some followers, to the rock, and waited until the maiden should appear. They had not long to wait, for she soon came to her place and stood above the dark waters combing her hair and singing a song of inexpressible sadness.

"Where is my son, thou cruel and conscienceless creature? To what death hast thou consigned him?" cried the unhappy father. The nymph pointed to the waves below, and turned upon the count a look of tenderness and sadness, as much as to say that a mortal might love and be loved by a nymph, but they might not wed.

She sang a song of great sweetness and bound her beautiful hair around her head. Then she took a stone and threw it into the waves. Immediately the waters rose and took her from the rock and carried her below. Perhaps she went to join the man who loved her, and who had also won her heart. At any rate, she was never seen again upon the place that men to this day call Lorelei. But those who pass by may sometimes hear the lapping of the waves and a sound from the shore that even to this day remind them of the sad song the maiden sang upon her rock.

CHAPTER XIX

THE MOUSE TOWER

Hatto was the bishop of Fulda. Now, by all rules, a bishop should be a good man and kind to his people, but not so this bishop. By all sorts of knavery he contrived to become bishop of Mayence, though there were many candidates for that office much more deserving than he.

"What matters it how you obtain an office, just so you succeed in getting it?" asked the bishop.

Having become bishop of Mayence he began to oppress his people in all kinds of ways. He levied taxes upon them so that he might build large buildings and satisfy his own love of splendor. Tolls were laid upon all vessels passing by his castle on the Rhine so that he could raise still more money.

"I shall not rest satisfied until I am the richest bishop along this river, and besides, what are the people for if not to pay money to their rulers?" With that the people had to be content.

Near Bingen, on the Rhine river, he built a strong tower, in the very middle of the foaming waves, so that all ships in passing could be easily stopped and made to pay heavy tolls to the agents of the greedy bishop. For a long time the ships were arrested, and the captains paid what was demanded of them. The bishop grew very rich, very arrogant, and very cruel.

After awhile there was a scarcity of food in the country. A long drought had parched the fields, rats and other vermin had eaten much of the grain, hail stones had beaten down the crops, and a general famine threatened the people.

When the bishop heard of this distress he called his servants about him and said to them, "I hear that food is scarce in the land, and the people are already beginning to feel the

want of it. Before it gets scarcer, you will buy all you can get, and store it in my barns, near the tower on the Rhine."

Then the bishop gave them money, and with it the agents went through the country buying all the grain and paying for it whatever the people demanded. Great wagon loads went through the land hauling the grain into the barns of the bishop until they were quite full.

"Now," said the bishop to himself, when he saw his pile of grain, "I have enough for myself and my friends for many years. No matter what happens to the people, I shall not suffer," and he ordered his servants to bring him food and wine, and lay back on his couch with feelings of great satisfaction.

In a short while the dreaded misfortune of hunger and starvation was upon the poor people. There was no grain left anywhere, and they remembered with consternation how much they had foolishly sold to the bishop. "Let us go to the bishop and buy back the food we sold him," said one to another.

But the bishop charged them the very highest prices, three or four times as much as he had paid for it, and even then would sell but a small quantity, just the contents of one barn. The other barns he would not allow to be opened.

The poor people were reduced to dreadful extremities. They ate roots and berries, and even their own cats and dogs to keep themselves alive. "Let us go again to the bishop, and pray him to give us food, lest we die," they cried in despair.

The bishop sat with his friends around a table eating and drinking. His cooks had prepared a feast of bread and cakes with game from the bishop's forest and fish from the river. There were also rare wines from the grapes that grew in the bishop's vineyards on the slopes of the hills. A great noise was heard outside the bishop's castle, as of people clamoring.

"What noise is that I hear outside the walls?" the bishop asked of one of his servants.

"It is the people, my lord," was the reply. "They pray you to give them food for themselves and their families, lest they all die of starvation."

"Send the beggars away. I have no food for them. If they starve, so much the better, for there will be fewer mouths to feed," and the bishop laughed.

But the servant replied, "My lord, the people will not be sent away until they see your lordship, and present their prayers to you. They wish to enter into your presence and tell their story."

"Well, let them come in then; the sooner I see them, the sooner I shall be rid of them," was the gruff answer.

The gate of the castle was opened, and the hungry men, women and children crowded in. Their faces were gaunt with hunger, and the children had to be carried from weakness. The crowd went along the corridors, up the stairs, and into the place where the bishop and his friends sat at their feast.

Here they told their pitiable story. They said that their crops had failed, and there was no corn in the land. They begged the bishop to let them have a little of the great store in his barns, or to sell it to them at any price. The bishop listened, and then thought of a cruel joke to play upon the poor people who were bothering him with their woes. "Very well," said he smiling and bowing low in mockery. "You shall enter one of my barns and are welcome to all you can find there and to all you can take away."

The bishop told his servants to bring him the keys to his barns. The people shouted with joy and blessed the good bishop for what they thought he was going to do. He led them along a path, and when he reached the empty barn, he ordered the door to be opened, so that the people could go in.

Once in, however, the bishop ordered the door to be shut and securely bolted on the outside. With cruel malice he

said, "Now, I have the rats in a trap. Let us be rid of them at once," and he made his servants set fire to the building.

Returning to his friends at the feast, he bade them hear the flames roar and the people cry. "Hear the corn-mice squeal," said he. "I always burn rats when I catch them."

But now hear the end of the story. Out of the burning building crept thousands and thousands of real live rats. They were big and fierce, and angered by the flames which had driven them forth. Like a wave of the sea they rolled out from the building, down to the path, over the walls, and right into the bishop's castle. They rolled up the steps, down the corridors, and into the room where the bishop sat with his friends.

The bishop's friends rose and fled in terror. The bishop cried out, "Save me! Save me! How shall I get rid of these rats?" But his friends were now out of reach and the bishop was left to himself.

With glaring eyes and hungry teeth they attacked the trembling man. The bishop leaped from a window, ran down the river bank and jumped into a boat, the rats after him. He rowed across the river, but the rats swam behind him. He landed on the island where he had built his tower to collect tolls from passing ships. The rats landed also. He ran up the tower and slammed the door behind him. The rats gnawed holes in the door and came in by hundreds.

At last they had caught the bishop in his own tower. They fell upon him and devoured him, until there was nothing left but his bones. And those who came the next day could not find a single rat anywhere, nor could they find the bishop, only some bones scattered around the floor. And to this very day they call the place the Mouse-Tower, and the people still tell the story of the cruel bishop and how he was devoured by rats.

CHAPTER XX

THE DEVIL'S LADDER

In his castle at Lorch on the Rhine lived an old knight named Gilgen. He had lost nearly all his possessions through disputes with his neighbors. His wife had died, and he was left alone with a beautiful young daughter named Gerlinde. To her he was devotedly attached, and for her care and comfort he spent most of his time.

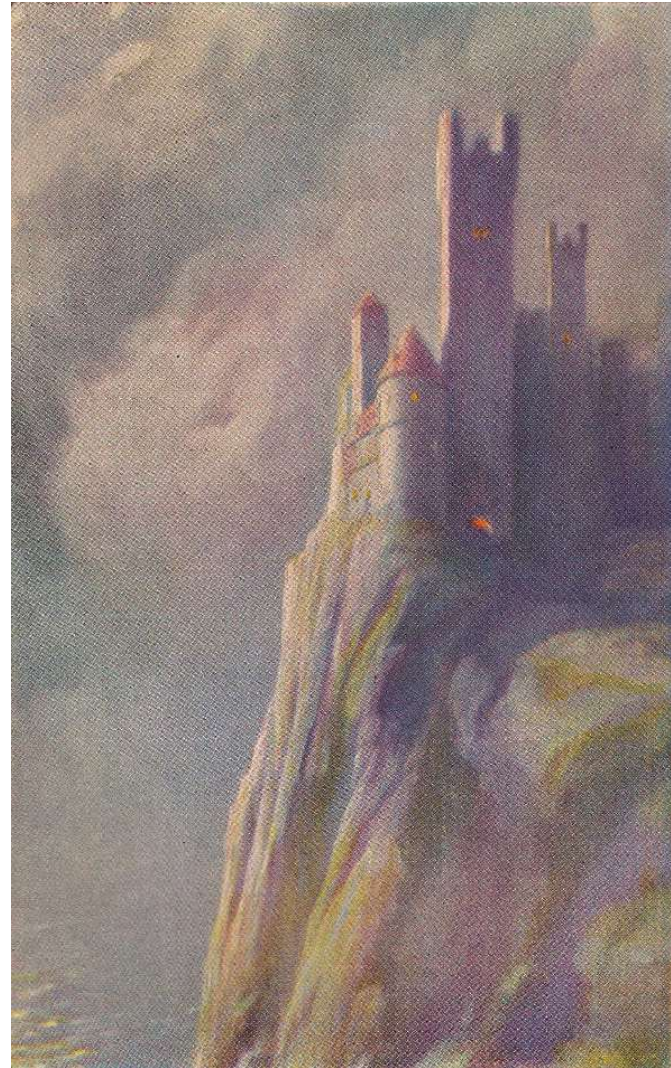
Two things he desired for his loved daughter: one was vast riches, the other was a noble marriage. In order to secure wealth he visited a hermit who lived in the mountains and was supposed to be a magician. From him he desired to learn of treasure hidden in the earth and how it could be reached.

The magician demanded gold for his knowledge, which the poor knight supplied every time it was required. But all the efforts of the magician were in vain. The knight gave up all he had, but no art of the magician could open the earth and disclose the longed-for wealth.

It was on a spring evening that Gilgen sat silent and absorbed in his armchair. The weather was rough in spite of the season of the year. The wind howled around the towers and bastions of the castle, the clouds hurried past, and drops of rain began to fall. "It bids fair to be a stormy night and a bad one for wayfarers in the mountains," said the knight to himself when he heard a particularly loud gust of wind.

Scarcely had he said these words when a groom entered and announced that a strange little man was standing at the gates of the castle asking for a night's lodging. His appearance was so odd that the porter would not admit him without the permission of the master and the groom desired to know what he should do.

The old knight was curious to see who the fellow was, and said to the groom, "Bring him to my door that I may see him."



IN HIS CASTLE AT LORCH, ON THE RHINE, LIVED AN OLD KNIGHT NAMED GILGEN.

Soon the groom returned, bringing a strange dwarf wearing a scarlet cloak, over which his long gray hair fell like a veil. On his head he wore a yellow cap, and in his hand he carried a staff that he kept continually twirling. Besides this, he kept moving his head from side to side and muttering to himself.

The hermit-magician had already warned the knight against the dwarf and gnomes of the mountains, saying they meant him no good. He therefore cried out rudely, "What do you wish?"

"Let me enter," said the dwarf, "and give me food and comfort for the night. To-morrow I shall be gone, for I have far to travel. I shall pay you well for your service."

But the knight was in no humor for hospitality, least of all, to the strange creatures of the mountains, who he believed were in league against him. "Not at all," replied Gilgen. "Such rascals as you can find no lodging under my roof. You are doubtless the one to bewitch my castle and to make my corn and eggs fly through the air. You have locked up the hills so that I can find no treasure. Begone, sir, into the rain and night, for I shall have none of you!"

He shut the door in the dwarf's face and the groom led the strange fellow outside the gates. The dwarf muttered some strange words and disappeared in the woods.

The next morning Gilgen went hunting and did not return until late in the afternoon. He learned to his great astonishment and dismay that his daughter, Gerlinde, had disappeared. No one had seen her since morning, when she had gone out for a walk alone and from which she had not returned. All efforts to find her had been in vain.

The knight was greatly alarmed. He remembered the way he had treated the dwarf and he feared that the evil creature had taken this means of being revenged. He ordered his men to search the country in every direction. He mounted

his best horse and rode over the mountains, and through the valley, and beside the stream, calling for his lost child.

Coming to a mountain called Kedrich, he met a shepherd boy, of whom he inquired concerning his daughter. The boy said, "About noon to-day I saw three dwarfs in scarlet cloaks, who were leading away a beautiful maiden on horseback. They disappeared in the alder bushes of the mountain."

Gilgen rode as near as possible to the Kedrich, and called out three times, "Gerlinde, my daughter, where are you?"

Scarcely had he called when he saw on the summit of a tall cliff his child, who held out her hands to him. Behind the maiden stood the same dwarf whom the knight had turned away, and who now called out in mocking tones, "This is the reward for the way you treated me yesterday."

To climb the rocky mountain was impossible. The knight resolved to make a road up the steep cliff. The next day workmen appeared with picks, shovels and axes and began cutting into the rock. But they made no progress, for as fast as they would cut away a portion of it, it would be filled up by a shower of stones that fell from above them. After working all day in the rain the workmen withdrew.

The knight hastened to the hermit and told him of his loss and of the plight he was in. The old magician sank into deep meditation, then lit a fire, and boiled a few herbs in a pot, which emitted sparks of fire when he stirred it. Looking into the pot the magician spoke these words: "I see a knight in black armor and riding a black horse. In his dreams he has seen the maiden and is now on his way. Wait three days and he will be at your gates. That is all I can see in the pot."

At the end of the third day there was a loud noise at the gates of the castle. Some one was calling impatiently for admission. When the gates were opened there was a knight in black armor, riding a black horse covered with foam and

almost dead with weariness. The knight spoke up and said, "I have dreamed of a beautiful maiden who is in great danger, and I have hastened here to save her. Lead me to her father that we both may be gone on one mission."

The heart of Gilgen leaped with joy when he heard that the knight had come. The black knight, whose name was Ruthelm, was admitted and given refreshment and a night's rest, before the quest for the maiden began. Early the next morning the two knights rode to the hermit from whom they desired directions as to the way they should proceed.

Reaching the hermit's house, all three proceeded to a cave opposite Kedrich, from which they could see the cliff where the maiden was held prisoner. The magician lit a fire, threw into it a quantity of magical wood and muttered some words as he stirred the fire with his wand. All three then sat on the ground while a strange blue light filled the cavern. Soon the walls began to open and a great crowd of dwarfs with laughing faces appeared. They poured in from all sides until the cavern was quite full.

The oldest and largest of the little fellows then approached Ruthelm, and bowing low to the ground, said, "You are the knight in distress, and if it is your wish we shall build our ladder to the skies." The other dwarfs capered about in glee and shook their heads at one another.

"It is my wish," answered the knight, "and whatever your ladder be made of or however high it may reach, I shall climb until I find the maiden of my dreams."

The dwarfs then hastened into the forest, and began cutting wood, until they had a great pile, some long pieces and some short pieces. All day long they labored with great diligence until at last the largest dwarf held up his hand. They all stopped work at once. The dwarf then gave another sign and each one seized a piece of wood and began building a ladder on the face of the cliff. Higher and higher it rose, the

dwarfs swarming up and down carrying the pieces, until before dark the ladder was complete.

When it was dark the knight began the dangerous ascent. The hermit gave him a magic ring, which he placed on his finger and which he was to turn whenever in danger. With his sword by his side and the ring on his finger the knight began to climb the ladder. All night long he climbed, and it was broad day before he reached the top.

When the sun rose and the knight stepped off the last round of the ladder he found himself on a wide plain in which beautiful flowers were growing, birds were singing, and fruits of all kinds were hanging from the trees. It was an enchanted spot and the knight was amazed at the beauty all around him.

Soon the adventurer found a crystal palace, before which stood two gnomes, but they were fast asleep, though they should have been awake, for they were sentinels. Without much reflection he cut off their heads and entered the castle. Here he found seated upon a great stone in the middle of the hall, the dwarf who had stolen his maiden.

Without much ado the knight drew his sword and advanced. The dwarf leaped down and seized a great club. "Now we shall see who shall have the maiden and live in this castle," cried Ruthelm, "for I shall cut off your head, as I did to the sentinels at your door."

The fight began between the knight and the dwarf. Try as he might, the sword of the knight could not reach the ugly creature's body. On the other hand, the dwarf's blows were easily turned aside by the strong sword of the knight. At last the dwarf leaped upon the knight's back and began to bite him on the neck. As he did so, he leaned over and caught sight of the ring, which the knight had on his finger and which he had just turned.

The dwarf stiffened and lost his hold for a moment. The knight gave a great lunge and threw the dwarf forward

over his head. The ugly body fell heavily against the great stone in the hall and the dwarf lay still with his neck broken.

Ruthelm wandered through the palace and at last came to a beautiful room where Gerlinde lay asleep. He thought he had never seen a lovelier face or form, and bending over her, kissed her forehead. The maiden awoke with a start, crying out,—

"Oh, where am I? I thought some one had called me to go to my father."

"I am he who has come to take you home," said the knight, kneeling before the maiden. "Come with me and you shall know no danger and suffer no harm."

Together they wandered through the great crystal palace, and the grounds and the gardens, until they came to the ladder. As they put their feet on the topmost round there was a great noise and the mountain shook about them. Looking up they saw the earth open and the palace and all it contained disappear in a great chasm.

It was not long before they had reached the ground, and Gerlinde was safe in her father's home. Within a few weeks she and the knight were married, and for many years lived in their own castle, from the towers of which they could see the tall cliff on which Gerlinde had had such a dreadful experience and from which she had been so happily rescued.

CHAPTER XXI

GERDA'S RIDE TO HER WEDDING

Many hundreds of years ago there lived in the castle of Rheinstein on the river Rhine a rich and powerful knight named Sifrid. But he was as wicked as he was rich, for he had gained his riches by robbery.

Upon one occasion, in returning home laden with the spoils of a foray upon some other lord, he brought with him a beautiful girl whom he had taken captive. The girl was not only beautiful, but she was very gentle and good, and soon her captor fell a victim to her gentleness. Deeply in love with her, she became his wife, and his constant companion in everything he undertook.

The arrival of the beautiful girl wrought a great change in the life of the knight. From the time of his marriage there were no acts of violence and no more robberies. The merchants passed the dreaded castle unharmed, and the ships came and went along the river without being molested. Sifrid had listened to his lovely wife and had learned to be good.

Rheinstein, once the abode of noisy highwaymen, was now a place of peace and rest. Gradually the wild guests left it, and the rude war comrades, seeing no further booty or advantage for them, left the knight and his wife alone. Thus matters went on for a year or more, when a little girl was born, whom the knight named Gerda.

"Now my happiness is complete," exclaimed Sifrid, "for I have two dear ones to love." But his happiness did not last long, for the wife died when the baby was a few days old.

The knight fell into a deep melancholy. He refused to see anyone and gave himself up to the gloomiest thoughts. "I

shall return to my old habits and become again a robber and a terror to those who pass my castle," said he.

But when he looked at the little baby and saw her smile with the face and eyes of her mother, he again changed his mind and kept to his better life. The only consolation he found was in the care and education of Gerda, and to her he devoted all his time and thoughts.

Gerda grew to be as beautiful and gentle a girl as ever was her mother. Under her father's care she developed like a rare flower until those who saw her marveled at her loveliness.

However retired Sifrid lived, still there were those who came his way and begged hospitality at his doors. Tired wanderers, pious pilgrims and others rested at the foot of the castle, and were entertained at the knight's table, and soon the story of the beauty of Gerda spread abroad.

Those who came away from the castle told others, "The Lady Gerda is the most beautiful woman in the world; her eyes are blue like the skies, her hair is as golden as ripe corn, her neck is as white as a swan's throat, and her voice is like the running of water in the moonlight."

You may be sure it was not long before a number of knights of high and low degree presented themselves at the castle and begged to have the hand of the maiden in marriage. It was known that her father was rich and powerful, so that marriage with the Lady Gerda offered double advantage of wealth and beauty to the one who secured her love.

The suitors became more and more numerous. Hardly a month passed that the old knight was not approached by some one demanding his daughter's hand. At last Sifrid, who had grown old and somewhat irritable, exclaimed, "I weary of all these suitors for the hand of my daughter. I shall appoint a tournament at Mayence, at which Gerda will assist. Her hand shall be the prize of the bravest of the knights."

To this Gerda had to consent, though she was far from satisfied.

Not easily could any tournament match this one in the number and splendor of the contestants. The festival was magnificent in the display made by the wealth of Sifrid, but by far the most beautiful object present was Gerda herself, who regarded the combatants from a balcony built expressly for her and her attendants.

Among the knights present, two distinguished themselves greatly. One was Kurt of Ehrenfels, the other was Kuno of Reichenstein—two castles that were not far from the one owned by Sifrid. Kurt was a rough knight, whom people called The Bad, for his wicked deeds. He was rich and had extensive domains, and Sifrid, who could not rid himself altogether of his avarice, secretly wished that Kurt might be the winner in the tournament and claim his daughter's hand.

Kuno, on the other hand, had a fine education and noble character. Gerda had long regarded him with favor, and as she watched the combatants from her balcony she secretly prayed that Kuno might overcome all his opponents.

The tournament proceeded amid great splendor and courage of the contestants. Knight after knight was vanquished, until only Kurt and Kuno were left in the field. Eagerly they prepared for the first onset, while Sifrid and Gerda watched them with different emotions, one with avarice and the other with the beginning of love.

The knights came together in the middle of the field. Sad to relate, Kuno was thrown from his horse, his lance was broken, and his armor pierced. Rising from his seat Sifrid exclaimed with joy, "Gerda, my daughter, Kurt shall have you for his own, for he has overcome all the others. You shall have a great castle and many riches."

Gerda made no reply. She cast down her eyes to conceal the tears of disappointment that she could not restrain.

The day of the wedding came all too quickly. Before the hour when Gerda was to appear she hastened to the chapel and threw herself down before the figure of the Holy Virgin, and cried out in her distress, "Holy Mother, save thy child from the misery of a loveless marriage. I am very unhappy, for I love not the wicked Kurt, and my heart is wholly another's."

As she knelt in prayer she seemed strangely comforted by some assurance that her petition would be granted. She rose and dressed herself in costly garments, and put on the jewels her father had given her for her wedding. Then she went forth, and meeting the impatient Kurt, said to him, "Sir, I am ready to ride with you to the wedding."

Kurt did not notice her pale cheeks, nor her eyes red with much weeping and loss of sleep. Nor did he notice when she cast her eyes upwards toward the castle of Reichenstein, where Kuno stood, sad and gloomy, watching the bridal procession start towards the chapel.

Now Gerda was riding a gray horse which Kuno had given her the day she was eighteen years old. The horse was young and spirited, and obeyed no one but his mistress, and loved no one more than he did his former master. When the procession came near the chapel, Gerda's horse which up to this time had been very quiet, became restless and began to prance. He reared so dangerously as almost to unseat his rider, and bit everyone who came near his bridle. At last he broke away and began to run furiously.

The old knight, her father, saw his daughter's plight and called out to the knights to pursue the flying animal. There was no need to urge them. Onward flew the gray horse, and onward came the eager knights, Kurt in the lead. He did not intend to be cheated of his bride.

Gerda, strangely enough, was not in the least afraid, nor was she in anywise likely to be thrown from her horse, for somehow she felt the sustaining arms of a saint about her, as she fled from her pursuers.

The horse ran straight for the Rhine, as if he would throw himself into the stream. However, he turned up the banks and began to ascend the steep rocks on which the castle of Reichenstein was built, and where Kuno was watching the flight of his beloved from her pursuing betrothed. Up the face of the cliff climbed the steed, bearing his lovely burden. From the frowning walls of the castle Kuno saw them coming.

"Unbar the gates! Down with the drawbridge! Out with the guards to meet the Lady Gerda!" cried he to his men, as the thundering hoofs came nearer. Hardly had his men opened the way when the faithful horse flew into the courtyard, and Gerda fell into the arms of the man she loved.

Kurt had followed furiously. Blind with rage, he had urged his horse up the same course that Gerda had been carried, but his horse fell and the knight's neck was broken on the rocks. As for Sifrid, he was content to let matters stand as they were, for Gerda had made up her mind, and there was nothing more to say.

CHAPTER XXII

PETER THE HERMIT

Peter was just a boy like any other boy, and we know so little of his early life that we have forgotten his father's name. He grew up in Picardy, worked in the fields, went to church, and when he became grown, began life as a soldier. Peter also married, but we know nothing of the kind of wife he chose, and since Peter separated from her, it does not really matter.

After being a soldier for a few years Peter decided he would become a monk. After making this change in his life he settled down into being one of the most ardent and devout of all the monks of his time. We are not quite sure whether he

ever went to Jerusalem on a long, pious pilgrimage or not, but it has been generally said that he did so.

You can imagine what a weary journey it was to walk all the way from France to Palestine, begging for food and shelter by the way, stopping in the wayside churches to pray, sleeping anywhere one could find a shelter, and fearful at all times of being robbed by highwaymen. But there were thousands who made these pilgrimages to worship at the holy sepulchre and to visit the sacred city of Jerusalem.

Now Jerusalem for many hundreds of years had belonged to the Arabs, who had captured it from the Romans. The Arabs worshipped Mohammed, and did not believe in Christ, but as they were a generous and kind-hearted people, they allowed pious pilgrims from all over the world to visit Jerusalem, and to worship at the tomb of Christ. Those pilgrims were treated with consideration, and the church of the holy sepulchre was kept in order and treated with respect.

But when Peter was fifteen years old, the barbarous Turks overran Palestine and captured Jerusalem from the Arabs and changed everything, so far as the poor pilgrims were concerned. The Christians had to pay large sums of money to visit the tomb of Christ, and even then were often robbed and some of them were killed. Moreover, the church was no longer treated with reverence, but became dirty and neglected.

When Peter was forty-five years of age, it is said that he made his way to Jerusalem and saw the plight in which all his fellow pilgrims were. He went at once to the patriarch of the church and loudly complained.

"The Turks by their unholy practice are defiling the temple of the Lord. It is filthy beyond description, and fills my soul with horror. Besides, the pilgrims are robbed and beaten. Only yesterday, I saw a pilgrim pay his last coin to enter the church, and the door was closed in his face. I have heard of others being beaten until they died."

"Alas, good pilgrim Peter!" replied the patriarch, "what you say is true, but what am I that I can stay this host of infidels? I am helpless, for I also am poor and almost alone."

And Peter saw that the good father was powerless to help the pilgrims or to protect the holy sepulchre from desecration.

That night Peter was admitted to the tomb of Christ, and there kept vigil, or watch, all night. As he watched by the tomb a vision came to him as of an angel, saying:

"Peter, what thou seest here should be known by mankind. I advise you to preach a crusade against these infidels and Turks, and to arouse the Christians of all lands to come by the thousands and redeem this holy sepulchre, by which thou standest, from the hands of those that do but defile it."

Peter departed the next day with a great purpose. He would preach a crusade, and arouse the world. The patriarch gave him a letter to the Pope at Rome, to whom Peter carried it. The Pope blessed him and praised his purpose, and then let him depart on his way to his native land.

Peter now began to preach the first crusade. He was known everywhere as Peter the Hermit, because he had come out of his retirement in order to preach to the people. He was small in size, thin, and of dark complexion. His eyes were bright and his voice most persuasive. Everywhere he was hailed by the people with great eagerness, for he was telling them a stirring story of the cruel Turks, and calling upon them to rise and march to Jerusalem.

He went about barefoot, poorly clad, carrying a cross in his hand. He probably had a long white beard, and his hair fell over his shoulders, for most of the monks wore their hair in that way. As he went through the country he rode a mule, and the excited people would pull hairs from the mule's tail, keeping them as relics of the holy man.

"Behold this cross!" he would call to the crowds around him. "It is by this sign that you shall conquer. Leave all and follow me to the Holy Land and drive the hated Turk from the Lord's domain. If ye perish on the way or die in battle, ye shall inherit the kingdom of God." This and much more did Peter the Hermit preach to the great crowds that followed him about the streets and from town to town through France.

Peter seemed to take little thought of what an army meant, and how it was to be supported, and supplied, and disciplined. All he wanted was an army, for he himself was once a soldier and thought he could be equal to any emergency. Instead of waiting for the knights and lords to make ready in a proper way for the long march, he became impatient, and wanted to go at once.

At Easter, in the year 1096, a great crowd of about fifteen thousand French mustered in the city of Cologne on the Rhine. They were not all soldiers, nor were they all men. Women, boys, girls and little children were there begging to go to the Holy Land. There were many there out of curiosity, and then there were others who were hardly more than thieves, who went anywhere a crowd gathered.

It was hardly more than a great mob of excited people who set out in the springtime in the vain hope of reaching Jerusalem and capturing that city from the Turks. But they were full of enthusiasm and each bore a cross. Most of them had crosses embroidered on their coats or sleeves, while others went so far as to have a cross burned upon their breast with a hot iron.

When Peter's army began to move, the first thing they did was to attack the Jews at Cologne, and other towns, and to rob them of everything they had. Their houses were plundered, their stores and shops were broken into, and in many cases men, women, and children of that race were put to death.

At that time the Jews in all nations were treated as an outcast and a wicked people. They had crucified our Lord, and

the descendants of the Israelites of old must pay the penalty. So in Europe and in England a Jew had no standing in law or the church, and anyone could treat him as he chose.

The army moved on day by day, but Peter stayed behind to preach in the towns he passed through, collecting others to go along. The main body moved under charge of Walter, whom men call the Penniless. Among the whole force of fifteen thousand there were only eight who had horses, the rest were on foot.

It is said that Peter finally collected forty thousand pilgrims in his first crusade, many of whom were real fighting men, but there was little order and discipline in this great mob of rude soldiers and excited people. Like a lot of travelers, each one was expected to provide for himself and take care of himself.

When the army reached Semlin, on the Danube, some of the pilgrims had a fight with the people of the town and were defeated. The clothes and weapons which had been taken from them were hung in triumph from the city's walls. This so infuriated the pilgrim army that they marched upon the town, drove out the inhabitants, and remained there as long as there was food to eat.

When the host of Peter's army came near Belgrade, they crossed the Danube river on rafts, or in wicker boats, or any way they could. Some swam across and many floated over on logs. When the people of Belgrade saw them coming they cried in terror, "The pilgrims! Peter's pilgrims! They are upon us!" and fled from their town.

In this way the army went on. Many grew tired of the excitement and turned back home. Others stopped in the towns through which they passed. Some died of disease, exposure, and weariness on the way. Jerusalem was farther off than they had expected, and there were gruesome tales of the cruel Turks that made women and children tremble.

After about five months' marching, Peter's army, reduced to seven thousand, reached Constantinople, where lived Alexius, the Emperor of the East. Alexius begged Peter to stay until the main body of another crusading army could arrive, which was better prepared for advancing into Palestine.

Peter, however, could not control his followers, few as they had become. They created so much disturbance and behaved so badly that Alexius was glad to get rid of them. This remnant of Peter's army was now a plundering band of outlaws that were bent on adventure more than on anything else.

Alexius provided them with ships and sent them over into Asia, where they could move on if they wished. He even gave them plenty of food for their march. It was not long before they fought a battle, and Walter the Penniless, their leader, was slain. Then the rest were scattered and we hear but little of them in history.

Thus we see that Peter the Hermit, though a great preacher, who aroused all Europe to a crusade to deliver the holy sepulchre, was after all a very foolish and incompetent leader. It was left for others to carry on the great idea he had announced, and to really lead armies into the Holy Land.

In fact, Peter joined other crusading armies and was present at Jerusalem three years later, when that city was taken from the Turks. On that day he received public thanks by all the priests for the part he had taken in the crusades.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE WIVES OF WEINSBERG

At one time the empire of Germany was divided into factions, which brought a great deal of unhappiness and strife. There were two noble families, one of them known as the Guelphs and the other known as the Ghibellines, both of whom had claimants for the imperial crown. The Guelphs came from Bavaria and the Ghibellines came from Swabia.

For a number of years war between the two factions continued. At last, Count Conrad, a Ghibelline, was elected emperor, and went in pursuit of his enemies, who were in the town of Weinsberg.

The Guelphs gave him an obstinate resistance. The governor was by no means in a submissive mood and the siege lasted a long time. Conrad was indignant at this protracted siege and sent word to the inhabitants as follows:

"Unless you surrender at once I shall demolish your city, burn your buildings and put all the inhabitants to the sword."

To this the inhabitants returned a defiant and indignant challenge. The siege continued for some time until at last Weinsberg was compelled to yield. Emperor Conrad now determined that his original threat should be carried out, and ordered all the men to be gathered together that they might be put to the sword, and told his men to prepare to destroy the city by flames. When this message came to the inhabitants of Weinsberg there were loud lamentations because they were filled with terror and despair.

A deputation of citizens went to Conrad's camp and said, "We men of Weinsberg are not afraid of your threat and are willing to submit to the fate of war. You may burn our

buildings and destroy our towns if you will, but we beg of you to spare our women."

Conrad replied, "I have sworn an oath that your city shall be destroyed and your people shall be put to death, but it is not for me to make war on helpless women, therefore I shall spare their lives. Furthermore you may tell them that on the morrow each of them may carry away on her shoulders whatever precious possession she may deem worthy of preservation. I do not wish to leave them destitute upon the world."

With this decision the emperor turned away and the deputation of citizens went sadly back into Weinsberg.

When the women heard this declaration of the emperor they were sorely distressed and there was much weeping among them. Finally the duchess, wife of Duke Guelph, called all the women together in the market-place and told the men to go into a distant part of the city, as she did not wish them to hear what she had to say to her companions.

She whispered something to the woman near her and she passed it on to the next one and she to the next, until all the women knew what was in the duchess' mind. Then each one smiled and went her way.

The next morning the gates were opened and Conrad stood outside to see the women file by, each one with her precious possession. First came the duchess, and to the astonishment of the emperor and to the admiration of the whole army, the duchess was bearing upon her shoulders her husband, Duke Guelph, the very one that Conrad had sworn first to put to the sword. Following her came a long line of women, each one bending under the heavy burden of her husband or some dear relative.

As the duchess passed the emperor, she said, "We have your word, my lord, that we can bear safely away that which we consider to be most precious, and each of us has taken her soldier husband. You are welcome to what is left in the city."

The emperor's chagrin was quickly changed to admiration. The earnest faces of the women that were turned to him so appealingly at last changed his intention towards them and the city, and his heart relented. Turning to the women, who were struggling along with their husbands, he said to them, "You may rid yourselves of your heavy but precious freight. I shall harm none of you, for you deserve to keep the treasure you have borne."

There were indeed some angry knights around him who did not have much respect for heroic deeds and who reminded him of his first oath to put the men to death, but Conrad turned to them in anger and said, "An emperor keeps his last word more sacred than his first."

He then called the men and women to him and told them that he not only spared them, but the whole city, from its doom of sword and fire. Thus did the women of Weinsberg save their husbands and their town.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE MEETING OF KING RICHARD AND SALADIN

When King Richard of England was engaged in the Crusades, he and his army of knights and soldiers were opposed to the mighty hosts of Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt and Syria. Saladin was a brave and courtly enemy, and Richard himself was full of knightly adventure. During an intermission of the many battles that were fought on the fields of Palestine, it was arranged by conference that the monarchs should meet and exchange greetings in the presence of their followers.

A station called the Diamond of the Desert was assigned as the place of meeting, it being midway between the Christian and Saracen camps. Richard was to bring one

hundred armed followers and Saladin five hundred guards. All others who came were to be without armor of any kind.

The Diamond of the Desert, ordinarily a single fountain spring, was transformed into a glittering camp under the orders and care of Saladin. Embroidered flags floated over gorgeous pavilions, ornamented with rich cloths, which reflected the rays of the sun in a thousand tints and colors.

The tops of the pavilions were in scarlet, yellow, blue, and other brilliant hues, while the poles were decorated with golden pomegranates and silken flags.

On the appointed day, Richard, with his men, moved forward across the plains to meet his mighty antagonist. His body of men was small, but well chosen and of true valor. It was a gay party, rich in dress and trappings of man and horse, and noisy with bugles and the sound of laughter and song.

"We are few, my lord, and they are many," said one of the knights. "Do you not fear treachery of this pagan? It seems that I hear the sound of many feet and many voices. Had we better not have a care?"

"Shame on you, knight!" answered Richard. "The sultan may be an infidel, but he is a generous enemy and a knightly one. I have his word that there shall be no violence, and it is enough."

They crossed a low hill and came in sight of the pavilion. They stopped at the sight of the splendid display that the sultan had made for their reception. As soon as they appeared, the Arabs caught sight of them and hundreds of them rode forward in a swift gallop. Clouds of dust rose in the air. The Saracen host surrounded the body of Christians, and began to yell their barbaric welcome, to brandish their spears and to shoot a volley of arrows into the air.

"Have no fear that they will do us harm," said Richard. "Their arrows are blunt, their spear heads have been removed. This is their way of welcoming a guest."

"I would we had a thousand good knights here to greet them in return," said one of his followers. "I should feel in better humor to partake of their hospitality."

"Truly, a wild welcome!" exclaimed Richard. "But it is after their desert fashion, and doubtless they would rejoice to see us daunted and disturbed; but remember, we have English hearts not easily dismayed." And with that the body of Christians moved on toward the pavilion, while the Saracen riders continually encircled them with loud cries and warlike greetings.

When they came near the camp a shrill cry was heard above the tumult as of a signal from a silver trumpet. Immediately the Saracen horde ceased their howlings and circlings, and fell in behind the Christians, with singular order and quiet. The dust began to settle upon the plains and Richard could now get sight of the pavilion toward which he was proceeding.

A body of cavalry approached him, the five hundred guards agreed upon for the defence of the Sultan. They were completely armed, most gorgeously arrayed, and each man rode a horse worth an earl's ransom. Richard's eyes shone with eagerness when he recognized the splendid body of soldiers, though they were but slaves of the sultan and were infidels.

"Truly, my brother Saladin knows how to choose his men. My eyes never beheld better men or finer mounts. I would they were of my train," muttered the royal leader to himself.

The splendid army moved forward to the sound of martial music, though it was somewhat barbaric in its wild desert strains. When they reached the body of Christians they respectfully divided into two parts, leaving an open path for Richard and his men to move forward. It would have been an easy thing to murder every Christian, but there was no need for fear, for Saladin was the host and his word for safety had been given.

Richard assumed the head of his followers, aware that Saladin was approaching. It was not long before the noble figure of the Saracen leader, wearing a snow-white turban and vest, and a scarlet sash, appeared, surrounded by his domestic officers and a body-guard of hideous negroes.

A close inspection showed in his turban that inestimable gem which was known as the Sea of Light, and which was worth alone more than the crown jewels of England. In his ring he wore a diamond that was worth an empire, and his sword was ornamented with a sapphire the like of which could not be found in the world.

"He may be a pagan, but he is truly a king," said Richard as his host came in full view and prepared to dismount from his white Arabian steed.

Richard dismounted also and the monarchs approached each other. There was profound silence, the music ceased, and the clamor of voices was hushed. Both monarchs bowed very low, and then according to the Eastern custom, they embraced as brothers and equals. Richard looked upon the Saracen with curious but not discourteous eyes. Saladin gave no sign of curiosity or interest in the trappings of his guest or of his followers. At last the sultan spoke.

"King Richard is as welcome to Saladin as water to the desert. I trust he feels no fear of all this host, for they are not armed and mean no discourtesy. The name of Richard is a terror in these deserts, with which nurses frighten children and the Arab subdues his steed. Therefore the tribe is here, but not with warlike intent. Who could remain at home when there was a chance to behold Richard?"

King Richard made a low bow and a suitable reply, and then Saladin led the way to a wonderful pavilion that he had prepared for the reception of his royal guest. Everything was provided that luxury could devise, and Richard was amazed that the desert could produce such comfort.

The king removed his riding cloak and stood before Saladin in the close dress that showed his great strength and symmetry of form, in contrast to the thin frame of the Eastern monarch. It was Richard's sword that at once attracted the attention of the Saracen.

"Had I not seen this sword flaming in the thick of battle, I scarce could believe that human hand could wield so heavy a blade," said he, attempting in vain to raise the sword into the air.

"If the noble Saladin desires to see me try my strength with this sword, I will gladly show him its might and power."

To this Saladin agreed. Richard, looking around, saw an attendant with a steel mace, the handle being of the same metal, and of about an inch and a half in thickness. He signaled for the mace to be laid upon a block of wood.

One of his knights, named DeVaux, cried out in consternation, "My lord, pray not attempt so impossible a feat. The bar is of steel, and no human arm could sever it in twain. Give no triumph to the Saracen, I beg of you."

"Peace, DeVaux!" answered the king. "I know my strength and I know my good sword. Here, help me strip for this trial."

The great broadsword, wielded by both hands of the king, rose aloft to the left shoulder, circled around his head, descended with the terrific force of some powerful engine, and the bar of steel rolled on the ground in two pieces, as if a woodsman had cut a sapling in twain.

"A wonderful blow, by the head of the prophet!" cried out Saladin in utter amazement. He then examined the bar which had been cut asunder, and the blade of the sword, which was so well tempered that it did not show the least sign of being dulled or hurt by the feat it had performed.

The sultan presently said, "I would fain attempt something, also, for each land has its own exercises, and

possibly Saladin may perform a trick at arms beyond even the great power of the noble Richard."

So saying, he took from the floor a cushion made of silk and the softest down, and placed it upright before him. It was so light that a breath of wind could move it across the pavilion. "Can thy weapon sever that cushion, my brother?" asked he, turning to Richard.

"Nay, surely not," replied the king. "Not even the sword of Arthur can cut that which offers no resistance!"

"Mark, then," said Saladin with a smile. Tucking up his sleeve he showed an arm, thin and brown, but strong with the blood and bone of the desert. He unsheathed his scimitar, a curved and narrow blade, of a dull blue color. Through it were thousands of lines, showing the infinite care with which the armorer had welded it into exquisite sharpness and temper.

Stepping forward, he drew the scimitar across the cushion and with apparently little effort. The cushion fell apart without even half sinking under the touch of the sultan's blade. It seemed almost to separate itself.

"A juggler's trick!" cried DeVaux, springing forward. "There is witchery in this, for no sword could perform such a miracle."

The sultan seemed to understand the doubt of the knight, and smiled at his incredulity. Taking from his face the veil which he had worn, which was made of the finest woven silk of his domains, he laid it across the edge of his sword, and then extended the blade in the air.

Slowly the veil fell into parts, as the temper of the sword severed the delicate threads. The Sultan stood without moving more than a tremble of his arm but the sharp edge of the scimitar did its work, until in a few, moments the severed parts of the silk veil floated in the air.

"Behold, my brother!" said Saladin; "it is not always to the powerful that comes the victory. I know not which is best,

thy mighty blow that severs the steel, or this thin blade that can divide the very marrow of men."

Soon afterward the sultan retired, leaving Richard and his followers to rest in the pavilion provided for their entertainment.

CHAPTER XXV

ADVENTURES OF RICHARD, THE LION HEART

Richard, King of England, had been in Palestine, fighting the wars of the Crusades. When he was there he heard that his brother John was trying to take his kingdom from him. Accordingly, Richard thought it was time for him to return to England, and forthwith set out for home.

He had many enemies in Europe, who would be glad indeed to take him prisoner. This made his journey dangerous and necessitated great caution on his part. When his ship was wrecked off the coast of Italy, he put on the dress of a pilgrim, and started across Europe on foot. With him were a few faithful friends.

At one place he sent a servant to ask leave to pass through the country, as he was a pilgrim returning from the Holy Land. Having no money he offered a costly ring in payment of protection.

The lord looked at the ring and said, "This is too costly a ring to belong to a pilgrim. Tell your master to come in person, that I may discover who he is that travels with the jewels of a king, but in the garb of a pilgrim."

Richard did not call upon the lord, but escaped, leaving some of his companions in prison. There were with him now only a knight and a boy. These three journeyed on into Austria. When the party reached Vienna the boy was sent into

a shop to buy food. Seeing the boy had plenty of money, the shopkeepers were curious to know the name of his master.

"I shall not tell you the name of my master. Sell me food and let me go," said the boy indignantly. But this did not satisfy the merchants, and taking him before a magistrate they made him confess that his master was a royal personage traveling in disguise. Whereupon soldiers were sent to surround the house where Richard was, and soon the king was a prisoner in the hands of Leopold, Duke of Austria, one of his bitterest enemies.

Leopold was glad to sell so dangerous a prisoner to some one else, for he needed money more than he desired war with England. Accordingly he sold the king to the German emperor for a large sum of money. Richard was then sent to a castle on the Rhine river, and his subjects in England waited in vain for his coming home. For the time being no one knew what had become of the kingly pilgrim.

When he reached the place where he was to be imprisoned, he was thrown into a cell, so strongly built that no one could possibly escape from it. It was lighted by a window, or rather opening, much too small for anyone to get through. Here the king was kept prisoner for a long while, sleeping on a rude pallet of straw, and eating such food as his jailer chose to bring him.

But Richard was of a dauntless spirit, and of a very powerful body. He had already endured much hardship and was capable of enduring much more. Besides that, he was cheerful and always hopeful. He amused himself by singing and playing the harp, though he knew that at any time his captors might consign him to a cruel death.

The king had in England a faithful adherent of his former years. This was Blondel, a singer, or minstrel, whose business it was to amuse his master by singing and playing on the harp, of which Richard himself was very fond, and in which he had become very proficient.

When Blondel heard that his master had disappeared, he took his harp, saying, "I shall wander over Europe and sing at every prison door. If my master hears me he will answer." Accordingly, the minstrel set out on his journeys, accompanied by a few faithful knights and followers.

The party wandered all over Germany. They inquired at every castle and at every prison, and in all towns, "Have you any news of Richard of England, whom men call the Lion-Heart?" But everywhere the answer was the same. No one knew anything of the lost king.

Already the party had searched along the Danube and the Rhine. One day they came to the tower called Trifels. A strange feeling came over Blondel. "I have a belief that my master is confined in yonder tower," said he to his companions. "Let us rest here in these woods while I spy out the land."

His companions concealed themselves, while Blondel went forward toward the castle, on which was the tower. On the way he met a maiden with whom he fell into conversation. He asked her many questions about the castle and if there were any prisoners there.

"Oh, indeed there are, but I have never seen them, nor do I know their names! Every castle has its dungeons and its prisoners, but only the men see them," said she.

When the girl was leaving him, Blondel took his harp from his shoulders, and resting by the roadside, he began to sing a song, while he played an accompaniment on his harp. As he played, the girl's eyes brightened. "Ah, I know that song!" she exclaimed. "It is the song that a poor captive in the north tower sings. I can hear it every day while I pasture my sheep in the neighborhood."

Blondel begged her to tell him more, but she sprang away and disappeared in the direction of the castle. Full of hope, the minstrel went back to his friends and told them what

had happened, confident that he had at last found the prison place of his master and king.

When it grew dark Blondel crept carefully up to the walls of the tower and began to sing the old songs that Richard loved, and to play his harp in the old way that the king knew so well. In fact, it is said that Blondel sang a song that the king himself had composed and set to music.

When the song ceased, Blondel listened for a reply. You can imagine his joy when from the window of the tower there came a continuation of the song. "My master! My master!" cried out the happy minstrel. "I have found you at last."

One story has it that Blondel and his friends hastened back to England and told everybody where Richard was imprisoned, and that a large sum of money was raised to pay for the king's ransom.

Another story has it that the day after Blondel had discovered the whereabouts of his master he applied to the castle for entrance, and soon was admitted to sing and play before the governor. He kept his eyes and ears open, but could learn nothing about his captive king. After several days he ventured to resort to cunning to obtain his purpose.

He soon discovered that the girl he had met outside the castle was named Mathilda, and that she was the daughter of the warden who kept all the keys.

"I shall make love to the beautiful Mathilda," said he to himself, "for I have heard that love can open all doors." Thereupon he sang to the maiden his sweetest songs with the result that not only did Mathilda fall in love with Blondel, but the minstrel himself succumbed to the charms of the lovely young girl.

At last he told her who he was, and said, "The knight in the tower, who sings the songs, is my master. He is Richard, King of England, and I would have you aid me in securing his

release. Then we shall all fly to England, where he can again be king and you shall become my bride."

Mathilda agreed, and together they laid their plans. On a dark, stormy night the girl secured the keys to the room in the tower and opened the doors for the king to come out. She handed him a helmet and a sword and bade him follow her to the courtyard of the castle. "Now strike yonder sentinels, or silence them, while I unbar the gates," said she to the king.

Richard was now armed, and with a few strokes of his sword the sentinels were beyond doing him any harm. The gates were flung open, and Richard's friends, who had waited patiently outside, rushed in and overpowered the garrison that had now surrounded the king.

It was short work for the king and his knights to cut their way through the soldiers. Blondel seized Mathilda and bore her safely outside. Soon the entire party were beyond reach of the soldiers and were safely hidden in the depths of the forests. When day dawned they mounted horses which had been made ready, and were soon beyond pursuit.

After many wanderings, they reached England, where Richard mounted his throne, and where Blondel and Mathilda were happily married.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE PRINCE OF TRAVELERS

Six or seven hundred years ago, Venice was the largest, richest and gayest city of Europe. Along her canals stood marble palaces, where proud noblemen and rich merchants lived. Her warehouses were packed with merchandise from the East, her markets were full of traders from all countries and speaking all languages, and her bay was crowded with ships whose sails had been spread on all seas. Venice was queen of the Adriatic Sea.

There was always talk of the far country to the East, from which caravans had brought rare silks, perfumes and spices. Eastern traders, coming half-way to meet the Western merchants, had told marvelous tales of cities paved with gold, of gardens heavy with spices, of courts and kings so splendid that the eye was dazzled and the mind lost in wonder. It was a fairy tale of China that grew in the telling.

There was a wealthy family in Venice named Polo. They lived in a palace on one of the canals, stately and imposing, full of servants to do their bidding, and friends to help them make merry with the wealth that had come to them by inheritance and industry. But for many years it had been quiet, and tenanted only by a few members of the family. The servants still cared for it, and a few rooms were still occupied, but for the most part it was closed and silent.

The fact was that, for twenty years, the master of the home, Nicolo Polo, his brother, Maffeo, and his son, Marco Polo, had been traveling in the East, and not a word had been heard of them, nor a letter received from them in all this time. "They are dead, sir," was the answer the servants gave to all questions. "They left here many years ago, saying they were going to China, but we heard they were killed by a band of robbers somewhere in the East."

This was not the first trip that Nicolo and Maffeo Polo had made to China, for years before they had ventured into that strange country, and on their return had decided to go back, taking Marco, a lad of seventeen years of age, with them. This second adventure is the one with which our story deals, for it lasted a long time, and their friends, relatives, and servants thought that they were all lost.

And so the years had passed, the servants had grown old, some friends had died, and Venice had grown larger and more powerful. The palace of the Polos stood almost vacant and its former splendor almost forgotten.

One day, however, three rough-looking men landed from a galley that was moored at the quay, and walked across the square of St. Mark. Their clothes were rough and shabby, and were of Tartar make. In fact, they looked as if they might be Tartars. The two older men wore long pointed caps and coats that reached to the ground. About their waists were belts, from which hung scimitars, such as the Tartars use. One of them led by a chain a great shaggy dog that he had brought from Tartary.

The youngest of the three was about forty years of age, but he, also, wore the outlandish costume of some oriental race, and, like the others, was tanned by exposure, until he was the color of the savage tribes that live upon the wilds of Asia. All three wore long beards and their hair fell in tangled heaps over their shoulders.

The two older men were Nicolo and Maffeo Polo, and the younger man was Marco Polo. They had returned unannounced to Venice, after an absence of twenty years. They presented a queer sight as they tramped across the square and the people turned and looked at them in astonishment.

Not far from the square, they took a gondola, and tried to tell the gondolier to take them to Nicolo Polo's house. They had almost forgotten their own Italian tongue, and it was with much difficulty that they could gather together enough words to make themselves understood. For twenty years they had spoken in the language of the Tartars. It did not take long, however, for the gondolier to land them at the steps of their own palace.

There was the same old house as they remembered it, stately and beautiful as ever, with its carved doors, its beautiful arches, looking just as it did twenty years before, when the same three travelers had left it amid the farewells of their family and friends. A group of curious neighbors gathered around the strange men, staring at them with all their might.

Marco knocked loudly at the portal. At first there was no response, but after awhile a servant leaned out the window and demanded, "Who are you, and what do you want?"

Marco answered, "We are the masters of this house, and we demand admission. Come down and unbar the door."

At this unheard-of assertion the servants laughed, and called out, "Away, you impostors! Leave the place at once, or we shall call an officer of the law. The masters of this palace are dead, and their relatives are away on a hunt."

The three travelers were forced to find lodgings at a near-by inn for the night, though they did not hesitate to announce to everyone that they were the three Polos, who had been away for twenty years and had now returned to give an account of their wanderings. In order to prove they were really what they pretended to be, the three Polos persuaded the servants at the palace to allow them to give a great feast and invite their friends to it. On the night of the banquet, the Polos sent around to the palace a number of boxes, which were carefully stored in one of the rooms, and plenty of money to pay for all the food and wine.

The guests came, with some misgivings of the outcome. The banquet was a very grand affair; nothing better could be prepared or served in all Venice. Instead of appearing in the ragged clothes that they had been wearing, the Polos had completely changed their costume and appearance. They wore now the richest silks and velvets that any one ever saw, and jewels sparkled on their fingers and shoe buckles. Their hair and beards had been cut in the latest style of Venice, and their manners had become those of real noblemen, and besides that, their native language had fully returned in a few days' practice.

In the midst of the banquet Marco Polo arose and said, "My friends, you once doubted that we really were what we claimed to be. Twenty years ago we left Venice, and since that time we have traveled far and have seen many wonders of the world. We returned to you in the garb of Tartars, but we have

brought with us the riches of China. We concealed our treasures, for fear of robbers on the way. It now remains for us to prove to you that we are not beggars."

Saying this, he left the room, and soon returned, bringing with him the old shabby Tartar clothes in which the three had made their appearance in Venice. He then began to rip open the seams of the long coats as they lay upon the table. Out from the seams rolled a number of beautiful diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, and other precious stones. Every seam was ripped open and revealed its treasures, until there was a dazzling heap on the table.

The company was amazed at all this wealth, and also at the wonderful silks and other cloths which Marco Polo showed, from the boxes he had stored in the room of the palace. There was no longer any doubt of the identity of the three men. They were indeed Nicolo, Maffeo and Marco Polo, who had returned to their home after so many years of wandering. The company was convinced that it was so, and the Polos settled again in their old palace, amid the wealth and luxury which were justly theirs.

The story of the adventures of Marco Polo was a wonder story that never tired the Venetians, who listened to him with ever increasing delight. "It took us nearly four years to reach the lands of the great Khan, a ruler of China, and we passed through many strange lands on our way. We went through Palestine and Arabia, and stayed awhile in the city of Bagdad. Then we wandered through Persia and Turkestan, seeing many singular people and gorgeous shows, and having perilous escapes from bandits and accidents. We walked most of the way, and by no means were in a hurry, for it takes a long time to see the world," said Marco to those around him one day.

"And what are the Chinese like?" asked the Venetians.

"They are a quiet, busy, civilized people, most of whom are farmers. They are short in stature, with squint eyes,

high cheek bones, with hair worn in a long braid down the back, and of a peculiar yellow complexion," answered Marco, for up to that time the Venetians had never seen a Chinaman. "They wear a long, loose coat, embroidered in rich designs, odd little cloth shoes, and hats with broad brims and the crown coming up to a point." From which we see that the Chinese a thousand years ago, in Polo's time, were very much in appearance and dress as they are to-day.

Then he told them of the gorgeous temples, covered inside and out with ornaments, and containing huge idols, before which the Chinese knelt and burned a strange incense; of the strange houses they lived in, of beautiful and curious design; of the little shops where carvings and curiosities were sold; of the great rice fields, where the grain was raised that furnished the main food for the people. Of all this Marco spoke in glowing terms, telling many interesting facts about his life with the strange people of the East.

"The ruler's name is Kublai Khan," continued he, "and he lives in the most wonderful palace in the world, with hunting grounds many hundreds of miles in extent, with thousands of attendants to do his bidding."

Then Marco told how he gained the favor of the Khan, who sent him on several important missions to various parts of China. He was a trusted envoy of the great Chinese ruler, and visited many strange lands and had many adventures. He finally rose to a position of importance and was once the governor of a great Chinese city.

Finally the Polos decided to return to Venice, but the Khan had grown so fond of them, particularly of Marco, that he did not wish them to leave him. In fact, he told them positively not to leave the kingdom and to make no more requests to depart.

After a great hunting party in the North, when the Khan had returned to his capital, he found an envoy from the court of Persia, asking the Khan to select one of the fairest and

noblest of his subjects to be the wife of the Persian king. After much ceremony and many weeks of entertainment for the ambassadors, a beautiful young girl was selected, loaded with presents and made ready for the journey. The ambassadors from Persia, on their departure, approached the Khan and, bowing low, said in humble tones, "Most noble sir, we have learned to love the three Venetians now in your employ, who greatly desire to accompany us to Persia, as escort for the lady who is to be the wife of our sovereign; we pray you to send them with her, since she also wishes it."

The Khan frowned, but could find no excuse for not allowing the Polos to go. So he gave his consent, and even agreed that they should return to Venice. He filled their bags with rare clothing and jewels, and wept on the day of their departure.

Thus it was that the Polos told the story of how they had lived in and finally left China, after many years' wandering over that empire. Years afterward Marco had all his adventures set down in a book, written by a friend of his, when they were both in prison in Genoa, after being captured in a great sea fight between the Venetian and Genoese fleets. The book was copied and read by many people, and nearly two hundred years afterward, fell into the hands of Christopher Columbus, whose desire to reach India and China was greatly enhanced by reading the wonderful adventures of this Prince of Travelers.

CHAPTER XXVII

WILLIAM TELL, THE SWISS PATRIOT

Many hundreds of years ago, there lived far up in the mountains of Switzerland, a race of hardy and independent people that most of the conquerors of the day had passed by. Their land was so bare and mountainous, that it did not attract the Huns and Vandals who were moving upon the rich plains and valleys of Europe. Century after century passed, and the hardy mountaineers lived on undisturbed.

At last, one of the Dukes of Austria claimed that the land of these Swiss people belonged to him, and went to make good his claims. He sent a governor and a band of soldiers to take charge of the country and force the people to submit to his authority.

The rulers were very cruel and oppressed the people mightily. In Unterwald, there was a Swiss countryman whose name was Henry Melchthal. He was a good citizen and much beloved by his people, but the governor was his enemy.

Now Henry had some fine oxen which the governor ordered his servants to seize, telling the messenger, "The governor says that the peasants should plow the fields themselves and not own such fine stock."

Henry unharnessed the oxen and delivered them to the servant. His son Arnold, however, was so angry that he struck the servant with a stick and broke his hand. Upon this, Arnold fled for fear of his life, and hid himself in the country of Uri. When the servant returned and told the governor what had happened, he was so enraged that by his orders old Henry was seized and his eyes were torn from their sockets. It was such actions as this that made the Austrian governor hated by the Swiss people.

Arnold called together several of his friends and told them his story. At last there was quite a large band of Swiss patriots who declared that they were tired of the Austrian rule and would not stand it much longer. This was the beginning of the revolt on the part of the Swiss that finally ended in their freedom.

Of all tyrannical governors which Albert of Austria sent to govern the Swiss people, none was worse than Gessler. He lived in a fortress in Uri, which he had built as a place of safety in case of revolt. Everywhere he went he was attended by a body of guards, and was most insulting to the people. They followed him with sullen looks and took no pains to conceal their enmity.

Moreover, Gessler took no pains to conciliate or gain their friendship. One day he had a pole erected in the market place at Altdorf, under the elm trees which were growing there, and directed that his hat should be placed on top of the pole.

An officer stood in the market place and called aloud to the people, "The governor orders that all who pass through the market place shall bow or kneel to his hat, as if it were to the king himself. All who refuse shall be beaten with rods and their property shall be confiscated."

To this insulting order the people gave no response. A guard was placed near the pole, with drawn swords, and all who passed that way were compelled to bow to the hat of Gessler, whether they liked it or not.

On the Sunday following the erection of the pole a peasant from the mountains of Uri, by the name of William Tell, came into the market place and stood viewing the crowd bowing to the hat of Gessler.

Tell was one of those who had sworn to rid the country of the Austrian rule. He looked on quietly for awhile, not knowing what they were doing, for he had not heard of the order. Quietly he walked through the market place, very

haughtily, and' neither bowed his head nor bent his knee. The guards did not force him to do so, because they rather feared the people, but they did not hesitate to send word to Gessler.

Gessler summoned Tell before him at once. "Why did you not obey my order and bow your head and bend your knee to my hat in the market place?" was the imperious demand.

"I had not heard of such an order and I did not know that it was your hat. I could not imagine why the people in the market place were making such adoration," replied Tell.

Gessler did not like the explanation, nor did he like the haughty manner of the peasant. He looked at the bold mountaineer and determined upon a singular and cruel punishment.

"Where are you from?" asked he.

"I am from Uri, my lord."

"Have you any children with you?" asked Gessler.

"My son is with me," replied Tell.

"I hear you are a famous marksman, and so you shall prove your skill in my presence by shooting an apple from the head of your son. If you hit the apple, I shall spare your life, if not, it is forfeit," was the unfeeling order of the tyrant.

Tell was the most famous archer of the mountains, and rarely missed his mark, but this was a trial to test the strength of the bravest heart and the most quiet nerves. He turned to Gessler in surprise and horror. "I shall not risk the life of my son. Let me die first, but spare him." But Gessler was obdurate and Tell was forced to the terrible ordeal.

Into the market place Tell was hurried, and under a tree his son was placed, with an apple upon his head.

"My son, sit very still, and be not afraid. Your father never yet has missed his mark," said the mountaineer to his son, in a trembling voice.

"I am not afraid, my father," replied the boy, who knew the unerring marksmanship that the mountaineer had shown upon many occasions.

The paces were stepped off and Tell took his stand. Gessler watched him closely. The archer selected two arrows with great care; one he placed in his bow, and the other he slipped into his jacket. Looking at his son, he said to those around him, "Turn the child to one side; his smile disturbs me. Should I slay him, I would not see his face as he falls."

Everything was ready and the crowd held its breath. Gessler smiled, expecting the boy to be slain. Tell carefully raised his bow and took deliberate aim. The rocks of the mountains were not steadier than he when his strong arm bent the bow and sped the arrow on its way. His son stood immovable, trusting to the skill of his father. Then the crowd shouted, "A fair mark; the apple is split in two and the child is safe."

The crowd surrounded the boy and took him in their arms, but Gessler scowled with dismay. Turning to Tell, he angrily demanded, "What means that other arrow in thy jacket?"

Tell turned to him and, taking the arrow from his jacket, said, "With this shaft I would have slain thee, thou tyrant, had I killed my child." And there was great silence in the market place when Tell uttered these brave and defiant words.

The face of Gessler was suffused with anger. "I promised you your life and you shall have it," said he; "but you shall have it in a place where you can never again behold the light of day." Turning to his guards, he said, "Seize that man and bind his hands."

The crowd was too overawed at Gessler to make any resistance. The guards were many and well-armed. Tell was seized, his arms were bound and he was hurried to the side of

the lake, accompanied by Gessler and the guards. Here he was placed in a boat, his bow being laid beside the steersman.

Gessler himself entered the boat with a few of his guards, and ordered the oarsmen to push off from shore and head towards the landing where Tell could be taken to the governor's fortress. Half-way across the lake a sudden storm arose, which frightened Gessler and all of his men. "My lord," cried one of them, "unless some one who knows how to manage it takes charge of this boat we shall all go to the bottom."

Gessler was a coward, and turning to Tell, said to him, "If you can bring us out of this danger I will release you from your bonds, and will let you return to your home." But he had no intention of keeping his promise.

To this Tell replied, "I know something of managing a boat; untie these hands and I can bring it to the shore."

Tell's hands were then unbound, and he was given the helm of the boat. He was a skilful boatman, and knew all about how to manage a craft upon the mountain lakes. In a short while, he had the boat under command and headed for the shore.

As he came near the land, he cried out to the oarsmen, "Steady, while I turn the boat towards yonder rock." In a moment the boat was beside a great stone, and underneath its shelter, so that it was in comparative safety.

Dropping the helm and seizing his bow, Tell leaped upon the rock, at the same time giving the boat a shove back into the lake. With a cry of defiance, he disappeared in the woods, while the enraged Gessler saw his victim escape.

In a short while the oarsmen succeeded in reaching the shore at the point to which they had intended to go, and Gessler and his party landed on their way to his fortress.

In the meanwhile, Tell had quickly made his way through the woods and had concealed himself behind a tree,

near a narrow passage, through which he knew Gessler and his party had to go on their way home. Here Tell waited, bow in hand and arrow in place.

He did not have long to wait. The angry governor came, swearing vengeance against Tell. "If I ever lay my hands upon him again, I shall have him torn to pieces at once. He and all like him must be taught a lesson."

In the midst of his wrath, there was suddenly heard the twang of a bow and the noise of a shaft as it sped through the air. A moment more and the deadly arrow had pierced the heart of the tyrant, and he reeled upon his horse. His servants caught him as he fell. He was laid upon the ground, and in a short while his days of cruelty and his powers of revenge were over.

Thus did William Tell rid his country of an oppressive governor, and on that spot there stands to-day a chapel built by the people of Switzerland in memory of the brave deed of the bold mountaineer.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SWISS DEFEND THE MORGARTEN PASS

Gessler was dead, slain by an arrow from the bow of William Tell. As soon as the news became spread abroad, signal fires were lighted on every mountain, and the hardy mountaineers came together from every direction, armed and ready to fight for liberty. They were determined that Switzerland should be free of the Austrian oppression.

One morning early, a band of men approached the castle of Landenburg, one of the oppressive Austrian governors. He was on the point of leaving his castle, when he was met by this band of twenty mountaineers, who said to him, "Sir, according to our custom, we are bringing you a gift

of calves, goats, sheep, fowls and hares. We pray you to accept this gift and let us take it into the court-yard of your castle."

Landenburg was much pleased with the present, and ordered the gates to be opened that the men might enter. No sooner, however, had they entered than one of them blew a horn very loudly, and at once each of them drew from behind his doublet a steel blade, which he attached to the end of his staff. Other men rushed from the neighboring wood and made for the open gates. In a few minutes the garrison was overpowered and the castle was captured.

Landenburg and his men fled in haste, but were soon overtaken and brought back to the castle. The patriots made them promise to leave Switzerland and never return, on the condition that they would spare their lives. To this they very cheerfully consented and for awhile Switzerland was free of the Austrian governors.

All this did not stop Albert of Austria, who claimed the land of Switzerland as his own.

"I shall teach those rebels a lesson," said he, and proceeded to raise an army to march against them. But Albert had his own enemies to deal with, and among them was his nephew, the Duke of Swabia. As the Austrian forces marched into Swabia, they approached a river over which Albert and his forces had to be ferried. A few of them had crossed the river when the Duke of Swabia suddenly rushed upon Albert and buried his lance in his neck, exclaiming, "This is the end of you and of your unjust tyranny!"

Others rode upon the unfortunate Albert, stabbing him with daggers, while one of his followers cleft his head in twain with his sword. The conspirators fled, leaving the dying man to breathe his last, with his head supported in the lap of a peasant woman, who had witnessed the murder and had hurried to the scene.

It is needless to say that all this pleased the Swiss very much. They now had time to cement their government and to

form their confederacy, which was the foundation of the liberty that they enjoy to the present day.

A number of years passed before the Austrians undertook to reduce the Swiss to subjection. One morning a band of Austrian horsemen went slowly up the Swiss mountains with their spears and lances gleaming in the sun, intent upon invading the Swiss territory. There were knights clad in armor and valiant soldiers who, up to this time, had not known defeat. At the head of the group rode Leopold, one of the bravest knights of Austria, and following him came the rank and file of the Austrian army.

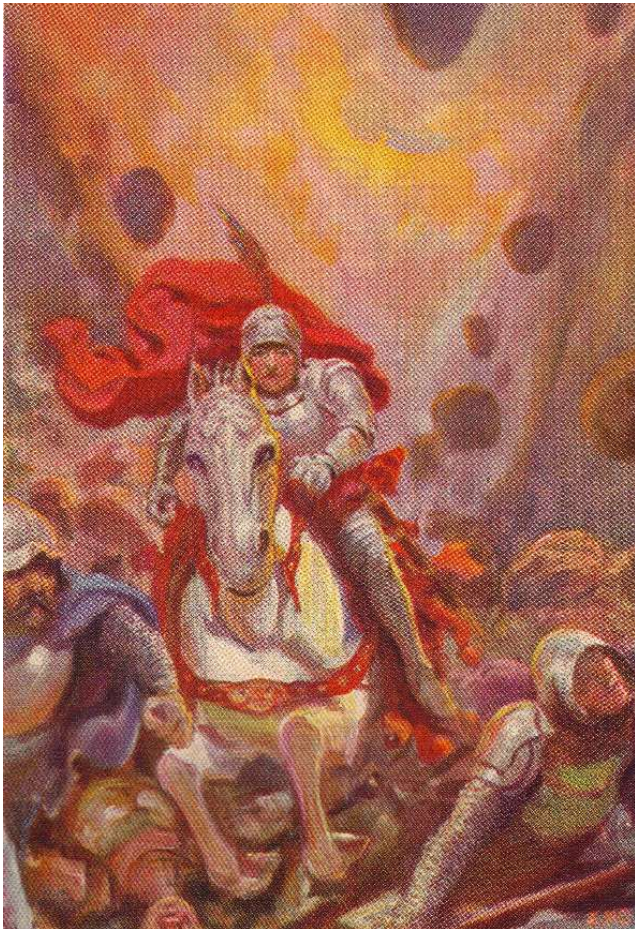
Landenburg was with them, also; he who had been driven from Switzerland seven years before and now swore vengeance against those who had seized his castle and expelled him from his possessions. He had been set free, with the understanding that he would never return to Switzerland, but in defiance of his vow he was coming back. There were also several members of the family of Gessler, the tyrant that Tell's arrow had slain.

Up the mountain pass went the knights and soldiers very gaily. It was a beautiful day in early autumn and there were no signs or sounds of the Swiss near-by. The Austrians were confident of victory, and their voices rang out in laughter and in disdain as they contemplated the vengeance which they would wreak upon the Swiss, who they thought were no soldiers and would flee before them like chaff before the wind.

Duke Leopold was astride a noble horse. Attached to his saddle was a long coil of rope. One of the knights said to him, "My lord, what do you intend to do with that rope which I see is attached to your saddle-bow?"

"With this rope I intend to hang the leaders of the rebels. I think I have enough to hang every mountaineer that shall come against us," said he laughingly. Still there was no sign of the Swiss on any side. The Austrian army rode forward

more like a pleasure excursion than an army bound upon conquest.



ROCKS CAME PLUNGING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE.

"I fear the Swiss have fled over their mountains or have crawled into their cliffs," said Duke Leopold. "We shall have to rout them out, if we expect to capture them."

A knight riding by his side remarked, "They have killed one governor and expelled another, but they shall find that the eagle of Austria will descend upon them and take its bloody vengeance." Thus the Austrians were too confident of

victory. By the middle of the day they found themselves at the entrance to a pass or gap in the mountains, such as is frequent in the Swiss highlands. The road was narrow, and on both sides, for quite a distance, the cliffs rose precipitously. It was a narrow and dangerous ravine wedged between the hills. Silence fell upon the advancing host, as if they had a premonition of disaster. They were now in the pass of Morgarten. The duke remarked, "This looks dangerous to me, and if I were not marching against so ignorant a body of soldiers, I should fear the pass; but let us spur on, for beyond is the open land with villages of the peasantry."

In a short while, most of the advance guard was in the middle of the pass. It was the flower of the Austrian army and nobility. Suddenly the stillness was broken by loud cries from the cliffs about them on both sides. Answering the cries, the knights looked up in alarm, and saw immense boulders beginning to loosen themselves from the sides of the mountains and roll down with irresistible force. It was too late to turn back, because in an instant the descending rocks were upon them. They came plunging down the mountain side and fell upon the mail-clad and crowded ranks in the narrow pass. The helmets of the knights cracked like shells. The armor was no protection, and men were crushed into shapeless masses, and buried beneath the weight of the rocks and dirt as it descended upon them in great masses.

There were no means to fight this unseen foe, with its avalanche of stones against which there was no resistance. The pass was closed in front of them and behind them; horses began to rear and plunge and crushed the knights beneath them. Still death-dealing rocks came down, smashing the armor as if it were pasteboard. Soon the pass was filled with dead and dying men. Strange to say, all this had been accomplished by fifty men who, on learning that Switzerland was in danger, had stationed themselves among the cliffs in the mountain pass and had provided themselves with means

for loosening the great stones which lay plentifully around them.

As a matter of fact, these patriots, when they were apprised of the approach of the Austrians, had taken the advice of an old Swiss mountaineer, named Redin, who was too old and infirm to be among the party and yet who had much reputation for skill and strategy in war. The warriors stopped by his door on their march against the Austrians and asked, "What can fifty men do to repel the attack of a thousand Austrian horsemen?"

Then old Redin said, "The Swiss passes can be defended against the multitudes if you have faith and but know how. My children, you must block the road and fight them from the clouds. The Morgarten pass is where you will catch them unawares."

Hearing the advice of the old warrior and patriot, the fifty men hastened forward and stationed themselves as we have seen.

The Austrian forces were rapidly slain in that narrow passage, unable to escape the descending stones. With rearing horses trampling them underfoot, the knights and men were crushed beyond recognition, and it seemed as if the whole army would be annihilated.

Landenburg fell, instantly killed. Two of the relatives of Gessler were also slain. The Duke Leopold himself narrowly escaped from the vengeance of the mountaineers. Managing to climb over the stones which blocked his path, he fled at full speed before the pursuit of the Swiss soldiers, which were stationed on either side of the pass to attack those who fled from it.

The poor duke managed to escape his pursuers, and calling upon a peasant, who did not recognize him, said, "For heaven's sake, my good sir, show me a pass through this ravine and I shall pay you well. My pursuers are upon me and I am no enemy of this country."

The peasant, deceived by the duke's words and desiring to help a stranger, led him through the pass and brought him to safety. He returned to his own land in the utmost dejection, leaving most of his army dead in the pass, or strewn by the side of the lake where they had been attacked and killed by the Swiss patriots.

There was now great rejoicing in Switzerland. A few men hurling stones, assisted by a body of others ready to avenge their country's wrongs, had overwhelmed a great Austrian army. Peace was concluded between the hardy mountaineers and their oppressors, and that portion of Switzerland was free, and from that day to this they have never surrendered their liberty.

CHAPTER XXIX

EDWARD, THE BLACK PRINCE

When Edward III became King of England, being young and brave, he was anxious to do something to win fame as a soldier. War seemed to be the business of all kings at that time and very little excuse was needed for raising an army and engaging in battle. In fact, there was little else than fighting and war to engage the attention of the people.

A chance came to quarrel with Philip, King of France. Philip had declared that Edward's possessions in France were forfeited, which, of course, offended the English king so that he now had an excuse for war. An army of thirty thousand men was raised and with it Edward sailed across the channel and invaded France.

Much success attended England's arms as they went farther and farther into the country, plundering the rich cities. They gathered much booty and the knights were in great glee over their success. When at last Edward decided that he had gone far enough and wished to return to Calais, a city which

was in his possession, he found that the French army had gotten between him and the sea and the English could not go back to their ships without fighting an army much larger than their own.

The French king, thinking he had Edward in a trap, marched rapidly to intercept him and give him battle. Edward stopped his army at a little village called Crecy, and calling his leaders around him, said to them, "To-morrow we give battle to Philip of France. If we win, we shall keep our possessions in this fair land. If we lose, we shall probably all be buried here upon this soil. I shall rest the battle upon your strength and the skill of my son Edward, who must now try his strength as a leader of English soldiers."

To this his knights and men replied with loud clanking of arms, and Edward, who was called the Black Prince, because he always wore black armor, said to his father, "We shall remember that we are English and that we fight for our country and our kin."

The evening before the battle there was great preparation among the English. There was polishing and mending of armor and much feasting among the soldiers. The king himself gave a banquet to the earls and barons of the army and did much to encourage them to carry out his plans for the battle. When they had left, the king went into his room, and falling on his knees, prayed that he might come off victorious in the morrow's battle.

About daybreak he awoke and called for his son Edward, Prince of Wales, and together they took the sacrament, as was the custom in those days before any great battle was fought. After that the army did the same, and so everything was set for the day's conflict.

Riding out from his tent the king gave directions for the men to be drawn up on the sloping ground in front of the little village. He divided his army into three divisions and the

first one he put under the command of Edward. Turning to his son, he said:

"My son, you are but sixteen years of age, but you are a knight and are the son of the king of England. To-day this battle shall be yours, and therefore I give you a command that will try the blood that is in your veins."

The young prince raised his sword and bent low before his father, saying, "The end of the day shall not find my father ashamed of his son."

When the battle array was set the English archers were placed in front. They were famous for their good shooting and it was hoped that they would be a great help on this day. The king himself commanded the last division, but it remained on the hill behind, as a reserve in case of need. The king retired to a windmill to watch the progress of the battle.

All day long the English stood in battle array waiting for the French to arrive, but it was near five o'clock in the afternoon when they drew near to Crecy. Four knights were sent forward to see how the English were displayed. When they returned they said to Philip, "The English have rested all day and are fresh for the battle. It is now late and our men are wearied with the long march. It is best to let them sleep to-night and be ready for the battle to-morrow. Mayhap the English will sleep in battle-line, with much discomfort. They now have the advantage."

The king himself was willing to listen to this advice, but the French knights, knowing that their strength was greater than that of the English and not counting upon the weariness of the soldiers, were eager to begin battle at once, and without waiting for orders from the king they pressed on toward the English battle-lines.

As soon as the English saw the enemy advance they sprang from the ground where they were calmly sitting, and made ready for the fight. When Philip came in sight of the English he shouted an order for his archers to begin the battle.

Just at that time a fearful thunder-storm broke over the country and rain fell in torrents. So quickly had it come that the archers had not time to protect their strings from the water, so that their bows would not shoot well. On the other hand, the English bows were quite dry, for they had carried them in canvas bags. The result was that when the French archers came within range, the English arose with a great cry and discharged their arrows with such force and number that it seemed as if it snowed.

The French archers fled in dismay and recoiled upon the ranks of the French knights, who were advancing behind them.

The French king cried out in a rage, "Kill those scoundrels! They are without courage and they block the road."

Whereupon the French knights fell upon the runaways, killing them as they came in their way.

The English archers shot on, and with deadly aim. Their arrows fell among the horsemen, killing and wounding so many that the horses themselves, freed of their riders, ran wildly among the soldiers.

Among those who rode in the battle that day was the blind king of Bohemia, who always wore three white feathers in his helmet. He was old, but very warlike, and desired to be led into the battle that he might deal one more blow against his enemies. He was an ally of Philip, king of France. The battle was raging and word came to the old king that the French troops were in disorder and it seemed as if the day were going against his friends.

"Bring me my armor and my shield, my helmet and my sword," cried he, "and order my horse to be made ready!"

His attendants hastily prepared him for battle and mounted him on his horse and tied him to the saddle.

"Give the bridle to two knights and lead me to the charge," he commanded.

This also was done, and with his old battle-cry the blind king raised his sword and dashed into the battle behind the knights, who were pushing their way through the flying archers against the oncoming ranks of the Black Prince.

In a short time the old man was in the midst of his enemies, though he could not see at whom he struck. It was not long before both of his knights lay upon the field and the old king himself was stretched dead upon the ground. The tide of battle surged around him and then away from him, and Edward, the Black Prince, came to that portion of the field where the king lay dead. Reaching down he took off the helmet of the king and removed the three feathers, which he ever afterwards wore himself and which to this day are in the coat-of-arms of the Prince of Wales. He then appropriated the king of Bohemia's motto, "*Ich dien*," which means "I serve."

The French knights and the English knights now met in deadly combat. Hand to hand they fought, and it seemed at one time as if the French must drive back the English. A knight rode in great haste to Edward III, who was watching the fight from his windmill on the hill.

"My lord," said he, "the battle goes against us unless you and your reserves come to the aid of the prince. He is fighting manfully, but the French knights outnumber us and he is sorely pressed."

"Is my son dead, or is he unhorsed, or is he so badly wounded that he cannot help himself?" inquired Edward III calmly.

"Thy son is not dead nor unhorsed nor wounded, but is fighting bravely and with all his strength," said the knight, "but he still is in sore need of your help."

The king turned to him and said, "Return to those who sent you and tell them not to send again to me this day or

expect that I shall come so long as my son is alive. I will that the boy shall win his spurs this day, and all the glory of this battle shall be his. If he be dead, let me know. Otherwise I desire no news."

The messenger carried back the word of the king, and the young prince was cheered by his father's confidence in his bravery.

Two hours went by and the day began to wane. The French knights could make no impression upon the English archers or spearmen and the bravery of the English knights was undismayed. The French retired from the field. King Philip had lost his horse and was fighting afoot. One of his knights, seeing his plight, brought him another horse and said, "Sire, retire while you can. You have lost this battle, but another time you may have victory."

Then making the king mount, he took hold of the bridle and led him away. With a few attendants the monarch fled through the darkness until he reached Paris.

Night fell upon the battle-field. It was too dark to distinguish between friend and foe and the fighting ceased. The dead lay around on all sides. The French knights wandered about seeking their friends and shouting to one another in the gloom. The English were doing the same, and occasionally hand to hand encounters took place. Late in the night all shouting from the French ceased and then the English knew that their enemies had fled and that the battle of Crecy had become another great English victory.

Bonfires were lighted upon the field of battle. The dead were piled in great heaps, to be buried upon the next day. Edward III came down from his windmill when he was told that the French had 'retired, and going to the tent of his son, took him in his arms and, according to the custom, kissed him upon the cheek, saying, "May God help you to go on as you have begun. You have borne yourself nobly this day and all the victory is yours."

CHAPTER XXX

BIG FERRE KEEPS THE FORT

The Hundred Years War was going on. France was torn and bleeding under the invasion of the English, who ravaged as they went, leaving ruin in their wake. Wherever they appeared the fertile fields were laid waste, homes were burned, and want and misery became the portion of lord and peasants alike.

The battle of Poitiers had been fought, the king of France was a prisoner, and the people were left to defend themselves the best way they could. At least for a while it was a kind of guerrilla warfare, in which the unarmed and untrained peasants played a part.

The small town or stronghold of Longueil is the scene of the story we are now to tell. It was fairly well fortified, and if the English should capture it, it would be a dangerous place for them to occupy, since they could use it as a base for their raids.

There were no soldiers to guard it; accordingly the peasants of the neighborhood gathered for its defence. They provided themselves with arms and ammunition, some stores of food, and swore they would die rather than surrender their town to the English. In all there were about two hundred of them, but they had no training as soldiers, and were ill prepared for an attack.

The men chose their captain, and formed themselves into a company. Now, the captain had a gigantic peasant for a servant, a man of great strength and boldness, who was known far and wide for his size and power. This servant was called Big Ferre. When Big Ferre was told that the English might attack the town that he had known from boyhood, he seized a bar of iron that two men could hardly lift, and whirling it

around his head, brought it down upon a log of wood with such force that the bar was bent and the log splintered into pieces.

"That is the way I shall treat the English if they show themselves in these parts," cried he.

We must remember that these were the days of cruel warfare, and any excess was considered legitimate if only an enemy would be made to suffer. Nowadays the rules of warfare forbid many things that were allowed five hundred years ago.

The English heard of this gathering of the peasants for the defence of Longueil, and laughed in scorn. "The base-born rogues—what can they hope for against the trained soldiers of England? Do they not know that we shall fling their dirty bodies to the dogs?" they asked derisively. They then prepared to march to the attack of the little fortress.

The peasants were not accustomed to the defence of a town, and did not even know how to guard the gates. They left gates wide open, and came in and went out at will. This lack of precaution resulted in disaster to the little garrison, for one day a body of armed men appeared at the gate, marched boldly into the center of the stronghold, while the heedless garrison gazed at them with open eyes and much astonishment.

"Where is your captain, and where are the soldiers?" the English officer inquired. "We have captured your fortress and we propose to stay here awhile."

Down came the captain with a body of his men, and made a bold assault on the English standing in the courtyard. But the English were too strong for the peasants, and pushed their way along the yard driving the defenders before them. Surrounding the captain they struck him to the ground and killed him with a blow.

Resistance now seemed hopeless. With their captain slain, the English inside the main court, and the first party of

the defenders dispersed, there was little hope of saving the place. The main body of the peasants were in the inner court, with Big Ferre at their head, but what could they do against so many?

"Come!" cried the great fellow to those around him. "We shall die fighting, as the English will murder us anyhow. Let us die like men and take some of them along with us."

His men answered his call with eagerness and prepared for the fray.

The old chronicler who told their story said, "They went down by different gates, and struck out with mighty blows at the English, as if they had been beating out corn on the threshing floor; their arms went up and down again, and every blow dealt a mighty wound."

Big Ferre led a party straight at the main body of the English. Over his head he brandished an enormous axe, which he wielded as though it were a feather in his hands. As he advanced the English fell around him as though he were knocking down tenpins. When he came to the spot where his captain lay dead he uttered a great cry of rage, and turned like a lion upon his foe.

The English looked with surprise upon this huge peasant, who rose head and shoulders above any of them, and who, like a maddened animal, came charging into them roaring his defiance and rage, and shaking his immense battle-axe over his head. He was indeed a terrible figure and they had every reason to be afraid.

Before the English could turn, Big Ferre was on them. With mighty sweeps of his great axe he leveled the foe as though they were grain he was cutting with a scythe. He kept the space around him clear of living men, for no one could stay in reach of his deadly weapon. One man's head was cut off, another's head was crushed in, from another he cut off an arm, and still another had a great hole in his side.

His companions were thrilled with ardor as they heard his battle-cry ring over the field: "Death to the English! Down with the foe!" and they impetuously followed him as he charged like a catapult into the ranks of the enemy.

This was more than the English could stand. Some leaped into ditches and tried to cover themselves with mud. Others ran for the gates, while still others hid under the huts and cabins of the fort. Big Fare and his men rushed after them full of rage. Reaching the place where the British had planted their flag, the big peasant slew the bearer with one blow of his axe, and seizing the flag told one of his followers to throw it into the ditch.

"There are too many English there, I cannot," was the reply.

"Then follow me with the flag," said Big Ferre, and cleaving his way through the enemy he cleared a path as if he were cutting his way through a thicket. Reaching the outer ditch, he flung the flag into the slime and dirt, and hurled his defiance at its defenders.

"He is some old god of war, come to fight with the French," cried out the English in amazement at his mighty strength. "We cannot fight the gods," and with that they turned with terror and fled from the stronghold. In a short time the place was cleared and the gates were closed. It was said that Big Ferre had killed forty men and wounded as many more, but of that no one can be certain.

The story of this day's deeds filled the English with shame. That their trained soldiers should be routed by a lot of peasants, led by a great lout of a man, was more than their pride could bear. They were filled with indignation and burned for revenge. The next day a great body marched on Longueil, determined to put an end to the exploits of Big Ferre and his men.

But Big Ferre had something to say about this plan. He had closed the gates and the walls were well manned. Their

victory of the day before had made the peasants sure of their strength, and Big Ferre thirsted for blood. On came the English, several hundred strong. Out from the gates and down the walls poured the French, voicing their battle-cry and led by the great peasant.

The battle was fierce beyond description. The peasants were like tigers, their leader a roaring lion. The great battle-axe rose and fell and every time an Englishman fell with it. At last the English broke and fled, pursued by the peasants, Big Ferre still in the lead.

The day was hot and the battle had lasted long. Big Ferre came back from the chase and drank a deep draught of cold water, and then another and another. The next day he was ill with fever, and was carried to his home outside the gates. The English heard of his illness with great glee. "Now we shall capture this wild animal in his own bed and put an end to him," they said.

Twelve men were chosen for the deed. Secretly they crept out through the bushes. nearer and nearer the sick man's house. He was tossing on his bed with fever. His wife sat by him, trying to keep him still and to cool his forehead with cloths dipped in cold water.

She heard a noise outside and going to the door caught the gleam of English swords in the near-by bushes. Quickly she returned to her husband's bed and said to him, "The English are coming again, and I fear they are seeking for you. Will you not go inside the fort until you are well enough to fight?"

"No!" cried the great giant. "Bring me my axe. I shall yet have more of them to bury before I die," and springing from his bed he barely had time to place his back to the door before the twelve soldiers were upon him.

The English attacked him with great fierceness, but fever lent strength to that mighty arm. The foe could not get inside the swing of that deadly axe. In a little while five of

them lay dead upon the ground, and the other seven turned and fled.

"It may be the ancient god of war that fights for the French, but we believe it is the devil himself," was the report they made to their captain.

And now we come to the sad fate of the valiant champion. Big Ferre returned to his bed after his last conflict, and again too freely drank of cold water. His fever rose higher and higher, and in a few days he was dead. Not all the mourning of his friends and followers nor the simple remedies of those early times could stay the hand that death laid upon him.

His comrades and his country wept for him, and to this day they tell the story of how he kept the fort at Longueil.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE LEGEND OF THE STRASSBURG CLOCK

The great cathedral at Strassburg was nearing its completion. It had taken nearly four hundred years to build, and already one could see it was to be among the most beautiful of all those great churches which adorn the capitals of Europe. The builders looked upon it with pride, and said, "The only thing this church needs is a wonderful clock that will not only keep time, but will be such a marvel in every other way that no other clock in the world will be like it."

The question was whom could they find to build a clock that would be so wonderful that it would accord well with the great building in which it was to stand and which would excite the admiration of all the world. High and low they searched for some clock-builder, but with all their diligence they could find no one to whom they could entrust the enterprise.

At last, an old man named Isaac Habich, who came from some foreign country, appeared before the builders and said to them, "I am a clock-builder and I know I can build one for this great cathedral that will be the world's marvel. No other clock will ever be like it or can ever be like it. I shall undertake the work for you if you so desire."

Habich told the builders what kind of clock he proposed to build, and the many beautiful things the clock would show. The builders were convinced that at last they had found the man for whom they were seeking, and so they engaged Habich to build the clock. In a few days he set to work. He took careful measurements of the space where the clock was to go, and set apart for himself a place in the cathedral where he could work undisturbed and unnoticed.

As the clock grew under his hands he added more and more marvels to it without saying anything to anybody about it, and the clock grew in size and in wonder under his masterful hands. Several years went by before the work was finished, and when it was uncovered for the admiration of all beholders, everyone was lost in wonder.

The builders and the people said, "This is indeed a marvelous clock. I do not see how it could be more wonderful than it is. Let us hope there never will be another clock in all the world like it."

The great face of the clock showed the hour of the day; there were places to indicate the day and month of the year; the rising and setting of the sun was also shown, as well as the appearance and eclipse of the moon and sun each time exactly as they occurred in nature; the change of the stars was also indicated and each constellation appeared in its appropriate place according to the astronomical calendar of the year.

In fact, there was not anything that related to time or change of seasons or the movements of the stars that this clock did not indicate. The master builder had so timed its works that everything ran with great smoothness and all one had to

do was to look at the clock to find out anything he wanted to know about time.

In addition to this there were many mechanical devices that added to the attractiveness of the clock. One of the most remarkable things about it was the striking of the hours and the quarter-hours. When the time came to strike the quarters, the figure of Death appeared, who seized a hammer to strike the bell, but the figure of the Saviour arose and sent back Death, who was only allowed to strike the full hour with his hammer. At certain times the procession of the apostles also appeared in front of the face of the clock and bowed before the figure of the Saviour.

Of course all Strassburg gloried in the clock and called it the crowning wonder of the great cathedral. But nobody said anything about the poor old clock-maker, who, through all the years, had been busy in the great work. The people thought only of the clock.

One day the builders met and began to talk about their possession. One of them said, "We have the most wonderful clock in the world and we do not wish anyone else to have one like it. Suppose Habich should build another and even a better one than this for some other cathedral."

To this the others replied, "That would be a great calamity to our cathedral and should be prevented by all means." They then put their heads together and decided upon measures to prevent Habich from ever building another clock. They hit upon the cruel design of putting out the eyes of the old man in order to make his skill useless thereafter. They said nothing of this cruel design to anyone, of course, but went to Habich at his house in Strassburg, and after talking to him about the clock, they said to him, "For fear that you will build another clock like this and take away the glory of Strassburg, it is our intention now, in your own home, in the dead of this night, and before anyone can prevent it, to bind you here in your own room and put out your eyes. No one will believe that

we did it, and we will then know that the clock of Strassburg will never find its equal."

To this horrible ingratitude Habich replied, "Is this the reward of all the work I have done for you and for Strassburg? Do you intend to deprive me in my old age of the means of livelihood? Do you intend to take away from me the glory of the sun and the sky and the earth because I have built a great clock to the glory of God and the Strassburg cathedral?"

To this appeal of the old man the builders replied, "Yes, that is our intention. It may seem cruel to you, but the glory of Strassburg is beyond mere human enjoyment and you must sacrifice your eyes because we cannot trust any promise that you may make."

Habich was alone in his house and was powerless, but the old man had wit as well as skill, and so he sadly replied to them, "Well, if that is your decision let me say that I can do no other than submit to your will, but I may as well let you know that the clock itself is not yet complete. There are several things yet to be done in the tower of the clock. Therefore I pray you, before I lose my eyes, let me finish the work which I have in mind; it will take but a few hours."

To this the builders finally consented, and taking the old man through the streets of Strassburg secretly, they entered the church and opened the door of the great clock and allowed the master to enter and climb the little stairs that led into the works where all the wheels were, of whose movements Habich alone possessed the secret.

There the old man stayed for a few hours, but instead of finishing the work as he had said, for it was already finished, he proceeded to take out several of the wheels and destroy certain movements of whose intricate workings he alone knew.

When he came back to where the builders were, he said to them, "The clock is now finished, and it is the last work that I ever expect to do, for now I am old and my days are spent.

You may lead me back to my house and there carry out your cruel design."

In the house of the old clock-maker the builders bound him hand and foot and with red-hot irons seared his eyeballs so terribly that from that time he could not see.

"Now," they said to themselves, "the clock of Strassburg will never find its equal in the world, for it is finished, and the clock-maker can never see to build another one."

But listen to the end of this story. Habich, instead of finishing the clock, had taken out the wheels that made the movements of some of its most interesting features. The next day when the builders went to see the clock, behold, it did not work! In haste they went to Habich and cried out to him in alarm, "The clock will not work in all of its parts. It tells the time and a few other things, but the most beautiful part, that we admired so much, no longer works. What shall we do?"

Habich answered, "I cannot help you now. You have deprived me of my eyesight and I can no longer repair any damage that has been done to my masterpiece. You must find some one else, now, for I am old and blind and shall shortly die on account of the ingratitude of those I have served. When I entered the clock I destroyed the best part of the work I did. Now there is no one to repair it.

In a few weeks the old man was dead and the people of Strassburg mourned, not for him, but for their clock. It took many years to find anyone who could unravel the secrets of the wheels that had been destroyed, and for a long time the clock was silent, as if mourning for the master hand that had put it together.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE BURGHERS OF GHENT REFUSE TO BE HANGED

It was the custom in olden days to build walls around the large cities to keep out enemies and protect the people in time of war. These cities had immense gates that were opened by day for the people to go out and come in, but were closed tightly by night and kept guarded all the time. The towns of Ghent and Bruges in Flanders are walled cities.

There was a Dutchman who lived in the town of Ghent by the name of Philip van Artevelde. At the time he lived, which was the latter part of the fourteenth century, these walled cities were constantly at war with one another and feuds and quarrels were of everyday occurrence.

The father of Philip was named Jacob and once had been Governor of Ghent. He had become quite famous in his time by leading his people in a revolt against the Count of Flanders. He had driven the count out of the country and taught him a severe lesson about oppressing the sturdy people of the town of Ghent.

But that was many years before this story begins, for when Philip had become a grown man, Ghent was still subject to the Count of Flanders. For many years Philip attended quietly to his own business and took no particular interest in public affairs.

The Count of Flanders began to oppress the people in every way he could, so that the burghers, as the people were called, began to complain about the way in which they were treated.

A merchant would say, "The count taxes us so heavily we cannot transact our business. What little money we make he takes away from us."

Another would say, "We have no time to work, because the count calls us to war every chance he gets and our best sons are often slain in battle."

Still another would say, "He shows all of his favors to Bruges and oppresses the people of Ghent to pay for his extravagances, and we are tired of it."

Bruges and Ghent were rival cities. The Count of Flanders, whose name was Louis, favored Bruges in every way he could, which pleased the people of that city mightily, and oppressed the people of Ghent all he could, which angered those people just as much. It is easy to see, therefore, that there was no good feeling between the two towns.

"What shall we do?" cried the burghers of Ghent. "Count Louis oppresses us so, and is trying to build up Bruges, and is willing to destroy us and our town and even put our people to death. We must call a meeting and consider these things." Accordingly, a public meeting was held and the burghers were very loud in their complaints against Louis and the people of Bruges.

Remembering how old Jacob had once led them against the father of Count Louis and had made him retract some of his harsh measures, they said with one voice, "Philip, the son of old Jacob, is the man we want for our captain. He will manage this quarrel for us. We choose him to be our leader."

Thereupon the people refused to pay their taxes and sent some very impertinent messages to Louis, telling him that he must treat them better or they would get another count.

Philip took this message to Count Louis at Bruges, and told him in quiet terms, "The people of Ghent desire peace and

do not wish for war, but we are not willing to pay taxes and bear the burdens that you have imposed upon us."

Louis was very angry at this, and stormed and raged at a great rate at Philip and the people of Ghent. "You must do as I say or I shall consider you rebels. You must submit without any conditions at all. You can go back to your people and tell them I shall not listen to their complaints."

When Philip returned to Ghent and told the burghers what Louis had said, they were quite indignant and prepared to defend themselves in case Louis marched with an army against the town.

Now Louis would not fight a fair battle with the people of Ghent. He chose, rather, to starve them out and, accordingly, he set soldiers on all roads leading to Ghent and surrounded the city with his men so that no provisions could be taken to the people.

It was not long before all the food had been eaten and the people were reduced to a starving condition. Something had to be done immediately and Philip decided to make one more trip to Bruges and appeal to Count Louis. With him were twelve deputies, leading citizens of Ghent.

Philip said to the count, "Our people are starving for lack of food and I have come to submit to almost any terms that you may name, provided that you do not put any of the people to death. Take me as a victim, if you please, and banish me from the country, but you must spare the town and the people. Henceforth we will pay all the taxes and perform all the service you demand, if you but give us food."

The haughty count laughed in the face of Philip, and replied, "I promise you nothing, for you and your people are rebels and have sent a defiant message to me. Now, I demand that all the people of Ghent, except the children, march half way to Bruges, bare-headed, and each one must wear a rope around his neck. I will then decide how many of them I shall put to death and how many of them I shall spare."

The count had made up his mind that the people of Ghent could not do otherwise than submit to this, and after they had come halfway to Bruges with ropes around their necks he would put all of them to death, or at least, the ringleaders of the revolt, including Philip himself. He sent word to his soldiers to assemble and be ready to destroy those rebellious burghers.

Philip van Artevelde went back to Ghent and called the people together. He told them what the count had said, and added, "We must starve here as we are or we must submit, with ropes around our necks, to be hanged or butchered, or we must fight. What say you all?"

An old soldier leaped upon a bench, and cried out, "We shall neither starve nor surrender. I, for one, am for fighting the count and for making Ghent the most famous town in Flanders or the most desolate town in the world."

All the men he could get together numbered not more than five thousand. They marched out of the gates of the city toward Bruges, determined to win the battle or die in the effort. The priests stood at the gates of the city and blessed the soldiers as they marched out. The women and children waved their hands to them as they went, saying, "Remember, you are to fight for us and our homes and for Ghent."

There was not much food left in the city and all of it was placed in a few little carts for the soldiers. The people themselves kept nothing. In one day's march, they had reached the neighborhood of Bruges and sent word to the count that the people of Ghent were there asking for justice or willing to fight.

"Do they come with ropes around their necks?" asked the count.

"By no means. They seem to have disregarded the orders sent to them," was the reply.

"Then we shall find rope enough in Bruges for the purpose," said the count with a harsh laugh.

When the people of Ghent heard what the count had said they prepared to teach him a lesson. Philip ordered food to be distributed to the soldiers, and said to them, "Lie upon the ground and sleep the best you may, for to-morrow we shall be all dead or Ghent will be a proud city."

At daybreak the little army was aroused from its sleep and preparations were made to meet the army of Count Louis. The priests went among the soldiers exhorting them to fight to the death. "You will die anyhow, either by starvation or at the hands of Louis. It is better to die fighting and facing the foe than to be slain in retreat. Let no man turn his face to Ghent save in triumph." All the soldiers knelt at these words and gave a great shout of defiance.

The soldiers had now eaten their last ounce of food. There was not a bit left in Ghent. This day was to decide the question between the soldiers and the count. The count himself had called his men to Bruges and gotten them ready for battle, but they were a disorderly lot and the count was by no means beloved. Therefore the people of Bruges, not waiting for orders, rushed out of that city in confusion to attack the burghers of Ghent. They went singing and shouting, as if sure of victory.

Suddenly, as they marched along the road, the people of Ghent sprang up before them on both sides, crying out, "Ghent! Ghent! Down with Count Louis!" The attack was so sudden and the people of Bruges were so ill-prepared that they did not know what to do. The front rank turned back on the second rank and that on the third, so that the people of Bruges were thrown into a panic and fled back towards town, hotly pursued by Philip and the burghers of Ghent.

Across the plains went the people of Ghent. It was mob pursuing mob, for none of them were soldiers and many of them were armed with sticks and staves, and many of them

were hurling stones. Arriving at Bruges the fugitives rushed in among the regular soldiers, who could do nothing because they were overwhelmed by their own people. The burghers of Ghent came on furiously with clubs and such arms as they had, and fell upon the soldiers. Back through the gates of the town ran the people, pell-mell. Count Louis saw the disorder from the towers of the city and cried out, "Close the gates and save the town. What devils are these that come from Ghent? They seem more like mad-men than soldiers."

It was too late to close the gates. The burghers of Ghent were already entering the town, pushing the panic-stricken people of Bruges before them. With sharpened staves they prodded them from behind and with hurling stones crushed many of them to the ground. They stormed into Bruges and furiously attacked the soldiers, who gave way before them.

The count's army, not knowing how many of the burghers were upon them or what was behind them, fled from the city. The people of Bruges fell upon their knees and cried, "Spare us, for Heaven's sake!"

The men of Ghent went up and down the streets everywhere, searching for the count, and he was doing all he could to escape his pursuers. He entered the house of a poor woman and said to her, "Good woman, save me! I am thy lord, the Count of Flanders, and at this time in great distress. My enemies are in pursuit of me and if I do not hide myself I shall be killed."

The woman knew the count, for she had frequently received alms at his door and had seen him pass as he went hunting. She admitted him willingly, and pointing to the garret of her little house, which was approached by a ladder, she said to him, "My lord, mount this ladder and enter the garret and get under the bed where my children are asleep."

The count did as the woman directed, while she herself attended to her duties by the fireside. Scarcely had the count

concealed himself when the mob entered the house, for one of them had seen a man go in.

"Woman," they said, "where is the man whom we saw enter your house just now?"

"I know of no one," said she, "who has entered this house. You may search it, if you like, for there is no place here to conceal a man. My children are in the attic, asleep in their bed, and I am here alone in this room."

Upon this one of the men took a candle and mounted the ladder. Thrusting his head into the place and seeing nothing but the wretched bed upon which the children were asleep, and thinking that the count was not there, he said to his companions, "The old woman has said true. There is no one up there except children, who are asleep in a dirty bed. We are losing time. Let us be off."

The mob left the house and the count was safe. Shortly afterwards he left his hiding-place and, clad in the dress of a simple laborer, managed to escape into the fields. After traveling all night, he finally procured a horse, on which he rode to one of his distant castles.

Now the starving people of Ghent had plenty to eat. They dined that day on the best food that Bruges could supply. They ransacked the stores and the houses and ate to their hearts' content, and made the people of Bruges hand out to them all the food they had. Great wagon trains of provisions were loaded and hurried across the country to the hungry people of Ghent.

Soon after, peace was made between the two towns, and they agreed to live happily ever afterwards.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE SACRIFICE OF ARNOLD WINKELRIED

After the dreadful disaster at the Morgarten pass, seventy years went by during which Switzerland enjoyed its liberty. Austria had learned her bloody lesson and did not care to disturb the liberty-loving mountaineers. In the meantime the Swiss Confederacy had grown into considerable proportions and other towns were joining it and throwing off the yoke of their Austrian oppressors. It seemed as if all Switzerland would be free.

There was now another Leopold, Duke of Austria, the successor to him who had had the disaster at Morgarten. When he heard of the action of his remaining Swiss subjects, he vowed, "I shall teach those Swiss a lesson about obedience. I am tired of dealing with these rebels. I shall raise an army to subdue the whole country and put an end to their confederacy."

He called together all of his Austrian nobles, and they decided to send imperious demands to the people of Switzerland to lay down their arms and acknowledge their dependence upon the Austrian government.

"Let us fill their hearts with terror by sending them orders, one from each of us."

This agreement was made and warlike letters were immediately sent by couriers to the Swiss Assembly. It was expected that this avalanche of warlike declarations would fill the Swiss people with dismay.

One day a messenger arrived, bearing fifteen declarations of war; in a few days another messenger arrived, bearing nine more declarations of war; the next day other messengers arrived, bearing equally threatening letters. Hardly

a day passed that one or more messengers did not arrive and warlike messages were not received from the Austrian nobles.

The Swiss were astonished at the demands made upon them, but they were not dismayed. It seemed as if all Austria was about to rise to crush the little mountain republic. The Assembly could do no business on account of the letters which kept on coming. The members sat breathless with the number and terror of the threats that poured in. But the hearts of the Swiss were not to be overwhelmed in this way. One of the members rose and said, "If they carry out these threats we shall all be slaves for life. I, for one, would rather be in my grave than in an Austrian dungeon, which would be the same thing. Therefore, if the Austrians will have war, let them remember the pass at Morgarten."

The cry of war resounded throughout the mountains; fires were lighted, according to the ancient custom of the people, and there was much gathering of troops and sharpening of weapons for the expected conflict.

Now there were Austrian nobles and castles still in some parts of Switzerland. Around them the armed patriots swarmed with resistless energy and in a short while most of them were captured and leveled to the ground. Leopold had not counted upon the Swiss beginning the war, but learned to his dismay that his threats had not overcome them at all, but had enraged them beyond restraint. Duke Leopold now appeared with his army. He was attended by many distinguished knights and nobles, and advanced against the little town of Sempach, which was noted for its rebellious subjects. He sent word to the people, saying, "I shall punish you with a rod of iron for daring to join in this rebellion. As you have done to the Austrian nobles, so shall I do to you."

The Austrian cavalry came on in advance of the foot soldiers. It was a splendid army, well equipped and consisting of trained soldiers.

The Swiss army was a little more than a thousand men who were poorly armed and untrained. It looked more like a mob than like a body of soldiers. Some of the patriots even had no shields to defend their bodies, but carried small boards fastened to their arms. Their leader said to them, "Yonder is the Austrian cavalry, but they are on Swiss soil. They are better armed and better trained than we, but back of us are our town and our wives and children. Shall we let them pass?"

Immediately there was a great cry among the Swiss peasants, "No! No! We shall die, to the last man, before the Austrians shall reach our town."

When Leopold looked upon the handful of Swiss peasants that dared to stand before his imperial host, he smiled disdainfully. He said to those around him, "Let us sweep these peasants like so many clods from our path. They are too insignificant to give us concern. Why wait for the foot soldiers to arrive?"

He therefore ordered his entire force to dismount and attack the peasant army on foot. Each of his soldiers was armed with a long, pointed lance, so that when they dismounted and stood in battle array their front presented a wall of iron. Leopold counted upon driving the Swiss peasants before him with these sharp spears through which he knew they could not penetrate.

The horses were left in the rear. The knights stood in their armor and with their lances in front, and began to march steadily forward. It was a closely knit line of spears, each spear ten to twelve feet long, and with a sharp point.

The plan of battle was not without its danger. In the first place the knights were in heavy armor and the day was very hot and sultry. Then again, the Swiss peasants were upon high ground and there was danger of repeating the disaster at Morgarten.

A veteran soldier said to the Duke, "I fear the nimbleness of these uncovered peasants. They have but to run,

and we shall exhaust ourselves on the march. Besides that, they know these passes and we are ignorant of them. We had better wait until the infantry comes up."

There were others of his nobles who gave the same advice, but there were many more who heard their words with shouts of derision. Leopold himself replied with much impatience, "I see no reason why we should delay our victory. I myself shall lead these knights and within an hour this town shall be ours." So saying, he placed himself in the front of his knights.

The Swiss, from the hills surrounding the town, had watched the oncoming of the Austrian knights. Seeing that the knights had dismounted, and were coming afoot, with loud cries the peasants descended to the plain below and formed in battle line the best they knew how. The sun arose and beat upon the Austrian troops with oppressive heat, but the mountaineers were dressed in their ordinary garb and were as nimble as the goats which leaped about their own hills.

Soon the battle was engaged between the two forces. The Swiss were armed with clubs and tried to beat the lines of spears aside. Many of them with impetuous fury leaped upon the spears and did bloody execution upon the helmets of the Austrian knights, who could not use their swords for fear they would drop their lances.

Many of the Swiss were impaled upon the sharp points of the Austrian spears. Many of the Austrian knights fell beneath the weight of their armor and the heavy blows of the Swiss peasants who managed to get beyond the iron points. Many of the mountaineers lay dead or wounded, and it seemed as if the Swiss could not stay the oncoming of the Austrian knights. Leopold ordered his men to form in the shape of a semicircle and enclose the body of the Swiss troops within this circle of bristling spears.

The Swiss soldiers, armed with heavy clubs, knew that they would be a match for the Austrian knights if they could

get beneath the bristling spear-points. Hand-to-hand they had no fear of the result, but how to press through that bristling array was the question. Slowly the Swiss soldiers retired, and it looked as if their town would be captured and Switzerland would no longer be free.

It was at this time that Arnold of Winkelried called a number of the bravest and strongest of the Swiss men around him, and said, "Follow me. I shall make a passage through the spears. Tell the others to follow close behind. I shall be dead, but Switzerland shall be free."

With a loud cry they advanced in close body towards a certain section of the Austrian line, Arnold in the lead. Behind them was a body of picked men, and behind these came the remaining strength of the peasant army. In front of Arnold stood the bristling spears and a dozen or more were pointed at his breast. He rushed forward with his arms outstretched, bearing no weapon of defense. "Make way for liberty!" he cried in a loud voice, and immediately a dozen spears were thrust into his body.

Before the Austrian knights could detach their spears, the bold peasants behind Arnold had rushed over his body and over the spears into the gap that had been made and were pushing aside other knights that were advancing against them. A breach had been made in the wall of iron and now the mighty clubs of the Swiss peasants fell upon the helmets of the Austrian knights. The fearless peasants poured through the gap in ever-increasing numbers. The knights became confused, crowded and disordered. Overcome with the heat, many of them fell to the ground from exhaustion and died without a wound. Leopold had made the mistake of requiring armed men to fight on foot on a hot summer day.

The Austrian banner was in the hands of Ulrich, who defended it desperately till a mortal blow cost him his life. "Save the flag of Austria!" he cried with his dying breath.

Leopold, who was trying to bring order out of his confused throng, heard the words of the dying knight, and caught the banner. He waved it over his head, all stained as it was from the blood of those who had tried to defend it.

The Swiss, resolved upon capturing the banner, pressed upon the duke with the spears which they had taken from the ground or from the knights who had fallen at their hands. "Yield us the banner!" they cried, as they surrounded the duke and his few remaining knights.

"I shall not yield the flag of Austria to such a rabble," cried the duke. "Let me follow my brave knights to a worthy death." Saying this, he rushed into the midst of his assailants. A dozen Swiss clubs descended upon his iron mail. He fell to the earth, and for a minute the tide of battle passed over him, while the banner which he had tried to defend was carried off in the hands of the Swiss.

Shortly afterwards a Swiss soldier approached the prostrate duke, who had raised himself upon his arms. The soldier drew his sword, whereupon the duke cried out, "Hold thy hand! I am a prince of Austria!"

But the soldier replied, "And in being such, you are the curse of Switzerland!" Whereupon his weapon descended and Duke Leopold of Austria was dead.

The defeat of the Austrians was complete. With their leader slain and their ranks disordered, they began to retire in terror and dismay. Those who could, staggered back to their horses, but they found to their consternation that the attendants who had been left in charge of their steeds had mounted them and fled in terror: The Swiss pursued the Austrians relentlessly and remorselessly. They remembered the seventy years of oppression and they were now resolved that all of Switzerland should be free. The knights fought desperately, but without avail. In a short while the heavy blows of the Swiss clubs had laid the last Austrian knight upon the ground and not one was left alive upon that fatal field.

When it was all over they returned to find the body of Arnold Winkelried. It had been pierced with many spears and was bloody with many wounds. He lay dead upon the field with a smile upon his lips, as if he knew that he had opened the way for his Swiss companions to penetrate the steel points of Austria and save the town of Sempach from destruction. He had made the way for liberty.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE STORY OF JOAN OF ARC

That we may understand the part that Joan of Arc played in the history of France we must know that at the beginning of the fifteenth century the king of France, whose name was Charles, was a half mad and totally incompetent ruler. His son, also named Charles, was a young and pleasure-loving boy, who thought very little of his kingdom.

The consequence of this was that the kingdom of France was at this time torn by dissensions and open to invasion. England was one of its enemies. King Henry of England had agreed with the queen of France that he was to marry her daughter and be the heir to the French throne. In this way, the young Charles, who was known as the dauphin and who was a rightful ruler, was entirely ignored. Of course this brought on war between the two countries, in which France suffered a great deal.

The English entered France. Henry married Catherine, the dauphin's sister, but shortly after, he, as well as the poor mad king of France, was dead. All this brought about much confusion, for now the heir to the throne of England, who was only nine months old, was contending through his party for the throne of France, and the friends of the young dauphin, Charles, contended that he should be the king of France. Charles was proclaimed king, but had not been crowned at Rheims according to the ancient custom of the French kings.

The beautiful land of France was filled with war and strife. In every part of it the English and French were fighting. Villages were plundered, towns were burned, the poor people suffered much hardship, and it seemed as if nothing would be left to the unhappy inhabitants of these fair lands. This is the time when the story of Joan of Arc begins.

At the little town of Domrémy, which is a village of Lorraine, there lived a farmer whose name was Jacques D'Arc. He had several children, among whom was a beautiful little girl named Jeanne, but we have always known her as Joan of Arc. She grew up as other little girls of her station, until she was about thirteen years of age. She went to church and said her prayers, but she never learned to read and write, for very few people learned to read and write in those days.

Since her parents were poor, Joan had much housework to do, but when the household tasks were finished she and her mother and sisters would sit and spin and sew and talk about the unhappy conditions of the country. The mother would say to her children, "What is to become of our beautiful France? The English are over-running the country, destroying our crops, killing our men, burning our towns, and our poor little dauphin cares for nothing but his pleasure. Would that the good Lord would send some one to rid us of the English!"

Out in the fields Jacques D'Arc and his three sons plowed and sowed and reaped and looked after the sheep, fearing all the time that the English soldiers would come by and destroy their crops and kill their cattle. In this way, between industry and fear, the family lived on quietly, just as many simple people did in those days.

At last Joan became thirteen years of age. The wretched state of affairs in France continued; in fact, they were becoming worse. News came to the little family of dreadful happenings everywhere. Sometimes soldiers passed and told them that the English were besieging Orleans and that the French would not be able to hold out much longer.

Sometimes wandering friars would come by bringing sad news of the condition of the country.

Joan became more and more thoughtful. She heard with great sadness that the dauphin, Charles, who was yet an uncrowned king, was living in idleness, trifling his time away and taking no interest in the troubles of his country.

She said to her mother one day, "Would that I were a man, that I might be a soldier, or at least that I might go to the dauphin and tell him to lead his people to war and drive the English from our shores!"

One evening Joan was seated in the little garden in front of the cottage, sewing. She was thinking of the dauphin and of France and the distress of the poor people everywhere. As she sat thinking, suddenly it seemed to her that a bright light shone between her and the church, which was close by. She heard a voice speaking to her, saying, "Joan, you must be a good girl, and go often to church, and you will yet be of great service to your country."

The child was frightened at first, and spoke to no one about the light and the voice which she had heard. Every day voices sounded in her ears, each time saying, "Joan, you will be of great service to your country some day." Some of these voices she thought were those of saints. At another time she thought she heard the voice of Michael, the archangel, saying to her, "Joan, arise and go to the king of France and help him. It is for you to win his battles."

These voices spoke to Joan always when she was alone and in the open air and walking about the fields or through the woods near by. For five years the voices spoke to the young Joan, but she did not know what they meant nor what she could do. She asked herself, "How can a young peasant girl be of any service to the king of France? He would not believe me if I should tell him my story. But I cannot stand these voices any longer and I must tell some one. what I have heard."

She told her story to her uncle, who took her to a French lord, who lived close by. Together they told their simple story, but the lord, whose name was Robert, laughed loudly at the thought of the young girl who proposed to help France in this time of trouble. So he said to Joan's uncle, "Take this child away. She is mad. Send her back to her mother."

Her words were very steadfast, her look was very serious, and her face was very sweet. She insisted that the voices still spoke to her and that she must go. At last Robert said, "Take the child to the king and tell him what she has heard. At least it can do no harm." So with two friends, Joan of Arc started out on her journey to the king's court.

She had on armor and breastplate and wore boy's clothes. Her hair was cut short, and one could not tell her from a young squire who was going to battle. She was mounted on a splendid horse and attracted much attention as she rode through the country. Robert himself had given her a sword.

For eleven days she and her escort rode through the country, traveling mainly by night for fear that the English soldiers would arrest her on the way. Finally they came into the beautiful country of Touraine and rode along the banks of the river Loire. Soon they came in sight of the great castle of Chinon, where lived the king. The castle stood upon a great cliff above the little town, and in it the king was having his pleasures, with but little thought of the condition of his country.

For two days Joan waited in the town before she was allowed to see the king. At last one evening, just about dark, some one said to the king, "There is a young girl below who says she has a great message for your majesty. She says she has heard voices from on high and that she is appointed by God to rid your majesty of your enemies."

The king smiled and said to himself, "This at least will amuse me for awhile," and then ordered the girl to be admitted to his presence.

The castle was crowded with members of the court. There were several hundred present when Joan and her friends, lighted by torches, were taken through the corridors and passages into the great hall where the king stood. The king had dressed himself very plainly so that he could not be distinguished from the others. Joan had never seen him, but when she entered the hall she walked straight up to him and knelt before him, saying, "My king and master, may God give you a long and happy life!"

Charles tried to confuse her by saying, "I am not the king, but there he stands," and pointed to a courtier near by.

But Joan was not to be deceived. "No, gentle dauphin, thou art my king and master. It is you to whom I speak and to none other." Arising from her knees, she said, "I am Joan, the maid. I am sent to the king by heaven, to tell you that you shall yet be crowned at Rheims, according to the ancient custom of the kings of France."

Joan stayed around the court for several days while the weak king made up his mind what to do. The ladies of the court questioned her about the voices which she had heard. She was examined by bishops and by other learned men, but to all who questioned her she gave the same answer, "I have heard voices from on high and they have told me to go to Orleans and drive the English from that town and then lead the king to Rheims, where he might be crowned."

Now Orleans, a city on the Loire river, was reduced to a state of great distress. The place was faithful to the king of France and the English had laid siege to it. They had built towers around its walls and from these towers they fired upon the inhabitants, killing many of them and driving others into the cellars. It was to this place that Joan begged King Charles to allow her to lead an army.

At last Charles and his counselors agreed that she should have her wish. She was provided for in every way. She was given a banner of snow-white linen on which was

embroidered a figure of the Saviour with an angel kneeling at each side. Her armor was pure white inlaid with silver. Her sword was one which had lain many years buried in a dead knight's tomb. She rode upon a great black horse that was accustomed to battle.

In this way, one spring morning, she and a large following set out for Orleans. Joan rode at the head of the army, her face very serious. The men were awed by her appearance and by her gentle reproofs, and ceased their oaths and foul language. In fact, the army moved forward singing hymns and accompanied by chanting priests.

As she neared Orleans the English were quite astonished at the appearance of the approaching army. They looked down from their towers in amazement as Joan and her forces approached, but did not try to prevent her and her forces from entering the town. They said to themselves, "The more we can get in this town the more we will capture in the end."

As Joan's white armor gleamed through the evening dusk the people of the town crowded around to see and to touch her and to kiss her hand. They had all heard of what she had said and many of them believed that she had been sent by God to deliver them from their oppressors. She was lodged in a house whose owner furnished such food as he had to her and her little army. Joan merely dipped bread in wine and water, saying that she would eat nothing else until Orleans was delivered.

The presence of the army cheered the people of Orleans and gave them great hope. They made many bold sallies from the town and one by one the English towers fell. The strongest of them, however, remained untaken. It was commanded by an English knight named Glansdale. Joan decided herself to lead the attack upon this tower.

Clad in her white armor and riding her black horse, she drew her sword, though she had never used it, and ordered the gates to be opened and her men to sally forth. In her hands she

bore the embroidered banner, which could be seen from every part of the field of battle. Joan was in constant danger everywhere, but she seemed to bear a charmed life. She stood unhurt amid the cloud of arrows that fell about her and which were directed at her.

As she was standing at the foot of the great tower one arrow struck her in the breast. In fact, she had already prophesied that she would be wounded on that day. With her own hands she drew the arrow from the wound, and getting down from her horse she asked some one to pour oil upon the wound and bind it up with linen. Then remounting her steed, she showed herself again to her host, and cried, "On, ye Frenchmen! One more effort and the tower is yours!"

The Frenchmen, seeing Joan again mounted, rushed forward with yells of courage. The English, who thought she had been killed, saw with dismay her boy-like figure riding through the field of battle and her white banner streaming in the wind. She seemed inspired of God, as she turned her face toward the skies. Again she cheered her followers. "Forward in the name of God! The place is yours in an hour!"

At last the tower was taken, and Glansdale, attempting to escape across a bridge, fell into the stream below and was drowned. He and his men had crossed the moat as Joan had moved along the lines, calling out, "Yonder goes the witch!" and calling her evil names. When Joan saw Glansdale and his men drowning in the stream she stopped and shed tears and said aloud, "I have great pity for the souls of those men. May God forgive them their sins!"

The town of Orleans was now out of danger, for the English marched away the next day. From that day Joan was no more known as Joan of Arc, but became known all over France as the Maid of Orleans.

One part of her mission was now accomplished, but the other remained to be done, and that was to see the dauphin crowned king of France. Going back to his castle, she begged

Charles to go at once to Rheims, where he might be crowned, but the poor king put it off from time to time, for it seemed to him best that he should stay where he was in idle safety, rather than to risk battle and, perhaps, his life.

While the king was delaying, the Maid spent her time clearing the English from the country round about. The great French generals were now her friends. In fact, so splendid was her following and so successful was she in her battles, that many of the French leaders were jealous of her success and began to look upon her with suspicion and with no kindly thoughts. Said they one to another, "Perhaps, after all, she is a witch and may be leading us into trouble instead of leading us to victory. We had better be careful." So it came about that the Maid had almost as many enemies as she had friends in France.

At last, in the middle of the summer, the king was persuaded to go to Rheims, where he was crowned, and so the second part of her great ambition was accomplished. With her banner in her hand the Maid rode beside the king into the ancient town. The archbishops anointed Charles with oil, and on his head they put the crown of France.

Then the Maid of Orleans knelt at the king's feet and said to him, "My lord and king, the pleasure of God is now fulfilled. It was His will that I should raise the siege of Orleans and that I should lead you to this city to be crowned king. You are now the true king of France, and this fair country is yours. I hope you will rid it of all its enemies and do justice to all your people."

At the ceremony there were many friends from Domrémy who knew her as little Jeanne. There were her father and her uncle, who were very plain, simple people, and who once had looked with sorrow on her leaving her home dressed as a man and righting with rough soldiers. It was a joyful sight to them now to see her riding by the side of the king, receiving such honor from his hands.

When the ceremony was over, her friends from Domrémy quietly went back to their homes, expecting the Maid to follow them. But in this they were disappointed, for they never saw the girl again. The Maid was not satisfied with having accomplished the two great purposes of her life, and which the voices had told her she must do. Orleans was free and the king had been crowned, but the English still had possession of Paris and other places in France. She persuaded the king to lead an army against Paris. There she fought as bravely as ever, but without success. Charles, who did not like fighting, retired from the wars and left that city in the hands of his enemies.

The next spring the Maid led an army into Picardy, to attack the English, who were threatening one of the towns. As the English approached, she said to her army, "We will sally forth to fight them before they reach the town. Guard the gates behind us."

Her forces went forward to battle, but suddenly the English appeared in great numbers, and her men, seized with panic, retreated towards the town whence they had come. To the consternation of those in the town, the English barred the way of the retreating forces. Then they made the cruel mistake of closing the gates of the town, leaving the Maid and her army outside.

In this way Joan was taken prisoner and led in triumph to the English camp. "At last we have you, thou witch and sorceress," said her taunting captors; "you shall no longer lead the French to victory, for we shall make short work of those inspired by the devil. You shall hear other voices than those of which you have spoken."

She was taken from one prison to another. Once she attempted to escape, and once she flung herself from a high tower, but was not injured by the fall. After a few months she was imprisoned at Rouen where her fate was to be decided. There she was treated shamefully. She was kept in a dungeon shut up in an iron cage. She was chained to her bed and

watched day and night by rough soldiers who taunted her with her misfortunes. King Charles, whom she had so bravely helped, and the French generals, by whose side she had fought, made no effort to ransom or to relieve the unhappy girl. She suffered in silence, and always she said to those around her, "I am sustained by a higher power than an earthly one. I have succeeded in my mission and no torture that you can inflict can conquer my spirit."

At last the day came at Rouen, of which the English were in full possession, when she was tried by a court of judges, and sad to relate, those judges were mostly French, and the charge was sorcery and witchcraft and other crimes. She told the story of her life and of the voices which she had heard, and always maintained that the voices were from God. The trial continued for days and even weeks, and in the end the Maid was condemned to die.

One spring day, in the early morning, she was taken to the old market-place at Rouen, where a stake had been driven into the ground. To this stake she was chained, and around her was piled a lot of wood.

She begged that she might hold a cross in her hand. One of the English soldiers who was on guard, broke a stick and fashioned the pieces in the form of a cross and handed it to her. The Maid took it and pressed it to her bosom and lifted her face to the sky. Then the cruel soldiers set fire to the wood and the flames slowly enveloped her form. Her last words were, "The voices I heard were of God. They still sustain me. They have never deceived me."

With these words upon her lips, the flames enveloped the form of the young girl and she died a martyr's death. Among all the heroes that France loves, whether they be soldiers or statesmen or even kings, there is none that is loved more tenderly or revered more sincerely than the little maid of Domrémy, whose wonderful courage has made her known to all the world as the Maid of Orleans.

CHAPTER XXXV

BAYARD, THE KNIGHT WITHOUT FEAR AND WITHOUT REPROACH

We hear the stories of many brave knights, but not all of the knights were as good as they were brave. Some of them were cruel, and some very wicked, especially in dealing with their enemies. We are now to tell the story of Pierre du Terrail, Chevalier de Bayard, who was known as "The knight without fear and without reproach."

There are many stories of his courage, his daring and valiant leadership in war; of his justice and honor in dealing with his own men; of his kindness and humanity in the treatment of his foes. Altogether he seems to be one of the noblest characters whose history has come down to us from olden times.

The town of Brescia had been captured by the French army, and according to the practices of the day, had been given up to pillage by the troops. It was a day of license and inhumanity. Bayard had taken part in the capture of the town, though he was never one to take part in the horrors of destruction.

Bayard had been wounded in the assault, and severely so. He thought his time had come. He said to his fellow-captain, "Comrade, march your men forward, for the town is ours. Spare the women and children. Leave me here, for I am a dead man within the hour."

But Bayard had yet many years before him. While the town was being looted by the soldiers, two of his own archers bore him on a stretcher to a house that had some appearance of size and comfort. It turned out to be the residence of a rich citizen, who, in a panic of fear, had fled for his own safety,

leaving his wife and two daughters to hide themselves as best they might in the hay with which the granary was filled.

The archers thundered at the door, "Open for the good Knight Bayard, who is wounded, and needs the comfort of a house." The trembling woman opened the door, afraid lest she be deceived and fall into the hands of the marauding soldiers.

She was surprised when she saw a wounded knight, and unbarred her door to admit the bearers of the litter upon which he lay. Bayard, in his courteous manner, said, "I pray you have no fear of me or of these men. They shall guard your doors," and he gave orders for them to stand outside and admit no one.

"Let no one enter here," he directed them, "on your lives, except it be my own people. Tell them these are the quarters of the Knight Bayard, who lies wounded and does not wish to be annoyed. If by doing this you lose your portion of the rich merchandise of this town, I shall amply repay you."

The archers did as they were bid, and stood guard before the doors of the house. Bayard was borne to a rich chamber and laid gently upon a sumptuous bed, with silk curtains and a canopy overhead. The lady threw herself on her knees before the bed whereon lay the knight, and in tears said pleadingly, "Sir, this house and all that is in it is yours and your men's. I know by the rules of warfare that I and my two daughters may be slain by your soldiers before the day is over. I beg you to spare our lives, for we are gentle folks and are helpless."

"Madam," replied Bayard in weak tones, for he had lost much blood, "I know not whether I shall survive these wounds, but so long as I am in your house, or alive anywhere, no harm shall come to you or to your daughters. Keep them in their rooms, so that they be not seen. I pray you, now, send for a surgeon that my wounds may be attended to."

The lady heard those words with great joy. Under the escort of one of the archers she set out to find a surgeon.

Finding one at last, she took him back to her house and made him attend her guest so carefully that there was no longer danger of his wound proving mortal. Shortly afterward, his own surgeon took charge of him and the knight was on a fair way to recovery.

In a few days the town became quiet, the soldiers having settled themselves comfortably in the houses of the citizens. Still there was great danger for anyone to be on the streets. Bayard then said to his hostess, "Madam, I see you are sad and weep occasionally. Pray tell me if you have news of your husband."

To this his hostess replied, "I know not, my lord, whether he be alive or dead. If he be alive anywhere he will be in some monastery where he has taken refuge and where he is well known."

"Let him return to his own home," answered Bayard. "I shall give him escort so that no harm shall come to him."

The joyful wife soon discovered where her husband was hidden. Bayard's steward and two archers were sent to the monastery, and the husband was conducted safely through the streets back to his own home.

"I cannot commend you for your bravery, for you are more prudent than valiant," said Bayard to the husband, "but your wife has saved my life by her ministrations and I gladly assure you that you are as safe here as in your monastery. You shall not suffer in person or in estate."

Needless to state, the reunited family was made happy by the generosity of the knight, whose wound was slowly healing, though at times he was in much pain. At the end of the month he was able to rise from his couch and walk about the room. He became restless for action as his strength slowly returned.

News came one day that a great battle was shortly to be fought between the French and the Spaniards. Calling his

surgeon to him, Bayard said, "My friend, is there any danger in my setting out on the march to join my commander? I feel well, or nearly so, and my wound seems to be healing. I feel sorely fretted here at this idleness when I am needed in battle. It will do me more harm to remain here than to take up my armor and sword and get astride my good horse."

"Your wound is not yet healed entirely, but a few more dressings will help it greatly. In a few days you may go hence and join your comrades, only I warn you be careful of your strength," was the advice of his physician.

Bayard heard these words with gladness and gave orders for his armor to be brightened, his horse to be made ready, and for his attendants to prepare for the march. The fact that he was to move made his strength return more rapidly than ever.

His host and hostess became anxious to know what the knight would demand of them before his departure. They knew too well the habits of soldiers, and how they were accustomed to be well paid for any service they rendered. They realized that after all they were the prisoners of Bayard and his men, who could force them to ransom themselves with the full value of their estate.

On the day of the departure of their guest, Bayard, who had been walking up and down, trying his leg, and who had thrown himself on a couch for a moment, was approached by his hostess, who knelt before him, holding out a small steel box.

"My lord," she said in a trembling voice, "I am thankful that the grace of God directed you to this house at the taking of our town. We owe our lives and all that we cherish to you. While others have suffered great misery and have had much loss, we have not endured a single insult, nor lost a farthing of our property. We are aware that we are your prisoners and that you can do with us as you will, in person and in property, but I beg you to have pity on us yet and

extend to us your generosity. Here is a little gift we make you, and we pray that you may be pleased to accept it."

The box was opened by a servant and Bayard saw that it contained gold coins to the brim. Bayard had never bothered about money and cared nothing for the coins. He burst out laughing and said, "Madam, of what value are the coins in this box?"

The lady was frightened, thinking the knight was ill-satisfied with the sum she had brought.

"My lord, there are but two thousand five hundred ducats. If these are not enough I pray you name the sum you will demand and it shall be found."

The knight, still laughing, replied, "Madam, a hundred thousand crowns would not repay me for the kindness and good cheer which I have had in your house. Such attention as you and your daughters have given me cannot be paid for in coin. In whatever position I may happen to be, remember that I am a gentleman and a knight at your bidding. As for your ducats, I am leaving them, for I shall have none of them. All my life I have loved people more than I have loved crowns."

The lady listened to him with astonishment, for she did not know that any knight could be so generous. She had never heard of one who did not crave money, nor of one who would refuse it when it was offered to him. Therefore she said to him, "My lord, you will leave me much distressed if you do not accept this little present from me."

She was so firm in her purpose that at last the knight said with a smile, "Well, I shall take it in remembrance of you, but fetch your two daughters, for I should like to bid them farewell."

In a short while the two girls appeared. The knight knew them well, for they had solaced many of his weary hours with their music and with their cheerful conversation.

When they entered they knelt before him, and the elder one said, "My lord, we owe much to your kindness and have come humbly to thank you for your goodness to us. We pray God to spare your life that you may ever be kind to those in distress."

Bayard took the girls by their hands and raised them from their knees. Going to the table on which the ducats were spread, he counted out three piles. Then approaching the girls, he said to them, "Some of these days you will get married and a poor knight has not much money to give as a marriage portion to those he loves, but each of you hold out your aprons while I give you a marriage portion."

The delighted girls held out their aprons and into each one the knight counted a thousand crowns and told them to keep it until the day they were married, as a present from him.

Then turning to the madam, he said, "I would keep these other coins to distribute among the good sisters of this town, which I know has been plundered. They will need it for the distressed whom they doubtless desire to succor and who have suffered at the hands of my soldiers."

The next day the good knight rode away, leaving tears of joy and grateful hearts behind.

It was such deeds as this that won for Bayard the renown which has come down in history of being a knight of good deeds and great bravery, living without fear and without reproach.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD

In the year 1520 there were three kings of Europe, all of whom were young men and very ambitious. One was Henry VIII of England, one was Francis I of France, and the other was Charles V of Germany. The question was which two should unite against the other one.

In that year war between France and Germany was threatened. The king of each country was anxious to have Henry VIII as his ally. Now, Francis of France and Henry of England had never met, and in order to bring about an alliance between the two monarchs a great meeting upon a plain near Calais in France was arranged. It was planned that Henry should establish his court at Guines, while Francis stayed at Ardres, the two towns being not far apart. The monarchs were then to meet between the two towns.

Both these monarchs were very fond of display; particularly so was Henry of England. He was fond of dress and jewels and horses, and all of his life had enjoyed himself to the fullest extent. Consequently Henry desired the meeting to be a very gorgeous one; but on the other hand, Francis, who was poor, and was saving his money for the war against Germany, did not desire an extravagant display, but wanted the meeting to be very simple.

In this Francis was over-ruled. Henry wanted a great show, and all of his lords and ministers were equally desirous of showing the power and splendor of England. So Francis, hearing what the English had made up their minds to do, determined to do likewise.

The French nobles tried to outdo one another in magnificence. It was said of them that they carried their mills and their forests and their friends on their backs, which meant

that they had mortgaged their estates to provide clothes and jewels for the great occasion.

For weeks before the appointed time thousands of workmen from England, having crossed to France, were making ready a magnificent pavilion which was to be just outside the gates of Guines, for the English monarch and his retinue.

This pavilion was made of wood and covered with cloth to resemble stone. It contained a great quantity of glass, which was very costly and considered luxurious in those days when glass was scarce. All the parts of the pavilion had been carefully made in England to be put together after they had been shipped to France.

It was a square building, over three hundred feet long on each side. In it were beautiful apartments for the king and queen and all the nobles of their suite, and decorated with the utmost magnificence. Bright jewels shone upon the canopies over the royal chairs and were scattered on the carpet in front of the place where Henry and his wife were to sit. In the center of the square was an open court where fountains played water and wine. Near the pavilion was a chapel hung with tapestry and filled with the relics of the saints of England.

Francis of France could show no such magnificence as all this. Still he erected two fine buildings in Ardres, one for himself and the other for his queen. He built another one just outside his town, where the two monarchs were designed to meet.

At last Henry and his retinue crossed to France and established themselves at Guines, where they were to spend the nights, and in the magnificent pavilion, where they were to spend the days. Two days after the arrival of Henry, the long-expected meeting of the kings took place. They were both young men, very handsome and very ambitious, and had never met before.

In spite of a great show of friendliness there was suspicion on both sides. It was arranged that each monarch should leave his town at the same moment, and with the same number of followers and men-at-arms, for each of them feared treachery, Henry of England fearing it the more.

At the appointed time guns were fired from both towns as a signal for the monarchs to move. Each king rode forward a half a mile and halted, then approached the other slowly. Each train eyed the other curiously. An English lord exclaimed, "Sire, it seems to me there are more French than English upon the field. I advise your majesty to have the French counted before we proceed."

But the Earl of Shrewsbury rebuked the courier for his cowardliness and advised the king to move forward without fear. "So I shall, my lord," said Henry with decision, and then gave the order for his train to advance.

The monarchs came together. Henry was short and active, and rode his horse easily. His hair was of a golden hue and he wore a bushy beard beneath his chin. He was dressed in crimson velvet, trimmed with satin, and rode a magnificent Spanish horse.

Francis was tall and slender and dark, but he was quite as handsome as his English rival. He was dressed in silver cloth, trimmed with gold. The dress of the two monarchs dazzled the eyes of all beholders.

Each rode in front of his train and greeted the other. The horse that Henry was riding became nervous and swerved aside, but Francis reached out his hand and caught it firmly by the bridle. The two kings then dismounted from their horses and, according to ancient custom, embraced each other. Then they walked arm in arm toward the great pavilion, where they were to converse and to witness the tournaments.

So magnificent was the field in its banners and trappings and display, that nothing like it had ever been seen

before. Some one said, "This looks like a field of cloth of gold"—and so it has been called ever since.

The sports began, in which the two kings freely joined. For six days there was tilting with the spear and broadsword exercises and games of strength and skill among the knights. In the main the English were victorious, for they proved themselves better wrestlers, and Henry himself had great skill with bow and arrows.

One day as the sports were on, Francis said, "My brother, I am a good wrestler and I would have a fall with you." Henry laughingly agreed, and the two monarchs stripped off their finery and stood in the lists. Francis was a trained wrestler and threw the heavy English monarch to the ground. Henry arose laughingly but somewhat irritated, and said he would like to try Francis in a second round, but the wise courtiers on both sides, knowing the consequences of such a royal struggle, intervened and dissuaded the kings from further tests.

Francis, wearying of the formality and restraint of this magnificent meeting, decided he would indulge his love of fun. Accordingly, early one morning, with but three attendants, he rode across the plain to the town of Guines, where Henry was still asleep in his apartments.

The French king passed the sentries at the gates and the guards at the door, for no one would dare stop the king of France. Laughingly he asked the direction to the chambers of the English king.

Arriving there, he knocked loudly and entered. Henry was barely awake, but he received his merry rival laughingly. Leaping from his bed, he said, "I am your prisoner. Do with me as you will. This is quite a clever trick on your part and I am helpless in your hands."

Francis jestingly said, "I have come to assist in putting on your majesty's clothes." So he performed the service of a

valet and assisted Henry in attiring himself for the day. Having performed this service for his rival, he rode back to Ardres.

Henry of course must do no less than pay a similar unexpected visit to Francis next day, and probably help to bring him in his morning coffee or something of that sort. Both the monarchs, however, showed much caution. For instance, when Henry rode to Ardres, he took care to wear his mask so that if traitors should be about they would not be quite sure which was the king. Francis was equally cautious.

One evening Francis paid his respects to Catherine, the English queen, at her residence in Guines. When he started out on his return to Ardres he met a party returning to Guines. It was the English monarch, returning from a ride. Henry raised his mask and showed his face; Francis raised his mask and disclosed his own identity. Then laughing at one another Henry took a jeweled chain from around his neck and threw it around the neck of the king of France. In return Francis presented Henry with a costly bracelet, and with many jests they separated, each one going his way. Thus we see that what each king did the other tried to do in return, but all the time each one was watching the other. A fortnight passed away in these courtesies.

One day a gale sprang up unexpectedly and with great violence and broke the cords of blue and golden ropes that held the great pavilion of the English king, and the splendid structure then lay in ruins on the ground. It did not take long, however, to build another hall in great haste, for there were several thousand workmen around, after which the feasts were continued.

At the end of the fortnight the kings embraced one another and parted with many expressions of regret. However, nothing was said or agreed upon so far as an alliance between the two kings was concerned. The magnificent pavilion was packed up and sent home, and Francis returned to his own, believing that Henry was on his way to England.

In this, however, he was mistaken. Henry did not return to England, but leaving his queen in Calais, he made an appointment with Charles of Germany, where, strange to say, he made an alliance with him. So that when war broke out between France and Germany, Henry declared himself upon the side of the German king. Thus was all the feasting and splendor, all the magnificence of the Field of the Cloth of Gold of no avail.

The fair words that had been spoken, the promises that had been given, and all the smiling eyes that had looked into each other during the two weeks of the merry-making, amounted to nothing when it came to the great question of what one kingdom should do in case of war.

CHAPTER XXXVII

DMITRI, THE PRETENDER

When Ivan the Terrible, Czar of Russia, died, he left his throne to Feodor, a feeble, timid and sickly ruler, who became a mere tool in the hands of Boris Godunof, his ambitious minister. The other son of Ivan was a child named Dmitri, about ten years of age, when this story begins. Feodor and Dmitri were the sole survivors of their line, and with both dead Boris saw how he could be chosen czar, for there would be no successor to claim the throne.

One day a number of boys were playing in the yard of the palace at Uglitch. The principal child was Dmitri, who was attended by his governess and nurse and a servant woman. The child had a knife in his hand, with which he was playing. The attention of the women attending him was drawn aside for a moment. When the nurse looked around she saw him bathed in blood and fallen on the ground with a deadly wound in his throat. The shrieks of the women attracted a crowd of people, who rushed into the courtyard.

A great cry arose, "Dmitri, the son of the czar, the heir to the throne, has been killed," and immediately the populace began to fall upon those who were with the child at the time of the accident. The governess was stretched dead upon the ground and one of her slaves was killed. The keeper of the palace himself and his son were slain. The lives of others were threatened, and a wholesale slaughter was barely prevented by the arrival of the guard.

Boris, the crafty minister, may have been secretly delighted at the death of the child, and may have arranged for it to happen, but in order to avert suspicion, he set about clearing himself of any guilt. The first thing he did was to order an inquest into the cause of the boy's death. The verdict was that the child came to his death by accident, and that he was not murdered.

The next thing was to punish those who had tried to avenge his death. The mother of Dmitri, who had been the first to cry out that the child had been murdered, was forced to enter a monastery. Her brothers, who had also incited the riot, and who had said the act was one of murder, were put in prison.

Boris turned his attention to the people of Uglitch, and in a short while had two hundred of them put to death. Many fled, and others were banished, so that all evidence of his own guilt might be destroyed. All this violence, however, did him more harm than good, for the people looked upon him as an assassin and began to suspect his motives.

It was whispered around, "Boris, the minister, contrived the death of Dmitri, and is seeking to hide the crime by punishing others." Once the rumor began, it spread rapidly, and whatever Boris did made the people suspicious.

A great fire broke out and left much of Moscow in ruins. Boris set about rebuilding it and distributed aid to those who had suffered. But the people said, "He set fire to the town

himself, or had his agents do it, that he might show us how generous he could be."

A Tartar army appeared at the gates of Moscow, and threatened to destroy the city. Boris assembled his forces, and defeated the Tartars, and drove them back with great slaughter. But the people said, "He has called in the Tartars to make us forget Dmitri."

A child was born to the wife of Feodor the Czar. It was a girl, but the people said, "Doubtless it was a son, and Boris has substituted a girl for it. He would do such a thing." The child died, and there were many who said Boris poisoned it. And so it went, for nothing that Boris did pleased the people, and nobody knew whether he was the knave which they accused him of being or not.

Still Boris was an able minister, and Feodor the Czar was too feeble and sickly to take any part in the government. Boris ignored his enemies and gained power as he went. Those who opposed him were banished or crushed.

"I shall be ruler of Russia some day; whatever stands in my way shall be pushed aside or crushed out," he said to his most trusted advisers.

In a few years Feodor died, leaving no heirs. With him the dynasty of Rurik came to an end. It had lasted for seven centuries, and he was the very last of his race. The remote members of the family were too much afraid of the powerful minister to aspire to the throne.

A new ruler must be chosen, and the people dared choose no other than Boris. Nobles, priests and people asked him to keep the power he already had, for they knew the army was with him and that he could be czar whether they willed it or not.

At the end of six weeks, Boris replied, "I shall accept the head of this great people to be their czar in name as I have been in fact for many years." And so Boris accepted the throne

of Russia. All his hesitance had been mere pretence, for the throne of Russia was the object of his ambition all the time.

Boris was a strange mixture of prodigality and cruelty. He showed many favors to the people, he built cities, he strengthened the fortresses, he defeated the enemies of Russia and he brought Siberia under firm control. In all this he was an able ruler.

On the other hand, he destroyed all those whom he feared, forbade the members of the powerful families to marry, hoping thereby to exterminate them, and seized the wealth of all whom he ruined. The peasants were treated with great hardship and many of them fled from the country.

In the midst of all this turmoil the ghost of the slain boy rose to plague him and accuse him of murder. This story forms one of the strangest and most interesting incidents in the history of Russia.

Upon one occasion, twelve years after the death of Dmitri in the courtyard of the palace, a Polish prince became angry at some negligence on the part of a young man he had employed and struck him a blow in the face, calling him some insulting names.

"You do not know who I am, prince," said the boy, "or you would not strike me, or call me by such a name."

"Who are you indeed, and what is your name then?" said the prince with some astonishment.

"I am Dmitri, son of Ivan, and the rightful Czar of Russia," replied the young man. "I was not murdered, as you suppose, but I escaped from the horrible plot by the help of my physician. It was a peasant boy who was murdered in my place and Boris Godunof was cheated of his cruel design. I have been in a monastery for twelve years."

To support himself in this remarkable statement the young man showed the prince a Russian seal which bore the arms and the name of Dmitri; also a gold cross which was

known to have belonged to the child. He showed certain marks upon his face and body which everyone knew the murdered Dmitri bore. It was a plausible story, and the young man had fine manners, a good education, and besides all that, the prince was too glad to believe his story.

Dmitri, for we shall now call him so, became the guest of the prince. He was given clothes, horses, and a fine retinue, and presented to other Polish nobles, to whom he related his story. His manners were so engaging and his knowledge of Russia so extensive that the Polish nobles did not inquire too closely into the truth of his statements, but accepted them as facts.

The story soon spread from town to town. After awhile it reached Russia. Dmitri had not been murdered, after all. The plans of Boris had failed, and a peasant boy had been substituted for the lad. The real Dmitri was alive and was on his way to call the usurper to a terrible account for his deed. The story spread like fire on a prairie.

Boris on his throne heard what the people were saying. "What? Dmitri alive! It is false. The man is an impostor. I must have him here at once. Send to Poland and have him brought to me." His messengers tried to bribe the Polish prince to give up Dmitri to Boris, but this was a bad move, for it confirmed the suspicions of those who believed that Boris was really concerned in the child's murder.

Events now moved rapidly. Dmitri, backed by the Polish nobles, raised an army of five thousand men and marched into Russian territory. The force grew rapidly as it advanced. Town after town submitted to him as soon as he appeared, bringing the governors that Boris had appointed bound and gagged to him. Dmitri set them free and treated them with courtesy.

Boris gathered his army to oppose the advance of Dmitri. At one town his force of fifteen thousand men opposed Boris' army of fifty thousand. Dmitri proved himself an able

leader and a brave soldier. At the head of six hundred knights he charged the center of the Russian army, threw it into confusion, while the soldiers fled in disorder.

A month later he was defeated by Boris and had to take refuge in a distant city. Here the agents of the ruler attempted to poison him, but the plot was discovered and the agents punished. Dmitri wrote a letter to Boris, saying, "Descend from the throne you have usurped, and seek refuge in a cloister and reconcile yourself with Heaven. I shall then forgive you, else I shall not cease until I shall punish you for your wicked crimes."

Boris shuddered when he read the letter. The phantoms of all the dreadful things he had done arose to haunt him and keep him from sleep. He feared Dmitri; he feared his attendants; he feared everything. He knew that so long as Dmitri lived, his throne was not safe, yet he also knew he could not keep on killing people in order to save himself. He knew that everybody that came into his presence hated him, and in his heart he was sore afraid.

One day he was dining in state with some foreigners. After the meal had been served he was seized with a sudden illness. Blood burst from his mouth, his nose, his ears. He fell on the floor and was borne to his room, where, after two hours' suffering, he died. No one ever knew, or at least ever said, what was the cause of his sudden death. And thus ended the strange career of Boris, whom nobody ever proved to be really a murderer.

Now, Boris had a son Feodor, named for the late czar. Feodor was not like his father, for his hold on the throne was very weak indeed. He was made czar, but within six weeks he was deposed and executed, and nobody seemed to care one way or the other. Thus was the way made clear for Dmitri.

The army and the people of Moscow proclaimed themselves in favor of Dmitri. He entered the city and was made czar amid great pomp and ceremony. The young man

who two years before had his ears boxed by a prince, was now the head of the mighty Russian nation.

Dmitri proved himself to be a kind and generous ruler. He remitted heavy taxes, punished offenders, paid the debts of Ivan, and in many ways endeared himself to the people. His knowledge of affairs was remarkable for one of his age, and his disposition was unusually gentle.

He, himself, however, could not escape from the conspiracies and intrigues that beset all rulers of Russia at that day. Most of them died violent deaths, and Dmitri was not spared this fate. His boyish humor had offended the nobles, who he declared had the manners of savages. They never forgave him for this.

After ruling for nearly a year a conspiracy was formed to put him to death. Moscow broke out in rebellion and a body of soldiers appeared before the palace of Dmitri, crying, "Death to the impostor! Down with the false Dmitri!"

Dmitri retired before the conspirators as they broke into the palace and forced his guards from room to room. With his own hands he slew several of his assailants, and then leaped from a window to the ground, thirty feet below, breaking his leg in the fall.

Here he was seized by the mob, his royal garments were taken off, and the cap of a pastry cook was placed on his head instead of his crown. Thus attired, he was carried back to his own palace, for a mock trial.

"You impostor! Tell us who you are and whence you came!" cried one of the Russians.

"I am your czar," said he. "The son of Ivan, and in my veins flows the blood of the Ruriks, who for seven hundred years have ruled this nation."

"You are a heretic dog, and the son of a slave!" cried one of the Russian nobles who was in the conspiracy, and aiming his gun, shot Dmitri through the heart.

The same people who a few weeks before had followed his imperial train now hacked his body in pieces, until none could recognize the features of the young czar. A few days afterward his body was burned and his ashes were mixed with gun-powder and rammed into a cannon, which was dragged to the very gate by which Dmitri had entered Moscow.

Here the match was applied and the ashes of the czar were blown down the road toward Poland, from which he had come. And to this day no one knows whether he was the son of Ivan, or whether he was merely Dmitri, the Pretender.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE MAN WITH THE IRON MASK

When Louis XIV became King of France, an event occurred which has ever since been shrouded in the mystery with which it was first involved.

One day there arrived under armed escort at the chateau of Pignerol an unknown prisoner, whose face was concealed by an impenetrable mask. Where he came from, why he was so closely guarded, or who he was, no one told at the time, and no one has since been able to discover.

All that one could observe was that he appeared to be young, for he stood erect and moved easily; that he was rather tall and well-formed and had a wealth of rich dark hair, and a voice indicating refinement and culture. He never said who he was, nor complained, nor asked questions, nor gave any clue as to why he was thus made prisoner. He was treated with the greatest deference by those who had him in charge.

His face was hidden by a mask of iron covered with velvet, the lower part of which was made movable by springs, so that the prisoner could expose his mouth when eating and drinking. So far as one knows, the mask was never removed. Whether he was handsome or otherwise, of noble or base

family, there was no way of telling. The man himself gave no sign. He became known then and is still known as the Man with the Iron Mask.

For a number of years the prisoner remained at Pignerol, under care of the governor, St. Mars, who seemed to have been a custodian of great discretion. If any one asked him who the prisoner was that wore the iron mask, St. Mars always replied, "It is not becoming in you to ask, nor in me to reply. We will talk of something else."

After a few years the prisoner was removed to the Isle of St. Marguerite on the coast of Provence, where he remained in the same seclusion and surrounded by the same mystery. The other prisoners regarded him with the greatest curiosity and respect, and the attendants tried in vain to secure from him any word of his identity or the cause of his imprisonment.

He walked about his prison halls and the yard with silence and dignity as if unmindful of those who were about him, rarely saying a word and never uttering a complaint. His mask was never removed day or night, so far as anyone knew. Throughout the kingdom the mystery became common talk, but no one could offer a satisfactory explanation.

"Who is the Man with the Iron Mask?" was the general inquiry.

"He is not an ordinary criminal, for he is treated by the governor of the prison with the respect and consideration that belong to those of noble birth," said one.

Another remarked, "I have heard that the Marquis of Louvois, the minister of war, visited him, and treated him with the respect due to one of royal birth. While he spoke to the Mask, the minister stood hat in hand, and though no one heard what was said, yet the attendants declare the minister bowed very low, with the deference due to royalty."

"It could not be a royal personage," was the answer, "for no member of the royal house of France or of any other

country has disappeared. They are all too well known by name and station. No, they are all accounted for." And so it was, for every reigning house was checked off and its members located beyond dispute.

It was also proved that no leading personage in France or Europe had disappeared. Everyone that should have been treated with the deference that was paid the Iron Mask was named as free and going about his ordinary affairs. The mystery remained unsolved. Probably the minister of war knew to whom he was talking, and St. Mars, the governor, may have known. If so, they never divulged the secret.

After thirty-six years at St. Marguerite, and after the Iron Mask had grown to be a middle-aged man and the people had ceased to wonder at the mystery, St. Mars was made governor of the Bastille in Paris. When he moved to his new position he took his prisoner with him. Some details of the journey are given in a letter written by the grand-nephew of St. Mars.

"When he set out to enter on his office he stayed at his estate at Palteau for a short time. The Mask was in a litter, accompanied by men on horseback. The peasants went out to meet the company and greet their seigneurs. St. Mars ate his meals in the chateau with his prisoner, who sat with his back to the windows which overlooked the courtyard. The peasants could not see whether or not he removed his Mask while he was eating.

"They observed that St. Mars, who sat opposite the Mask, had a pair of pistols by his plate. The valet who waited on them took away the dishes from an ante-chamber, the dining-room door being carefully closed beforehand. When the prisoner crossed the courtyard a black mask was always over his face."

At the Bastille the secret which involved the prisoner was as closely guarded as ever. His mask was never removed, and he spoke in a guarded voice and to very few persons. St.

Mars was still his constant companion, though always with great courtesy. He never sat in the presence of the Mask except when at meals, and even then observed a great deal of formality.

"See that the prisoner has everything his comfort demands, and spare no expense," were the mysterious orders the governor received, and they were rigidly obeyed. The best food was supplied to his table, the finest linen and china for his service. If he wished for fine laces, they were provided; if he wished for music, it was forthcoming; if he called for rare wines, they were sent for.

The only request that was never made was that the mask should be removed. The only name forbidden to be uttered was the name of the man who wore it. St. Mars, with all his deference, stood with pistols by his side, probably with secret orders to end the life of the Mask if he should show his face or utter his name.

One day word was sent to the prison doctor, "The Man with the Iron Mask is ill. You will attend him." The doctor came into the rooms of the prisoner and saw him lying on the bed with his mask still covering his face. He examined his tongue after lifting the iron frame, and then looked over parts of his body. Not a word was uttered, while St. Mars stood by grimly to see that the old secret was kept.

"There is nothing particular the matter with the prisoner. He is worn with much confinement, and is feeble with anxiety and concern." And with that the doctor departed.

The next day the prisoner was worse and the doctor prescribed some remedy which was of no avail. During the day he sank rapidly, uttering no sound, making no confession, calling no name, carrying his secret with him into his grave. That night he died and was buried with his mask on him. He had been a prisoner for forty-one years.

Who was the Man with the Iron Mask? That is a question which has been debated for two hundred or more

years and without conclusion. Chamillard, the last minister of Louis XIV, knew, but on his dying bed he declared it was a secret of state, which he had sworn never to reveal, and died leaving it untold. If St. Mars knew, he never said so, and never ventured to make a conjecture. Louis XIV knew, but that mighty monarch kept to himself and his trusted agents the mystery of the Man with the Iron Mask.

CHAPTER XXXIX

STORIES OF PETER THE GREAT

Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, was such a remarkable character, both of body and of mind, that during his reign he did more for his country than any other czar that has ever ruled over it.

It was in the early history of Russia, when conditions were very crude and most of that country was half-civilized. It is said that his sister contrived to have him placed, when he was almost a child, under very evil influences, hoping that he might become a monster who would be so odious to his people that she herself could gain control of the government. This plan, however, did not succeed, for his removal from the court made him self-reliant and the influences by which he was surrounded rather disgusted than tempted him. From the very beginning he showed an interest in military affairs, and often played at soldiers with his companions.

In addition to this he became very much interested in all kinds of industries, particularly shipping. He cared little about his rank and went everywhere among the people, looking at the way things were made, and was often anxious himself to take a hand at the bench. He would make a companion of anyone, high or low, from whom he could learn anything. One day, when he was sixteen years old, he was wandering about one of his country estates and he saw an old building in the yard. He asked one of his servants what it was.

"It is a storehouse full of rubbish," was the answer he received.

Peter was curious to see this rubbish, and had the doors opened and went in. In one corner he saw a boat with the bottom upturned, very different from the kind of boats that were then used on the Russian rivers.

"What kind of a boat is that?" he asked. "It is an English boat," was the reply.

"What is the difference between an English boat and a Russian boat?" demanded Peter.

His guide said, "If you fit this boat with sails it can go not only with the wind, but against the wind."

Peter was incredulous at this statement and demanded to know how a boat could be steered against the wind. Determined to find out, he had the boat taken from the storehouse, but it proved to be too rotten for use. He sent for an old boat builder and demanded that the boat be put in order and fitted with sails and launched on a neighboring stream.

Imagine his surprise when he saw the boat moving under sail up and down the river, turning right or left under the control of the helm. Up to that time Peter had never seen a rudder.

The river was very narrow, however, and Peter, who tried to steer the boat, ran it into the bank. He wanted a larger space to learn how to manage his new craft. He therefore ordered a larger boat to be built upon a lake about fifty miles away.

This was done for him, and after a short while the boat was launched. Peter was so interested in sailing the boat that he hardly could be taken away from his new occupation.

A few years after Peter became czar he saw his own country was far behind the other countries of Europe, and he determined to visit the western countries and learn some of the

arts of civilization. He cared little for the display and finery of his court and determined to travel as an ordinary person in so far as he could.

With a few followers he went to Zaandam in Holland. This was a little town devoted largely to fishing and the making of fishing boats. It had a multitude of cottages in which workmen lived, half hidden among the trees, while a multitude of windmills with their sails always in motion showed the industry and thrift of the people.

Peter came to Zaandam and found quarters on a small farm and engaged himself as a ship carpenter. No one at first knew who he was, though his companions attracted some attention on account of the strangeness of their appearance. He looked around with a great deal of curiosity at the ships and asked a great many questions. He learned rapidly and with a great deal of eagerness, and it was not long before he was ready to take his place as a workman in the construction of a boat. He lived as an ordinary workman, demanded his wages, and slept on the shelves in the little closet-like sleeping rooms of the workman of those days. He ate the food and wore the dress of the ordinary laborer of the day, and was in no respect different from him.

The traveler of the present day in Zaandam is shown the house in which Peter lived, the table at which he ate, and the rough bed on which he slept. It is so remarkable that the Czar of all the Russias should lay aside his great estate and become an ordinary carpenter, that Peter's house at Zaandam attracts the attention of thousands of visitors every year.

One day the disguised emperor had bought a bag of plums and was eating them in the most ordinary way as he walked along the streets. He met a crowd of boys to whom he gave a few of the plums. Others crowded around him, not knowing who he was, and demanded, "Give us some plums! Give us some plums!"

Peter did not desire to part with any more of his plums, and so he shook his head and walked away. Thereupon the boys began to pelt him with mud and stones until the czar had to take to his heels. The boys chased him into an inn and dared him to come out, but the czar prudently resolved to stay inside.

He then sent to the burgomaster of the town, and taking him into his room, said to him, "Burgomaster, you do not know who I am, but I am Peter, the Czar of Russia, and I am here unknown. For fear others will find out who I am, you must issue orders for my protection."

The burgomaster then issued an edict threatening with punishment anyone who should insult my distinguished person who wished to remain unknown.

It soon became known that Peter was the Czar of Russia and his life became intolerable. Such a crowd followed him wherever he went and crowded around his shop, that he decided he must leave Zaandam. The crowd grew very annoying, so that one day he leaped in anger from his boat and gave one of the foremost of his persecutors a blow across the back with his staff.

The crowd cried with delight, "Bravo, the czar has made you a knight!" And from that time on, they called the man "Sir Marsje."

The next day a large ship was to be moved across the docks by means of capstans and rollers. Peter was anxious to see this interesting sight, but the crowd pressed around his quarters so closely that he could not get out. He looked out of his window and said to the burgomaster when he came for him, "Too many people!" Too many people!" and firmly refused to move.

He resolved to go to Amsterdam. Getting into the yacht which he had bought and which he had refitted with his own hands, he hoisted sail in spite of the danger warnings of furious winds which were blowing. In a few hours he reached Amsterdam, where his own ambassadors were, and who were

much surprised to see the way in which their own czar had entered the town.

Peter was not interested in balls and parties. Assuming the dress of an ordinary citizen he visited the docks, went to the theatres, watched the fire-works, and stood in the crowd pretty much as anybody else would have done, much to the surprise of the rulers of Amsterdam and the mortification of his own ambassadors.

At Amsterdam he took up the task of a workman at the docks of the East India Company. He had a house inside the enclosure where he could work undisturbed by the gaze of the crowd.

Here he worked four months as a ship carpenter, with ten of his Russian companions, who grumbled at the heavy hours and hard labor which Peter imposed upon them. He was known simply as Peter the Carpenter, and declined to be treated differently from any other of the workmen. If anyone addressed him as "Sire," or "Your Majesty," he scowled and shook his head; but if anyone addressed him as "Peter," he answered civilly, and would accept orders from his superiors as cheerfully as any other workman.

Upon one occasion an English earl and several other noblemen came to the docks to see him at work. The overseer pointed him out to the distinguished visitors, but they were not quite sure which was he because he was dressed as every other workman. The overseer called out sharply, "Carpenter Peter, help your comrades lift that log."

Without saying a word, Peter rose, put his strong shoulders under the heavy log and helped to lift it in its place. He then said to the foreman, "Remember, I am not the czar here in Amsterdam, and I do not want any curious eyes to watch me. When I choose to be a czar I shall become one, but now I am a carpenter and I am learning this business for the sake of my people. I pray you have me let alone." After that he was not disturbed.

His evenings he spent in the study of ship building and in the drawing of plans. He visited factories, museums, hospitals, and everything that he thought was worth while for him to see and know about.

After a few months he went to England to visit the ship-yards there. He slept in a small room with four or five companions and lived in the most meager way, though he was able to spend any sum of money he wished. When the king of England came to visit him in his quarters he received this monarch in his shirt-sleeves. The room was small and crowded and the air was so bad that the king insisted upon the window being opened. He said to the czar, "Why not come and live in the palace, where you can have the comforts that become your station?"

To this Peter replied, "I have no right to live in a palace while I am a workman. I am here to learn and to see, and I do not care to be known as the czar."

Thus we see that the great Czar Peter, when he was about twenty-seven years of age, laid aside the splendor of his estate and spent many months learning things for the benefit of his people. When he went back to Russia he had firmly made up his mind to rescue those people from barbarism.

Upon his return to Russia one of the first things that he did was to order all his subjects to cut off their long beards and shorten their hair and to go about with clean faces. Up to this time a Russian was as proud of his long beard as a woman of this day is of her long hair. Their beards flowed to their waists and Peter thought it foolish for them to have so much hair on their faces.

He ordered every grown man except the clergy to appear clean-shaven, and since he was the czar, everybody had to do as he said. There was weeping and wailing all over Russia and the barbers were busy. Shaving off their beards was to the Russian people what the shaving of heads would be to the women of the present day. But Peter knew no relenting

and the order went forth. After awhile everybody's beard was off, though many of them kept the hairs hidden in their bosoms as a memento of former times. It was not long, however, before the people saw the advantages of clean-shaven faces.

Another thing Peter did was to require the people to cut off their long cloaks. At that time the Russians wore garments that trailed to the ground, which interfered with their walking and with their working. He issued an order that all cloaks and coats should be cut off at the knees, thereby saving cloth and adding to the comfort of the wearer.

The people were required to kneel upon the ground and the shearers cut off their garments as they knelt, so that when they rose there could be no mistake about their length.

Czar Peter introduced a great many other reforms, extended the domains of his country, revised laws and started Russia upon that great career which has made it so interesting and powerful a nation in Europe.

CHAPTER XL

MAZEPPA, THE CHIEF OF THE COSSACKS

At the court of Casimir, King of Poland, there was at one time a young page named Mazeppa. He was the son of a poor nobleman, who was anxious that his boy should receive the training that could be given only at the courts of the ruling men of the nation. At the court of Casimir, Mazeppa attracted a great deal of attention because he was very handsome and excelled in all manly sports.

Here he waited upon the king, went on messages for the ladies of the court and was flattered by them in every possible way. Being young and attractive, a lady of high rank fell in love with him, which greatly enraged her husband, a man of jealous temperament, and though Mazeppa, with a high

sense of honor, gave him no cause for his jealousy, the infuriated nobleman declared he would be revenged upon the young man. Calling Mazeppa to him, he accused him bitterly of stealing his wife's affections.

"Nay, sire, you do me wrong, for your noble lady has but smiled kindly upon me as a poor squire in your service," replied the young man.

The nobleman was implacable, however, and in those rude times, having complete control over his subjects, declared in his wrath, "I shall rid this court and this country of you forever; I shall bind you upon a horse and set him free, that the wolves may devour you both."

The young Mazeppa was led away, amazed and horrified at this unjust punishment. The next day, out from the nobleman's stables was led one of the finest and fiercest horses that he had. It was a wild and beautiful steed, the noblest of its kind, which could race for hours without being tired and could out-strip any other horse racing with him.

Leading Mazeppa into the court the cruel master ordered the young squire to be stripped, and with many a thong to be bound securely on the back of the already maddened horse. His arms were tied behind him and his body and legs were securely bound so that there was no chance of his being loosed in the mad race which was before him. Leading the horse out from the gates of the castle, he ordered his men to lash the beast into fury and turn him loose.

The splendid animal, infuriated by his punishment and maddened with the unaccustomed weight upon his back, fled away, bearing Mazeppa to his fate. With no bit or rein to guide him, the maddened horse galloped for miles and miles through forest and over plains. All day long he ran and far into the night. Mazeppa was tortured almost beyond endurance by the thongs that bound his body and the fierce action of the horse's movements. Resting every now and then for a few moments, and frightened at every sound, the beast fled again over the

mountains and across streams, seeking the savage wilds of the Cossacks, which was its native home.

At last, after some time, the almost exhausted animal was staggering by the hut of some poor peasant Cossack, who noticed the strange burden upon its back. It was not difficult to catch the animal, for he was sorely in need of food and almost dead with his hours of running. The thongs that bound the young man were quickly severed, and more dead than alive, he was taken into the peasant's hut.

"This is a strange sight," said the peasant to his wife. "The young man seems comely, but is so covered with dirt and blood that one knows not what he is or whence he came. I fear he is already dead."

After being laid upon a bed and having his bruised body washed, it was not long before Mazeppa showed signs of life. In a few days he was well enough to tell his dreadful story.

Of course, Mazeppa made his home with his new-found friends. Life with the Cossacks was different from the life he had been accustomed to lead at the court of Casimir, in Poland. He was a young man of much courage and learning and sagacity, so that he soon made many friends among the Cossack tribes. He learned to ride a horse with the fiercest of those wild men, who knew more about riding than any other people in Europe. He learned their ways of warfare and their customs, and soon became a noted figure in their councils and one of their bravest leaders in the petty warfares of their tribes.

From the fact that he was educated, he was made secretary to the chief of the Cossacks and attended him upon many excursions and advised with him in many matters of state. Upon the death of this chief, Mazeppa, who was now a well-grown man, was made leader of the tribe.

Among all the daring leaders of the Cossacks, none could ride faster or farther, or fight with more fierceness than Mazeppa. For many years he was their leader, allying himself

first with one party and then another in the turbulent politics of Russia.



THE MADDENED HORSE GALLOPED FOR MILES AND MILES THROUGH FOREST AND OVER PLAINS.

The daring leader of the Cossacks became the friend of Peter the Great, who laughed good humoredly at the story of his early life and told him that he needed him in his service. Peter conferred on Mazeppa the title of Prince and refused to

believe any of the tales that were told against him by his enemies.

One day, when Mazeppa was visiting the Russian court and Peter was in bad humor, he told the prince that the Cossacks were very ungovernable. "They fight like devils in time of war, but they act the same way in time of peace. There is no discipline nor any control among them. I would have them submit to my military orders."

Mazeppa, who was very proud of the way his band could fight, but did not desire that they should be reduced to military discipline, replied very boldly, "Sire, the Cossacks are fierce by nature. They ride without bridle and saddle, that they might hold lance in one hand and sword in the other. Their horses know their cries and they fight their own way. You may not like the Cossacks, but you cannot change them. You must take them as they are, if you take them at all."

Peter flared up in wrath. "Every Russian must do my bidding," said he to Mazeppa, who had now become an old chief. "You will curb these wild riders of the plains, otherwise you are an enemy and a traitor, and I shall run my sword through your body if you do not my bidding." The czar was furious, and Mazeppa left his presence in deep offence.

Mazeppa was so angry that he sent word to Charles of Sweden, the bitter enemy of Peter the Great, that if he would advance into Russia the Cossacks would join with him in his warfare against the czar.

This plot, however, failed, because the Cossacks, though they were very wild, still were very loyal to Russia and never wanted to betray the czar into the hands of his enemies. When the plot was discovered, Mazeppa was deprived of his office and the Cossacks chose a new leader.

The rest of his story is easily told. Mazeppa, with a few of his followers, made his way into the Swedish camp, and after a great battle, in which the Swedish army was defeated, made his way to Turkey. Here, a fugitive in a foreign land,

feeling that he had betrayed his country and was without friends, the old chief decided that he would destroy himself. One night he took poison, and the next day those who came to look for him found him dead.

Thus ended the dramatic life of the fiercest leader that the Cossacks have ever known.

CHAPTER XLI

THE CRIME OF CHARLOTTE CORDAY

Charlotte Corday was the daughter of poor parents who lived in Normandy, and when a child, had to work in the fields to help support the family. She and her sisters and brothers dug in the garden, worked in the fields, and made the clothes for the entire family. In this way Charlotte grew to be a young woman, and when her mother died she entered a convent. But when, in 1790, all the convents were shut up, she went to live with an old relative at Caen.

Charlotte read a great deal and learned that France was in the throes of a terrible revolution. One party, called the Jacobins, wished to overturn all power except its own, and to put the king to death. The other party, called the Girondins, were more moderate, but they wished to dethrone the king and to establish a republic.

One of the leaders of the Jacobins was Jean Paul Marat. He was an ugly, tiger-like looking man, with a hoarse, croaking voice and a cruel mouth. His nature was as cruel as his face was repellent. He was in favor of murdering everyone who opposed him in any way. He wrote a great many articles that were published in the papers and in pamphlet form, many of which fell into the hands of Charlotte. As she read these articles she became more and more alarmed at the principles of the cruel man.

"Oh, unhappy France! Unhappy king!" She was heard to exclaim, "I also am a Republican, but no ruler is safe whose garments are dyed in blood!"

Charlotte had now grown to be a lovely woman, with long brown hair and dark eyes. Her face was very serious, and her voice trembled with emotion when she thought of France and the terrible deeds of Marat and his followers.

A dreadful idea entered her mind. All that she had read and heard convinced her that Marat was a dangerous enemy to society. He was always asking for more victims for the guillotine, and blood was flowing fast under the awful knife of the executioner. It did not seem to her that this was necessary.

"If Marat were only dead, or could be made to die, then France would be at peace again," she said to herself. She did not know that Marat already had a fatal disease and that in a short while he would be dead anyhow.

The thought took possession of her. Marat must die and die quickly. She herself would kill him, though she knew her own life would be the penalty. "What matters my poor little life, if only France can be saved from a cruel monster?" she said to herself.

She told no one of her purpose, but began to make preparations for leaving Caen. She told her family and friends that she had to go to Paris on business and would be absent for a few days. She wrote a letter to her father in which she said, "I am leaving without your permission, my dear papa, and I must leave without seeing you. I am going to England to live, for I do not believe any one can live happily in France any longer. Farewell, and kiss my sister for me, and do not forget your unhappy daughter."

Of course her going to England was not true. But having made up her mind to kill Marat, she did not wish her father or anyone to interfere with her purpose, and she preferred for him to believe that she was really leaving the country.

One morning she set out for Paris in the public stage. She reached the city and engaged a room at a hotel. Upon inquiry, she learned that Marat was ill, and was not attending the meetings of the Convention. She was sorry for this, for she had hoped to kill him as he sat in his seat with his counselors.

She now made up her mind that Marat must be killed in his own house. The day after her arrival she was seen walking around the beautiful gardens of the royal palace. She sat down on a bench, and with the flowers blooming around her, and the birds singing overhead she matured her plans. Leaving her seat she went into a shop near-by and bought a long, sharp knife with a wooden handle and a case to fit over the blade.

She bought a newspaper at a stand, and read that several citizens of Caen, whom she knew, had been killed by order of the Jacobins. "Surely this man must die and his crimes be stopped," said she. Thereupon she called a carriage and ordered the driver to take her to the house where Marat lived.

The servant opened the door after Charlotte had knocked several times. "I wish to see your master on important business," she said. But the servant told her it was impossible, that Marat was ill, and no one was allowed to see him, and the door was closed in the face of the girl.

Charlotte went back to her room and wrote a note to Marat in which she told him she had news of Caen, and that she could tell him some things he should know. She sent this note to his house and waited for a reply. None came by evening, and Charlotte grew more and more impatient.

She dressed herself in a white gown, put on a cap of the shape worn by the peasant girls of Normandy, concealed the knife in her bodice, and went again to the house of Marat.

"I must see your master on important business," she told the servant. "Ask him if he received a letter from Charlotte Corday; say that I am she, and that I have something for him and for France."

The servant went to his master, who was just in the act of reading the letter Charlotte had written him. He was curious to know what news the girl could bring to him, and in his croaking voice said to the man, "Show the girl up here." He was seated in a medicinal bath, where he stayed for several hours each day, a remedy for the disease of which he was slowly dying. Charlotte did not know of this, and when she entered was surprised to find him thus occupied.

Marat had put on a loose gown, his head was wrapped with a cloth, and near his hand were two pistols. A map of France hung on the wall. On a stool near him was an ink-pot and a glass of medicine. In front of him, and across the bath, was a board on which he was writing. It was his custom to sit thus in the water and work all the time he was there.

"For what reason do you come, and what news bear you of the traitors of Caen? I shall soon have more of them under the knife, I hope," said he, with a snarl, which made the girl shudder.

Charlotte told she had heard that some Girondins were going to raise an army, march on Paris, and put all the Jacobins to death.

"Give me their names!" cried the infuriated man, "and we shall see that they are stopped before they begin." He then eagerly wrote down the names of those that Charlotte called out to him.

His cruel eyes glittered, and his hoarse voice made deep guttural noises in his throat. Underneath the list he wrote, "For the guillotine," and smiled with a malicious satisfaction.

"And do you need proof of what I say or are you taking my simple word for all this?" asked Charlotte.

"I need no proof, for the guillotine needs victims more than I need confirmation of what I hear," sneered the inhuman wretch, as he prepared to dispatch the order.

Charlotte could stand no more. She had given him the names of people she knew were innocent, and now she saw what fate could befall anyone who was accused. Swiftly she drew her knife and advanced upon her victim. Seeing her purpose, Marat called, "Help, help!" but it was too late. The knife had sunk deep into his breast, driven by both hands of the determined girl.

When the attendants rushed in and lifted Marat from his bath, and tried to stop the bleeding of his wounds, it was too late to save him. He was dead.

One of the attendants struck Charlotte to the ground with a chair. Police came in and bound her with cords which cut and bruised her wrists. After a short examination she was thrown in prison. Before being taken there she was shown the corpse of Marat, and asked how he came to his death.

"I killed him," she said quietly, but with a voice that trembled, for, after all, she was but a girl and the sight of blood made her shudder.

On being brought to trial, her judges asked her why she came to Paris. She replied to them, "I came to Paris to kill Marat, for his many odious crimes against the people of my country, and for what others he could commit."

While the trial was going on an artist was busily engaged sketching her face. She asked his name and begged him to come to her prison to finish the portrait if there was time. When the artist had finished, Charlotte took up a pen as if to write, but at that moment the executioner came to the door.

He put on her scarlet gown, and bound her hands behind her back. Her long chestnut-colored hair was cut off. One lock she gave to the jailer's wife who had been very kind to her, another she gave to the young artist who had sketched her picture.

On the ride to the guillotine she would not sit in the chair provided for her, but stood up all the way. As they moved slowly through the crowd, the executioner remarked, "We move but slowly."

"Yes," she replied, "but we shall arrive in time."

When the place of the guillotine was reached, Charlotte descended from the cart, mounted the platform, and faced the crowd. Her lips moved as if in prayer and her face was very gentle and composed. Shortly the knife descended and Charlotte had paid the penalty she expected.

If she had only waited a few weeks Marat would have been dead of his malady and she been spared her dreadful crime; but she did not know this, and who knows whether it would have made any difference?