

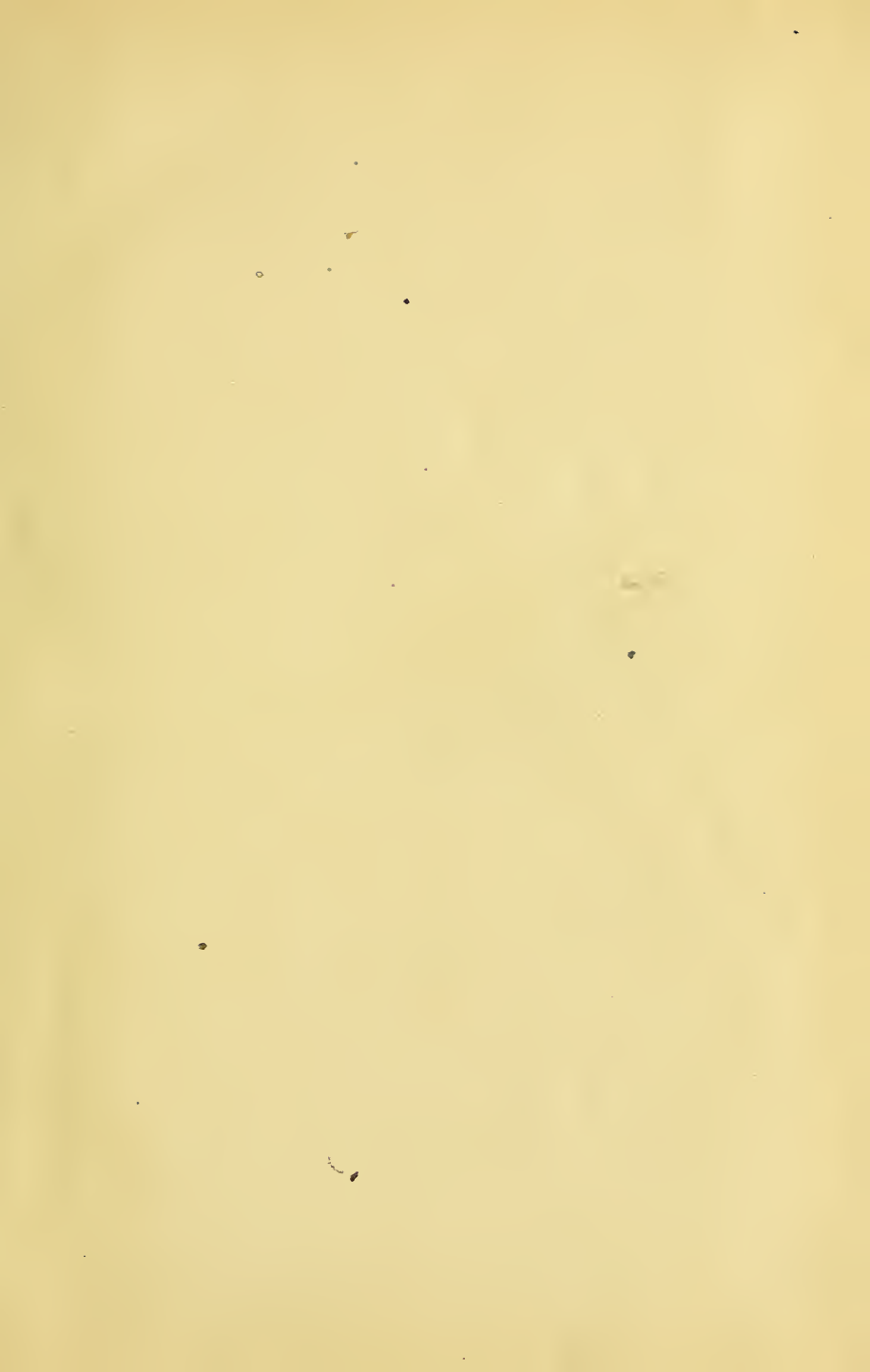


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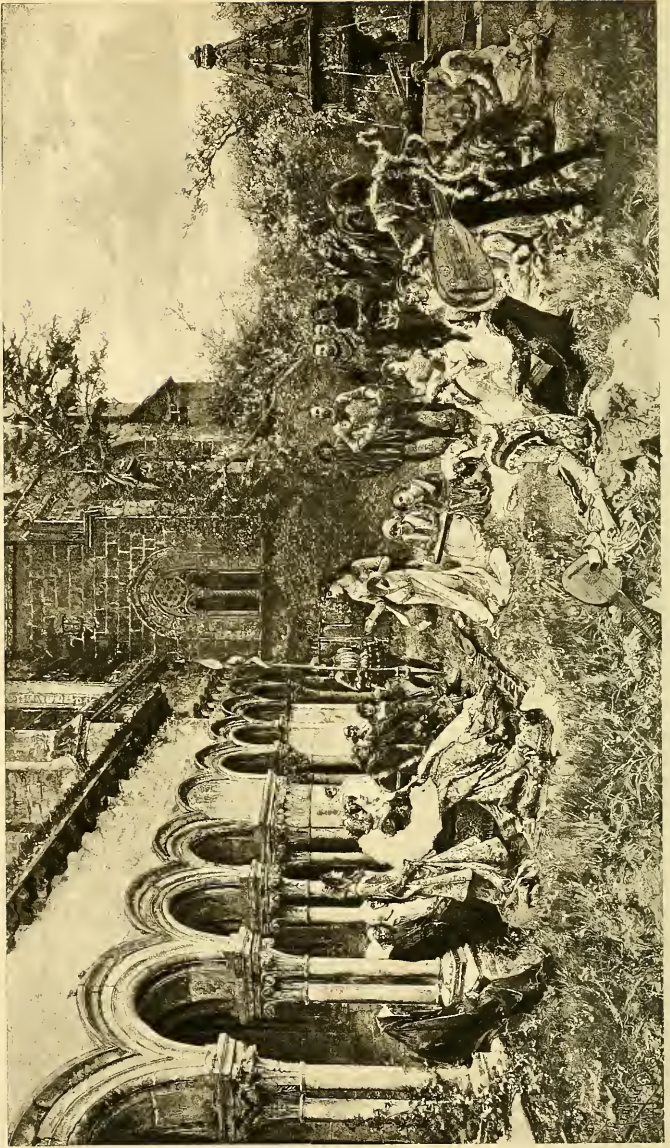
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297

309



The Court of Love.

From a design by F. Pradilla.

ROMANCE OF
THE FEUDAL CHÂTEAUX

BY

ELIZABETH W. CHAMPNEY



ILLUSTRATED

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK & LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press

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TO MY HUSBAND

Who has made all my privileges possible ; and who long ago discovered the Enchanted Castle of Merlin, invisible and indestructible, "in which we live, without (to our own knowledge) growing old, or parting, or ceasing to love one another,"—this book, the gathering of a happy life, is dedicated by

ELIZABETH W. CHAMPNEY.

FOREST OF BROECILIANDE,

May 15th, 1899.



CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	I
> I.—TREASURE-TROVE	40
II.—ANGERS, THE MOTHER CASTLE	74
III.—A CASTLE OF THE SEA	111
(Mont St. Michel)	
IV.—A FOOL'S ERRANDS	151
(Falaise and Caen)	
V.—HAREBELLS AND BROOM	209
(The Spectres of Chinon)	
VI.—THE LODESTONES OF LOVE	241
VII.—THE SIEGE OF CHÂTEAU GAILLARD	285
VIII.—THE WAR OF THE THREE JOANS	337
IX.—THE STORY OF CHÂTEAU JOSSELIN	354
7 X.—GUYONNE DE LAVAL	371
INTERLUDE	391
XI.—THE SECRET CHAMBER	400
(Coucy and Pierrefonds)	
XII.—THE AFTERWORD	426

ILLUSTRATIONS

IN PHOTOGRAVURE

	<i>Page</i>
¹ <i>The Court of Love</i> <i>Frontispiece</i> <i>From a design by F. Pradilla.</i>	
<i>Châteaudun</i>	40
<i>Mont St. Michel</i>	112
<i>Château Falaise—View from Mont Myra</i>	152
¹ <i>The Troubadour</i> <i>From a design by César Detti.</i>	242
<i>Château Gaillard</i>	286
<i>The Falconer's Recital</i> <i>By permission of the American Art Association.</i>	332
<i>Château Fosselin</i>	354
<i>Château Laval</i>	372
<i>Château Pierrefonds</i>	416

¹ Reproduced from *Moderne Kunst*, published by Richard Bong, Berlin, Germany.

ILLUSTRATIONS

OTHER THAN PHOTOGRAVURE

	<i>Page</i>
<i>A Stockaded Farm</i>	4
<i>Bird's-eye View of Arques</i>	6
<i>Plan of Arques</i>	8
<i>Angers</i>	74
<i>Dolmens, in Brittany</i>	138
<i>Alençon</i>	146
<i>Guard Tower at Caen</i>	150
<i>Chamber in Château of XIIth Century</i> .	176
<i>Ruins of Château of Chinon</i>	210
<i>Norman Armour—Linked Mail, XIth Century</i>	230
<i>Plate Armour, XVth Century</i>	232
<i>Chamber in Château of XIIIth Century,</i>	244

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Coiffure—Time of Queen Eleanor</i>	248
<i>Bird's-eye View of Gaillard</i>	308
<i>Ground Plan of the Château Gaillard</i>	312
<i>Attack by the Drawbridge from the Bef- froi</i>	320
<i>Keep of the Château Gaillard</i>	326
<i>Old Tower at Montfort L'Amaury</i>	338
<i>Fosselin—Exterior View</i>	342
<i>Feeding a Prisoner</i>	382
<i>From an old print.</i>	
<i>Montfort</i>	388
<i>Laval—Exterior View</i>	392
<i>Coucy—Interior, Showing Thickness of Walls</i>	400
<i>Coucy</i>	402
<i>Coucy—Bird's-eye View</i>	408
<i>Chamber in Château of the XIVth Century</i>	418

Illustrations

xi

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Pierrefonds—Bird's-eye View</i>	420
<i>Statue of Duke of Orleans in Pierre-</i> <i>fonds</i>	422
<i>Vincennes</i>	426
<i>From an old print.</i>	
<i>Loches</i>	428

important
dusky
Cloîtres poudreux, salles antiques,
Où gémssaient les saints cantiques
Où riaient les banquets joyeux !
Lieux où le cœur met ses chimères !
Eglises où priaient nos mères !
Tours où combattaient nos aïeux !

O débris, ruines de France,
Que notre amour en vain défend !
Les jours de joie ou de souffrance,
Vieux monuments d'un peuple enfant !

Mes pas errants cherchent la trace
De ces fiers guerriers dont l'audace
Faisait un trône d'un pavois ;
Je demande, oubliant les heures,
Au vieil echo de leurs demeures
Ce qui lui reste de leur voix.

Les forteresses écroulées,
Pas la chèvre errante foulées,
Courbent leurs têtes de granit ;
Restes qu'on aime et qu'on vénère !
L'aigle à leurs tours suspend son aire,
L'hirondelle y cache son nid.

VICTOR HUGO.



ROMANCE OF THE FEUDAL CHÂTEAUX

INTRODUCTION

THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL BACKGROUND

THE romancer, like the playwright, if his period is given, has his work in great part mapped out for him, for the date decides not alone the scenery, the costuming, and other adjuncts of the play, but the customs and opportunities of life, and so in great measure the plot itself.

Romance is the child of History, and as legitimately, though less obviously, the child

of Architecture; and the knight who wore harness and lived within the rough walls of a grim fortress was a different man, for those very reasons, from the silken courtier who lolled over the carven balustrades of a château of the Renaissance.

We have few vestiges of the dwellings of the earlier races in France, for they built in earth and wood, and their constructions have for the most part disappeared. The oldest stone monuments in the country are the Celtic dolmens of Brittany, and these were not dwellings but tombs and altars. Though we can point to no other constructions of this half-mythical period, Brittany is by far the best field in France for the lover of the earliest legendary lore. Its authentic history glides back in an untroubled stream to primeval man, uncomplicated by any political or social changes. In 58 B.C., Brittany was made nominally a Roman province, but Cæsar never really conquered this part of Gaul, nor did the Merovingian kings, and thus it remained undisturbed in the cult of its Druidical religion and its tribal independence until the eighth century, when it was subjugated by Charlemagne.

Civilisation, education, convention, were slow to enter Brittany. It was the "Wild West" of

France ; its people are still simple, with strong natural instincts, credulous, kindly, childlike in their wonder and unquestioning piety, with the virtues and faults of savages. Conservative, contented, mixing little with eastern and southern France, excepting in fight, they are in more direct communication with the farthest past, believe its traditions and keep up its customs, and, having less that is new to think of, have forgotten less of the old than any other province. We find here fewer modern buildings and more ancient ones. The architecture is principally Gothic, for the Renaissance, which triumphed everywhere else in France, hardly found any lodgment here, and its irreverent curiosity and intellectual doubt never entered the Breton's happy mind. They lived their frankly physical lives with heartiness, loving dearly a fair fight, but preserving a crude honour even in their hatreds, which forbade treachery though not cruelty, and entering into the simpler enjoyments of life with a whole-souled gaiety, which while it gave credence to mysteries was not greatly troubled by them.

It is to Brittany, in greater part, that we owe the Arthurian legends, for Geoffrey of Monmouth asserts that he found his material there.

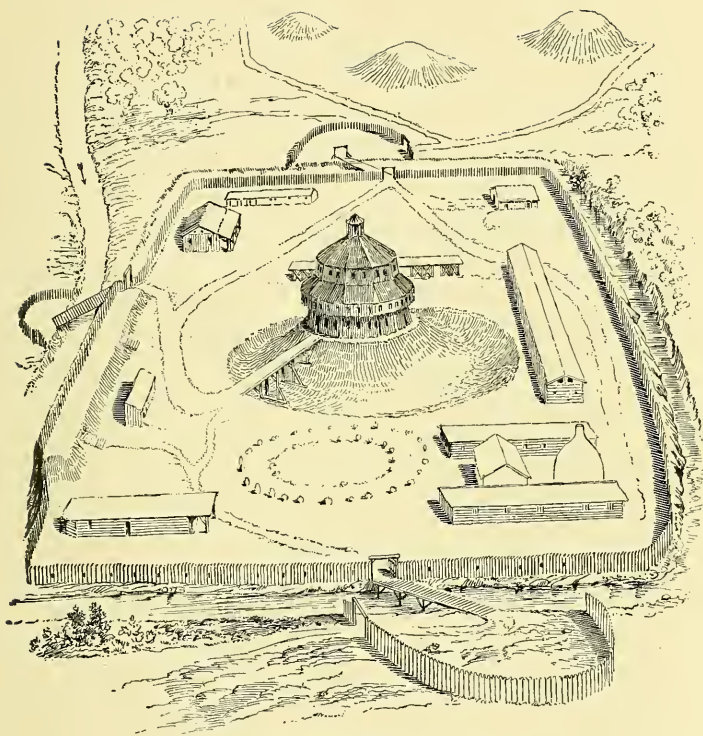
The enchanter, Merlin, is entirely Breton, and

the version of the story preserved through French channels is sweeter and simpler than its English culmination in Tennyson's idyl of Vivien. The romances of Lancelot and of Tristram and Iseult were gradually evolved by wandering trouvères at a later period, and bring in the flavour of the Courts of Love and the lighter thought of Provence. But it was a Breton again, Walter de Map, who opposed these romances by the inspired ideal of Sir Galahad.

“ My good sword carves the casques of men
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten
Because my heart is pure.”

It was his genius, too, that wove the unrelated legends into an epic cycle by the common motive of the quest for the Holy Grail. And this motive at once elevated the morale and the poetic construction of the whole.

Remnants of these legends are still rehearsed in Brittany, and until recently we are told that a man would have been stoned who dared to assert that King Arthur was not a historical personage, while several of the dukes of Brittany, including the unfortunate Prince Arthur, son of Geoffrey Plantagenet, were named for him. Tradition, though regarded



A STOCKADED FARM.

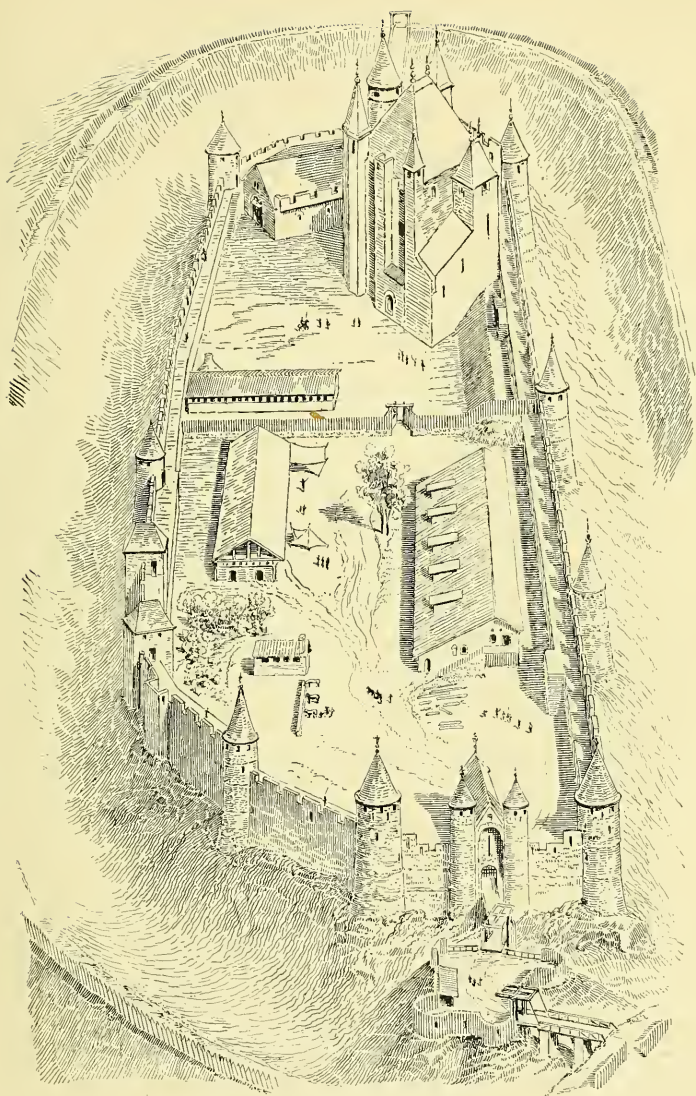
as an airy nothing, is for this period more enduring than architecture; for the literary remains of this ancient epoch have outlasted the palaces of its kings, the fortresses of its warriors, and every other monument except the huge stones of the Druids.

For four centuries and a half, from 51 B.C. to 406 A.D., Gaul was under the control of Rome. The Roman proprietor did not fortify his country dwelling, but lived, in the security of the protection of his great government, in simple temporary villas, fleeing, when occasional forays were made by barbarians, to the nearest oppidum, or fortified town. Roman civilisation introduced good roads, good bridges, aqueducts, military engineering as applied to forts and town walls, and civic architecture, such as temples, palaces, baths, tombs, theatres, arenas, etc., but it left no lasting record of the life of the landed proprietor.

The Frank swept over the land, absorbing or blotting out the work of the Roman, and still the country nobleman and his castle bided their time to appear. For the Frank brought ruder manners, loved isolation, and took heartily to a country life; but he lived on great farms and grouped his granaries and stables about a central wooden blockhouse,

surrounding the entire group by a palisade of pointed logs. It was the life of a frontiersman, a barbaric chief, who nevertheless, as he gathered his dependants about him, was building up a lordship which, as it became modified by contact with the more civilised Romanised Gauls, was to develop into the French nobility.

Another race poured in on the West, and the Norseman brought new influences, especially in building. The Frank had defended his personal dwelling, his ranche, but the Norman defended his territory, and wherever he set his invading foot built strong forts of stone to hold what he had taken. He fortified the Seine, the Loire, and the Garonne, from whose mouths his galleys made their way into the heart of France, and controlled these rivers by means of forts upon the islands, peninsulas, and promontories, and by chains and sluice-gates and obstructions, with fire-boats lying in wait in sheltered coves. At first, as pirates of the sea, the Norsemen had built for themselves mere fortified camps and storehouses for booty, such as the Hague dike, the earthworks of which can still be traced at the end of the Cotentin. Very soon, however, the idea of conquest of land as well as of movable wealth entered their minds, and on every hilltop,



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF ARQUES.

along the rivers and the roads, a vidette watch-tower was built of enduring stone, as token of permanent occupation and to flash beacon-lights from one to the other on the first approach of an enemy. These forts or towers were at first garrisoned only by men, but later the invaders took to themselves French wives and became settlers, and the forts, homes.

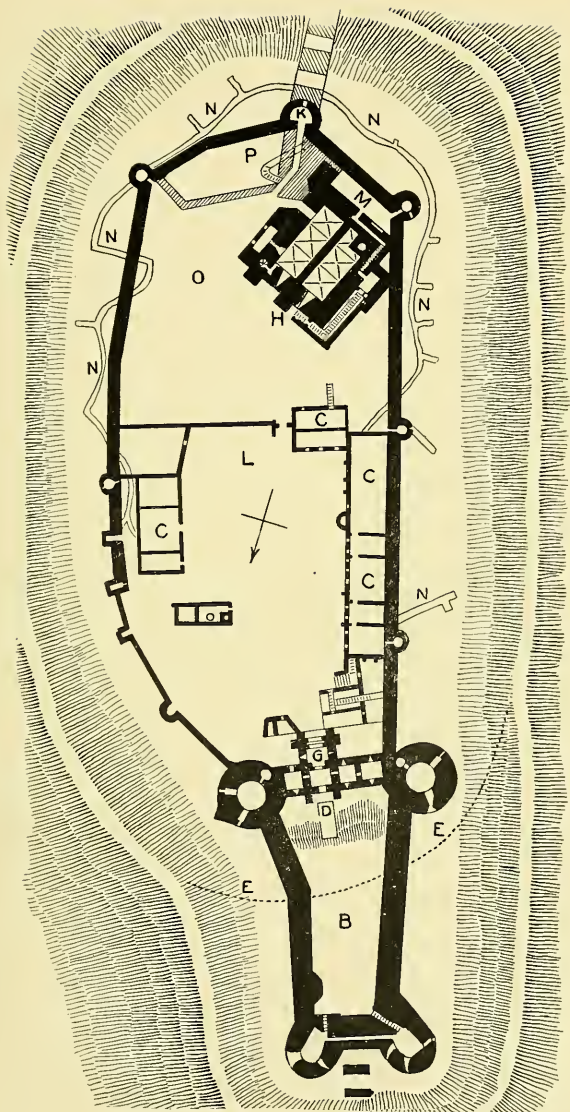
From the time of Charlemagne France had suffered from incursions of the Norsemen, and in the early part of the tenth century the most formidable of their chiefs, Rollo, repeatedly ravaged France. He had the friendship of Alfred the Great of England, and his incursions became so numerous and so dreaded that in 911 the necessity of treating with him was clear, and Charles the Simple held a conference with him and offered him a domain in France if he would settle peacefully. The offer was accepted, and Rollo the Norseman gave the name of Normandy to his fief. It was his great descendant, William, Duke of Normandy, who in 1066 gained his appellation of the Conqueror and the English crown at the battle of Hastings.

In the century and a half between Rollo and William the Conqueror the Norseman revolutionised country architecture in France,

and the castle had its birth. Roughly speaking, the castle-building epoch of France extended from the year 1000 to 1500, with a recess of a century about the middle of the period. The last Crusade and internal war were responsible for this halt. From the advent of Rollo the Normans had built industriously; by the eleventh century all France had caught the building fever and until 1240 castle after castle sprang up all over the land.

The Crusades called the French knights to adventures beyond seas; and the seigneur put his estate in pawn, and allowed his roofs to leak and his walls to topple that he might raise the funds necessary to equip his following in this last struggle for the Holy Land. With the death of St. Louis the Frenchman lost his crusading fire, and settled himself to rebuilding his castle, but the persecution of the Albigenses and the war with England destroyed more fortresses than were erected. Those, however, that were built after 1360 brought the science to its perfection. From this period date the magnificent fortified palaces of which Pierrefonds is the type.

The sixteenth century saw the end of castle-building by the seigneurs, and with it the decline of knighthood. Thereafter the French



PLAN OF ARQUES.

château was a royal *maison de plaisance*, of very different architecture, and gunpowder did away with the grand old walls and towers even in fortification.

It will be seen from this review that the history of French castle-building is the history of feudalism in France. If to-day the life of the Norman seigneur, and even that of the feudal nobility of a later period, seems to us absurd, we must study its conditions and those from which it rose and we will recognise that it was the only way from barbarism to civilisation.

Of the mythical period it has been explained we have no authentic remains. The Angers of Roland was not the Angers of to-day, and the Norman's keep is the first castle that we enter, sure of standing within the very building in which our hero's life was passed. Let us question these old walls and they will tell us much of that life which has not been preserved in written records.

The most perfect specimen of a castle of the very early Norsemen is that upon the island of Mousa near Zetland, which is thus described by Sir Walter Scott in a note to *Ivanhoe*.

“ It is a single round tower, the wall curving in slightly, and then turning outward again in the form of a dice-

box, so that the defenders on the top might the better protect the base. It is formed of rough stones, selected with care, and laid in courses or circles, with much compactness, but without cement of any kind. The tower has never to appearance had roofing of any sort; a fire was made in the centre of the space which it encloses, and originally the building was probably little more than a wall drawn as a sort of screen around the great council-fire of the tribe. But although the means or ingenuity of the builders did not extend so far as to provide a roof, they supplied the want by constructing apartments in the interior of the walls of the tower itself. The circumvallation formed a double enclosure, the inner side of which was two or three feet distant from the other and connected by a concentric range of long flat stones, thus forming stories or galleries rising to the top of the tower. Each story has four windows looking into the interior of the tower. A path, on the principle of an inclined plane, turns round and round the building like a screw and gives access to the different stories, intersecting each of them in turn and thus gradually rising to the top of the wall. On the outside there are no windows."

By slow degrees the Norsemen learned the art of roofing-in their buildings, of springing arches, and making staircases, but the Norman idea of a stronghold would not have sprung up on every hand if the time had not been ripe for them and political conditions called for such constructions.

Throughout the tenth century the descendants of Charlemagne had slowly declined in

power, until, under the last Carlovingian, France was divided into one hundred and fifty fiefs, each a petty state governed by an independent noble. This was feudalism: "a collection of individual despotisms exercised by isolated aristocrats, each of whom being sovereign in his own domains had to give no account to another, and asked nobody's opinion about his conduct towards his subjects." But it had also another side, a sense of fealty toward the King who was suzerain of all. A nominal sovereign they must have to secure any unity, and recognising the superiority of one of their own number, Hugh Capet, over the legitimate king, the grandees of France on June 29, 987, unanimously elected him King of the Gauls, the Aquitanians, the Bretons, the Normans, the Goths, the Spaniards, and the Gascons.

Among the chieftains present at this election were Foulques Nerra of Anjou, Eudes, Count of Blois, Chartres, and Tours, Bouchard, Count of Vendôme and Corbeil, Gautier, Count of Vexin, and Hugh, Count of Maine. Each of these puissant lords had his own great castle, in which he reigned more truly than Hugh Capet over the nation at large. From this time to the Crusades rose the abbeys and early Gothic

cathedrals; during this period castles sprang up in every province and were well defended against the aggression of powerful neighbours, for the nobles grew more numerous, more pretentious, more jealous of each other. The two families most ambitious and most successful were those of William of Normandy and Foulques of Anjou. Under the domination of the latter "the lower reaches of the Loire bristled with fortresses in a long crescent from Angers to Amboise." He built or enlarged Loudon, Mirebeau, Montresor, Montrichard, Langeais, Montbazou, Loches, and Chinon. But William the Conqueror was the greatest of all castle-builders, for he erected seventeen great strongholds in England, prominent among which are Conway, Rochester, Cardiff, Kenilworth, Windsor, and the Tower of London. Indeed England had no castles before the coming of the Conqueror, and must acknowledge her debt of the castle idea to France. William erected nearly as many strongholds in Normandy, and the English and French castles of this time have the same characteristics.

The château of Arques, near Dieppe, built by the uncle of William the Conqueror in 1040, was the prototype of the Norman fortress of his time and is explained with archæological

exactness by Viollet-le-Duc in his *Dictionary of French Architecture*. His plans, elevations, and sections, with the accompanying text, should be studied by everyone who wishes thoroughly to understand the special peculiarities of the castle in the different centuries,—how its architecture was modified as the art of defence and the science of military engineering progressed, and the special meaning and use of every detail.

A few of these plans are reproduced in this volume, but can only be briefly touched upon.

Arques was built on a tongue of chalk cliff, a promontory defended by nature on three sides. This was the favourite site of the Normans for their château forts; we shall find it again in Gaillard, built by Richard Cœur de Lion, who, with the knowledge and experience of two more centuries of castle-building, could not improve on this situation. Beyond the outer walls of the castle a deep ditch surrounded the entire works. If the besiegers succeeded in scaling the cliffs they found themselves unprotected on the brink of this fosse and not beyond the reach of the arrows from the archers behind on the battlements, while their own, directed upward, were less likely to reach their aim, and it was impossible to drag

heavy battering-rams, mangonels, towers, and temporary bridges up the cliffs.

The main attack would therefore be on the entrance, D, which was defended by outer walls, B, called a barbican. Within the walls were two courtyards, the outer, L, called the bailey, used for the stables and outbuildings of the château. K was the second gate, a drawbridge crossing the trench which separated the two courts. H was the square donjon, the residence of the seigneur and the last retreat of the garrison. The donjon commanded the entrance, K, and the entire court. Its angles communicated with the *chemin de ronde*, or ramparts of the outer wall. If the enemy took the court, L, they could not mount on the ramparts of the inner court, as they were higher than those of the outer bailey, and archers could be deployed from the donjon to fire down upon them. It was the habit of the Franks to build their blockhouse in the centre of the court, but the Norman showed more of ruse in placing his at the side. Should it become necessary to evacuate the castle a postern-gate was arranged at K, defended by a fortified building, P, commanding both the court, O, and the fosse. Besides the postern, that led by means of a drawbridge to a road down the

cliffs commanded by the donjon, a subterranean passage connected the latter with secret paths and defiles which would enable the garrison to escape or by which reinforcements or provisions might be introduced under cover of the night.

Such was the usual plan of the defences of a Norman castle, but these fortifications were modified as the science of attack and defence progressed. The castle itself, at first simply a strong tower or a square donjon-keep of three or four stories, each containing but one or two rooms, became a commodious and stately dwelling, and in the fourteenth century, as has been said, no longer a fortress but a fortified palace.

The ordinary engines for conducting a siege in this first period were the battering-ram, the *trebuchet*, and the mangonel. The last was an instrument for throwing great stones and blazing tar barrels, and was worked by a windlass. The principle of the *trebuchet* was that of a sling: it consisted of a great beam whose shorter arm was so heavily loaded that when the other end was released it was possible, as Froissart relates, to hurl back into the castle the messenger who had been secretly despatched, and had been taken by the besiegers.

In the story of the siege of Château Gail-

lard, we shall see how the system of fortification was improved in the second period of castle-building, when the wooden hourds which protected the battlements were replaced by machicolated parapets, through the openings of which boiling oil, pitch, molten lead, and what a humorous writer denominates as "other hair curlers" were showered upon the heads of the besiegers.

The Crusaders brought back from the Orient the secret of Greek fire, and Richard Cœur de Lion introduced flanking towers; the mine was met by the countermine; but until the invention of gunpowder the castle was stronger than any force which could be brought against it, and the dread Marshal Famine was needed to summon it to capitulation.

If the feudal system developed "irregularities of ambition, hatreds, and quarrels among near neighbours, with outrages on the part of princes, energy of character, activity of mind, and indomitable will were not wanting." The sentiment of loyalty welded all together, and Christianity, grafted on this thorny stock, blossomed in that flower of the age—Chivalry.

Let us inquire a little more closely into the causes which brought about this efflorescence.

In the study of architecture, as in that of

history, "we learn how age develops into age, how century reacts upon century, how thought inspires action, and action modifies thought." The castle, while giving security, at least at intervals, and developing military life, gave an elegant leisure, which fostered the arts, patronised letters, and amused itself in diversions. These were at first simple, such as riding, hunting, and jousting, interspersed with feasting, the story of the trouvère, and the song of the wandering minstrel. But later they became more luxurious and complicated, culminating in the tournament and the literary Courts of Love.

Armour was modified and perfected, keeping pace in its changes with the development of the château. Chain mail, properly called harness, was used during the reign of Charlemagne, the conquest of England, and the Crusades, and was made by the Moors at the forges of Toledo. The old Goths wore coats of bull's hide on which were sewn metal rings. William the Conqueror and his Normans wore hauberks or suits of linked mail, which are represented in Matilda's tapestry. The earlier Crusaders wore long gowns of linked steel over their robes, and their coats of mail were heavy but supple. The knights who wore

them could wheel and swerve and manœuvre, but though the links would turn the sharpest sword the mace could inflict a heavy bruise. Shoulder-pieces, elbow-, and knee-plates were added, the transition in the fourteenth century to plate armour. Between 1400 and 1450 plate armour attained perfection, and the armourers of Milan were noted for their beautiful works of art, fitted to the wearer, and inlaid with gold. Later the fluted armour of the time of Maximilian was introduced. Then came the invention of gunpowder, and armour and castles alike received their death-blow. Bayard, the last and most perfect flower of knighthood, was killed by a pinch of the "devil's dust," and impregnable fortresses could be blown up by bombs from long-distance cannon.

The joust and tourney have been mentioned as diversions of the Middle Ages. The joust was a simple passage at arms between two knights, but the tournament became a most complicated ceremonial. So expensive and dangerous was it that it ruined the fortunes of the seigneurs, and as many as sixty knights were killed in a tourney held at Cologne in 1245. Philip Augustus made his sons swear never to take part in one, and the Pope finally placed them under his ban. The Field of the Cloth

of Gold, organised in June, 1520, was the most magnificent and one of the last of the tournaments.

Good King René of Provence arranged many, among the most brilliant of which was one held at Chinon in 1446, which lasted several weeks, and was called "l'Emprise de la Gueule du Dragon." King René wrote a code of punctilious etiquette for their procedure in which he lays down the dictum that only a prince or a noble of very high degree and renown can of right give a tournament. He imagines, by way of example, that the Duc de Bretagne desires to challenge the Duc de Bourbon to courteous combat, in which case the former, as appellant, must privately ascertain whether the latter will accept, whereupon they proceed to the following public ceremonies: The appellant invites some notable herald to act as King at Arms, and says to him, "Take this sword to my cousin, the Duc de Bourbon, and say to him for me that on account of his valiance, prudence, and great chivalry, I send him this sword to signify that I burn to fight a Tourney of Arms with him, in the presence of ladies and damsels and others, on a day and in a place convenient, and offer him a choice of half the judges."

The appellant and defendant were each allowed to select four of these judges, with the restriction that in each case two of the judges must be of the country of their opponent, and all notable and valorous men. The herald having repeated his message with even more ceremony, the defendant accepts in the following terms :

“ I do not accept to make show of my own prowess, but to give my cousin pleasure and the ladies diversion.”

The defendant presents the herald with a mantle on which are quartered the arms of the contending parties and, in the four corners, those of the judges. The judges convene and arrange all preliminaries, sending poursuivants to cry the tournament at the King's court and in the chief cities of the kingdom.

“ Oyez, oyez,” shouted the poursuivant, “ be it known to all princes, seigneurs, barons, knights, and squires of the march of the Isle de France, of the march of Champagne, of the march of Flanders, etc., and to the knights of Christian countries, if they are not enemies to the King our Sire, to whom God give long life, that at such a time and in such a place will be a great pardon of arms and very noble tourney, fought after all the ancient customs, at

which tourney the chiefs are the very illustrious Duc de Bretagne, appellant, and the very valorous Duc de Bourbon, defendant, and all knights of all Christian countries, provided they are not at variance with the King, are hereby invited to take part in the said tourney for the glory of knighthood and the fame of their ladies."

Further pompous preliminaries followed: the entry of the knights into the town chosen for the tournament; the display of the helmets, when any lady had the right to strike one, indicating that its owner was a false knight and not worthy to combat; the showing of banners at the lodgings of the accepted knights; banquets, and more announcements by the herald, and finally the tournament.

NOTE—Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Blashfield have illustrated and explained the armour worn at a tournament in a scholarly article published in *Scribner's Magazine*, from which the following description is quoted:

"The jousting armour was more magnificent and theatrical than that worn by knights upon the battlefield, with a greater display of banners and blazons. The tourneying knights wore armour heavier in front than behind and bassinets (helmets) with open grated visors, on which rested the great tourney helms with their

strange devices. They fought with 'courteous arms,' that is to say, the swords having no point and being too wide in the blade to enter the opening of the visor (while the spears were blunted and called rochets). The heaviest and most complete horse armour was found at tourneys. A double board fence surrounded the lists, and on one side tribunes were erected, one for the judges and two for the ladies. A double cord stretched across the lists separated the parties, who faced each other, each knight with his mounted standard-bearer behind him. Four mounted axmen stood ready to cut the cords. As the trumpets blew the cords fell, the banner-bearers retired, and the fight began. In charging the knight stood in his stirrups. If the aim was good the lances splintered. Sometimes, as in Kingsley's *Hereward*, all four, horses and men, found themselves sitting upon the ground among the fragments of the lances. A splinter from the lance of the Count of Montgomeri entering the narrow sight of the visor of Henry II. put an end at once to the king's life and to jousting in France."

The pageant had reached a pitch of extravagance which must soon have insured its decline without this accident. At first the lady's favour, a scarf or veil, or, like Elaine's,

"a red sleeve
Broidered with pearls,"

was either attached to the helmet or suspended from the shoulder of the knight's sword arm. Later her coat of arms was frequently blazoned or embroidered upon his surcoat, a tunic worn

over his armour. The crusading Knights Templars wore white surcoats on which was blazoned the red cross of Jerusalem. Tourneying knights wore surcoats of samite, or silk, of what colour or device pleased their fancy. It is hard to imagine a bird of gayer plumage than the princelings of the day in their full war-paint. When the lady of Belles Cousines asked Jean de Saintr  if he were provided with a surcoat for an enterprise he was about to undertake in Spain, he replied: "My lady, I have three; the first of crimson damask richly embroidered in silver furred with Siberian marten, the second of blue satin lozenged with jewels and bordered with miniver, the third of black damask wrought with a border of silver thread about a device of green, violet, and grey plumes, your colours, the whole trimmed with white ostrich feathers dotted in black spots like ermine."

Though loaded with luxury and etiquette the tournament was a rude and dangerous pastime fitted only to feudal times when, in the intervals of fierce war, men could find no sport so interesting as fighting for pure love of contest.

Rough-riding and tilting at the quintain, a lay figure on a pole, and the play of rings,

mimicked now in the merry-go-round, was the boy's pastime in the castle courtyard and orchard. Later he left his home to serve as varlet in some grander castle and squire for some famous knight. Austin Dobson's *The Dying of Tanneguy du Bois* gives a vivid picture, not alone of the death of a knight at a tournament, amid the flash of scarves and waving hands, but also of the castle life of the period: the wife in the turret watching for him through the narrow window, a mere slit in the massive wall, the boy with a reed for a lance charging in play and slashing the heads from the lilies.

“ Yes, with me now all dreams are done, I ween,
 Grown faint and unremembered ; voices call
 High up, like misty warders dimly seen
 Moving at morn on some Burgundian wall ;
 And all things swim—as when the charger stands
 Quivering between the knees, and east and west
 Are filled with flash of scarves and waving hands ;
 There is no bird in any last year's nest.

“ Is she a dream I left in Aquitaine ?
 My wife Giselle—who never spoke a word,
 Although I knew her mouth was drawn with pain
 To watch me trotting till I reached the ford.

“ Ah ! I had hoped, Got wot—had longed that she
 Should watch me from the little-lit tourelle,

Me, coming riding by the windy lea—
Me, coming back again to her, Giselle ;
Yea, I had hoped once more to hear him call,
The curly-pate, who, rushen lance in rest,
Stormed at the lilies by the orchard wall ;
There is no bird in any last year's nest.

“ Give ye good hap, then, all. For me, I lie
Broken in Christ's sweet hand, with whom shall rest
To keep me living, now that I must die ;
There is no bird in any last year's nest.”

Even in feudal times the life in the château was not all brutal. There were oppression and cruelty, the torture chamber and the oubliette ; there were robber-like excursions, harrying of fields, sieges of neighbouring castles. There were black revenge and inordinate ambition, but there was also a reverse to this picture. “ Fearlessness, the generous use of power and strength, succour to the weak, comfort to the poor, reverence for age, for goodness, for women,” were springing up, and, with these ideals, courtesy of manners and progress in education. The troubadour was welcomed in the hall, and the trouvère told his legend and the jongleur played his lute. And the troubadour was no base-born child or travelling mountebank, but a noble, educated in one of the abbeys. William of Poitou, the grand-

father of Queen Eleanor, was one of the first of the troubadours, and he and his granddaughter made Bourdeaux the centre of a brilliant poetic coterie, which caused the *gai savoir*, the polite literature of romance and poesie, to become popular throughout France. The chatelaine of the castle kept a book in her bower in which she asked each visiting troubadour to write down any of his romances which were new and particularly pleasing.

The troubadour guest-room was always ready, and sometimes he abode with the family during an entire winter, composing poems in honour of his hostess, which some artist-monk from the neighbouring priory illuminated on fine parchment. The castle was not dependent alone upon the troubadour for its literature. The monks copied the classics as well as the Scriptures and legends of the saints, and the library begun at Blois by the early Dukes of Orleans is an example of the interest taken by the nobles in letters before the invention of printing. The monks at this time were not only the exponents of scholasticism, but of the arts and crafts as well. They were dramatists, musicians, sculptors, naturalists, wood-carvers, engineers, and architects. The monks of Cluny were notable architects, and the pro-

fession was nearly monopolised by them for centuries.

We must not forget that the same age which built the stern and simple castle elaborated Gothic architecture; though it was not until the heart was gone out of religion that the same luxury of art was lavished upon the dwellings of the noble as upon the cathedral and the abbey, and the stone walls of the castle were lined with wonderful carved wainscoting, tapestries filled the space above, and the rafters were blazoned in vermilion.

Ruskin admires the self-sacrifice and the reverence of the seigneur who lived simply and hardily in inconvenient and undecorated dwellings and poured out such a wealth of beauty upon the buildings devoted to God. It was religious as well as artistic "exaltation to which we owe those fair fronts of variegated mosaic charged with wild fancies and dark hosts of imagery thicker and quainter than ever filled the depth of a midsummer dream; those vaulted gates trellised with close leaves, those window labyrinths of twisted tracery, those masses of multitudinous pinnacle and diademed tower. All else for which the builders laboured have passed away. They have taken with them to the grave their power, their

honours, and their errors, but they have left us their adoration."

The beautiful Gothic abbey was usually nestled beside some powerful fortress, its acknowledged protector and patron, so we will find the castle of Monfort l'Amaury protecting the abbey of St. Leger; Coucy, Premontre; and Chinon, Fontevrault.

Alfred de Musset alludes lovingly to this companionship :

“ Que j’aime à voir, dans la vallée
 Désolée,
 Se lever comme un mausolée
 Les quatre ailes d’un noir moutier !
 Que j’aime à voir, près de l’austère
 Monastère,
 Au seuil du baron feudataire,
 La croix blanche et le bénitier !

“ Que j’aime à voir, dans les soirées
 Empourprées,
 Jaillir en veines diaprées
 Les rosaces d’or des couvents !
 Oh, que j’aime aux voûtes gothiques
 Des portiques,
 Les vieux saints de pierre athlétiques
 Priant tout bas pour les vivants !”

So their ruins stand to-day. The stronghold on the summit of some eminence, commanding a watercourse or one of the Roman roads,

the abbey nestling beside the castle, and the two forming the *cité* or ecclesiastical and aristocratic quarter of the *ville*, or home of the burghers, which gathered around them on the hillside. It is this picturesque grouping that makes French landscape so attractive to such nomad artists as Hamerton and Pennell, and by its suggestive companionship charms the poet and the romancer.

The proximity of the castle and abbey had a nobler significance. The monks were not alone humanisers and educators.

“The Church of the Middle Ages,” says a standard authority, “possesses the passionate devotion of the foremost minds of the time, and left a system which really penetrated and acted upon the minds of men. It stood between conqueror and conquered and formulated a system common and possible to all.”

Chivalry was the direct result of the blending of the Christian ideal with a militant life. The ceremony of knighting the young candidate was complicated and impressive, and included many symbolical and religious acts, such as bathing, fasting, the vigil at arms, confession, communion, and the formal dubbing. Before receiving the accolade the aspirant was asked, “To what purpose do you desire to enter an

order? If to be rich, to take your ease and be held in honour without doing honour to knight-hood, you are unworthy of it." If his answer was satisfactory, the knights and ladies who were to act as sponsors drew near and invested him in his maiden armour, and the accolade or three blows with the flat of the sword were given him and he was made a knight "in the name of God and of St. Michael and St. George," the two militant archangels.

The knights had to swear to twenty-six articles :

- (1) To fear and reverence and serve God religiously, and to die rather than to renounce Christianity ;
- (2) to serve and fight for their King and country ;
- (3) to uphold the rights of the weaker, such as widows, orphans, and damsels ;
- (4) that they should not injure anyone maliciously, or take what was another's, but rather do battle with those that did so ;
- (5) that greed, pay, or profit should never constrain them to do any deed, but only glory and virtue ;
- (6) that they would fight for the common weal ;
- (7) that they would obey their generals ;
- (8) that they would guard the honour of their country ;
- (9) that they would never fight in companies against one, and that they would eschew all tricks and artifices ;
- (10) that they would wear but one sword unless they had to fight against two or more ;

- (11) that in tourney they would never use the point of their swords ;
- (12) that being taken prisoner in a tourney they would be bound on their faith and honour to perform in every point the condition of capture, besides being bound to give up to the victors their arms and horses and being disabled from fighting in war without their leave ;
- (13) that they would keep faith inviolably with all the world ;
- (14) that they would love and succour one another ;
- (15) that having made a vow to go any quest they would never put off their arms save for the night's rest ;
- (16) that in its pursuit they would not shun bad roads or perils ;
- (17) that they would never take wage from foreign prince ;
- (18) that in command of troops they would never suffer violence to be done ;
- (19) that in the escort of dame or damsel they would save her from all danger or insult or die in the attempt ;
- (20) that they would never offer violence to dame or damsel though they had won her by deeds of arms ;
- (21) that being challenged to equal combat, they would never refuse, without wound or sickness or other reasonable hindrance ;
- (22) that having undertaken any enterprise they would devote to it night and day unless called away by King or country ;
- (23) that having made a vow to acquire any honour they would not draw back without having attained either it or its equivalent ;

- (24) that having become prisoners in fair warfare they would pay to the uttermost the promised ransom or return to prison at the day and hour agreed upon, on pain of being proclaimed infamous and perjured ;
- (25) that on returning to the court of their sovereign they would render a true account of their adventures, even though they had been worsted, to the King and the registrar of their order, on pain of being deprived of the order of knighthood ;
- (26) that above all things they would be faithful, courteous, and humble, and never wanting to their word for any harm or loss that might accrue to them.

Gibbon says " the order of knighthood was particularly dedicated to the service of God and the ladies," and adds, " I blush to unite such discordant names." After reading these twenty-six articles one is at a loss to understand his blush.

Tennyson epitomised the code in Arthur's ideal knight.

" Who revered his conscience as his king,
Whose glory was redressing human wrong,
Who spake no slander, no, nor listened to it,
Who loved one only and who clave to her."

This ideal was formed by degrees ; the hero of Tennyson's imagination was of a loftier character than the Arthur of the troubadours, as that hero was a different one from the real Arthur of the sixth century, if he ever existed.

We shall see how the castle was in many respects the outer physical expression of the man, only one layer removed from his armour, and all developing together to a more perfect whole.

One great romancer or rather necromancer, Walter Scott, "the poet of romantic legend, of adventure, of chivalry, of life in its heyday of action and its golden glow of pageantry and pleasure, could alone adequately rebuild these crumbling battlements and shattered towers, and pour through their ancient halls the glowing tide of life and love, of power and beauty and song." But he has touched few of the French châteaux with his magic wand; many of them have disappeared, and the old piles that remain tottering day by day still await patiently their chronicler.

Fergusson in his *History of Architecture* says of them :

"France is not so rich as Germany or England in specimens of castellated architecture. This does not apparently arise from the fact of no castles having been built during the Middle Ages, but rather from their having been pulled down to make way for more convenient dwellings after the accession of Francis I., and even before his time when they had ceased to be of any use. Still the châteaux of Pierrefonds and Coucy are in their own class as fine as anything to be found elsewhere.

The circular keep of the latter castle is perhaps unique both from its form and its dimensions. Tancarville still retains some of the original features of its fortifications, as do also the castles of Falaise and Gaillard. The keeps of Vincennes and Loches are still remarkable for their height. In the south the fortified towns of Carcassonne and Aigues-Mortes, and in the north, Fougères, retain as much of their walls and defences as almost any place in Europe. The former in particular, both from its situation and the extent of its remains, gives a singularly favourable and impressive idea of the grave majesty of an ancient fortalice. But for alterations and desecrations of all sorts, the palace of the popes at Avignon would be one of the most remarkable castles in Europe; even now its extent and the massiveness of its walls and towers are most imposing.

“ These are all either ruins or fragments; but the castle of Mont St. Michel in Normandy retains nearly all the features of a mediæval fortress in sufficient perfection to admit of its being restored, in imagination at least. The outer walls still remain, encircling the village which nestles under the protection of the castle. The church crowns the whole, and around it are grouped the halls of the knights, the kitchens and offices and all the appurtenances of the establishment, intermingled with fortifications and defensive precautions that must have made the place nearly impregnable against such engines of war as existed when it was erected, even irrespective of its sea-girt position.”

Each grim donjon is the background for some sinister or heroic figure. Sometimes, as the château of Coucy, it is the background

for many such, since in these long-enduring walls (which but for the insane rage of man would hardly have felt the tooth of time), memories of one age lap over upon another and ghosts flit that never knew each other in life. We have chosen only a few as typical: Angers, with its traditions of Roland and the peers of Charlemagne; Mont St. Michel with souvenirs of Rollo and the Vikings, with legends of the submerged castle of Is close at hand; Caen and Falaise, which tell the story of William the Conqueror; Chinon, the cradle of the Plantagenets; Avignon and Carcassonne, re-echoing the poetry of the troubadours; Gaillard, that proved Richard Cœur de Lion the greatest military engineer of his time; Monfort l'Amaury, Josselin, and Laval, unfolding like a tapestry the panorama of the war of the Three Joans, with Du Guesclin always in the foreground; and Coucy giving dissolving views all through the centuries, from Merovingian times until it unites with Pierrefonds to tell of the ambition and fall of Louis d'Orleans. Gentle St. Louis walks with De Joinville before the stately Keep of Vincennes; gloomy Gaston de Foix rages at Pau; Louis XI., wily and cruel, peers from Plessis les Tours and from Amboise at those castles of death, the gibbets, with their

ghastly habitants, or at that more grewsome living death in the dungeons of Loches, and in his greedy kingship strikes the first blow to feudalism, just as it is coming to perfection.

All through the centuries we shall see how the ideal of the perfect knight grew; that William of Normandy was far nobler than Rollo, and he of the Lion Heart more courteous and cultured than the bluff Conqueror, while St. Louis is immeasurably in advance of Richard in purity, sweetness, and all the qualities which make the ideal King Arthur. Du Guesclin, sprung from comparatively humble birth, gives an uplift to commonalty through his personal emprise; Charles of Orleans, writing his poems in captivity, or collecting his literary circle at Blois, is a forerunner of the Renaissance, and René, the artist-king, calmly painting his miniatures while his castles are taken from him, has the same disregard for material wealth and dignities which marks the modern artist. Froissart's ideal, as shown in his hero, Gaston de Foix, who finds his highest pleasure in his kennels, and Simon de Montfort, whose perverted conscience makes him burn hundreds of heretics, has been lost sight of in a clearer vision of what perfect knighthood should be. And at last, just as

chivalry passes from the world, the ideal achieves its realisation in Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*.

With the passing of the knight, feudalism and its stronghold also passed from the scene, and the royal château of the Renaissance sprang up to mark a new era, when the King was supreme and the noble had lost all of nobility but the name. Agrippa d'Aubigné was the last who dared shut himself in his fortresses and refuse to surrender them to the King. Richelieu issued an edict in 1626 which ordered the destruction of all useless castles and fortifications in the kingdom. Only those were to be spared which were on the frontiers, or possessed special value in case of foreign war. The measure while strengthening monarchy was also aimed against the Huguenots. Castles, which, like Montargis, had been a hospice for Protestants and defied the armies of the League and the King, were not to be suffered to exist. All through the south of France, and in Provence especially, the work of blowing up the grand old towers and walls went on. There is something akin to fury in the French blood, which loves to destroy its monuments, remembering only the wrongs that it has suffered; and the local population

joined with the King's authorities in sacking, pillaging, and demolishing. The Revolution nearly completed the work which the religious wars and monarchy had begun, and though every town in France has its ruin, we understand why Fergusson's reproach is true, that there remain fewer well preserved specimens of feudal fortresses in France than in England or Germany.

The writer loves these ruins, and the traditions which cling to them. Some have been told her by simple people on the spot; others she has found in old chronicles in which she has read a trifle between the lines, seeing looks and gestures and little explanatory phrases with guesses at thoughts and motives, written in that magical sympathetic ink which is too faded and faint to catch the eye of the searcher for authenticated statistics; and so she must explain that, of the tales that follow, though some are historically true, of others she must write as Caxton did in his preface to the *Morte d'Arthur* of Sir Thomas Malory:

“I have down-set in print the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honour, and how they that were vicious were punished and put to shame. Do after the good and leave the evil, and it shall bring you to good fame

and renommée. And"—while we hope that—"for to pass the time this book shall be pleasant to read in, but for to give faith and belief that all is true that is contained herein—ye be at your liberty."



CHAPTER I

TREASURE-TROVE

IT was as though some enchanter of the dim past had lifted his wand and time had stood still for centuries.

Here were the same moats and massive walls, the great entrance with the portcullis rusted into its grooves, the meurtrières, or tiny slits of windows where the archers stood, the "pepper-pot turrets and extinguisher roofs."

When we crossed the permanent bridge, which at Château La Joyeuse now replaces the ancient drawbridge, we drifted back into legendary times, and felt ourselves as unreal as the unsubstantial characters in an old romance. For the stately life, at once ceremonious and simple, has scarcely changed, and has never been interrupted (save by that dis-



Châteaudun.



agreeable episode of the Revolution) and still goes on within its walls as it has always done since the ennoblement of the first La Joyeuse. That was long ago, in the tenth century, and the castle itself was built somewhere in the thirteenth. It escaped the lynx eyes of Richelieu only because it was such a little château, defending nothing in particular, and because it was in so inaccessible a region that it seemed to have run away and hidden itself. There were ruins on the one side, which added to the picturesque effect of the whole; but in this case it was the more modern and ornate wing, erected at the time of the Renaissance, which had been destroyed. The mad peasants found what had escaped the envy of royalty, and attempted to burn the entire château; but the thicker walls of the more ancient portion had resisted the flames, and a tower and one wing remained, antiquated and solitary, like an aged man who had lost his children and with them every link to the present.

And yet its name, La Joyeuse, was not a misnomer. There was no hint of sadness in the life at the château. It was calmly retrospective, and untroubled by the turmoil of the present. A sweet sense of peace, and remoteness alike from the ambitions and drudgery of

modern life, pervaded all. Every appointment was archaic, with no incongruous modern improvements of electric lifts and lighting to replace the monumental stone staircase, up which the family toiled in ghostly procession each evening, their twinkling bedroom candles making luminous will-o'-the-wisps in the dark hall ways. There was the same sense of simplicity and antiquity in the spacious rooms, severely furnished in precious old carved oak, black with age. Ancient arras with dim figures, hunting scenes for the most part, formed appropriate backgrounds for antlers and boar-spears; the raftered ceilings were picked out in painted heraldic designs, and a few old portraits looked down from walls that had echoed the voices of their originals.

Every detail was fitting and unostentatious; each object was old, very old—a priceless heirloom. There were not enough of them for the riotous taste of modern times (which would turn every room into a heterogeneous bric-à-brac shop), but with the severity was a sense of quiet dignity, of accustomed use, and of aristocracy that had been aristocratic for so many centuries that it had lost all self-consciousness.

Without, the dependencies of the château

were those of a great farm, but even here the huge dove-cote, with room for a thousand pigeons, in itself attested seignorial rights, for only the seigneur could keep the rapacious pigeons, which were by the old laws allowed to devastate the peasants' grain fields.

The La Joyeuse family harmonised with their environment, or rather gave to it its serene and elevated character.

The Vicomte was absorbed in archæology and in his collection of antique coins. The daughter of the house, Yseult, was winsome and debonair, as full of pranks and merriment as an American girl, and as fond of outdoor sports as an English maiden. Both were unconscious and sweetly unassuming. Only the Vicomtesse recalled the portrait of the old Marquise in her boudoir, and suggested in every intonation of her voice and dignified gesture that she never forgot her position, and that a jewelled coronet would have received, not have added, distinction by resting on her small head, so imperiously was it carried.

I have called their name La Joyeuse, chiefly because that is not the appellation of either the family or the château, for one does not repay the friendship and confidence of years by notoriety; and though La Joyeuse

fittingly describes their sunny natures and the château in the laughing Breton landscape, no one will recognise under it our gentle host and hostess.

In the earlier stages of our acquaintance they had been surprised at the interest which we took in the history of the château, in the legends of the neighbourhood, and in the romances which had been lived by the originals of the old portraits. They had spoken of their "American ancestor," so called because he had gone to America with his friend Count Rochambeau to fight for our liberties. It seemed natural to them that we should be pleased to know of him ; but that we should feel an equal interest in an old crusading ancestor quite passed their comprehension.

Yseult showed me the old knight in a lumber room, where a coterie of portraits of ancestresses, decked out as shepherdesses à la Watteau, were holding a forlorn little levée among broken-legged ormolu tables and buhl cabinets from which the inlay was dropping.

"This is the room of the émigrés," she explained. "When the château was sacked the family fled, but the faithful servants, before the mob arrived, dropped the portraits and the

most valuable furniture into the oubliette in the donjon tower. They were not discovered until years afterward, when they were rescued in this dilapidated condition. They have waited ever since for a time when we could spare the money to have them restored. The knight's portrait was painted in Venice on his return from the Crusades. Father could tell you his history, I presume, for he lives in the past. He makes me think of Gautier's hero :

“Âme rétrospective, il loge
Dan son château du passé
Le pendule de son horloge
Depuis des siècles est cassé.”

At first the old Vicomte only smiled incredulously when I attempted to explain my love of old legends as something akin to his own passion for corroded coins, but at length he was won over and the archives of his rich memory were opened to us. Having exhausted his store he suggested fresh fields.

“We have plenty of old vulture's nests like this in Brittany, as heavily laden with traditions as are our oaks with mistletoe. If you like we will make a driving tour, and you shall have your fill of gables and fables.”

“And after you have gathered your legends,”

said Yseult, "after you have made the old castles deliver up to you their secrets, you must remember it was only half of the duty of the *trouvères* to find. They repeated their stories in the halls of the châteaux, and you must come back to us and tell your legends here. We will imitate one of the old provençal courts of love, and will all dress in the costume of the period. I will practise some of the early *chansons* and will have a jongleur to play my accompaniments upon a lute."

The invitation was extended to us collectively, and particularly to me as a *trouvère* or finder of romances; but it was a visiting architect, a young student of the *École des Beaux Arts*, who had been making measured drawings of the Gothic chapel (under Yseult's direction), who answered with alacrity and decision, "We will certainly come." "And in the meantime," continued Yseult, with slightly heightened colour and more pointedly addressing the scribe, "we will all help you. My father shall admit you to his *sanctum*, the library, and we will see what shades of the past we can waken for you here."

Yseult spoke gaily, for there were no lugubrious stories connected with Château La Joyeuse. It was the last place where one

could expect to see a ghost, and yet it was here that the apparition first appeared to me that I was to track through many a tangled romance and find and lose in many an old château.

The library was in itself a fascinating room, situated in the round tower, near the ruined part of the building. The upper part of the walls was hung with tapestry and armour, the lower lined with books. From the shelves the Vicomte took down old histories and *chansons de geste*, which he piled beside me on the study table, a most valuable introduction to the voyage of exploration which we afterwards made to the shores of the past.

One day he asked me if I had read the stories of *The Table Round*.

“Only Tennyson’s version,” I replied.

“Oh, but you should read old Robert de Borron!” he exclaimed. “His Viviane is so different, so pure and sweet, you could read the legend to a child; *on boit du lait en lisant ça*.”

He opened the old book and read aloud and I was soon deeply absorbed in the narrative. When he laid it down, there were tears in the eyes of both reader and listener.

“Whatever you find in your wanderings,”

he said, "may it be your good fortune to discover the enchanted castle of Brœcilande. Once I thought I had found it; but no, that castle has no memory of sorrow or of sin—it is not La Joyeuse."

While the Vicomte was speaking, Finette, Yseult's maid, entered quietly and laid some letters upon the table. The Vicomte opened his letters and left the room, but Finette still lingered, softly taking up books and laying them down again and indulging in such conspicuously unnecessary attentions as announced a desire for conversation. Finally her curiosity became irrepressible and she asked, "Where is the Château of Brœcilande of which the Vicomte was speaking?"

"Somewhere in Brittany, but no one knows exactly where."

"Anatole could find it" she said meditatively. "Anatole knows all the old castles hereabouts. If Madame will tell me all the story,—I only heard the last part,—perhaps I could recognise some locality that would give a clue to finding the castle."

"The Vicomte did not say that the story was all true, Finette."

She nodded in a sidewise, knowing way. "Trust me, I can tell you if a story is true; I

was not born yesterday. The Vicomte was in earnest when he said he hoped you would find the castle. If Madame will have the goodness to proceed."

"A long time ago, then, Finette, just after King Arthur had chased away the demon which under the form of a black cat guarded the bridge of Lausanne, and routed in the plains of Autun the Roman army, and killed the giant of Mont St. Michel ——"

"It is true; I know all about that."

"You were personally acquainted with the giant?"

"I have sat in his chair; it is a matter of history."

"Very well, after this historical event, Merlin asked leave of King Arthur to go into the heart of Brittany and ——"

"Pardon, Madame, who was this Merlin?"

"The book says, Finette, that he was an enchanter and the son of a devil and a nun, and so had two natures, but the good triumphed; and after he was baptised, though he possessed demonic power he exercised it only for good."

Finette nodded approvingly. "I have known devils to be converted," she said, "and as for enchantments, there have things happened in

this château, yes, in this very room, that cannot be explained—but it is Madame who is telling the story, not I.”

“While Merlin was travelling, he entered the forest of Brœcilande and, as he was resting beside a fountain, a girl of twelve approached him. Merlin was a grey-bearded old man, but the moment he saw her coming, he assumed the appearance of a young varlet, or youth of good family. The young girl’s name was Viviane, and De Borron says that at this time she was the most beautiful creature that one could dream. Merlin could not take his gaze from her, but all the time he kept saying in his heart, ‘What folly, nevertheless, in me, that I should lose the wisdom and sense God has given me for a simple young girl.’”

Finette smiled. “Men are all alike,” she said loftily—“all fools when they are in love, as doubtless Madame knows, for though Madame’s husband does not look like a fool, yet he married Madame.”

“Do not interrupt me, Finette,” I said severely. “Merlin introduced himself to the maiden as a student in search of a master, and the maid explained that she was the daughter of a *vavasseur* who lived in the neighbourhood. ‘What would you learn?’ she asked.

“‘Magic,’ he replied; ‘and I can already perform a few feats.’

“‘What can you do?’ asked Viviane.

“‘I can lift a château into the air, although it may be surrounded by besiegers, and transport it to an inaccessible place.’

“‘Certes, you are already wonderfully learned. Do you know the future?’

“‘Assuredly.’

“‘I would see a proof of your art.’

“‘For your friendship there is nothing that I would not do. I will both cause you to witness my power and will teach you how to work the same wonders, if you will grant me your love.’

“Merlin made a circle upon the grass and seated himself within it, beside Viviane, and presently many knights and ladies entered the circle, dancing and singing, while strains of charming music floated through the air. Around them sprang up a beautiful garden filled with exquisite flowers. A magnificent château arose in the background, and servants brought from it and served upon its terrace a sumptuous banquet.

“Viviane listened with all her might but she could only half understand the refrain of one of the songs :

‘Love comes as blooms the blossoming rose,
As silently and surely goes.’

“Merlin lifted his hand and all this phantasmagoria vanished. Viviane regretted that she had only two eyes to behold it all, and begged to be taught to work similar wonders.

“‘And will you hold to your agreement and for my trouble give me your love?’

“‘You have it now.’

“And Merlin, looking into her eyes, knew that she spoke sooth.

“‘Since you can read and write,’ he said, ‘I will teach you more secrets than any woman ever knew.’

“‘How do you know that I can read and write?’

“‘The moment I saw you I was aware of all that ever happened to you. I can read your thoughts; you love me as I love you—I can trust you. Take therefore this parchment and write down the lesson that I will teach you.’

“‘What will you teach me?’

“‘To produce glamour, as I have just done, and to make men see what you will.’

“So Merlin taught her to make the semblance of lake or river where drops of water never flowed, and to make men fancy that they saw whatever she bade them.”

“I have seen that done,” interrupted Finette. “There was a man who came to the château who did it. They called it hyp-, hyp-, I forget what. We called it devil’s work, and he made us all very drunk from drinking wine out of empty bottles. How the Vicomte did laugh! ‘That would save me a pretty account with my vintner if I knew the trick,’ he said. But it had not the same satisfying effect; there was no headache afterward. But pardon, Madame, *mille* pardons; I die to hear the rest of Madame’s story of the fool wizard, and the wicked young girl who stole all his power.”

“She was not wicked, Finette; she was as faithful as Merlin was trustful, for she loved him with her whole heart.”

“In that case,” said Finette, “of course he went away and left her.”

“Yes, he went away, but he promised her that he would come again just one year from that day on the Eve of St. John; and when he came he found Viviane waiting for him beside the fountain, and this time he taught her a great deal more of magical lore: how to change her form at pleasure, so that she should never grow old or hideous, and how to lay a spell on man or beast, so that they could never harm her. And all this Viviane wrote down care-

fully upon the parchment. She begged him to teach her to lay whom she would in a magic sleep, and this she explained was because she wished to throw her parents into a trance, so that they should not discover his visits. Merlin went away for the second time, but it was like death to Viviane to part with him, though she could not bring herself then to practise the spell which she had just learned upon him, nor did she wish to keep him with her asleep, for that would be to lose the pleasure of hearing him converse. Merlin, who read her thoughts, and could foretell the future, foresaw what the end would be and he bade farewell to King Arthur and to his friend, the hermit Blaise, saying, 'I go to the land which I have reason to dread, sweet and lovely as it is, for there is a fairy in the forest who will bind me with chains, neither of iron nor steel, but so firmly that I shall never be able to return.' So Merlin was not surprised when Viviane said to him at their third meeting, 'There is one charm which I know not yet which I beg you to teach me.'

"'What is that, sweetheart?' Merlin asked, though he knew already.

"'I wish to know, dear love, how to lock without bolts or bars, so that I can imprison whom I will.'

“ ‘I know all that is in your heart,’ said Merlin, ‘and that if I teach you this charm I shall be your prisoner for ever.’

“ ‘Is it not reasonable that this should be, my dearest love, since I am wholly yours? Why should you not obey me as I obey you?’

“ ‘It is reasonable and just, my own,’ said Merlin, ‘for I know that you are mine; ask what you will and I will do it.’

“ ‘I desire that you should teach me to make a delicious retreat, impenetrable, invisible to others, where we two can live for ever without growing old, or parting, or ceasing to love one another.’

“ ‘This is my desire also,’ said Merlin, ‘and nothing is easier. I will at once call into existence such an enchanted castle.’

“ ‘Nay,’ said Viviane, ‘but teach me how to do it, that I may be its maker and *châtelaine*; then it may be made after my own fancies and last according to my will.’

“ ‘It shall be as you wish,’ said Merlin, and he taught her how to work this enchantment.

“ One day as they were walking in the forest they came to a bower of blossoming black-thorn and sat down, and as Merlin rested, his head in Viviane’s lap, he fell asleep. Very softly she arose and wound her scarf nine times

around the bower and whispered the spell. Then she took his head again upon her knee and waited to see what would happen. Suddenly there sprang up all around them the towers and bastions of the strongest fortress that was ever built, and the blackthorn blossoms wavered and flattened into figures of blackthorn embroidered on tapestry, and they were in a noble vaulted chamber of the great castle, and the branches of the trees became groined stone arches, through which golden stars were seen studded upon a blue ceiling, which was the sky dropped down and hardened. And Merlin awoke and found himself lying on a golden couch instead of a mossy bank, and he knew he was Viviane's prisoner. And he cried, 'Ah, Viviane, you will be the falsest of women if you misuse your power.' For he knew that she could come and go at pleasure, while he must ever remain chained without iron or steel, and fast locked without bolts or bars.

" 'My soul,' answered Viviane, 'could I ever leave you?'

"And Viviane has been true, for she has never left him."

"How long ago was that?" asked Finette.

"Twelve centuries."

“It is a wonderful story, is it not, that a castle could be built thus by enchantment?”

“The enchanted castle, that is not so wonderful; I can readily believe that, and that a man should be a fool,—that is natural. But that a woman should be true for twelve hundred years, that is what is incredible.”

Finette left the room, but I still sat thinking of Merlin and his enchantments, when, chancing to glance up at an old helmet which hung above a door, I was startled to see within the cavern of the open visor the gleam of fiery eyes. I pinched myself and changed my position that I might be sure this was no hallucination. The eyes followed me. They were small and gleamed like coals of fire, and seemed to be set in a black face. I hurried from the room intending to call someone, but on the threshold was ashamed of my timidity and returned. Looking up at the group of armour I was still more puzzled to notice that the visor, which was open when I left the room, was closed. It was a relief not to see the eyes, but I was puzzled. Stories of robbers looking down through the openings cut in the eyes of portraits occurred to me, and I decided to investigate the wall against which the helmet hung. The door beneath it was opposite the one which

communicated with the other rooms of the château, and was secured by a rusty bolt which I had some difficulty in drawing. It gave way suddenly and the door swung heavily inward, pushing me back into the library. It was fortunate for me that it had not been constructed to open in the opposite direction, for, as my hand still grasped the bolt, I might have been dragged outward into a yawning abyss. As I looked through the doorway I saw below me the blackened ruins of the burned portion of the château. Once a staircase had led up to this door. I could see the indications of its course jutting from the outer wall of the library tower; but the projection of these brackets was so slight that no human being could have found foothold upon them. Turning, I faced the Vicomte, who, entering the library, was surprised to see the door open.

“Did you hear anything? Has anything alarmed you?” he asked, and I fancied he seemed annoyed. His expression plainly asked why I had opened the door.

“Not exactly alarmed,” I replied, “but I fancied I saw eyes peering from that helmet and I opened the door to investigate. I see that I must have been mistaken. Of course

it was an hallucination ; I had been reading too long and my eyes were tired."

"Of course," the Vicomte replied with alacrity ; "one can fancy anything, and since you heard nothing and the visor of the helmet is down, of course you were mistaken."

"But," I replied, "the strange part of it is, that the visor was surely up this morning, for I happened to notice the helmet as I entered the room."

"You are right, you are quite right," the Vicomte replied gaily, "and I know now what you saw." Dragging a small step-ladder before the door, which he had closed, he thrust his hand within the helmet and withdrew what appeared to be a small iron mask, a grotesque face with eyes of large carbuncles. "I remember placing this within the helmet myself," he said ; "it is a curio about which we have had much discussion, an ornament of an ancient suit of armour, probably the *epaulier* or shoulder-piece. As I put it back within the helmet you will see that it was no hallucination. From where you were sitting you saw the light reflected by the red stones, giving the eyes a positively demoniacal glare."

"I can explain the closing of the visor, too," I exclaimed ; "when I first noticed this face

I ran out of the room, and the closing of the door must have jarred the helmet and caused the visor to fall."

"Exactly; there is always some physical explanation for any seemingly supernatural appearance or sound when they are really seen or heard. There is a pretty story connected with the grotesque face. It was given to one of my ancestors by the greatest knight of France—Dunois—who, under Joan of Arc, delivered the country from the English. Should you in your visits to museums discover anything similar I shall be grateful if you will send me word."

The persistency with which this strange object reappeared and vanished again in the legends of the château was not only tantalising but marvellous. At this time, however, I had no suspicion that it was more than a curious piece of bric-à-brac, and as I was more interested in literary curiosities than in antiquities of this kind, I gave it no especial attention. The ruins upon which I had glanced at the opening of the door interested me more. The Vicomte seemed to have nothing more to say, but rang for Finette to put the step-ladder away, and returned to the drawing-room.

The maid looked at the door with a quick,

comprehending glance. It had, then, been opened.

“Madame has heard anything? Madame has been alarmed?”

The similarity of her question to that of the Vicomte struck me.

“Heard anything?” I replied. “What is there to hear?”

“But nothing; it is of course quite impossible that Madame should hear anything in broad daylight, with Monsieur le Vicomte in the library too!”

“Neither Monsieur le Vicomte nor the daylight would affect my hearing in the least if there were any unusual sounds,” I answered, a little flippantly.

“Perfectly, and as these sounds were not unusual, Madame would neither be startled nor notice them. There is nothing remarkable in footsteps going up- and down-stairs.”

“There are no stairs near the library.”

“Madame has seen that there were stairs formerly just outside.”

“But no living being could mount a vanished stairway.”

“That goes without saying, and since Madame has heard nothing, there is nothing to be said.”

The enigmatical girl glided respectfully away, leaving my curiosity piqued. Evidently there was some story of ghostly footfalls here, and since it was my province to collect stories, I had acted stupidly in discouraging information. I determined that if opportunity again offered I would make my peace with Finette and encourage any communication.

The evening before we left Château La Joyeuse I stepped into the library to bid farewell to the spot I had enjoyed so much. We were in the long days of summer, and the afterglow of the western sky lighted the room dimly, but not sufficiently for reading; so I patted the old books gratefully and lovingly on their backs of well thumbed calf, and sat down for a moment in the great arm-chair. At that instant I distinctly heard a light, quick footstep, apparently mounting a hardwood staircase just outside the wall. I was startled, but not frightened, and I listened acutely. The footfall I at once identified as that of a lady, for the tap of the little shoe on the uncarpeted stair was buoyant, light, and thoroughly excited. She was fairly running up-stairs now; it seemed as if the next instant she must enter the door. I fancied I heard the turning of the bolt, and braced myself for some

apparition, but the door remained closed and I saw nothing. There was no sound of footsteps going down-stairs, and, impressed with the feeling that the spectral lady must be on the landing outside, I again threw open the door. There was no lady and no landing; only the same deep abyss, indistinctly lighted in the gloaming. Again I heard footsteps behind me and, turning, faced Finette, who was bringing in a lighted lamp.

She did not repeat her question and ask whether I had heard anything. A look of quick intelligence passed across her face. She *knew* that I had heard it. "Yes," I acknowledged, "I have just heard the family ghost. Did someone fly up the blazing stairs and perish in the flames as the walls fell in? What was the story? Who was the lady?"

"I do not know," Finette replied, "but Zéphyre might tell. She and her mother before her were in service here since their childhood. I used to ask her what it meant, and she knew, though she would not tell me. It has something to do with that face. Ask about it too."

"Where is Zéphyre?" I asked.

"I do not know—perhaps with Anatole; he keeps a good inn at Ploërmel, the Lion d'Or.

Madame could not do better than to stop there. Anatole is acquainted with all the region thereabouts. I came from Ploërmel myself. It is a pretty country."

"We are going to Ploërmel," I said, "and we will certainly stop at the Lion d'Or."

Finette smiled; she was really a very pretty woman. "And if Madame will have the goodness to tell Anatole that I am going to Ploujean to see the mystery play of St. Gwenolé this summer. He may like to see it too."

"Tell me about the mystery play, Finette. I have no doubt that I would like to see it."

Finette was apparently ready to tell, but the Vicomte entered. "You are not going to spend your last evening moping here by yourself?" he said, and Finette slipped quickly away. A cool night wind had begun to blow up the valley and flickered the flame of the lamp, and the Vicomte noticed that the door overlooking the ruins was again open. He made no inquiries, but I was too eager for the story to need encouragement, and I at once told him what had happened, and asked for an explanation of the sounds.

"It is very simple" he replied reassuringly. "You have mistaken the scuffling of rats within the partition for footsteps outside."

I was not convinced, but made no reply, for after all he might be right, and he seemed satisfied with his solution. Before he closed the open door, while still looking out into the twilight, which yet showed us the void beneath, he demonstrated the physical impossibility that a sound of footsteps could be produced where there was no resonant surface on which the foot could fall. Even as he spoke, the uncanny tread mounted rapidly toward us, with its tap, tap, tap of the light foot clear and distinct, not within the walls but out on the open void upon the vanished stairway. Did the Vicomte hear it? He shivered visibly, then murmuring, "This night wind is very dangerous," hastily closed the door. Clearly there was only one person who could or would explain these mysterious sounds. I must find Zephyre.

But though the Vicomte was averse to talking about the footsteps he was quite willing to satisfy my curiosity in regard to the grotesque face so far as it lay in his power to do so.

"It is the story of Dunois," he said, "one of the most brilliant pages in the history of France. Yseult, my daughter, sing for our friends the little ballad of the *plus vaillant*."

Yseult seated herself at the piano and sang very simply and sweetly De Labordes's charming song :

“ Partant pour la Syrie
Le jeune et beau Dunois
Venait prier Marie
De benir ses exploits.
'Faites, Reine immortelle,'
Lui, dit il en partant,
'Que j'aime la plus belle
Et sois le plus vaillant.' ”

“ His prayer was certainly answered,” said the Vicomte. “ You shall hear the story at Châteaudun, Dunois's own castle. That shall be the first stage of your pilgrimage. We will drive there with you to-morrow. You will find the castle one of the most picturesque in France. I know of no other better suited to stand as a type of the best architecture of feudalism, and no knight who better than Dunois represents its manhood.”

And so it happened that in company with our friends, in the roomy family carriage drawn by the tireless Norman horses, Gamin and Farceur, we visited Châteaudun and many another castle. We found Dunois's proud home all that the Vicomte had promised, and agreed that the most impressive view was from the

Loir, where its mighty foundations and aspiring, turret-crowned buttresses tower grandly upward, and are perfectly reflected in the placid stream. On the other side stands the ancient tenth-century donjon, with its pointed roof like a cavalier's hat. Ivy covers its massive walls, which are one hundred and fifty feet high. It is one of the oldest of cylindrical towers,—old when Dunois was a boy, antedating even Angers and Falaise. Nestling close beside it is the pretty Gothic chapel, which contains a statue of Dunois. The façade of the château toward the inner court is most ornate, covered as it is with flamboyant Gothic tracery, and the superb staircase is only less famous than those of Blois and Chambord.

Told in this well-preserved castle, Dunois's career seemed far more real to us than when remembered as a subordinate part of the history of the Maid of Orleans. In a later château pilgrimage, we found him as a boy brought up at Blois by his foster-mother, Valentine of Milan, who loved him as much as she did her own boys, and inculcated upon him as a sacred duty the avenging of the death of his father, Louis of Orleans. Destiny had a nobler task for him, but family love and pride burned very intensely in the breast of this scion of the bar

sinister. He especially adored his brother Charles, the legitimate head of the house, and when this gentle prince was taken prisoner at Agincourt and confined in the Tower of London, where he whiled away the time by composing charming poems, Dunois took upon himself the task of defending his domains and securing his rescue. He had studied with Charles, and was far better educated than most nobles of his age. Valentine had herself directed their studies, and the boys' tutor had been the celebrated astrologer, Florent de Villiers. Dunois was eloquent as a statesman, and master of a polished style. He had thought of entering the Church until his duty to his brother Charles and later on to his country became evident. Charles, too, deeply loved his country as his verses written in captivity testify :

“ En regardant vers le pays de France
Un jour m'avint à Doove sur le mer.”

But he loved it as a poet and an artist, as witness the charming poem written after his return :

“ En tirant d'Orleans à Blois
L'autre jour par eau je venoye.”

Dunois was far the stronger nature, and this

had been recognised by Valentine in his boyhood. His only thought in engaging in the war at first was to preserve Orleanais for his brother. The department of Eure et Loire, in which Châteaudun is situated, formed anciently a part of this province, and the town of Châteaudun was the only one on the right bank of the Loire which remained French during the Hundred Years' War. Four hundred of its men sought Dunois and offered him their services as the representative of their Seigneur. They were among the following with which he threw himself into the city of Orleans, besieged by the English, and held it until the coming of Joan of Arc, and were foremost in the first brilliant sortie. Dunois placed Joan in command, constituting himself her right arm in the execution of her orders. The raising of the siege of Orleans was the turning-point for France. Even the capture of the divine Maid did not stagger him. He swept on irresistibly. At Chartres, he forced the English to give up their advance on Paris. In Normandy, Rouen, Harfleur, Honfleur, Caen, Falaise, Cherbourg, surrendered to him. His first aim had been achieved, for Charles of Orleans had been given up by the English and had returned to his principedom. The meeting be-

tween the two brothers was most affecting. Hitherto Dunois had been known simply as Le Batard d'Orleans, but now his brother created him Vicomte of Dunois, and gave him as appanage the estates and castle of Château-dun. Nothing could have better pleased his vassals, for they had long given him fealty of their own wills, and the old castle, and town as well, rang with rejoicing as its new lord entered its gates. He had won no great battles, for he had never had an army of any size at his disposal, only the men who owed allegiance to Orleans, and those who joined him won by his personal magnetism. His career had been like that of Du Guesclin, an infinity of small victories achieved by his own prowess and the devotion of his little band of followers. "There was so great a similarity between these heroes," said the Vicomte, "that some thought that he was Du Guesclin come again. Oddly enough, though Du Guesclin's death preceded Dunois's birth by a quarter of a century, the bit of armour which you noticed in my library was a link between them. Du Guesclin's widow, though very aged, was living when Dunois first became famous, and she sent the hero, by her grandson, a corselet which had belonged to her husband. It had always

brought him good fortune, she wrote, and she hoped that it might prove a talisman of success for Dunois.

“Whether the talisman had anything to do with his success we may well doubt, but Dunois wore the corselet through his victorious campaign in Guienne when Montguyon, Blaye, Fronsac, Bordeaux, and Bayonne were his, and at last France was entirely French, never again to be reconquered by the invader.

“It was Dunois’s hour of greatest triumph. The King created him Comte de Longueville and *Prince legitime*. Legitimation was the boon he had most desired, for it opened the way for his marriage with the daughter of the Comte de Montgomery. And now, Yseult, as there is no one but our own party on this side of the château, I think the time has come for the last verse of the ballad.”

Yseult sang the quaint words very simply :

“ À l’autel de Marie
Ils contractent tous deux
Cette union chérie
Qui seule rend heureux.
Chacun dans la chapelle
Disaient en les voyant,
Amour à la plus belle,
Honneur au plus vaillant.”

As we listened we thought of the splendid

record, how for twenty-five years Dunois and his men of Châteaudun fought disinterestedly for France, and our hearts thrilled as though they too were French.

“He was one of the last of our knights,” said the Vicomte. “Feudalism was passing when he passed.

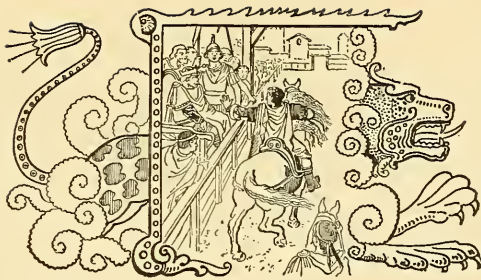
“Between the history of Dunois and the legend of Viviane, between Châteaudun and Brœcilande a long procession of castles and of knights welcomes you to the land of romance. Yseult and I will attend you a short distance farther on your pilgrimage. I have told you the tradition of the grotesque face as it is preserved in our family, but it is far more ancient than Du Guesclin’s time. Its history must embrace the entire feudal period. You have read the story backward from the present for a little way, and I shall be very glad if you are able to trace it to its beginning.”

So we journeyed together, collecting the early legends which were told by one story-teller to another before they were set down in print or writing—stories of wizard or Druid, of ghosts and demons, and the adventures of half-mythical knights,

“Aback in the darlingest days of the earth,
The dear dead days that are lost to sight.”

In our wanderings we visited many ruins of old feudal castles and a few that were faithfully preserved or carefully restored. We found much treasure of romance and roused many an unfamiliar spectre; and ever and anon we caught the gleam of the fiery eyes and the sound of the inexplicable footsteps.

And those who have patience to follow this phantom hunt to the finish shall learn how, baffled where we had sought most confidently, we tracked our game to earth over the vanished staircase where we had roused it, and found it at last at the Troubadour's Court of Love summoned by Yseult La Joyeuse.



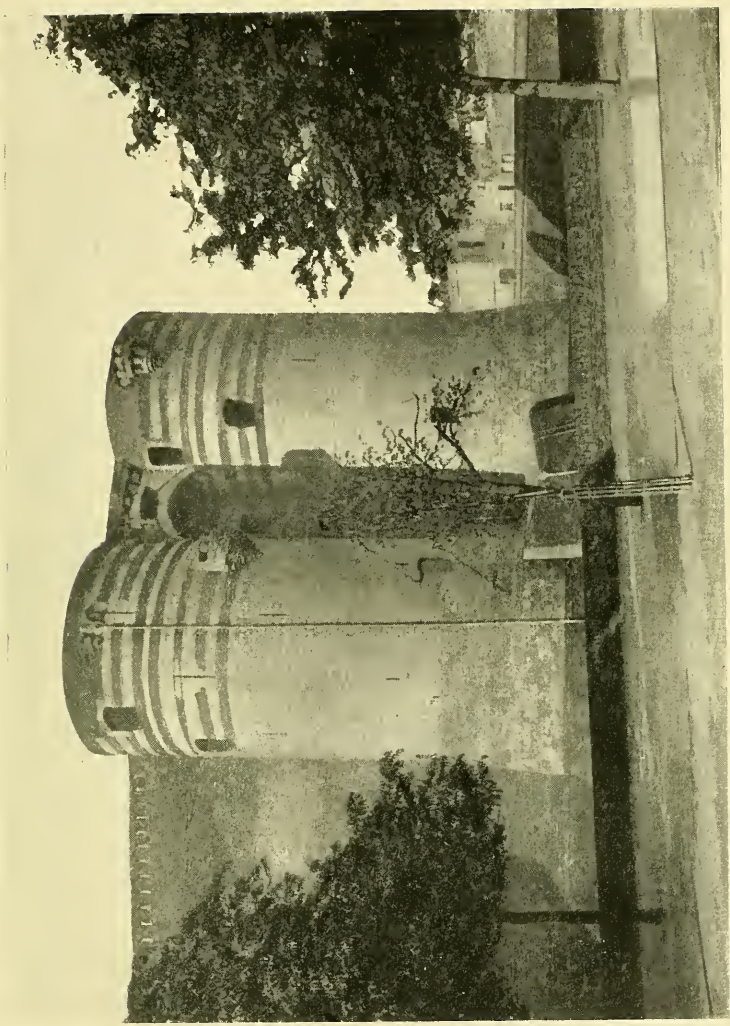
CHAPTER II

ANGERS, THE MOTHER CASTLE

ONE of the oldest castles in France, in appearance as well as in its history, is the giant fortress of Angers. Huge and grim, unsoftened by architectural decoration of any kind, it suggests an age of strength and brutality, of rude assault, cruel torture, and long imprisonment, with death the only possible deliverer from its relentless dungeons.

"She looks the mother castle of all the châteaux-forts of France," was Yseult's exclamation, as we four, Yseult, the Vicomte, the artist, and I, drove toward it across the long bridge.

"Those seventeen titanic towers clustered about her are her stalwart sons. She is a



ANGERS

powerful but not altogether an agreeable mother, to be dreaded even by her own children, merciless in the punishment of their faults as well as in the revenge of their wrongs."

The Vicomte smiled approvingly. "Your metaphor is not far wrong, my child, for Angers is the mother castle in more than mere semblance. You will find the great names of the families that have been nursed in her arms making themselves and their châteaux distinguished in the history of the nation. Angers's importance can be realised when we learn that she was early considered the key of France, and bears for her blazon a silver key on a red shield beneath the royal lilies: '*de gueules à la clef d'argent, posé en pal au chef d'azur chargé de deux fleurs-de-lys d'or.*'

"This was not only a strategic point greatly to be desired by the foreign invader, as it controlled the outlet of the rivers of Brittany, and by its vassal forts the navigation of the Loire, but as a frontier fortress between Brittany, Maine, Anjou, and Touraine it was a pivotal point for internal warfare between the powerful chiefs of these provinces.

"The castle appears older than it really is, for the present fortress was built by Philippe

Auguste, while one could readily believe that it is the stronghold which originally occupied this site which was the birthplace of the Foulques of Anjou, the far-away ancestors of the Plantagenets, before they built their new home of Chinon, now crumbling into ruin."

"I do not believe that the Foulques were pleasant people," Yseult persisted. "Certainly not if their rule was anything like the personified gloom with which the castle dominates the 'Black City.' The influence which it exercises is positively sinister. I am sure something tragical will happen to us under its shadow"—and she shivered as she spoke.

"It has had its share of tragedy in the past," said the Vicomte. "The fate which seemed to brood over it must have spent itself, and can have no power over us."

But Yseult was right, the Foulques were not agreeable characters; this the Vicomte himself admitted, as he told us their histories. One of the least objectionable of the traditions preserved of Foulque Nerra, the Black Falcon, is that having resigned to his son Geoffrey the administration of his countship, and being displeased with his son's misconduct of it, he made him do several miles crawling on the ground with a saddle on his back,

taunting him the while by crying, "Thou'rt beaten, thou'rt beaten."

"Ay, beaten," replied Geoffrey, "but by my father only; to any other I am invincible." This reply so pleased the old man that they were reconciled on the spot.

More ghastly was the story of his burning his wife at the stake for infidelity, and "leading her to her doom dressed in her gayest attire."

In spite of his crimes Foulque Nerra was a most remarkable man; "a consummate general, cool-headed, clear-sighted, quick to resolve, quicker to strike. At his accession in 987, Anjou was the least important of the greater provinces of France. At his death in 1040, it stood first among them all." Brittany, Touraine, a large portion of the domain of Blois and Maine, marked the full tide of his success, which brought him to Normandy. After his death his son found himself unable to cope with William the Conqueror, but the family still remained so powerful that the son of William was glad to placate it by giving his daughter, Maud, to Geoffrey, and from the union of these two remarkable lines sprang the Plantagenets.

Foulque Rechin, the Brawler, married Ber-

trarde de Monfort, of the ducal family of Brittany (and we shall meet with the de Monforts again and again in our wanderings through the history and the land of France), but this marriage was not a happy one, for the King, Philip I., fell passionately in love with this Countess of Anjou, and with her connivance caused her to be seized and carried away by his people, whom he had left in the neighbourhood of the castle.

For twelve years he openly defied the Pope, who bade him return Bertrarde, and jeered at his excommunication. "It was the custom," says William of Malmesbury, "at the places where the King sojourned, for divine service to be stopped, and as soon as he was moving away all the bells began to peal. And then Philip would cry, as he laughed like one beside himself, 'Dost hear, my love, how they are ringing us out?'"

At length the guilty couple took a vow to separate and "to hold no intercourse or companionship," and were released from excommunication. Bertrarde, however, still maintained her position as nominal queen. Two years later the King and Queen were the guests of Foulque in his castle.

Vital, the most complete of the chroniclers

of this time, says of this extraordinary meeting of Bertrarde's two husbands: "This clever woman had by her skilful management so perfectly reconciled these two rivals, that she made them a splendid feast and got them both to sit at the same table."

The Abbé Serger adds :

"This sprightly and rarely accomplished woman, well versed in the art, familiar to her sex, of holding captive the husbands they have outraged, had acquired such an empire over her first husband, the Count of Anjou, in spite of the affront she had put upon him by deserting him, that he treated her with homage as his sovereign, often sat upon a stool at her feet, and obeyed her wishes by a sort of enchantment."

Two bridges cross the river Maine at Angers. One is called the Pont de la Haute Chaine, the other the Pont de la Basse Chaine. They take their name from two great chains which were stretched across the river at these points in feudal times, to obstruct hostile navigation, and to protect the Black City, which was comprised between these limits, huddled beneath the walls of the castle. Standing on the lower bridge to-day and looking up at the colossal towers with walls twelve feet in thickness, and, though truncated, still seventy feet in height, we could scarcely resist the impression that they were still the home of the

Foulques, so much has this stupendous fortress in common with that formidable family.

Our garrulous guide would have had us believe that this very structure was the home of the Foulques, and of the prehistoric kings of western Gaul. He led us to the old Tour du Diable, solemnly declaring that the Empress Ermengarde died here while visiting her aunt, the sister of Charlemagne.

The Vicomte shrugged his shoulders. "Hardly in this tower," he said to us, "though the Empress really died at Angers while her husband, Louis le Debonnaire, the son of Charlemagne, was fighting near this spot with Morvan, the last of the Celtic kings. Roland, too, the hero of Roncesvalles, was born here, but the castle of their time antedated that of the Foulques. There can hardly be any vestiges of it in the present structure."

"Pardon, Monsieur," said the guide respectfully but firmly, "that tower is far older than Morvan. It was a part of the palace of his ancestors, the early Celtic kings. King Arthur gave it to Merlin. See, on the outside you can trace the vestiges of the staircase by which he used to come and go without passing through the palace, or being challenged by the guards. After he went away to his invisible

château in the Forest of Brœcilande, the staircase was removed, lest some enemy might steal in. But they say," here the guide dropped his voice mysteriously, "that on certain nights Merlin comes just the same, and his footsteps are heard pattering up and down where no staircase is."

"Nonsense!" snapped the Vicomte crustily; "who retails such falsehoods?"

"My *belle-mère*, Monsieur. She went to the convent school and learned them of the nuns, so they are all true. If Monsieur will come to our house this afternoon—it is back of the little chocolate-shop near the cathedral—*la belle-mère* will tell you all of the old legends of Angers over the best cup of chocolate to be found in France."

Of course I took the bait and the chocolate. My husband, the artist of our company, had decided to make a sketch of the old tower. Yseult also settled herself with pencil and paper in a corner of the bastion, but it was not to sketch. She was always writing letters whenever opportunity was afforded—letters which were addressed to Monsieur Louis Rondel, the young architect, who was visiting at Château La Joyeuse, but who had not been invited by the Vicomte to accompany us in

this driving tour, though he had expressed great interest in the feudal châteaux.

As the Vicomte passed with me out of the castle gate, I caught sight within the lodge of a familiar figure. What could have brought Louis Rondel to Angers?

I did not think it necessary to stop then and there and investigate, or to draw the Vicomte's attention to the presence of the young man. He would easily find Yseult upon the ramparts, and they could endure the Vicomte's absence for an hour or so. How amusing it would be to banter Yseult about her premonition of evil doom to happen at Angers!

The Vicomte escorted me to the little chocolate-shop, but he did not enter; and he warned me as he left that *la belle-mère's* tales would probably prove most unreliable. Then, courteously promising to call for me in an hour, he passed under that cathedral portal crowned by so many statues of chivalric figures, his own, as it seemed to me, as worthy as any there to wear knightly armour. He bore his sixty-five years lightly; his head was white, but he carried it erect save when he bowed it to woman, or, as now, at the shrine of his religion.

La belle-mère's chocolate was high-priced and poor, but *la belle-mère* herself was im-

mense, and this term may be understood both literally and figuratively, for physically she was elephantine, and as a story-teller exceptionally endowed, accompanying her monologue with expressive gestures which gave to the legends a vividness not to be conveyed by cold type.¹

THE MOTHER CASTLE'S FIRST HERO

One of the early lords of Angers was Milon, a Celtic chief. He married Berthe, the sister of Charlemagne, having the good sense not to contend against the invincible power of the Emperor. They had two children: a son, Roland, and a daughter, Fleur d'Épine (or Briar Rose), so named because the pink eglantine which tapestried the garden side of the walls of Angers was not more delicate than her lovely face.

Though Berthe was a Christian, Milon was a follower of the old Druidical religion. The paganism of the Romans, only half believed by themselves, had made no converts in Brittany. The Bretons are an earnest people, and were either frankly savages or Christians. Besides,

¹ I have emended *la belle-mère's* early history of the hero of Roncesvalles, by the introduction here and there of incidents related in Mr. Baldwin's painstaking collation of myths bearing upon the story of Roland.

Druidism was the patriotic religion, and it was like betraying one's country for a Breton to give it up. Milon kept hidden, in the topmost chamber of that tower of the castle which is now called the Tour du Diable, a Druid priest greatly venerated in this region, but condemned to death by the laws of Charlemagne. On certain nights his followers met him among the dolmens and merlins of the Morbihan, and once a year it was said a human sacrifice took place.

The Druid's name was Maugis ; he was also a powerful enchanter, and had either been a pupil of Merlin and knew the way through the Forest of Brœcilande to the enchanted castle where Merlin was held a prisoner, where he received his counsels, or, as more believed, he was Merlin's avatar or second incarnation, and the staircase which led to Maugis's study is still called Merlin's Stairs.

He cast Roland's horoscope on his birth, and had assured Milon that the babe would become a great hero, for in his form was the soul of great Hector of Troy.

Milon was delighted, for he was himself of Greek origin, through an ancestor who had been shipwrecked several centuries before on the Breton coast.

“Roland must go in search of Hector’s armour,” said Merlin, “for if Hector’s sword is ever held in Roland’s hand it will be invincible.”

“That shall be his first adventure,” said Milon, “but until he is of age I will teach him the use of arms, and his mother the lore of books.” So Roland grew up in the grim castle, a lonely life but for his little sister Fleur d’Épine, and his friend Olivier, and his friend’s sister, “la belle Aude.”

Roland learned more than the lore of books from his mother, for he became a Christian, and gentle of manners. One day he confided to his mother that he loved Aude and desired her blessing.

“Is it so soon?” Berthe replied; “then it is time that you started on your adventures, for love is not to be won except by high emprise.” And she asked her husband to send Roland to the court of his uncle, the great Charlemagne, that he might be made a knight.

That night Milon led Roland with him up the Stairs of Merlin to Maugis, told him of his resolve to send Roland to Charlemagne, and desired the enchanter to provide him with a suit of magic armour.

“That can I not do personally,” said Mau-

gis, "but Morgan le Fay is a friend of mine. She is the fairy men call Good Luck. If she takes a fancy to Roland she will arm him, and he will always be fortunate."

Maugis sat down at a lectern, and began to read from a book of enchantment which had been written by Merlin. One of the properties of the book was that the person who read in it knew all that he wished on any subject, but if he read aloud all who listened fell into a magic sleep and dreamed whatever the reader listed.

Maugis allowed Roland to read the directions to the Forest of Brœcilande, in which was the palace of Morgan le Fay. Roland went away upon his adventure, but returned without the arms.

"Did you not find Morgan le Fay?" asked Maugis.

"Oh yes," Roland replied, "I found her palace very easily, and found her, too, in her enchanted garden, where rubies, amethysts, and other precious gem stones grow instead of flowers. She is very tiny, and she was dancing and singing when I entered the garden. I sat down to look at her and she danced all around me; sometimes she pirouetted on my knee; I could have caught her very easily, but I feared

to injure her gauzy wings with my great hand. I wanted, too, to make out the words of her song. At length she poised upon my shoulder and sang it in my ear :

‘Seekest thou gifts from Morgan le Fay?
Seize her, seize her, while you may!
Once, and only once, men say,
To everyone she shows the way—
Fortune’s a fickle fairy.’

“Then I sprang up and tried to catch her, but—whirr! she danced away, out of the garden, through the wood, over a bog in which I sank, and from which I had great trouble in extricating myself. Then I found myself before the door of a castle, and when I knocked and inquired if Morgan le Fay was there, a hideous old hag came out and beat me with a whip of knotted cords. I could easily have killed her, but she was so old I would not lift my hand against her, though I remonstrated and said, ‘Mother, why do you punish me thus?’ And she replied: ‘I am Repentance. I scourge everyone who through cowardice or carelessness neglects to seize the fairy fortune at his one golden opportunity. Go away; you will never be lucky. Every good thing that you obtain will have to be

worked for and fought for, well deserved and dearly earned.' ”

Maugis looked at the youth sadly but kindly, and again opened Merlin's book of enchantment.

“I learn here,” he said, “that the witch spoke the truth, but there are those who wrestle with evil fortune and overcome it ; and they are stronger than those who have everything given them without their exertion. I had hoped that Morgan le Fay would give thee a suit of magical armour that would keep thee unscathed, but thou must go out to thy battles unprotected, and many a wound and bruise wilt thou receive, with defeat at times and imprisonment. Thy lot is no better than that of any ordinary mortal, excepting as thou canst make it better by thine own undaunted spirit.”

And Roland answered : “Right glad am I that it is so, for there is no zest in striving when the victory is assured, and I am not afraid.”

“There are other things to fear besides buffets in battle,” said Maugis. “Thou wilt meet not only knights but ladies, and ladies are often the more dangerous. Thou hast no shield to protect thee against the swords of

the knights or the charms of false women."

"*Nenni*, but that I have," Roland contradicted. "La Belle Aude has given me this scarf of sarcenet to wear as her favour. I will tie it about my eyes and stuff the ends in my ears, for beauty can have no temptation to a blind man, nor the song of the siren enter deaf ears."

"It is well," said Maugis; "and I give thee here the golden spurs of King Arthur, and will provide thee with an enchanted horse which will take thee swiftly out of all peril, outstripping every foe, even the last enemy, Death, for it is his 'pale horse' which I shall steal when next he comes to our yearly sacrifice. Mounted on that courser he will never be able to overtake thee, and thou shalt never die, but be changed from one hero to another. This steed I will give thee on one condition."

"What is that?" asked Roland.

"That thou abjure the Christian religion."

"Never!"

"Then at last thou must die, and leave this beautiful earth. In thy hour of mortal agony remember that the Christian religion is one of death, and thou mightest have been immortal."

"Nay," Roland replied; "it is by dying that I shall become so."

Maugis was offended, for it is hard to have gifts scorned and requests denied, even by those we love. When at the next Druidical sacrifice, while Death claimed his victim, Maugis secured the "pale horse," and carried it not to the stables of Angers, but to those of Duke Aymon of Dordogne, who had four sons that Maugis loved almost as much as he loved Roland.

So Roland set out for Charlemagne's court without sword or armour and on foot, like a simple palmer.

But when Charlemagne saw him and knew that he was his sister's son, he loved him, and made him one of his paladins, and Defender of the Marches of Brittany. And he dubbed him knight and took him into his own armory to arm him, and Roland had great admiration for the emperor's sword, "Monjoie." "But this," said his uncle, "I cannot give thee. It was forged from the spearhead which pierced our Saviour's side. *Monjoie* it is, and its name is my rallying-cry in battle. But here is another sword which I won at a tournament from the Emperor of Constantinople. Its name is Durlandal. This I have never carried, for I have sworn to use no sword but Monjoie, and it has hung idle in my armory. See, it bears

damascened upon its blade the device, 'I am Durandal, which Trojan Hector wore.'"

When Roland heard that he uttered a cry of delight. "It is that sword above all others that I desire," he cried, "for my father has told me that if I can obtain it I will do great deeds."

"That doubt I not," said the Emperor, "but this sword is not to be given—it is to be won. See, it bears upon the reverse of the blade, 'Let honour be to him who most deserveth it.' I will make it the prize of a tournament. Earn it if thou canst."

Then Roland was cast down, for he knew that the most valorous knights would fight for Durandal, and he was in nowise puffed up as to his own prowess. "I shall do my best," he said, "and there is no disgrace in failure when one has done that."

"There is no disgrace in such failure," repeated the Emperor, "but neither is there guerdon, and unless thou win, thou gettest not Durandal."

Now Roland had no sword with which to fight, and the Emperor bade him borrow a sword where he could, since it was his ambition not to own one until he had earned it. Ogier, the Dane, was the most renowned knight at the court, and he loved Roland, and

said to him : " I shall not strive in this tournament, for I am past the age which the King has set. Take thou my sword ; it is short but strong." Roland took it very gratefully, and read the inscription on the blade : " I am Cortana the Short. He who has the right on his side need not fear the might of the wrong-doer."

Although Charlemagne had decided that Roland should earn his armour, wearing none in the tournament, but assuming that of the knight whom he overthrew, he was not utterly without interest in his nephew ; and since he had made the conditions so hard for him, he determined to supply him with one proof of his affection and he offered him a horn that had belonged to Charles Martel, beautifully engraved and inlaid with gold, and cunningly constructed from the horn of an unicorn. But no one since Charles Martel had been able to sound it. " Blow it," said the Emperor, thinking to amuse himself with Roland's failure. Roland blew a blast of such sonorous strength and sweetness that it was heard all over France. " Keep the horn," said Charlemagne, " but do not blow it again unless thou art in direst need, when I will not fail to come to thy succour."

Roland's fancy was also greatly taken by a cuirass adorned with a bronze face which reminded him strongly of his friend Maugis. "I would give thee that cuirass," said the Emperor, "were it not that it brings ill fortune to the wearer. It also belonged to Charles Martel; it was taken from the body of a Moorish prince whom he slew at the battle of Tours, and everyone who has worn it has been slain in battle. Better were it for thee to go to thine encounter unprotected than to wear that evil thing."

But Roland still craved the cuirass. "It is written," he said, "that I shall have no help from Fortune, but neither fear I her tricks. An undaunted and a pure heart cannot be harmed by her, even though he fight without her help."

Thus besought, Charlemagne gave him the cuirass, and, as you will see, it brought him no ill luck. On the first day that he wore it La Belle Aude came to Paris with her brother to witness the tournament, and her betrothal with Roland was approved by the Emperor. Charlemagne also determined to provide his nephew with a mount worthy of a prince, and he therefore announced that a horse-race would take place before the

tournament, offering a magnificent prize for the winner.

Duke Aymon was in disgrace, through no fault of his, and he and his sons had been banished from court; but when Guichard, the youngest of the four, heard of this race he determined to attend in disguise and compete with the horse Bayard, which Maugis had given them. All the knights of France flocked to the tournament, and the most celebrated horses in the world were entered for the race.

Among the distinguished guests were the Prince and Princess of Cathay, Argalia and his sister Angelica. They had come with evil intent, to conquer all of Charlemagne's knights, Argalia by the help of an enchanted spear, and Angelica by her marvellous beauty.

Argalia took no part in the races, but as they sat among the spectators his sister was the observed of all observers, and many could not fix their attention upon the horses for the rival attraction of her beautiful eyes. Even Roland forgot to bind his eyes with the scarf of La Belle Aude, but sat gazing upon Angelica as one spellbound, as indeed he was. Guichard himself, as he rode up on Bayard, looked at her and not at the goal, and he would surely have lost the race if his own conduct of his

steed had had anything to do with the result. But the enchanted horse needed no jockey and gained every course.

Charlemagne was delighted with the animal and determined to purchase him for Roland. He sent for the owner, who rode up to the steps of the dais, and demanded the price of this wonderful horse.

“He is not for sale,” the young man replied proudly, “and I am Guichard, son of Aymon, who contemns thy riches and defies thy power.” So saying he struck spurs into Bayard and vanished before he could be seized.

Charlemagne was furious. “As soon as the tournament is over,” he said, “we will march to Montauban and destroy these traitors and their nest.”

Guichard had not gone far, for he was too much fascinated by the Princess of Cathay. He concealed Bayard and re-entered the city and was among the spectators of the tournament.

Roland did wonders. He overcame every knight until the Prince of Cathay challenged him and then his very misfortune was his good luck. As he had no lance Charlemagne decided that the Prince must meet Roland on equal terms, and fight with the sword. The

Prince had struck down everyone whom he touched with his enchanted lance in the *mêlée* which preceded the single combats. He had expected to use the same weapon, but he could not withdraw from his challenge or gainsay the decree of the Emperor, and he met Roland in a duel with swords, hoping that as his own was much the longer he would be able to keep Roland at such a distance that he could not touch him. The Princess, too, who had made herself most radiantly fascinating, sat directly in front of Roland, expecting to distract his gaze. But Roland had bound his lady's favour about his head, in lieu of a helmet, and it slipped down over his eyes. Sarcenet is the finest silk gauze, and he could see his antagonist through it, while it blinded him to the charms of the Princess. Argalia brought his scimitar down upon the head of Roland with both hands, expecting to cleave his skull, but the gauze scarf deflected the blow harmlessly to one side, and at that instant Roland made a lunge which buried Cortana in the heart of Argalia.

When the Princess saw that her brother was dead, she fled from the lists and from the city. Guichard ran after her, and at the city gate offered to take her where she would on his

horse Bayard, who was used to carrying double and even quadruple.

“Take me to Merlin’s Stairs,” said the Princess, “for I would fain consult his book of enchantment, which is in the possession of Maugis, the Druid wizard.”

Straight to the castle of Angers flew Bayard with Guichard and the Princess. Arrived at the stair, Guichard waited with his bridle over his arm while the Princess mounted to the tower to consult Maugis. Guichard was heated and thirsty, the sun beat down upon him, and seeing a little wood near by, he fastened his horse at the foot of the tower and wandered into the forest in quest of water. He soon found a fountain and drank copiously without knowing that its waters had the magic power of making every man forget his former love and thereafter love only the next maiden whom he happened to meet. It so chanced that Fleur d’Épine, the sister of Roland, had from her window seen Guichard enter the wood, had mistaken him for her brother, and had followed him. As Guichard returned to the tower he met Fleur d’Épine, and his heart was for ever hers. She saw at once that he was not Roland, but divining that he came from the court, she asked news of her brother,

and Guichard told her of Roland's prowess at the tournament, and how he had won the sword Durandal.

"And the race," she asked, "that he wrote us of, tell me of that."

"Oh, the race was no great matter," Guichard replied modestly. "I chanced to win it, but that was no credit to me but to my horse."

"He must be a noble animal," said Fleur d'Épine; "I should like to see him."

"That you shall," replied Guichard, "and ride upon him too," for he had quite forgotten the Princess of Cathay, and was very much astonished to see her come from the tower at that moment and spring upon Bayard's back.

When the Princess surprised Maugis in his study, he had at once suspected her of some evil intent, and had opened his book of enchantment, sure of finding within it all the information in regard to her which he wished. He read only far enough to know that she would exercise a pernicious influence over Roland, when the Princess spoke to him in so sweet a tone that he looked up from his reading. Her beauty immediately fascinated him, and when she requested him to allow her to look within his book for a moment, Maugis immediately handed it to her, and the Princess

read what she had come to ascertain,—that the only way to fascinate Roland was to take from him the scarf of La Belle Aude, with which he stopped his ears and blinded his eyes to her blandishments. The Princess read this aloud, and as she read a deep sleep fell upon Maugis, and she closed the book, came down the stair, and mounted Bayard. As she did so Guichard came up and, as he had forgotten that he ever loved her, ordered her very rudely to dismount. The Princess's only answer was to strike him across the face with her riding-whip, and to give rein to Bayard. Guichard clung to her, endeavouring to drag her from the saddle, but not succeeding in this attempt, was carried away by her, greatly to the astonishment and grief of Fleur d'Épine.

As the Princess and Guichard tore on they were met by Roland riding on *Brigliadoro*, the horse which he had won from Argalia, and wearing his armour, with *Durandal* at his side. He was returning to Angers to show these glories to his family. The Princess cried out as she passed that Guichard was carrying her away, and Roland, always ready to heed the cry of woman in distress, turned and followed, calling to Guichard to hold. He could never have overtaken Bayard had not the Princess

reined him in ; but as she did so he caught up easily and pulled Guichard from the horse. At the same time the Princess snatched at the scarf which fluttered from his helm, and concealed it in her bosom. Guichard insisted that the Princess's charges were false, but Roland, looking her straight in the eyes, felt his heart fall from its allegiance and his senses waver. Instinctively his hand sought the protecting scarf, but he fancied he had lost it as he rode, and he continued to gaze, fascinated by her beauty. The Princess smiled, held out her hand, and rode on, and Roland followed, for he was mad—insane like many another good man for the love of an unworthy woman. Many and strange adventures were his while this frenzy lasted, but they have naught to do with the castle of Angers. At last this madness passed and Roland ceased to be his own shadow, and returned to France to La Belle Aude, whose forgiveness he received.

As for Guichard, when he was pulled from his horse by Roland he wended his way to his brothers' castle of Montauban, which shortly after was besieged by Charlemagne. Induced by treachery to leave the castle Guichard was taken prisoner, and when Roland arrived he had been ordered to be hung. But Roland

protested with Charlemagne against such injustice, vowing that if the order were carried out he would renounce his allegiance, go to the brothers, ask them to receive him in the stead of their brother, allow him to take the name of Guichard, and thenceforward share their fate.

The Emperor's heart was softened and he ordered that Roland should have the care of Guichard, who should simply be kept as a hostage for the loyalty of his brothers. Roland took his prisoner home to Angers (the spot above all others where Guichard most desired to be), and there entertained him as a guest. Fleur d'Épine showed her brother the bronze face which had fallen from his armour at the time of his struggle with Guichard when the madness for the Princess of Cathay came over him. It had been found and brought to the castle, but Roland had lost his fancy for it, perhaps because it reminded him of his frenzy, and he never wore it again. When he was summoned to accompany Charlemagne on his campaign against the Saracens in Spain, Guichard begged to be allowed to go with him, but this was not permitted, and he remained at Angers, the prisoner of love and of Fleur d'Épine. Angers knew the brave Roland no

more, but after Roland's death the Emperor pardoned Guichard and he married Fleur d'Épine, and became Lord of Angers and Warden of the Marches of Brittany.

La belle-mère had ended her story, and I asked her eagerly to tell me more of the strange ornament which had once formed a part of Roland's armour. "It was a malicious face, *tres malin*," she had heard, "with eyes of precious gem-stones, red and fiery." I was struck by her words, they so exactly described the curio in the library at Château La Joyeuse, but *la belle-mère* could not tell what had become of the ornament. It had been hidden by Maugis, but none knew where, certainly not at Angers.

I was convinced, however, that the objects were identical, and was eager to find the missing links in the history.

The after-story of Roland, heroic and brief, is immortalised in the *Chanson de Roland*, with which Taillefer, the minstrel of William the Conqueror, cheered on the Normans at the battle of Hastings. Eginhard, the authentic historian of the period, tells us only that in the year 778, the rear-guard of Charlemagne's army was attacked in the Pyrenees: "There

took place a fight in which the French were killed to a man and Roland, Prefect of the Marches of Brittany, fell in this engagement."

There exists a quaint but evidently fictitious chronicle which Bishop Turpin, a comrade of Roland's, is supposed, as an eye-witness, to have dictated, when found dying upon the field of Roncesvalles. In the quotation which follows, Roland's bombastic address to his sword is greatly shortened :

"Charlemagne now began his march through the pass of the mountains, giving the command of the rear to his nephew Roland and to Oliver, Count of Auvergne, ordering them to keep the pass at Ronceval while he passed it with the rest of his army. When he had safely passed the narrow strait with twenty thousand of his warriors, with Turpin the Archbishop, while the rear kept guard, Marsir and Beligard (Moorish leaders), rushing down from the hills, where they had lain two days in ambush, smote it until scarcely one escaped. Some were transpierced with lances, some killed with clubs or battered with stones. Only Roland, Baldwin, and Theodoric were left ; the last two gained the woods and finally escaped."

Here Roland drew his sword Durandal, which he would no sooner have parted with than have lost his arm, and addressed it in these words :

“O sword of unparalleled brightness, admirable temper, and hilt of the whitest ivory decorated with a splendid cross of gold, topped by a berylline apple engraved with the sacred name of God, endued with keenness and every other virtue, who now shall wield thee in battle, who shall call thee master? Thus do I prevent thy falling into the hands of the Saracens.’ So saying, he struck a block of marble twice and cleft it to the midst and broke the sword in twain.

“He now blew a loud blast with his horn. This horn was endued with such power that all other horns split by its sound; and at this time Roland blew with such force that he burst the veins and nerves of his neck. Charlemagne heard the sound eight miles away, but the false traitor Ganalon persuaded him that Roland had used it only in hunting.

“Roland offered his confession, and then his soul winged its flight from his body, and was borne by angels to Paradise, where he reigns with transcendent glory, united by his meritorious deeds to the blessed choir of martyrs.”

Long after *la belle-mère* had finished her recital I waited for the Vicomte, but at last it was my husband who came for me. I knew at once that something had happened. “What is it?” I asked, as we walked toward the inn together.

“Only that Rondel arrived just after you left.”

“I know it. Yseult was surely not displeased?”

“Yseult! perhaps not, but when the Vicomte came back and found them chatting together there was a drop in the temperature of the surrounding atmosphere. I distinctly regretted that I had left my overcoat in the carriage. You should have seen the Vicomte; he was magnificent. He is not so tall as our friend the architect, but he straightened himself until he fairly towered. ‘Will Monsieur have the kindness to enlighten me as to the business which gives me the honour of this interview?’

“He might very easily have replied that the castle of Angers was free to any tourist of an inquiring mind, but Rondel was even more self-controlled than the Vicomte. ‘I came, Monsieur,’ he said, ‘to deliver this paper into your own hands.’

“‘I do not understand,’ said the Vicomte haughtily.

“‘Permit me then to say that after you left Château La Joyeuse, I was sitting with the Vicomtesse in the library, when we heard a strange sound of footsteps just outside the door. The Vicomtesse seemed much annoyed, and said she would be grateful if I could ascertain what caused the sound. I studied over the noises for an entire day and

at length, while scrutinising the wall from the outside, became convinced that they were caused by ravens tapping their beaks against the metal roof of the turret. There was a small opening in this roof and I judged that the birds, which were wheeling about the tower, had nests within. I had a ladder brought; mounted, and thrusting my arm inside the opening, cleared the interior space of the nests. Amongst the rubbish I found this document. Its address was so peculiar that I decided to say nothing about it to the Vicomtesse, but to bring it to you.'

"The Vicomte hardly noticed the paper. 'Are you sure,' he asked, 'that the explanation which you give me of those strange foot-falls is the correct one?'

"'I think so,' replied Rondel; 'I had the opening in the roof closed and feel confident that you will have no more annoyance from that quarter.'

"'In that case,' said the Vicomte, 'I am certainly greatly indebted to you. But,' and here he glanced keenly at Yseult, 'I have decided not to have the chapel restored, so that there will be no occasion for you to make any further drawings. Be good enough to send me a memorandum of my indebtedness to

you. If we have any further need of your very able services I will communicate with you.'

"Rondel bowed ceremoniously, and turned with an appealing look to Yseult, who was very white. 'My father has explained,' she said, faintly; 'you will hear from us,' and then, with a silent gesture of farewell to the young architect, read aloud the address upon the yellowed envelope.

"'What a strange inscription!' she exclaimed. "To the Vicomte La Joyeuse, to be read by him when he returns to this accursed house, gloating over the belief that he is not made of the same clay as ordinary men, and congratulating himself that the vengeance of God has swept by, and has not found him.'"

"'What mad utterance is this?' the Vicomte asked, taking the paper from Yseult's hands. 'It bears the very date of the burning of the château, on that night of terror. It is doubtless the insane threat of the mob, infuriated at finding that my ancestor had escaped. "And until the day of retribution," this cheerful paper continues, "may demons guard this paper, keeping watch within his home, listening at his door, patrolling his stairs, and awaiting the right moment to pour upon him the

vial of wrath which it is now permitted him to unseal.”’

“‘Do not open the paper,’ Yseult begged; ‘I am sure it is something horrible.’

“‘I shall certainly read it,’ the Vicomte replied loftily; ‘no La Joyeuse has ever known fear. It is not, however, necessary to take these gentlemen into our family confidences.’ He drew Yseult’s arm within his own, and, flourishing the paper lightly, he led her away with him.

“I had a long talk with Rondel before he left, and I like the fellow. He is an American as you know, but with French ancestry away back somewhere, and he would gladly settle in France, for he is independent financially, and so far as family ties are concerned. He loves Yseult with all his heart, and though he has not declared himself, the old Vicomte evidently understands the situation. Rondel also perfectly comprehends that he is dismissed. ‘I have been living in a fool’s paradise,’ he said to me. ‘I might have known that it would end in this way; but theoretically there are no class distinctions in France to-day, and the Vicomte seemed so friendly and unassuming I had no idea that the caste feeling was such a strong instinct with him; but I suppose

it is bred in the bone. There is no hope, for the Vicomte and Vicomtesse will never change. It is not their fault—they were born so.’”

I was not sure that all was hopeless. The Vicomte had often referred with pride to his “American ancestor” who fought for our liberties, and in speaking of rank had said (rather sadly it is true): “There is no such thing as rank left in France. ‘*La pluie a passé l’éponge sur les couleurs de mon blazon.*’” It would better rain more violently, I thought viciously, and entirely efface such distinctions. I was sure that Yseult loved the young man, and I determined to bring whatever influence I might have to bear upon the Vicomte.

The opportunity was not afforded me. The Vicomte and Yseult dined in their own room, and when we came down to breakfast we found a little note awaiting us written by Yseult but dictated by her father:

“The Vicomte Raouel Aimeri Claude de La Joyeuse regrets that the state of his health renders it imperative that he should return home immediately. He has the honour to wish Monsieur and Madame a pleasant journey.”

In a corner, half blotted by a tear, Yseult

had added—“*Priez pour moi.*” It was like the legend added to the formal announcement of a death, and it filled me with irresistible longing to fold the dear child in my arms and whisper comfort and hope—but they had left an hour before.



CHAPTER III

A CASTLE OF THE SEA

'T was springtime in the bright, warm month of May
As I, half dreaming, near the close of day,
Heard o'er the water, while it rose and fell,
The soft vibration of a distant bell ;
And as I listened, so it seemed to me,
The mingled cries of stifled agony,
And sobbing sounds, like children when they weep,
Went upwards from the bosom of the deep.
I rose up wondering what those sounds might be
That reached me thus upon the lonely sea,
And looking o'er the boat saw down below,
In the clear water where the seaweeds grow,
What seemed the ruins of some temple old,
Whose buttressed towers the waving plants enfold,
And columns high, and arches reaching wide,
Spread out in ordered form on every side.

.
My ancient oarsman now had ceased to row,
And pointing to the wonders down below

Said when the spring tides came, in days gone by,
That he had seen a tower left partly dry.
But now the sea had slowly pressed its way,
Sweeping all things beneath its cruel sway,
And always covering now the highest walls
Of those strange towers and desolated halls.
I learnt from him all facts that he could tell,
And many legends that he knew as well,
About this place which seemed so strange to me
Thus buried 'neath the stillness of the sea.

FRANK LEYTON, in *The Bells beneath the Sea*.

FROM Angers we decided, as the time for the Mystery Play was approaching, to go by rail to Ploujean, and from that point to make excursions to interesting localities in the west of Brittany.

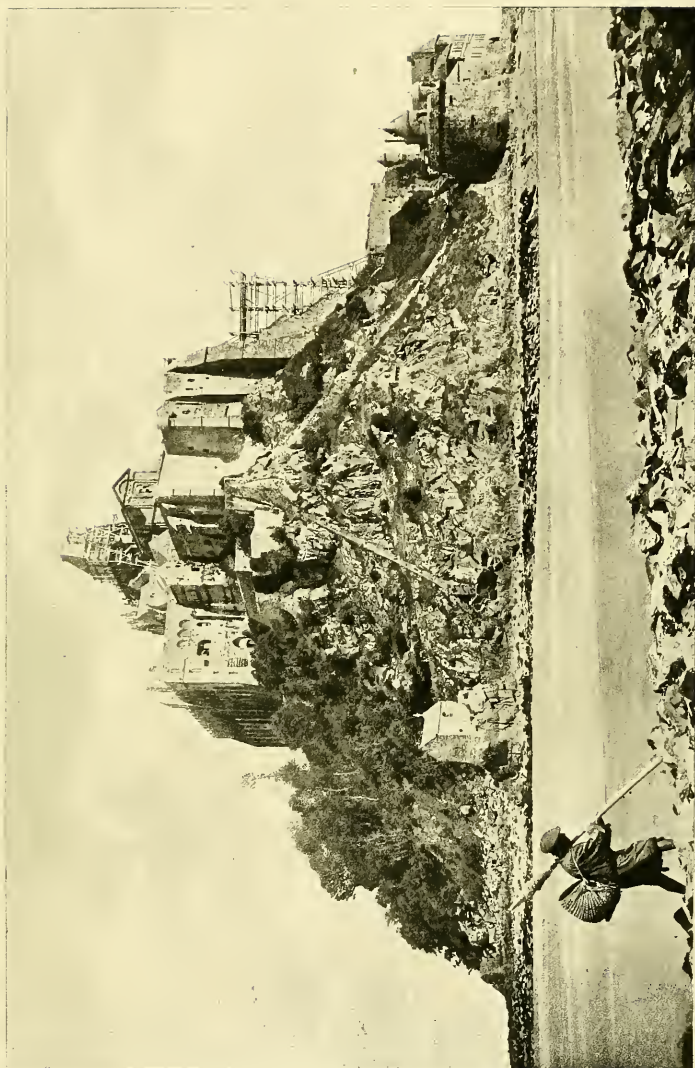
It was not until the journey was nearly made that my husband chanced to mention that he had written to a certain innkeeper of Ploermel, who he had ascertained would be at Ploujean during the performance of the play, to meet us upon our arrival at the station.

“He is the proprietor of a jaunting-car which will be useful to us now that Gamin and Farceur have wended their way homeward, and I am assured that he is an excellent guide and an inexhaustible story-teller.”

“And what is the name of this useful personage?”



Mont St. Michel.



“Anatole le Bavard.”

“Then it was the Vicomte who recommended him—or was it that sly Finette at the château?”

“Neither; it was his mother, the old woman who told you the legend of Roland at Angers, *la belle-mère*, Zéphyre le Bavard.”

I uttered a cry of disappointment. So *la belle-mère* was Zéphyre. Impossible! I had imagined that romantic name as belonging to a sylph-like creature of fifteen, and *la belle-mère* was at least sixty and weighed nearly three hundred! To think that I had actually seen Zéphyre, had heard her talk—she who was accredited with knowing all about the mystery of the vanished staircase, and might even have enlightened me as to that strange document which Louis Rondel had discovered in the turret—and yet I was none the wiser! Like Roland in his adventure with Morgan le Fay, I had lost my opportunity, and would probably never find it again.

Then, to cap my disappointment, I realised that as Zéphyre had lived at Château La Joyeuse she must have seen the curious bronze face in the library. Would not this account for its introduction into her story, and the accuracy of her description? Was it not pos-

sible that in this part of her legend she had drawn upon her imagination? Had I really made a reliable discovery in regard to the history of the object? *Was* there any Mrs. Harris? There was no answer to my questionings.

Anatole was waiting at the station when we arrived; waiting for us, he averred, though we noticed that as quickly as possible after depositing us at the inn he flew back to be in time for the arrival of the next train. It could not be greed for business which made him lash his pony into such unusual speed, for we had engaged his services for a fortnight. We could not explain his general air of expectancy, his gala costume, and the cabbage-shaped bouquet, done up in white paper, with which he had presented me on my arrival, duplicated exactly—until we remembered Finette. Then many things were made clear, though I was less certain as to the original destination of my red and yellow dahlias.

Ploujean is in Finistère, and Finistère in the extreme western portion of Brittany, swept eternally by the ocean wind and lapped on three sides by its waves. All the dark cliffs were ablaze with golden gorse, and illimitable heather-empurpled moors stretched away to

the landward horizon. Here and there were little groups of huddled white huts where a river or an inlet made a harbour for the fishing-boats, but there were long stretches of lonely coast between, with only an occasional lighthouse to tell that it had ever been discovered by man, and the only signs of life were gulls swooping restlessly over the water and the tiny curlews pattering along the sand.

Ploujean is more than a village,—it is an ancient town with a large public square faced by old houses with slate roofs, and on one side a pretty Gothic church with picturesque open belfries, and a cemetery with grotesquely cut yews. Here every summer for many years the peasants have given the *Mystère de Saint Gwenolé*, a play popular in the sixteenth century, describing events supposed to have occurred in prehistoric times,—the old legend of the engulfment of the city of Is, and the rescue of King Gradlon by St. Gwenolé. The peasants act the mystery in the open air; the painted scenery is stretched upon the cemetery wall, and the audience, filling the public square, is a heterogeneous mingling of nobles and peasants, artists, tourists, the seaside pleasure-seeker, and the religious devotee. The orchestra consisted of a couple of aged

bagpipe players in the picturesque old Breton costume, mounted on some barrels. The play was long, dragging its weary way through five acts, but it was listened to with breathless attention by the white-coiffed peasants, who had come from miles away to hear it, and it was acted with great conscientiousness by the amateur performers. They were all men, the female parts being taken by boys. King Gradlon was played by the village barber, St. Gwenolé by a wine merchant, and the other stars were hostlers, blacksmiths, road-menders, farm-labourers, and fishermen. Some had so nearly preserved the ancient physical type that in their antique Celtic costumes, with stuffed dogs' heads as crests for their barbaric helmets, they seemed magnificent statues. Others acted so naïvely that they were most amusing, but for the actors themselves it was no laughing matter. Had they not rehearsed laboriously twice a week for six months, scrupulously repeating the same faults on the forty-eighth rehearsal for which they had been forty-seven times corrected? And were they not to receive from the Mayor the munificent compensation of four dollars for these labours? Moreover, the legend which they acted, if not actually biblical, was at least

taken from the Lives of the Saints, and its infallibility as history was not an open question, for many of them had seen the statue of King Gradlon, mounted on his white horse, placed over the portal of the Cathedral of Quimper, in company with the helmeted lion of Montfort, and other equally sacred and authentic personages.

There was a still stronger reason for believing the story. It had all happened right here, and though not in the memory of any now living, still their grandsires averred that they had seen from their fishing-boats on very calm days the roofs of the city of Is, with the steeples of the churches, on which every vane was still set toward the west.

We too felt that such an experience must be most convincing, and if we could not actually hear the tolling of the bells beneath the sea, or see the submerged city, it would be something to have the anchor catch upon a tower of Dahut's castle, and bring up some token, however trifling, of its existence. We therefore determined to continue our excursion to the Point de Raz, the westernmost extremity of Finistère and of France, for beyond it, far out in the ocean, one sees the little Isle de Sein, and under the deep water

between, which shimmers like a floor of glass in calm weather, but can rage madly when the wind rouses the frothing sea demons, there lies the lost city of Is.

It was some time after the breaking into confusion of the rapt attention and perfect stillness with which the audience had followed the play before we could find Anatole. Finette was with him, as demure and pretty as ever, and by great good fortune, as Anatole explained, Finette wished to make some visits on old friends scattered along the route which we had proposed to take. There was no one like Finette for making sandwiches, and as there was plenty of room for her on the driver's seat by his side, he had invited her to accompany the expedition. She could hold the horse when it was necessary, in acting as our guide, for him to leave the waggonette, and could serve madame in an hundred ways as maid. It was a rank imposition, but I was well contented, for Finette had come from Château La Joyeuse and would return to it again.

She had brought me no direct word from Yseult, who did not know that we were to meet, but the maid told me much of her mistress's sadness since her return to the château, and how the Vicomte had changed.

“He has aged so strangely, Madam. He has grown bent and ill-tempered and wicked-looking. One would scarcely know him. His face is like that demon-mask that used to be in the helmet over the library door.”

“Is it not there now?”

“No, Madam, and there is something very strange about that mask. You see, Madam, the Vicomtesse told the young architect who was visiting with us about the footsteps, and he had an idea that it was the ravens chattering and fluttering under the roof—just as Monsieur the Vicomte used to insist that it was rats in the wall.”

“Perhaps,” interrupted Anatole, “it was the creaking of the *girouette* (weathercock) on the roof.”

“*Bête!* just like a man, all three of you, and it was neither the one nor the other, nor the third. It was the demons, coming after that mask.”

“Did not the footsteps cease after Monsieur Rondel cleared the ravens’ nests from the turret?”

“Certainly, and for good reason; Monsieur Rondel must have left the door open, and either the demons carried away the mask, or the demon-mask joined its companions, for it

has gone, Madame. It is in the helmet no longer, and no one will ever be frightened again by its fiery red eyes. Sometimes, however, I have another idea about it. It seems to me as if Monsieur the Vicomte must have tried on that mask, for the sport of the thing, and it had cemented itself to his flesh,—had grown in, Madame, the expression has become so terrible. His eyes, too, are red and sullen, and his moustache, which he used to keep waxed so carefully,—it is no longer the moustache of a gentleman, but of an enraged cat. Something frightful must have happened to him while he was travelling. Did Madame see no change in him?”

“No, Finette; the last time I saw him he was passing into a church to say his prayers, like a good Catholic, and I thought that for his age, I had never seen so handsome a man.”

“*Ah! ça*, he does not say his prayers now. He has had the chapel door boarded up,—the chapel that mademoiselle was so anxious should be restored, and had Monsieur Rondel down from Paris to make estimates upon. He made me trundle the *prie-Dieu* out of his bedroom, and broke madame’s *bénitier*, that was made of old Rouen faïence, a precious *bijou*, and one that she had inherited. I fear

he is going insane, and it is a dog's life he leads mademoiselle, who never leaves him."

"You shall take a letter to Mademoiselle Yseult from me, when you return," I said. "I will send her our itinerary, so that she can write me all summer, and I will write her frequently."

"Do so, Madame, and if you happen to see Monsieur Rondel in your travels you might suggest to him that it would be well to enclose his letters for mademoiselle in envelopes addressed to me. I would scorn to read them, and so would the Vicomte a week ago, but I would not answer for him now, for he pounces on the mail-bag when it is brought in like a cat on a mouse. He may think I am getting a good many letters, but I shall tell him that it is Anatole here who is writing, and I shall have one of Anatole's letters always ready in case the Vicomte demands to see what I have received."

"I will tell Monsieur Rondel, if I see him, of your kind suggestion, but I doubt if he will take advantage of it."

"Possibly not, Madame, men are so stupid, but it was only my duty as a Christian to try to help him."

Finette was really a useful little personage

and we had no reason to regret her uninvited appearance. Anatole and she vied with each other in story-telling, suggesting one legend after another; in turn correcting, improving, and adding little flourishes to the recitals, which were pleasant to listen to, but which I shall not attempt to reproduce exactly. It was a delightful trip in spite of my anxiety for poor Yseult, and though we often wished that our friends were with us, we gradually gave ourselves up to the full enjoyment of our surroundings.

As we approached the Point de Raz driving along the coast, the scenery became wilder and more sinister. The cliffs were jagged and black, and scooped into caverns where the winds and waters howled and roared. The coast of Finistère is extremely dangerous, and from its many shipwrecks has acquired such ominous nomenclature as the Baie des Trépassés (bay of the dying), the Enfer (hell) of Plogoff, the Golfe des Naufragés (gulf of the shipwrecked), and the Isles of the Ghosts, the Demons, and the Pirates.

The Isle de Sein was once the seat of a Druid oracle, and later it was covered with buildings (if we are to believe Finette's tradition rather than actual research), for long

ago the island was a part of the mainland, joined to the Point de Raz by a low peninsula on which the city of Is was built. So large and beautiful it was, the Bretons boast, that Paris was named, in reference to it, "*par Is*," the equal of Is. The city was protected on both sides by sea-walls, in which were sluice-gates, opened only in calm weather and at low tide to allow the sea to fill a basin and to permit the entrance of ships. But these gates were always locked when the tide turned, for at its full the water outside was nearly up to the top of the sea-wall, and higher than the masts of the ships inside the harbour, or than the steeples of the churches of the city of Is. King Gradlon's palace was in the water-tower just over the gates, whose golden key he kept, and they were never opened except by his permission. This, at least, was the law, but his wicked daughter, Dahut, sometimes stole the key to allow entrance into the basin of boats bringing her lovers to the marble landing at the foot of her tower. Sometimes these lovers were young Vikings of noble birth whom she had met in her father's court. Sometimes they were base-born pirates of whose terrible deeds she had heard (for she prided herself on conquering the invincible);

but high or low, the man to whom she sent her galley with the golden key was never so favoured twice. On arriving at the landing a mask was placed upon his face, ostensibly to conceal his identity, but a mask so poisoned that the wearer died mysteriously within twelve hours after it was put on.

For a long time her wickedness was not known, and even when it became notorious King Gradlon would not believe it, and the harpy went unpunished. At last, however, she found her match. Two princes, brothers, had come to King Gradlon's court on an embassy from Norway. They were both handsome men of elegant manners and superb dress, befitting their royal birth, and Dahut made eyes impartially at both, inviting the elder brother to see her jongleurs give a performance in her bower that evening, and the younger to a banquet on the night following.

The first, suspecting nothing, became her victim, and died in the arms of his brother on his return to the ship, but his extraordinary vitality so resisted the poison that his power of speech was not paralysed, as was usually the case, and he babbled incoherently of a black mask, and, fancying that he still wore it, tore the flesh from his face. As he staggered

on board the ship there was something so wild in his appearance that the suspicions of the younger brother were aroused and he caused Dahut's galley with its oarsmen to be detained. To save his life the servant who had charge of the golden key gave it up, and the brother, who now had the power of entering the city, resolved to avenge the murder. But Dahut, who had repented of her rashness in inviting the younger brother, when she learned that her galley had not returned saw that her crime was discovered and determined that even with the aid of the golden key the Prince should never enter the gates. She accordingly sent for the Druid of Sein, who had intimate dealings with the Prince of the Power of the Air, and asked him to raise a storm which would sink all the ships in the Channel. The white-bearded magician stood upon the roof of her tower and pointed his wand toward the sea. Immediately every weathercock on the steeples and gables of the city pointed in the same direction, and the wind whistled briskly from the west. Merchants took in their wares, housewives closed their windows, domestic animals scurried for shelter, and fishing-boats sought the harbourage of the city ; but the key to the gates could not be found, and they were

refused refuge and were obliged to scud for such little inlets on the coast as were available.

Looking through a powerful glass the Princess could see that the sailors on the Norse ship had close-reefed the sails and were lowering more anchors.

“Stronger, stronger!” she cried to the magician, and the whistling of the wind rose to a shriek and strengthened to a howl, and the air was full of flying sand, chimney tiles, and trees that had been uprooted by the tempest, and finally the roofs of houses that went sailing inland from the city of Is. And the good St. Gwenolé at the door of his hermitage in the “Montagnes Noires,” with his miraculous second sight saw demons riding like witches on the débris, and knew that the powers of evil were assaulting the city, and that on account of Dahut’s sins all of his prayers would be powerless to save it. He girded up his robe, and taking his staff set out to warn King Gradlon. On his way he met the citizens flying toward the mainland, for he had uttered an exorcism which had compelled the demons of the wind against their will to set the great alarm-bell ringing, and the citizens had warning of their peril. The Saint found the King pacing his palace in anxiety, and

even as he called to him to flee a gull was blown straight through the shivered window against his breast. The King had his white horse and the Princess's hackney brought to the postern-gate, and he sent a messenger to the Princess in her turret to summon her to flee with him to the mountains.

"I will follow in a moment," she said to the messenger. "Bid him ride on and I will overtake him." And the King rode on, looking back fearfully for the Princess, and in the multitude of fugitives he fancied he saw her following.

"Oh! my beautiful city," he mourned; "how can I bear to witness thy submersion!"

"Never fear," said St. Gwenolé; "I will remain here, and if the sluice-gates give way will bless the waves so that they will be turned to holy water and will do no harm to the city, which will rise from its baptism cleansed from every evil thing."

St. Gwenolé stood on the church tower holding aloft his crucifix. The Druid stood on Dahut's tower, still lifting his hazel wand, and the Princess stood by his side, well satisfied with her work.

"The Norse ship is a wreck by this time," she thought, "and we may slacken the tem-

pest." But at that instant she saw a small boat driven by the wind approaching the tower. The boat contained one man, who was grasping the tiller. He had been steering by the light that shone from the Princess's window, but he had no power to stop the boat and the waves carried him by the tower. Dahut recognised him, and laughed as he passed, and clapped her hands in delirious joy as the boat shivered like an egg-shell against the sluice-gates. Then she noticed that though the receding wave had carried back the fragments of the boat, the man, flung against the gates, had clung to them and might clamber down into the city.

"Stronger, stronger!" she cried in a fury, and a wave, mountain-high, towered above gates and palace; but ere it broke the Norseman had found the lock of the sluice-gate and had opened it with the golden key, which hung from his girdle. He had thought only of swinging in upon the gate, and so of saving his life; but as the bolts slipped back the stupendous wave smote the gates with all its force and the ocean overwhelmed the town.

It was a different version of this legend which the peasants of Ploujean had acted, but on the whole I preferred Finette's, for it

seemed to promise a continuation, in the rising of the purified city,—which indeed she gave us later on; and as we saw its towers pearly through the shifting mist we could almost credit her assurance that Mont St. Michel was this risen city, purified for centuries by the cleansing tides of the sea.

We had no proof either that the submerged city had not slipped away from its moorings, for the sea was stormy and we could not indulge our curiosity by gazing down into its depths from a fishing-boat.

Though disappointed in this design, the trip was full of interest. This region is the fairy-land of Brittany: the dolmens and menhirs which are scattered through the country are thought to be the homes of *cornicouets* and *poulpiquets*, little impish people who freakishly distribute treasure or misfortune as the whim takes them. This was the country, too, raided by that prince of brigands, Guy de Fontenelle, who had his robber castle on an island near by, and whose fierce bandits left nothing which was not too hot to touch or too heavy to carry away. During his lifetime the country was afflicted by another scourge of great grey wolves, which became so hungry and so audacious that they descended from the mount-

ains in the daytime, and broke into the homes of the peasants, who believed that they were the embodiment of the souls of Fontenelle's dead brigands.

“These were talking wolves”—Anatole was sure of that. “Had Madame never heard of *le petit Chaperon Rouge* (Little Red Riding Hood)? Well, there were others; garrulous wolves who made themselves very agreeable by telling stories; Madame, who is so interested in hearing tales, should be especially on her guard. A five-leaved clover is an excellent protection against all evil animals, and there are many. Bats are especially malign; has Madame never been told the origin of those uncanny creatures, half bird, half beast, and wholly demonic? Best of all, there is the legend of the Walking Stones. It is so indisputably true that it has been printed in a book.”

I remembered the tales vaguely as told by Émile Souvestre, who, born in this part of Brittany, made himself its Hans Andersen by collecting its fairy stories, but I was glad to hear them again, for they are as truly a product of the Breton soil as its flowering gorse and heather, and in their perennial upspringing they have lost nothing, but rather have gained in extent and in colour.

Returning from our western explorations we followed the northern coast, which gives its name to the next department, Cotes du Nord. Near Lannion we found ourselves among the great dolmens, huge boulders of rose-coloured granite of curious shape; some of them were balanced so nicely that a child's hand could rock them; others were buried in the heather, like kneeling prehistoric monsters, pasturing peaceably in great flocks, and ready at the least alarm to rush down into the sea, where others of their kind were disporting among the breakers. Something of this fancy I expressed to Finette, and she replied very seriously that it was only once in an hundred years, and on the eve of St. Sylvester, that the dolmens left their places and tumbled down to the beach to drink the salt water.

I had spoken to Finette that morning of the bronze mask, wondering if it might have been the same one which Dahut used to disguise her lovers.

"We will never know its entire history," she replied, "until we ask Anatole's mother."

"But I did find her at Angers," I answered.

"Did Zéphyre say that she knew nothing about it?" Finette asked.

"No; she gave me some very interesting

information, but apparently does not know all its story. She said it once belonged to Roland. I should like to know its history between his time and the present."

"But my mother certainly could have told you," said Anatole, "that Maugis hid the face after the death of Roland, and wove a spell that it might remain hidden until the coming of another and as great a hero."

"Yes, your mother said that Maugis hid it, but where?"

"But where? why here?"

"You surely do not mean this very spot?"

"It may have been. It is a tradition at Angers that Maugis on a certain St. Sylvester's night, of which I was telling you, took the piece of armour to such a field of dolmens as this, and when they had all rushed down to the ocean for their once-a-century drink, he placed it in the bed of one of the largest, where there was no chance of its being discovered for another hundred years. They told me at the Point de Raz that it was Maugis who used to live in the Druids' Tower on the Isle de Sein, and who raised the great tempest which destroyed the city of Is. If so, he went down with the wicked Dahut, so that was the last of him."

“Not at all,” Finette contradicted cheerfully. “The city rose again, you know, three hundred years later. So there was Maugis free again.”

“What idiocy!” Anatole replied politely, “when everybody knows that in that time it was cleansed from everything wicked; and when St. Gwenolé anchored it off Pont Orson and changed its name to Mont St. Michel, he intended that no magicians or women should cross the sill of its castle, and so it became a great abbey-fortress, the most famous in all the land. The demons did their best. They surrounded it with *sables mouvants* (quicksands), and at every return of the tides they strove to overwhelm it, but St. Gwenolé bought them off by promising them one victim a year, and with that the ocean was satisfied. Even Rollo, the great Norse pirate, who swore that to avenge the death of his countrymen that were killed by Dahut he would destroy every city of France, even he, after he had visited Mont St. Michel and saw what a holy community it was, spared it, and he protected it after the King of France gave him Normandy, though he knew that it was the city where one of his princes had been poisoned and the other drowned.”

Finette's nose was in air in derision. "Much Rollo cared for the holiness of the monks!" she said. "It was the magic of Gisele's pretty blue eyes that did that business, or the towers of St. Michel would have been tumbled into the water from whence they rose."

"How was that?" I asked. "And who was this Gisele?"

"It is a matter of history, Madame," Anatole replied. "Rollo came sailing along with his Norse pirates, and he saw the island castle of St. Michel, and as a soothsayer who had come with him assured him that this was the city of Is, he determined to sack and destroy it. But the Abbot rowed out to his ship, and told him what a poor community they were, with nothing to steal, and how holy and kind to the poor they had been since all the wicked women were drowned. Rollo was only half convinced, but he went back on the Abbot's safeguard, with his men waiting just outside the gate, ready to press in if there were treachery; and the Abbot showed him over the fortress. What impressed Rollo most was not the sanctity or poverty of the monks, but the strength of the place. He saw how a small number could easily defend it, and he noted

that the monks were sturdy fellows, and that weapons as well as crucifixes hung in their halls. He reckoned that he might have hard work to take the castle, so he resorted to diplomacy. He promised to take it under his protection, and offered to leave some of his men to garrison the fortifications, if the Abbot would afford him refuge here on his return from his expedition, and would give him information of wealthier abbeys or castles that he could pillage.

“On his promise of protection the Abbot agreed to tell him a great secret whereby he could secure much treasure. Rollo gave his word, and the Abbot told him that on the next St. Sylvester’s night, which was near at hand, the stones would make their centennial pilgrimage, and that while they were drinking, all the treasures of the elves, of whom they were the bankers, would be open to the eye of heaven and might be carried away. The pirate fleet therefore anchored off Tregastel, and it may have been to this very flock of stones that Rollo led his men. They were careful not to stand between them and the sea, but a little to one side ; for if they had been in their path they would have been crushed to a pulp in the wild stampede of the boulders. As

soon as the dolmens were well out of the way each Norseman rushed to a different hollow which one of the giant stones had made its lair, and found that the Abbot had not deceived them. Jewels and golden objects and all manner of riches were exposed to view. Rollo was enchanted. 'They say that "a rolling stone gathers no moss,"' he cried. 'These rolling stones should have remembered that adage and should have kept better guard over their property.'

"The pirates began to gather up their booty, but greed made them forget that the boulders would soon come home again. Up the beach they tumbled, as intoxicated as though they had been spending the evening at the *cabaret*. They turned somersaults and played leap-frog as gaily as though their weight were pounds instead of tons. They bounded into the air and shouldered each other, and wrestled and pushed like frolicsome schoolboys released from their tasks. There would have been no escape for the poor Norsemen, for they were completely shut in by this terrific herd, had not a very remarkable thing happened.

"The Abbot had led Rollo to suppose that there were no women on the Mont of St. Michel. It was a pious fraud for the sake of

saving the poor creatures from the pirates; but in fact there existed on the island and within the walls of the castle a convent of holy nuns, who were conducting the education of certain noble maidens. Among these was the Princess Gisele, daughter of the brother of King Eudes. This young person was endowed with all the innocent mischief of ten ordinary girls, and with curiosity unbelievable. She had seen the entrance of Rollo into the castle, and she had stolen into the Abbot's apartments and concealed herself behind the arras, and had heard the story of the walking stones, with the explicit directions of how to reach them. This she reported to the other pupils, who were immediately fired to see—I say not the Norsemen, but the miracle of the pilgrimage of the dolmens. Accordingly, when Gisele added what the Abbot had neglected (perhaps from treachery) to inform Rollo, that it would not be safe to attempt this expedition unless each man wore a five-leaved clover in his helmet, it seemed to the maidens that it was their duty to rescue these interesting strangers. That night both the moon and the tides were at their full, and after the nuns had bidden good-night to their charges, the maidens slipped from their cells, and, suborn-

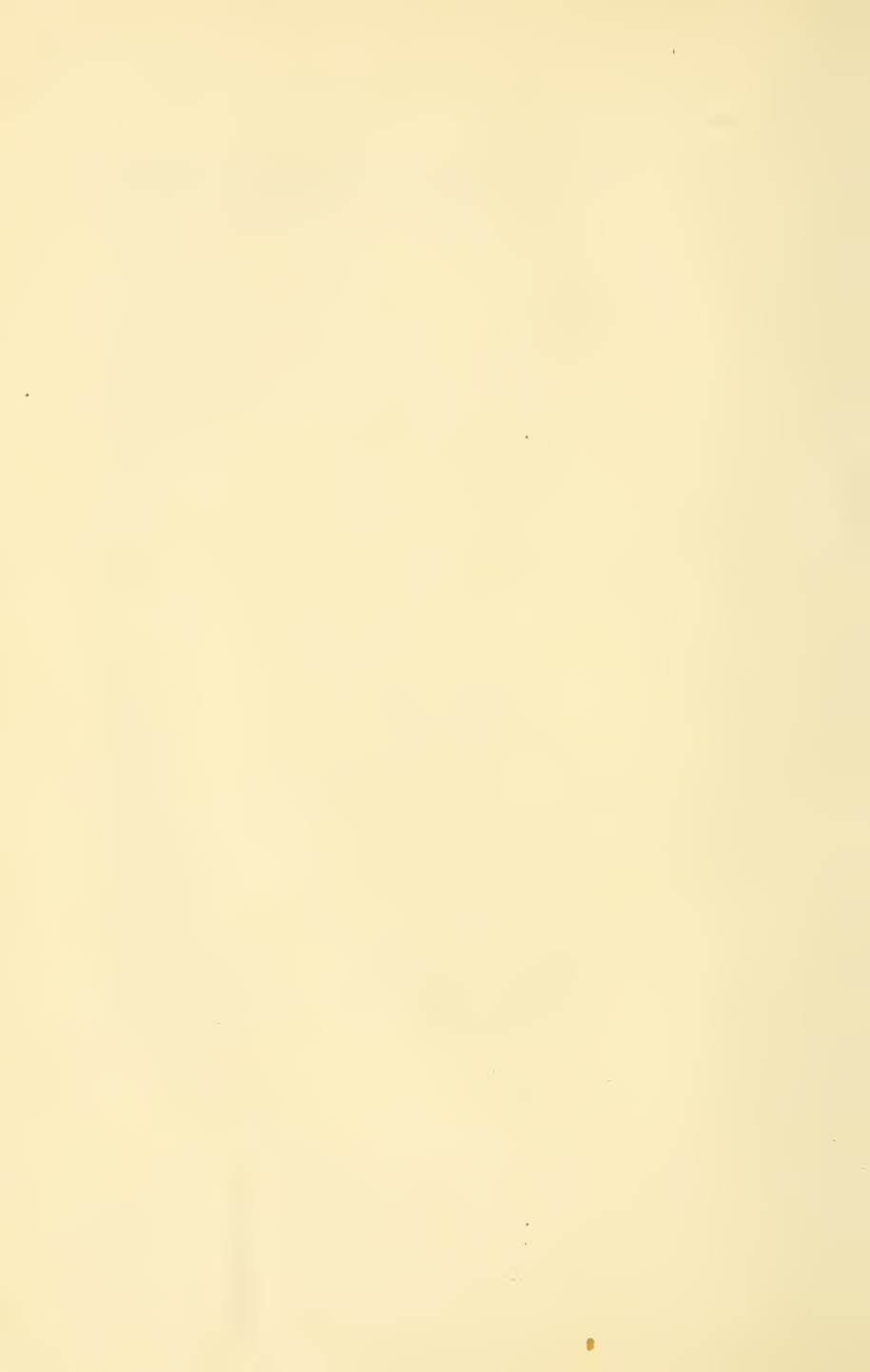
ing the guardians, rowed away in the Abbot's galley, following the wake of the Norse fleet. They fastened the galley at a little distance from the ships and trooped across the moonlit moors, arriving on the scene just as the dolmens came hurtling back from their dip in the sea.

“The maidens, with Gisele at their head, holding aloft the magic five-leaved clovers, bravely stepped between the tumultuous horde and their victims, and with a hoarse roar of baffled rage and fear the stony monsters fled back like a covey of frightened partridges. Rollo, who, though a barbarian by birth, had some traits of gentleness in his nature, threw himself upon his knees before the Princess, thanking her for his preservation, and swore that his men should do her and her maidens no harm. They even escorted the galley back to Mont St. Michel, which they promised to protect in spite of the doubtful behaviour of the Abbot, and they shared with the maidens the treasures which they had found.

“The most curious part of this story is the circumstance that Rollo had discovered the piece of armour which Maugis had hidden. It was the only object in that particular pit, and he gave it to Gisele, saying that though



DOLMENS, IN BRITTANY.



the metal in which they were set might be of no use to her, yet the carbuncle eyes would make her some pretty trinket.

“You may be sure that this was not the end of the affair. Gisele wore the grotesque face as a clasp for her girdle, and there must have been some charm in its fiery eyes, for Rollo could not forget the maid. He was victorious everywhere, and at last he held Paris at his mercy. The King sent out his uncle, Duke Robert, to treat with him, and offered him all of Neustria if he and his warriors would settle there, become baptised, and acknowledge the King of France as their sovereign. Duke Robert was the father of Gisele, and when Rollo heard this he accepted the proposition provided that Neustria was the dowry of the Princess Gisele. So Neustria became Normandy, the land of the Normans, and all of Gisele’s schoolmates were married to Viking chieftains, and peace was ushered in by wedding bells—the first Chimes of Normandy. To this day maidens go out with five-leaved clovers on St. Sylvester’s night, and on the Vigil of All Saints; but though they still find husbands, the dolmens are more cautious or less thirsty, and I have never known anyone who was able to trick them out of their treasures.”

MONT ST. MICHEL

“ Dans les sables mouvants sur formidable roc,
Au peril de la Mer est Saint Michel de France.”

Finette had returned to Château La Joyeuse, and after she left us we almost hesitated to see the real fortress of these wonder stories for fear that the glamour would depart. But the Mont is more wonderful than any fairy tale that could be fabricated about it. A part of the great pile is called the Marvel, for it was almost a miraculous feat to build a castle in so inaccessible a spot. It is a marvel of beauty, too, and of strength, in its union of the grand Norman pillars and arches in the foundation portions with the exquisite Gothic of the thirteenth century, where the building shoots up and blossoms like a flower in all the radiance of sunshine flashing through jewelled glass windows.

Au peril de la Mer it is called, for around it the tides ebb and flow ceaselessly, jealously guarding it with their waves. In the change of watch the waves leave in their place still more cruel warders, the grey quicksands, which seem to give easy access, but trap the unwary and drag them down to suffocation, or hold their victims relentlessly until the mad waves rush back and overwhelm them.

In the white mists that drift across these quicksands the peasants fancy that they see the wraith of "the White-veiled Fairy of the Sands," who stole every night across the treacherous pavement to carry food to her lover, the knight Aubrey, imprisoned in one of the dungeons. She was caught at last by the relentless tides, and her ghost was soon joined by that of her lover, who starved to death without her ministrations.

A long causeway now leads from Pont Orson across the sands to the base of the Mont, where the village nestles within its encircling fortifications. An interesting old town in itself, with a famous inn for pilgrims, and an old parish church hung with the banners and votive offerings of knights who came from far and near to this popular shrine. Near the church is a museum containing, among other curios, some huge old volumes said to have belonged to Du Guesclin. A steep lane winds upward to an archway which opens into the Salle des Gardes, a strange hall built on different levels. Beyond the guard-chamber the path still climbs upward between the bishop's palace and the church, below bridges built across for the priests to pass over, until one enters the abbey church, with its se-

vere Norman nave and Gothic choir. Under the church is the solemn crypt, with its huge pillars, and still beneath are the grewsome dungeons, with an iron cage in which a courtier who had displeased Louis XV. was devoured alive by rats. Far up on the rock is a beautiful cloistered court, one of the loveliest bits of that exuberant Gothic which flowered into all manner of curling foliage and playful dwarfs and chimerical animals. A greater contrast to the subterranean prisons could not be imagined. Beneath the cloisters is the very noble hall of the knights, with three high vaulted aisles like those of a cathedral. In this hall Louis XI. founded his order of the Chevaliers de Mont St. Michel, whose decoration consisted of a necklace or collar of linked scallop shells (the emblem of pilgrimage), from which depended a medallion of St. Michel killing a dragon. This grand apartment gives one an idea of the strength of the different institutions of knighthood,—the Templars, the Hospitallers, and other militant orders,—for nowhere else does there exist so fine a specimen of the fortress monastery. The great dormitory where the monks slept in beds ranged in company, instead of sequestered in cells, is empty now. So is the refec-

tory, whose tables groaned with dainties; and the cellars where formerly stood the great butts of wine—

“ a brotherhood
Dwelling for ever under ground,
Silent, contemplative, round, and sound.

With beards of cobwebs, long and hoar,
Trailing and sweeping across the floor.”

But in the glamour of the moonlight the indestructible halls are peopled again, and we hear the warrior-monks revelling in the refectory, and see them seize their battle-axes and formidable maces with the swinging chain and ball when one among them tells how he has feigned to betray the fortress to Montgomery, the Protestant leader; and that his men are to be drawn up one by one by the windlass into the great guardroom. Eighty are admitted in this way, and slain as quickly as they are helped through the window, before Montgomery, chafing below at the slow admission, suspects the truth,—that the traitor who promised to aid him is doubly a traitor,—and flees with the remnant of his force.

From the time that Rollo fortified it, Mars has shared with the Prince of Peace the sovereignty of the Mont. The English at-

tempted in vain to take this outpost of France, and though empty and dismantled, it still remains one of the most wonderful and interesting of the castles of France.

Most beautiful of all is the church upon the very summit. It was evening when we stood here, and Sir Walter Scott's lines describing another abbey might well have been written of this enchanting spot :

“ We entered now the chancel tall.
The darkened roof rose high aloof,
On pillars lofty and light and small ;
The keystone, that locked each ribbed aisle,
Was a fleur-de-lys or a quatre-feuille ;
The corbels were carved grotesque and grim ;
And the pillars with clustered shafts so trim,
With base and with capital flourished around,
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had bound.
The silver light, so pale and faint,
Showed many a prophet, and many a saint,
Whose image on the glass was dyed ;
Full in the midst, his cross of red
Triumphant Michael brandished,
And trampled the apostate's pride.
The moonbeam kissed the holy pane
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.”

An intelligent priest, who was shown over the buildings with us, gave us much entertaining information. He described so vividly the ceremony of initiating a young man into the

order of knighthood that we seemed to see the candidate at his vigil, watching his arms before the altar. Several of the legends of *The Table Round* are laid at Mont St. Michel. King Arthur is supposed to have killed a cannibal giant who had his lair where the church now stands, and a chapel on this site was the pilgrimage shrine where his knights received benediction before marching away on their quest of the Holy Grail.

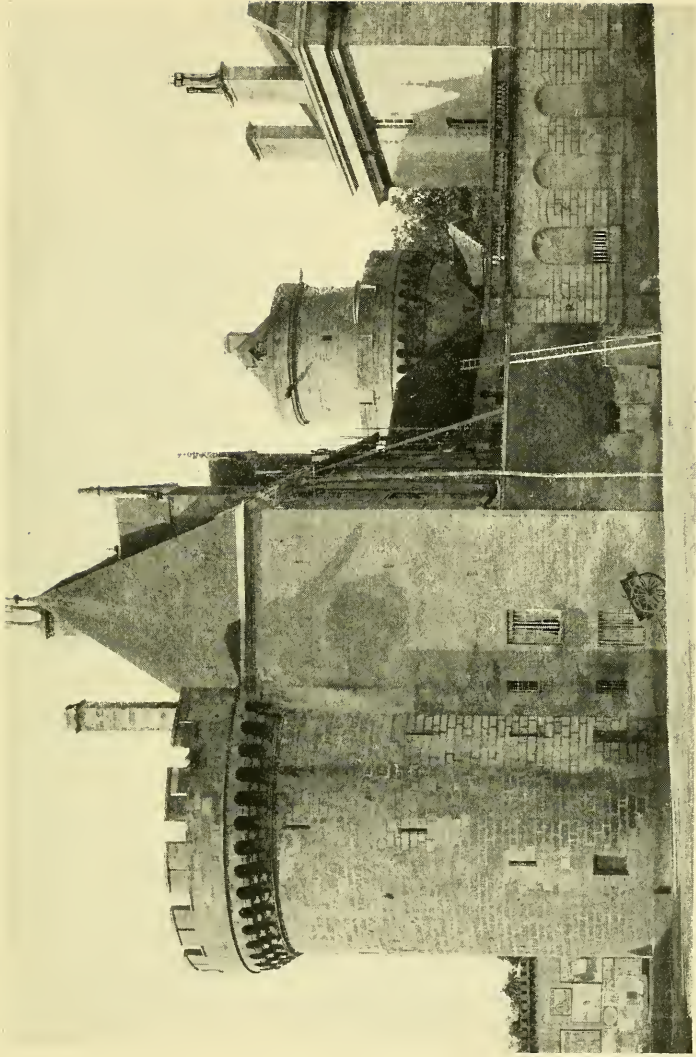
If the dubbing of a knight was impressive, the degradation of one who had proved recreant was, as our new acquaintance explained it, almost heartrending.

The culprit was first tried before the officers of his order in some great hall, like the Salle des Chevaliers, and having been found guilty and had sentence pronounced upon him, his brother knights and the public at large were summoned to witness his disgrace.

"I have often figured to myself," he said, "that ceremony of dishonour in the case of Oliver Talvas de Bellesmes of Alençon, who was convicted of an attempt to assassinate William the Conqueror. The Talvas were the possessors of immense border estates between Normandy and Anjou. They held that they possessed a better right to govern Brit-

tany than William, and a deadly enmity existed between their families, and the Talvas de Bellesmes were noted for many black deeds of cruelty. There are oubliettes in the dungeons of Alençon where human bones have been found crumbling in corroded fetters, and instruments of torture in other chambers whose function makes one's blood curdle. Old William Talvas de Bellesmes, the father of Oliver, was noted for his wickedness, and so was Mabel, or Aimable, the daughter of William Talvas. Mabel was skilled in the use of poisons, and had a turret fitted as a chemical laboratory where she concocted them. She was lovely in appearance, and was married to Roger de Montgomery, a very honourable gentleman and the dearest friend of her brother Oliver.

“Under his safeguard William the Conqueror, when a boy, visited at the castle of Alençon, and another lad of about his age was invited to bear him company. The night before he was to leave, this poor child was stabbed in his bed, and when inquisition was made by Roger de Montgomery, the crime was found to lie between his wife Mabel and Oliver, who confessed that he killed the lad, thinking to have stabbed the young Duke of



ALENÇON.

Normandy. As he had confessed to the deed, and there was an inherited feud, he was not executed; but he was publicly expelled from the order of chivalry. The cook of the castle, whose duty it had been to fasten on his gilded spurs, now hewed them from his heels with a butcher's cleaver. A scaffold was erected in the great council-chamber of the knights, and on it his armour was broken by the axe of the executioner; the blazon was effaced from his shield and it was dragged in the mud by criminals. Then the imprecation against traitors was read by a herald, and the Grand Master emptied a basin of water on his head, in token that the oil of his anointing was washed from his forehead. He was next stripped, robed in a shroud, and laid upon a bier with his broken arms, and carried by the monks into the church, where the burial-service was read over him. From the church he was taken to the family tomb, where his armour was buried, and he was turned loose to wander for the rest of his life as his own ghost, proscribed and disclaimed by relatives and friends."

"A terrible punishment, but not too grievous for so frightful a crime," was our comment.

"No," replied the priest, "if it had fallen

on the real evil-doer. But when Mabel Montgomery came to die, she confessed that she had stabbed the boy with her own hand, and that her brother, though guiltless of any complicity in the act, had confessed to it to save her from punishment and his friend Hugh Montgomery from the shame of knowing that his wife was a murderess."

"And Oliver was reinstated?" we asked.

"It was too late," replied the priest; "he had probably died an outcast, for he could not be found."

Mont St. Michel stands just at the meeting of Brittany and Normandy. As we follow the trend of the coast by sea we thread the Channel Islands, which have belonged to England since the days of William the Conqueror. Scattered among the Jerseys and Guernseys are other picturesque castles of the sea, such as Castle Cornet, brave and strong, and Mont Orgueil, grand and venerable. William Prynne, imprisoned in the latter fortress for three years, wrote here his *Divine and Profitable Meditations, Raised from the Contemplation of these Three Leaves of Nature's Volume*:—1. Rocks. 2. Seas. 3. Gardens. The dedication of his book to the daughter of Sir Philip Carteret (the governor of the cas-

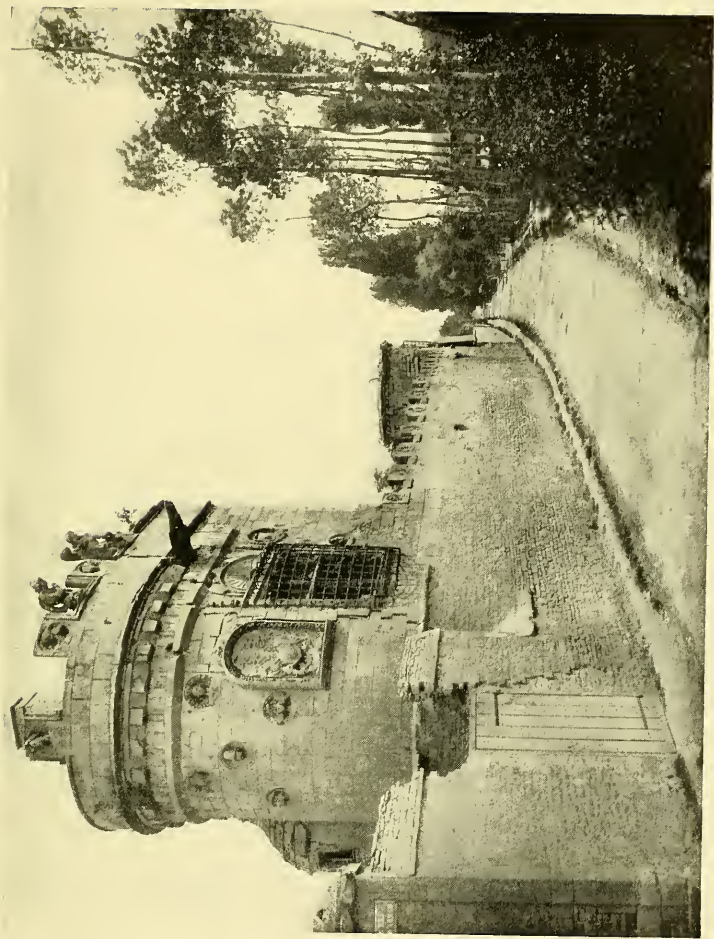
tle), "Sweet Mistress, once fair Margaret," suggests that his contemplation included still another leaf from Nature's volume.

We might have rounded the Manche and entered Normandy by one of its water-gates, but we chose to drive across the pleasant country, by William the Conqueror's great castle at Falaise, to his abbey city of Caen. Here I expected to hear from Yseult, and I was not disappointed. There was a provokingly brief note waiting for me at the post-office which said nothing of herself.

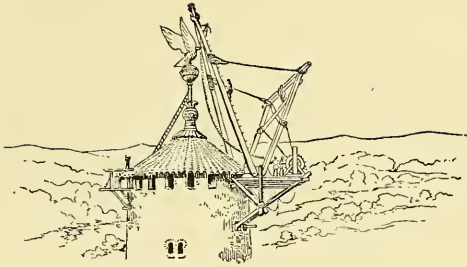
"When you are in Caen," she wrote, "inquire at the Abbey of Holy Trinity, which Queen Matilda founded, for Sœur Euphrasie. I have written her, asking her to copy for you a manuscript which I saw in the abbey library when I visited it several years since. I think it may interest you, as it bears some relation to the old Norman castles."

I found Sister Euphrasie a smiling, rosy-faced nun, who handed me a packet through the grating. Yseult and she had been school-mates, she said, and she longed to see her again. It was very sweet and peaceful at the abbey, and if Yseult was not happy,—someway her last letter had not sounded so,—she hoped I would beg her to come and find a refuge

here. The nuns were not *triste*; it was pleasant to care for the poor old beneficiaries of the abbey, and then they had such beautiful music,—I must sit a while in the church and listen to the vesper service. I sat and listened to the organ and the sweet chanting of the *Stabat Mater*, and I prayed for Yseult, but I prayed that she might never need this refuge. Then I wandered through the quaint old city to the little tower called the House of the Guardsmen, with the carved stone warders leaning over the parapets and watching for the coming of any foe, and seated under the trees across the way I read the story of Tuold, Duke William's fool.



GUARD TOWER AT CAEN.



CHAPTER IV

A FOOL'S ERRANDS

(Being the chronicles of the castles of Falaise and of Caen during the reign of Duke William of Normandy, found among the private papers of Cicely, Abbess of Holy Trinity.)

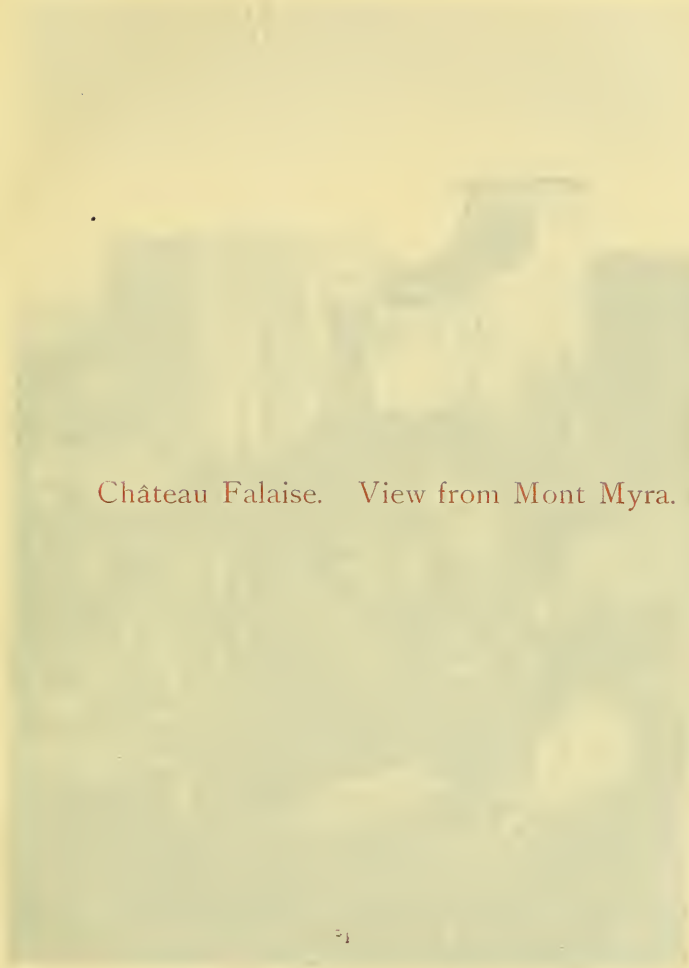
I AM Tuold, sometime "the Little Monkey," Duke William's dwarf, jester, fool—what you will, held in equal consideration with his horse, his dog, and his falcon as a useful thrall, and kindly handled as were all his creatures.

I loved my master with all the dumb passion of my heart. I think he knew I had a heart, but never a soul until that night on which I went on my first errand and saved his life at peril of mine own, an adventure which happened on this wise:

As I lay feigning sleep by the ingleside at

the castle of St. Saviour, I overheard Guy of Burgundy and certain others plotting with Sir Neal, whose guests they were, to surprise and kill my master as he lay that night, but slenderly accompanied, at his hunting-lodge of Valognes. All unnoticed I stole from the castle, and mounting my horse which was in the stable, I made off through the fearsome night. When I reached the lodge I beat upon the door with a stirrup, crying, "Treachery, *Seigneur, levez ! levez !*"

When, coming down and putting his ear to the ground, he heard the hoof-beats of the ruffians coming to slay him, "The caitiffs are in force," he muttered; "here, Raoul and Antoine, *sauvez vous*, but leave a light burning and the door bolted that they may think me within!" Then, leaping to the saddle, he gave me his hand, for my horse was spent, and climbing by his foot I mounted behind him, he bidding me "Hug tight, Little Monkey"; and so we dashed on with but little advantage, a race for life or death. And life won, for, just as day was breaking and our horse was staggering blindly on, and I was praying my dear lord to lighten his load by letting me down, we came to a chapel at the gate of the castle of Rye, and my lord went in to say



Château Falaise. View from Mont Myra.



his prayers. While I held the horse without, the Lord of Rye and his three sons came by as they were starting for a hunt. And when this lord heard of my master's flight he put him and me on his own fresh horse, and his three sons went with us for a bodyguard ; but my lord of Rye fastened my master's tired horse at his own castle gate, so that when the pursuers came up they saw it and lost much time in ransacking the castle, and so we got safe to the castle of Falaise, which was our own stronghold.

This plot of Guy of Burgundy to slay my master and to seize the dukedom had come about in this way : My master, who had been bred up as a page at the court of the King of France, had but just come of age, and had taken the governance of Normandy, his father, Duke Robert, having perished in the Holy Land at the hand of the infidels. He was joyfully accepted by the greater part of the lords, but there were certain ones who desired him not, being stirred up to this treachery by the false bishop of Rouen, my lord's uncle Mauger, who favoured his other nephew, Guy. For a time their villainy was hidden.

Guy of Burgundy had a castle on the frontier of Normandy, where he often came, and

he sometimes visited my master at Falaise. My master, being great of soul, suspected no evil, and treated Guy right cousinly. One night, as they feasted together, I was called upon for quips and merry tales till my brains were wearied, and a troubadour sang love-songs; and the wine having warmed them, Guy said, "I marvel, Cousin William, that you, who have had a taste of the gay life of the French court, should be pleased with this lonely and womanless habitation. Have the damsels of Falaise lost their beauty since my uncle's time, or come they no longer to beat their linen in the river under the castle windows?"

Then my master grew angry, but he restrained himself, and he thought, "Perchance Guy meant no insult, but knew no better"; so he answered that he was indeed lonely, and had thought of taking a wife, but that when he mated it must be with no village maid, and he challenged Guy to name him the best match in all Europe.

"If by the best match," said Guy, "you mean the most beautiful, the most accomplished, and the unattainable, she is La Belle Mathilde, daughter of the mighty Baldwin of Flanders."

“The most beautiful, the most accomplished, and the most virtuous,” my lord said after him musingly, “may answer your requirements, but such common qualities are not enough for me.”

“She is also a most wealthy heiress, so please your Grace,” Guy made answer in some pique.

“My Grace is not sufficiently well pleased yet,” quoth my exigent lord, “and for this reason: My conscience tells me that I am myself a fair Christian, my peers find me no lout, and there be ladies who have told me that I am well favoured. Also my guardian, Alan Fergeant of Brittany, has so administered my estates that I have more wealth than I know how to bestow. Flanders is no better than Normandy or Burgundy—therefore, in all these respects the lady is but my equal and yours, fair cousin, and I see not why she should be greatly desired by either of us.”

“In lineage,” said Guy, “she tops us both, for she is descended on her father’s side from the Saxon King Alfred of England, and her mother was Adelais, daughter of Robert, King of France; she is related also to the Emperor of Germany.”

Then my master pricked up his ears and mur-

mured, "It is better to found a royal line than to end one, but descent from an old race of kings should be no hindrance to those who would rule in a new dynasty."

At these cogitations Guy could not keep his countenance, but laughed loudly, giving as a mock-toast, "La reine Mathilde."

Seeing that my master drank to this toast but scowlingly, he said, still bantering, "She is indeed fit to be a queen, but Edward the Confessor is too old to seek a bride, and our liege lord of France is already wed, so be not discouraged, fair cousin."

"I am not discouraged," my master answered stoutly, "and this Mathilde shall be queen of me, and in good time of England and France also."

"An' if she be not pleased to accept from you the crown of these three kingdoms?" Guy asked.

"With all her wit," my lord answered, "the damsel hath doubtless the discernment to know her best offer when it is made her."

"That hath she not," Guy replied hotly; "for she cast my offer in my teeth, as she will thine, saying that she can never love any man. And she made no shame of the reason, that her heart is given to Brihtric Meaw (or snow,

so called for his blond beauty), the lord of the honour of Gloucester, who came to the court of Baldwin as ambassador from England. Since he returned to his country (refusing her hand, which her father offered him with a goodly dowry), she has drooped and pined, refusing to be consoled by better men ; so let her go, Cousin William, for an obstinate jade. You and I can do better than to gather up another man's leavings."

My master said nothing in reply, for Guy had touched his pride, which was always accounted the tender spot in his armour, and he had also touched his pity ; and that night as I lay at his feet I heard him talking in his sleep (it was then only that he babbled his secrets), and pleading, "Nay, lass, but let me try to teach thee to love me."

The next morning the Duke of Burgundy, seeing that what his cousin had said the night before was not idle vapouring, but that he was firmly minded to set forward to Lille, persuaded him to tarry for a few days to hunt a naughty boar which Neal of St. Saviours had told him ranged his forests and had slain many huntsmen.

Hunting was my lord's dearest sport, so he wrote a letter to Earl Baldwin demanding his

daughter's hand in marriage, and sent it by his servitors, bidding them have speech with the maid, and having said what they could in his favour, to urge her to give no answer until she knew her suitor better, seeing he would shortly come for his answer in person; and with that we set out for the hunting party. Guy had gone on ahead, and my master was to join him at Neal's castle, but going first to his own hunting-lodge of Valognes kept by a few huntsmen; he was told there that the hunting was so good that he tarried to try it, and sent me on to tell Guy and Neal that he would be with them the day following. It was a disappointment to his would-be host that he came not—that I could see, for he had invited other lords, as I thought to do him honour, so that the castle was full of armed men. I heard Guy say to his host, "Think you that he will surely come on the morrow? Hath he been warned of the plot?" With that I pricked up my ears; and after supper, feigning sleep in the shadowy corner, I heard more. For it was settled between them that they would not wait for the chances of the morrow, but would ride that night as soon as the moon rose to Valognes, and there murder my master, and Grimbald of Plessis would strike the blow.

Then it was that I saved my dear master's life, as I have recounted, save that I have not told that when he held out his hand to aid my climbing, crying, "Up, Little Monkey" (his pet name for me), I would not mount, my heart being swollen with contrary passions of love and wounded pride, but I threw myself on the bracken, crying that if I was but a beast I were not worth the saving. Then my dear lord swore that he would nevermore so misname me, but that I was his little *quen* (or chosen companion), and I sprang full joyfully behind him, hugging him as tight as ever lover held his sweetheart.

After that the conspiracy took open shape, and my lord with his battering of the rebellious lords into their allegiance, had no time to think of love-making. Earl Baldwin, too, had sent word that though he asked no better son-in-law, his daughter had vowed never to marry.

"It is but what I looked for," said my master, "and I like her the better for it. Light won, little worth; she shall know me better—and change her mind."

So, when he had overcome all his enemies, and some were killed, and some in prison, and some had rendered themselves, and Guy had

fled to his own estates, and the King of France had made a league of peace with my master, we set out for Lille upon our wooing. He sent a page to announce his coming, who came back to the inn with the crestfallen aspect of a whipped dog. My master saw that he had bungled his errand before he had uttered a word.

“So she will have none of me? and what saidst thou in my favour?” he asked shortly.

“That which is held of all men concerning thee: that never was seen a man so grandly formed, or so fairly accoutred, nor one who rode so gallantly, and became his hauberk so well, or bore himself so gracefully among ladies, or with such credit among scholars, or with such honour among knights, or with such gentleness in his household.”¹

“And when may I belie thy praises?” Duke William asked.

“I counsel thee to let the matter rest as it is,” quoth the messenger, “for though her father is rightly called the Gentle, thou art well rid of such a shrew, for she scoffed at my persuasions and vowed by Our Lady that when she married it would not be with a bastard.”

¹ Wace, a historian of the time, praises William in these terms.

With that word the blood mounted into my master's face, and then left it white as death, and he strode to the Earl's palace, I following unregarded. It was a Sunday, and it so fell out that when he reached the door the Lady Mathilde met him with her maids, returning from the cathedral. She was daintily arrayed in a silken gown broidered with roses, a veil of silver-shot tissue covering but not concealing her beautiful hair, which was braided in long tresses with ropes of pearls. She held her misal demurely in one hand, and in the other, as though it were a royal sceptre, a palm branch that she had gotten at church, and I have never seen a lovelier picture. My master with all his rage was struck by her beauty, and gazed at her for a moment spellbound.

She returned his gaze with one of questioning, for he blocked her way, and being travel-stained and unshorn, he was not to be known for the gallant of whom his herald had told her.

His tongue came to him as he saw her half-scornful look, and he asked brusquely if she was that Mathilde, daughter of Earl Baldwin.

She nodded, as disdainng speech with him, which so angered my lord, even while her loveliness inflamed him, that he cried, "And I

am William of Normandy, and I suffer no man or woman to insult me unpunished." With that he caught her by the arms and shook her as one shakes a vexing child. Then she, all unafraid and blazing with temper, turned up her little nose at him, crying, "Unhand me, thou dirty tanner; I am not a calfskin for thy vats!"

At this second insult to his mother and himself, his rage so overcame him that he cuffed her and rolled her in the dust, in full view of a large concourse of townspeople, who came running at her screaming, her father also standing transfixed with astonishment in his door.

But my lord's anger vanished as quickly as it had risen, and he lifted her in his arms, she silent now and looking at him in wonder, but with neither fear nor anger. And he, crying, "Forgive me, proud mistress, but your words have given more pain than my unmannerly actions," set her gently on her feet, and so, head in air, strode back through the crowd to the inn. I followed greatly abashed, for I liked not to see the adventure end there, and I could hear Earl Baldwin bawling for his sword to avenge the indignity done his daughter.

My lord slackened his pace at these shouts, and bade me go back and tell the Earl that he would meet him at Augi on the frontier, with his men-at-arms, and in battle or in single combat would give him satisfaction. His anger was gone, and he was red with shame.

“God’s death! it was a scurvy trick to serve a lady,” he muttered, “and the Earl may punish me as he likes. If we meet in battle he shall work his will and have no harm from me. Thou art my fittest messenger, Tuold, for I have indeed come upon a fool’s errand.”

I went back, therefore, with this message, which was half challenge, half apology, and I added, of my own impudence, that my lord rested his cause in the hands of the Lady Mathilde, and would do such penance as she pleased to ordain. When she heard that, she prayed her father to stay his answer, and called me apart into her bower, and bade me tell her more of my master, and what virtues there might be to offset his too quick temper. My lord’s first messenger had spoken only of his bodily comeliness and prowess. “As to the first,” she said, “I believe he spoke sooth, for so beautiful and terrible must St. George have looked to the dragon; and he

must be a man of great courage and high daring who could venture to beat me in my own father's presence." Then I, lamenting in my heart that I had not an eloquent tongue, poured out all my love for my young master.

"It is an ill thing, gentle lady," said I, "when a pious, a loving, and a proud heart like my master's cannot obey that commandment of Holy Church, 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' more especially as my master loved both of his parents with as great a passion as that of sons whose affection is blent with reverence. And though his mother, the tanner's pretty daughter Arlette, had never a wedding-ring to her finger, and his father, Robert le Diable, well deserved his name, they showed each of them as great a devotion for their child as could the best of parents. For Duke Robert, when he heard that Arlette (whom he had hitherto loved but lightly,) was dead, and that she had commended her babe to him, was smitten with remorse and sent and fetched him from the tanner's house, named him William, and brought him up in his own castle, caring for him with a father's and mother's tenderness in one. There was no woman in Falaise castle, but Duke Robert sent for a learned clerk, Ordericus Vitalis, to

be his son's tutor, while as yet the boy could scarcely talk, so that he learned Latin as soon as Norman French. He had in other boys to be his playfellows and schoolmates, I among them, and save that Odo was the subtler logician, and another had the gift of eloquence, and Taillefer a knack of matching rhymes, our young master was the scholar of us all. He was so bewitched with the story of Cæsar's fighting that he ever outran his stent, and then acted it all over in our play, building an oppidum and causing us to figure as Ariovistus, Vercingetorix, and other Gauls, we getting broken heads as our share of this lusty sport. As for me, I was no scholard, but my fingers had a knack of drawing with a bit of charred stick, and my tongue found ever a saucy answer, so that Duke Robert marked me out, in spite of my small stature, and had me to Paris with his son, where I learned to be a painter, and, what is much the same, a fool.

“It was when my young Lord William was seven years old that Duke Robert saw that his son had his spirit and his mother's beauty. Then he called his peers and vassals together in the great hall of his castle, and said, ‘I go to Palestine for the shriving of my

soul, but I leave my dukedom in the ward of my dear friend and neighbour, Alan Fergeant of Brittany, who, though he is young, will govern wisely and faithfully until my return, or, if I die in this adventure, until the coming of age of this my son, whom I beseech you to accept as your lawful sovereign.'

"And the lad bore himself so handsomely that Duke Robert's *queens*, for the love they bore him (for he was a merry comrade and true, though a sinful man), raised the little William on their shields and swore fealty to him. Then Duke Robert took us to Paris to the court of King Henry, to be bred up at court.

"This much is known of all, but what is not publicly known is that his mother died not, as was supposed. Her father had caused this report to be given out because Arlette foresaw what would follow; namely, that Duke Robert would love her more truly dead than living, and that remorse would make of a false lover a true father. So she held herself in seclusion at the tannery, and none save her father knew that she lived, though she could see her son at play, drilling the boys as soldiers; and she remembered how, the day that he was born, when lying neglected on the

floor (for she was thought to be dying), he had clenched his tiny hands on the straw, and the witch-wife who tended her said, 'He has begun early to clutch at things and what he seizes he will hold.' So, for the boy's good, she stifled her mother-hunger and kept from him until the day that her father told her that he had been publicly owned by the Duke as his son, and accepted by the lords as the heir to the dukedom, and that on the morrow he would go away. Then the yearning to kiss her son farewell was so strong within her that she veiled herself and came upon us as she saw us sporting by the river, and she kissed him full tenderly and wept. She had meant to do no more, but the passion of mother-love carried all before it, and she called him her son. Then when she had recovered herself she swore him to secrecy, saying, 'Thus only canst thou come to thy kingdom.'

"But the boy had replied to her caresses, and strove to dry her tears. 'Thou art a pretty woman,' he said, 'an thou dost not weep. I have never been kissed by a woman before; thy breast is a sweet pillow, and thy cheek is soft, not bristly like my father's; I knew not woman's love were so sweet; I would rather have it than kingship.'

“‘Nay,’ said she, ‘kingship is better; hold thou to that, and beware of love, for it is the undoing of man and woman, save indeed that love which asks for no love in return, only the good of that it loves, and the fierce joy of loving.’

“We understood not then, for we were but children, but we kept the secret and my lord mused much upon it, and now and again he spoke to me of his mother at the French court. ‘And if she holds lordship so precious who has loved so much,’ he said, ‘then I will keep my heart from love’s tangles, and give myself only to ambition. But when I am come to my own again, I will search for my mother and she shall be lady of my father’s castle.’ But when we were come to Falaise his mother was dead in very sooth, and he could do nought to repay her self-sacrifice. So it is not so much shame for his lowly origin as love and pity for his mother, and anger with his father, that fills my lord with fury at the word ‘bastard.’”

Mathilde had heard me thus far silently, but she spoke now. “I have misjudged him. I have heard of him before; but his cousin Guy of Burgundy told me that he was as savage as the Viking pirate Rollo, from whom he is

descended, a hater of women and cruel to men. Tell me, is it true, as Guy said, that on the taking of the city of Alençon he caused certain prisoners to be flayed alive?"

"Nay," I replied; "you have heard that story wrong. When Alan Fergeant faithfully delivered to him his kingdom, all his lords greeted his home-coming and came to his crowning, save only three or four, and his uncle Mauger, his father's false brother, Bishop of Rouen. Then my lord understood that King Henry of France, knowing what an adventurous and ambitious spirit my master had, feared he would be no safe vassal and neighbour, and had plotted with Mauger to make Guy Duke of both Normandy and Brittany. But my lord was not angered, for he said: 'Guy is descended from Rollo as well as I, but through my aunt Alice, and were it not for the Salic law, he would have as good a right to the dukedom; we will fight for it even as Rollo did with the King of France, but there shall be no ill will between us, and the better man shall win.'

"He forgave the daughter of William Talvas, Mabel Montgomery, who was his false hostess when as a boy he visited her castle and another lad was killed in his bed by her

brother Oliver, though, as it was suspected, by her connivance. He bore her no ill will, I say, because of his love for her husband, Roger Montgomery, who stood by him and fought with him when Mabel had induced Geoffrey Foulque of Anjou to garrison and hold her castle of Alençon against my lord.

“But what he could not forgive, was that neat-skins were hung on the walls of the castle with the inscription, ‘Work for the tanner.’ My lord swore that they who did that should be flayed and their skins tanned and hung where the filthy insult had been displayed.”

“It was a hard sentence,” quoth the Lady Mathilde, “but I understand him now; ’t is a loving nature turned bitter, and he who could thus avenge an insult to his mother would doubtless brook none to his wife.”

“Nay,” I answered, “but hear me out. My lord’s actions were less brutal than his threat. His anger is soon cooled, and when the dastards fell into his hands he caused their hides to be tanned, but with a thong only, and left them on their backs to heal.”

My lady’s eyes grew great with wonder. “He rolled me but gently,” she murmured to herself, “doing injury only to my finery; and surely we were equals then not alone in our

dusty appearance, for a foul tongue is more shame to its owner than a besmirched ancestry; we are quits, if he will forgive my shrewishness. But tell me, Sir Fool," and here she blushed, "since your master holds love as nothing to ambition, how is it that he loves me?"

"Fair lady," I replied, "though in verity it was ambition that first made him lift his thoughts to thee, when he saw thee his soul went out of his eyes, and doubt not that he loves thee truly."

With that she laughed. "I guessed rightly then," she said, after a little space; "my Saxon lineage and connexions will be helpful to him in his pretensions. I should have known that no one, however base-born, could truly love me."

"Nay, Mistress," I plead again, "I swear to thee, love came at first sight." She smiled again, but there was no gladness in the smile.

"Yea, Fool, my words were amiable and his actions loving! I was not made for love. Nevertheless, thou hast done thy duty well—'t is a fool's wooing, and I am won, the more fool I."

With that we went in to her father, and she said, "William of Normandy pleases me, and none other will I have for a husband."

The Earl laughed loudly, and swore that a maid's mind was beyond his wit, while his chaplain, who stood by, answered him, "Yea, my lord, for it is written, 'Mulier hominis confusio est.'"

So Earl Baldwin bade me answer that Duke William might meet him at Castle Augi, and there make happy reparation for his hastiness. "But by Our Lady!" he said to his daughter, "an he roll you in the dust again, I will see that he rolls there too, never to arise."

So these twain were wed. Earl Baldwin bestowed great grants of land and riches upon his daughter, and made a league with his son-in-law to help him with his soldiery and his substance at home and abroad, in peace and in war. The Lady Mathilde was gloriously appalled, more in the guise of a queen than a bride, all in cloth of gold, with a mantle broidered with jewels, and a jewelled diadem instead of a wreath of orange flowers. And in penance for his savagery (the Duke would have it so), before he knelt with her at the altar, he knelt before her at the church steps and laid his forehead on the stone, placing with his hands her dainty foot upon his head. And when she had suffered this very unwillingly, she took off her satin slipper and bade

me bear it for her as a thing precious, for it should never tread upon earth again ; and she walked to her marriage as a penitent, unshod save for her silken hose.

That was a grand wedding, but where love is not there is no true marriage, and, though each loved the other and hungered for each other's love, they knew not that they had their desire, and so for long years they were but half wed. And here in sooth is a great mystery, that a man and his wife may so live and love, and strive in their very souls to be leal to one another, and to speak sooth and kindness—and yet may not fully know each other's hearts. And this misunderstanding came about from great desire of frankness, for before they went to church they did their best to make true confession to one another ; but words have not the power to carry right sense to those whose minds are perversely twisted to believe a contrary thing. The Lady Mathilde, believing that Duke William wedded her but to serve his ambitions, would receive no protestation of affection from him, but said, "My Lord, let us not deceive one another, for even if there be no pitch of love between us, with mutual respect and truth we may win happiness, and be great aid and

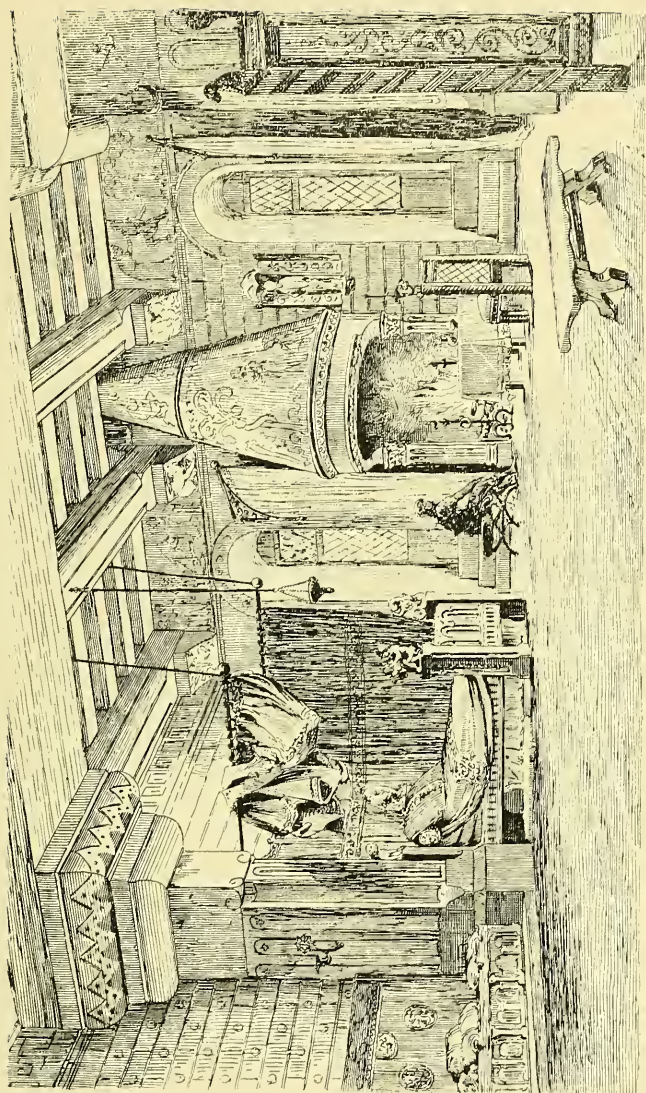
solace to one another, if only thou canst swear, as I do, that, whatever may have chanced in the past, thou are quit of all such entanglements of heart and lovest not in any other quarter."

This she said as much to clear herself in his eyes (for she knew that her former infatuation was known) as to make her mind sure that she had no rival. He took the oath very gladly, for he had never loved any woman, and in his humbleness he asked no more of her than she offered, being exceeding thankful to have her on any terms. She, poor child, the while, because he insisted not on her love, fancied that he did not desire it—such a plague it is for man and woman to come to any understanding. This state of things endured for years, my master loving the very ground on which his wife trod, but mastering himself to treat her at all times with stately reverence, and submitting himself to her gentle tyranny. He had the discernment to see that, while he had valour and strength of mind and body for the carrying out of great enterprises, she had the wit for planning them, and he was content to be hand and arm to her head. They had each a great fondness for building, and many were the plans which the clerk Gundulph and I

drew up under their direction. The old castles of Normandy were all of one pattern. One huge, rough tower, called the donjon-keep, was the residence of the lord and his family. This keep in early times was round, though now we build them square, with square turrets at each angle, and a buttress up the centre of the front. There were other smaller towers near by, which were the outbuildings of the castle, and the lodging of the garrison, and contributed, with the connecting wall, to the defence. Outside the walls was a moat or river. Across this moat went the drawbridge of the sally-port, and beyond the moat were warders' towers for the further defence of the entrance, and a stockaded barnyard, or bailey, into which the cattle and horses were driven at night.

Our Norman castles were indeed but a mixture of grange and fortress, and no fit habitation for a delicate lady. It irked my dear lord sore to bring his bride to his ancestral castle at Falaise. There had not been a Duchess of Normandy for fifty years,—since the time of my lord's grandmother, whom none of us had known, so that there was no provision for so fair a dove in this eagle's nest. The great keep was fit only for men, and for

men of war. The first story held the provisions and munitions ; the second was a great kitchen and dining-hall in one, with fireplace and bake ovens at one end, where the cook turned the spit that roasted a quarter of an ox, while the steward served at table at the other end. In the thickness of the wall, which was double and filled in with rubble, were the staircase and various passages, closets, and secret hiding-places. The third floor was the hall of assembly, or great hall of the castle, in which the Duke received his *quens*. There was a fireplace here, but the chamber was so large that it was cold even when great logs were blazing, and the benches on each side of the chimney had high backs to keep off the wind. The bed, which stood in one corner, was fended from the room with heavy curtains. There was a great oaken table near the fireplace on which was an inkhorn, and in presses in the wall were a good store of manuscripts. There were chests for linen and clothing which served also for seats. The dogs were free of the room, for his hounds were my lord's pets. There were stairs and doors leading up to the parapets, and a great opening in the middle of the floor whereby stones and engines of war could be hoisted from the cellars by means of



CHAMBER IN CHÂTEAU OF XIIIth CENTURY.

a windlass in case of siege, but this opening was closed with a trap-door in time of peace. There was at one corner of this great hall a little room hollowed in the masonry of the thick wall, called formerly My Lady's Chamber. It had been the bower of my lord's grandame, but after she died it went by the name of the haunted turret, for some prattled that they had seen a white face looking from its narrow window. There were those who were bold enough to say that Duke Robert le Diable kept Arlette, the tanner's daughter, hidden there. The old castles throughout Normandy were no better than this, saving that at Arques, which was Bishop Odo's, and went for the most luxurious habitation in the province, though there were no women there either. It was also the strongest fortress on the Channel. Odo was a fighting bishop, and though from his vows he could not use a sword, his mace was heavy and the muscles of his arm stood out from use of it. He needed many outbuildings for barracks, for he had many retainers.

My lord would have put off his marriage until he could have received his Duchess in state, but when he told her of this at Augi, before their wedding, she replied that she

would liefer go to his eyrie on the crags of Falaise, and there plan with him the building of their new home—which pleased my lord well. He fitted up the haunted turret as best he could for her boudoir, and I painted posies and love-mottoes in gay letters along the timber rafters. I painted also a little picture of the Madonna in the niche which was the turret oratory, and the Virgin had the face of La Belle Mathilde as I remembered it. The seats along the wall in the great hall were newly covered with skins of wolf and bear, the floor was strewn with rushes, the walls were hung with armour and with antlers of deer; in the centre of the room was a great brazen lamp hung by chains, kept burning all night for fear of ghosts, and the chimney-piece was cunningly chopped by means of an axe in zig-zags. The two stone pillars had cushion-shaped capitals, and the shelf held many new silver flagons and platters. It was a good enough place for men, but when I thought of Earl Baldwin's palace in the city of Lille, with its silken curtains, its soft carpets, its paintings and tapestries and embossed leathers and other luxuries, I wondered whether our Duchess would not pine in this warrior-like abode; but we need have had no fears. The

moment Duke William lifted her from her palfrey she clapped her hands in glee, and ran ahead of him, exploring the castle. She found of herself her own face in the Madonna, which I painted to signify that she was the object of my lord's devotions; but my lord, who knew nothing of my work till that moment, had not the quickness of mind or the dishonesty to take the credit of it, but said, right stupidly, that it was "some foolishness of Turoid's."

With that she looked at me very gravely. "'T is like, if thou canst weave such pictures with thy fingers, that the romance thou didst recount to me at Lille has little more of truth in it." And I knew that I had not helped my lord's cause as I had hoped to do.

She brought with her many chests of household linen, and fine garments garnished with lace, and silver flagons and candlesticks, but no maids or serving-people, for she had the good sense to know that these might quarrel with her husband's people; and she had set herself to make us all love her, which she presently effected, from Bishop Odo to my insignificance. As for the *quens*,—Alan Fergeant, Raoul de Grace, Roger de Beaumont, Fitz Osborn, Roger Montgomery, Geoffrey

Martel, Hugh de Grantmesnil, William de Warenne, Taillefer the minstrel, and the rest,—they were hers to a man. But she was not content with the homage of mankind. They must all bring their mothers, their wives, their sweethearts, and their sisters, all of whom loved her excepting the false-hearted Mabel Montgomery; and at last we had a true court in Normandy. There were great hunting parties, for my lord loved hunting beyond any pastime, and to pleasure him my lady learned to follow the deer at his side. There were church festivals, with processions to holy shrines, to the content of Bishop Odo; and there was dancing as well as feasting at our castle, with harpers and other musicians; and the songs of the minstrels were cleaner; and I cudgelled my brains for jests fit for ladies' ears, which would raise the laugh without the blush.

When the wind whistled ice and snow upon us from the north, she set up her broidery frame and taught the women to broider tapestry. For this work I was set to draw patterns, and Bishop Odo was for sacred subjects, from the lives of the saints, for the Church; but nothing would content my master but she must broider the story of Cæsar's conquest of Gaul. And she promised that both

should be pleased, and she did it in her own way,—as I shall tell you in the sequel, lest I outrun my story.

All was not sunshine, however, for though Guy of Burgundy had owned himself beaten, Mauger was for revenge by underhand means. He declared that the Duke and Duchess were within bonds of relationship banned to wedlock, and excommunicated them, declaring their marriage illegal.

When my lord heard that, he cried, "I spit upon his excommunication, and Odo shall beat him out of Rouen with his men-at-arms, and take his bishopric." But he grew white as he thought what a curse that word "illegitimate" had been to him. His own children were coming now: the lads, Robert Curthose, short and sturdy, named for the old Duke; William Rufus, ruddy as his father, and the child of his heart, for he had both his face and name; there was little Cicely too, but Henry and the other girls came later. Henry was ever a lonely child, for his mother loved her first-born best; so Henry was left to Lanfranc and the love of books, and they called him Henry Beau Clerc. At last, when his father lay dying, he asked, "Since Robert has Normandy and William England, what shall I

have?" and his father answered, "Have patience, and it may so chance that thou have England and Normandy. If not, patience is best of all."

My lord could not abide that the word "Bastard" should be written after the name of any son of his, and Lanfranc, having the oiliest tongue amongst us all, was posted off to Rome to wheedle the Pope, which he did to such purpose that his Holiness declared the excommunication off and the marriage sound if the Duke would build an abbey for holy monks, and the Duchess one for nuns. This was exactly to their mind, for, as I have said, they had each a passion for building. Lanfranc had brought back with him some drawings of churches in Rome, and Gundulph was sent to see the abbey church of Cluny, thought to be the best in France, while I brought out the plans and studies I had made in Paris. Our buildings were mostly of rough stone, whose wide, uneven joints were filled in with plaster, with much use of timber. There was hardly a stone-vaulted ceiling in all Normandy; the roofs were of wood, pointed like a hat, and raftered within. But now there was a great improvement, and fair round arches grew to barrel vaulting, and that to groined vaulting.

Gundulph chose Caen for the site of the abbeys, because the stone of Calvados was fine, and there was an abundance of it. My lord sent for stone-cutters and masons, and he built not alone the Abbey aux Hommes to St. Stephen, over which he made Lanfranc abbot (saying, "This honour shalt thou have now and a greater hereafter"), and the Abbey of Holy Trinity for virgins nobly born, but here at Caen he built also a greater castle than that of Falaise, to be his palace.

My lady had spent long hours at the oratory beseeching a blessing on Lanfranc's errand, and when he returned successful she had a softer, gayer look than I had ever seen in her face, and she said to me, "Now that this curse of Mauger's is removed, we shall be happy."

But it was not Mauger's curse which had made the trouble at first; and my lord had been so used to seeing her cold and stately, never failing in any wifely duty, but treating him ever with calm indifference, that he did not mark the flutter of hope in her face, and it presently died out as he grew more and more absorbed in his building. His constructions at Caen were not the only ones, for he built a chain of fortresses on the coast, and

made the harbours more commodious, and built a great pier at Cherbourg; and the overseeing of these works, together with the repulsing of two invasions and the conquering of the county of Maine, necessitated many long journeys, so that he was much from home.

But at last this was all over, and we had forsaken the old castle of Falaise and were settled in Caen. And now that there seemed nothing to be done for the strengthening of his kingdom of Normandy, one would have thought that my lord might have taken pleasure in his home; but it was not to be. He looked on his wife's love for their son Robert with a sort of jealousy, and whenever Robert kissed his mother he would stride from the room. Idleness irked him also, and he grew moody and irritable. My mistress saw this, and strove to interest him with changes in the castle, making it still more lordly or stronger in its defences, and any of us who could devise such changes were bidden to lay them before him. It was then that Lanfranc told of a villainous contrivance that he had heard of in Italy in the way of a prison dungeon, being a very grewsome well or pit, into which prisoners were lowered with ropes never to be

taken out again, or into which they were let fall by the dropping of the floor, trap-door-wise, from a fair guest-room in the tower above, the machinery being operated (when the guest was well within) from without the door like the hoisting and lowering of a drawbridge.

“And how call you so devilish a contrivance?” asked my lady.

“It is called an *oubliette*, Sweetheart,” said my lord; “the word cometh from *oublier* (to forget). By God’s death, it were a handy thing to have such a pit, well garnished with knives, beneath a sweetly furnished chamber! Then if any guest chanced to come who had offended us past forgiveness, we could easily there forget both sin and sinner.”

But my lady cried, “That were treachery, my lord. Let the transgressor suffer his doom either in battle or in open judgment, but let there be no murder in our house.”

My lord knew that she was right, and there was no *oubliette* of this sort made in our castle, nor in all Normandy save at Alençon, but he answered her roughly then, and many times thereafter. Coming in suddenly one morning I found her sobbing alone, and, when I asked what ailed her, in the distraction of her grief

she replied, "Thou canst see well enough, Tuold, that my lord loves me not. Sweet Saviour! what is it that he lacks in me?"

"Naught, dear lady," I protested, not knowing what I said, I was so distraught by the sight of her grief. "I have heard him declare you perfect. And I know that other than you, he hath never loved woman. It may be that he is brooding over great enterprises, for such a man as he can never have enough of them."

"Think you so, Tuold?" she cried. "Then I must make myself a part of his ambition, and not hold him back from it."

From that time she began to set his mind again on the heirship of the English crown. Edward the Confessor was now an old man and childless; and Duke William by his marriage had strengthened his pretensions. The Duchess therefore persuaded her husband to visit his relative, and she begged to be taken with him; but to this the Duke would not consent, and her very desire wakened unjust suspicions in his heart. I found him walking alone and talking to himself. "Why should she wish to go to England, since Brihtric Meaw is there, and she swore to me long since that her love for him was dead?"

“Please you, my master,” I made bold to say, “it is for that very reason that my mistress would show this man what a great marriage she has made, and what a fair husband she hath, for it is but the nature of women as well as men to triumph over them who have done them despite.”

“Thou art right, Tuold,” the Duke cried, “and by the splendour of God (it was a great oath and his favourite) she shall have her triumph, but not now, since I go as a suppliant; nevertheless she shall have her fill of triumph in good time.”

So Duke William went to England, and the King received him well and made him many fair promises, for he was old and cared not what strife there was for the kingship after him, so there was peace while he lived. Harold, who stood nearer the throne and held himself the rightful heir, looked on this intimacy with suspicion, nevertheless he was outwardly friendly. So, after the Duke had returned, he had him to visit us at Caen. This was the Duchess's plan,—“For,” said she, “we will gain the kingship by alliance and friendly treaty if we can, but if courtesy fails then thou shalt have thy way.”

All men know what came of that visit, and

that Duke William told Harold, while hunting with him, of his design of claiming the English crown on the death of Edward, and that Harold not only privately promised the Duke, but took the most solemn oaths before his lords to support his claim. As Harold was in his host's power when he made this treaty, my master had no great confidence in his good faith, and my mistress counselled him to make it to Harold's interest to keep his oath. My lord therefore bade him choose a bride among his daughters, promising that he should be his son-in-law and heir to England, and that he would provide for his sons in Normandy. The Duke's daughters were a fair garland of sweet flowers, whereof Cicely, the eldest, was fair and stately as a lily. She had been consecrated at her birth to the Church, and later became abbess of Holy Trinity. She was then at home, but the shadow of her approaching separation from her family rested upon her and kept her constantly at her mother's side. The others were but little girls, and whereas I was of diminutive stature they thought me a child, and treated me ever as one of themselves. I played with them, and taught them, and little by little as they overtopped me in stature they looked down upon

me in more ways than that, and though ever kind, never gave me credit for having the feelings of a man. Agatha was the beauty and rose of them all, and next in age to Cicely.

There came other wooers at this time: young Stephen, Earl of Blois, and Alan Fergeant, Earl of Brittany, whom, though he was older than himself, Duke William was glad to have for his son-in-law, both because he owed him much for keeping his duchy for him during his minority, and because he could render him the same and other service while he was absent in England. Agatha could have had either of these lovers, or another whose love she never suspected, but to whom she confided her secrets, sure of his sympathy and loyalty, who tore his hair and beat his breast at night and all but cursed his Maker who had given him a man's eyes and a man's heart in a pigmy body.

But Agatha mocked at the Earl of Brittany as a grandsire, and the Earl of Blois as a dullard, so that these were fain to content themselves later on with her sisters Constance and Adela, for the blue eyes and yellow hair of the Saxon Harold had made an even deeper impression upon Agatha than the same blond beauty of Brihtric had upon her mother. He

was a young prince of haughty demeanour, and he dressed in the fantastic fashion of the Saxons, his beard shorn all but his upper lip, and his arms laden with golden bracelets and pictured with figures pounced in the fair skin. Though a barbarian there was something heroic about him which caught the young girl's fancy. It was doubtless but to insure his own safety, that he made some show of affection for his betrothed, and would hold the skeins of silk that she wound, and watch the slender form droop over the tapestry frame on which she embroidered his likeness. As she painted thus with her needle she often looked at him very fixedly, and on one such occasion he asked her the meaning of her gaze.

“I am trying to look through your eyes into your soul,” she answered; “but all is not open and clear there. You do not love me, Harold, and something tells me that you will forget the promises made upon French soil.”

But Harold took her hand in his and swore: “I will be as true as the stars. When you see one of them wandering among the fixed constellations, then Harold will wander from his love. When one of heaven's steadfast lights flies away from its place, nevermore to return to its shining companions, then you may doubt

that Harold will return. Dry your tears, my Agatha, for I will be true—as true as the stars.”

Then Harold went his way, and the days that followed were long and lonely for Agatha. Her brother Robert reproached her, for his father had forced him to relinquish to Harold any claim that future events might give him to the heirship of England.

“Thou shalt have Normandy, Robert, and thou shalt wed the heiress of the Duke of Maine, and that,” said the Duke, “must content thee.”

But Robert was not content, and he visited his displeasure upon his sister, until Edward the Confessor died, and Harold, repudiating his promises to William of Normandy and to Agatha, caused himself to be proclaimed King of England, and married Edyth, widow of the King of Wales.

When my lord received this news he could not speak for wrath, but stood tying and untying the cordon of his cloak ; but my mistress's words came easily enough, and her indignation was greater for the affront put upon her daughter than that Harold had seized the crown from her husband. My lord could not fail to mark this, and he understood that his

wife endured again the bitterness of her own rejection.

“I should have known,” she cried, “that it is not possible for a Saxon to love, or hold faith. Would that there had been an *oubliette* beneath his couch! then would he never have departed from this house.”

This she said in the first frenzy of her anger, but her husband gave more weight to her words than he should, and they rankled in his heart, while his face grew fixed with an awful purpose.

“My wife and daughter shall be avenged,” he said to me; “’t is not alone for ambition that I would conquer England now. I have had a look into my wife’s heart, and at last I understand her.”

“Then,” said I, “now that you know you have the love of such a heart, methinks you should count yourself richer than if England were already yours.”

But his face grew grey. “Her love, Tuold, is what I shall never have. I deceived myself—she never pretended to love me; I hoped it might come, but she has no capacity left for loving. All the passion that was in her soul she gave to Brihtric Meaw. It is his still, but turned to hate, which is but the rebound and

other side of love. For me she has only friendship. For me—who am eaten through and through with love of her. God's death! if she but cared enough for me to hate me as she hates that man! But if I were false to her she would smile as coldly as ever. Still I must thank her hate; it is to that I owe that I have her at all."

"That is a hard riddle," I made answer.

"Did you not tell me when you came from wooing her for me, that Guy had told her falsely of my savagery to certain of my prisoners, how I had caused them to be flayed alive, and that at that word she cried, 'He who could so punish his mother's traducers, would in like manner avenge an insult to his wife'? It was for this she married me, Tuold, not for love, but for revenge. All these years she has waited for it, and it is no wonder that she despises me for a laggard and a coward. She longed to be Lady of Gloucester; she shall be that, and Queen of England too, and Brihtric of the Snow shall lie whiter and colder than ever when I tie the keys of his castle to her chatelaine. But look you, Tuold, that she know not that I have guessed her secret. She would think I married her from compassion, whereas she desired love and has had

it. It may be that the knowledge of this may have been some small solace to her, as it is my fierce happiness to serve."

I was powerless to make my lord understand matters other than in this warped fashion, and indeed I had little opportunity for coming at him, for now he was taken up with preparations for the invasion of England. He called together the quens and told them of his project. At first they were not wholly minded to the enterprise, for they feared the sea, and were not bound by their feudal tenure to serve beyond it; but Bishop Odo set the example and Fitz Osborn so wrought upon them by picturing the Saxon spoils and honours which would be theirs, that they not only consented to pass overseas but to double their accustomed homage, so that he who was bound to furnish twenty men-at-arms promised forty, and he who owed an hundred agreed to furnish forth two. The Duke was not satisfied with what he could raise in his own dominion, but he invited his neighbours the Bretons, the Angevins, and the men of Boulogne to join his banner, the Earl of Flanders coming forward as he had agreed with supplies of men and ships. This was not for the sake of his daughter Mathilde alone, but because his other daughter had

married Tostig, the brother of Harold, and this Tostig had been shut out by Harold from his Northumbrian earldom, and was now waging war on the north coast of England, having secured the aid of the King of Norway.

Our Duchess was of great assistance in cementing a league with her family, for she took great interest in the invasion. She also caused to be built from her private coffers, and as a surprise to her husband, a splendid vessel of war, which he made the flagship of his fleet. The Duke had even sought to make an ally of the King of France, who made sport of the scheme, asking him with some significance, "Who would take care of his duchy while he was running on such a fool's errand?" To which half-disguised threat Duke William had replied, "That is a care that shall not need to trouble our neighbours; by the grace of God we are blessed with a prudent wife and loving subjects, who will keep our border securely during our absence."

The King of Spain was more friendly, for he sent aid and a present for the Duke, a magnificent horse royally caparisoned, and he desired an alliance in case the Duke was successful in this venture; the Pope also sent him

a splendid banner which he had blessed. The design upon this banner was a comet embroidered in gold, with the legend, "*Nova Stella Novus Rex*," for about this time a wonder had appeared in the heavens which was thought to augur success to the Normans, and indeed had been foretold by Saxon seers in rude rhyme :

"In the year ten hundred and sixty-six
A comet an end to the Saxon shall fix."

There was one who looked upon this comet with other significance. Agatha was standing at a window looking away toward England when it flashed like a scimitar across the starlit sky. When she saw it she fell in a faint, and when I brought her to herself with chafing of her hands, she murmured, "Harold hath broken no promise to me, for his star wandereth." Full gladly would I have consoled her stricken heart with my love, but she was smitten too sorely. I knew also that though the Duke felt that he owed me much, in that I had not hesitated to go upon two of his most important errands, and had both saved his life and won for him his bride, yet was he too proud a man to suffer his daughter to wed so meanly. Therefore I kept silence,

striving to attain to that state which Arlette told us was best of all, namely, the love which asks no love in return, and no recompense but the good of that it loves.

No sooner had the expedition departed than tapestry frames were set up in the great hall of the castle and our Duchess gathered her ladies to beguile the absence of their kinsmen by embroidering all the history of the Conquest. It was a great undertaking, but there were many hands, and as fast as we had tidings I made a picture of what had befallen, and from this the dames took their patterns. It was thus that our Duchess fulfilled her promise to her husband and to Bishop Odo, for she made the Duke her hero and depicted his exploits instead of those of Cæsar; and she planned the tapestry of sufficient length (230 feet) to compass the nave of Bayeux Cathedral, thus greatly contenting the Bishop with this magnificent gift. There are in this tapestry upwards of 1400 figures, of which 623 are men and women, 762 are animals, 37 castles, and 41 ships. These figures were combined in 72 pictures, separated from each other by trees, and described by Latin inscriptions, beginning with a view of Harold taking leave of Edward the Confessor before his departure

for Normandy, and showing the events of his visit in Normandy. Among these was an attack which my lord made upon a castle in Brittany, to reach which we crossed the treacherous sands of St. Michel, where Harold rescued two men, pulling them from the quicksand.¹ It was Agatha's will that this honourable deed of his should be commemorated, and she wrought it with her own hand, leaving to others the task of depicting his treachery in accepting the crown of England.

We had laboured thus far when a galley brought the news of the battle of Hastings and the death of Harold; and that our lord was to be known no longer as Duke William of Normandy, but as William the Conqueror, King of England. From that time the work on the tapestry galloped joyfully, save that one seat, that of the Lady Agatha, was vacant, for she was ill of a fever. So other hands embroidered the appearance of the comet, the council of the Norman chiefs presided over by Bishop Odo concerning the invasion, and all the details brought us by the messengers of the disembarkation of our men in England,

¹ This panel of the tapestry bears the inscription, "Hic Harold dux traherat eos de arena." The rather comical representation of Mont St. Michel in the background is the oldest existing picture of the castle. In another panel appears a portrait of Turold.

the march to Hastings, the formation of a camp, and setting up of the wooden castle which Gundulph made in Normandy and which was carried over in pieces.

Most admirable of all was the battle itself, with the onset of the English, the shower of darts hurtling against the shields and the bright mail of the Norman horsemen, the wounded and the dying lying in piteous state and trampled beneath the hoofs of the horses. All of the chief personages were most careful portraits, and among these our lady, whom now I must call *la reine* Mathilde, would have it that I should make one of my insignificance.

My lord had much further fighting in England to thoroughly take the land, and to keep that he gained, all of which he effected with as much wisdom as valour; instituting good laws and providing for their thorough execution, in which difficult undertaking he far exceeded even Cæsar himself. So soon as the country was pacified he had his wife come to England, with a magnificent train of noblemen and ladies, to be crowned at Winchester. So great a pageant had never been seen before in the kingdom, both at the church and at the great banquet at the castle, where the King

caused the Queen to create many new offices and to bestow benefices, thus adding to her power and popularity, and signifying that she reigned in equal sovereignty with himself. Among the offices then created for all future coronations was that of the "Championship." The King had ordained that a handsome young cavalier, Marmion of Fontenaye, should ride into the great banqueting-hall, and having curveted around the table, repeat three times this challenge: "If any person denies that our most gracious sovereign, Lord William, and his spouse Mathilde are King and Queen of England, he is a false-hearted traitor and liar; and here I as Champion do challenge him to single combat." No person accepted this challenge, though there were many Saxon chiefs in the hall, and the King had made proclamation that any who wished should be provided with horse and armour and be given a fair field. Among those who heard this challenge was a prisoner who had been closely guarded in the dungeons of Winchester since his capture, Brihtric Meaw, Thane of Gloucester. For a moment he drew himself up and looked at the knight, and in that instant my lord's hand sought his sword. "By the splendour of God," I heard him say,

“if he accept the challenge, not Marmion but I will fight him in this presence.” But the Thane’s spirit was broken and he crawled forward on his knees and submitted the keys of Gloucester, which my lord fastened, as he had promised, to his wife’s chatelaine, saying that the life of the prisoner was in her hands. Whereat she made answer indifferently that his life or death had long ceased to be matter of interest to her, and that she desired never to see nor hear mention of him more. Whereupon a great light flashed across my lord’s face, and he bade them let the prisoner go free ; but that he should leave the kingdom and take some other name, so that his wife’s wish might be regarded. And as few heard this order, and naught was known of Brihtric thereafter, the report went out that he had been slain in his dungeon, and privately buried. My lord was very happy after this, for the suspicions and torments of eighteen years were lifted from his mind, for he knew that if the Queen had not hated Brihtric to the death, as he had imagined, then she had never deeply loved him either. So at last his heart was gay, and he was so merry that he distributed largesse on every hand, and made many whimsical and merry honours ; among others that of

the "Grand Panetier," who bore the salt and bread from the pantry, which was done gracefully on this occasion by a page called Beauchamps, to whom he gave the salt-cellars, knives, and spoons which he had laid on the table, together with a fair manor. To the cook also, who tickled his palate with a Norman soup, he gave the manor of Addington.

So it was a great day, and a joyful one, and my lord's heart was at rest, for at last he knew without doubt that his wife loved him. While she was in England they planned together seventeen great castles, among which were the Tower of London, Dover, and Rochester in Kent, Newcastle in Northumberland, Appleby and Carlisle in Cumberland, Brougham in Westmoreland, Richmond and Conisborough in Yorkshire, Porchester in Hampshire, Guildford in Surrey, Goodrich in Herefordshire, Norwich and Castle Rising in Norfolk, and Hedingham and Colchester in Essex. Roger Montgomery, also, who had been foremost among his followers, he made Earl of Arundel and Shrewsbury, and for him named a great shire. He was a good man though his wife was evil.

But the governance of two kingdoms is not an easy thing, so that my lord and lady were

much separated in their later life ; he governing in England and she in Normandy, where she was greatly beloved. Her favourite residence was ever the castle of Caen, and there she had ever near her her daughter Cicely, the Abbess of Holy Trinity. This abbey the Queen loved dearly, bestowing upon it the lands which had belonged to Brihtric Meaw, which the King had given her, and many other rich gifts of embroidered mantles and robes to be made into vestments, and silver plate ; and all these bequests were made with the consent of the King. Save that he still thought her love for their son Robert overweening, there never came cloud betwixt them, nor was I ever separated from service to my sweet lady but on one dolorous errand, which fell out in this wise : The Lady Agatha greatly desired to become a nun, but this her father would in no wise suffer, saying that the Church had its full tithe and more in Cicely. Therefore when the King of Spain plead the promised alliance, he betrothed Agatha to Alonzo of Galicia. Agatha besought her father with tears not to force her to wed this Prince, but he was not to be turned from his purpose. Her mother also chid the maid gently, telling her her own story, how she

had deemed in her youth that she loved another, whereas it was but the romantic vapouring of a girl's mind. I was deputed with others to take this most reluctant bride to her bridegroom. All the way she prayed that the Most High would take her to Himself before she should be transported to Spain, so that my heart was torn within me. We journeyed very slowly, on account of her feebleness and sadness, and her prayers were answered, for God granted her a virgin death before we reached the frontier. Returning with her little body, we buried it with many tears in Bayeux, in the Church of St. Mary the Perpetual Virgin.

Our noble Queen died also about this time, at her castle at Caen. As she felt her end approaching she notified her husband, who hastened to her overseas, and was with her at her death. He would not allow the sapphire ring which he had given her to be taken from her finger, and caused her to be buried with great solemnity as befits a good queen, in the church of the Abbey of Holy Trinity, which she had founded. Sorrowing exceedingly he caused to be traced upon her magnificent tomb, in letters of gold, these words in fair Latin :

“Here rests within this fair and stately tomb,
Matilda, scion of a regal line ;
The Flemish duke her sire, and Adalais
Her mother, to great Robert, King of France,
Daughter, and sister to his royal heir ;
In wedlock to our mighty William joined.
She built this holy temple, and endowed
With lands and goodly gifts. She, the true friend
Of piety and soother of distress,
Enriching others, indigent herself,
Reserving all her treasures for the poor ;
And, by such deeds as these, she merited
To be partaker of eternal life :
To which she passed Nov. 2, 1083.”

After his gentle lady died my master never listened to quip or jest, nor could I have uttered one at his bidding, for our hearts were broken. When, to hearten him, one evening I spoke of the wonderful success of his great expedition to England, and the glory of the coronation at Winchester, he smiled and said, “Yea, Turoid, that was the crowning of my life ; but had I not then learned my wife’s love, all that invasion with its great victories, yea, and my whole life, would have been but a fool’s errand.”

After a stormy evening to his splendid day they laid him to rest (who never rested before) in his Abbey of St. Stephen, where I have begged that I too may be buried, like a faith-

ful hound (his little monkey), at my master's feet, praying that this last quest of mine, the search for Heaven, be not like the other illy accomplished ventures of my life, the errand of a Fool.

And whereas many slanderous and lying chronicles have been written of my dear lord and lady, I, than whom none can know better, have writ out this story, for the solace and at the request of the saintly Abbess of Holy Trinity, the Lady Cicely. Given at the Abbey of St. Stephen in Caen, in the year of our redemption 1090, by Tuold, whilom jester to King William, now lay brother and illuminator in the Scriptorium of the Abbey.¹

Of Queen Mathilde a French author writing in her son's reign says : " La quele jadis quant for pucelle Aima con conte d'Angleterre, Brihtric Mau, le oi nomer, Apres le roi ki for riche vir. A lui la pucell envoica messenger ;

¹The character of William the Conqueror as depicted in this imaginary record is well borne out by history. A Saxon scribe of the eleventh century is quoted by Donald G. Mitchell in his *English Lands, Letters, and Kings*, as writing : " King William was a very wise man, and very rich, more worshipful and strong than any of his foregangers. He was mild to good men who loved God, and stark beyond all bounds to those who withsaid his will. Bishops he set off their bishoprics, abbots off their abbotrics, and thanes in prison. By his cunning he was so thoroughly acquainted

Par sa amour a lui procurer ; mais Brihtric Maude refusa.”

As I finished reading the MS. a letter fluttered from the last pages. It was addressed to me and had been sent in care of the nun. It read as follows :

“ DEAR FRIENDS :

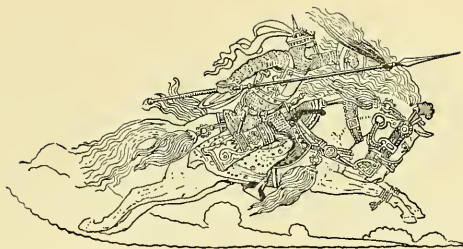
“ You must come to Chateau La Joyeuse before you leave our part of France, for we need you so very much. Something so strange has happened. Something at once both sad and sweet in its consequences. Unspeakably sad it is for my dear father, but you can help him to bear it with your republican ideas of the slight worth of rank and all that he has been accustomed to hold of so much importance. He does not know how far France has drifted from these ideas. Come and talk with him for he talks with no one.

*‘ Il ne voit ni laics ni pretres,
Ni gentils hommes, ni bourgeois
Mais les portraits de ces ancêtres
Causent avec lui quelquefois.’*

with England, that there is not a horde of land of which he did not know, both who had it and what was its worth. He planted a great preserve for deer, and he laid down laws therewith, that whoever should slay hart or hind should be blinded. He forbade the harts and also the boars to be killed. As greatly did he love the tall deer as if he were their father. Brytland [Wales] was in his power, and he therein wrought castles and completely ruled over that race of men,— it was need that they should follow the King's will, if they wished to live, or to have lands or goods. Alas, that any man should be so moody, and should so puff up himself, and think himself above all other men !”

“What have I said? His ancestors are the last persons whom he would talk with—but I cannot explain by letter. Come, and come at once, to your very sad and yet your most blissful

“YSEULT.”



CHAPTER V

HAREBELLS AND BROOM

A GROUP OF PLANTAGENET LEGENDS

Old slopes of pasture ground
Old fosse, and moat and mound
Where the mailed warrior and crusader came,
Old walls of crumbling stone,
Where trails the snapdragon,
Rise at the speaking of the harebell's name.

MARY HOWITT.

YSEULT'S call was irresistible. We had planned to go from Normandy straight to Touraine, but we could not pass through Brittany without stopping for a night at Château La Joyeuse.

Gamin and Farceur were at the station and took us swiftly across the forest and up the hillside to the dear fortalice.

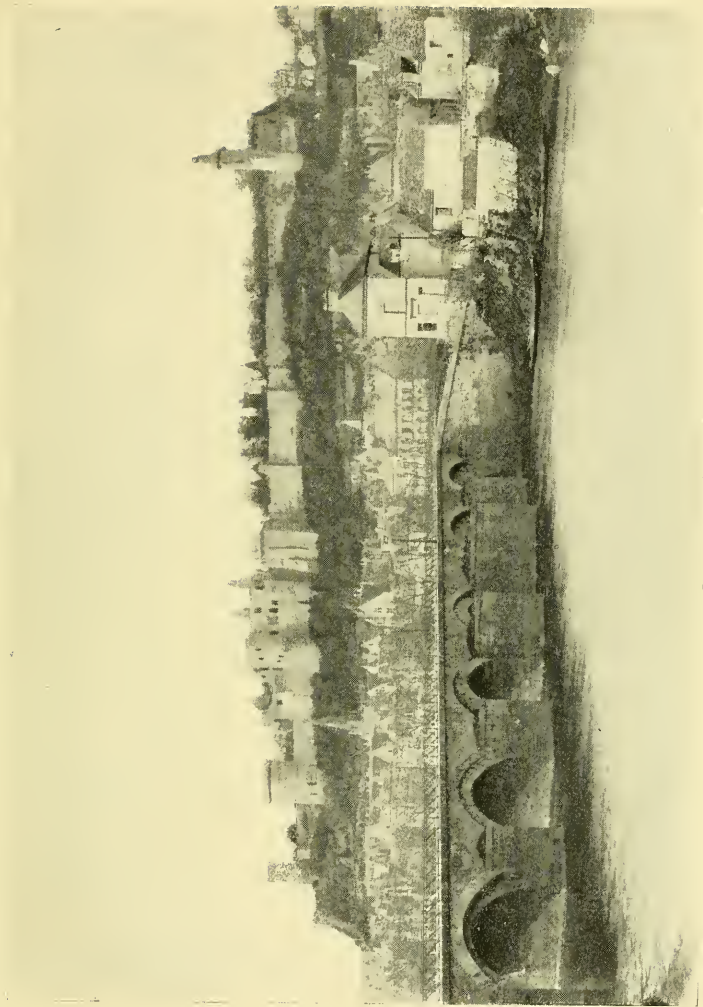
Yseult met us at the door. "Thank you so much for coming," she said; "my father thanks you too. You will find him sadly changed."

She led us to the sunny drawing-room, where the Vicomte sat in a wheeled chair, wrapped in shawls and wearing a gown faced with fur though the day was warm. He extended a trembling hand, and while his face was lighted with momentary pleasure it showed the traces of great physical and mental suffering.

"Sit down," he said, waving his hand to a *fauteuil* which Finette pushed forward; "the Vicomtesse will be in immediately. It is good to see you here again. I have been very ill since I saw you last. It is like a horrible dream. Tell me of your wanderings. Did you find much to interest you after we parted at Angers?"

I outlined the trip and found him most interested in Mont St. Michel, and the ceremonial of the disgrace of Oliver de Bellesmes. His thin hand clenched on his chair and he lifted his head more proudly as I went on, until at the end he drew a long sigh and it fell forward as though oppressed by thought.

"And yet," he said after a pause, "in spite of that ceremony of degradation, I am prouder



RUINS OF CHÂTEAU OF CHINON.

of Oliver Talvas de Bellesmes than of any other ancestor of my house."

"Was he your ancestor?" I cried, chagrined that I had probed an old wound. "Forgive me; I would not have told you all this if I had known."

"I am glad that you have refreshed my memory; his example will strengthen me for an act of renunciation. His wife died before his disgrace and he left his infant son in the charge of her relatives, refusing his sister's offer to bring him up. I believed until recently that I was descended from him through my great-grandmother, but I shall be more worthy of him if I disclaim the honour I have prized so long. After his disgrace he wandered to the Holy Land as a pilgrim on foot, with a halter around his neck. He never came back, nor could his son find trace of him. It was that son whose portrait Yseult showed you. He followed Godfrey de Bouillon on the First Crusade and when he was made a knight asked to be allowed to carry his father's buried shield, that he might redeem it and restore a new blazon to the family escutcheon. Did you not notice on our shield the white lion rampant, which indicates the Crusader, with the red bars across the field? He won that device

at the battle of Ascalon, when he was desperately wounded in defence of Godfrey. The chief thought him dying, and he drew his fingers, stained in the attempt to stanch his friend's wound, across his well dented shield, leaving it '*barry of gules.*'"

I remembered shamefacedly how in the early days of our acquaintance I had privately made sport of the La Joyeuse coat of arms, designating it flippantly as a circus poodle in boxing attitude behind a red gridiron, and I listened repentantly as the Vicomte continued.

"I have been foolishly proud of that blazon, but it is mine no longer."

"What do you mean?" I asked; "I do not understand."

"You will understand when you have read this paper, which was handed me at Angers," the Vicomte replied. "Get it, Yseult; we will take our friends into our confidence. It will be only a little while before the whole world will know."

Yseult took the document from a cabinet. It was dated August 23, 1793, and read as follows:

"I, Thibault Le Brun testify that having been placed on guard at the burning of Château La Joyeuse at the north side of the castle, saw a woman of the village dash

up the burning turret staircase and endeavour to force an entrance into the château. Not being able to open the door she stood there beating upon it and shrieking most piteously until her dress caught fire. Then, not willing to see her perish, I ran up, brought her down, and extinguished the flames which had fastened upon her, but not before she was badly burned. Even then she struggled in my arms striving to run again into the fire, and crying that her son was in the tower above and would perish in the flames. With that I recognised her as Marie Courtois, who had been nurse to the Vicomte's son, but I told her that she was losing her senses, since her child was safe at home. 'Nay,' she cried, 'God have pity on me! —I changed the babes in their cradle. It is the young Vicomte I have at home, and my own son that is burning up there. Save him, save him, for the sake of the Madonna! He is not an aristocrat.'

"As she spoke, the staircase fell away a mass of embers, and I ran to my captain and reported what the woman had said, which I now set my name to as the truth."

The old part of the castle had resisted the flames, but the marauders forced another door and sacked it of all objects which had not been hidden by the faithful servant. It was discovered that the family had escaped, but the captain left the statement of Thibault Le Brun to be given the Vicomte on his return, with this further endorsement:

"Let him know that the child he cherishes as his own is a base-born peasant, and that ere

he reads this paper his own child will have been drowned in the Loire."

This terrible revelation had been left nailed to the door of the château, but the same faithful servant who had hidden the valuables had taken it down, and knowing the grief which it would cause, yet not quite daring to destroy it, had hidden it under the roof of the turret where Louis Rondel had found it.

"I am the descendant of that changeling," the Vicomte explained, "for there were no other children. Strange to say, the captain who wrote this paper and the guard whose deposition he took never returned and were never heard from; nor did Marie Courtois ever come back to the village, or the servant who writes on the envelope that he hid the paper confide the fact to anyone, and the secret has remained undiscovered until now."

"And now," I said, "that nobility has been abolished in France, what does it matter?"

The Vicomte made the sign of the cross as though exorcising a demon. "That is what I told myself for a time," he said. "I have been out of my mind—possessed of a devil—since this knowledge came upon me. It seemed to me monstrous, impossible, and I hid it in my heart, thinking that I would carry it to my

grave and never tell. But I could not be so base. Though I am not really noble, I have been reared in the old traditions that *noblesse oblige*. Such a secret as that eats like a coal of fire and cannot be hidden. Since I am not a La Joyeuse, I shall put this revelation in the hands of the lawyers of the La Joyeuse family. Unless this is disproved I shall renounce everything."

"Is this the feeling of the Vicomtesse? Does Yseult consent?"

"There is no Vicomtesse La Joyeuse. This is hard for my wife, for she thought the more of the title because there was none with her own broad estates; but Yseult approves."

A glance at Yseult's sweetly radiant face told me why.

"Father, our friends have guessed my secret," she said; "they know that I cannot grieve for the loss of the old blazon, since its red bars kept me from Louis."

The Vicomte—I cannot even now designate him to myself by any other term—wincing. "Yes," he admitted, "there is no difference now in your rank. I have written him a full apology for the attitude I took at Angers, and I have asked to be put in communication with his parents. Yseult will receive a fat

little *dot* from her mother,—she is still a desirable *parti*.”

Yseult made a little *moue* behind her father's back, for well she knew that neither dowry nor title formed any part of her attractiveness to Louis Rondel.

“And now,” continued her father, “I have some other papers which I have laid aside for your inspection,—the journal and various letters of our American ancestor. The letters are in English, which I do not read. The journal, which is an account of the campaign in which he took part with Count Rochambeau, I have always intended to look over, but since this trouble has come upon me I do not find myself possessing either the strength or the inclination for the task. You may find in these papers something of historical interest to Americans. Read them at your leisure, and return them to the new representative of the house.”

Thanking the Vicomte for this privilege we expressed the hope that an arrangement might be made whereby he could still remain at Château La Joyeuse.

The Vicomte covered his face with his hands, and shook his head.

“The grief of leaving Château La Joyeuse

is very great," said Yseult, "but it would be harder to remain under the changed conditions, my father could never adapt himself to them. We must go far away."

"Yes, far, far away," he cried passionately, while his frame shook with sobs. "Wheel me to my room, Finette. I am making—a spectacle of myself. I thought I was stronger."

Neither the Vicomte nor the Vicomtesse appeared at dinner. It was a forlorn meal, though Yseult did its honours bravely. We had failed in bringing any consolation to the smitten man. It seemed to us that he could not survive the final leave-taking of all the old associations, and though Yseult did not realise this, yet her voice broke as she bade us farewell and urged us to carry out the original plan of returning to Château La Joyeuse to read the legends,—“before we bid good-bye to our dear old home.”

She filled our hands with harebells from the ruined part of the château, and with broom from the neighbouring moors.

The *Plante-à-genêt*, or yellow broom, gave its name to the Plantagenet family; but at Chinon, the old castle which was the cradle of their race, and the next shrine of our pilgrimage, we found no broom, but only delicate harebells

ringing their inaudible chimes from rocky campaniles.

“It is a good omen,” I persisted; “they are ringing for Yseult’s wedding; but oh! I wish her joy might have been purchased at a lesser price.”

THE SPECTRES OF CHINON

“*Farceur!*”

“Not the least in the world. I tell you, *tout sérieusement*, I saw it with these eyes.”

“*Menteur, alors.*”

“*Tu ose le dire?*”

“If I dare?”

“I would strike you.”

“Me, a woman?”

“Ah! there is the embarrassment. Thou art indeed a woman, and, what is more unfortunate, my mother, and, that which renders thee more presuming, thou art old; but thou hast called me a liar, thou hast insulted me. *Quoi faire?* Ah! most fortunately thou art an *imbecile*—one forgives all to idiots.”

“Gaston,” said I, “stop reviling your mother instantly, and tell me what this is all about.”

“He amuses himself by fabricating romances.” This from Mère Françoise.

“She is a *vrai tête de chou* (cabbage-head).

She knows nothing." This from the filial Gaston. "Figure of a pig, but it is unbearable! When everyone knows that the old castle is haunted! I have myself seen the spectre. Jean le Roux has seen it, and so has old Michel."

"Liars all," broke in the old woman. "Jean le Roux is a drunkard, who sees serpents in his path each night; Michel is out of his mind, and my son—" he lifted his arm as though to strike her—"is, as you see, a sacreligious one, a parricide, and (climax of infamy!) a hanger-on of artists and other idle people."

"Since you have reached this depth of degradation, Gaston, pick up the sketching kit and tramp for the château; and as we go tell us what you and your honourable colleagues have seen. What was the spectre like?"

"So please you, Monsieur, it was the Pucelle."

"What! Joan of Arc?"

"Herself."

"That was very appropriate—but I suppose you, who have been brought up at Chinon, have possibly heard that Jean d'Arc was first introduced to King Charles VII. in the great hall of Chinon."

“Oh, yes, Monsieur, I have heard that story, and how they tried to fool her by telling her that someone else was the King; but she stuck out her tongue at the false jokers, in the same way that my mother did at me when I told her the sacred truth this morning, and she struck the true King on the shoulder, saying, ‘You’re it,’ as the children do when they play tag.”

“Since you have the facts of history down to so fine a point as that, is it not just possible that you may have had the lady who saved France so completely in your mind that you imagined that you saw her?”

“Ah, no, Monsieur, for we all saw her at the same time, and if Michel is half crazy, and Le Roux had unquestionably had a few drops, still we could not all have imagined the same thing, could we?”

“What was she doing?—playing tag around the castle, with the King chasing after her?”

“Ah! Monsieur is incredulous; I will say no more.”

“But, Gaston,” I pleaded, “I believe you perfectly, and I am very much interested; don’t mind Monsieur, but tell me.”

“Ah, thanks, Madame,” and the boy’s face lighted with a sunny smile. “It is good to be

believed, and you shall know all. It was at the hour of sunset yesterday; the castle was stretched out along the hill as you see it; I had gone to the little knoll to gather up Monsieur's *implements de travail*; Michel and Le Roux joined me, and asked to see the picture which Monsieur had been painting. I placed the easel in the road and we looked at it together. Le Roux is a great admirer of the fine arts, and can talk beautifully about them, when he is not too drunk, and Michel was himself an artist when he was young."

"That was before he became insane?"

"Pardon, Madame, that was at the worst of it; he is quite harmless now. He essayed to make his living by decorating wedding-cakes with Cupids modelled in sugar and coloured to the life, ravishing creations, I am told; but what would you? The stupid *bourgeoisies* have no eye for art, fine sugar is expensive, young people did not marry fast enough, and he was forced to degrade his inspirations by executing them in gingerbread for fairs. The medium is ungrateful; the torture of seeing his finest conceptions distorted in the baking drove him insane. He no longer strives against fate to realise his ideals."

“Poor brother artist! I would like to have heard your friends criticise my picture.”

“Pardon, Monsieur, you would not. They did not find it good. But that is inessential. As we were all talking about it and comparing it with the castle, striving in vain to find any resemblance, we suddenly saw crossing the bridge the figure of the Pucelle. She was in complete armour, and she was mounted on a horse that was in armour too. He had a mask of steel on his face from which projected a long, sharp spike, and there were scales of steel along the back of his neck, and the Maid held a long spear in her hand, with a little three-cornered flag on the end. She did not ride very well and the horse did not like his armour, for he shook his head and it rattled, clap, clap, clap, and we all heard it.”

We had reached the point of vantage from which my husband was making his sketch. The ruins of the grand old castle loomed up very nobly. Three châteaux, Saint George, Coudray, and the Château du Milieu, with their connecting walls, made up the fortress. They silhouette in a straggling but picturesque sky-line, which the ruined towers dominate at just the right salient points, and convey in the first view the impression of gloom which the

imagination, stimulated by a study of their tragical history, demands of them. For Chinon is a place sinister from its very founding in the obscurity of the dark ages by the Foulques of Anjou, and it held its own as pre-eminent in horror above all the other feudal fortresses of Touraine with the exception of Louis XI.'s terrible dungeons at Loches. That ogre in human shape, Foulque Rechin (the Brawler), here shut up his brother in miserable imprisonment for thirty years, until Pope Urban, who was holding a council at Tours, demanded his release. Its history as the ancestral home of the Plantagenets was still one of strife and evil doom, and later the Inquisition had a court and torture chamber here.

The brightest gleam that ever touched it was the evanescent one which flashed from the armour of Joan of Arc, as she rode beneath its portcullis, bringing to Charles VII. her mission of deliverance to France. It was therefore rather pleasant to know that if the castle was haunted (as it seemed perfectly befitting and natural it should be), it was by so gentle a ghost. She fitted charmingly into the mental picture, and would have given just the touch of human interest to key up my husband's sketch. "I wish she would appear

now," he said; "a mounted figure would come in very well on that bridge."

"It was at the cheerful hour of sunset that Gaston saw the appearance yesterday," I suggested. "You have only to paint a little later than usual and she may favour us."

"The castle is good enough for me without her," the artist mumbled, with his mouth full of brushes. "I have n't seen anything in all Touraine that comes up so absolutely to one's requirements. All of the white pleasure-châteaux, reflected so bewitchingly in the smiling Loire, were theatrical and modern. They posed self-consciously, like pretty women quite confident of our admiration; but Chinon is an aged queen who commands admiration though she has outgrown the love of it."

That day, while the artist painted, I read aloud from Ozanzeaux' *Chronique* of the mission of Joan of Arc. I had reached his description of her entrée into Chinon:

"The courts, the staircases, the vast corridors were lined with valets, with pages, and halberdiers. At last the door of the throne-room opened, and the *pucelle* discovered a vast assembly, who poured upon her a deluge of curious glances. Instantly she recognized the King, and approaching him said with resolute voice,—'Charles, gentle Dauphin, Jeanne d'Arc salutes thee.'"

“That would make a magnificent picture, if one were strong enough to paint it,” said my husband.

In doubt whether he referred to the passage I had just read or to the scene before him, I looked up, and saw that I had read on until now all the sky was aflame with a magnificent sunset. My gaze fell from the glowing clouds to the dark hollow of the arched doorway, when suddenly it was filled by the figure of a mounted knight. No, it was not a knight, but Joan of Arc herself, as Gaston had described her, with the reflected light glinting from her armour with such splendour that she seemed a radiant vision.

Something in my look must have startled Gaston, as he lay on his back in the grass, for he leaped to his feet and cried :

“*Eh bien!* You have seen her too. Did I tell the truth or not?”

“Seen what, the spectre?” asked my husband. But he had looked up too late—the great portal had swallowed the resplendent figure. Though still incredulous he could not regard my “hallucination,” as he was pleased to call it, in quite the same light as the fabrications of a boy whose own mother could not give

him a good reputation for truth, or as quite on a par with the visions of a madman and a drunkard.

“Your mind was full of the story,” he said, “and your eyes were dazzled by the setting sun ; you simply thought you saw the figure. We will go up to the castle to-morrow morning, and we will find that doorway barred across with cobwebs, and the bridge thick with untracked dust. Then I trust you will be convinced.”

Gaston shook his head and gave me a look of sympathy, we were comrades now, under the same persecution. “Ghosts do not leave footprints, and they pass straight through barred doors,” he said, confidentially. The artist might prove that we were wrong, but we would not be convinced—we had *seen* the spectre.

The next morning, as we climbed the hill, my husband in his eagerness outdistanced me, and when I overtook him on the bridge he was looking at the ground in a puzzled and crest-fallen manner.

“There is something very peculiar here,” he said ; “the ground is all trampled and trodden. A horse has passed both in and out several times,—you can tell that by the different directions in which the hoof-marks point. It is

always the same horse too, for they are exactly of the same size. There is no mark of wheels."

We made the circuit of the ruins, but saw no one. Richelieu, whose policy it was to destroy the châteaux-forts in order to weaken the nobles and strengthen the royal power, made no exception of Chinon, though it belonged to him. He pulled down even the great hall in which Charles VII. received Joan of Arc, and the only relic of that meeting is the hooded fireplace against which the King leaned. This now hangs forlornly on the portion of the wall left standing. The Tower of Coudray, where Joan was entertained during her visit at Chinon by the lieutenant of the castle, Guillaume Bellier, is at the extreme end of the fortress. In its court she was taught the exercise of arms by the Duke d'Alençon, who presented her with a horse. As I was a little wearied by my climb I sat down opposite this tower, while my husband completed his inspection of the ruins.

"Did you see no one?" I asked as he returned from his rounds. "It seemed to me that I saw a face appear at that window in the Tower of Coudray, but it vanished so quickly that I am not at all positive."

“It may be,” my husband replied; “for when I had almost reached the tower I distinctly heard someone singing. I stood still and listened. The voice was pure and liquid, the words that pretty *Récit de Jeanne d’Arc* of Mermet’s :

‘Un jour d’été sous l’ombre de l’église
 Dans le jardin seule j’étais assise
 Quand l’Archange Michel une épée à la main,
 M’apparait, suivis d’un cortège sans fin.’

The last line was repeated more softly. As soon as the cadence had died away I hurried forward and explored the tower. It was vacant, and there was not a human being in sight. The whole thing is becoming most mysterious.”

As he spoke we again heard singing. This time it was not a girl’s voice, but the manly ring of a *chant de guerre*, reverberating as in some vaulted hall :

“Oui, tous pour la France,
 Nous combattons à tes côtés !
 Dieu le veut ! Tu rends l’esperance
 À ces cœurs qu’elle avait quittés !”

It was just such a battle-hymn as might have been caught up by the great assemblage of knights when Joan entered the castle.

A soprano voice now caught up the refrain, and thrilled—

*“ Nous délivrons la patrie !
Nous délivrons la patrie ! ”*

while the base kept time as to the tramp of marching feet—

*“ Dieu le veut, Dieu le veut,
Dieu le veut.”*

“It is *her* voice,” my husband cried, running forward—“the voice I heard from the Tower of Coudray,—Joan of Arc’s.”

I followed as quickly as I was able—and there on the spot where the great hall had been, near the old fireplace, we both saw her.

She was standing as motionless as a statue. Indeed, were it not that the light morning breeze fluttered her faded skirt of grey frieze, she might have been a statue. She wore a steel cuirass whose plated sleeves met the steel gauntlets, and her legs were encased in greaves and solarets. Her helmet was on the ground by her side, and her hair cut squarely just above her shoulders. She was looking upward with a rapt expression, and held to her breast a cross-hilted sword.

I confess that for a moment I was positively stupefied. Here was no glamour of moonlight or possibility of deception, but there in the garish light of day stood the embodied Maid

of Orleans! My brain swam; were my senses leaving me?

It was only for an instant, for my husband was shaking hands with a gentleman in a worn velvet coat, who held a palette on his thumb, and had stepped forward from behind a sketching easel. It was his friend, Leon Gautier, an historical painter, who had chosen to bring his wife, who sometimes served him as a model, to Chinon, and to paint his studies for his next Salon picture in these authentic surroundings. He was laughing heartily, for my husband had explained how we had been intrigued. "We had no idea," he said, "that we were giving a cantata for your benefit. Yvonne has a fair voice, and we often try a duo together."

After this, and so long as we were all at Chinon, we met frequently. Monsieur Gautier was something of an antiquary, and a great enthusiast over everything connected with the Middle Ages. He had rented the little château at Blois which formerly belonged to the Duc de Guise, and had filled it with a collection of costumes and armour.

He explained to us the difference in armour worn at various periods. The Norman hauberk or shirt of chain mail in all its gradations



NORMAN ARMOUR—LINKED MAIL—XITH CENTURY.

was perfected during the Crusades from imitation of the Saracens' fine cloth of linked steel. He showed us how plate armour was introduced, first by shoulder-, elbow-, and knee-pieces, and lastly the transition in the fourteenth century to a complete panoply of plate. I was startled in looking at the suit worn by Madame Gautier to recognise in one of the shoulder-pieces a grotesque face with jewelled eyes exactly similar to the one I had seen at Château La Joyeuse. Monsieur Gautier told us that he had seen a very old portrait of Joan of Arc in which she wore such armour, and that this particular *épaulière* had been lent him by a friend. I told him of its reappearance in the legends of Roland and Rollo, and later he related another chapter in the history of the strange object. He showed us, too, a chamfron or horse's helmet with neck-plates and housings, which transformed his sturdy sorrel horse Flavel (named for Cœur de Lion's charger) from a respectable modern hackney into Joan's gallant steed. He had thought at first of painting her in the tilt-yard of the castle by d'Alençon, but gave this up in favour of Chinon.

He was a collector of legends as well as of bric-à-brac, and said that often in the folk-lore

of the people he had found inspiration for a picture.

One day, as the artists painted in company, Gaston related some marvellous tale of a goblin dance which he had witnessed one evening in the ruins. Monsieur Gautier professed entire credence, and proceeded to draw him out : "These goblins, Gaston, how did they look?"

"Veritable demons, Monsieur. Demons with black wings and claws, and with the heads of devils, but little, and all dancing in a circle. You may see them yourself above the clock-tower yonder any midsummer night."

"Yes, I saw them last night. They were bats."

"In the form of bats if you please, sir, but veritable demons, the descendants of Mabile, who inhabit that tower."

"Who do you pretend was their ancestress?"

"I do not pretend, Monsieur ; it is all the pure truth."

"Be careful, Gaston ; I will report you to Monsieur le Curé."

"It was Monsieur le Curé who told me the story of the Lady Mabile, Monsieur, and that these bats are her progeny. He said it was as true as the legends of the saints."

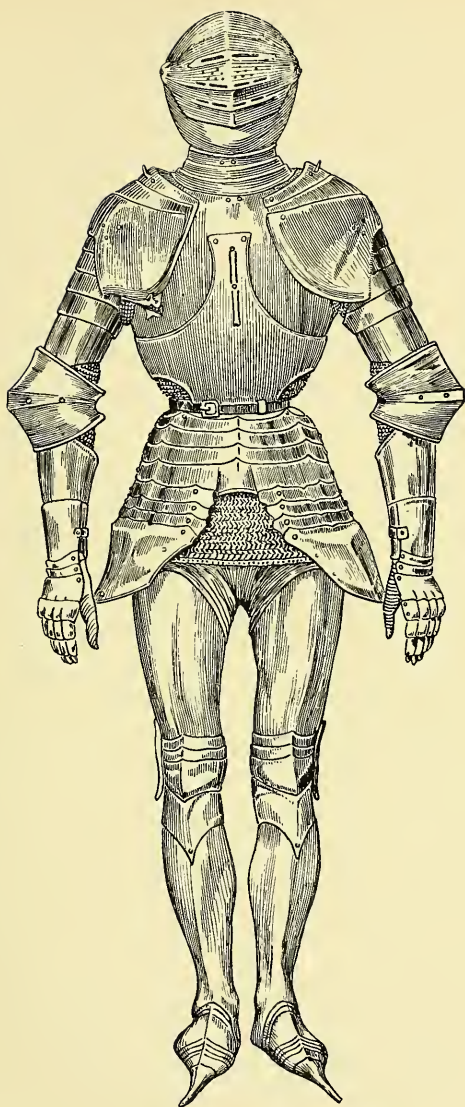


PLATE ARMOUR—XVTH CENTURY.

“Then I believe you. Tell us the legend.”

“Many hundred years ago, Monsieur, there was a lord of this castle named Foulques Rechin.”

“Exactly, that is history; go on.”

“He married a demon. He did not know at first that she was a true daughter of Satan, though she led him the devil of a life, and stirred up all manner of strife with his neighbours. At last he began to suspect her, for she would never go to mass, and he had her taken forcibly to church by his men-at-arms, and held during the service. But at the elevation of the Host her fingers shot out great claws, and she scratched her guards' faces so fiercely that they let go of her, and she spread out her black cloak, making two great wings, and flew away over their heads out of the church window, and up over the castle. The Curé told it to the boys at school, to make them come to their first communion, for all bad boys he said were the children of Mabile, and would be changed at last into bats instead of going to Heaven.”

“But the bats do no harm,” I commented.

“Pardon, Madame, but they are very evil birds. They are responsible for all the misfortunes which have come to all the inhabit-

ants of this castle. To this day no one of us, however hungry, will eat a bat. Would Madame eat one?"

"Hardly."

"Ah! that proves it,—and yet Madame had never heard this legend."

"Your story is a good one," said Monsieur Gautier. "Do you know any others?"

"Only one other true one. Has Monsieur ever heard of the Lady Melusine?"

"Melusine of the château of Lusignan? Certainly. She was a fairy lady. John of Arras in 1387 wrote her story. As the good Curé said, it is as true as the legends of the saints. But tell us the story as you know it here."

"Melusine was a good fairy—not hateful like Mabile. She was '*meme très gentil*.' She was a very pretty woman down to the waist, but the rest of her was a hideous water-snake. One day the knight Raymond de Lusignan, who was hunting, saw her bathing in a lake in the midst of the forest. He held in his horse and looked at her, but her slimy tail was under the water, and he saw only her lovely white human form. The moment she saw him she cowered down into the water very modestly, and her lovely hair spread out on its surface

like the petals of a pond lily. But she did not sink quite out of sight, and she kept looking at him with her wonderful eyes, until he fell in love with her and begged her to come out of the water. She told him that was impossible, as it was not the fashion in those days for ladies to wear bathing-suits, and he seeing her so modest knew that she was a lady, and loved her all the more, and begged her to be his bride. Now it is possible for fairies of her kind, if they are loved by mortals, to become human beings for six days in the week, but one day they must retain their old form. So Melusine said, 'If you love me, come to-morrow to my castle, and we will talk of this matter; and in the meantime throw me your ring.'

"But Raymond could not wait until the morrow, and as the place she had described was on his way to his own castle, he went back that way. But there was no castle there, for Melusine had not had time to erect one by her enchantments. So Raymond thought she was a deceiver, and did not go on the morrow to the tryst.

"As he did not love her enough to believe in her, Melusine did not become a woman, and so could not go to him; and things remained as they were until one day the knight thought of

his ring and regretted that he had so lightly parted with it. As it was of great value he determined to drag the pool for it. He took a net of fine meshes and went again into the forest, and having weighted it began to drag. He knew at once that he had found something heavy and when he pulled it to the surface there was Melusine, caught in the net. She closed her eyes and he thought that she had been drowned in the pool and it was only her dead body that he had found. So now his heart was filled with ruth, and he believed in her in spite of his former suspicions ; so as he lifted her in his arms her serpent shape changed beneath the water, and as he drew her out she was all a lovely woman. He covered her with his cloak, and bewailed her, and Melusine, knowing that she was at last truly beloved and wholly a woman, opened her eyes, and he brought her to the castle, which was now really there, and they were married and were very happy. But, as I have told you, this could only be six days in the week, so Melusine made him promise to let her pass Sundays alone in the forest. They had eight brave and beautiful human children and Melusine helped them by her fairy power, so that the boys performed wonderful exploits, and there were no maidens

in all France so lovely as the girls ; and though Raymond gave his entire fortune to the eldest when she married, there was as much for all the others when their turns came. Now all would have been well but for the demon curiosity ; for Raymond began to wonder what his wife did on Sundays, and at last he became jealous and followed her and learned the truth.

“ Though he would have taken her back with him even on these terms, he could not, for he had doubted her, and the spell was broken. She sank into the pool, and was never heard of more. He dragged it again with the net but he could never catch her, though at the first haul he found his ring glistening in its meshes.”

“ You have told the legend of the Lusignan family very well,” said Monsieur Gautier, “ and it does not differ materially from the form in which it exists in literature. The castle is not far from Chinon, and the Lusignans and Plantagenets are connected in their family history. Richard Cœur de Lion and Hugh de Lusignan you will remember were warm friends.”

“ So were the ladies,” Gaston interpolated.

“ What ladies ? ” I asked.

“ Mesdames Mabile Plantagenet and Melusine Lusignan. It is a pity that Melusine could not have sweetened Mabile’s temper, but a

demon she was, and a demon she will remain."

"Is there more of the legend?" Monsieur Gautier asked, somewhat surprised.

"*Mais certainement*; there is the part about the magic armour."

"And what is that? I have never heard it."

"It was after the disappearance of both of the ladies, but long years ago, nevertheless, as I have heard, that the Saracens invaded France and fought a great battle not far from Chinon. It may not be true—it is the only part of the story that seems unlikely, and the King of France sent a knight with a hammer, who led the French forces and defeated them all."

"Yes, I happen to have heard of that. It was the battle of Tours, gained by Charles Martel; that is historical."

"Then the rest of the story must be historical too. On the side of the Saracens there were some knights who wore magic armour, and they could not have been slain had not Melusine and Mabile, who were both French at heart, used their enchantments to direct the arrows to the vulnerable parts. They each wanted this armour for their descendants. Melusine, because she knew a way to make it

still more fortunate for the wearer, and Mabile, because she intended to poison it so that it would cause the death of him who wore it.

So, as soon as the battle was over, Mabile flew to the field to strip the slain, but Melusine had been there before her, and had carried the armour to her pool. Now a bat cannot dive, so all Mabile could do was to fan the pool with her wings until she dried it up. But Melusine, as she felt the water diminishing, dragged the armour deeper still into an underground cave where there was an undying spring, and here Mabile could not come. And there it exists, for all I know, to this day, with a blessing for the Lusignans and a curse for the Plantagenets. There is not a boy who knows that legend but has searched for that armour with a wand of witch-hazel but no one has found it."

Monsieur Gautier, who had listened to the legend with growing excitement, now sprang from his camp-stool, and threw his cap into the air exclaiming, "At last I have found it!"

"Found what? the armour?" we asked in chorus.

"No, the missing link in a story which has always baffled me. Your legend, Gaston, explains the contrary effects, for bane and blessing, which that magic armour had on the

families of Plantagenet and Lusignan. It was found long since, and lost again, and the second time that it was lost it was far from Chinon."

"Tell us the legend," we clamoured; and Monsieur Gautier, thus besought, related the story of the treasure of Chalus, the lodestones of love, for which Richard lost his life and knew that it was not lost in vain.



CHAPTER VI

THE LODESTONES OF LOVE

Ah ! dear Provence ! ah ! happy troubadour,
And that sweet, mellow, antique song of thine !

RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

“MY legend,” said Monsieur Gautier, “which I tracked all through Provence, and among the castled crags of the Limousin, finding it on the battlements of Carcassonne at Bordeaux, and under the ruins of Chalus, has its roots at Chinon in a double sense. In the first place, because it was near Chinon that Charles Martel gained his great victory over the Moors, which resulted in bringing the precious lodestones to France, and secondly, because it is the life story, and particularly the love story, of the noblest of the Plantagenets, Richard Cœur de Lion.”

Gaston looked up from the grass and commented approvingly: "But yes, but yes, he belonged to Chinon, and he is buried in our Abbey of Fontevraud. He was one of our French kings who owned England."

"Gaston is very nearly right," said Monsieur Gautier, "in his characterisation of Richard as a French king. The time which he spent in England in his different flying visits would hardly have aggregated a year. He had more French blood than English in his veins, he was entirely French in feeling, and it is even doubtful whether he could speak English fluently, while he inherited a more important portion of France than the French king. The perpetual struggle between England and France was at this time a desperate one for the French nation. Richard's father, Henry II. of England, inherited from his father, Geoffrey Plantagenet, only the insignificant domain of the Foulques, Anjou and Touraine; but Geoffrey had married Maude, granddaughter of William the Conqueror, and she left Henry Normandy and Brittany, and finally secured for him the throne of England. Through marriage with Eleanor of Aquitaine Henry annexed Provence, 'securing his position in France as lord from sea to sea from the

The Troubadour.

From a design by César Detti.



Norman coast to the Gulf of Lions.' He would have held what he had gained had he not been the father of a tribe of turbulent boys, strong, like their father, quarrelsome, and ambitious. Henry could meet and master exterior foes, but he could not keep his own family in subjection, and one of his sons said bitterly, 'The only way we can have peace and unity is to unite in fighting our father.'

"After the death of his two elder sons, the King's preference was plainly for his youngest, John, who received an English education, and was kept by his father near him in England; while Queen Eleanor fostered Richard's right to the heirship, and brought him up in her own dominion of Aquitaine.

"Chinon was the common meeting-ground of the family, the only spot that they could all look upon as home, and yet it was the preferred residence of none of them.

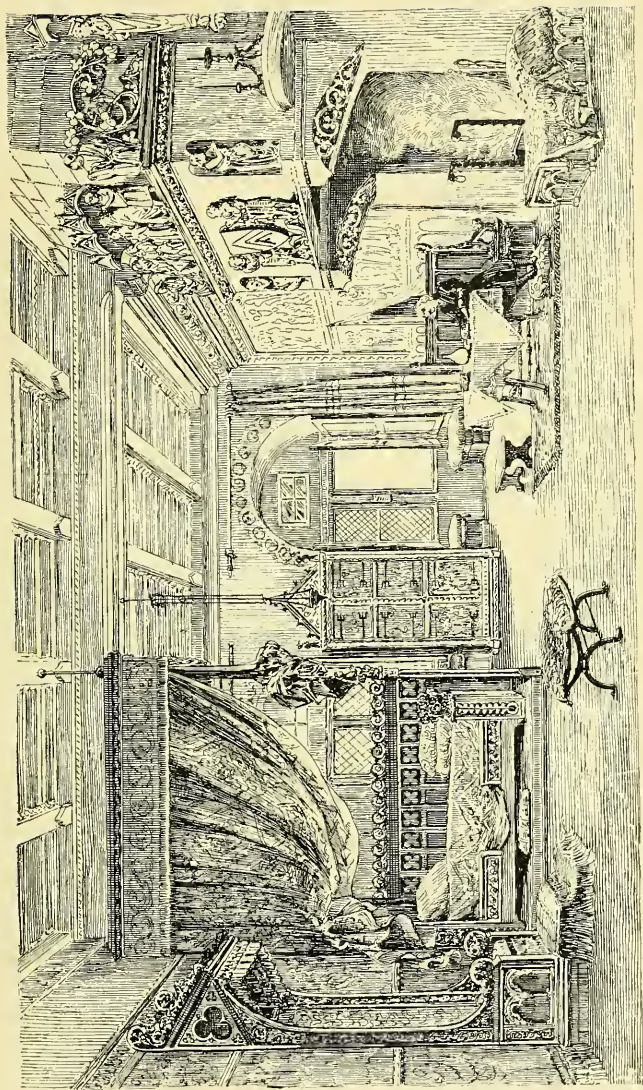
"It was the spot, however, where took place those angry encounters and agonised repentances and those terrible deaths which have made history; and over there in their Abbey of Fontevraud sleep Henry and Eleanor, as though they had come from northern England and southern France to dwell together

in that common home, united at last in a long reconciliation, with all their passion, their jealousy, their ambition, and hatred cooled by death.

“ You will look in vain upon the map for the duchy of Aquitaine. It is the western portion of the old kingdom of Provence, the counties of Guienne and Gascony, which have been divided in modern times into eight others, comprising all that beautiful south-western portion of France, the valley of the Garonne, a little natural kingdom in itself, with the Pyrenees its bulwark on the south, and the long coast-line of the Bay of Biscay. Navarre, on the southern slope of the Pyrenees, was in the time of Eleanor a loving neighbour, governed by Sancho the Wise, who had three children: Sancho the Strong, and two daughters, Berengaria and Blanche.

“ Sancho the Strong had earned his appellation in a gallant exploit against the Moors, when he defeated the Miramolin and broke with his battle-axe the chains that guarded the camp of the infidel, which chains were afterward transferred to the armourial bearings of Navarre.¹ An ardent friendship existed from boyhood between Richard and this young

¹ *Lives of the Queens of England*, Strickland.



CHAMBER IN CHATEAU OF XIIITH CENTURY.

Prince, for Sancho was not only athletic and chivalrous, but he shared Richard's taste and skill in Provençal poetry.

“ His sisters were noted for their mental as well as physical graces. Richard first met them at a tournament at Pamplona, where he and Sancho became *fratres jurati*, or sworn brothers.

“ The following year a Court of Love, or contest of troubadours, was to be held in ‘gay Guienne,’ and Richard courteously insisted on the attendance of his host's entire family, with special desire that Berengaria should be among the guests, for (as an old chronicler has quaintly stated) from the time that he first saw her in the tournament lists, ‘Richard loved the elegant girl.’

“ Queen Eleanor had found in Sancho the Wise a faithful and powerful friend, and she gladly took this opportunity to foster a friendship between their children. Every effort was made, both by Richard and his mother, to make the approaching literary contest the most brilliant that had ever taken place in Provence. Besides being, by right of her rank, judge of all such contests, Eleanor was herself a poetess. Her *chansons* would have found a place in French literature but that they are

too erotic for even the lax French standard of literary morality.

“To attract to the next festival the troubadours of all countries, Eleanor proclaimed that every comer should have hospitality and safeguard, were he her most deadly foe.

“‘And look you, Richard,’ said his mother, ‘that you eclipse every one of them.’

“Every class of Provençal poetry was to be represented: epic romances, ballads, *pastorales*, *chansons d’amours*, *tensons*, and *sirventes* or satires; and each class was to receive its prescribed reward, a flower, only in this instance the flower was of beaten gold cunningly designed by the goldsmith’s art. The great prize of all was to be a golden wreath of laurel.

“The day of the contest arrived. On the tournament ground at a little distance from Bordeaux, by the side of the sparkling Garonne, had been spread the great pavilion of rose-coloured silk. The curtains were looped back at intervals to admit the breeze. Within, the tent was garlanded to the central pole with roses. The seats were arranged as in an amphitheatre, encircling the Queen’s throne, above which a canopy of cloth of gold was held by halberds with silver heads. A rich

Oriental carpet covered the steps leading to the throne ; on each step were ranged two golden-haired pages, on whose tabords was embroidered the coat of arms of Cupid,—a flaming heart with arrows and chains. Each page held on a silver salver one of the golden flowers which were to be given as prizes. A herald, gorgeously arrayed, announced each contestant as he arrived and made obeisance to the Queen, who motioned him to the seats provided for the troubadours and their jongleurs, or musicians.

“ On the first day each troubadour was to be called upon in turn to sing or recite his poem, and to name the lady in whose honour it was written. On the second day matrimonial engagements were to be submitted to the Queen for her approval, and on the third the court proper was to be held, when questions of love and gallantry would be debated, and any who felt themselves aggrieved in matters of the heart were allowed to enter a protest before a jury of the noble ladies of Guienne.

“ The invitations to attend the Court of Love had been so widely scattered that contestants came from distant provinces of France and even from foreign countries. Richard was deeply disappointed on the arrival of the guests

from Navarre, to note that though her sister Blanche had accepted the invitation, and Sancho had brought a clumsy sonnet, Berengaria was not in the train.

“Queen Eleanor opened the literary tourney with an address full of grace and wit, and closed it by repeating a poem by a contemporaneous poetess, Barbe de Verrue, which was certainly most appropriate in its reference to her own youth of coquetry and the nobler character of her later years :

‘ The gazing crowds proclaimed me *fair*
 Ere, autumn-touched, my green leaves fell :
 And now they smile and call me *good* ;
 Perhaps I like that name as well.

‘ On beauty bliss depends not ; then
 Why should I quarrel with old Time ?
 He marches on ; how vain his power
 With one whose heart is in its prime.

‘ I joy too, here, (though those there be
 Who mock the sentimental tale,)
 To see how lays of truest love
 The listening circle round regale.

‘ You fancy time for you stands still,
 And pity me my hairs of grey,
 And smile to hear how once your sires
 To me could kneeling homage pay.

‘ And I, too, smile to gaze upon
 These butterflies in youth elate .



COIFFURE—TIME OF QUEEN ELEANOR.

So heedless sporting round the flame,—
 For love's the same whate'er the date.'

“Eleanor's proclamation of amnesty and forgetfulness of old quarrels was accepted by more than one of her neighbours with whom she had embroiled herself, and her brow darkened as Thibault, Count of Champagne, and the youthful Raymond, son of her old enemy the Count of Toulouse, were announced. Thibault was accredited the most skilful amateur troubadour in France, and would doubtless win in whatever class he chose to enter. Her queenly word insured them both a courteous welcome, though she saw with displeasure that her daughter, the Princess Joan, was soon chatting with evident pleasure with the adventurous Raymond de Toulouse. She quickly summoned him to open the contest, which he did by singing to his own accompaniment on the viol the short serena which has come down to our own day. The verses ended with the stanza :

' Her charms are of the growth of Heaven,
 She decks the night with hues of day :
 Blest are the eyes to which 't is given
 On her to gaze his soul away.'

“The eyes of the troubadour were fixed so ardently on the Princess Joan that none

doubted that she was the lady referred to, but Eleanor perversely omitted to ask Raymond in whose honour the poem was composed, and abruptly called upon Thibault for his lay, which was delivered in praise of Blanche of Navarre, sister of Berengaria.

“Geoffroi Rudel, the friend of Geoffrey Plantagenet, next named the Countess of Tripoli (the fair Saracen whom he had never seen, and for whom he finally renounced home, religion, and even life) as the lady of his love, and sang a song which so touched the heart of the dusky Countess that she caused it to be transcribed in letters of gold and from his death to her own carried it in her bosom.

“Arnaut Daniel and Gaucelm Faidit, two friends of Richard's, followed, Daniel giving them the romance of Sir Launcelot du Lac. Then came Bertran de Born with a ringing battle-hymn, in honour of no lady, but of the warlike race of the Plantagenets; and Peire Vidal sang to Alazais, wife of the Viscount of Marseilles, and Tomiers of Tarascon to a fair one of Avignon. Time would fail us to give the names of the votaries of ‘the Gay Science’ who graced the occasion. Richard and Blondel replied to each other in the *tenson* which was afterwards so famous; and, while awards

in special classes were won by others, it was evident from the burst of universal applause that popular vote decreed the golden laurels to Prince Richard.

“A flush of gratified pride mounted to the Queen’s brow, and she was about in mock modesty to ask for a vote rather than herself give the prize to her son, when the herald struck the heart-shaped shield suspended on a lance in front of the poets’ rostrum, in token that a *trouvère* or prose story-teller from the East desired to exhibit his skill. The young man was announced as Berenger, *Cherche le monde*, a wanderer. He was a slight youth robed in a scholar’s gown, though he carried a pilgrim’s wallet and staff, and wore the cockle-shell upon his cap. He made a low obeisance and related his story in the following words :

“‘Be it known to you, most noble lady, that there existed many centuries ago in the mountains of Persia a famous mine of carbuncles, gems somewhat resembling rubies, but larger and darker, so that whereas a ruby is of the joyous colour of wine when the sunlight plays lovingly through it, and it sparkles in the glass, a carbuncle has a gloomy and ominous resemblance to a drop of blood, dark and lus-

treless, save when the sun strikes it, when it glows as it were a coal of living fire.

“The carbuncles in the mine of which I speak were always found imbedded by nature in iron ore, and besides being unusually large and of a heart shape, they had peculiar magic qualities; for it was soon discovered that those who carried them in their rough state, whether miners or merchants, were fortunate in love, so that the stones acquired a reputation as love amulets.

“This property was lost when the gems were taken from their native bed and set in gold or silver; therefore it became the custom of the Saracen artificers to mount them with a portion of their natural rough setting in iron rings or upon steel armour. Some of these wonderful carbuncles were brought to Toledo, which after Damascus was the most famous city in all the world for the manufacture of arms.

“At first the carbuncles were in great demand. There was not a Moorish warrior of wealth who did not desire to have one of the “lodestones of love,” as they were called, set upon some part of his armour, and always with the same happy result. The lady of the knight so bejewelled, were she ever

so haughty and implacable, speedily became yielding; were she cold and unloving, impassioned; were she jealous and suspicious, then trustful; if wronged, forgiving; if false, then penitent; were she far distant, she flew to him, and if there were obstacles in the way of their union they were all speedily and magically removed.

“In spite of these desirable and ever efficacious qualities these lodestones of love shortly lost their popularity, for it was observed, after some experiment, that only those who were true lovers could profit by their spell. When a lady had been false to her lover, and he wore one of these carbuncles, her passion for him indeed returned; but she died within a night and a day after her forgiveness. If the knight wandered from his allegiance, he might do so with impunity so long as he wore not the fateful gems, but if he repented his fickleness and sought their aid to make peace with his true love, they were immediately reconciled, —and his death as infallibly followed.

“It will be easily understood that such inconvenient conditions could not be popular with the followers of Islam, to whom their prophet allowed a multiplicity of loves. The rule of a single love was too tyrannical for them;

the lodestones of love were soon a drug in the market, and the merchants ceased to import them, or the miners to search for them, and an earthquake taking place in that country, the mine was filled and all traces of it were lost.

“ ‘ In the reign of Abd-ur-Rahman, however, ideas of chivalry, doubtless gained from the observation of the manner of life of the French knights, sprang up among the noblest of the Mohammedan youth of Spain. The Sultan’s bodyguard was composed of the horsemen of Irak, the very flower of soldanrie. Fifty young princes of this body bound themselves by a vow to be true to one love only, and gave order to the armourers of Toledo that their harness should be studded with the magic carbuncles. There was great trouble in filling the order, for the gems had by this time become somewhat scarce, but the knights were wealthy, and requisition being made publicly throughout Spain, every carbuncle in the kingdom was brought to Toledo, and the full complement was at length furnished. Never had been seen more beautiful armour ;— for besides having their tunics of chain mail ornamented with baldrics, set with the carbuncles, extending from shoulder to thigh and

supporting the scimitar, the same gems ornamented their carcanets (or collars) and glowed along the helmet, from which depended the coif of steel links that defended the throat. Besides the decorations afforded by the jewels, the hilts and scabbards of their scimitars were encrusted with other precious stones, the blades were damascened with mottoes from the Koran in gold and silver, and the device of each knight was emblazoned in the same manner upon his shield.

“‘These knights were among the bravest as well as the handsomest and noblest of their people, and were the crest of that tidal wave which swept all before it and reached its high-water mark before the city of Tours, when the God of battles rebuked them through our valiant Charles Martel, saying: “Thus far shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” On that great day of battle there were slain the Sultan Abd-ur-Rahman and the greater part of his army,—and of the fifty knights of Irak not one returned to Spain.

“‘There is a tradition that, as they carried on their campaign through our smiling countries, the beautiful maids of Navarre and still more lovely ladies of Provence seduced many a

knight, of the lodestone from his allegiance ; but when such was the case he had the magic pieces of armour replaced by others of a plainer but less dangerous sort. On the eve of the battle of Tours the Moorish commander noted the altered appearance of this élite corps and bade them adorn themselves on the morrow in their most gorgeous panoply. Perhaps they had come to be sceptical and disbelieved in the spell, or perchance some of them on the eve of battle, in the presence of near death, repented their wanderings ; at all events the knights went into the charge with the carbuncles reddening their armour like splashes of blood. And the spell wrought even at that distance, for by the fountains of Cordova the ladies of these knights felt such pricking of heart that they mounted on swift palfreys, and journeying night and day, reached the field two days after the battle. And there among the dead they found their mortally wounded lords, whose souls could not leave their agonised bodies until they had received the forgiveness of their beloved.'

“The young trouvère ceased his recital, and Queen Eleanor was about to speak when Richard rose and bowing gracefully, said :

“‘By your leave, dear mother and Queen of

this gracious court, I pray the boon to ask this sweet youth what became of the fifty suits of jewelled armour.'

“‘They were never heard of more,’ replied the trouvère. ‘It is supposed that the Moorish ladies carried them back to Spain, but they were never seen thereafter in any joust or battle.’

“‘And thou, my lady mother, who hast followed a Crusade to the Holy Land, and hast met many of the Saracen princes at Antioch and Jerusalem, hast thou marked a coat of mail thus bedizened?’

“‘Jewelled mail and weapons have I seen in great profusion,’ Queen Eleanor replied. ‘It was reported that the armour of Sultan Noureddin blazed with diamonds. Now that I mind me, there was a young Emir named Saladin who affected only red stones. They may have been carbuncles.’

“‘Then,’ said Richard, ‘I swear that I will go a Crusader, not so much to deliver Jerusalem, as to seek out this Saladin and recover from him his enchanted armour.’

“The Queen turned pale. ‘Make not, my son, such a rash and silly promise,’ she said sternly. ‘The cross of the Crusader cannot be assumed for so trivial a purpose, and it

would ill betide thee to meet Saladin, for he is a conqueror in war as in love, and there can be none of the lodestones of love among his jewels, or he would long since have died as a penalty of his infidelity.

“‘But we interrupt the proceedings of this court by our vain discussion. This youth hath so eclipsed the other singers, both in the ingenuity of his tale and in the art of its delivery, that I here confer upon him the golden laurels and crown him king of this contest.’

“‘Berenger was pushed forward reluctantly. ‘Most noble Queen,’ he said, stammering and blushing, ‘I pray your indulgence, but I can in nowise accept the meed you are pleased to grant to my poor efforts, both in respect to their lack of merit as regards those of these other noble gentlemen, and especially the *tension* of your princely son.’

“‘There can be but one judge of merit here,’ Eleanor replied, somewhat piqued. ‘Dost thou, presumptuous youth, dare to usurp that office or question my authority?’

“‘Nay, royal lady, but there is another reason—this prize is granted to the troubadour Berenger.’

“‘And art thou not he?’

“‘Nay ; pardon me,—I am she, Berengaria,

who has assumed this disguise and entered this contest out of wantonness of play, which I cannot carry so far as to accept this unmerited reward'; and lifting her boy's cap, a shower of golden hair fell to the waist of the sportive maid.

"The Queen strove to speak, but an uproar of laughter drowned her voice. When the merriment had subsided Richard again strode forward, and begged grace for the culprit.

"'She shall be absolved,' said the Queen graciously, 'from the disrespect shown this august court by the deception which she has practised upon it in her frolicsome prank; and inasmuch as thy *tenson*, my Richard, is marred by the cankerworm of jealousy and unfaith, and the *romancéro* of Berengaria breathes the true spirit of the chivalry of love, we decree to thee and to Blondel these silver roses gnawed by emerald worms, but to Berengaria the perfect golden laurels,—and proclaim her, until the next sitting of our court, the Queen of all Troubadours.'

"Richard led forward the Lady Berengaria, and both received their prizes amidst the applause of the court.

"That evening, a glorious moonlit one, the troubadours practised their serenades and bar-

caroles ; and many a lover touched the lute beneath his lady's window, or sang his boat-song to the dip of the oars, as he rowed her in his light bark upon the Garonne. The night was given to wooing, and hearts and pledges were exchanged in ardent practice of the principles which had been enunciated during the day ; for the next ceremony of the festival, which would take place on the morrow, would be the public announcement of betrothals, for which the approval of Queen Eleanor was besought. This was not a mere empty form, for, as Suzeraine Lady of Aquitaine, she had the right to forbid any alliances between families owing her fealty.

“ Among the couples who were made happy on the next day by an exchange of plighted troth were Richard's friend and companion in arms, Hugh de Lusignan, Count of Marche, and Isabelle, the young daughter of the Count of Angoulême, who held as her dowry the province of Angoumois. These two provinces, Angoumois and Marche, divided Eleanor's possessions of Poitou and Aquitaine ; and as the Plantagenet provinces of Anjou and Touraine were bordered by Poitou on the south, and were themselves extended by Brittany and Normandy, Angoumois and Marche were the

only possible gap in all that western sweep of the possessions of the King and Queen of England in France. They were therefore strategic points, and Eleanor recognised the importance of winning Lusignan's fealty from the King of France, and securing his allegiance to England. She accordingly encouraged the friendship which had sprung up between Hugh and Richard, and gave her most loving accord to the desired betrothal. According to the custom of the day the bride-elect was given into the guardianship of the family of her betrothed, and left her father and mother to reside at the castle of Lusignan.

“Eleanor was less pleased with the alliance which was next proposed, but as neither of the young people owed any fealty to Aquitaine, the Queen of the Court of Love graciously accorded her benison on the suit of young Thibault of Champagne, who besought the hand of Blanche, Princess of Navarre, sister of Berengaria. But when Raymond of Toulouse begged that the next Court of Love might sit at Carcassonne, the strongest fortress of Eastern Provence, and that Queen Eleanor would deign to preside as now, receiving the keys of the castle in token that the old quarrel for the possession of Langue d'Oc was hap-

pily settled by his marriage with the Princess Joan, the Queen angrily refused to listen to his proposition, and summarily adjourned the court.

“One other pair of suppliants would have besought her grace if Richard could then have acted according to the dearest wish of his heart; but, like most princes, he had no freedom of choice, having been contracted by his father to the Princess Alix, sister of the King of France. The engagement had been entered into when Richard was seven and the little Princess three. Now, though nearly twenty years had elapsed since the Princess had been given into the care of King Henry to be given an English education, as befitted her future position, she was kept at Winchester, and Richard was not allowed to meet his promised bride. Since Richard had heard Berengaria tell her legend this privation had not seemed to him so grievous. He had been reading a poem which a minstrel from Normandy had submitted to him, the *Romaunt of the Rose*, by Guillaume de Lorris, and it chimed with his own feelings. The poet sang,

‘Harde is his heart that loveth nought
In May, when all this mirth is wrought,

When he may on these brannches here
The smalle birdes singen clere
Hir blissful swete song piteous,
And in this season deliteous :

· · · · ·
Within my twentie yeere of age
When that love taketh his courage
Of younge folke—
Joliffe and gay, full of gladnesse
Toward a river gan I me dresse.'

“This reminded him that he had composed a barcarole, which he had promised to sing to-night to Berengaria, on the moon-silvered Garonne. He caught up his lute and his cap with the troubadour's peacock plume, when his mother entered the room. Her manner showed deep disquietude, but Richard, in his preoccupation, did not notice it. He took her in his arms and told her of his love for Berengaria. ‘I shall demand of your grace at your court to-morrow to absolve me from my vows to the Princess Alix,’ he said gaily, ‘and the jury will surely grant my plea.’

“The look of pain in his mother's eyes deepened, so that now he could not fail to note it.

“‘It is what would pleasure most your false betrothed and falser father,’ she replied in a choked voice.

“‘How so?’ Richard demanded.

“ ‘John has just arrived from England. He tells me that it is certain that Henry loves his ward with more than fatherly affection, and that he is inquiring as to the possibility of a divorce from me.’

“ Richard swore a terrible oath: *‘Par le gorge de Dieu, my mother shall never be so dishonoured! It is an insult to me as well. Alix is my affianced bride. The King of France shall help me demand my right to his sister.’*

“ Eleanor smiled sadly. ‘And is Berengaria forgotten so soon?’ she asked.

“ ‘Berengaria shall decide for me,’ Richard groaned. And Berengaria nobly bade him be true to his engagements, and refused to listen to the love of a man who was betrothed to another.

“ Among the fantastical questions brought up on the morrow was one mooted by Prince John.

“ ‘While dancing with that fair and tricky little maid, Isabelle of Angoulême,’ he asserted, ‘I besought her for her love. Whereupon she made answer that she had just been affianced to Hugh de Lusignan; but that if ever a time should arrive when she should be deprived of this lover, she would then give ear to my prayers, and adopt me for his successor.’

I therefore make inquisition whether it is permitted me to compass this gentleman's death.'

"The question was asked in sport, for Isabelle was a mere child. John's affections at this time were supposed to be otherwise enlisted, and no one foresaw the terrible feud which the girl's favour would create between himself and Lusignan.

"Eleanor's answer was characteristic of her bright wit and easy morality.

"'There need be no quarrel,' she gave sentence, 'for we are not inclined to controvert the decision of the Countess of Champagne (made at a Court of Love held under her jurisdiction), to the effect that true love cannot exist between married people. This, a solemn and deliberate decree of the aforementioned court, ought to hold good. Therefore, Prince John has but to wait until the couple are married, for then in gaining a husband the Lady Isabelle will have lost her lover, and her conditions will be fulfilled.'

"When the gay encampment broke up, and the silken pavilions were struck, as many aching as happy hearts wended homeward from the Court of Love,—the last which Queen Eleanor was to hold in romantic Provence, for now followed her imprisonment by her husband, at

Winchester, and the stormy period during which Henry was at war in France with his sons and with the Comte de Toulouse.

“After the latter had been subjugated Richard met his father at Chinon. It was an unsatisfactory meeting for both, for Richard, who was passionately attached to his mother, called his father to account for her imprisonment, demanded to be recognised as heir to the throne of England, and to be told the King’s intentions in regard to the Princess Alix. The King equivocated,—he would promise nothing; as for Richard’s betrothed, he could not give her up either to Richard or to her brother, the King of France, for the young lady, though she should never wed Richard, might still become the Queen of England. It was not strange that, never having been associated with her betrothed, she should care more for his brother John, with whom she had been brought up. The King counselled Richard to give her up peaceably.

“What the fiery Prince heard did indeed strengthen Richard’s determination to give up the Princess Alix, but not peaceably. Whether it was John or his father who had stolen the affections of his betrothed did not greatly matter. He felt himself insulted in either

case, and saw plainly that his father intended to continue his mother's imprisonment, and to set aside his own rights in favour of his younger brother John. He disguised his anger, but fled from Chinon that night, and did homage to Philip, calling upon him to maintain his own heirship to the throne of England. Philip was smarting under the loss of Toulouse and he saw the advantage of an alliance with Richard. They swore to defend each other and each other's interests, and were so inseparable that they slept in the same bed and drank from the same cup. The Pope was calling for a crusade, Saladin was overrunning the Holy Land, and Richard and Philip vowed to undertake one together as soon as Richard's rights were established. Philip insisted, too, that the engagement with his sister should be consummated, and called upon King Henry to restore the Princess or he would come for her.

“ But fiery old King Henry did not wait to be attacked. With such forces as he could raise he advanced to Le Mans, where he was besieged and routed by Philip. Fleeing from the city he rode madly back to Chinon, where his over-exertion, rage, and disappointment threw him into a burning fever. Philip followed him, took Tours, and summoned Henry to meet

him at Colombières. Though very ill he rode out and kept the appointment in a violent thunder-storm, fainting after signing a humiliating peace. He returned to Chinon, where for several days he lay dying, muttering: 'Shame on a conquered king.'

"One faithful son there was who was at his side on the mad rout from le Mans, who nursed him tenderly, sent word to Richard that his father was dying, and held him in his arms when he expired, robed his body in royal state, and caused it to be borne across the bridge which he had built to connect the castle with the abbey. Could this have been written of the King's best beloved son, John, it would have covered a multitude of sins; but John had treacherously signed the French alliance, and it was his name on the list which Philip showed him that broke the old King's heart. The son who was so faithfully filial had least reason to be so, for he was William Longsword, the child of Henry and the deeply wronged fair 'Rosalmonde' Clifford, whose bower at Woodstock Eleanor discovered from the bit of floss silk on her husband's spur. The romantic legend states that, wondering where the King could have picked up this dainty follower, Eleanor cleverly detached the silk without attracting

his notice, and afterwards, following the clue, assured herself of his unfaith. It was a double perfidy, for Rosamonde believed herself a lawful wife, and on learning the truth retired to Godstow Nunnery.

“Richard obeyed the summons of his half-brother, and threw himself before his father’s body in an agony of remorse, vainly seeking forgiveness from the lifeless clay. As he touched his father’s hand a drop of blood appeared beneath the nostril, and Richard, recognising the sign by which a corpse was supposed to designate its murderer, exclaimed in horror, ‘It is true. It is I who have killed him.’

“He left Chinon, taking with him Longsword, who was ever after his loved companion. A bat flew in his face as he rode across the drawbridge, seemingly opposing his departure, and he told his brother the legend of Mabile, adding: ‘Is it any wonder that we are accursed, seeing that we are descended from Satan? His imps haunt this castle still; I shall never return to it again.’ There was no familiar spirit at hand to foretell that he was doomed to return in exactly ten years, mortally wounded, to die where his father had died, and be buried at his feet.

“His first act now was to liberate his mother,

and to order that the Princess Alix should be sent back to her brother. He was so impatient to set out upon his Crusade that he could hardly await his coronation and appoint his mother regent. The treasurer of the kingdom raised an enormous sum to defray the expenses of this expedition, which Richard quickly undertook.

“ He had named Messina as the trysting-place, where he would join forces with King Philip for the voyage to Palestine. He had a brotherly duty to perform here, for his sister Joan had been married to the King of Sicily, but on the death of her husband Tancred had usurped her dominions, and confined the widowed Queen a close prisoner in the castle. Before departing on the expedition Richard confided to his mother his love for Berengaria, and the Queen, right pleased, set out for Navarre, to ask her of her father. She prospered so well in her mission that the Princess went with her to Italy to meet and marry Richard and accompany him on the Crusade.

“ Richard on his arrival at Messina speedily brought Tancred to terms and secured liberty and a moneyed indemnity for his sister Joan. But he had a harder task in persuading the wily Philip to release him from his engagement to

Alix. Philip argued that his sister's dower, the city of Gisors, had been accepted by King Henry. Piers of Langtoft in his quaint poem gives Richard's answer :

“Now,” said King Richard, “that menace may not be,
For thou shalt have ward of Gisors thy citee
And treasure ilk a deal.”

Richard yielded him his right, his treasure, and his town,
Before witness at sight,
(Of clerke and eke baron,)

His sister he might marry, wherever God might like,
And to make certainty, Richard a quittance took.’

“When Eleanor and Berengaria arrived in Messina it was Lent, an impossible season for marriage, and as the Queen could not tarry longer from her regency in England—

‘She beleft Berengere,
At Richard's costage,
Queen Joanne held her dear,
They lived as doves in cage.’

“Richard led his fleet of fifty ships and fifty galleys in the *Tronc du Mer*. The two ladies followed in one of the strongest ships, and the wedding took place at Easter, in the island of Cyprus.

“‘On their arrival at Acre,’ says Bernard le Trésorier, ‘it was very grievous to the King of France to know that Richard was married to any other than to his sister; yet he received

Berengaria with great courtesy, taking her in his arms and lifting her on shore himself from the boat to the beach.'

[Richard's exploits in Palestine have been too often recounted in history and romance, to be dwelt upon here. It is the fashion of these later days to decry Scott, but the man or woman who has not been brought up on the Waverley novels, can never have quite the same love for knightly days and deeds, and has lost much of the charm of life. To Scott we refer the reader for Richard's career during the next seven years.]

"Returning, as they had set out, in separate vessels, that which bore Berengaria and Joan arrived safely at Naples. At Marseilles the ladies were met by Raymond, son of the Count of Toulouse, who was himself returning from the Crusade, who offered his escort to protect them on their journey through his father's domain to Aquitaine. He had not met Joan since the memorable Court of Love, but he renewed his suit, and Eleanor, learning how long and faithfully he had loved her, did not now refuse her consent. Eleanor's heart was possibly softened by grief; and now a terrible anxiety arose for both her and for Berengaria. Richard's ship had not been heard from since

it set sail from Palestine, and, assuming that it had suffered shipwreck and that all on board were drowned, John clamoured for the kingdom. Eleanor steadfastly opposed him; and John entered into an alliance with Philip, promising to marry the poor Princess Alix, who had been so cheaply bandied back and forth. In return he was to have only England, for Richard's French possessions, on the supposition of his death, had declared for young Arthur of Brittany, the son of Geoffrey Plantagenet and of Constance.

“At length the troubadour Blondel, wandering through Austria, heard of a prisoner in the strong fortress of Trifels who sang French songs to cheer his captivity. His suspicions were excited, and at the foot of the tower he sang the first verse of the *tenson* which he and Richard had composed together :

*‘ Personne, o ma charmante dame,
Ne vous voit sans vous aimer.
Mais comment attendrir une âme
Qu’aucun jamais ne sut charmer ?
Faut il puisque tous se desolent,
Que les maux d’autrui me consolent ?’*

“Scarcely had he finished when the powerful voice of Richard replied with the second stanza :

*‘Jamais, non jamais une dame
N’aura d’empire sur mon cœur,
Si, trop prodigue de son âme,
Elle a pour tous une faveur,
Plutôt loin d’une telle reine
Laissez moi seule porter ma peine.*

“The discovery that Richard was still alive was like a thunderbolt to the plotters, but Philip and John did not quite give up hope. He was in prison, and for any help of theirs he might stay there.

“Eleanor, still undaunted, held England for him, though she signed herself at this time, ‘Eleanor, by the Wrath of God Queen of England.’ It was now that she wrote her famous letter to the Pope, endeavouring to induce him to order Richard’s release.

‘If I leave my son’s dominions,’ she wrote, ‘invaded as they are on every side, they will on my departure lose all counsel : if I remain, I shall not behold my son whose face I long to see. There will be none to labour for his redemption ; and what I fear the most, unused as his generous youth is to such terrible calamities, he will not survive all he has to endure.’

“At length Philip sent John that well-known message : ‘Look to yourself, for the devil is unchained.’

“Richard had been released on payment of an enormous ransom raised in great part by

the exertions of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the second son of Rosamonde Clifford. John threw himself upon his mercy.

“ ‘I forgive you, John ’ said his brother, ‘ and I wish I could as easily forget your offence as you will my pardon.’

“ But Richard could not so easily condone Philip’s double-dealing. He now understood thoroughly his treacherous character, and until his dying day never went to confession for fear that he would be obliged to forgive him.

“ He forgave even Philip at last, and the archer who fired the poisoned shaft which killed him. He was of a magnanimous nature and it was easier for him to forgive than to cherish a grudge ; but when he believed himself forgotten by his dearest friends his heart grew very bitter, as is shown by some verses written during his imprisonment :

‘ No captive knight, whom chains confine,
Can tell his fate, and not repine ;
Yet with a song he cheers the gloom
That hangs around his living tomb.
Shame to my friends ! the king remains
Two years unransomed and in chains.

‘ Now let them know, my brave barons,
English, Normans, and Gascons,

Not a liegeman so poor have I
 That I would not his freedom buy.
 Oh, what a blot upon their name
 If I should perish thus in shame !

‘Ye Troubadours, and friends of mine,
 Brave Chail, noble Pensauvine,
 Go, tell my rivals, in your song,
 This heart hath never done them wrong.
 He infamy, not glory, gains
 Who leaves a monarch in his chains.’

“Even the faithful Berengaria was doubted. The verse of the *tenson* with which he had replied to Blondel was the true expression of his feelings :

‘No longer such a faithless dame
 Shall hold dominion o’er my heart.
 Quenched is her feeble flickering flame
 And I alone can bear my smart.’

“Richard cruelly wronged his wife by these suspicions, for Berengaria had governed Aquitaine for him, and with the assistance of her brother, Sancho the Strong, had kept in check the grasping hand of Philip. But some malicious tongue must have traduced her, for on his liberation Richard pushed directly to England to throw himself into the arms of his mother, but cruelly slighted his sweet wife. For years she waited patiently, still strangely

doubted and neglected. His excuse that he had now no time for dalliance was not a valid one,—though it is true that after his return he found much to do. In spite of John's treason, the devotion of his mother and the zeal of the primate had held the heart and resources of England for him, but he realised that his French possessions were slipping from his hands. It was not alone Philip's power or treachery; the loyalty of the people themselves was wavering: 'Were they not French? why should they serve an English king?'

"In the few years that followed, Richard showed his ability as a ruler and his military skill as never before. Heroic in action, splendid in his court, gallant, generous, worshipped by all who knew him whether men or women, chivalric, poetic, fiery, passionate in love and hate, but none so courteous to a conquered foe, he had ever been; but these were personal qualities of a hero of romance rather than the practical abilities necessary for the success of a sovereign ruling indifferent subjects and opposed by crafty enemies. To the astonishment of friend and foe Richard now showed that he possessed the very sagacity which they supposed he lacked. With wisdom and tact he won back the faltering allegiance of his French

barons. Flanders was drawn away from its French alliance; the Counts of Chartres, Champagne, and Boulogne came to his standard. He subdued the rebels of Aquitaine, and made an alliance with Germany against Philip; and while carrying on these shrewd diplomatic campaigns he surprised all by another proof of the versatility of his genius, in showing that the poet was equally a master as a military engineer. His observation of the systems of Saracenic and Austrian fortification had not been thrown away. In his long imprisonment he had not spent all his time in stringing together *tensons*; but he had thought out combinations, and invented new methods of defence, which now lifted him to the rank of the first engineer and architect of his time. Viollet-le-Duc awards him this distinction, and points out the original details in the system of fortification which he introduced in his Château Gaillard, his '*filie d'un an*' which now rose as by magic in a twelvemonth on a strategic point covering Rouen, a site chosen with the keenest foresight as the bastion of Normandy against Philip. 'Château Gaillard,' says one historian, 'is the greatest monument—greater even than his Eastern exploits—of the genius of Richard.' And Green adds:

‘As a monument of warlike skill this “Saucy Castle” stands first among the fortresses of the Middle Ages. Richard fixed its site where the Seine bends suddenly at Gaillon in a great semicircle to the north, flashing like a silver bow on its way to Rouen. The castle formed part of an entrenched camp which Richard designed to cover his Norman capital. Approach by the river was blocked by a stockade and a bridge of boats, by a fort on the islet in midstream, and by a tower on the bank. On a spur of the chalk hills rose, at the height of three hundred feet above the river, the crowning fortress of the whole. Its outworks have for the most part gone, but time and the hand of man have done little to destroy the fortifications themselves—the fosse hewn deep into the solid rock, with casements hollowed out along its sides, the fluted walls of the citadel, the huge donjon, looking down on the brown roofs and huddled gables of Les Andelys. Even now in its ruin we can understand the triumphant outburst of its royal builder as he saw it rising against the sky: “How pretty a child is mine, this child of but one year old!”’

“The ‘fluted walls’ of which Green speaks were not merely ornamental. Indeed there was no sculpture, no mouldings, not a single feature in the entire castle designed simply for ornament. They were a series of *flanking towers*, hitherto unknown in France, and in their arrangement an invention of Richard’s. They were semicircular, each touching the other, and making in plan a scalloped line with the curves on the outside, the precursor of the

scarp and counterscarp of Vauban. Richard did not follow either Norman or French traditions, but by the use of these and other original features rendered his fortress well-nigh impregnable against the means of attack then known.

“ Philip scoffed at the report of these new inventions, and vowed that he would take the castle though it were made of iron. Richard replied with the vaunt that he could hold it against him though it were made of butter ; and indeed it was the general who held the fortress rather than the strength of the fortifications that Philip feared. As long as Richard lived Philip dared not push by Gaillard or attack it, and if John had not been as incompetent as he was cowardly, it could not have been taken, and Normandy would have remained an English possession.

“ Richard had accomplished wonders in strengthening his position, but he had lavished enormous sums and was in great need of money. It was in the spring of 1199 that a rumour was brought that an enormous treasure had been found in the fields of Limousin near the castle of Chalus. A peasant ploughing had fallen into a subterranean cavern which rivalled that of Aladdin. Twelve golden statues of

knights of life size were seated around a golden table, which was laden with a golden service, heaped with jewels instead of food. Richard at once felt himself ravenously hungry to partake of such dainty cheer, and sent a message to that effect to Lord Vidomar of Limousin (his vassal), inviting himself to the banquet, and urging his right as suzerain to the lion's share of the treasure-trove. The lord replied that no such treasure had been discovered, only a few suits of rusted armour with bones within them, the remains doubtless of knights who had been buried there years before after some battle with the Moors.

“ Did the message bring up the old story which Berengaria had made her theme at the Court of Love? or was it simply greed for money that impelled Richard to the fateful assault of the castle of Chalus?

“ Hither he came at any rate, and made a last demand for the treasure. His vassal lord sent him a suit of antique armour of peculiar pattern, protesting that nothing more valuable had been discovered. Richard did not believe him, considered this trifling response an insult to his authority, and swore to take the castle clothed in this travesty on his power, and to hang all its defenders. While girding the

rusty harness about him the old legend must have come to his mind, if he had not thought of it before, for on the shoulder-pieces and belt glowed like baleful coals the magic carbuncles.

“The Lodestones of Love had not lost their power during their long burial.

“Joan, Richard's sister, was in trouble. The same atrocities to which her son was afterwards subjected, in the persecution of the Albigenses, were being committed upon the vassals and castles of Toulouse by the joint machinations of the Pope and of King Philip. Joan hurried for succour to her old friend Berengaria, to whom a messenger had just brought word that Richard was on the border. She doubtless told herself that it was the need of his sister which broke down all restraints of injured dignity; but Berengaria felt at that moment the irresistible drawing of the most powerful of lodestones,—all-forgiving, faithful love,—and with a little train the two women dashed on to Chalus.

“They reached the English only to learn that Richard, who had ventured dangerously near the walls, had been shot in the shoulder by an arrow from an arquebus, the corroded links that held the jewelled shoulder-plate having broken.

Though the castle was taken, gangrene had set in, and the King lay dying. The shock was too great for Joan, who, exhausted by what she had already borne, fell dead in Berengaria's arms at the news. Berengaria in this terrible calamity showed herself the heroine she was, and had the inexpressible happiness of a complete reconciliation with her husband before his death. They were not far from Chinon, and to that fateful home of the brother and sister Berengaria carried the dying Richard and the body of Joan. Side by side they lie at Fontevraud at the feet of their father and mother, a peaceful home-coming at last. Berengaria retired to her dower city of le Mans, and here she founded the Abbey of Espan and died at an advanced age. It would have been fitting to have carried her to Fontevraud, but the nuns of Espan would not give up the body of the royal foundress of their abbey. It was mistaken devotion. She should have been laid beside Richard, and Matthew Arnold's lines would seemingly have been written of them, even as now, with slight change, they apply to the carved effigies of Henry and Eleanor.

'So rest, for ever rest, O royal pair!
In yon high church, 'mid the still mountain air,

Where horn and hound and vassals never come,
Where thou, O King, shalt nevermore arise
From the fringed mattress where thy consort lies,
On autumn mornings when the bugle sounds,
And ride across the drawbridge with thy hounds
To hunt the boar in the crisp woods till eve.
And thou, O lady, shalt no more receive,
Thou and thy maidens in the hall of state,
The jaded hunters with their bloody freight,
Coming benighted to the castle gate.
So sleep, for ever sleep, O marble pair !
And if ye wake, let it be then when fair
On the carved western front a flood of light
Streams from the setting sun, and colours bright
Prophets, transfigured saints, and martyrs brave,
In the vast western window of the nave ;
And on the pavement round the tomb there glints
A checker-work of glowing sapphire tints,
And amethyst, and ruby ; then unclose
Your eyelids on the stone where ye repose,
And from your broidered pillows lift your heads,
And rise upon your cold white marble beds,
And looking down on the warm, rosy tints
That checker at your feet the illumined flints,
Say : What is this ? we are in bliss, forgiven ;
Behold the pavement of the Courts of Heaven ! ”



CHAPTER VII

THE SIEGE OF CHÂTEAU GAILLARD

But one short year had passed away
When Castle Gaillard rose,
As built at once by elfin hands
And scorning time or foes.

It might be thought that Merlin's imps
Were tasked to raise the wall,
That unheard axes fell the woods,
While unseen hammers fall.

As hung by magic on a rock
The castle keep looked down
O'er rocks and rivers, and the smoke
Of many a far-off town.

And now young knights and minstrels gay
Obeyed their master's call,
And, loud rejoicing, held the feast
In the new-raftered hall.

WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES.

LONG after our visit to Chinon, as we were on the point of leaving France, we made a flying trip from Rouen to Château Gaillard,

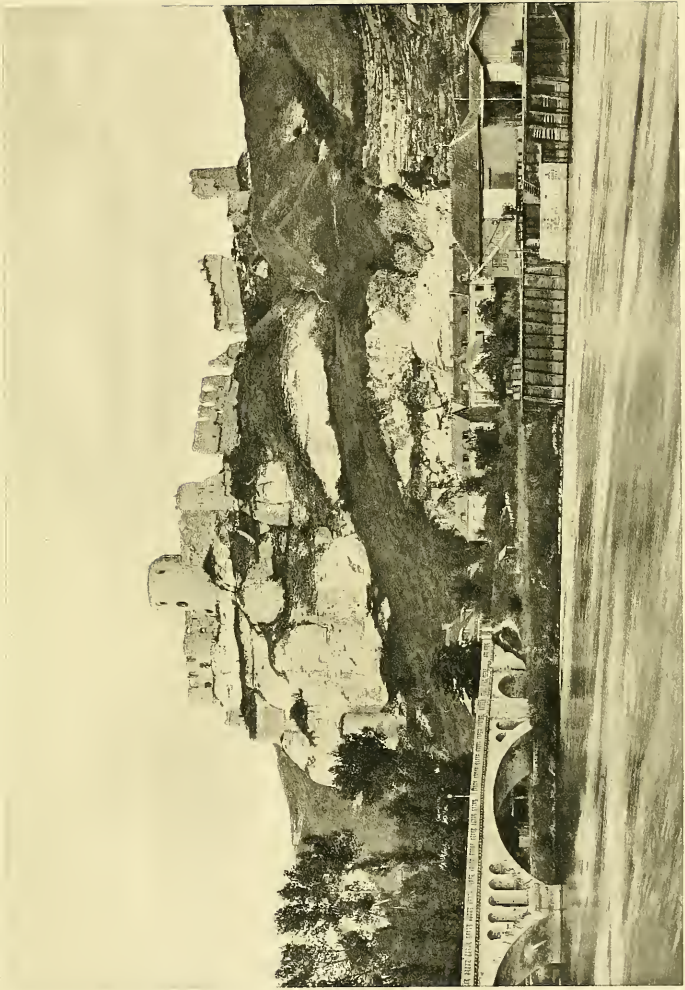
the famous fortress built by Richard Cœur de Lion to enable him to hold Normandy.

As we climbed the steep cliff we were filled with admiration for the genius which had chosen this wonderful site, rendered almost impregnable by nature, and so completely commanding the Seine, which bent lazily around it in a great horseshoe curve, and was the only highway to the Norman capital of Rouen, twenty miles away. Philip would never have taken the fortress if the master-mind which built it had commanded at the time of the siege; but Richard, who finished Gaillard in 1198, was killed before Chalus the following year, and the French king recognised his opportunity.

We stood in the great keep and wondered how it was ever taken. We had asked for a guide at the village of Little Andelys, and had been told that the best one that the town afforded was now conducting a party about the ruins. He was a little "scattered," the innkeeper said, significantly touching his head, as to matters of the present century, but none so reliable on all historical points. He had studied military engineering at St. Cyr and had assisted Viollet-le-Duc in his restorations at Pierrefonds. He was a crank on fortresses; we might rely on him perfectly for anything



Château Gaillard.



before Vauban—but he never took his diploma at the Academy, for he said the Dark Ages were so interesting that he did not care to study anything after the invention of gunpowder.

We had seen no one about the ruins, and quite congratulated ourselves on having escaped the “scattered one,” who, we were persuaded, must be a great bore with his archæological treatises. We sat down under the walls where the view was finest, and proceeded to read the *Lay of Talbot the Troubadour*, in which William Lisle Bowles tells so well the story of the finding of the little daughter of the Earl of Salisbury. The child had been stolen by the French while Richard was building Gaillard, and had been hidden in a castle in Normandy. Talbot offered to go through the country disguised as a wandering minstrel and discover the little maid. This he effected in the same way that Blondel found Richard,—by singing familiar ballads beneath the castle walls.

By right of poetic justice Talbot should have been rewarded for this romantic quest by the hand of the little heiress; but Richard favoured his half-brother, for his love for William Longsword had become a passion

since the night when he found that the son of Rosamonde Clifford had performed the last offices due to King Henry from his legitimate but rebellious children. On one of those high days of revelry after the completion of the castle, the ballad tells us,—

“ At Gaillard Richard kept his state
Released from captive thrall ;
And girt with many a warrior guest
He feasted in the hall.

“ His minstrels and his mailed peers
Were seated at the board,
And at his side the highest sat
William of the Long Sword.

“ This youthful knight, of princely birth,
Was dazzling to behold,
For his chain mail from head to foot
All glistened o'er with gold.

“ His surcoat dyed with azure blue
In graceful foldings hung,
And there the golden lions ramped,
With bloody claws and tongue.

“ With crimson belt around his waist
His sword was girded on ;
The hilt, a cross to kiss in death,
Radiant with jewels shone.

“ The names and banners of each knight
It were too long to tell ;

The Siege of Château Gaillard 289

Here sat the brave Montgomery,
There Bertrand and Rozell.

“ So all within was merriment,
When suddenly, a shout
As of some unexpected guest
Burst from the crowd without.

“ Now not a sound, and scarce a breath,
Through the long hall is heard,
When, with a young maid by his side,
A visored knight appeared.

“ Up the long hall they held their way
On to the royal seat ;
Then both together, hand in hand,
Knelt at King Richard's feet.

“ ‘ Talbot, a Talbot ! ’ rang the hall,
With gratulation wild,
‘ Long live brave Talbot, and long live
Earl William's new-found child ! ’

“ Amid a scene so new and strange
This poor maid could not speak ;
King Richard took her by the hand
And gently kissed her cheek ;

“ Then placed her, smiling through a tear,
By his brave brother's side :
‘ Long live brave Longspé ! ’ rang the hall,
‘ Long live his future bride ! ’

“ To noble Richard this fair child,
His ward, was thus restored ;
Destined to be the future bride
Of him of the Long Sword.”

"After all," commented my husband, as he drew several small paper-covered volumes of ballads from his overcoat pockets, "the poets are the only guides we want to these old castles. What do we care for the stupid researches of the antiquarians? What we need to make the castle *live* is the story of an eye-witness who endured the siege and saw the French forces hemming in the garrison like a pack of hungry wolves. That is the only point of view I care for."

"Then I can be of no service to Monsieur," said a melancholy voice at my elbow, "for I was with the French."

We started, and turning saw a slight, dark man of indefinable age, for his face was beardless, and though his brow was wrinkled it had rather the effect of the scowl which comes from intense thought than the lines which mark the passage of time. His hair, which was cut squarely across his forehead and even with his shoulders, was dark and waving. His eyes were preternaturally bright and his nervous fingers were thin and claw-like. I fancied from his costume that he was an acrobat who had strolled up the cliff from some wandering circus, for he wore trunk hose and a jerkin of soft leather laced down the front. On his

wrist he carried a fine falcon, belled and hooded.

“That was a stirring ballad,” he continued, for we were both too much surprised to speak, “and a good description of William Longsword. He was ever a trifle too glorious in his dress, but that was because he was young. I would like to have seen Richard; my master adored him, though he was English. We would not have joined King Philip and have assisted at the siege of this castle if Richard had lived, but we thought King John was in the castle and we had more reason to hate him than most.”

“Who was your master?” I asked wonderingly.

“Hugh de Lusignan,” replied this singular man. “He was Richard’s comrade as a Crusader in Palestine. You must have heard of him, even if you are not French.”

My husband pulled himself together with an effort. “Did you happen to go to the Crusades with Lusignan and Cœur de Lion?” he asked, sarcastically.

“No, Monsieur, I was too young; I was only a page at Le Croizant, the castle of the Lusignans among the wild mountains in Creuse. It is in ruins now, and it was a lonely place then,

with my lord's old aunt as chatelaine ; and the pretty little Isabelle of Angoulême, my lord's betrothed, who was being bred up in the castle, had but a tiresome life when my lord was away upon the King's business. I had charge of the dove-cote. The Lusignan pigeons were the best carriers in France, and my lord never went from home without a willow basket of them, and every now and then he would send one homing with a tender missive beneath its wing for the Countess Isabelle. She came to the dove-cote every morning, and would cry, 'Mount the ladder, Papiol, and search the nests, and see if there is no tired messenger with a letter for me.' She was only fifteen, but a queen in her bearing even then, and when my lord went on the Crusade she bade him bring her a present more costly than that brought back to any other lady by her lover.

"My lord took a standard in one of the charges from five Moslems. One of them stripped the banner from the pole and fled with it, but Lusignan killed the other four and brought away the staff, with the gilded crescent on the top. He gave that to his love and she was well pleased, for it had cost him many wounds. She had it nailed over the entrance to the castle and named the castle Le Croizant

(the crescent). It was a pagan thing, and it may be it was responsible for the ill luck that came to him. He never prized a thing which was not coveted and taken from him. Even the treasure which King Richard took from the Lord of Chalus should have been Lusignan's by good rights, for it had been buried in that underground cave by his ancestress, the fairy Melusine."

"What became of the treasure after Richard's death?" I asked eagerly.

"Richard gave it to his brother of the Long Sword, who brought it here to Château Gaillard, the strongest fortress in France. King Philip besieged it, as you know, but he would have had still greater difficulty in taking it if my master had not helped him, and my master would not have gone on that campaign but for his betrothed."

"We all know that episode in history," said my husband: "that John hurried to Chinon after Richard's death, and was there acknowledged King; that while there he sent for fair Isabelle of Angoulême (whom he had met at his mother's Court of Love), and married her at Bordeaux, 'to the scandal of knighthood,' August 24th, of the year 1200. We have read, too, how Hugh de Lusignan sent the King a

challenge to mortal combat, which John treated with contempt; how Lusignan joined young Arthur of Brittany in his revolt against his uncle; and, when both were taken prisoners, how John made a progress of his domains, dragging his wife's lover after him in a narrow cage placed on a rough tumbril drawn by oxen, 'a mode of travelling,' says the chronicler, 'to which the noble Lusignan was not accustomed.' I presume you would have us believe that you accompanied that gala procession?"

"Alas, no. If I had been there and had seen that indignity to my dear lord I would have sent an arrow through the King's heart. There was not a man on the Lusignan estates that did not burn to take arms against the English after that. And when our master escaped from the dungeon in which King John had ordered that he should be starved to death, and King Philip declared war upon England to avenge the murder of Prince Arthur, the men of La Marche were the first to take the field under the Lusignan banner with the gold crescent on the top of the staff.

"Only Château Gaillard here, manned by the knights Richard had left in it, with some Norman men-at-arms, opposed the progress of the French, and hither Philip led us and sat

him down for a long siege on an autumn day in 1203,—a year I have good cause to remember. If Monsieur and Madame would like an account of the siege from an eye-witness I will describe it exactly as I saw it, I and this falcon, for we are the only survivors.”

“Chatter on, if it amuses you,” said my husband, “provided you will let me engage you as a model, and pose, while you are talking, for a picture, which I will call ‘The Falconer’s Story,’ for you make up extremely well.”

“Pardon, Monsieur, I make up nothing. If my account is not to be credited——”

“I referred to your physical accoutrement,” the artist replied, apologetically. “Far be it from me to doubt that you are a trifle over seven hundred years old, though really you don’t look it.”

“You have only to look about you,” said Papiol, settling himself to his story, “to understand exactly how it all happened. This spur of cliff juts out like a peninsula from the main highland, and as it was impossible for an assault to be made up the precipitous sides of the cliff, with the river bathing it below, it was only at the point where the peninsula joins the table-land that an attack was to be expected. At this point Richard built the

bastion, or advance fort. It was triangular in shape, with a strong tower at the point which would be our first point of attack, and a very deep moat had been dug all around it. Behind this forework was the real fortress, with a great 'bailey,' or courtyard, surrounded by high walls with strong towers at every angle. In the bailey were many buildings which made life more convenient-like,—stables and workshops, barracks for the men, and a chapel,—but still nothing that was absolutely essential. The castle with its inner court was at the extreme point of the cliff, a fortress within the fortress. So you see we had a good stiff piece of work cut out for us.

“Down on the river, too, the village of Little Andelys was fortified, as was that island opposite, while the Seine was blocked by a stockade which effectually prevented the passage of our boats until we pulled up all those prickly river-plants.

“Philip expected hard work, and he had it; but he realised the tremendous issues which hung upon the result. Aquitaine, which had ever been loyal to Queen Eleanor and to Richard, had no interest in English John, and not Normandy alone but all the English possessions in France formed the prize which

awaited him if he took Château Gaillard. He counted, too, on the consternation which had fallen on Richard's knights with the death of their leader. Do you remember how his friend and fellow-troubadour, Gaucelm Faidit, voiced the general grief and discouragement when he sang :

'Valour and fame are fled since dead thou art,
England's King, Richard of the Lion Heart.

'O noble King ! O knight renowned !
Where now is battle's pride
Since in the lists no longer found
With conquest at thy side ?
The Holy Tomb shall linger long
Within the Moslem's power
Since God hath willed the brave and strong
Should wither in an hour.

'Valour and fame are fled since dead thou art,
England's King, Richard of the Lion Heart.'

“Still this lament was not quite true, for Richard's companions in arms, many of them knights of prowess, were within the fortress. The doughty Constable of Chester commanded ; William Longsword, after Richard the bravest of his time, was thought to be inside the walls ; and if King John had given the garrison the enthusiasm which would have resulted from defending the royal person they would have

had an added incentive for fighting to the death.

“We arrived before the castle at the beginning of the siege and before the place was completely invested. At this time Philip was in ignorance of the fact that the Constable of Chester, Roger de Lacey, held command of the garrison and hoped that he should be able to trap King John himself, with his gay court. When my lord heard of the possibility that both his hated rival and the still loved Isabelle were within these walls his heart was fired by a passionate desire for revenge and for the recovery of his betrothed. He believed that she had been forced into an odious marriage by her parents. He had noted many a look of pity when he was paraded before her in his degradation, and he believed that he owed his life and liberty to her intercession.

“My master gladly obeyed Philip’s command to reconnoitre the castle and learn all that was possible before it was completely shut off from all communication with the outside world. He at first proposed to venture in as a spy, but this was forbidden by his monarch. He had been too long a marked man and his face was too well known by the English for him to escape detection. His strong desire to ascertain whether

the Queen was indeed within the castle quickened his invention. Thinking that he might wish to send some message to Le Croizant he had brought with him an osier basket of our carrier-pigeons. In his survey of Gaillard he noticed that carts containing supplies were still received at the postern-gate to the inner fortress, for the path leading up the cliffs from the Seine was not yet in our hands. He therefore disguised me as a Norman peasant, and providing me with a donkey laden with poultry, sent me by a roundabout way to this gate.

“‘I cannot let you in,’ said the warder, ‘for the governor’s orders just sent me are, “Admit neither man nor beast under forfeiture of your life.”’

“‘This is neither man nor beast,’ I replied, holding up a fat goose. The warder eyed it enviously.

“‘Doubtless,’ he said, ‘you think to take advantage of our straitened condition to drive a hard bargain for your wares, but you have come to a poor market.’

“‘Harkee, man,’ I replied, falling back to a certain extent upon the truth, which promised in this instance to serve me better than any fiction; ‘I am no poulterer. My master, a wealthy farmer hereabouts, pities the condition

of the ladies shut up in this fortress and has sent these birds for their use. If thou wilt get this cage of pigeons alive to the Queen and tell her that she knows them well and him who sends them, then for thy trouble thou mayst keep these geese of La Marche.'

"'Now, marry, thou art a fool to trust me,' replied the warder. 'What guaranty hast thou that I keep not both pigeons and geese?'

"'The guaranty of an honest face,' I made answer. 'Throw down a rope that I may tie it to these panniers and ease my donkey of his burden.'

"Having hoisted my birds I bestrode my donkey and followed a circuitous path down the hill to the village of Little Andelys, which was now only a mass of charred ruins, for our men had burned it and held the bridge which communicated with the other side of the Seine. Here, giving the countersign, I was allowed to enter our lines and report to my master the manner in which I had performed my errand.

"I was not allowed to do so, however, without a serious adventure. On the way I fell in with some of the inhabitants of Little Andelys who had fled to the castle for refuge but had been refused admittance. Roger de Lacey,

foreseeing the prospect of a long siege, in which starvation would be the enemy's chief general, had judged best not to burden the castle with these *bouches inutiles*. It was a stern measure, but a necessity of war. Attempting to return to their homes the poor villagers found that they had been pillaged and burned by the French, who would not allow them to pass through or enter their lines. Twelve hundred wretched creatures, men, women, and children, sat down beneath the castle walls or wandered starving on the chalk cliff, which they soon cleared of the small animals that burrowed there. Their miserable existence was prolonged for a time by the dogs which were turned from the castle because they, too, were useless mouths. A fine pack of hounds, with which Richard himself had followed the chase, were now in turn hunted by starving men, whom the terrible pangs of hunger rendered fleet of limb and strong of arm. After the dogs were all devoured there remained nothing but the Seine, which dragged out their lives by providing them with water and occasionally with a small fish.

The outcast refugees had not reached the worst stage of their distress when I met them, but they foresaw it and they tore me from my

donkey, which they instantly killed, and for whose carcass they fought. Horrified by what I had seen I begged my master to intercede with King Philip for their relief.

“‘That will I,’ said Lusignan, ‘for I have come near enough to starvation myself to like it not. Philip shall give these poor wretches license to pass in peace through our lines whither they will. Thou hast done well. My Isabelle (I cannot even now call her the Queen) will recognise the pigeons if they find their way to her turret instead of to the cook’s spit. What said the warder; is she certainly in the castle?’

“‘Woman gear of some kind is there, for as I stood at the postern I looked up at the governor’s dwelling, which is next to the donjon keep, and I saw a narrow window, and set therein a harp.’

“‘That may well be,’ Lusignan replied, ‘for it was Bertran de Born’s custom to place his harp in the window when a storm was coming, and the wild notes which the wind struck from it inspired him to songs of battle. There is no certitude from that discovery that Isabelle or any other woman is in the castle. If she is there and has received the pigeons she will let fly one at once, but it will be long before my

pages that watch the dove-cote at home can bring me the message which it bears.'

" 'Methinks an arrow might bring the messenger down,' I suggested.

" 'Nay,' said my master, 'they fly too high. We have not a bowman among the King's archers could hit such a mark.'

" I thought a moment, and then threw my cap into the air. 'Nevertheless, what an arrow cannot do a hawk may.'

" 'A merry thought, but where shall we find a falcon? The knights of France go not to battle with hawk on fist. Ah, Papiol, thy devices are like a good chain with but one rotten link.'

" 'That link shall be new welded,' I promised. 'Get but that rabble of starvelings from under the castle walls, and ask the King to give thee that tower which was built by the river to defend the stockade. It is suited to more manœuvres than King Richard had in mind when he built it. From its platform one hath a straight view into that same window of the harp, at no great distance neither as the crow, or rather as the pigeon, flies. Place me as sentinel on that tower, and I will find me a falcon and go a-hawking, and catch my pigeon before it has shot to any great height, for, trust me,

the harp I saw belongs not to Bertran de Born. There was a scarf of rose-coloured sarcenet tied to it, which fluttered in the breeze, and that were too womanish a gawd even for a minstrel.'

"My master lamented that he had not Richard's famous falcon with which he had hawked at Jaffa on the Plain of Sharon, but I bade him not grieve for that or any other, for I had my own plan. Cold weather was coming, it was the time of the migration of birds, and I had noted each day that passage hawks flew over to the south. I trusted to snare a haggard that would answer our business as well as a *faucon gentil*. I could make the *leurré*, the jesses, and the *chaperon à cornette* or hood, and I had learned the *dressage* or training of hawks from a famous falconer.

"The first time that my master visited me after giving me the River Tower yonder I showed him with pride three falcons, hooded, jessed, and belled, and fastened to a block of wood by the thongs attached above the talons.

"That great one,' I explained, 'is a Peregrine and noble. She has escaped from some hunter and gone wild, for she has a silver varvel [ring] on her right arm [wing]. She flew to the *leurre*, too, and even allowed me to

fasten on the hood without resistance. This is a common goshawk, and ignoble, for it pursues its prey in direct line, while all noble falcons soar and strike the quarry from above. This is a Merlin, an *eyess* [nestling], which Ludovic found for me in a nest on the cliff. It will take longer to dress than the others, for its mother had been killed by those starvelings and the poor little screamer has hunger traces on its feathers. It is not strong enough to enter at a pigeon, but I am training it with sparrows, which I fasten to one line while I hold my *eyess* by another. It flew bravely this morning when I called it off, but it had not the strength to retrieve its quarry; I fear it will be of no service—but the others will serve our turn.'

“‘Let me see the varvel,’ said Lusignan, holding out his wrist, upon which the Peregrine hopped confidently and allowed him to examine the flat silver ring on her ankle.

“My lord started. ‘There is a crown engraved on the varvel,’ he exclaimed. ‘If this is one of John’s hawks I will not use it.’

“‘She is the best of the three,’ I grumbled, ‘and no Irish hawk. John’s come from Carrickfergus.’

“‘Nay, Papiol, but for once thy lore is wrong,

for this is no Peregrine. Dost see the name, "Melek Rik"? She is an Indian Shahin, and the very bird that Richard hunted with at Jaffa. She was given to him by Saladin, and Richard gave her in turn to Bertran de Born, who must have lost her in this vicinity. Do not enter her unless thou art sure she will return, for I would not lose her for a chest of treasure.'

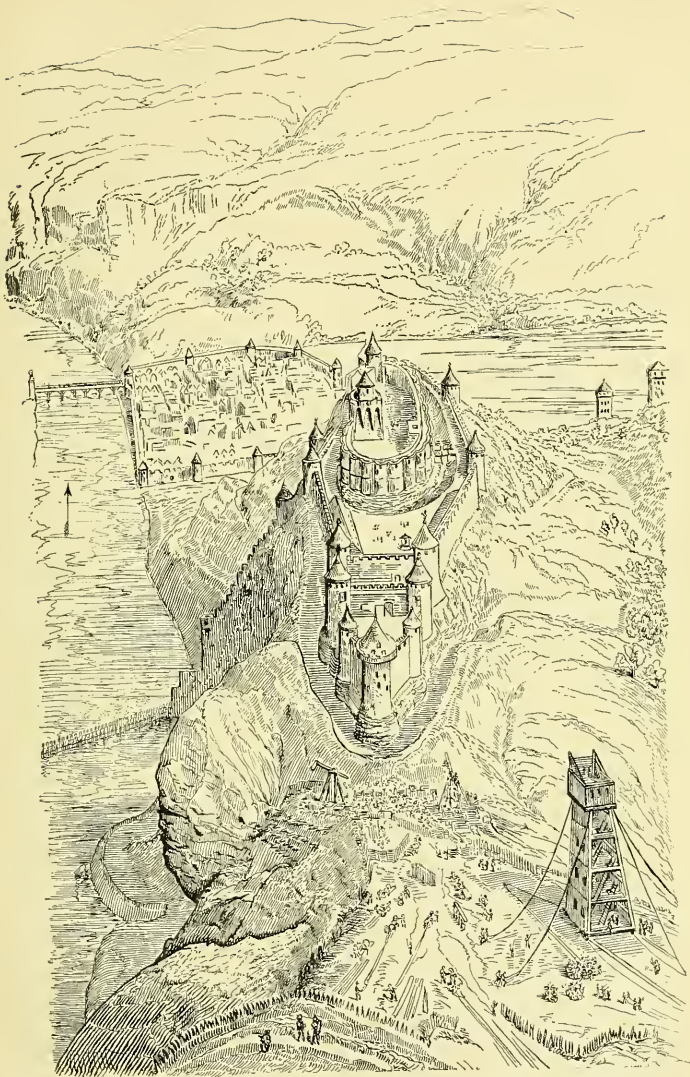
"Lusignan was so much occupied in carrying out the commands of the King, as well as in establishing Ludovic, the best archer among his crossbowmen, with me at the River Tower, that it was not until the wretched condition of the outcasts was brought to his personal notice, as they swarmed about his tower, that he bethought him to petition the King for them. Even then it was in his own interest that he did so. A heron had flown over the tower, and I loosed the goshawk, which raked off [flew in a straight line], fastening its claws on the heron's neck. The quarry was heavy, and bore down its captor in its fall, when some famished boys, who had watched the pursuit, dashed down from the cliffs, and seizing both birds devoured them ravenously, hardly waiting to strip off the feathers. Ludovic shouted to them to leave the hawk or the archers would

fire upon them; but hunger had banished all fear, and they would rather have died with the hawk's flesh in their teeth than have lived to starve.

“ Lusignan would not allow Ludovic's threat to be carried out, and when he recounted the incident to the King the latter cried : ‘ In God's name let these poor people go where they will. I count them as mine own subjects since they are rejected by our enemies.’ This clemency came too late for hundreds who had already died of starvation or gone mad upon the cliffs.

“ Philip had possession now of all the region below the castle, but the fortress could only be taken by attacking it from the higher land. The main army established itself on this elevated plateau and the investiture was complete. But to fortify his camp with a palisade, to build towers, and mount the huge engines necessary for an assault required time ; autumn grew to winter, and if the grand marshal Starvation was engaged on the French side to assist in the reduction of the castle, the stern general Winter, with all his legions of ice and snow and bitter wind, attacked our unprotected camps in the interest of the besieged, who were snugly housed.

“ Now the siege proper began. Richard, foreseeing that the assault would take place from this quarter, had strongly fortified the triangular bastion, or outwork, which lay between the plateau and the fortress itself. This advanced fort was completely isolated on every side by a deep and wide moat. Its only connection with the castle was by a bridge, which, whenever it became necessary to abandon the bastion, could be drawn up by a windlass, manipulated on the castle side, thus closing the doorway and leaving the bastion detached. The bastion was provided with towers connected by a *chemin de ronde* on the top of the *courtines*, or walls. Both the walls and the towers were topped with battlements forming breastworks for the defenders. On the central tower was mounted a mangonel, or engine for throwing to a distance huge stones, a great heap of which had been piled beside it. In the two side towers were catapults which commanded the moat at the foot of the larger tower, and in the earlier part of the siege rendered efforts at mining unsuccessful. Along the ramparts of the wall skilful crossbowmen were stationed, who picked off the commanding officers, and the men who worked the engines, as well as the pioneers whose business it was to



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF GAILLARD.

fill in the moat with trunks of trees and earth, and to stampede the oxen which drew the carts laden with this material to the edge of the ditch.

“The battering-ram could not be made to play against the wall of the tower until the ditch was filled in, but so deadly a fire was kept up by the besieged that it seemed impossible to approach the moat and many men were killed in the attempt. At length a “cat,” or long shed on rollers, whose roof of strong oaken beams was protected with green hides, was trundled forward, worked by men inside, until it reached the edge of the moat. Carts of rubbish were then backed through this tunnel and their contents dumped into the moat. By this means the part directly in front of the main tower was filled, and the cat advanced so that it touched the wall. Then a *bosson*, or battering-ram on wheels, was rolled down an inclined track under cover of the cat, and by the combined efforts of twenty strong men worked backward and forward until the repeated blows of its iron beak began to drill a hole in the wall. The besieged were perfectly aware of what was going on, and from the flanking towers barrels of Greek fire were thrown by the catapults on the roof of the cat. The raw hides, however, prevented the roof from catching fire. The wall

was cracking : it was evident that in another hour a breach would be effected.

“ Roger de Lacy had provided for the emergency and had filled the lower story of the tower with several cartloads of earth, so that when, with infinite labour, the great wall was finally bored through, the pioneers encountered a solid mass of earth, and, although cracked, the upper walls did not settle.

“ Though their enthusiasm was somewhat lessened, this device merely retarded their efforts. The *bosson* was withdrawn and the soldiers worked with pickaxe and shovel to clear the interior of the tower of the earth. This was the work of an entire day, and while it was going on the King caused two trebuchets¹ to be set up out of range of the catapults on the tower, which hurled huge trunks of trees and great stones clear over the walls into the courtyard of the fort. But this did no mischief whatever, for the court was quite empty, all of the garrison having mounted to the towers and walls. At length the engineer of one of the trebuchets got the range of the platform of the main tower, and discharged

¹ Machines acting by means of a great weight fastened to the short arm of a lever which, being let fall, raised the long arm with great velocity and hurled stones with much force.

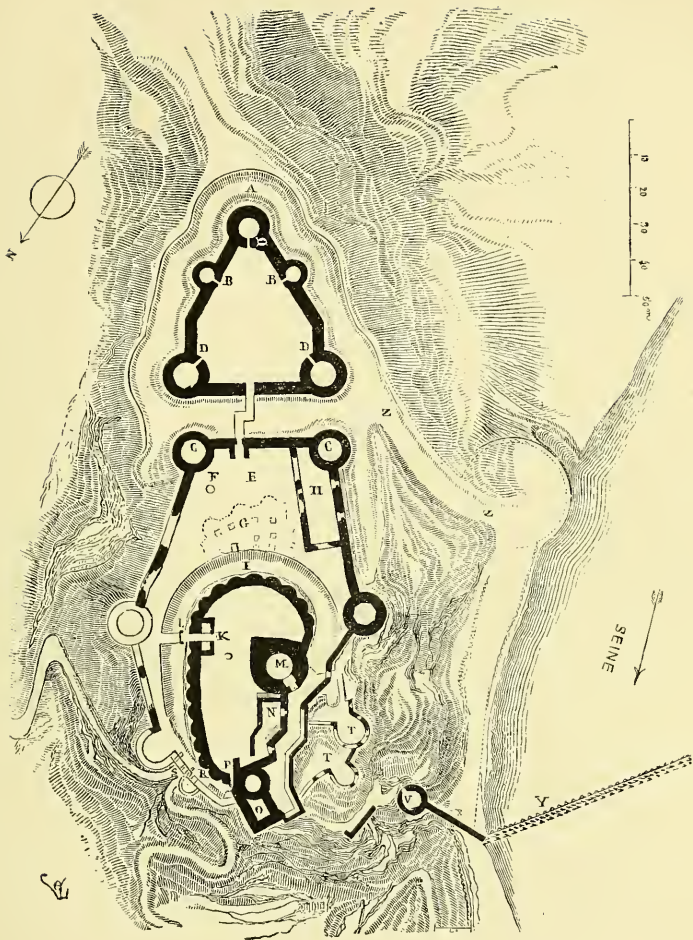
such an immense fragment of stone upon it that it not only killed the worker of the mangonel, but broke the engine itself into a thousand fragments. As the trebuchet continued with the same deadly aim to pile stones upon the platform the tower had to be abandoned, though the two catapults continued their fire and prevented any advance of archers to the edge of the moat.

“At length the pioneers working within the lower story of the tower cleared it of earth, only to find that the ladder-opening through which they expected to mount into the next story had been covered with boards and by a heap of stones. Wood and tar was brought and the lower room was nearly filled and set on fire, the besiegers retiring through the cat to a safe vantage-ground to await the result. As no one dared enter the tower from the roof on account of our trebuchets it soon became a blazing caldron ; but the walls fell in, so far smothering the flames as to make it possible for the defenders of the walls on each side to keep the fire from spreading.

“A breach was now made, but while our men waited for the burning ruins to cool before entering over them, the English constructed a barricade behind which they

mounted trebuchets and mangonels, while the two catapults on the side towers were also pointed toward the breach. The first onslaught was repulsed, but the watchers on the towers seeing that we were preparing to advance in greater numbers and better order, and that the French would undoubtedly gain possession of the court, and then, if it were not destroyed, of the bridge to the second fortress, the order was given to retire from the outpost into the bailey, pulling up the drawbridge after the last man had crossed. The retreat was accomplished in good order, the besieged carrying their munitions of war with them. In February we took possession of the bastion, only to find that the English had filled in the well and had left the place stripped of everything which could be of any service to us.

“It was the first step to be taken, however, and King Philip and all his army were greatly cheered to think that we were driving them in. The fortress was still of commodious size, as you see, and had been put into the best possible condition for a siege, for Richard had munitioned it admirably (see Note A). Blocks of stone were quarried out of the cliff and piled up in the bailey, and smaller heaps were



GROUND PLAN OF THE CHÂTEAU GAILLARD.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A. HIGH ANGLE TOWER. | N. THE ENCAMPMENT. |
| B. B. SMALLER SIDE TOWERS. | O. POSTERN TOWER. |
| C. C. D. D. CORNER TOWERS. | P. POSTERN GATE. |
| E. OUTER ENCEINTE OR LOWER COURT. | R. R. PARAPET WALLS. |
| F. THE WELL. | S. GATE FOR ENCAMPMENT. |
| G. H. BUILDINGS IN THE LOWER COURT. | T. T. FLANKING TOWERS. |
| I. THE MOAT. | V. RIVER TOWER OCCUPIED BY LUSIGNAN. |
| K. ENTRANCE GATE. | X. CONNECTING WALL. |
| L. THE COUNTERSCARP. | Y. THE STOCKADE IN THE RIVER. |
| M. THE KEEP. | Z. Z. THE GREAT DITCHES. |

placed beside every mangonel and catapult on the roofs of the towers.

“ There was a good stock of fuel stored in the caverns which were formed by quarrying the stone, sufficient to serve the castle all winter, and an abundance of water was provided by the three wells, which were supposed to be one thousand feet deep, though, as the castle was only three hundred feet above the level of the river, this estimate is probably exaggerated.

“ Ludovic, the archer who was associated with me at the River Tower, had a friend named Bogis, a fearless man of an inquiring mind. He was very much interested in the quarries under the castle. A deserter told him that the only entrance to them was from the castle bailey ; but Bogis was not so sure, and was constantly prowling about the outside of the cliff in the hope of finding a concealed door. At one point he said he could hear the pick-axes of the men within, and he marked this place as a good spot for mining. Unfortunately it was in an exposed position and under the range of one of the towers, and the commander of the miners would not attempt operations there. So Bogis continued to prowl.

“ The besieged were in good spirits at this

time, the deserter told us. They were only 180 men, but they could all be depended upon, and as only sixty were kept on guard except when we attacked they had two-thirds of the time to rest. Provisions were plenty and there were frequent banquets, at which Bertran de Born's battle-songs were sung so lustily that the armour rattled on the walls of the great hall.

“Do you know those *chansons de guerre* of Richard's friend? Here is one,”—and Papiol sang with spirit :

“ I love to see all scattered around,
 Pavilions, tents, on the martial ground,
 And my spirit finds it good
 To see on the level plains beyond
 Gay knights and steeds caparisoned.
 It pleases me when the lancers bold
 Set men and armies flying ;
 And it pleases me, too, to hear around
 The voice of the soldiers crying ;
 And joy is mine
 When the castles strong, besiegèd, shake,
 And walls, uprooted, totter and crack ;
 And I see the foemen join
 On the moated shore all compassed round
 With the palisade and the guarded mound.

‘ I tell you that nothing my soul can cheer,
 Or banqueting, or reposing,

The Siege of Château Gaillard 315

Like the onset cry of "Charge them!" rung
From each side, as in battle closing,
Where the horses neigh,
And the call to "Aid!" is echoing loud;
And there on the earth the lowly and proud
In the fosse together lie;
And yonder is piled the mangled heap
Of the brave that scaled the trenches steep.'"

"That was better stuff to give men stomach for fighting than the wailing of Gauclm Faidit.

"Until actively employed in combating, the men were kept at work making arrows and practising manœuvres and running along the *chemin de ronde* to the succour of different towers, according as De Lacey's signal horn rang out from his station in the highest outlook. In one of the towers opening from the bailey, Richard had established a singular man whom he called a Spanish physician, and who had been sent to him by his friend Sancho of Navarre. He had been in Toledo and had learned something of the arts of the Moor, and it was even whispered among the soldiers that he was a Moorish alchemist, for he had fitted up the lower story of his tower as a laboratory, and strange fires were seen to glow within it, whose smoke emitted most unchristian odours. He worked harder than ever now, and De

Lacey was delighted when he was informed that he was busy constructing Greek fire, which he had seen used in Palestine.

“The deserter assured us that the King and Queen were not within the castle, but my master would not wholly credit his word. It was an old trick, he said, for a beleaguered garrison to send out a pretended deserter to report things differently from what they were. There were two women—this I had discovered—in the Governor’s house adjoining the donjon keep; but these, the man said, were the wife of De Lacey and the Countess of Salisbury, the affianced of William Longsword, who had been sent to England on some errand before the siege, and had been detained there by King John’s orders.

“So the siege went on. It had lasted eight months when Bogis entered our tower nearly wild with excitement. It happened that my master was with us, warming himself at the fire of driftwood which had been washed ashore from the broken stockade and which we had utilised to make a cheerful blaze, but he was not in a merry humour, for not a pigeon had been sent from the castle and he feared that they had been broiled and eaten. But when Bogis plunged in, stuttering and sputtering,

for his mouth was full of too big a matter for him to spit it forth at once, and we understood at last that he had discovered a small window opening into the moat from the underground caverns, my master's face lightened. The fosse was dry, and Bogis desired only to be let down into it with a few other companions, when, climbing on each other's shoulders, they would enter that window and spy out the land. My lord bettered that notion with the counsel that once within they should get them as soon as possible to the bailey drawbridge, which they should let fall, so that he and his troop, who would be waiting in the bastion, could rush in and surprise the garrison. Ludovic volunteered at once to go with Bogis, and he chose him three other daring fellows for the business,—Eustaches, Manassés, and Ori. I longed to go also, but my master said gruffly that I had not prospered so well with my chicken hawks as to be trusted with so weighty a matter.

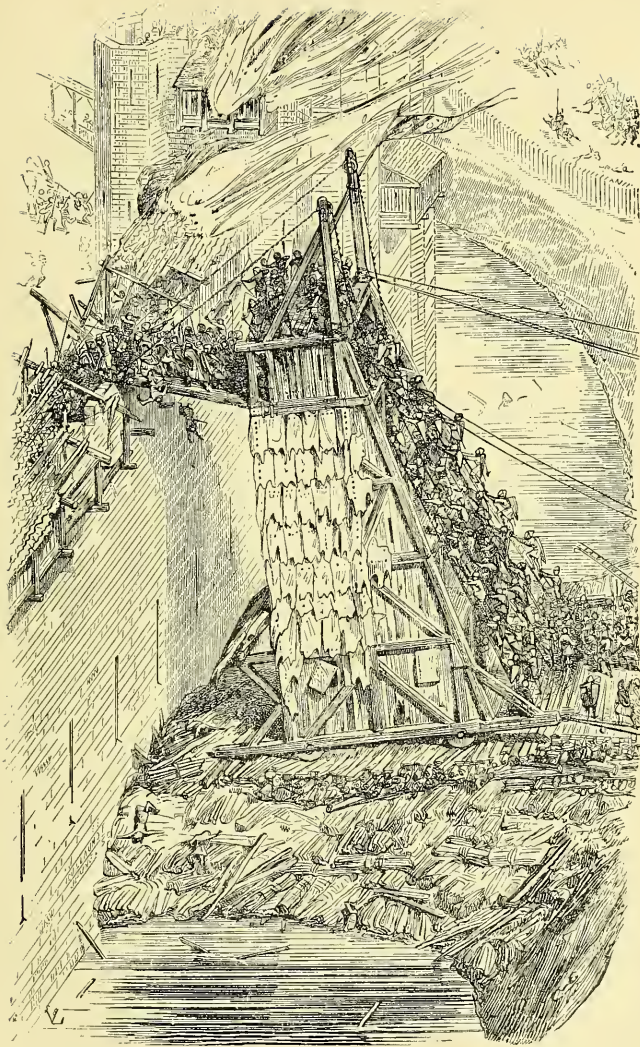
“These others, at the peril of their lives, entered upon the adventure, and discovered when they had entered the window that they were not in the cellar stables, but in a little crypt set round with tombs. Mounting by a narrow stair they found themselves within the

chapel, where a fair lady was saying her prayers. She fled with a shriek at the appearance of Bogis, who came up sword in hand. He followed her to the door, where he waited for the arrival of his companions before venturing out into the bailey, in which were a number of soldiers. At the lady's outcry some of these backed a cart of tar barrels, which they set on fire, against the chapel door. Bogis and his men seeing themselves so imprisoned, made such a racket hewing at the door with their battle-axes that the soldiers in the bailey believed that a large body of soldiers were swarming up from the crypt, and fled for their lives into the castle's inner court.

“The bailey was left empty, but Lusignan and his men waiting in front of the entrance which connected it with the bastion could not immediately enter, for Bogis and his companions, shut up within the chapel, could not rush through the flames of the tar barrels, which had aided them in demolishing the door, but now stifled them with their smoke. Abandoning the door, which they had lost time in hewing, they broke the windows with their battle-axes, and at length climbed out and let down the drawbridge. Lusignan's men marched in in

good order and, wheeling slightly to the right, pressed to the entrance of the castle. But the defenders had had time to man the many-towered walls, to recover from their surprise, and to grasp the situation. Richard's ingenuity was now demonstrated. A movable bridge high in air connected the castle with one of the towers of the outer walls, so that though the bailey was in the possession of the French, the six great towers with their connecting *courtines* which hemmed it in were still in the hands of the besieged, and from these they kept up from all sides a galling fire on the invaders. The French saw that unless this *chemin de ronde* (see Note B) was secured the bailey was only for them an arena of death. Evidently the next feat to be performed was to disconnect the outer walls from the main fortress by destroying the bridge, to reach which it was necessary for us to thread a narrow lane between the walls of the outer and inner enclosure, and close to the great donjon, from whose battlements molten lead was continually raining. Lusignan would not allow his men to venture unprotected into such a trap, and a *beffroi*, covered on all sides with green rawhides and manipulated from within by a few resolute men, was trundled along be-

tween the walls, from whose tops projectiles of all kinds were poured upon it, with showers of Greek fire. In spite of its protection the roof of the *beffroi* caught, and the flames streamed upward. Nothing daunted, the soldiers within continued to roll it forward, until they had placed it directly under the bridge. Then they deserted the burning tower and made a dash for safety. In vain: they were all shot down before reaching their ranks. But the burning engine remained, and the bridge was ignited by the very flames which the besieged had kindled. A few crossed to the castle while it was burning, but the greater part of the defenders, scattered along the long line of battlements, did not understand their situation until the charred planks fell and they saw themselves cut off from the stronghold. These deserted the *courtines* and collected in the Magian's Tower, but as they were deprived of provisions and water they soon saw that there was no hope in their situation, and surrendered. Our forces now took possession of the bailey with its surrounding walls and towers, its chapel and outbuildings, and the great underground caverns, and we now entered upon the third stage of the siege, the reduction of the real stronghold, in which the English were



ATTACK BY THE DRAWBRIDGE FROM THE BEFFROI.

Thus described by Froissart:

“Two belfries of great timber with III. stages, every belfry on four great wheels and the sides were covered with cure boly [*cuir bouilli*, rawhide], to defend them from fire.”

now straitly shut up. It had been a long and weary business and we had not much to boast. The leaves upon the trees were green when we gaily spread our pavilions around Gaillard. We had seen them turn sere and fall, and the wind had whistled snow and ice through the leafless branches. Our men had died by hundreds. Various distempers induced by the cold played havoc among our soldiery, who shivered in their comfortless tents and saw with envy the great fires glaring behind the thick castle walls and heard in their misery songs of revelry each night. We learned afterward that only twenty of the English died during the siege and that up to the last they had hopes of holding out until spring should make it possible for John to lead an army to their relief. We also began to dread this. The roads were an ell deep in mud, but they would soon become settled, the weather was much milder, and it was evident that we must hasten to complete our work before we were ourselves hemmed in. This was borne in upon Lusignan's mind more emphatically by an accident which happened at this time.

“Ludovic, after his exploit with Bogis, had returned to the River Tower. He was a great hearty fellow and I liked him well, and we

took turns in watching for pigeons. One day I heard him shout, and rushing to the platform saw that *two* pigeons had been sent off at the same instant. Ludovic had loosed both the falcons. This which I hold in my fist, the great falcon of King Richard, soared, struck, and retrieved its prey, bringing the quarry back to the tower and dropping it at my feet. The little *eyess* struck bravely, but the pigeon was too heavy and it let fall the wounded bird below the castle wall and returned without it to the block.

“There was a letter under the wing of the pigeon which the great falcon had brought back which my master read with eagerness. It was written in a lady’s hand, cramped to get all possible matter in the least possible space, on the very lightest parchment, and read as follows :

‘BELOVED :

‘Pardon my slowness of understanding. I have but just comprehended why these pigeons were sent, and that thou art somewhere near, watching over my safety. I might have known this of thy fealty, but I have been very wretched, thinking myself deserted, and wondering what would happen to me when the castle surrenders, for render it must unless we are relieved. But now I trust to thee to care for me when that terrible moment comes. I will hide in the strong-tower, but will



flutter my pink scarf from the casement and thou wilt secure my safeguard.'

"The letter had neither address nor signature, but Lusignan was certain that it was meant for him, and was written by Isabelle. He at once displayed his banner with the crescent from the top of the tower, and was wild to possess the other pigeon which had fallen on the cliff. This falcon would not stoop for dead quarry, so it was of no use to send him forth. There were no starving people on the cliff now to snatch the game and it lay in full sight. My lord was about to issue out to secure it, but Ludovic had already started. He climbed the cliff bravely, secured the bird, and started back, waving his hand to us gaily as we cheered him on. But there had been other watchers of that exploit, and an arrow whistling from the bow of Maître Yvon, the commander of the English arbalisters, struck Ludovic between the shoulders. He gave a great leap into the air, and fell not far from the foot of our tower. Lusignan rushed out and bore him in, and he died in his arms, muttering, 'To be shot in the back like a coward!'

"My master was sure that this was John's work, and that he had suffered his Queen to

write this letter to make him show himself, until he read the letter under the wing of the second pigeon, which lay dead within the breast of the dead man.

“This letter was from Roger de Lacey to King John, urging him to take the field for the relief of his beleaguered subjects, ‘For,’ said the Constable of Chester, ‘no matter how strong a fortress may be, it must render at last unless help come from without.’

“This letter gave Lusignan matter for thought, for it proved that they within the castle thought that the pigeons had been sent them from Rouen as a means of communication with their friends in that city. Since this was so, the lady who wrote the love-letter was not the Queen, and the letter was not intended for Lusignan but for some English knight.

“This irked my master sore, but he carried the intercepted letters to the King, who saw well that now was the time to strike the final blow.

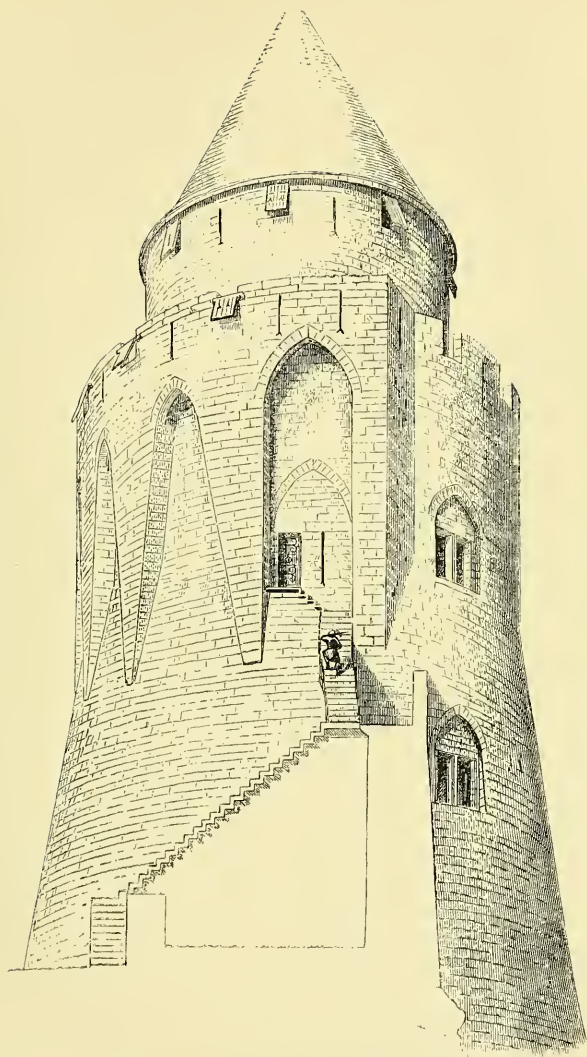
“The fortress which it was now our business to take was the strongest that had ever been seen in France. It was surrounded not by ordinary walls, but by an *enceinte* consisting of nineteen half-circular towers whose walls were three yards thick and had no win-

dow or opening of any kind from the moat at their foot to the battlements thirty feet above. The great donjon-keep on one side was eight yards in diameter within, and its walls were four and a half yards thick. Its roof was flat, to accommodate the engines, whose projectiles were kept in the upper story, while its machicolated battlements were of stone instead of the inflammable wooden hoarding hitherto used. Even should the French take the courtyard, De Lacey boasted that the donjon was impregnable. His boasting was vain, for here Richard had made his one fatal mistake. On the 6th of March, 1204, our miners, operating from the shelter of the underground caverns, caused one of the semicircular towers to fall in. The débris filled the moat and formed a causeway on which the besiegers swarmed through the breach and into the court. De Lacey sounded the signal for a retreat from the walls to the donjon-keep, but when the defenders descended from their posts on the battlements, they found the court filled with the French, and had to fight their way across to the donjon door. By an excess of caution on the part of Richard, this door had been cut high up in the donjon wall and was approached by a narrow staircase, with an enfiling *meur-*

trière where it turned sharply. A most excellent device to prevent an attacking force from entering, since it could only be mounted single file, but unfortunately presenting the same difficulties to the refugees who now sought entrance. Roger de Lacey and his 160 men were able to cut their way only to the foot of the staircase, where they surrendered to the tremendous odds by which they were hemmed in.¹

“The prisoners were marched to Paris and later many of them were exchanged and reached England in safety. The women and the caretakers of the wounded had already taken refuge in the donjon before the last disaster, and De Lacey in his surrender demanded their safeguard, which was solemnly promised. But when Lusignan, at the command of the King, took possession of the citadel he found within no woman, priest, or physician, only the wounded lying on the floor, but so well cared for that it was evident their nurses had only recently left. De Lacey was as much astonished as the captors, and

¹ Richard's inventions were improved upon and his mistake corrected by the castle-builders who followed him. The plan of the donjon of Étampes is a quatrefoil, giving better flanking than a cylindrical tower, and the donjon of the Louvre had its door on the ground floor, to give easy ingress to its garrison when sore beset.



KEEP OF THE CHÂTEAU GAILLARD.

feared they might have precipitated themselves from the top of the tower, but no traces of them could be found in the trench below.

“Leaving Lusignan with a small body of men to garrison the castle, King Philip swept on through Normandy. After the fall of Château Gaillard the remainder of his campaign was but a triumphal march. Falaise, the fortress next in strength, resisted only a week. Guy de Thonars took Mont St. Michel, and Normandy and Brittany were French. Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and the greater part of Aquitaine sent in their submission, and ‘from the lordship of a vast empire that stretched from the Tyne to the Pyrenees, John saw himself reduced at a blow to the realm of England.’

“He had fled overseas before his faithful soldiers shut up in Château Gaillard had given up hoping for his appearance, and Lusignan learned to his intense disappointment that he had taken the Queen with him, and that she had not been within the castle during the siege. He was not long left in uncertainty as to the identity of the lady who sent the message which the falcon had captured, for the day after he was left in charge of the dismantled fortress an English knight bearing a

flag of truce appeared before the gate. It was Longsword, who, released from detention in England, had braved all dangers to find his bride.

“He was distracted by her disappearance, and took little comfort from my master’s opinion that she must have escaped from the castle by some secret way. None such was known to Longsword, and he was in the depths of despair. Lusignan pledged him his word as a knight to put forth every possible effort to find and restore the missing ladies, and in token of this promise took from the wall of the trophy hall and gave to Longsword a gauntlet which had belonged to Richard. It was a part of the treasure of Chalus and had been restored to my lord by Philip as his right. Though unsuspected by its owner it may have possessed some magic power, for as Longsword drew it on while walking dejectedly across the castle court something very remarkable happened.

“My master had been correct in his suspicions. Within the thick wall of the donjon there was a secret staircase leading by an underground passage to a ruined mill on the river bank. At the mill were hidden a boat and provisions. It was a forlorn hope,

the last resort in case every other means of escape failed. Only Richard and the Moorish physician knew of this secret way, for the workmen who constructed it had been changed so frequently that none of them knew the relation of the different parts or the design of the whole. When the two women, the physician, and the priest, who were tending the wounded in the donjon, saw the fall of the great wall, the rout of their defenders, and the French swarming into the castle court, they understood perfectly that all was lost. And when the physician touched a hidden spring and a tall dresser moved into the room, disclosing the staircase, they followed him without question, only to find that the shock of the falling wall had shaken down a vast quantity of earth and choked the subterranean passage.

“Remounting the staircase they discovered to their dismay that the door had closed firmly behind them, and that their united efforts were powerless to open it. The staircase was lighted by a narrow loophole, and looking out upon the court they could see that the French were in full possession. They determined that for the present they would make no outcry. The priest had caught up a basket of bread and a jug of water as he closed in the retreat.

They had an abundance of fresh air and they decided for the present to remain quietly in their hiding-place.

“They watched the departure of the main body of the French, and began to wonder whether the castle was to be abandoned. ‘It would be a pretty fancy,’ said the priest, ‘if they should decide to burn it and us with it, like rats in the walls.’

“The suggestion was so terrible, as well as the fear of being left to starve to death, that they called aloud with all their force, but without attracting any attention. Two nights of discomfort and anxiety, two days of fear, and now their provisions had given out, and their voices were hoarse and weak. An ominous stillness reigned around, when suddenly (as the young Countess of Salisbury told us afterward) an unreasoning impulse made her fly to the narrow window and recognise her dear lord, just mounting his horse. She cried aloud, but though he paused irresolutely and looked around, he fancied the faint cry of ‘William, beloved!’ was but an echo of his imagination. Through the narrow slit she thrust her arm and fluttered a rose-coloured scarf. He did not see it, but there were sharper eyes in the head of this good falcon chained to

the block. He shook his bells and beat the air with his strong wings. I had just brought Longsword's horse, and I unfastened the thong, wondering what quarry the royal bird recognised. Longsword drew rein and watched the bird mechanically. It mounted, stooped, and tangled its claws in the scarf, then flew with it to me at my call. But Longsword was off his horse, and had snatched his lady's favour before I had time to release the falcon. One end of the torn scarf still waved from the window. I brought a scaling-ladder, and the knight mounted to the opening, learned who was imprisoned within the walls, and how to release them.

“ My master treated them most courteously, and allowed the ladies to go away with Longsword, furnishing them with an escort to the coast. The priest, too, was given his freedom, but the physician was retained, for he possessed the knowledge of many useful secrets, among others the manufacture of Greek fire. This man was not particular whom he served, and Lusignan re-established him in the Magian's Tower, which Richard had fitted up for him, where he continued the exercise of his black art. He had a great fascination for me, and I used often to repair thither to watch him at

his work, though at times I was all but choked by the unchristian odours which issued from his laboratory. He had a precious elixir, which he kept hidden in a phial of rock crystal; but one day I entered and surprised him as he had poured some of it into a glass. When his back was turned for a moment my falcon flew from my wrist and drank from the glass. I made a loud outcry: 'He is poisoned! my beautiful bird will die!' The alchemist turned pale. 'He will not die,' he gasped; 'he will never die. It was the Elixir of Life!' He drove me from his laboratory, and would never suffer me to enter it again, for he feared that I would rob him of his precious elixir. There was no need: while fondling my pet, which I believed poisoned, a single drop from his beak had touched my lips, and I, too, can never die."

"I understand now your great age," I said; "but tell me more of the armour which you say may have had something to do in bringing Longsword and his betrothed together. What made you suspect that it had any agency in the matter?"

"This same Moorish physician. He pointed to the rest of the armour in the great hall when he was brought before my master after his capture, and promised, if his life was spared, to tell

him a great secret. This was that the jewels with which it was studded had the power of bringing together faithful lovers.

“My master did not believe him, but long years thereafter, while arranging his armoury at Le Croizant, he came upon the jewelled armour which had been sent from Castle Gaillard. He put it on out of mere idleness and that night he heard that the widowed Queen of King John had returned to her native city of Angoulême. Lusignan’s hair was white but his youthful ardour was not cooled, and Isabelle, whose life as a Queen had been one of wretchedness, in her thirty-fifth year fulfilled the promise which she had made in her fifteenth, and, marrying her faithful lover, proved that the tenderest love of all is an old love revived.

“I remained with them as long as they lived, and often my lady would have me in her bower to tell the story of this falcon. Le Croizant is a ruin now. No one goes there, and so I have come to Gaillard and made myself and the bird a nest in the River Tower, and there we live over the siege in telling its story to appreciative people like Monsieur and Madame.

“Thank you, Monsieur, for the coin. No, I could not sell my bird. You might be kind to

him, but you see you will die some day, while I can care for him for ever."

He went away down the hill to the River Tower—and we saw him no more. Several years later, when visiting Les Andelys again, we inquired for the young man who had read and studied so much about the past that he believed he had lived in it.

"But yes," our innkeeper replied, "the Scattered One. He is a sad warning, Madame, to those who read romances. He fancied that he and his bird could never die. Figure to yourself the imbecility! Ah well, what would you! A hunter took the falcon for a wild hawk and shot it, and that foolish Papiol shut himself in his tower and died of grief. The room was full of books. We burned them all that they might do no more mischief."

NOTE A

Though Richard called Gaillard his "daughter of one year," he had gone on strengthening it and furnishing it until his death, and the pay-rolls of "Échiquier Normand" for 1198 and 1199, preserved in the Tower of London, give us some idea of its strength and resources.

Some of the items are :

For five thousand arrow-heads,.....	£	10
" wheat and wine.....		227

The Siege of Château Gaillard 335

For ten thousand herrings.....	£ 14
“ Sawal, son of Henri, and his associates, Robert and Matthew, master masons dur- ing two years.....	1,700
“ carpenters	3,350
“ wood-cutters.....	2,320
“ inferior workmen.....	9,730
“ guardians and porters.....	543
“ smiths.....	250
“ arrow-makers.....	200
“ diggers of moats	178
“ digging three wells.....	300
“ asses	4,040
“ mill in the castle.....	149

The total expenditure by Richard is estimated at £178,000, an enormous sum for those days.

The accounts give the names, not only of the master masons, of whom Sawal seems to have been the director, and, under Richard, engineer and architect, but also of many of the employees who were members of the permanent garrison. Maître Yvon, a Norman, was head of the arbalisters; Girard de Flandre and his brother Arnouet, armourers, were employed from the fête of St. Jean to that of St. Cecile, making 152 days at 42 sous per day. Alain Wastehouse commanded 106 “sergents,” or Norman tenants of Richard’s lands in the neighbourhood, who owed homage or honourable service under arms to the King’s person and were considered of higher rank than regular soldiers, only repairing to the castle when it was in danger.

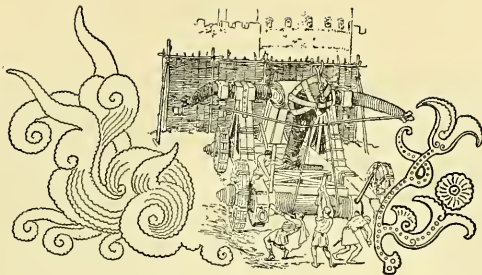
The garrison was divided into three relays, each serving one-third of the time, so that the walls were manned night and day.

"All of these knights were sheathed in steel
 With belted sword and spur on heel ;
 They quitted not their harness bright,
 Neither by day nor yet by night :
 They lay down to rest
 With corselet laced,
 Pillowed on buckler cold and hard ;
 They carved at the meal
 With gloves of steel,
 And they drank the red wine through the helmet barred."

NOTE B

The *chemin de ronde* was the walk along the battlements of the outer walls ; its sentries commanded not only the exterior of the walls, but the court within. Scott's description of this straggling patrol-walk is interesting in this connection :

"The turret held a narrow stair,
 Which, mounted, gave you access where
 A parapet's embattled row
 Did seaward round the castle go ;
 Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
 Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
 Sometimes in platform broad extending.
 Its varying circle did combine
 Bulwark and bartizan and line,
 And bastion, tower, and vantage coign."



CHAPTER VIII

THE WAR OF THE THREE JOANS

Aux Ruines de Montfort l'Amaury

Je vous aime, ô débris ! et surtout quand l'automne
Prolonge en vos échos sa plainte monotone.
Sous vos abris croulants je voudrais habiter,
Vieille tours, que le temps vers l'autre incline,
Et qui semble de loin, sur la haute colline,
Deux noirs géants prêts à lutter.

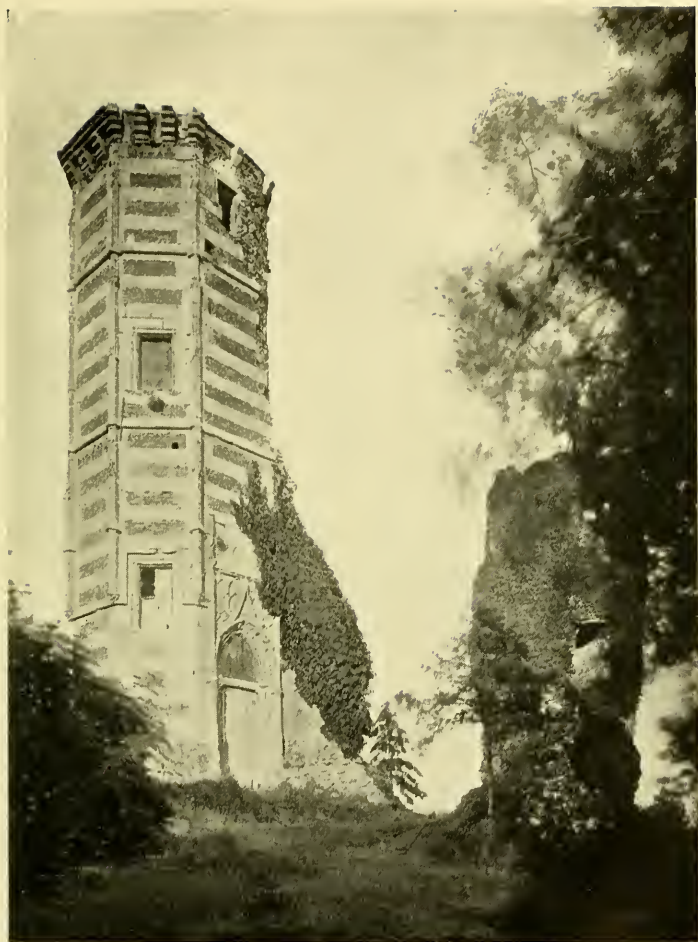
Lorsque d'un pas rêveur foulant les grandes herbes,
Je monte jusqu'à vous, restés forts et superbes !
Je contemple longtemps vos créneaux meurtriers,
Et la tour octogone et ses briques rougies,
Et mon œil, à travers vos brèches elargies,
Voit jouer des enfants, où mouraient des guerriers.

Écoutez de vos murs ceux qui leur chute amuse !
Laissez le seul poète y conduire sa muse,
Lui qui donne du moins une larme au vieux fort ;
Et, si l'air froid des nuits sous vos arceaux murmure,
Croit qu'une ombre a froissé la gigantesque armure
De l'Amaury, comte de Montfort.—VICTOR HUGO.

The legends of Provence wakened within us longings to penetrate farther into that charmed land of the troubadours; to follow the after-history of Raymond and Joan at Toulouse; to watch the Crusaders departing from Aigues-Mortes, or to listen to the very earliest traditions of how Aimeri of Narbonne defended his city from the Moors. More fascinating still was the possibility of finding traces in the crypts beneath the palace of the popes at Avignon of that subterranean, or rather subfluvian, passage which, dipping beneath the river Durance, is said to connect the palace with Château Renard on the opposite shore.

Mistral makes Nerto fly through this awesome tunnel, nearly fainting with fear, and stunned by the noise with which the river bowls great stones along its rock-lined alley overhead. We sympathised with Mr. Janvier when he says: "Modern engineers have had the effrontery to assert that the passage is impossible, but I am the last person in the world who would set an idle engineering fiction in array against an established poetic fact. I do not doubt for a moment that the passage exists."

We would like to have lived at Avignon at its period of greatest splendour, when the



OLD TOWER AT MONTFORT L'AMAURY.

popes reigned in their great castle, and the people

*“ dansaient, dansaient,
Sur le pont d'Avignon,”*

that famous bridge which the Hospitallers, the great military engineers of the time, built, with many another with hospice and chapel, to make the Roman roads practicable for travellers.

How thrilling a sight it would have been to watch a tournament in the lists between the double walls of Carcassonne, or, more fearful spectacle, the siege of those walls by old Simon de Montfort, and his death before Toulouse. But Provence with all its witchery was to be reserved for another season, and we turned northward, wandering among the châteaux of the Loire, until we found ourselves drawn again to Brittany, to trace in another group of castles the very same family of de Montfort from which sprang Simon, the scourge of Provence and the persecutor of the troubadours, who had developed the questionable tenets of the Albigenses.

As we sped from Paris on our way to Château La Joyeuse at the very beginning of our pilgrimage, we passed the ruins of the

birthplace of the family. On the site of this their most ancient ancestral castle, Montfort l'Amaury, there existed in the time of the Gauls a village with an oppidum, to which the Romans gave the name of *Mons fortis*, and this was the origin of the name of the powerful dukes of Brittany. Several daughters of the house became queens. France claims with greatest pride the twice-crowned Anne de Bretagne, successively wife of Charles VIII. and Louis XII. Other queens of this family have brought the country only disaster and bloodshed. Of one of these, Bertrarde, wife of Philip I., we have already found souvenirs at Angers, where, as Duchess of Anjou, she lived with her first husband, Foulque Rechin. Her niece, Luciane de Montfort, married Louis VI., and the war into which these two de Montfort queens plunged France was only less bloody than that which the intrepid Joan, or Jeanne, la Flamme carried on for twenty-five years to preserve the dukedom of Brittany for her son.

We found traces of the de Montforts again and again in our wanderings, always with the same family traits,—courage, ambition, obstinacy, and frequently unscrupulousness. They repeated not only the same characteristics but

the same names, so that it is often puzzling to differentiate the Amaurys, Simons, and Jeans.

Their original home is in ruins, but all through Brittany they built, conquered, or gained by matrimonial alliance other castles, and the blazing torch of Jeanne la Flamme scarred many another during the quarter of a century during which it flickered like a will-o'-the-wisp, or, gaining force, swept all before it in a tornado of fire.

Ploërmel, in the heart of Brittany, was to be the next centre from which our legend-grasping fingers would radiate like the tentacles of an octopus. We had promised Anatole, as we jaunted through Finistere, that after we had been to Touraine we would surely come to Ploërmel, and this promise was made on the assurance that it was the town of all Brittany richest in old traditions.

In its neighbourhood the old *chansons de geste* placed Merlin's castle of the Forest of Brœcilande, and in later times Ploërmel was the very vortex of that War of the Three Joans which in the Middle Ages drew every Breton into its maelstrom, and shook every castle in Brittany.

Our first excursion from Ploërmel was the

regulation one to Château Josselin, the home of the De Clissons.

The older portion of this beautiful château formed a part of the feudal stronghold in which centred more than one stirring episode of the war. Before launching into this period I was eager to learn whether there were any local traditions of Viviane's enchanted castle, and as we drove toward Josselin I strove to lead Anatole's memory backward to any legends which he might have heard of the very earliest times.

"Anatole," I said, "you know all the forests in the vicinity of Ploërmel?"

"None better, Madame. I was *garde-chasse* for the late Duke."

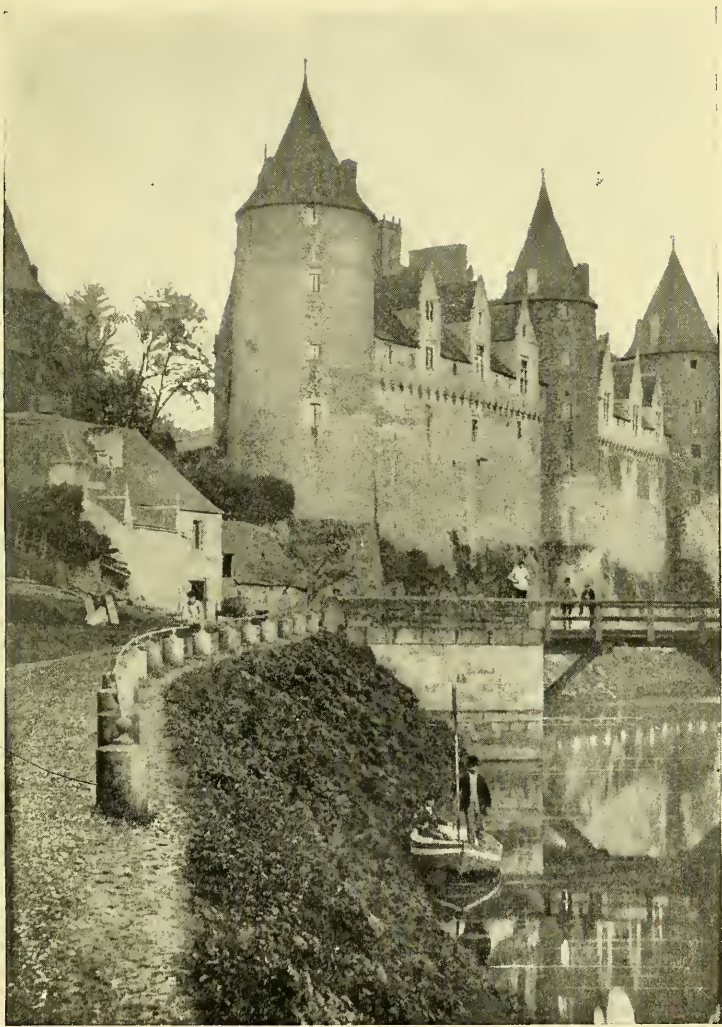
"So I have heard."

"And Monsieur le Duc was very fond of hunting and leased the right to chase the boar on the estates of his neighbours. I have ridden over every acre for miles around."

"Then you can doubtless tell me the exact whereabouts of the Forest of Brœcilande?"

Anatole shook his head doubtfully. "It cannot be a wood of any great extent," he replied. "I have never heard it mentioned."

"On the contrary it is an immense tract of country here in the heart of Brittany. It is



JOSSÉLIN—EXTERIOR VIEW.

celebrated in literature, and very wonderful things happened there, which I have read of even in English books.”

“*Ah, ça!* it exists then, probably, only in the imaginations of your English writers. They are great liars; it is scandalous what things they will write about France without ever having been here. If Madame saw it in a book it has doubtless no other existence.”

“But, Anatole, I have just been reading about it in a *French* book. The forest belonged to the Comte de Laval, and here is a detailed description of it made out for its proprietor.”

“The Comte de Laval? That is more reasonable. He had a surveyor from Paris go over the boundaries, for there was a dispute between him and the Duc de Rohan about some of the forests. It was all settled by law. If it is in the title-deeds of the Comte de Laval it is all right. He was a hard man, but a just. My father knew him.”

“Not this Comte de Laval, Anatole, for the paper of which I speak is dated August 30, 1467.”

“*Fichtre!* That was a long while ago.”

“Not so far back as the events which happened in this forest in which I am interested. I would not care a button for the locality but

that somewhere within its limits there is an enchanted castle in which Merlin was shut up in the sixth century."

"Does the Comte de Laval say so?"

"Yes. The description which was made out for him expressly states that this castle is to be sought for between Ploërmel and Montfort."

"*C'est curieux*; that might be anywhere about here. What else does the paper say about the forest?"

"A great deal. Listen :

'The said forest contains four chateaux and maisons fortes.

'Item : in the said forest are two hundred different woods, each having a different name, and as many fountains.

'Item : a wood named Au Seigneur, in which no venomous beast or insect can live.'

"That is true, Madame ; there is such a wood, though no man can ever find it. But the beasts know it well, and in the summer when the cattle are afflicted with swarms of maddening flies, they all set out for this wood, frantic and bellowing with pain, with their tails in the air, and they come back calmly at night, delivered from that pest, their bells chiming a psalm of thanksgiving. That is no fiction—it is gospel truth. A holy hermit lived there

long ago, who loved the beasts, at least the good ones, and would not have them tormented. It might be a good scheme to follow the next afflicted animals we see, and so, perhaps, come to the place Madame seeks."

"True, but the description does not state precisely that the enchanted castle was in this holy wood, which was only one of two hundred divisions of the forest. Many of the two hundred fountains seem to have been endowed with magical qualities. One is described that always boiled whenever the Sieur de Montfort came near it. No matter at what hour of the day or night or however dry the season, if the Sieur stood upon its margin the fountain bubbled up until its waves touched his feet, when it would sink again with a sobbing sound; and this it would do for no one else."

"That must have been because the nymph of the fountain was in love with the Sieur de Montfort. Poor little fairy; if he could have found the right spell, she might have become human for a part of the time at least, but those Montforts were all cruel, not *gentil* like the De Clissons."

"Then what I have read you of the Forest of Brœcilande does not seem impossible?"

"But no, Madame, especially if it was a long

while ago ; and I should like to know more about the enchanted castle."

"You have heard doubtless of King Arthur and his knights of the Table Round?"

Anatole nodded. "*Mais certainement* ; in history at the school when I was a boy, my schoolmaster was always telling us about him and the good St. Louis. Was he King of France before François Premier or afterwards, Madame?"

"Arthur was King of Great Britain, not of France, though the early Breton chronicles have much to say of him, and of his enchanter, Merlin. Indeed, all that the English know of Merlin was copied from old Breton manuscripts. Merlin was the son of a nun and of a devil, but all wickedness was driven out of him at baptism by a holy hermit, to whom he swore to do nothing contrary to the will of Jesus Christ. He was a powerful magician and performed many wonderful feats for King Arthur until he was imprisoned somewhere hereabouts in the Forest of Brœcilande by his wife Viviane. Have you never heard of their names?"

"Yes, Madame, but certainly ; still my mother is better versed in those matters than I, and as she is coming to Ploërmel to visit us shortly

she will doubtless be able to answer all Madame's inquiries."

So Zéphyre was coming to Ploërmel, and after all I might be granted a second opportunity for unravelling the entire mystery of the La Joyeuse grotesque face with its magical lodestone eyes. I was therefore all the more content to remain in the picturesque old town, absorbing the histories of the Montforts, the Lavals, and Du Guesclin as developed in the War of the Three Joans.

No conflict carried on entirely within and in the interests of a province in all "the eternal welter of little wars" is more dramatic than this war. It was really an electoral contest, more sanguinary but not more bitter than the wordy war we carry on in the United States when we elect a governor of New York. In April, 1341, the Duke of Brittany died in Caen childless, and the succession to the duchy was in dispute. As there was no direct heir it reverted to the Duke's next brother. But this next brother, Guy, Count of Penthievre, had died before him, and had left no sons—only a daughter, Joan (or Jeanne), married to Charles of Blois, nephew of Philip VI., King of France. The third brother, John, Count of Montfort, disputed his niece's claim under the Salic law, but

Joan insisted that while it ruled succession to the throne of France, it had no bearing on the governance of Brittany, and she appealed to her husband's uncle, the King of France. Philip at once championed her cause; while the Count of Montfort, who had seized the principal cities of Brittany, secured the support of the King of England.

It was a strange complication for the two kings who set forward their candidates to this gubernatorial election. Philip, who proclaimed himself in favor of woman's rights in Brittany, held his own throne by virtue of the Salic law, while Edward III. was defending succession in the male line only in a province of the very country in which he was fighting for his own pretensions to the crown through maternal descent. The situation was anomalous in another particular. The two countries were at truce, and while their armies renewed the fight in Brittany, France and England were declared *not* to be at war.

The conflict speedily resolved itself into a Ladies' War, for in the first campaign the Count of Montfort was carried prisoner to Paris and shut up in the Louvre. His wife, who was also named Joan, donned armour and rode from town to town at the head of the

English auxiliaries, and with her youthful son continued the war with great spirit. Besieged in the port of Hennebon she made a brilliant sortie and set fire to the tents and baggage-train of the French; and this conflagration did so much damage that it won for her the name of "Jeanne la Flamme."

Charles of Blois was made prisoner and shut up in the Tower of London. But Joan of Blois was of the same temper as Joan of Montfort. During the next year the Count of Montfort died, but the two Joans still fought doughtily. When Charles of Blois obtained his liberty, weary of the struggle, he signed a treaty giving up half of Brittany to the young son of the Count and Countess of Montfort; but his wife, Jeanne de Penthièvre, insisted that the province belonged to her and that he had no right to give what he did not own. "I married you," she said, "to defend my inheritance, not to yield the half of it," and the treaty was broken.

While these two Joans were heading the armies of France and England so obstinately, another Joan, the wife of Oliver I. of Clisson, threw herself into the conflict. Clisson was supposed to be the vassal of France, but Philip believed that he was intriguing with England, and had him arrested at a tournament in Paris and sum-

marily beheaded. Before this was generally known Joan de Clisson, in her revenge, rode with her husband's troops to a castle of the Count de Blois, was admitted without suspicion, and had the entire garrison, but one, put to the sword. She then fled to the Countess of Montfort and placed her revenge and the rights of her son, a boy of seven, in her service and protection. Joan of Clisson was a most valuable reinforcement. She was as intrepid and more cruel than the other Joans, and it was at his mother's side, fighting against France, that her little son learned the first lessons in warfare which afterwards were turned to such good account in defence of his country, and made Oliver II. of Clisson later one of the most famous constables of France.

The Battle of the Thirty was an episode of this war. The three Joans each possessed different castles scattered throughout Brittany, so that the scene of battle was not confined to any one locality. The de Penthièvres, the de Montforts, and the De Clissons were related and connected by marriage with nearly all the noble houses of Brittany, so that great complication of interests resulted, and it was very difficult for many of the seigneurs to decide to which party they belonged.

Just about the time that Joan of Clisson offered her services to the Countess of Montfort, Joan of Blois received an important reinforcement in the devotion to her cause of a young knight destined to make for himself a name as one of the greatest warriors of Christendom, Bertrand Du Guesclin. He was born near Rennes, at the castle of Motte Broun, and two of his ancestors were comrades of Godfrey de Bouillon in the First Crusade. He is spoken of as "the ugliest child from Rennes to Dinan, swarthy, thickset, broad-shouldered, big-headed, a bad fellow, always striking or being struck, whom his tutor abandoned without having been able to teach to read."

I happened to quote this statement to Anatole as we drove from Ploërmel to Château Josselin.

"Pardon, Madame," he objected; "it must have been in an English book that Madame found such a slander as that. If I may be permitted to speak, I will tell the whole truth of that matter—and who should know it better, seeing it was in this neighbourhood that the great Du Guesclin was born, and came to his first fame? It is true that they do say that he did not take to his books, but I do not blame him for that, for I have found them a bit diffi-

cult myself. Besides, that was not to be his profession, and in all matters pertaining to war there was not a more learned or more skilful man than he. His father taught him to ride, and the exercises of all kinds of arms,—the sword, the lance, the axe, and he taught himself to wrestle with the boys of the neighbourhood and the men of the castle, and to box, not with gloves as now, but heavily, as was the manner of those days; and he was prodigious strong and active withal, and could run, jump, swim, and climb trees.

“ But all this personal prowess was as nothing compared with his influence over the other boys. He had his father read him the tactics of those days, and he would assemble the boys in the barnyard, and for ever he would be drilling them. Their favourite exploit was to take castles, and pretending to do this they were continually climbing ladders up into the haymows, and escalading the great dove-cote tower to tear the pigeons from their nests. Every day some of the boys were carried home with broken arms or heads, but as Madame has a son, she knows that is the nature of boys, and that it is a miracle how any of them live to grow up. Bertrand was the most agile of them all. He could mount straight up a

ladder which two of the other boys would hold, and balance himself at the top like an acrobat after they had let go the rails.

“When he was sixteen or seventeen years old he longed for something more than mere play. There was to be a great tournament at Rennes in honour of the wedding of the same Jeanne de Penthièvre that you have been telling about, to Charles of Blois, and all the noblesse of Brittany would be there. Bertrand’s father had his armour furbished up, for he intended to take part, and Bertrand begged to go too, but his father would not suffer it and left him locked in his chamber. Scarcely had the old knight ridden away before Bertrand was out of his window, clambering down the wall with the help of the ivy. But at the stables a disappointment awaited him, for, as the entire family from his mother down wished to see the tournament, every horse had been taken and the stalls were empty. Only a donkey was braying in the paddock. *Houp la!* and there was Bertrand on the donkey, galloping away at a great rate to Rennes.”

But what befell Bertrand at the tournament and afterward is a long story which shall be told later.



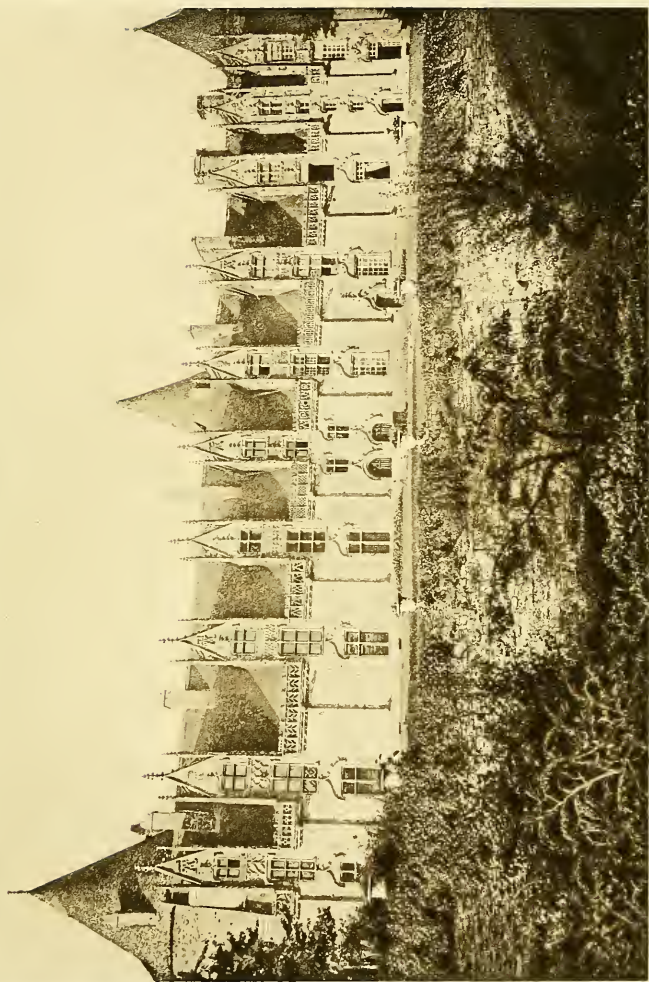
CHAPTER IX

THE STORY OF CHÂTEAU JOSSELIN AND TIPHAINE LA FÉE

“FOR we are coming now, Madame,” said Anatole, “to the famous battlefield of the Thirty. There is the monument; Madame can read the inscription. That was between the French and the English a long time ago. The English were in Ploërmel, but how they got there I am sure I do not know. They were commanded by Bembro, and the French had their headquarters at the château of Josselin; and they met half-way on this very spot, thirty on each side, and every man killed his man, and when the battle was over there was not a soul left alive!”

“Oh, Anatole!” I protested; “are you sure that it was quite so sanguinary as that?”

Château Josselin.





“Quite sure, Madame. They are all buried under that stone. It was removed during my father’s time and the skulls counted,—sixty skulls, and not one without a hole in it.”

“One can’t dispute the authority of an eye-witness, but I have brought along Froissart’s account of the battle. He was of the period, and had the story from a man who took part in it; so if you will carry the lunch hamper to that shady spot, after we have discussed the cold chicken we will discuss the battle.”

“Madame is very learned,” said Anatole, taking up the Froissart and looking at it suspiciously. “I have remarked that English ladies usually take their libraries with them when they travel; but generally smaller books than this, and bound in red, always in red,—it is so I can always identify a *dame Anglaise*.”

“But I am not English, Anatole; I am American.”

“In that case,” said Anatole, “I would be grateful if Madame would read me what her book says.”

And luncheon being served, I read to Anatole Froissart’s quaint account of the Battle of the Thirty:

“In 1351, it happened on a day that Sir Robert de Beaumanoir, a valiant knight and commandant of the

castle which is called Castle Josselin, came before the town and castle of Ploërmel, whereof the captain Brandebourg [your Bembro, Anatole, and perhaps the Earl of Pembroke] had with him a plenty of soldiers of the Countess of Montfort. 'Brandebourg,' said Robert, 'have ye within there never a man-at-arms, or two or three, who would fain cross swords with other three for love of their ladies?' Brandebourg answered that their ladies would not have them lose their lives in so miserable an affair as single combat, whereby one gained the name of fool rather than of honourable renown. 'I will tell you what we will do if it please you. You shall take twenty or thirty of your comrades, and I will take as many of ours. We will go out into a goodly field where none can hinder or vex us, and there will we do so much that men shall speak thereof in time to come in hall, and palace, and highway, and other places of the world.' 'By my faith,' said Beaumanoir, 't is bravely said, and I agree; be ye thirty, and we will be thirty too.'

"When the day had come they parleyed together all the sixty, then they fell back until one made the sign, and forthwith they set on and fought stoutly all in a heap, and they aided one another handsomely when they saw their comrades in evil case. Pretty soon, after they had come together, one of the French was slain, but the rest did not slacken fight one whit, and they bore themselves as valiantly all as if they had been Rolands and Olivers. At last they were forced to stop and they rested by common accord, giving themselves truce until they should be rested. They rebuckled their armour which had got undone, and dressed their wounds. Four French and two English were dead already. They rested long, and there were some who drank wine which was brought them."

“Those were the English, Madame,” cried Anatole. “The Bretons had brought no wine with them, and their captain cried out that he was dying of thirst, and one of his comrades shouted, ‘Drink thy blood, Beaumanoir,’ and that has been the war-cry of the Beaumanoirs ever since. I have often wondered whether he advised that in good earnest to allay his friend’s thirst, or whether he was scoffing at him for crying like a baby for drink ; and I have wondered, too, whether such a draught would have been refreshing, but it has always happened that when I have cut my finger and might have discovered, I had not the least thirst or desire to try the beverage.”

“We have got beyond cannibalism, Anatole,” I replied ; “let us hope that we may some day get beyond fighting. The chronicle goes on to say :

‘When they were refreshed the battle recommenced as stoutly as before and lasted a long while. They had short swords of Bordeaux, tough and sharp, and boar spears and daggers, and some had axes, and therewith they dealt one another marvellously great dings. At last the English had the worst of it ; Brandebourg, their captain, was slain, with eight of his comrades, and the rest yielded themselves prisoners when they saw that they could no longer defend themselves, for they could not and must not fly. Sir Robert de Beaumanoir and his

comrades who remained alive took them and carried them off to Castle Josselin as their prisoners ; and then admitted them to ransom courteously when they were all cured, for there was none that was not grievously wounded, French as well as English. I saw afterwards, sitting at the table of King Charles of France, a Breton knight who had been in it, Sir Yvon Charuel, and he had a face so carved and cut that he showed full well how good a fight had been fought. The matter was talked of in many places, and some set it down as a very poor, and others as a very swaggering business.' ”

“ Madame,” said Anatole, after a pause, “ my father must have been mistaken in his count of those skulls. He was never very good at arithmetic. It is just possible that one or two of the Bretons escaped, but not one of the English, no not one.

“ If Madame has amused herself sufficiently with these worthless tales, I will continue the perfectly attested history of Bertrand du Guesclin. Madame will remember that we left him outside the tournament at Rennes. He tied the ass outside the lists and pressed in with the vulgar where he might, and saw the first two courses run with great delight. He shouted with the rest at each gallant stroke, and was in despair that he could not also be among those magnificent knights, so richly harnessed, with their arms emblazoned on silken surcoats

which they wore outside their armour. At the end of the second course he saw that one of the knights, the Vicomte de la Bellière, was so greatly fatigued that he retired from the lists. Bertrand followed to his hotel and begged that he would lend him his horse and his armour. He might not have been so obliging but that his daughter Tiphaine, called Tiphaine la Fée (the fairy), because she was so petite and knew the language of animals and birds and could make every one work her will,—was disarming her father. Tiphaine took a fancy to the youth.

“‘Lend him your arms, dear father,’ she begged, ‘I am sure he will not dishonour them.’ And with that she gave him her favour, a scarf embroidered with birds, and ran back to the tournament, and seated herself beside the duchess to see what would become of it. The challengers were of the noblest knights of Brittany, of whom the Sire Penhouet, governor of the city, was the first. Bertrand rode forward with his lance raised, Penhouet accepted the challenge, and the two champions met with so great a shock that Penhouet was unhorsed, and had such a thump on the back of his head that he had no stomach for further fighting that day. Then the second of the challengers presented himself to avenge the

Governor of Rennes, but Bertrand recognising his father by his crest and coat of arms, lowered his lance, made him a profound bow, and declined the combat. All the assembly were surprised at this, but concluded that the fame of the old knight, Du Guesclin, was such that the stranger dared not engage with him, and they put forward a puny knight, Olivier de Mauny, who became afterward the inseparable companion of Bertrand, though, in this the beginning of their acquaintance, Bertrand handled him most ungently. It was the same story with Guillaume de Launoy, Yves de Charuel, afterward one of the Thirty, the Sieurs de Kergorlay and de Kaergouet, and others of the noblest seigneurs of Brittany, to the number of fifteen.

“At last, Guy, Comte de Laval, took him in hand, and every one pitied Bertrand. At the first shock de Laval knocked Bertrand’s spear from his hand, and a great cry went up from the lists. But Bertrand threw away his shield, and with both arms caught De Laval in such an embrace as never lover held his mistress, and lifting him from the saddle flung him clean over the lists among the ladies.

“*Fichtre*, but it was fine! and you can judge of the admiration of the ladies, when they saw

all their bravest knights thrashed so handsomely. The Duchess, seeing that Bertrand wore the favour of Tiphaine, asked her who he might be, but Tiphaine was not fairy enough to tell, for she did not know. At last Charles of Blois, feeling that enough of his men had been banged about, threw his gilded baton into the lists to end the combat, and sent Robert de Beaumanoir, Marshal of Brittany, to bring this unknown knight to him, and to bid him discover himself. Figure to yourself the delight of the old Du Guesclin when he saw that it was his ne'er-do-well son who had that day made a name for himself. The Duchess gave him the prize of the tournament, which was a great diamond, and this you may guess he presented on bended knee to the demoiselle Tiphaine, asking only that he might be permitted to continue to wear her favour."

"Anatole," I said, "you are a sly rogue; you have pretended to know nothing of the history of the War of the Three Joans, and by this account of the tournament you have shown yourself better posted than I am in the history of Brittany."

"Not in history, Madame; that is only for the learned, but in such little trifles as the accurate details of all the battles of this part of

Brittany, of which you read so much nonsense in the books,—on these points you may trust me implicitly.”

I was a listener after Anatole's own heart, and when I besought him—“Tell me more of Du Guesclin, of his exploits after the war broke out and he devoted himself to the cause of Joan of Blois”—he at once launched forth on a voyage of reminiscence and imagination.

“Ah! Madame, every castle in Brittany has its own story of him, for either he held it, or took it at some time with his boon companions. Chief among these in love for Bertrand and in rank was Guy de Laval, who, though he had married the sister of De Montfort, yet forgot family ties and took up arms against him, for the sole reason that he might fight by the side of Bertrand Du Guesclin.

“Bertrand's chiefest enemy was Sir Thomas de Kantorbrie, an Englishman of high rank, who aided the Countess of Montfort in the siege of Dinan. Madame must have heard of him, and how he traitorously took Du Guesclin's young brother Oliver prisoner, when he was exercising his horse outside the city during a truce. Bembro was commanding the English, and Du Guesclin went out and complained to him. It was arranged that Du Guesclin and

Kantorbrie should fight for the possession of the person of Oliver, at single combat in the sight of both armies, in the public place of Dinan, the English being let in simply to see this fine feat of arms, and swearing to go out again in an orderly manner when it was over,—an oath which they kept very honourably.”

“Du Guesclin won the battle, I presume?”

“*Mais certainement*, that goes without saying; and when he had pulled Kantorbrie off his horse, on to the ground, and torn his helmet from his head, he beat him in the face with his mailed hand until he had spoiled his beauty, and he besought permission to cut off his head; but this, unfortunately, Bembro would not grant.”

“That gentle feat of arms would hardly be thought quite honourable in these days,” I commented.

“True, Madame,” Anatole admitted; “and the demoiselle Tiphaine, who was one of the spectators, thought it a trifle too serious, and she told Bertrand afterward that to beat a man in the face when he was down was use to which a knight’s gauntlet was not meant to be put; and she gave him back his diamond, and asked for her favour. So there was Bertrand all shamed in the midst of his victory. But he

took his punishment like a man, and pulled off his steel gauntlet on the instant and handed it to her with the diamond in it, as a token that he would fight in a gentler fashion thereafter.

“And after that he took many castles by escalade and sometimes by stratagem. Madame has never heard of the siege of Rennes? Surely that was the most laughable trick of all. The garrison of the city were nearly famished when that villain, Kantorbrie, thought he could induce them to surrender, in the hope of good food. So he foraged all the country hereabouts, and collected all the pigs, herds upon herds of them. Now, the pigs of Brittany cannot be beaten, and those of Ploërmel are best of all. Kantorbrie drove those pigs round and round the town of Rennes, in full sight of its starving population. He grew so daring that he brought them close to the glacis of the fortifications. You may judge if the poor people felt their mouths water and their bellies fail them as they thought of the delectable pork-pies, the juicy hams, the links of sausage, the souse and the head-cheese, and pigs’ feet *à la vinaigrette*, and other delicious *charcuterie*, which those tantalising porkers would make. The Governor, Penhouet, was wild with despair.

“ ‘Leave this to me,’ said Du Guesclin, who was also shut up in the town. ‘Leave this to me, and by the same token we shall dine so toothsomely that every Jew within the gates will turn Christian to be our *convives*.’ Now, Bertrand was as ignorant as Madame is at this present moment of how he was to come out of this adventure but Tiphaine had returned to Rennes, and had just told him to speak thus to the Governor. I have said that she was called Tiphaine la Fée, and from what now transpired the belief was spread that she not only understood but could speak the language of all animals. However this may be, she was at least fond of all the creatures of the good God, and could imitate the sounds that they make to a nicety.

“ She went with Bertrand to a postern-gate which gave upon the moat. This she caused to be half opened, and when the herd of swine arrived opposite it she made the cry of a sucking pig when it is very hungry or in distress. And when the porkers heard this squealing, every mother’s and father’s heart among them was stirred, and they fancied that they recognised the voice of their own offspring, and in spite of the efforts of the distracted swineherds they plunged into the moat, swam across, and

dashed through the postern into the city. Tiphaine would have been trodden under foot of them but that Bertrand caught her up, set her on his shoulder and marched to the city square,—she still squealing gleefully, and thousands of pigs following in procession, so that the city streets could hardly hold them, and the city was well provisioned.

“After that Tiphaine could no longer withstand the importunities of Bertrand, ‘for,’ said he, ‘you will not, sweetheart, treat me with more despise than I were a hog, since you suffer them to follow you?’

“Now, there was another reason why Tiphaine took pity upon him, and this was because since the scolding she had given him at Dinan, he had made war so courteously that when he appeared before a castle in which was the Countess of Montfort, and had ordered the fortress to be bombarded with great stones, the countess appeared upon the battlements, and each time that a stone hit them wiped the place with her handkerchief, crying in scorn, ‘You are most impolite, Bertrand, thus to scatter dust on my parapets.’ When Tiphaine knew that he had followed out her instructions to the point of being so made light of, she acknowledged that he well

deserved her, and some of Kantorbrie's porkers furnished forth their wedding feast."

It was some time before the English name which had suggested Anatole's distortion, Kantorbrie, dawned upon my mind. "The name sounds as if it might be Cymric," I said, much puzzled; "are you sure that Kantorbrie was not a Breton?"

"Ah, no! Madame, he was an Englishman and of noble family; his brother was an archbishop."

"I have it!" I cried, "you mean Sir Thomas of Canterbury."

"*Parfaitement*," said Anatole, calmly. "That is what I have said all along. Sir Thomase de Kantorbrie."

We jogged into the little bourg of Josselin, in the early afternoon, and caught our first glimpse of the beautiful sixteenth-century château which the De Rohans reared on the old foundations of Sir Oliver de Clisson, from the bridge, which is the proper standpoint from which to see its ornate dormers and glistening towers reflected in the little river Oust. The dormers on the side of the court are still more beautiful, carved with most exuberant fancy, the intricate foliage catching in its convolutions strange Gothic animals, and displaying at

intervals the heraldic devices of the De Clissons and De Rohans, with their aspiring motto "Au plus!" The peaked roofs of the towers have for finials bristling *girouettes*, or weathercocks, resembling a sheaf of spears, bent and rusty, surrounding the oriflamme of France.

Oliver de Clisson was only a boy, careering madly about the country with his mother and the Countess de Montfort, at the time that the spears of the Thirty were stacked in his château and it was used as a hospital for both English and French after the battle.

After the war was over, his allegiance was accepted by the King of France, and he was confirmed as Seigneur of Josselin, which he made his home, occupying it from time to time during his adventurous career, and dying here full of honours and of years in 1409, having as faithfully served two kings of France, Charles V. and Charles VI., as he had enthusiastically fought against their ancestor Philip and his nephew, Charles of Blois. His cenotaph in white marble and that of his wife, Marguerite de Rohan, lie in the castle chapel. His wife's feet rest on a pet greyhound, his upon a lion, his great sword lies beside him, and the inscription tells us that here rest the ashes of the "*Très haut et très puissant seigneur,*

Monseigneur Olivier de Clisson, jadis Connétable de France.

“Madame must not imagine,” said Anatole, as we drove homeward, “that when the War of the Three Joans was ended, Du Guesclin retired to his little château at Pont Orson, which had come to him as Tiphaine’s dowry, and thereafter profited by her familiarity with animals to keep a dairy farm. On the contrary, this was but the beginning of his career.

“After the war was over all the men-at-arms, English, French, and Bretons, who had taken part in it were out of business, and they turned into brigands, organising themselves into companies and establishing themselves in castles, swooping down upon the highways and carrying travellers off to their nests and holding them for ransom. Not alone Brittany, but all France was overrun by these gentry. To protect each other the chiefs of the different robber bands met together and organised the Grande Compagnie. Their chief on the part of the Bretons was Lè Begue de Villaines, and the captain of the English outlaws was Hué de Cauérlee. Madame has doubtless heard of him?”

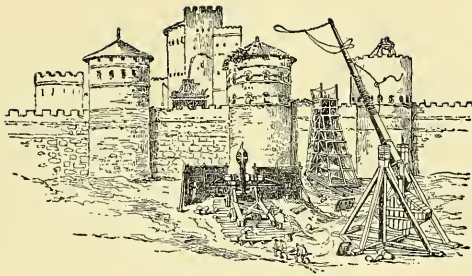
For the moment the name struck no responsive chord in my memory. “But assur-

edly he was such a bad one that he must be among Madame's acquaintances." Turning to my books enlightenment came, and I was able to identify Anatole's Hué de Cauerlée as Hugh de Calverly.

"*Parfaitement*," assented Anatole; "it is exactly as I said, but he was not so bad as Kantorbrie, who also became a bandit, and were it not for the exploit of the damsel Guyonne de Laval, there would be nothing more to tell of the magical power of Tiphaine la Fée, or any more adventures on the part of the illustrious Du Guesclin."

"So you have some more legends, Anatole? Let me have them by all means."

"Ah, Madame, they have nothing to do with the War of the Three Joans or with Château Josselin; but if Madame should care to visit the Château de Laval and should take me as guide, I could show you the very dungeon, and if it should happen to be a moonlight night that would be the time and place to tell how Bertrand delivered France of the Grand Company, and other truthful tales not found in the histories, but well worth hearing."



CHAPTER X

GUYONNE DE LAVAL

AND THE FURTHER HISTORY OF BERTRAND AND
TIPHAINÉ LA FÉE

ANATOLE appeared before us at breakfast one morning with the announcement :
“Congratulate me, Madame ; I have discovered the Forest of Brœcilande !”

“And the Enchanted Castle of Merlin ?”

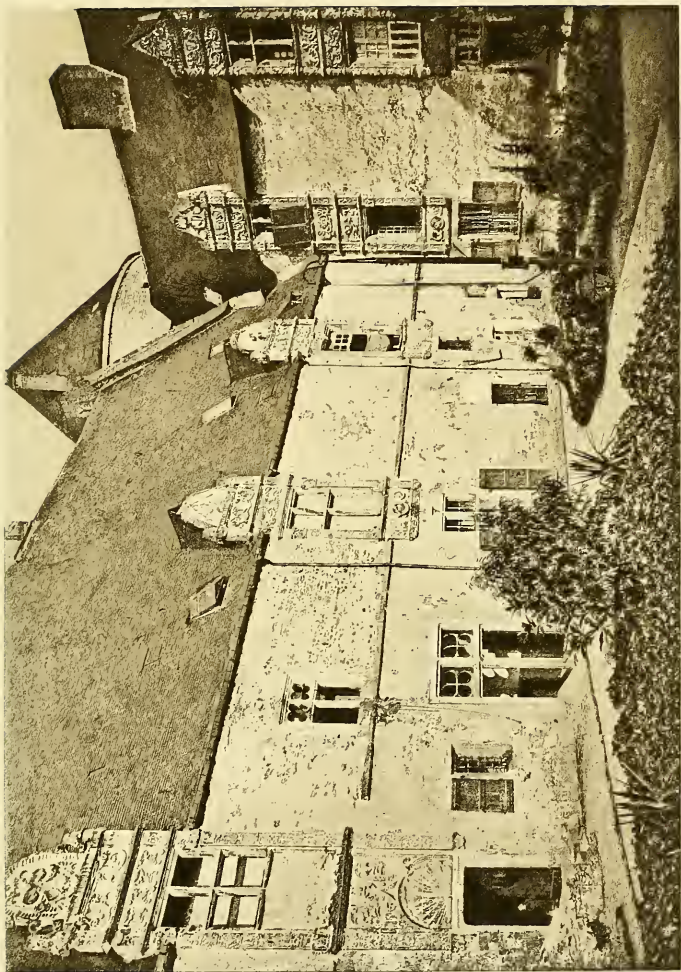
“Alas ! no, Madame, for either the enchantment, which Madame will remember rendered it invisible and impenetrable, still holds, or else it all happened so long ago that the castle exists no longer. But the forest is still there. Madame said it was to be found in this neighbourhood and I have found it, only it is called, now, the Forest of Paimpont. It is much

changed,—it has been cut up and built upon, but the Thicket of Refuge for persecuted beasts—that is still there. It was by its magical virtue in ridding poor animals of their tormentors that I discovered it. Surely, there was no animal worse tormented than Grégoire Trudel's donkey, and Grégoire himself was the persecutor. The poor beast endured his thumps and kicks for years, but at length she said to herself, '*Tiens!* one would be as stupid as the holy martyrs to suffer this any longer. I will go in search of the Holy Wood,' and she ran away.

“ Grégoire went in search of her, though I warned him it would not be for his good health. He found his donkey standing in a pool beside the ruins of a castle, in a little clearing of the forest. He tried to coax the intelligent creature to come to him, but she was too wise. So he waded out to her and mounted on her back ; but as this pool was what was left of the enchanted fountain, and as Grégoire was full of old cider, the donkey threw up her heels and was quickly rid of her pest, for he was drowned very neatly in the pool, and there we found his body. This happened only a few years ago, and it occurred to me last night that this must surely be the Forest of Brœcilande.



Château Laval.



There are the ruins, too, of the old castle of Montfort from which Tiphaine la Fée was rescued by the fairy ducks."

"How did that happen, Anatole?"

"Has Madame never heard? And yet these English books of hers call themselves histories! This adventure befell Tiphaine la Fée after the king had bestowed upon her husband the castles of the Comte de Montfort. Du Guesclin had said that, for his part, he had no use for them, but his wife thought differently. She was not sure but that she would prefer one of them for a residence to their château at Pont Orson, and she had a woman's love for house-hunting. So she mounted her white palfrey and, slenderly attended, set out for this castle, for the De Montforts were in another part of the country, and she had no idea that it was occupied. But, as evil luck would have it, Kantorbrie had established himself here with his men-at-arms, as likely as not with the permission of De Montfort, for they were friends.

"When Tiphaine approached the castle it appeared deserted, but when she had ridden across the drawbridge she heard the clang of the descending portcullis behind her, and saw the court full of the English, and knew that she was caught like a mouse in a trap. She

demanded to see the captain, and promised that if she were honourably treated her husband would pay a handsome ransom for her deliverance. But when Kantorbrie knew that the wife of his mortal enemy was in his power, the expression of demoniacal triumph upon his disfigured countenance made it still more hideous.

“‘Ah! Dame,’ he cried, ‘I had not hoped you would do me the honour to return my visit so speedily. I shall be more hospitable than you were to me, and you shall bide longer in my castle than you suffered me to rest in your bower,’ and he caused her to be imprisoned in a high turret jutting out over the lake.

“The visit to which Kantorbrie referred was one which had brought much derision upon himself, for, hearing that Tiphaine had reproved Bertrand for his savage treatment of himself at the affair of Dinan, of which she was a witness, he flattered himself that he had her interest. He had pursued her with his attentions even after her marriage, to the point of appearing beneath her window at her château at Pont Orson, prepared with a litter borne by some of his soldiers to carry her away *bon gré mal gré*. But it so chanced that Tiphaine lay awake that night, and hearing the slight noise they made in placing the ladder

against the wall, she looked out of her window and saw the men holding the foot of the ladder and Kantorbrie mounting toward her. There was no human being within call, for they had seduced the watchman with gold. Her first thought was to call upon the saints; but when she saw her herd of pet Alderneys quietly grazing in the moonlight she lost no time on the saints, but began to call them, 'Co' bos! Co' bos! I have salt for you, salt for you,' and the whole herd came stampeding up to the foot of the tower. When the men heard the galloping hoofs they thought a troop of horse were charging, and took themselves off in a hurry, *sauve qui peut*, and the beasts lumbered up against the ladder, and overturned it, dumping Kantorbrie on the ground at the foot of the tower. And there they stood guard around him, so that when later his men returned in answer to his crying they had no small trouble to come at him and to carry him away, all bruised and trampled, in the very litter in which he had hoped to kidnap Tiphaine.

"You may be sure that the memory of this adventure did not serve to lessen Kantorbrie's satisfaction at having her safe in his hands at last. As Tiphaine now looked from the

window of her prison in Château de Montfort (which was so high up that Kantorbrie had not thought it necessary to have it barred), she saw that the base of the tower was surrounded by the lake, and the lake by the forest, and it was inexpressibly lonely, for there was no living creature in sight except some wild ducks that had settled on the water.

“To lighten her loneliness she began to talk to them in their language. The ducks were so overjoyed and set up such a loud quacking, ‘Crac! Crac! Crac!’ that the garrison of the castle thought that the foundation of the tower on the water side was cracking, and they all rushed *pêle-mêle* out of the castle and Kantorbrie with them. They were so frightened that they rode away with all their might without even thinking of their prisoners. But there was Tiphaine in almost as evil a case as at first, for she was firmly locked in a deserted castle, as were her servants, and they were all like to die of starvation. They would doubtless have done so had not Tiphaine invoked St. Nicholas, who walked upon the water, and calling the ducks to witness that she would build a church to him if she was saved, she jumped fearlessly from the window into the lake. The ducks, instead of being

frightened at her descent, grouped closely together so that they not only broke her fall as nicely as a feather bed, but she did not even wet her stockings, and this makes me think that she must have known the spell that Merlin taught Viviane, of walking dry-shod upon water.

“She had seen, from her window, the hasty departure of Kantorbrie and his men, so she entered the castle, found the key to the dungeon, liberated the servants, and hurried home.

“After the country was pacified she kept her vow and erected a chapel to St. Nicholas. When it was dedicated the ducks all appeared, waddling up the aisle in procession, just as the monks were chanting the ‘Adeste Fideles.’”

“When Kantorbrie and his cutthroats rode away from Château de Montfort they proceeded to that of Guy de Laval. It chanced that the knight was not at home, so Kantorbrie easily overcame the garrison and made himself master of the place.

“You must not think that after his first fright at the supposed cracking of the walls he did not intend to go back to look for Tiphaine, but he thought it wise first to establish himself in a strong castle, and he had hardly taken possession of the château of Laval before it

was his fortune to trap Du Guesclin in much the same way that he secured Tiphaine la Fée. This time there were no friendly ducks swimming under the castle walls, and if they had been there they would never have survived if Bertrand had fallen upon them. Bertrand had great desire to meet Kantorbrie after he escaped him at the battle of Auray, but if he could have had his way he would have planned their meeting in a different way.

“After the war was over there were many men-at-arms, both Bretons and English, who were out of work and who turned bandits, going about pillaging on their own account; and that they might do this the better they organised themselves into the Grand Company. The king asked Bertrand’s advice, and Bertrand agreed to lead them all into Spain and set the rightful king of that country, who was banished, upon his throne again. The king replied, ‘Do what you will with them, so that you rid France of this pest,’ and gave Bertrand much money to effect the business. Bertrand sent to the Chevalier Vert, who promised to rally the captains of the Grand Company at a given time at Château de Laval, and promised that Bertrand might meet them safely there. So away rode Bertrand, nothing doubting but

that his old friend Guy de Laval was master in his own château, and would receive him hospitably.

“What was his surprise, on entering the court, after he had given up his horse and suffered himself to be disarmed, to be surrounded and held down by a multitude of armed men, and to be confronted by his arch-enemy, the villain Kantorbrie, who, though he belonged to the Grand Company, and Bertrand showed him his safe-conduct from the Chevalier Vert, had him treacherously thrust into the lowest dungeon of the castle. So there was Bertrand at the mercy of his direst foe, with no hope of deliverance, for though the Grand Company would shortly assemble, he was in no position to treat with them. The dungeon was vile and wet, his teeth chattered with cold, rats ran impudently over him, and Kantorbrie gave him neither food nor water. He was sore battered, too, in the tussle which he had given the men-at-arms to overcome him.

“Worst of all, he was tormented in mind, not so much as to his own future, but because Kantorbrie had told him, with such malicious glee that he could not believe the news false, that he held Tiphaine a prisoner in a tower of the Château de Montfort.

“I have said that the dungeon was wet, and Madame will see why it could not be otherwise, for its floor was below the level of the river, and the drain-pipe of the castle passing down through the dungeon into the river, the water had worked back, loosened the joints of the pipe, and covered the floor to the depth of a foot with noisome filth. It was well known, too, that a dragon, a great water snake, was accustomed to come up through the pipe and spend the night in the dungeon, and Kantorbrie hoped, that as Bertrand was unarmed the dragon would strangle him before morning.

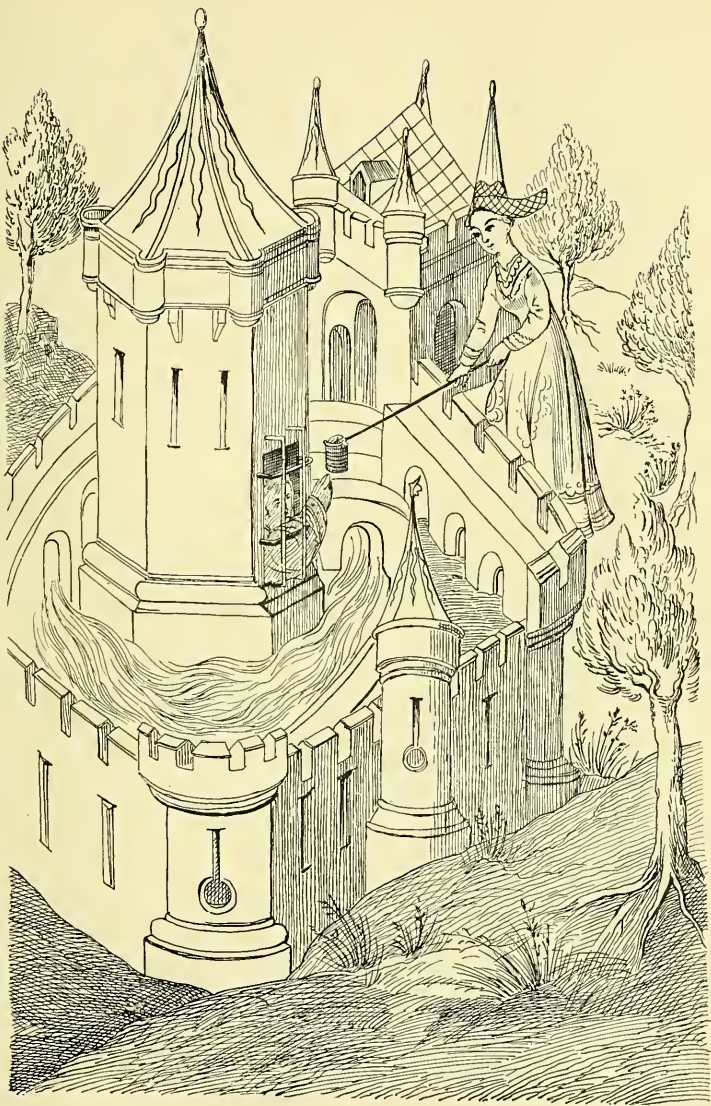
“You can imagine Bertrand’s distress; and that might have been the end of the most illustrious knight of Christendom, but for a little slip of a girl, Guyonne de Laval, niece of the rightful lord of the castle, Guy de Laval, and named Guyonne after her uncle. She was only twelve years of age, and so insignificant in appearance that Kantorbrie had not thought it worth while to shut her up, and the child wandered quite unnoticed about the castle. She was amusing herself fishing with a rod and line in the castle moat when she discovered Du Guesclin behind the grating of his dungeon window, and began a conversation with him. Learning that he was hungry and thirsty, she

fastened a small basket to the end of her fish-pole and provided him with bread and wine. Seeing that there was a small window higher up in the tower directly in a line with Du Guesclin's window, she mounted thither, and finding that it was an empty *grenier*, she let down with her fish-line a file, with which he could disembarass himself of his fetters, and widen the grating of his window so that he could take in various commodities which were too heavy to pass across the moat. The window was too narrow to suffer Du Guesclin to escape even after the bars were removed, but the ingenuity of Guyonne rendered him safe and even comfortable. For she knew the habit of the dragon and told him what to expect, and she lowered him a battle-axe so that when the creature appeared Bertrand chopped its head off, leaving its body to stop up the pipe. Guyonne had also let down a bucket and a mop, with which he now baled the water out of his dungeon, and a brazier of coals, whereby he dried it, with a faggot of sticks to keep up the fire through the night and scare the rats away. She also sent him a box of ointment for his bruises, dry clothing, a hauberk and helmet, a haunch of venison for his supper, and a blanket for

his bed. As she let these down under cover of the darkness, she was not observed by the guards of Kantorbrie.

“All that night Kantorbrie revolved in his mind what he would do with Du Guesclin if he found him alive in the morning. If he kept him until noon the next day he knew, by the safe-conduct that he had seen, that the Grand Company would arrive; but in that case the captive knight would be no longer in his power, for he doubted not that the captains would admit him to ransom. Therefore Kantorbrie resolved that he would murder Du Guesclin just before noon, when he fancied that he would find his strength so reduced by cold and fasting and a wakeful night spent in fighting the dragon, that it would be an easy matter to overcome him. He descended to the dungeon at daybreak to personally gloat over his victim, attended by his torturers with their instruments, intending to give Bertrand an unpleasant forenoon before giving him the *coup de grâce*.

“But when they threw open the dungeon door there stood Du Guesclin as strong and lively as ever, with his shackles off, and his back against the door which had swung inward, and, most unexpected and least to be



FEEDING A PRISONER—FROM AN OLD PRINT.

desired of all, brandishing a heavy axe as gayly as if it were a dandy's walking-stick. Figure to yourself the disgust of Kantorbrie! He sent in his guards first to attack Du Guesclin, but the cell was so small that only two could enter at a time, and the knight hewed them down easily, and leaping over their bodies he made for Kantorbrie, who retreated along the passageway, calling, '*Au secours!*' But Bertrand caught up with him at the entrance of the great hall, and after a fierce combat killed him in the presence of his men, just as the warden rushed in to say that an army was approaching. 'These are my friends whom I expected,' said Du Guesclin; 'choose ye whether ye surrender to them or to me.'

"Then the garrison fell upon their knees crying, 'We surrender to thee, valorous Du Guesclin.' So he sent some of the men to dig the graves for Kantorbrie and the two torturers, and he admitted the captains of the Grand Company to parley. The captains were struck with admiration when they saw how Bertrand, a prisoner, had killed his captor in his castle, and they swore to follow him whithersoever he would lead them, for he had always had the same fascination for men that his wife had for dumb animals.

“He assured himself of Tiphaine’s safety before he went to Spain, and he promised little Guyonne that he would surely return and be present at her wedding. What he did in Spain I know not and it is of little consequence so far as my story goes. It is enough to know that he returned covered with glory, and that the King of Spain, for whom he had fought, sent him two mules laden with a service of golden plate, and the French King made him Constable of France; but his faithful wife, Tiphaine la Fée, was not to share his triumph, for she died immediately after his return.

“They say that she received the most remarkable funeral ever given to a Breton woman, for not only was it attended by all the knights, her husband’s friends, but all the dumb creatures for miles around,—the sheep grazing in the fields, the cattle in the barnyards, and the wild animals from the woods left their haunts and joined in the procession, while the birds flew overhead in long straight lines, as when they migrate, filling the air with their doleful cries.”

Could I dispute the story when the heart of the Breton is so reverent and loving in its trust in these wonders?

Surely Tiphaine’s influence over animals

and birds was not more magical than the refining power which she exercised over the somewhat brutal nature of her great husband. He mourned her sincerely, and when war broke out again with the English, Du Guesclin threw himself into it with avidity, this time not at the head of a band of outlaws and brigands, but Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of France, and followed by all its noblest seigneurs, with the son of his former commander, Charles of Blois, and his old antagonists De Clisson and De Montfort, proud to call him their general.

Anatole only repeated the popular tradition when he added that in an interval between Du Guesclin's victory in Brittany and the campaign that followed in the south of France there was a grand festival at the château of Guy de Laval, for it was the wedding of Guyonne de Laval, now grown a beautiful woman, and the king himself attended and all the chivalry of France. Joan, widow of Charles of Blois, leaned on the arm of her old foe, De Clisson, for her son had married De Clisson's daughter Margot. Other feuds had been healed, and later a daughter of the house of Laval was to marry a De Montfort, though it is hardly possible that the three Joans

actually met at this wedding. Du Guesclin redeemed his promise made to little Guyonne so long ago, and honoured the occasion. His golden service, the gift of Henry of Trastamare, was displayed upon the festal board,

“ At Bertrand’s plate gazed every eye,
So massive, chased so gloriously.”

But the knights did not gaze upon it with envy, for their commander delighted to lavish upon them all the benefits which he received, and on this occasion his magnificent golden service was broken up and dispersed, each guest receiving as a souvenir of the feast the plate upon which he ate. It was with the bride’s consent that the service was scattered so munificently, for it had first been offered to her. The Laval were better provided with silver plate than any family in Brittany, for Beatrix of Flanders had brought great store of it with her when she married Guy IX. Moreover, Kantorbrie’s golden cup, beautifully wrought and enriched with jewels, had been left in the château and was given Guyonne by her uncle. But what were wedding-gifts of royal gold to her, compared to her wish that all should worship her husband as she did, for though the bridegroom’s hair was streaked with grey the bride looked

upon her husband with love as well as pride, for he was not only the most illustrious general in the world, but her true captive knight whose life she had saved in this very château, and each wedding-guest drank a deep draught from Kantorbrie's jewelled cup as it was swung to him by the bride, at the end of a silver fish-pole, as he toasted Guyonne and her bridegroom, Bertrand du Guesclin.

Anatole's story ended here. Du Guesclin's life thereafter is French history. He left his bride almost immediately for the campaign in the south of France. We all know how he died before Châteauneuf-Randon on the morning that the castle was to be given up to him.

An ancient chronicler quoted by Guizot says :

“At the decease of Sir Bertrand a great cry arose throughout the host of the French. The French Marshal, Louis de Sancerre, said to the English, ‘Friends, you have your agreements with Sir Bertrand and you shall fulfil them to him.’

“‘God the Lord!’ said the captain, ‘you know well that Sir Bertrand, who was so much worth, is dead; how, then, should we surrender to him this castle?’

“‘Needs no parley hereupon,’ said the marshal, ‘but do it at once, for if you put forth more words short will be the life of your hostages.’

“Well did the English see that they could not do

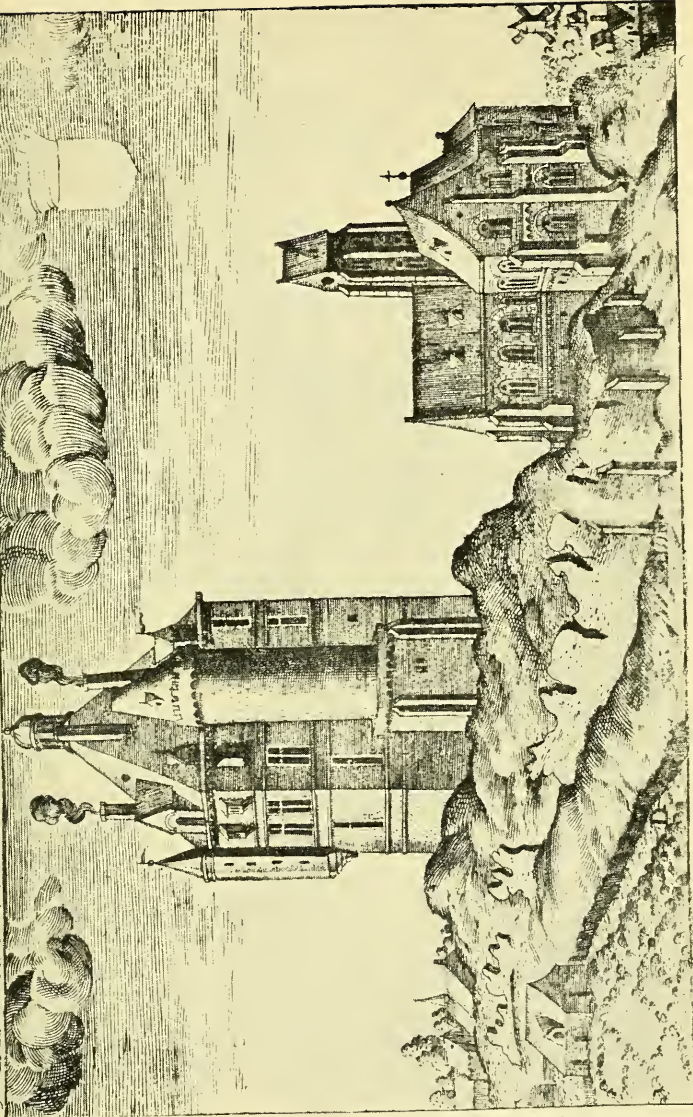
otherwise, so they went forth, all of them, from the castle, their captain in front of them, and came to the marshal, who led them to the hostel where lay Sir Bertrand, and made them give up the keys and place them on his bier, sobbing the while : ‘ Let all know that there was there nor knight nor squire, French or English, who showed not great mourning. ’ ”

The body of Du Guesclin was interred in the abbey of St. Denis, near the tomb which Charles V. prepared for himself, and a poet of the time wrote of his funeral :

“ The tears of princes fell
 What time the bishop said,
 Sir Bertrand loved ye well ;
 Weep, warriors, for the dead !
 The knell of sorrow tolls
 For deeds that were so bright ;
 God save all Christian souls,
 And his—the gallant knight.”

Oliver de Clisson succeeded him in the office of constable. He became too powerful for Jean de Montfort to regard him without uneasiness, for he feared De Clisson’s next step in greatness would be the dukedom of Brittany. He treacherously invited De Clisson to visit him, which he did in company with Guy de Laval. De Clisson was shown into the donjon and the door closed upon him ; Guy de Laval, who followed, seeing that his friend was trapped,

13 LE CHÂTEL DE ANCIENS · CONTES · DE · MONT · FORT · LAMORY



MONTFORT.

rushed to De Montfort and demanded what he was going to do with De Clisson.

“He has been very active of late,” said De Montfort significantly; “it is time he rested,—he shall sleep well to-night.”

Guy de Laval flew into a rage and demanded his release.

“Your horse is at the gate,” replied De Montfort; “you would better leave while you can.”

Laval saw that he was powerless, and rode away in hot haste for help. De Montfort had given orders that De Clisson should be sewn up in a sack and thrown into the river; but he was not without conscience and passed a horrible night. In the morning he sent for his seneschal and asked whether his orders had been obeyed.

“To the letter,” replied the servant. “I put him in the sack myself, and when I last saw him he was in the middle of the river.” De Montfort’s remorse broke forth violently. “I expected this,” replied the seneschal, “so I made a surcoat of the sack with openings for head, arms, and legs. It in no way impeded the action of the Constable, and as the part of the river in which I placed him was the ford hardly a span deep, and he happened to be

mounted on his good horse, I doubt not ere this he has joined Guy de Laval."

I was interested to discover in the family records of the Lavals that the friend of Du Guesclin was surnamed "La Croix de——" from his favorite oath, "By the Cross of Christ." He was a good Christian, though a heavy swearer, and he said, in dying,—for he knew no other prayer,—"*Biau Sire Dieu en qui je crois.*" His son Guy married his cousin Guyonne, the widow of Du Guesclin.

I had been somewhat puzzled by the repetition of the name Guy in the Laval family until reading the explanation given by the same records. A very early ancestor had performed such wonders in the first crusade that the Pope ordained that thenceforth there should never lack a Guy de Laval in any generation.

The oldest son was always christened Guy, and when male issue failed, the Pope ingeniously ordered that the King should choose a husband for the heiress of the Lavals from some noble family in France, and that, on his wedding, he should give up his own name and be known thenceforth as Guy de Laval. The last of the name, Guy de Laval the XXVI. gave up his life in the Revolution, and the

family is now extinct. The traveller who visits the old château is still shown the dungeon to which, until recently, the entire population of the town resorted in procession on Ascension Day "pour fouetter le dragon" (to beat the dragon). The château is now used as a prison and is even more sinister in appearance than in the lifetime of our heroes.

At the abbey of Clermont, near by,—that graceful abbey of which Pierre Lescot was "Abbé Commendataire," and which he enriched with his beautiful work,—may still be seen the carved effigies of many a Guy de Laval and his dame, and among these you may find the placid features and piously folded hands of little Guyonne.

INTERLUDE

While we lingered at Ploërmel, Louis Rondel unexpectedly joined us.

He told us that the research of the Vicomte La Joyeuse had developed the fact that Marie Courtois's supposed child had not been drowned in the Loire as had been threatened, but had disappeared with his mother. Search was being made for some trace of his after history, for it was possible that he had left descendants and that the real Vicomte La Joyeuse might be discovered in humble life. This revelation had removed the obstacle of inequality of rank and Yseult and he had been formally betrothed.

“Why, then,” we asked, “do you seem so unhappy?”

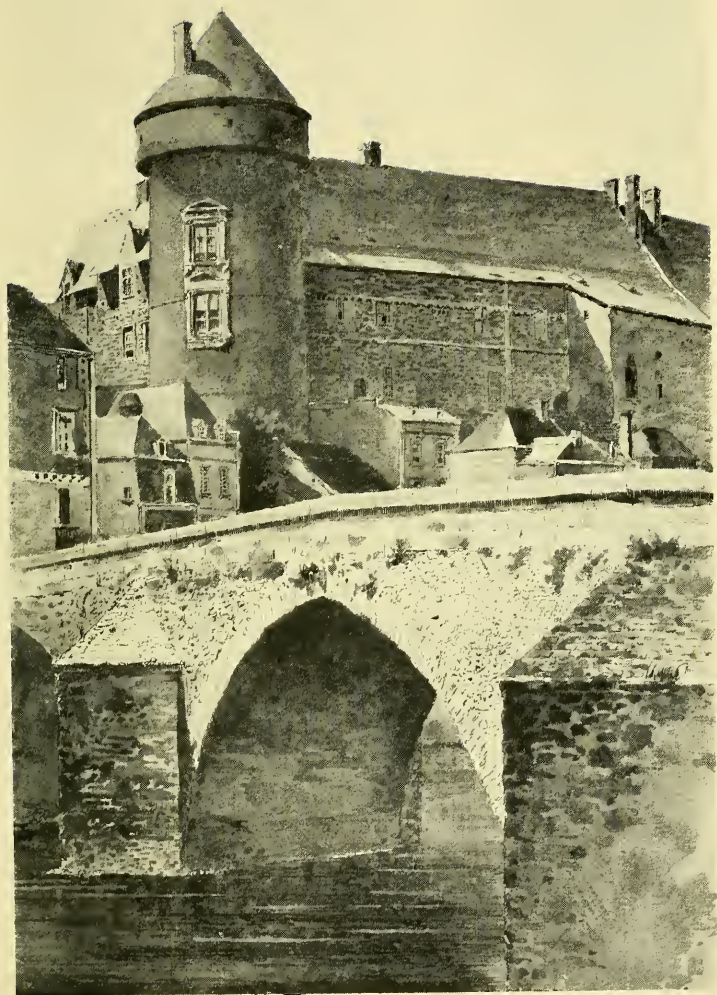
“Because,” the young architect replied, passionately, “I feel like a thief and a murderer. Our happiness would not have been effected except by this terrible change which has robbed the Vicomte of all that made up his life. I do not believe that he can survive the final renunciation of the château. Yseult is in despair, and we both feel ourselves criminals, though we are not responsible for the turn affairs have taken. She cannot forget that I am the instrument of her father’s suffering, and when he dies her morbid conscientiousness will make her look upon her love for me as a mortal sin. I am at once the most blessed and the most wretched of men.”

“I wish I could think of some way out of the difficulty,” I said, fatuously. “Have the detectives, who are searching for the descendants of the nurse who changed the children, no clue?”

“No; and even if they should find that the real heir died childless, it would still leave Yseult’s father the descendant of Marie Courtois.”

We were driving in the vicinity of Ploërmel, and in the absorption of our conversation had forgotten that Anatole had ears. He turned on the driver’s box and asked:

“Pardon, monsieur, did I understand the name of Courtois? That interests me, you understand, for it was my mother’s maiden name. I remember my grandfather, Jean Courtois, distinctly, and my mother can tell you all about the family. They lived near Château La Joyeuse years ago, but emigrated during the Terror. My grandfather was too young at the time to remember his early home or to care for it; but my mother was interested in the place from tales that her grandmother used to tell, and so after my grandmother died we went



LAVAL—EXTERIOR VIEW.

there, and my mother was a servant for a time in the château. That was where I first met Finette. I was always following her. The Vicomte caught me kissing her one day, and told me to leave the château. My mother is a proud-spirited woman, and there were words between them. I remember she said that there might come a time when it could be proved that I had as good a right to stay there as he. They were inconsiderate words, spoken in a moment of rage; they meant nothing, and my mother bitterly repented them and begged the Vicomte's pardon; but they had been spoken, and he sent us both packing. We went to Angers, where my sister married a guardian of the castle, and where my mother keeps a chocolate shop. I had a chance to take a situation in this inn, where I have prospered, as Madame sees, until now, as its proprietor, I have arrived at the summit of my ambition; for in the fall Finette has promised to marry me, and I see nothing left to desire in life."

Louis Rondel and I looked at each other in consternation. Was it possible that Anatole, the good-natured, contented lout, was the real Vicomte La Joyeuse? Could life furnish such irony?

Zéphyre made her promised visit to her son that evening. She had come to superintend the alterations and furnishings which were to prepare the little inn for the reception of Finette.

"She should have been named *Avalanche* instead of *Zéphyre*," said my husband as he watched Anatole driving perilously from the station, his little pony-cart lurching frightfully to one side under the weight of his ponderous mother.

We had each of us such a dread of aiding in the unwelcome discovery that seemed hanging over us, that

no one was willing to tell her of the state of affairs at Château La Joyeuse. "Fancy my leading these vulgar and stupid people to the Vicomte," said Louis Rondel, "and explaining that I have brought them to dispossess him! I decline to say another word. If Anatole has not the intelligence to comprehend his opportunity from what I was so unfortunate as to say in his hearing, I shall not enlighten him."

"Anatole seems to me a good fellow," I said, weakly; "so far as opportunities have been given him he has improved them."

"He has improved the education of a hostler until he is a tolerable whip, and your encouragement, to talk us all out of our senses."

"Some of the titled members of the Jockey Club cannot equal him in either accomplishment."

"Do not exasperate me," Rondel retorted. "Both he and his mother are human carrots, made to grovel in the mud, without aspiration to lift themselves to higher things, because they are absorbed in their little, barren lives, with no delicacy or elevation of soul or the imagination necessary to commit a crime."

But neither Anatole nor his mother were so stupid as they seemed. Possibly Finette had written from the château, for one day the little balcony on which we were sitting trembled under the elephantine tread of Zéphyre.

"Pardon, Messieurs et Dame," she said in a perfectly respectful but ominously insistent way, "but I have here a paper which I would be grateful if you would take the pains to regard."

It was a yellowed document folded like an old letter, and sealed without an envelope.

We looked at each other in dismay, and Louis Rondel rose, muttering that it was no affair of his, and he had a

pressing engagement at the railway station, as he had decided to take the next train for Paris. But Zéphyre completely blocked the way.

“The next train, Monsieur, does not leave until tomorrow morning,” she said, calmly, and Rondel sat down hopelessly. Zéphyre also sat, a familiarity which seemed to me portentous.

“I come to you, Messieurs et Madame, for information. I am told that there is some flaw in the succession of Monsieur le Vicomte de la Joyeuse to his estates and to his title.”

“Such, unfortunately, is the case,” replied my husband.

“Unfortunately? but certainly — for the Vicomte. But for those others, — the descendants of Marie Courtois, — am I right in my information that they are the real heirs?”

“Not at all,” Rondel replied, eagerly, “but the descendants of the *supposed* child of Marie Courtois, the child which she fled with, who was not her child at all, but the son of the old Vicomte.”

“Indeed, Monsieur, it has then been proved incontestably that this supposed child of Marie Courtois’s was a La Joyeuse?”

“So it seems,” Rondel admitted, grudgingly. “But anyone who attempts to prove his descent from that infant will find his task a difficult one. He will have to prove every link in the chain.”

“But having done so to the satisfaction of Messieurs the lawyers, he will then become the real Vicomte La Joyeuse and be given the château?”

Rondel did not answer; his heart was too full of rage.

“You need not reply, Monsieur; I have the intelligence to follow the chain of reasoning. Eh, bien! the proof

is very simple. And the Vicomtesse—behold her—it is myself, and Anatole is the legal Vicomte. What do you say to that, Messieurs et Madame ? ”

“ That it is atrocious, impossible ! ”

“ *N'est-ce pas ?* Nevertheless that infant, ‘ the *supposed* son of Marie Courtois, ’ was my father. I have all the proofs. And you say that we have only to show these for Anatole to take possession of the castle and for me to ride in the landau of Madame la Vicomtesse ? ”

“ Impossible ! ” Rondel growled again.

“ Doubtless, Monsieur, the landau is old ; it would remonstrate, it would break down ; but it would be possible to have a new one made, which would be stronger and would not have the prejudices of the rickety old carriage. But pardon, I joke no more. You will possibly respect my intentions more when you have read this document, ” and she laid the folded paper on the little iron tripod table. “ It is the dying confession of my grandmother, Marie Courtois, written out by the curé who attended her in her last moments. ”

“ I see that it is dated 1820, ” I said, feebly. “ If the old lady died so long ago, and the paper has not been opened since, I hardly know what right we have to pry into the sins or secrets of her life. ”

“ Only, Madame, so far as this confession may set things right that are going wrong and affect people living now. ”

“ Even so, ” said my husband, “ I do not think that we strangers have the right to break the seal. You would better take it to your father confessor and let him judge whether it has any bearing on the affairs of the present century. ”

“ I know that it has, Monsieur, for my father, who heard the paper read at his mother’s death-bed, told me

its contents when he died, and bade me carry it to the Vicomte la Joyeuse, for it concerned him nearly."

"Why did you not do as your father told you?"

"I took it to the château, Monsieur, and was always on the point of giving it to the Vicomte, but he is a proud man and not easy to speak to on such a matter, and so, when I found that he knew nothing whatever about it, I decided that it was best to let things rest as they were, especially as no good was to be gained by publishing abroad my grandmother's sin."

We were all thunderstruck, and gazed at Zéphyre hardly crediting our senses. Surely the woman's soul must be constructed on a scale proportionate to her body if she were able so simply to give up wealth, rank, and opportunities, the possibility of whose loss had broken the Vicomte's heart.

None of us could speak for the moment, but Louis Rondel rose and took off his hat.

"What do you intend to do with this paper now?" I asked, when I could collect my senses.

"Why, now—things are different. I hear that the Vicomte is distressed by a scandal that my grandmother sent her own child to the château and carried off his ancestor, and since affairs have reached that pass, I think it is time that my grandmother came forward and denied the charge."

"What do you mean? Did she not change the children?"

"But no, Madame. How could anyone have been so depraved as that? Not a Courtois at any rate. She was a sinful woman, but not so vile as that."

"What, then, was the sin that she confesses here?"

"That she lied, Madame. It was the only lie of her life, and it was told from a good impulse; but she fore-

saw how it might make trouble, as at last it has, and it lay heavily on her conscience when she came to die. When those wretches were burning the castle and she thought that the child of the Vicomte, whom she had nursed at her breast along with her own child, and loved almost as much, might be roasted alive in the flames, she dashed up the burning staircase and strove to rescue him; but she was caught and held by the sentry.

“ She knew that it would be nothing to him if the child of an aristocrat should perish, and so she told the lie that weighed upon her soul ever afterwards. She told him that it was her own child whom she was trying to save, and she tried to soften his heart by the sight of her mother-agony so that he would let her take away this little one, this child of the people. But it was too late, the staircase was consumed, and the sentry was hard of heart. She learned afterward that the lie was not needed, for all of the family had escaped before the firing of the castle. She had quick work to get out of the village with her own child before he would be killed by the men who believed him to be the heir.

“ She hid herself and her boy at Angers, and she never returned to La Joyeuse, nor would my father, though he often said that the Vicomte ought to have that paper.”

Louis Rondel drew a long breath and wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

“ You understand fully,” he said, “ that in divulging your grandmother’s confession you perform, as she did in making it, an act of renunciation, giving up freely all benefits which might accrue to you from letting things take their present course ? ”

“ Certainly, Monsieur; since that course is not the true one, since we have no right to any of these things.”

“ Then I agree with you, Madame Zéphyre, that the

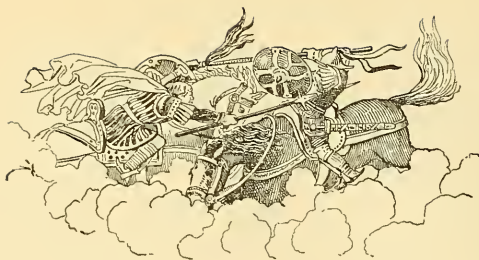
time has come you and for your grandmother to speak. Will you accompany me to Château La Joyeuse ?”

“ When you will, Monsieur.”

“ We can arrive more quickly by driving across the country than by leaving on to-morrow’s train and changing cars at Rennes. We will ask Anatole to get us the best span of horses in Ploërmel,—his pony will not answer for this occasion.”

“ But, Rondel,” said my husband, “ do you realise that this puts everything back exactly where it was ?”

“ Precisely; and Yseult’s father is still the Vicomte La Joyeuse. We will break it to him gently, and his life is saved.”



CHAPTER XI

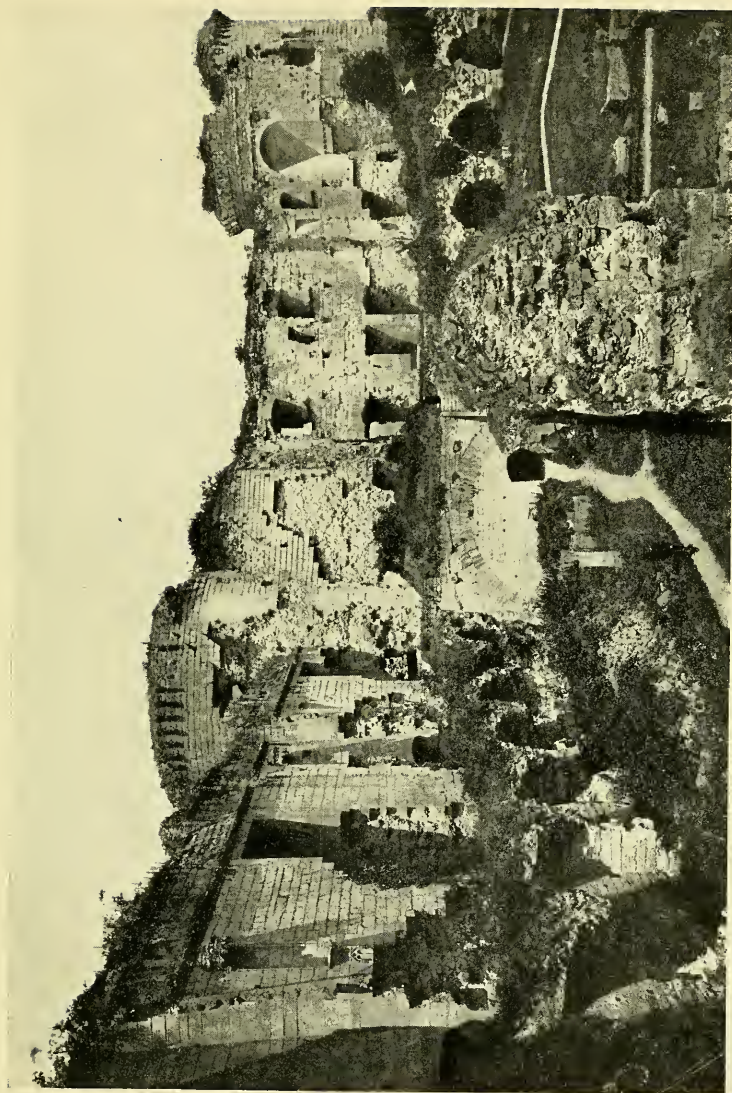
THE SECRET CHAMBER

“O murs ! o creneaux ! o tourelles !
Remparts ! fossés aux ponts mouvants
—— le beffroi des alarmes
La cour où sonnaient les clairons ;
La salle où, déposant leurs armes,
Se rassembloient les hauts barons.”

I

THE ANCIENT CASTLE OF COUCY

IF Angers is the mother castle of the *châteaux-forts* of France, the great donjon tower of Coucy looks the grandsire of them all. None of the huge towers of Angers or of any of the fortresses of Europe can rival its stupendous bulk, and, as it is in ruins, it appears far more venerable than older castles which



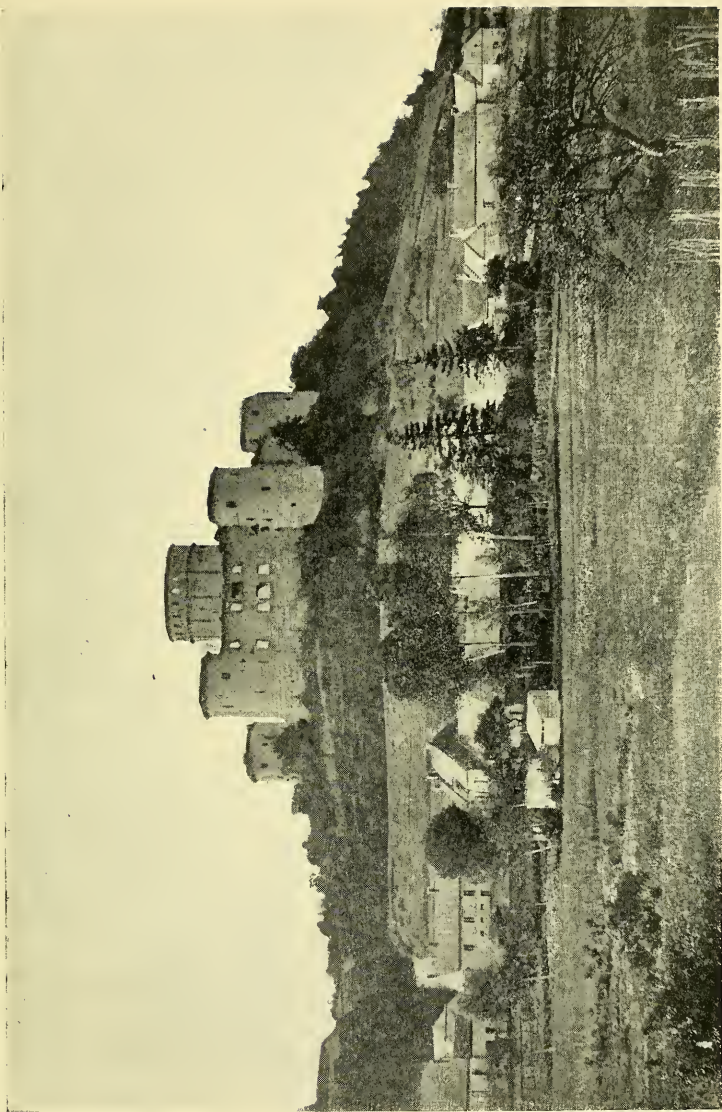
COUCY—INTERIOR, SHOWING THICKNESS OF WALLS.

have been kept in a better state of preservation. It is in every way the most remarkable castle in the north of France, unless we except Pierrefonds, for which it served as a model and with whose history it is intimately connected.

Standing on a slightly eminence the ruin dominates the surrounding country, and its Titanic round tower, which the engineers of Mazarin could shatter but could not demolish, is the ideal representative of the barbaric strength and brutality of the ruder and earlier portion of the Middle Ages. Viollet-le-Duc, who made this castle a special study, says of it: "We counsel those who love to live sometimes in the past to visit the donjon of Coucy, for nothing so well paints feudalism in its power and its warlike life as this admirable ruin." In his *Dictionnaire de l'Architecture Française*, he assures us that its stupendous donjon-keep is the finest specimen in Europe of mediæval military architecture; "compared with this giant the largest towers known appear mere spindles," for the tower is one hundred feet in diameter, and the walls in some places thirty-four feet thick. This huge width has the effect from a distance of lessening our appreciation of its height (180 feet),

which in a tower of ordinary diameter would strike one as remarkable. Everything about the castle is in proportion. The castle, with its great bailey, covered ten thousand square yards, and five hundred men were required to defend all its works; but while twelve or fifteen hundred could be seated in its colossal council chamber,—the chief apartments are (with one notable exception) of such vast size and lofty height that it would seem as if the castle were intended for a family of giants rather than for a numerous garrison of ordinary men.

The huge donjon had but three stories, each of one immense vaulted room. Admittance to this tower was from the inner court across a drawbridge, which closed the door in rising, while a gate of iron bars slipping into the wall further protected the entrance. There were a staircase and a drain-pipe in the thickness of the walls, and a vast cellar for provisions and munitions of war. The exterior of the tower was round, but within, the rooms were twelve-sided, forming ten niches for closets, and giving space for a fireplace and a well. In the centre of each floor was a large trap-door, and a pulley was attached to the ceiling of the upper chamber, so that bulky objects, ammunition, etc., could be hoisted from the cellar to



COUCY.

any story. The second story did not differ from the first, with the exception that it had three windows, while the lower one was lighted only by the opening in its ceiling which communicated with this chamber, and by its iron-grated door opening on the court. Even this could be closed, as we have said, by the iron drawbridge, so that the lower portion of the tower was an unbroken wall. The second story also contained ovens instead of a fireplace, and a *pont-volant* could be thrust out from one of the windows, affording communication with the battlements of the walls, and allowing their defenders to receive ammunition and reinforcements from the tower, or to seek refuge in it even after the enemy had obtained possession of the inner court. The upper story was loftier and more pretentious in its architecture than either of the others. This was the great hall of the castle, where the baron assembled his vassal warriors. It was handsomely vaulted, and for half its height was wainscoted with wardrobes for the stacking of arms. Above these closets ran a gallery which encircled the room and opened upon a corresponding balcony which surrounded the exterior of the tower, and afforded the archers and slingers a protected *chemin de ronde*, with

openings in the floor through which to pour boiling tar and molten lead. The tower may have been roofed by a platform on which were posted the larger engines for throwing stones. Traces of all of these details can, with the help of Viollet-le-Duc's explanations, be still made out in the dismantled tower.

Du Cerceau also gives plans and description of the entire castle, dwelling with most interest on the two great oblong halls within the courtyard, called respectively, from the statues carved over their mantels, the halls of the Nine Heroes and the Nine Heroines. While these rooms are of corresponding size with the donjon, there existed in the old exterior wall of the castle, and opening from the *Salle des Neuf Preuses*, a small but elegant boudoir quite out of character with the rest of the building. The vaulting of the room is finer architecturally than anything else in the castle, and it possessed a large and sunny window, whose empty arch still looks out vacantly toward the lovely landscape. There was a little fireplace too, and a tiny bath- and dressing-room, and on the other side, but still within the wall, a spiral staircase running down to the cellars. Opposite the window was the door leading into the great salon, but this could

have been covered with tapestry, or so hidden in the panelling as to isolate the little boudoir, and make it a secret chamber unknown even to the occupants of the castle.

Although so very small it was so finely finished that Viollet-le-Duc deems it worthy of mention, and indicates it on his plan, though he does not explain the use for which it was intended.

Enguerrand III., the builder of the castle, stands as the hero of so many exploits that some of them may well be mythical.

After distinguishing himself in early youth by leading the men of Soissons at the battle of Bouvines, he followed Simon de Montfort in his crusade against the Albigenses, and remained the comrade of his son Amaury after the death of Simon. Feeling that his exploits were not rewarded, he retired sullenly to his estate of Coucy, and during the minority of Louis IX. (St. Louis) his resentment and audacity had reached such a pitch that he aspired to seizing the kingship. It was to forward this scheme that the mighty fortress, which we still wonder at in its ruins, was planned and reared on the foundations of an earlier castle which Louis VI. had demolished. Begun in 1225, the work was pushed forward so rapidly that in 1230 it was finished. The

expense of building so hampered Enguerrand that he delayed hostile demonstration, but for the next ten years he was busy arming and disciplining his vassals.

Queen Blanche (the mother of Louis) and the faithful councillors of the King could not see without apprehension the gathering of so formidable an army near their doors. During the preceding reign, Simon de Montfort had found a vent for his activity and a draught from the black waters that cool all ambition, in the war against the Albigenses. His no less powerful son, the connétable Amaury, was gathering troops for a crusade,—an employment for the energies of belligerent lords with large bodies of militia in their following, which was always welcomed by kings timorous for the solidity of their thrones.

Louis was too simple-minded and unselfish in his zeal to have been influenced by this consideration, but it must have added to the satisfaction of his councillors when the young King sent for Amaury and desired that “he should in his name serve Jesus Christ in this war, and gave him arms and money, for which Amaury thanked him on his knees. And the crusaders were mightily pleased to have this lord with them.”

Amaury de Montfort visited Enguerrand at Coucy, hoping to persuade him to join in the Crusade, and Enguerrand entertained his old friend and comrade right royally. A banquet was given to him in the great vaulted hall of the donjon, and knights from far and near were gathered to meet him.¹

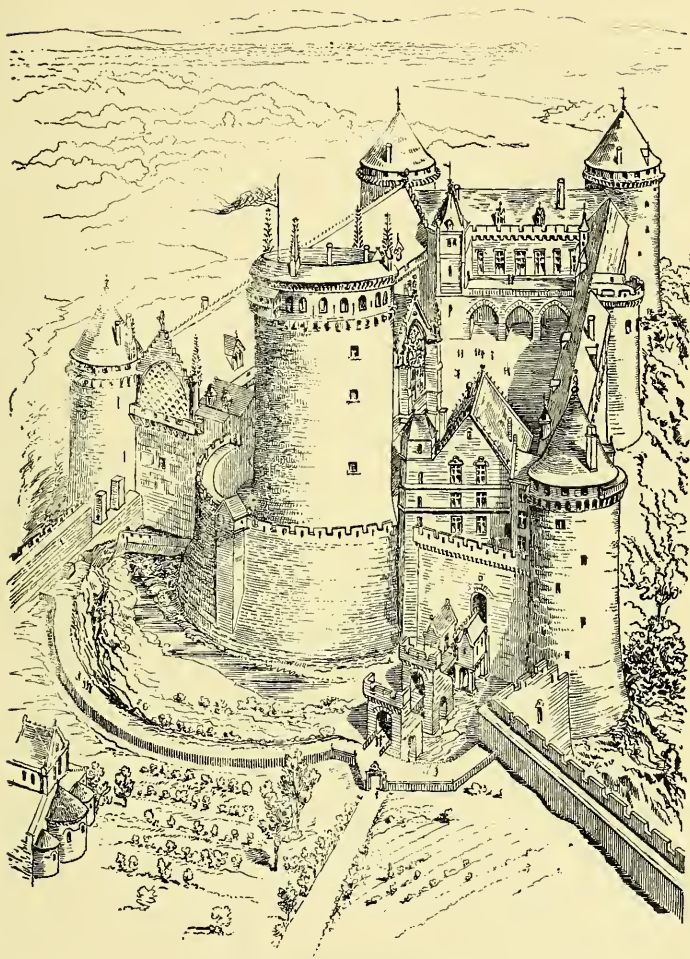
“For now for every merry mate
Rose the portcullis’ iron gate ;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.
Pages with ready blade were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share :
O’er capon, heron-shaw, and crane,
And princely peacock’s gilded train,
And o’er the boar’s head garnished brave,
And cygnet from the Aisne’s broad wave,
O’er ptarmigan and venison
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
For from the lofty balcony
Rose trumpet, shalm, and psaltery ;
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaffed,
Loudly they spoke and loudly laughed ;
Whispered young knights in tone more mild
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perched on beam,
The clamour joined with whistling scream,

¹ Walter Scott’s description of such a feast is equally applicable to this festival.

And flapped their wings, and shook their bells,
In concert with the stag-hound's yells,
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine
From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine ;
Their task the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry."

But though the Sieur de Coucy made the occasion of the visit of Amaury an exhibition of his power and wealth, he was not to be persuaded to join his enterprise. He thought he saw in it a royal plot to distract him from his ambitious designs, and could not be led off to the Holy Land with vague visions of being crowned King of Jerusalem, when a more attractive crown was nearer at hand. He would wait until Amaury had taken the loyal troops out of France and then strike for himself, meantime masking his designs under an appearance of perfect fealty and unwillingness to leave the King unprotected. He appeared frequently at court and professed great concern for the King, who had fallen very ill.

In this crisis the preparations for the crusade lagged, and Enguerrand still waited patiently. If the King died his opportunity would be better still. And while he dangled at court he fell in love with a beautiful woman, the Dame de Fayal, and was loved passionately in return.



COUCY—BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

It made no difference to Enguerrand, and probably little to her, that she was already a wife. The *Sieur de Fayal* had taken the cross under *Amaury*, and there was good chance that he would be slain in *Palestine*. If not, he would at least be conveniently out of the way for a long time,—another reason for not going off on this wild-goose chase. So with impatience burning like a hidden fire within his heart, Enguerrand kept an inscrutable demeanour, and divided his time between *Coucy* and *Vincennes*, the King's favourite castle.

Suddenly word was brought to Enguerrand that the King was dying. He knelt with the other lords in the antechamber waiting for the Bishop of Paris, who was within, to come forth and announce his death. The stillness was sharply broken by the wailing of two queens, *Blanche*, the mother of the King, and *Marguerite*, his bride. The Bishop lifted the arras and instinctively Enguerrand rose with his hand fumbling the handle of his sword. But the holy man's face was lit with joy. "The crisis is past, the King will recover, and in thanksgiving he has just asked me to place upon his shoulder the cross of the voyage over the sea. It is for this that the women wail, but they should thank God that he who was so

near to being a saint in heaven is spared to be a saint on earth."

Thanks to the chronicles of the Sieur de Joinville we have a clear understanding of the character of Louis, who as nearly deserves his title of saint as any in the long calendar: a fervent Christian, an ideal knight, pure of conscience and tender of heart, the search-light of history pronounces him *sans peur et sans reproche*.

He loved to sit under the oak of Vincennes listening to the complaints of the humblest of his subjects, and administering justice. The Sieur de Joinville, who was of a more earthly mould, tells us very naïvely of certain differences of opinion which arose between himself and the King.

While conducting his crusade Louis was much affected by his first sight of a leper, and asked De Joinville whether he would rather endure the leprosy or commit a mortal sin. The worldly-minded but truthful courtier replied that he would far rather commit thirty deadly sins than have so loathsome a disease. Whereupon the King was much grieved and pleaded with him earnestly, "striving to show him how much more abominable and filthy than a diseased body was an unclean soul."

This was the King against whom Enguerrand de Coucy was rebelling, and in contrast with whom he seems a very Lucifer.

The King intended to lead personally the crusaders,—would he never be gone? His men were ready now and impatient for action. As Enguerrand moodily paced the park of Vincennes, he noted the impregnability of the great donjon, and decided that he would not hazard its assault. He would keep Queen Blanche penned up within it in a state of siege with a small body of his troops, and throw the main force into Paris. These thoughts were surging through his mind when he met the King with several courtiers. “Here’s my good Enguerrand,” he said, “who is so devoted to my person that he swore not to leave me when his friend Amaury besought him to go with him. Ah! well, we will now all go together,” and the King fastened the cross to the breast of the unworthy knight.

Enguerrand was so taken aback that he was speechless, and the King, pretending not to notice his confusion, bade him go to his castle and put his vassals into marching order.

Enguerrand rode swiftly to Coucy, but he had no thought, though the cross had been forced upon him, of really joining the crusade.

He would delay on one pretext and another, always finding some reason why his troops were not ready, and promising to follow and meet the King at Aigues-Mortes, from which point the Genoese fleet was to convey the crusaders to Cyprus. At the last moment the King would set sail without him, and then!

All worked as he planned. The King had left at the head of his army. Enguerrand only waited to attack Paris for a trusty courier whom he had sent with the crusaders to inform him that they had really sailed. A few days before the messenger was expected, he arrived, his horse staggering and white with foam. He handed the Sieur de Coucy a perfumed note. "But this is from the Dame de Fayal," he exclaimed, as he saw the device upon the seal which they had agreed upon between themselves,—a heart and the words "Thine till death and after."

"Yes, my lord," replied the courier; "the lady is with the army, and recognising me, sent one of her people to me with this letter, begging me to carry it to you in all haste."

Enguerrand tore open the missive and read to his astonishment: "My husband suspects our attachment, and has discovered that you do not intend to go upon this crusade; he has

therefore determined to take me with him. Rescue me."

The word was enough. It was not an unprecedented thing for wives to accompany their husbands. Queen Marguerite had herself gone with the King; the Dame de Fayal would probably be left with her in some safe fortress near the scene of action. Enguerrand's visions of usurpation shrivelled in the flame of his passion. He ordered his forces to march at once, and endeavoured to overtake the army. When he arrived at Aigues-Mortes he found that it had sailed, but the King had left a transport for him and he followed to Cyprus.

Then he found that he had been tricked. The Sieur de Fayal, having read his wife's letter, had allowed it to be sent, and rightly calculating its effect, had left the lady in the care of, some nuns of Provence.

But Enguerrand and his men were now actively engaged in the crusade, and there was no other course open but to follow it to its bitter end. Bitter it was, for he met his death at Damietta. Dying, he bade his squire have his heart embalmed in spices, placed in a silver reliquary inscribed with the motto "Thine till death and after," and so to carry it to the

Dame de Fayal. And now comes the most darkly tragic part of the story, but so in harmony with those brutal times that several similar instances are recorded in authentic chronicles. Revolting as it is, it forms the theme for old French ballads and is referred to by Longfellow.

The Sieur de Fayal, intercepting Enguerand's squire in the performance of his errand, gained possession of the heart and had it skilfully cooked and served to his wife. This ghoulish feast was her last, for she died of horror when told that she had eaten the heart of her lover.

On first hearing this ghastly tradition I fancied that in it I had found the clue to the mystery of the Secret Chamber, and that it might have been for the Dame de Fayal that it was so cunningly hidden and so elegantly appointed. But there is no such heartless iconoclast as research. Further historical study developed the fact that the legend was mythical; and architects insist that the little room is of a later date than the rest of the castle, and could never have known either Enguerrand III. or the Dame de Fayal.

II

Coucy tells its secret to the Château of Pierrefonds, and the latter blabs it, thereby proving that walls have tongues as well as ears.

Another turn and a half of the century hour-glass, and the Château of Coucy was to play again its old rôle of menace to royalty.

When that strange insanity fell upon Charles VI., his brother, Louis of Orleans, ruled the kingdom as regent, and there was little concealment of the guilty attachment which he cherished for the Queen, Isabel of Bavaria. The regency of the Duke of Orleans had been stoutly contested by his uncle, the Duke of Burgundy, and on the latter's death his son, John the Fearless, took up the enmity while feigning friendship for his cousin.

Louis of Orleans had married the lovely Valentine de Visconti of Milan, and before the coming of the fateful Queen theirs had been a happy home in the ancestral castle of the counts of Blois, which Louis had purchased. He was an extravagant purchaser and builder of castles, and besides those mentioned in this chapter possessed several which do not bear upon our story.

His duties as regent took him to Paris, and

here the little palace called the Hôtel de Bohême (which had been the favourite residence of Queen Blanche, the mother of St. Louis) was given him by the King in 1388.

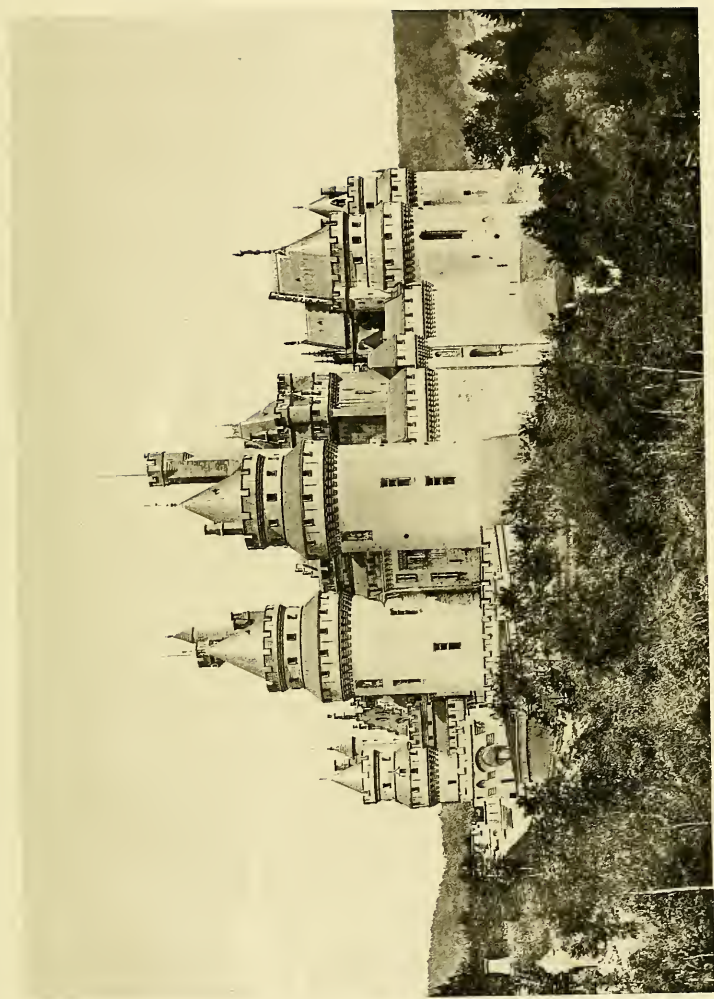
Valentine came to Paris with him and fitted up the mansion with great magnificence. She had brought with her from Italy, not alone great store of art treasures, but the cultured Italian taste. She was the *avant-courrière* of the Italian Renaissance which in the next century was to take France by storm.

But this palatial town-house and the château at Blois were not sufficient for the Duke of Orleans. He realised that he had deadly enemies, and that he must have a stronghold near at hand, to which to flee upon sudden emergency, and in 1396 he purchased the Château of Coucy for four hundred thousand livres. Louis at once set to work altering, improving, and embellishing the old castle, and Viollet-le-Duc very carefully traces these alterations, distinguishing between the rude masonry of Enguerrand and the more elegant architecture of the portions erected at this period.

Enguerrand had lived in the donjon, but Louis used it only for his garrison, building within the inner court the handsome residential portion, including the two great halls



Château Pierrefonds.



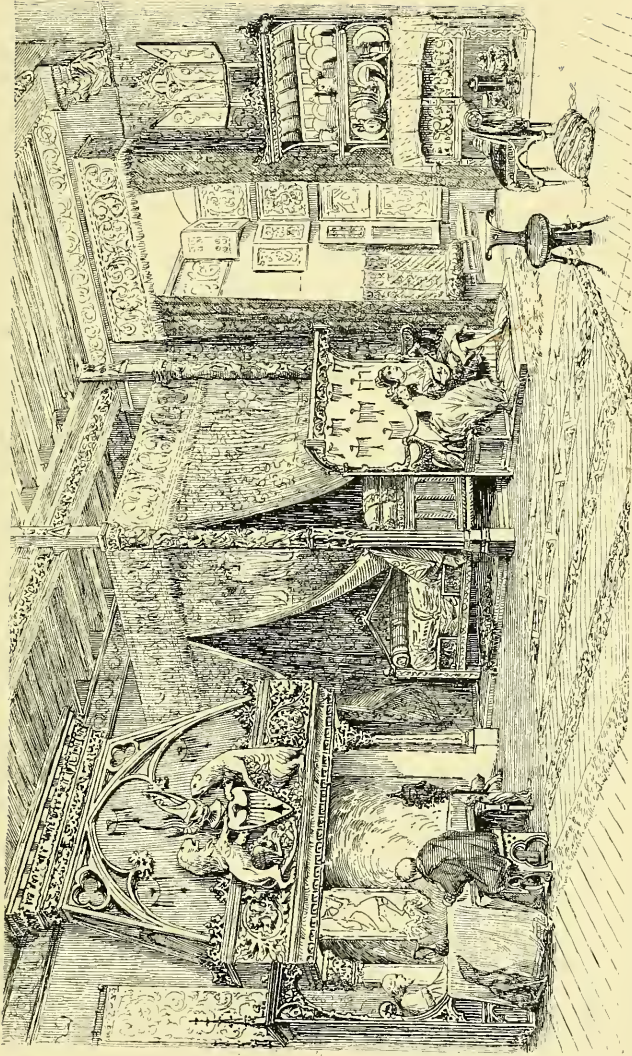
of the Nine Heroes and Nine Heroines. It was he who had the statues carved over the mantels, and the ornamentation was perfectly in harmony with his educated taste, for Louis was a scholar and left at Blois the foundation of a library which his son and grandson increased and rendered famous. Among the books still remaining which are known to have belonged to him are : a Bible, Horace, Virgil, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the Koran, the *Fables* of Æsop, and the *History of King Arthur and the Saint Graal*. Valentine, for the amusement of their children, caused two little picture-books to be made, "illuminated with gold, azure, and vermilion, and bound in Cordovan leather, at a cost of four hundred francs."

Louis and Valentine had much in common, for they both loved art, literature, and refined luxury. Sauval, in his *Histoire et recherches des antiquités de la ville de Paris*, describes the magnificent appointments of their town-house, where they maintained a train of two hundred servants. The spacious salons were hung with cloth of gold embroidered with the coats-of-arms of Louis and Valentine, and with tapestries, one of which represented the Seven Virtues and the Seven Vices, another the history of Charlemagne, and a third that of

St. Louis. The chairs were covered with Cordovan leather or velvet ; the ceilings were panelled in Irish oak like those in the Louvre ; and huge silver vases, statues, and costly paintings filled the rooms. Valentine was as extravagant in her generosity, and a munificent list is given of the presents which she made upon a certain New Year's Day, among which figure :

“To the Queen Isabel, an enamel painting on gold of St. John, framed with nine rubies, a sapphire, and twenty-one pearls, a brooch set with a great ruby and six great pearls for the King, three pairs of ‘paternosters’ (missals) for the daughters of the King, and two great diamonds for the dukes of Burgundy and Berry.”

During the mad King's intervals of sanity, Valentine devoted herself to amusing him, as one would entertain a child with games and stories. Louis saw with satisfaction the influence which her unselfish kindness might gain over his brother, and while she was thus charitably engaged employed himself with entertaining the Queen. But the Duke of Burgundy was not to be consoled for Louis's usurpation of power by gifts of “great diamonds,” and cousinly courtesies. John the Fearless had well earned his name—and Louis d'Orleans knew that he was not for one moment safe,



CHAMBER IN A CHÂTEAU OF THE XIV. CENTURY.

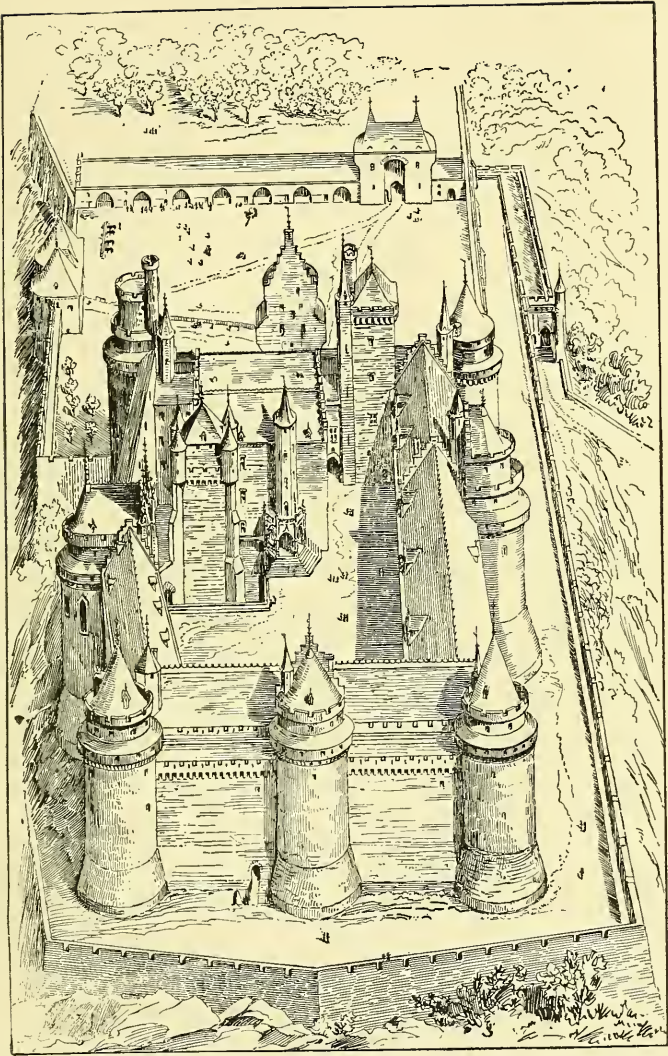
and he pushed on his construction at Coucy. With Viollet-le-Duc for our guide we understand perfectly Louis's alterations, and see how he machicolated the parapets for their better defence, enlarged the windows, and gave every tower its separate staircase, though at every story changing the position of the flight of stairs from one side of the tower to the other, obliging anyone desiring to mount from the ground floor to cross at each landing a guard-room, and so protecting the castle from the entrance of spies and assassins. Most interesting of all, we see how the little room was niched in the thickness of the old wall, and the elegant vaulting of this period encrusted on the rough stonework. It was Louis d'Orleans and not Enguerrand who built the Secret Chamber and ornamented it in such regal style.

There is no proof that it was ever occupied. Louis was disappointed in Coucy. It was too far from Paris, and, in spite of the changes which he effected, not adapted to the improvements which had been made in warfare. It long remained the appanage of the dukes of Orleans, was a part of the marriage portion of Claude, the wife of Francis I., and was finally dismantled by Mazarin's orders. Although

Coucy had not fully answered his expectations, it suggested much which Louis embodied in the fortress of Pierrefonds, which he erected between 1390 and 1404. Thanks to the intelligent and enthusiastic restoration of Viollet-le-Duc, this castle presents to-day every detail of mediæval times.

While it took a garrison of five hundred men to defend Coucy, sixty men could man the larger sides of Pierrefonds, and forty the smaller. It was necessary to pass entirely around the castle in the fosse to enter it, while the fortifications were so connected that the defenders could be shifted instantly to whatever point was attacked. To lay siege to this fortress, at least two thousand men were required (more than could be thrown into the field by the Duke of Burgundy), and it was absolutely proof against any assault but artillery. Here he repeated the two great halls of the Nine Heroes and Nine Heroines, and few of us, I fancy, are so familiar with history as to give, without a little research, the stories of the ladies who still look down from the great mantel: Semiramis, Lampedo, Delphila, Thamyris, Tanqua, Penthesilea, Menelippe, Hippolyte, and Deifemme.

Pierrefonds has eight great towers, each one



PIERREFONDS—BIRD'S-EYE VIEW.

hundred and twelve feet high, with walls from fifteen to twenty feet thick. So impregnable was it that it withstood four royal sieges, and was only taken and dismantled, though not demolished, in 1616, by that great iconoclast Richelieu, who, in pursuing his policy of strengthening the monarchy, destroyed so many of the strongholds of feudalism. Its ruins were purchased by Napoleon I., whose interest in this castle was shared by Napoleon III., who contributed from his personal property one-third of the five million francs (the State voting the other two-thirds) which were necessary to restore it. The artist will always care more for the picturesque ruin of Coucy, but to the antiquarian and the architect the glistening walls of Pierrefonds are invaluable.

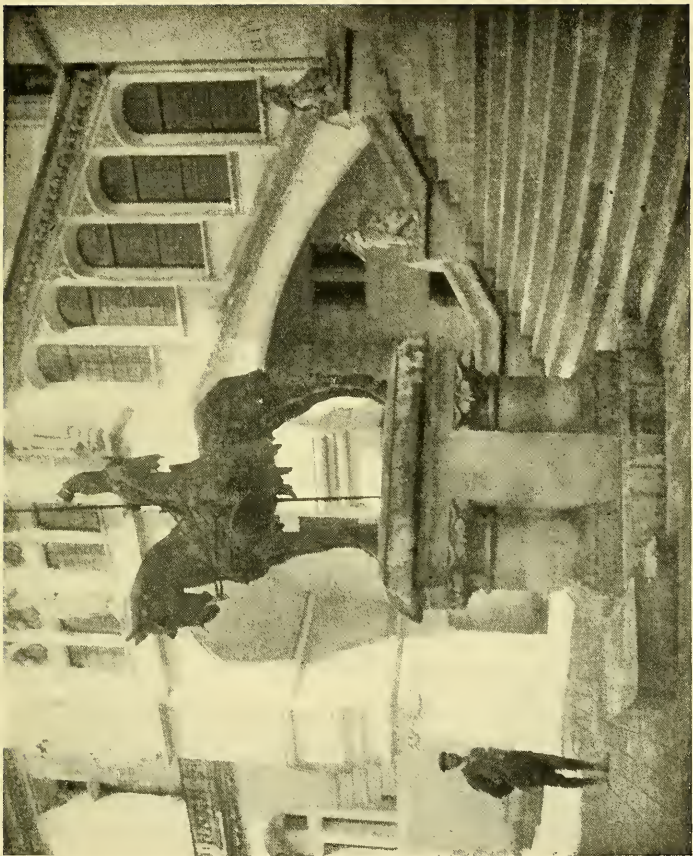
The equestrian statue of Louis d'Orleans stands in the inner court in front of the grand staircase, where he had expected to stand to welcome the Queen, for at last she had promised to be his guest, and Valentine had been posted off to Blois. The fortress of Pierrefonds was finished, and all arrangements were made for a merry celebration of Noel therein. For the moment the Duke of Burgundy seemed to have buried his enmity, for he had dined with Louis at his own house, and they

had met together in cousinly fashion at the mansion of their uncle, the Duke of Berry.

“On the 23d of November, 1407,” says Guizot, “the Duke of Orleans had dined at the palace with Queen Isabel. He was returning in the evening along the old Rue du Temple, thinking of the woman whom he loved, and singing gayly a love-song. He was attended by only a few servants carrying torches. When the Duke was about a hundred paces from the Queen’s hostel, eighteen or twenty armed men, who had lain in ambush behind a house (called the Image de Notre Dame), rushed upon the Duke, shouting, ‘Death, death!’ ‘What is all this?’ said he,—‘I am the Duke of Orleans.’ ‘Just what we want,’ was the answer, and they struck at him with axe and sword, and as they fled put out all lights. The Duke was quite dead. He was carried to a neighbouring church, whither all the royal family came to render the last sad offices. The provost of Paris set on foot an active search after the assassins. The Council of Princes met at the Hôtel de Nesle. The Duke of Burgundy came to take his seat, but the Duke of Berry went to the door and said to him, ‘Nephew, give up the notion of entering the council; you would not be seen there with pleasure.’”

“‘I give up willingly,’ answered the Duke, ‘and that none may be accused of putting to death the Duke of Orleans, I declare that it was I and none other who caused the doing of what has been done.’ Thereupon he turned his horse’s head and galloped without a halt, except to change horses, to the frontier of Flanders.”

But this was not the end. Valentine de Visconti, widow of the Duke of Orleans, with



STATUE OF DUKE OF ORLEANS IN PIERREFONDS.

all her passionate Italian nature clamoured for justice, and finding that she could not obtain it, inculcated the duty of revenge upon her children, and not upon her own alone, but upon a little illegitimate son of the Duke of Orleans whom she adopted, saying, "This one was filched from me, yet there is not a child so well cut out as he to avenge his father's death." It was the Italian tradition of the vendetta.

Valentine's eldest son, Charles, was of a gentle, poetic nature, that shrank from deeds of violence, but twenty-five years later the child of the bar sinister was the famous "Dunois, Bâtard d'Orleans." Valentine, taking for her motto *Rien ne m'est plus, plus ne m'est rien* (I have nothing any more, nothing henceforth is of any worth to me), gave herself to the inculcation of revenge, but soon died at Blois of a broken heart.

France took up the quarrel, and took sides, until the death of Charles, either with the Duke of Burgundy or with Valentine. Meanwhile the English invaded the kingdom, and, after the battle of Agincourt, pressed toward Paris.

Isabel, whom "faith unfaithful could not keep even falsely true" to her dead lover, was fascinated by the audacity of his murderer, and

favoured the cause of the Duke of Burgundy. The King, in an interval of sanity, had her banished from Paris and shut up at Tours. The Queen managed to send her golden seal to the Duke of Burgundy, who, with his men-at-arms, rode from Corbeil to Tours and carried her off. With characteristic audacity, they returned to Paris and attempted to seize the government; but the dauphin, soon to be crowned as Charles VII., took upon himself the task to which Valentine had striven to educate the sons of Louis d'Orleans, and just twelve years after his murder caused the Duke of Burgundy to be assassinated on the bridge of Montereau.

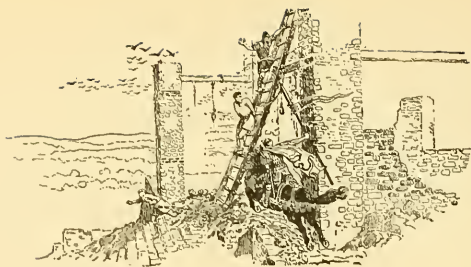
Then, until the meeting of the peasant girl of Domremy with Dunois and the young King at Chinon, the English swept all before them in France.

The history of Charles of Orleans, the poet son of Louis and Valentine, is associated more with the Château of Blois than with Coucy, and Pierrefonds, which he inherited; and yet we are certain that he must have had the fireplace of the Nine Heroines in mind when, carried to England as a prisoner by the English, he beguiled his captivity by composing his graceful verses on the *Heroines of the Past*.

“ En viei 'temps grant renom couroit
De Criseis, d'Yseud, et Elaine,
Et maintes autres qu'on nommoit,
Parfaictes en beauté hautaine.
Mais enfin en son domaine,
La mor les pris piteusement,
Parquoi puis voir clérement,
Ce mond n'est que chose vaine.”¹

¹ Charles was the friend and early patron of Villon, and entertained him at Blois. It was directly on this poem that the latter modelled his better-known *Les Neiges d'Antan* :

“ La Royne Blanche comme un lys,
Qui chantait à voix de sereine,
Berthe au grand pied, Bietris, Allys,
Harembourges qui tient le Mayne,
Et Jehanne la bonne Lorraine,—
Qu'Anglois bruslèrent à Rouen :
Où sont-ilz Vièrge Souveraine ?
Mais où sont les neiges d'Antan ?”



CHAPTER XII

THE AFTERWORD

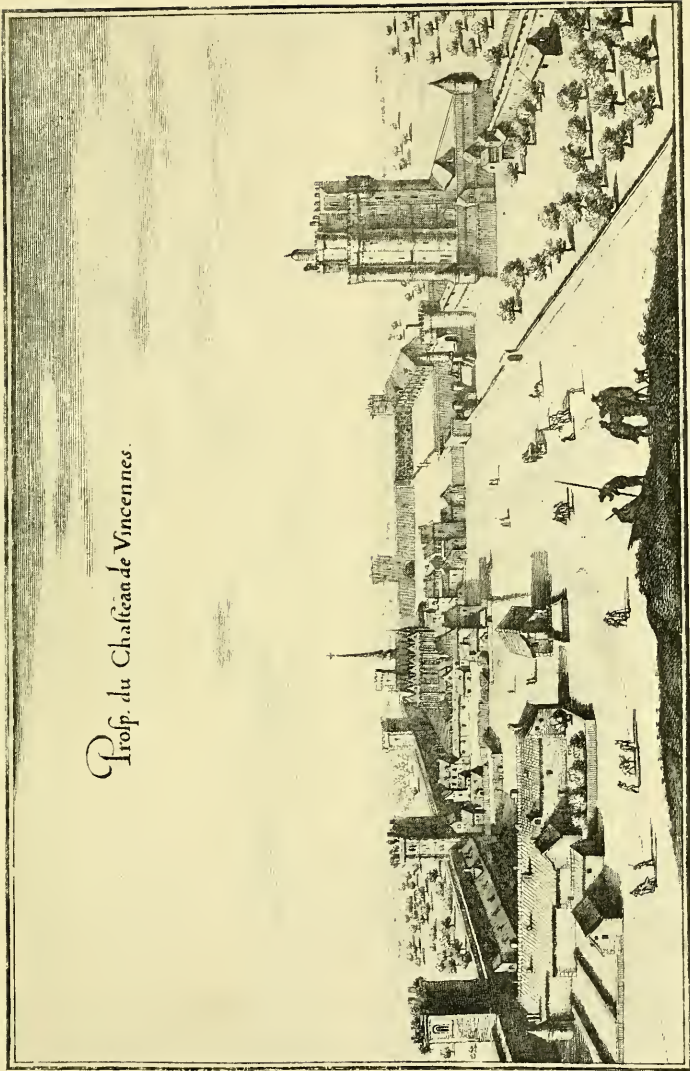
The old order changeth, yielding place to new.—TENNYSON.

THE feudal period ends with the reign of Louis XI., for he broke the power of the independent barons and ushered in that of royalty. Henceforth the châteaux-forts were appropriated by the State, and many of them were converted into prisons.

“In general,” says Linguet, “all the *places fortes* could at will become as many bastilles; there is not one of these fortresses, raised apparently against foreign enemies, which a ministerial caprice could not instantly change into the tomb of the children of France.”

Amboise, Chinon, and Vincennes bear out this statement, both in their history and their sinister appearance, but most grewsome and

Prospect du Chateau de Vincennes.



VINCENNES—OLD PRINT.

heart-sickening in the mute testimony of its dungeons and torture chambers is Louis XI.'s favourite prison castle of Loches. Near these prisons were reared the terrible châteaux of death, the ghastly gibbets, which, like that of Montfaucon, frequently held many bodies, and a new victim was often suspended between the skeletons of other criminals or martyrs.

As the monarchy became more firmly established the state had less occasion for prisons and forts, and many were torn down.

The hour was striking, too, for a change in domestic architecture with the changed political conditions. The power of the nobles was broken; they could no longer contend against their sovereign, and the desire to do so vanished with the power. The nobility themselves tore down their old fortresses or made them over. The narrow meurtrières for arrow-shots gave place to broad windows, the massive walls to elegant carving, and the white châteaux of the Renaissance rose to mark another period in architecture and another epoch in history.

While we were at Pierrefonds, a merry letter came from Yseult, bidding us to the promised Court of Love at Château La Joyeuse.

“I have arranged all the details,” she wrote. “We will hold it on the terrace in front of the long corridor. I have the costumes ready, and the list of guests,—only a few choice spirits, to be invited when you have set the date. Louis Rondel has been practising upon the lute till he is a capital jongleur, and he looks remarkably well in his troubadour’s costume. The dresses have all been lent me by an historical painter, an old friend of my father’s, Monsieur Leon Gautier, of Blois, who has entered heartily into the spirit of the affair. He and Madame Gautier will sing some airs composed by Thibault, of Champagne, in 1235. When will our trouvère be ready with her romances?”

“We must not keep them waiting,” said my husband. “Early summer is just the season for the court to sit. My mind is greatly relieved by Yseult’s reference to Rondel. I feared that when the Vicomte was reinstated in his position he would have a relapse into the old caste feeling, but apparently everything is joyful. I hope your legends are ready.”

“Quite ready,” I replied; “but it is a pity that we have not heard from the Chairman of the Search Committee on applications for admission to the Society of the Colonial Wars, to whom you sent the papers which the Vicomte gave us.”

“Oh! they came back weeks ago, with a

The Falconer's Recital.

(By permission of the American Art Association.)

letter from Bradford Brewster, so long and so illegible that I have n't had the time to puzzle it out."

"Let me try," I said, and I found the cramped, old-fashioned script which the antiquarian had affected not at all difficult to decipher.

"I have verified the events detailed in the diary of the Vicomte La Joyeuse," he wrote, "and have found that his service is honourably mentioned in the official records of the Revolutionary War. He was aide-de-camp to Rochambeau at the battle of Yorktown, where he was wounded. It was before he had recovered that he received the news, which he so touchingly deploras in his diary, of the death of his young wife, to whom he was married during the stay of the French allies at Newport. 'I told my dear Jane,' he writes, 'that I was a swallow, a bird of passage, that must fly away, but that I would as certainly return. Alas! her swallow has no incentive to cross the seas again.'

"This word 'swallow,' frequently repeated in the diary, has set me on the track of an important discovery. A year ago I had the task of looking up the ancestry of an applicant for admission to our society, a certain Louis Rondel. It was all straight sailing back to a Coddington L'Hirondelle of Newport. Apparently this had been the original name—the French word for swallow—and I fancied that the father of this Coddington was one of the French allies; but I could not find the name of L'Hirondelle either on the rolls of the French soldiers or on any marriage record, and we were obliged

to decline M. Rondel's application for membership. After reading the diary which you sent me, I took a run down to Newport and found the record of the marriage of Jane Coddington to Louis Raoul, Vicomte de La Joyeuse.

"To me the conclusion is evident that the couple were secretly married, that the Vicomte never knew that his wife had left him an infant son, or her relatives the name and rank of the child's father. They called him L'Hirondelle, because the Vicomte had so signed himself in his letters to his wife. I have written M. Louis Rondel that I have at last found the missing link in his ancestry, and that he is now eligible as a member of our society. More than this, it appears by the Vicomte's diary that he married again on his return to France, and that he left descendants,—your friends for whom you are making these inquiries. You can readily see that they are descended from the cadet or younger son, and that the title should revert to the older branch."

"Stop right there," exclaimed my husband, "until I can take it in. If this is true, Louis Rondel is the real Vicomte La Joyeuse. Well, that is a little better than Anatole. The Vicomte can hardly now object to the marriage on account of inequality of rank; and, as he has no son, he ought to be glad that the name and title are preserved for his descendants."

"I don't know," I replied doubtfully; "there is no telling how the Vicomte will take this second shock, and he has been through a great

deal of late. Mr. Brewster says he has written Louis Rondel. I am glad of it, for that absolves us from the responsibility of announcing the discovery."

We found Château La Joyeuse so transformed by the gay company which filled its spacious rooms, that we hardly recognised it. At last it realised its name. Lights twinkled, flowers breathed perfume and gave great splashes of colour, music set our pulses thrilling, beautiful women smiled, and gay young people laughed and danced. The Vicomte himself was radiant,—none gayer or younger. He welcomed us most heartily, as did the Vicomtesse, who wore the family jewels and looked more queenly than ever.

"I am so glad," I ventured, "that you have made Louis Rondel happy,—he is such a good fellow."

"Ah! yes," replied the Vicomte. "It is not the match to which we might have aspired for our daughter, but he is, as you say, a good fellow, and very appreciative of the honour done him."

"Yes, very appreciative," murmured Madame; "it is quite a pleasure to condescend. He is never failing in respect to the Vicomte, and his arm is always at my service."

The Gautiers came forward while she was speaking, and led us into another room to inspect the costumes. The artist had sent his historical collection, and Yseult had had them copied or adjusted for each guest.

“You were so enthusiastic over the old Courts of Love when we saw you at Chinon,” I said to Monsieur Gautier, “that I should not be surprised if this entertainment were entirely of your planning.”

“On the contrary, it was Mademoiselle Yseult who suggested Berengaria’s story to me. We were here just before we went to Chinon, soon after your first visit. I was struck by that delightfully grotesque piece of armour which hangs over the door.”

I looked up quickly. The face which Finette had assured us had vanished was in its place again. Was it an augury of coming evil? My superstition was quickly dispelled as Monsieur Gautier continued calmly :

“It exactly resembled the shoulder-pieces of a cuirass worn by Joan of Arc in an old painting by an artist of Lorraine. Our friends were good enough to lend it to me, and you remarked upon it when you saw it at Chinon. I did not tell you then where I obtained it, for that would rather have spoiled the effect of its

weird appearances and vanishings, with which I saw that you were somewhat impressed."

"What a rogue you are!" I exclaimed, somewhat piqued. "You have explained one part of its mysterious history, but can you tell me how it happened that I was continually chancing upon that impish thing in our wanderings? Were you responsible for its appearance in the legends which we heard at Angers, at Mont St. Michel, at Ploërmel, and elsewhere?"

"Not I; but I cannot vouch as much for your mischief-loving friend, Mademoiselle Yseult."

"How could Yseult have had anything to do with the legends that I found in these widely distant places?"

"Very easily. She read me, for instance, the story of Turoid, which she composed with the help of Miss Strickland's *Life of Queen Matilda*, and other histories, and sent to her friend the nun, at Caen, to give to you. As for the other traditions, I think you will find that most of them were arranged in the same way and came to you through Zéphyre and Anatole, who were suborned through the agency of Mademoiselle Yseult's maid Finette, at least so far as to introduce the strange face into their *fabliaux*."

It was not in human nature to feel no indignation on learning how egregiously I had been played upon and hoaxed,—but no one could cherish resentment against such a friend as Yseult. I punished her by making her acknowledge her misdeeds before the Court of Love, where the noble lady presiding condemned her to wear shackles forever, and to be guarded for the rest of her life by a jailer who could not be corrupted by any bribe to give her liberty. Merlin's castle of Brœciland was named as her prison; the shackle, which was fastened on in the presence of the court, was a tiny iron ring set with carbuncles, and Louis Rondel was constituted her guard.

“And how about the mysterious footfalls on the vanished staircase?” I asked Finette one day, when I found her alone in the library. “Have you heard them again since the face has come back?”

“No, Madame,” Finette replied, with a sheepish look, “and no one will ever hear them again.”

“Why not?” I asked.

“Because, Madame, that was a practical joke of Anatole's when he was a boy. He was flying his kite over the château and its tail caught in the *girouette* (weathercock) on the

turret. It was a long tail of stout twine, with a bit of wood fastened to the end to make it heavy. When the wind blew the weathercock round and round, it would wind and unwind the kite-tail, and cause it to bang and drag against the library wall, mounting and descending, clap, clap, clap, like the tap of a shoe on a staircase. All the other bobs wore away, but the grey string and the bit of wood remained, so near the colour of the wall that no one noticed them. It was chance that caught the kite-tail and set the machinery in motion ; but Anatole was carrying wood into the library for the fire one afternoon, when a very demon of a wind whirled the weathercock about, and the Vicomte exclaimed, ' There are those footsteps again ; they will drive me crazy ! '

" This amused Anatole so much that he did not confess, and when the Vicomte sent him away for kissing me, he was vindictive enough to be glad that in restoring the twine he had left a cause of vexation. When Monsieur Rondel examined the turret, and tore away the nests of the ravens, he took with them the piece of twine, or else it has at last blown away of itself, for the sounds are heard no more. I did not know this until the last time that I saw Anatole, or they would long since have ceased."

After the other guests had left the château we showed Louis Rondel the letter we had received from America in reference to his own descent.

We were alone in the dining-room and a light fire was burning in the great fireplace. He dropped the letter quickly upon the bed of coals. "Pardon me for destroying your friend's communication," he said, "but it is only a romance of his imagination, though a very dangerous one. I would not have the Vicomte have the least suspicion of this for worlds. His is a generous as well as a proud nature. It is his foible, if you please, to be magnificent, to play the patron, to stoop to confer favours; but he does it gracefully, and it makes him happy to condescend. He has suffered cruelly. He shall never suffer again."

Which was romance, the theory of Bradford Brewster or the denial of Louis Rondel? How much was truth and how much fiction? We can only answer as though the question were asked of any of these legends. Sometimes imagination is the only real part of life, and romance truer than history.

THE END.

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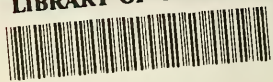
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