THE AGE OF CHIVALRY

Philip H. Johnstone

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A TOURNAMENT.

THE AGE OF CHIVALRY

Scenes from the Lives of

THE CHEVALIER BAYARD

AND

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

BY

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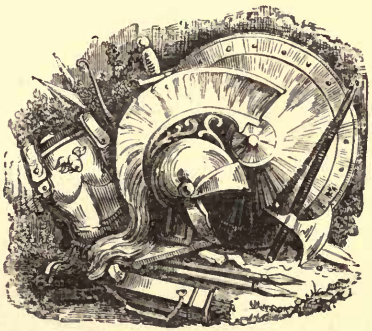

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M W
FLORENCE WHITEHEAD

Dedication.

TO THE MEMORY OF

THAT BRIGHT PARTICULAR STAR OF MODERN CHIVALRY,

THE LATE

MAJOR-GENERAL CHARLES G. GORDON, C.B.

Palmam

qui

meruit

ferat.

PREFACE.

IN this age of the endless making of books, it is necessary to have good reason for adding another to the innumerable series.

I have not been able to discover any other work giving within reasonable limits a concise statement of the principles and effects of the Institution of Chivalry.

The Chevalier Bayard and Sir Philip Sidney are names to conjure with, yet how few of those who so often use them know anything of the actions on which their fame rests. There have been several French lives of Bayard written, some of which have been translated into English, notably by the poet Southey in 1825, and all founded on *La très joyeuse Histoire du gentil Seigneur de Bayart par le loyal serviteur*, published shortly after his death; but I am not aware of any book in English giving a short and succinct account of his life suitable for the general reader.

There is no life of Sidney at present in print except that in the "English Men of Letters" series, dealing solely with his literary work, a totally different aspect from that which I have considered in the following pages.

Recent historical research has thrown new light on the period with which I have had to deal, and among the authorities of which I have availed myself are—*La très joyeuse Histoire;* Fox Bourne's *Memoir of Sidney;* Hallam's *History of the Middle Ages;* Froude's *History of England;* Dyer's *Modern Europe*, and the other standard works of the period.

DAVOS-PLATZ,
22nd January, 1890.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is my purpose in the following pages to treat of one of the most interesting periods in the annals of the nations of Europe, and of an institution which, although it has now been for generations but a memory and a name, has left an indelible impression upon the whole social feelings and impulses of those who have come after.

Chivalry was, when at the height of its prosperity, one of the most important elements in the national being of the countries of Christendom. It exercised, as will hereafter appear, an influence over every phase and direction of the social and political life of the people of those times, and had, perhaps, more to do with the refinement and civilisation of society than any other factor in the history of that age. And its power did not end here. As an institution, with all its ordinances, privileges, and ceremonies, Chivalry did not retain a dominant ascendency over the nobility of Europe for more than about two hundred years, and yet its wide-spread effects only began to be manifested when its reputation and energy as an independent Order had begun to decline. In the years immediately succeeding the foundation of the Order, society was in a state of anarchy and disorganisation which prevented the prin-

ciples inculcated by it from having their full effect, as they were too far advanced in humane and generous feeling for the people of the time to fully understand. But when the condition of society had so far improved as to allow the sentiments of justice and mercy taught by it full scope for action, the Order produced a host of men eminent in every noble quality, whose examples had an invaluable influence upon the manners and habits of their fellows.

And not only is it of importance on account of its direct influence upon the people of the period, but also owing to the effect it had in producing and encouraging so many other motive powers on the side of civilisation and refinement. For it was the spirit of Chivalry that animated poetry and art at a time when learning and culture were almost unknown; it created romance and heraldry, which did so much in a rude and barbarous age to foster the taste for the softer pleasures of life; it determined individual conduct when the Church was the only guide of right and wrong; by its martial strength it modified the policy of states, and inspired the energies, while it controlled the destinies, of the most enterprising and powerful nations of the world.

The importance of Chivalry at the present time, when the Order of Knighthood is no longer conferred as a reward for the performance of heroic deeds or the possession of knightly qualities, arises from the fact that from it are derived many of those magnanimous and lofty ideas and sentiments which still unconsciously

animate great and good men, and spur them on to actions of unselfish devotion and manly fortitude.

It is, of course, impossible to convey any notion of the widespread influence of such an institution as this by the mere statement of its rules and precepts, and we can only see the effect which it has had on the world at large by viewing the results of its animating principles through the lives and conduct of its representative men. It has therefore seemed well to illustrate its training as seen in the actions of two of the greatest members of the great Order to which they belonged :—the one, the Chevalier Bayard, as a national hero of France, the cradle of noble and chivalrous sentiments—who, in a stern and warlike age, when Chivalry still existed as an institution, lived the life of a brave soldier, and showed how one whose very occupation was the infliction of wounds and death could exhibit the noblest traits of a humane spirit and a kind and gentle heart; the other, Sir Philip Sidney, as a national hero of England, where the sentiments of knightly honour first developed into those of manly self-respect—who, in a society not unlike our own, manifested how plain, straightforward conduct, free and open speech, pure and magnanimous sentiments, could flourish even in the midst of politics and state-craft, and in the luxurious life of courts and palaces.

Although the lives of both were passed at a time when the direct influence of Chivalry was beginning to decline, yet the ideas and sentiments which governed their whole thought and conduct were the genuine con-

sequences of the training of that institution, and in them we have the highest examples of its elevated teaching. These men are heroes for all time, but their greatness did not consist in any material prosperity which either enjoyed, for both were poor, and without any great rank or influence in the State; but they have, in a high and stainless renown, a possession which will last for ever, and none can deprive them of. It belongs alike to both Bayard and Sidney that they saw what in life is really worth striving and fighting for, and they steadily pursued this the true good, without hesitation or faltering, from manhood to an early grave. Then, as now, the prizes of life attracting the attention of the brave, the talented, and the ambitious, and in pursuit of which they spent their lives, were those ephemeral possessions of wealth, rank, and power only valuable as means to attain some higher aim, but which, when sought as ends in themselves, are like the apples growing by the banks of the Dead Sea, sweet and beautiful to the eye, but which crumble into dust when touched.

It was not for such as this that these two noble hearts lived and fought and conquered. They saw, with that divine light only given to pure and great minds, that most of their companions were like the man with the muck-rake, stooping to gather the worthless straws and rubbish from the earth, while they looked not upward to the angel of light who held the deathless crown of glory within reach. Their lives are full of actions which display a calm contempt for the

petty objects desired by lesser souls, a steadfast insight into what is best and truest, and a noble determination to walk only in the higher paths of virtue and honour. And it is because of this that now, after the lapse of years, and in a new and changed era in the world's history, when the lives and stories of others who in their day were famed for riches, prosperity, or success have faded away into utter forgetfulness, we can still look upon these two heroes as models for the mighty world, and feel a pride and sympathy in their noble achievements and inspiring words.

In them we have specimens of two living, breathing men, made of the same clay as ourselves, who yet approached within an appreciable length of the ideal perfection of their natures. At this distance of time we cannot well imagine how their thoughts and actions, springing as they did from pure and noble minds, could have been other than great and good; and yet it was not so to them. They had their own hard struggles for the right against all the alluring forces striving to drag them down to a lower level, and, at every cost to present peace, enjoyment, and material prosperity, they firmly withstood these pleasures which enticed so many others, and persevered in following a higher course alone. We have many instances in the history of their times of others who, like them, felt the ennobling influence of Chivalry, and yet were unable to live up to its highest precepts. Thus it was the constant ambition of King Francis to display all the

qualities of a perfect knight, and yet he merely succeeded in imitating the pomp and show of Chivalry without its noble virtues, and perhaps he would not, even if he could, have surrendered the enjoyment of the hour for the sake of the eternal heritage of a stainless fame.

Now it is precisely this quality of ideal goodness in their respective spheres, and in relation to the light that was given them, that makes the record of the lives of such men as Sidney and Bayard so invaluable at the present time. "What," said Edmund Burke, "is the education of the generality of the world? Reading a parcel of books? No! Restraint and discipline, examples of virtue and justice, these are what form the education of the world." It is this need in the formation of character which is supplied by the biographies of truly great men, and nowhere are noble qualities more conspicuous than in the persons of these two Knights of Chivalry.

It has been said that "the great need in modern culture which is scientific in method, ratiocinative in spirit, and utilitarian in purpose, is to find some effective agency for cherishing within us the ideal;"* and no more likely means for attaining this object can be found than in the histories of real men who, while having actually existed and encountered the good and evil fortune of life, have left reputations which are totally free from stain or blot, and as pre-eminently noble as any fictitious character which the imagination of novelists can produce.

* "The Study of Literature," by John Morley.

There is another point of view from which I think their biographies will be of use to many. They both lived in an age when faith was deeply implanted in the hearts of all earnest men, when the old landmarks of science, religion, and politics seem fixed and stable for all ages, and the man who would have dreamt of impugning either the existence of the Deity or the divine right of kings would have been deemed a fanatical revolutionist, and probably punished as a disturber of the public weal.

It is not so now. The best and noblest among us hardly know what they believe, and faith in the unseen seems to be as utterly lost to humanity as the art which built the Pyramids on the desert sands of Egypt. Progress is the watchword of the hour, but it is a progress to we know not what; and in that universal habit of critical examination into the basis of everything that surrounds us, how many holy and beautiful ideas and beliefs, which have been fondly cherished to our pleasure and delight, will be seen to rest on foundations too insecure!—how many hopes, which have cheered and encouraged the weary and sorrowful in the hour of trial and despair, will be found to be but the baseless fantasies of enthusiasts and dreamers!

Perhaps this phase of progress may be but the darkness which precedes the dawn of a bright and a glorious day. Let us hope that it may be so. But till that time arrives, it will be an encouragement and a consolation to some to read the lives of these men—the one a

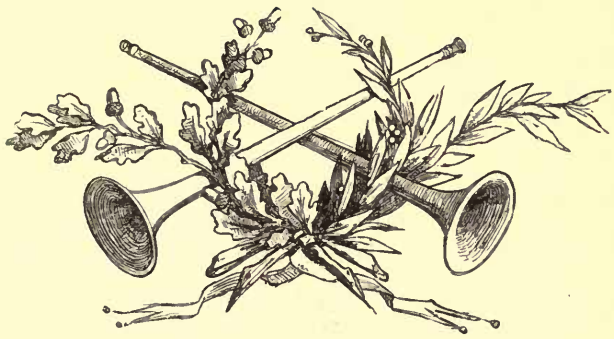
devout Catholic, implicitly believing in the doctrines of the Church and relying on her for guidance, yet living up to a law higher than one of human invention; the other an equally devout Protestant, by whom the light and purity introduced by the Reformation, which had at last established its hold in England, was regarded as sent from God, and to be cherished and protected with his life-blood. And both alike in this, that they steadfastly believed in their respective faiths; they felt no painful questionings as to the worth or purpose of life, or whether it had any value or purpose at all, but both followed calmly and joyfully the path where duty called them. That "Stern Daughter of the Voice of God" was to them the rule of life, and they indeed knew nought so fair as the smile upon her face when she cheered their lagging spirits, and encouraged them to live up to the full glory of the light that was in them.

Therefore it is that they are indeed heroes in the truest sense of the term, for only a man with a brave and enthusiastic faith in the high purpose of life, and the eternal beauty of virtue and truth, can ever be a great man; and those who proceed with a doubtful and questioning spirit and wavering step, are condemned ever to wander in the dreary wilderness of doubt and despair, and never to reach those lofty heights which reveal the glory of the promised land.

Theirs was the age of Chivalry; and what a crowd of images and associations does that word bring to our minds, like the breath of the mighty ocean, with its

freedom and its storms! Do we not hear the sound of martial music, and listen to the blowing of trumpets and clank of arms, as the warriors muster beneath the gloomy and turreted walls of their baronial castles for the battle or the tourney? Their crested helmets and brilliant armour glitter in the light of the morning sun, and the bright pennons of the knights flutter in the breeze; while their loud jest and laughter, the neighing of the war-horses, and the sound of armed feet along the paved terraces, give a sense of bustle and excitement to the scene. Then might we have witnessed the splendid pageantry of joust and tournament, when beauty, rank, and valour met together to hold high festival, or listened to the songs of bards and troubadours, and the stirring narratives of noble deeds, with all the pomp and circumstance of a martial institution and a warlike age.

In the glowing words of Burke, Chivalry was "the unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiments and heroic enterprise. . . Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart which kept alive even in servitude itself the spirit of an exalted freedom—that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour that felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage while it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its grossness."



CHAPTER I.

THE FEUDAL PERIOD.

THERE is an age in the life of nations, as in that of individuals, when the buoyant spirit of youth seems to pervade every thought and action, when fanciful visions of gallantry and adventure give to the ordinary events of life the colour of poetry and romance, and when the great world is still an unexplored country, peopled with fiery dragons and alluring sirens, with beautiful princesses enthralled by cruel tyrants waiting for the succour of the gallant knight,—an age when tales of the gold of the Indies, the kingdom of Prester John,* or the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre, animate alike the spirits of the needy adventurer, the patriotic soldier, and the religious enthusiast to deeds of lofty enterprise and daring,—a time when men appear to have engaged in the affairs of

* As described in "Allan Quatermain."

war, of love, and of friendship with a passionate heat and excitement unknown to a calmer and more contemplative age, and when the world was as it were a great playground, and they a mob of thoughtless schoolboys.

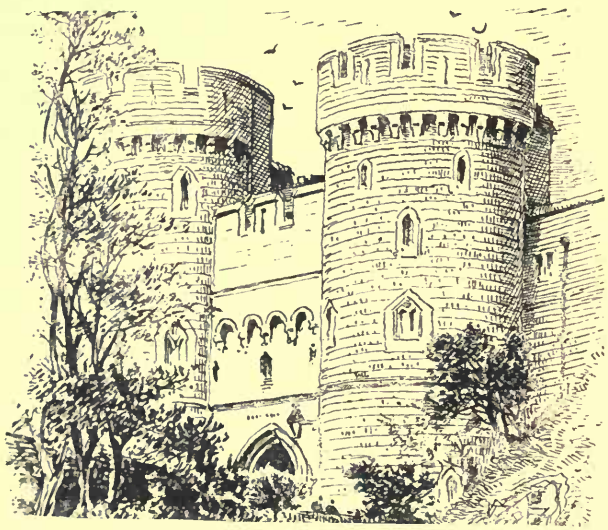
The blood seems to have coursed more quickly through their veins; they quarrelled, loved, and swore eternal friendship with an ardour which partakes of the fire of youth, and they were ready to fight and die for principles and dogmas the practical influence of which we find it hard to understand.

Such, in the life of Greece, was the age of Homer, with the deeds of Achilles and of Hector; such, in the later history of the nations of Europe, was the time between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries, known as the "Feudal Period."

It was the herioc age of Christendom, when the haughty barons waged perpetual war, and humbled the pride of kings and emperors; when the Holy Crusades for the rescue of the Saviour's Sepulchre from the hands of the Infidel Turk brought the nobles of Europe and Asia face to face. Then were the days of jousts and tournaments, when knightly valour and prowess were crowned by the hands of the Queen of Beauty; when minstrels and troubadours sang their lays, and brightened the gloomy castle halls with the sound of harp and song; and when, above all, those lofty virtues of the noble Order of Chivalry and Knighthood shone abroad as bright lights amid the darkness and despair of universal ignorance and feudal oppression.

It is unnecessary to enter into all the particulars of the state of society during the feudal period, the peculiarities of which belong to the domain of history; but in order to correctly appreciate the lives and characters of the heroes of that time, it is essential to understand some of the characteristic differences which distinguished the society of the middle ages from that of modern times. One of the most beneficial effects of the progress of civilisation is that universal supremacy of law and order as exemplified by the head of the State, which punishes all outrages, and protects the lives and property of its subjects. This feeling of security was, however, almost unknown at the period referred to, as there was no central authority to which those suffering from robbery or violence could appeal, and but little power to enforce the very imperfect laws then existing against those who were thus able to disobey them with impunity. The king had, indeed, a formal sovereignty over the whole of his dominions, and in the hands of a powerful monarch like Charlemagne or William the Conqueror this was the means of preserving a certain amount of tranquillity in their realms, but a weaker or more indolent sovereign had but little control over the powerful and turbulent barons who were nominally his subjects. These were able to exercise almost unlimited authority within their own domains, and carried on wars with each other, and often against their suzerain, without much interference from any superior power.

A glance at a typical ancient feudal castle, of which the best examples are those gloomy ruins still to be seen along the banks of the Rhine, will help to explain the independence of the great nobles. Situated usually on the top of an eminence, the castle was surrounded by a deep ditch or fosse, often filled with water, the only passage over which was by a heavy drawbridge



which could be drawn up on the approach of the enemy, thus closing the entrance. Beyond the fosse was a massive wall, with turrets and loopholes for the archers, and protected with machines for pouring down stones and earth on the besiegers, and within this was a broad quadrangle where the men-at-arms had ample room for the practice of their knightly exercises. Above

the courtyard towered the lofty battlements and massive walls of the castle, whose only windows were narrow openings, through which darts and arrows could be discharged without exposing the defenders to the fire of the enemy; while down below were the deep dungeons in which the luckless prisoners were confined. Such a fortress was, when properly defended, almost impregnable at a time when artillery and gunpowder had not been invented, and the only method of attack was by a direct assault upon the walls. In the plains surrounding their lord's castle were usually the cottages of the peasants and some of his inferior followers, over whom he had absolute power, and whose position was little better than that of slaves.

These warlike nobles were engaged in continual forays into each other's estates, from which, unless prevented in time, they carried away everything of value, and burned and destroyed whatever could not be removed.

The roads and highways were infested by their followers, who robbed and murdered any unfortunate travellers or merchants who were unable to protect themselves, or had not sufficient money to pay the exorbitant sums demanded for their ransom. It is told of a French bishop, that, having appointed a new governor to one of his castles without any apparent revenue, and being asked how it was to be supported, he merely directed the commander's attention to the fact that the castle overlooked a place where four cross-roads met, and which was consequently much frequented by merchants; the

obvious conclusion being that the revenue was to be derived by levying black-mail on the unfortunate travellers who had to pass that way. This is a fair sample of the manner in which these robbers' dens were kept up, and gives considerable insight into the habits of the time.

The treatment of those who had the misfortune to fall into their hands was brutal in the extreme. By the recognised laws of war, the life and property of the vanquished, even when of noble rank, were at the disposal of the conqueror; and when the captive was of inferior birth, he was confined in the darkest dungeon, and ruthlessly tortured till he consented to give the ransom which the avarice or caprice of his captor dictated, and in case he was unable to do this, he was allowed to languish away in hopeless captivity.

All who were not sufficiently powerful to defend themselves from these lawless depredations were obliged to put themselves under the protection of some powerful noble, in return for which they were bound to give him their service in war. As a consequence of this, the castles of most of the great barons were filled with a regular army of gentlemen and men-at-arms, ready to fight their master's battles against all comers, and to engage in any expeditions with him or his allies. The habits of these rough soldiers during their short intervals of peace were not much better than in time of war. Few of them could either read or write, and they were totally devoid of learning of any sort, except that con-

nected with their military service; so that when a hard fate condemned them to remain for a time peacefully within their castle walls, the weary hours were passed in drunken feasts and debauchery.

The only check upon these semi-barbarous nobles was the restraining power of religion and superstition, and in a state of society such as theirs, this was necessarily of little avail to curb the violence of unlicensed freedom.

The more gentle and refined nature of woman, which has ever been one of the strongest allies on the side of mercy and peace, was at this time able to effect but little amongst those whose daily occupations removed them so far beyond the sphere of female influence; and the barons' wives, confined to their gloomy chambers in the castles, with no authority except over their maids and pages, could do but little to soften and ameliorate the habits of warriors trained to violence and slaughter, and loving the draught of the wine-cup and the gluttony of the feast more than their ladies' smiles and prattle.

The condition of the nobles in England, France, and Germany, which in these respects were much alike, must have been rough and unpleasant enough; but that of the lower orders was one of considerable hardship, while the serfs and peasants were kept in a state of oppression and tyranny. The feudal lord had complete dominion over the latter, and even over his followers of rank he had privileges which could be used with great rigour. The principal of these were the rights of wardship and marriage, by the former of which he was

entitled to the revenue from the property of any vassal who was a minor, and by the latter he had the right to offer any unmarried female vassal the choice of a husband from among three men, one of whom she was bound to accept, the only valid excuse being that she was over sixty years of age.

Such was the state of society at the end of the eleventh century, when a new and strange factor, destined for many years to exercise extraordinary influence over the people of Christendom, appeared on the scene, and this is what has been known to succeeding ages as the "Crusades."

At this time the Turks had for some years held possession of Jerusalem, and harrowing tales of the cruelties and outrages perpetrated by them upon Christian pilgrims on the way to visit the Holy Sepulchre had been from time to time brought back to Europe, and inflamed the minds of the people of Christendom against the Saracen invader. Their indignation was at length brought to a head in 1095 by the preaching of Peter the Hermit, who journeyed from land to land proclaiming a holy war against the infidel. The vast assembly at Clermont responded to the fiery eloquence of the warlike monk with one unanimous shout, "It is the will of God." Everywhere the greatest enthusiasm prevailed, and, encouraged by the blessing of the Pope, an immense multitude, composed of nobles, priests, peasants, and even women and children, assembled for the rescue of the Saviour's Sepulchre, believing that by taking the Cross they were absolved from the most heinous sins.

The difficulties to be encountered were enormous, and in an age when transport and railway communication were unknown, and the long journey had to be performed for the most part on foot, thousands of those who set out never reached Palestine at all. But the courage and fanaticism of those who survived made them for the time victorious; the power of the Crescent waned before the heroic valour of the soldiers of the Cross, and the Christian lances, often encountering tremendous odds, bore all before them from Nice to Antioch, Edessa, and Jerusalem. Even after these successes, however, the position of the Crusaders was extremely critical, surrounded on all sides by the Turkish hordes who had already begun to press towards Constantinople, and situated, as they were, at the outpost of Christendom, far away from the succour and resources of their own nations. Thousands of the warriors died every year by the pestilence or the sword, so that in 1147 a second Crusade was organised by the Emperor and the King of France for the relief of those who had gone before. This expedition was, however, more unfortunate than the first, and the immense army of two hundred thousand cavalry wasted away in the passage of Natolia.

The accession of the renowned Saladin to the throne of Egypt in 1187 completed the misfortunes of the Crusaders, who were driven out of almost every part of Palestine by his victorious arms. It was this blow which once more aroused the Princes of Europe to make the third and great Crusade, undertaken in 1189 by the

three sovereigns, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, Philip Augustus of France, and King Richard the Lion-hearted of England. This was the Crusade in which Richard performed those acts of heroism and valour which made him the terror of the Moslem armies, and famous throughout Europe and Asia; but, like the preceding enterprises, it failed of any permanent effect, and the Crusaders, divided by internal dissensions, were obliged to return home, leaving the Holy Sepulchre once more to fall into the hands of the Turks, with whom it has remained ever since.

The Crusades, though they effected little of the purpose for which they were intended, and made no permanent conquests in Asia, reacted in a wonderful way upon the nations of Europe themselves. It was through these expeditions that the rough and semi-barbarous Christian nobles were brought into contact with the superior refinement and civilisation of the Eastern nations, from whom they learnt a sense of courtesy and honour before uncommon in Europe, which insensibly affected the manners and customs even of those who had remained at home. The inferior nobility, who in their own country were kept in subjection by their feudal lords, were able in a strange land, and fighting with their superiors against a common foe, to obtain by their own prowess and valour a position and reputation which made them almost independent, and went far to establish and strengthen that Order of Chivalry which was distinct from mere hereditary rank or power, and

the object of which was to obtain the honour of knighthood by great and noble deeds.

Another important factor in the improvement of manners was the birth of a national literature, through the songs and poems of the minstrels and troubadours. At a time when complete ignorance of the classical languages prevailed, and all learning was confined to the priesthood, the narratives of the exploits of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, and of the Knights-errant at home, about which the Provençal troubadours composed verses which they sang from castle to castle throughout the land, diffused a romantic love of adventure, and the fame of gallant and noble actions, which did much towards softening the harsh manners of the barons, and giving birth to sentiments which the clergy and ladies were not slow to encourage by every means in their power. The first-fruits of European imagination, the first attempts at poetry and of literature, the first intellectual pleasures tasted by Europe on its quitting barbarism, were born under the sheltering wings of Feudalism in the interior of the baronial castles, and they mark the first appearance of that heroic age of modern nations.

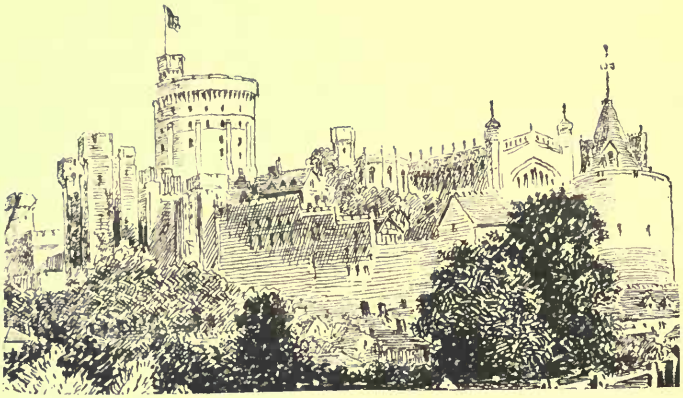
Thus we have seen that, in its earliest stage, the Feudal state was one of almost perpetual war, rapine, and anarchy, during which the weak and unarmed were exposed to insults and injuries. The power of the sovereign was too limited to prevent these wrongs, and the administration of justice too feeble to redress them.

The most effectual protection against violence and oppression was often found to be that which the valour and generosity of individual knights afforded. The same spirit of enterprise which had prompted so many gentlemen to take arms in defence of the oppressed pilgrims in Palestine, incited others to declare themselves the patrons and avengers of injured innocence at home.

When the final reduction of the Holy Land under the dominion of the Turks put an end to those foreign expeditions, the romantic adventures encouraged by the institution of Chivalry were the only employment left for the activity and courage of the nobles.

It was then the happy idea occurred of founding a distinct Order whose highest aim and duty would be to

fight the battle for freedom and justice against tyranny and oppression, and all who thenceforth aspired to the rank of knighthood were required to bind themselves by the most solemn vows and imposing ceremonies to assist each other in furthering the great cause. To check the influence of overgrown oppressors, to rescue the helpless from captivity, to protect or to avenge women, orphans, and ecclesiastics who could not bear arms in their own defence, to redress wrongs and remove grievances, were deemed acts of the highest prowess and merit; and at a time when the people were helpless and oppressed, the whole social state must have collapsed and ended in barbarous anarchy, had it not been for the lofty principles and noble deeds of the heroes of this great Order, which was destined to revolutionise society, and to produce the highest examples of knightly virtue, and those honourable sentiments which a later age associates with the name of gentleman. Chivalry was itself the daughter of Feudalism, which, by preserving the bond between the semi-independent nobles and their sovereign, and diffusing that peculiar sentiment of personal reverence and attachment to him which we call loyalty, maintained, at a time when the boundaries of nations and countries had not become clearly defined, the mutual relations of all, and kept alive the feeling of a common country and common duties which was destined to settle, after the lapse of ages, into the free constitution of England, the firm monarchy of France, and the federal union of Germany.



WINDSOR CASTLE.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORDER OF KNIGHTHOOD.

THERE are three powerful ideas which have at different epochs revolutionised the world, and these are Religion, Liberty, and Honour. It is the spirit of Religion whose hand we see in the great work of the Reformation, as well as in many other struggles for purity of worship. The spirit of Liberty has been manifested in the History of England, in that stern and continuous resistance to oppression, from the days of Magna Charta to those of the Revolution, which at length won for us a constitutional government; and these victories have had their counterpart in the annals of other nations, and it is this spirit which is still the motive power in the work of regenerating mankind. But it

was the lofty spirit of Honour from which emanated that noble Order of Chivalry of which we are about to treat; and whatever glorious victories in the history of the world the love of religion and liberty has gained for the cause of truth and freedom in the great battle against falsehood and tyranny, have been equalled by the high and magnanimous feelings, the noble and unselfish valour, and the pure and lofty sentiments which the exquisite sense of honour inculcated by this institution has preserved for the benefit of humanity in all subsequent ages.

The Order of Chivalry grew up gradually within the bosom of feudal society, in the manner related in the preceding chapter; and by it was established throughout Europe a distinct class of nobility almost independent, as to its rights and dignities, of any particular sovereign. Admission to this by the reception of the Order of Knighthood was considered superior to any rank or title conferred by hereditary descent, and it could only be given to those gentlemen by birth who had distinguished themselves by some great and noble exploit. Even kings desired to obtain this distinction, and Francis I. received, as will be hereafter related, the honour of knighthood on the field of battle from the hands of the greatest knight of his time, the immortal Bayard.

The custom was for the inferior nobility to send at an early age their younger sons, who had no estates of their own, to the court of one of the great princes, where

they were trained as pages till they were fourteen years old, after which they became squires. They were then instructed in the management of arms, in the art of horsemanship, and in exercises of strength and activity. They became accustomed to obedience and courteous demeanour, serving their lord and lady in offices which had not yet become derogatory to honourable birth. Thus placed in the centre of all that could awaken their imaginations, they were instructed in the creed of chivalrous gallantry and honour, and, panting for glory which neither their strength nor the established rules permitted them to anticipate, the young scions of chivalry attended their masters to the tournament or battle, and rivetted with a sigh the armour they were forbidden to wear. Arrived at manhood, it was their constant ambition to win their golden spurs and the honour of knighthood by some noble deed, so that even those who were in a position to obtain that dignity often deferred it for the great part of their lives, in the hope of signalising their investiture by some eminent exploit.

By these means men were trained to knighthood, which was coveted by every person of noble birth, and deemed a distinction superior to royalty, which monarchs were proud to receive, by a long previous discipline, and they were admitted into the Order by solemnities the most devout and imposing.

The squire who aspired to the honour of knighthood, and was considered worthy to receive it, was vouched for by two elderly and renowned knights, who first

caused him to be divested of his clothes and bathed, as a symbol of purification. After this he was clothed in a white tunic signifying purity, a red robe as a token of the blood he was bound to shed in the service of the faith, and in a black cloak to remind him of the death which awaited him as well as all men. Thus purified and clothed, the recipient observed a rigorous fast for twenty-four hours, after which, in the evening, he was brought to the church, where he passed the night in prayer, sometimes alone, sometimes with the priest and his sponsors.

The following day his first act was confession, and the priest having performed the service, and administered the holy communion, the most eminent knight present delivered a discourse upon the duties of Chivalry and the new life he was about to enter, at the conclusion of which the recipient was led to the altar, where his sword was blessed by the priest, and he was then required to kneel down and swear the following solemn oaths:—

1. To fear, reverence, and serve God; to fight for the faith against the infidel, and die a thousand deaths rather than renounce Christianity.

2. To serve his sovereign faithfully, to fight for him and his country, and not to take service with a foreign prince.

3. To maintain the just right of widows, orphans, and maidens; to hold himself in readiness to protect them, and never to do them violence, even when captured by force of arms.

4. Never to offend any one maliciously, nor usurp the just rights of another; and not to perform any action for the sake of profit or reward, but only for that of honour and virtue.

5. To obey all who had a right to command him, and to respect the rank and honour of his companions in arms, and to maintain their cause in their absence.

6. Not to fight more than one against one; to avoid all fraud and deceit, and, in a combat *à plaisance*, never to use the point of the sword.

7. If taken prisoner, to faithfully observe the conditions of surrender, and return to captivity if the stipulated ransom could not be paid.

8. To serve and honour his lady-love faithfully and constantly, and lay all the trophies gained by his valour at her feet.

9. If he made a vow to engage in any adventure, to apply himself to it till accomplished; and when in pursuit of it, not to turn from the straight road for fear of encountering any impediment which the valour of a single knight could overcome.

10. When returned from any quest, to give a true account of all that had befallen him, even when it was to his disadvantage.

11. When in command of troops, to preserve order and discipline, and do his utmost to mitigate the horrors of warfare.

12. When sought in equal combat, not to refuse, except on account of wounds, illness, or other just cause.

13. Above all things, to be faithful, courteous, and honourable, and never to break his word for any cause whatever.

Having taken these vows, the applicant was led to the lord who was to confer the Order, before whom he knelt down, and who asked him, "With what design do you desire to enter into the noble Order of Chivalry? If it is to become rich, to enjoy yourself, or to be honoured without doing honour to Chivalry, you are unworthy of it, and can never enter into the company of knights." Upon the suitable reply of the recipient, and his promise to acquit himself well of his knightly duties, the lord then summoned the attendant knights and ladies, who put on the golden spurs, the hauberk or coat of mail, the cuirass and gauntlets, and girded on the new knight's sword. When this was finished, the lord rose, and, giving him three blows on the shoulder with the flat of his sword, repeated the formula—"In the name of God, of St. Michael, and of St. George, I dub thee knight. Be brave, adventurous, and loyal." This completed the ceremony, after which the knight's squire handed him his plumed helmet and led up his charger, upon which he sprang without the aid of stirrups, and the whole party left in solemn procession.

The ceremonies related above comprised the full solemnities of investiture, but, of course, it was often impossible to carry them out completely, and the Order could be granted by the accolade, or act of dubbing, alone.

This admission to the Order of Chivalry entitled the knight to assume the crested helmet proper to his new rank, the weighty armour of mail or plate bearing his heraldic coat, the gilded spurs, and horse barbed with iron for war, and clothed in housings of gold upon more peaceful occasions. He used richer silks and more costly furs than were permitted to squires, and scarlet was the colour appropriated by his Order. But the chief privilege was his reception into the commonwealth of Chivalry, entitling him to the peculiar rights of knighthood in almost every country in Europe, and to enter in the List of Tournaments against the other members of the Order. It thus raised him in the scale of society, putting him on a level in dress, arms, and title with the rich landowners; and as it was due to his own personal merit, it did much more than make him equal with those who had no pretensions but from wealth or title.

The four cardinal virtues inculcated by the institution were Valour, Loyalty, Courtesy, and Munificence. Loyalty in this sense included fidelity to all engagements —both actual promises and tacit obligations—whether towards the Sovereign or the lady whom the knight served.

Breach of faith was held a disgrace, and treachery, whether to friend or foe, the most infamous of vices. A knight was unfit to remain a member of the Order if he violated his faith; he was ill acquainted with its duties if he proved wanting in courtesy, which com-

prised not only that ceremonious politeness peculiar to the time, but also the spontaneous modesty, self-denial, and respect for others which ought to spring from the heart. Liberality and disdain of money, as one of the virtues, taught the duty of scattering their wealth with profusion, especially towards minstrels, pilgrims, and the poorer members of the Order, the last of whom had a constant right of succour from the opulent. In addition to these noble qualities, the character of the perfect knight was expected to display an active sense of justice, an ardent indignation against wrong, the direction of courage to its best end, the prevention or redress of injury.

Such were the qualities required to be displayed by the true knight; and anyone who, being admitted into the Order, openly exposed his unfitness for its duties by cowardice, breach of faith, discourtesy, or avarice, was liable to instant degradation and deprivation of all his high privileges. The ceremony of degradation was solemn in the extreme. The recreant knight was publicly tried by his peers, and, if condemned, was led into the church where he had received the honour, and there the cause of his disgrace was proclaimed to all. His golden spurs were then hacked off, his sword broken over his head, and he was divested of his armour piece by piece, which was immediately destroyed, as being unfit for any true knight to wear. After this, he was led away to undergo whatever punishment had been determined upon, and false, perjured, disloyal,

recreant were the names henceforth applied to him who had proved himself unworthy of his high calling.

The principles inculcated by this wonderful institution were, of course, much better laid down in theory

than carried out in practice; but they effected an extraordinary improvement in the habits of the people of that period, and in no way is this better exemplified

than in the milder treatment of prisoners, and the mitigation of the horrors of barbarous warfare. As personal rather than national feelings animated the knights of different countries, they never felt that hatred, much less that fear of their enemies which are the chief incitements to treachery, and in their wars, originating in no real animosity, the spirit of honourable as well as courteous behaviour towards the foe, of which several instances will be given hereafter, was invariably exercised by the leaders on both sides. The behaviour of The Black Prince to King John of France after the defeat and capture of the latter at the Battle of Poitiers is well known. While he did everything in his power to lessen the sorrow of defeat and imprisonment, and endeavoured to cheer his royal captive by praising his heroic valour, he himself waited on his prisoner at meals, saying that it ill became him to sit down in the presence of majesty.

Edward III. and his noble son were eminent examples of chivalrous virtue among the princes of their day, but the inferior nobility were no less generous in their treatment of the vanquished. "After the Battle of Poitiers," says the historian Froissart, "the English and Gascon knights having entertained their prisoners, each of them went home with the knights or squires he had captured, whom he then questioned upon their honour what ransom they could pay without inconvenience, and believed them without further proof; and it was common for men to say that they would not

straiten any knight or squire so that he would not be able to live well and maintain an honourable appearance." At a time when the life of the vanquished was deemed forfeited to the conqueror such generosity is the more remarkable, especially as permission to the prisoners to return home for the purpose of procuring the ransom agreed upon was never refused, and this indulgence could only have been founded upon an experienced confidence in the knightly honour of the captives.

The strong tincture of religion which pervaded the entire composition of Chivalry, and entered into all its ceremonies, was partly derived from the time of the first Crusade, when the great object placed before the warlike nobles was the rescue of the Holy Land from the dominion of the infidel. And a no less remarkable ingredient was the universal respect and homage paid to the female sex. The position of women in the early part of the feudal period, when rude and barbarous manners prevailed, was one of almost complete isolation and subjection to the stronger sex; but the spirit of gallantry which became so animating a principle of Chivalry was the cause of the progressive refinement of society; and as woman obtained more scope to practise those fascinating graces with which nature has endowed her, she was able to counterbalance the want of that physical strength and energy which belong to man.

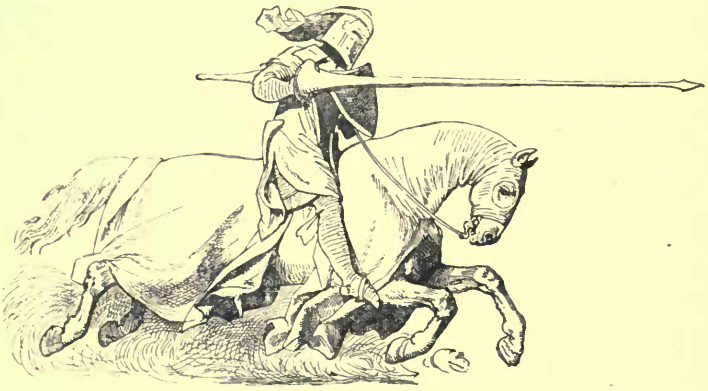
As the taste for the more elegant enjoyments of wealth arose among the nobility—who were, of course, the first to experience the softening effects of the principles of the

knightly Order—woman obtained an influence at first in the lighter hour, but afterwards in the more serious occupations of life, and was able to bring into subjection the god of wine, and the rude spirits of the uncultured warriors. One of the chief duties of the knight was that of devotion to his lady, and from this arose a spirit of gallantry, often indeed too amorous, but which had a beneficial effect upon the manners of the age. Even the harsh spirit of the laws sometimes recognised this general homage to the fair sex, and in the Kingdom of Arragon it was enacted that "Every man, whether of knightly rank or no, who should be travelling in company with a lady, should be permitted by all to pass free and unmolested, unless he had been guilty of the crime of murder."

There is no better statement of the leading principles of Chivalry than that given by Tennyson's King Arthur, who made his knights swear—

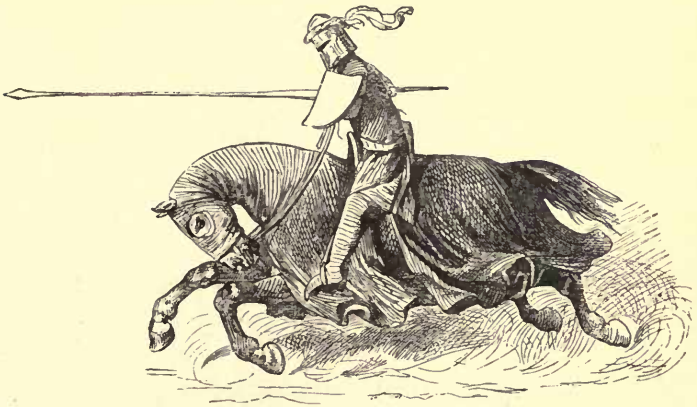
> "To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
> To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
> To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
> To honour his own word as if his God's,
> To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
> To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
> And worship her by years of noble deeds,
> Until they won her; for indeed I knew
> Of no more subtle master under heaven
> Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
> Not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thought, and amiable words
> And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man."

Besides the powerful efficacy with which the poetry and romance of the time stimulated those susceptible minds which were alive to no other literature, one of the principal causes tending to the promotion of Chivalry was those splendid pageants called Tournaments. The period was essentially warlike, and the very sports of the nobles were mimic battles. Every scenic performance of modern times must be tame in comparison with



these alluring spectacles, when all the valour and beauty of the country met together to enjoy what was almost the only amusement of the age. At a tournament, a space was enclosed within the lists somewhat after the manner of a modern circus, and around this rose tier after tier of seats, like an amphitheatre, which were filled by sovereign princes and their noblest barons, while knights of established renown and all the most distinguished rank and beauty of the kingdom crowded

around. A Queen of Beauty was first chosen from the most beautiful ladies present, who was honoured as the Sovereign of the Tournament, led to the central seat on the grand stand, and surrounded by a bevy of ladies and courtiers. Outside the lists the knightly combatants were seen clothed in steel, and known only by their emblazoned shields, or the favours and coloured scarves of their ladies—a still prouder emblem. They



advanced singly, each mounted on a gaily caparisoned charger, and armed with a long lance of wood or iron, with which he struck the shield of the opponent he wished to encounter.

If, as was usually the case, the shield was struck with the handle of the lance, the combat was to be merely *à plaisance*, or with blunt weapons; but if it was struck with the pointed end, then it was to be *à outrance*, or with sharp weapons as in actual battle. When the

joust was to commence, the trumpets were sounded, and a knight entered at each end of the lists, and at a given signal both galloped forward with lances pointed straight at the strong armour of the other's breast, as described by Chaucer, the Father of English Poetry :—

> "The heralds leave off riding up and down,
> Now ring the trumpets loud and clarion.
> There is no more to say, but East and West
> In go the spears full proudly in the rest,
> In go the sharp spurs into the side,
> Then see we who can joust and who can ride.
> The shivering shafts upon the shieldës thick,
> He feeleth this the plate of steel to prick ;
> Up spring the spears twenty feet in height,
> Out go the swords as is the silver bright."

At the end of the tournament the prizes were awarded to the victors by the Queen of Beauty, and in case the victorious champion's lady whose badge he wore was present, it was customary for him to proclaim his homage by laying the trophy won by his valour and prowess at her feet.

Victory in a tournament was little less glorious, and perhaps at the moment more exquisitely felt, than in the actual field of battle, since no real conflict could assemble such witnesses of valour. "Honour to the sons of the brave" resounded amid the din of martial music from the lips of the minstrels and heralds, as the conqueror advanced to receive the prize from the Queen of Beauty; while the surrounding multitude acknowledged in his prowess of that day an augury of triumphs that might in more serious contests be blended with

those of his country. Though the weapons used by the combatants were usually pointless and sometimes only of wood, and though they were bound by the laws of tournament to strike upon the strong armour of the trunk only, these impetuous conflicts often terminated in wounds and death, of which an unfortunate instance was the too true stroke of the Scottish Captain Montgomery when tilting with Henry II. of France in 1559, when the head of his lance, striking the king through the bars of the helmet, inflicted a mortal wound, from which he died in a few days. This sad event caused the practice of tournaments to be discontinued in France, but they were held in England for many years after.

Another of these splendid pageants was the Courts of Chivalry, which met at appointed times with great pomp and ceremony to decide disputed questions of honour or conduct between the knights, and exercised a beneficial authority by preserving a high standard of action, to which every knight was expected to attain, and by which his conduct was to be regulated in all cases of difficulty. To these courts belonged also the settlement of all differences arising between knights and their ladies, though, when such were to be heard, the tribunal was usually constituted in rather a different form by the admission of lady judges, and they were then called Courts of Love. To them appeal was made to decide upon the loyalty of a knight to his lady, or her loyalty to him, or such disputes as might take place between rival knights for the affections of the same lady; and

from the decisions of these courts there was no appeal, so that all true knights were bound in honour to abide by them, and assist in carrying their decisions into effect.

A great result of the success of Chivalry was the foundation and progress of the Military Orders of Soldier Monks formed in imitation of it, but whose object was the protection of Palestine in the wars with the Turks. The principal of these Orders were the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem founded in 1118, and the Knights Templars founded in 1124, the members of both of which were leagued together to fight for the Cross, and were governed on the principle of fraternal equality, at the head of each Order there being an elective Grand Master having supreme and absolute authority.

The members were all soldiers of reputation, and were vowed to celibacy; and such progress did the Orders make, that some years after their foundation each numbered several thousand members, and they possessed immense wealth and property in every country in Europe. The chief centre of the Hospitallers of St. John was in the Island of Rhodes till 1522, when they were attacked by the Sultan Solyman with a large army, which at length compelled them to surrender after twenty thousand Turks had been slain. Shortly after this they established themselves in Malta, and although their power had long before declined, they remained there till 1798, when they were ousted by Napoleon Bonaparte, and the Order practically

destroyed. From them are derived the Orders of the Masonic Brotherhood, whose rules and precepts, suited to the changed manners and requirements of modern times, aim at carrying out the fundamental principles of their warlike predecessors.

Such is a slight sketch of Chivalry as an institution in which gallantry and religion were so strangely blended, and which was so skilfully adapted to the taste and genius of the martial nobles, and whose effects were so soon visible in their manners. War, we have seen, was carried on with less ferocity when humanity came to be deemed the ornament of knighthood no less than courage. More gentle and polished manners were introduced when courtesy was recommended as the most amiable of knightly virtues. Violence and oppression decreased when it was reckoned meritorious to check and punish them. A scrupulous adherence to truth, with the most religious attention to fulfil every engagement, became distinguishing characteristics of a gentleman, because Chivalry was regarded as the school of honour, and inculcated the most delicate sensibility with respect to these points. The admiration of these qualities, together with the distinction and prerogatives conferred on knighthood in every country in Europe, inspired persons of noble birth with the principles of generosity and honour, and these were strengthened by everything that could affect the senses or touch the heart.

But Chivalry, like every other institution, was destined sooner or later to decay, and even before the time of

Bayard it had begun to decline. The more organised state of society, the growth of the knightly authority, and the loss of that independence which characterised the feudal nobility, and which was essential to the preservation of a distinct Order of Knighthood, were among the causes of this decline; but the chief one was the invention of gunpowder, which, by destroying the protection afforded by coats of mail, at the same time did away with the superiority of the knights, who, completely clothed in armour which protected them from the spears and arrows of the foot soldiers, had been able to perform deeds of individual valour, and singly decide the fate of battles in a manner which afterwards became impossible.

The Order of Chivalry was the morning star which was to usher in a glorious day. The poetry of the troubadours and minnesingers was the first fruits of that splendid revival of learning, and of the arts known as the *Renaissance*, which in literature was to produce such noble names as those of Shakspere, Milton, and Spenser; and in art, such as Leonardo, Michael Angelo, and Raffælle.

The virtues of Chivalry, which were at first confined to a limited class—the nobility, were destined in the wider enlightenment introduced by the Reformation to spread abroad over the whole world, and embrace all humanity in the doctrine of the universal emancipation of mankind. But the sentiments which the Order inspired were so deeply rooted, that they continued to operate long after the vigour and reputation of the

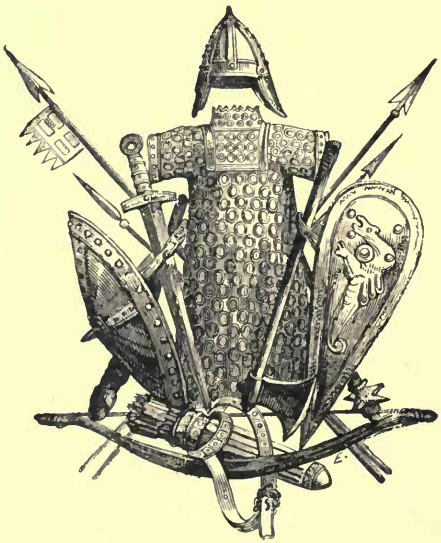
institution itself had declined; and many of the most eminent persons of later years were so strongly tinctured with its romantic spirit, that their characters and achievements cannot be understood without a knowledge of the source from which they derived their inspiration. And the spirit of Chivalry left behind it a more valuable successor. The character of knight gradually subsided into that of gentleman, and the one distinguishes Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as much as the other did in preceding ages. A jealous sense of honour, less romantic but equally elevated; a ceremonious gallantry and politeness; a strictness in devotional observances; a sympathy for martial honour, and a feeling of independence and self-respect which undoubtedly sprang originally from the high pride of birth—these are some of the lineaments which, in a period more subdued by peaceful habits, prove an indisputable descent from the ideal knights of olden times.

In Bayard we shall see the model of the perfect soldier-knight, with his patriotic valour, his gentle courtesy, his munificence and generosity to all; and these are manifested in an age still warlike and disturbed, but the wars are now between nations, and not between the powerful barons as formerly.

In Sidney we have the transition from the ideal knight to the noble and chivalrous gentleman almost completed; but the lofty and magnanimous sentiments which animate him are the same as those which inspired the heroes of Chivalry two hundred years before. We see

that the men and their principles are the same, but in an altered dress, and suited to the changed character of the times.

In these two noble names we have the most perfect examples of the virtues of Chivalry; and it seems as if these virtues, after growing and expanding with the wider knowledge and truer enlightenment of a higher state of civilisation, had, in them, at length burst forth in their full glory to be exemplars for all time of the national characters of a French Knight and an English Gentleman.

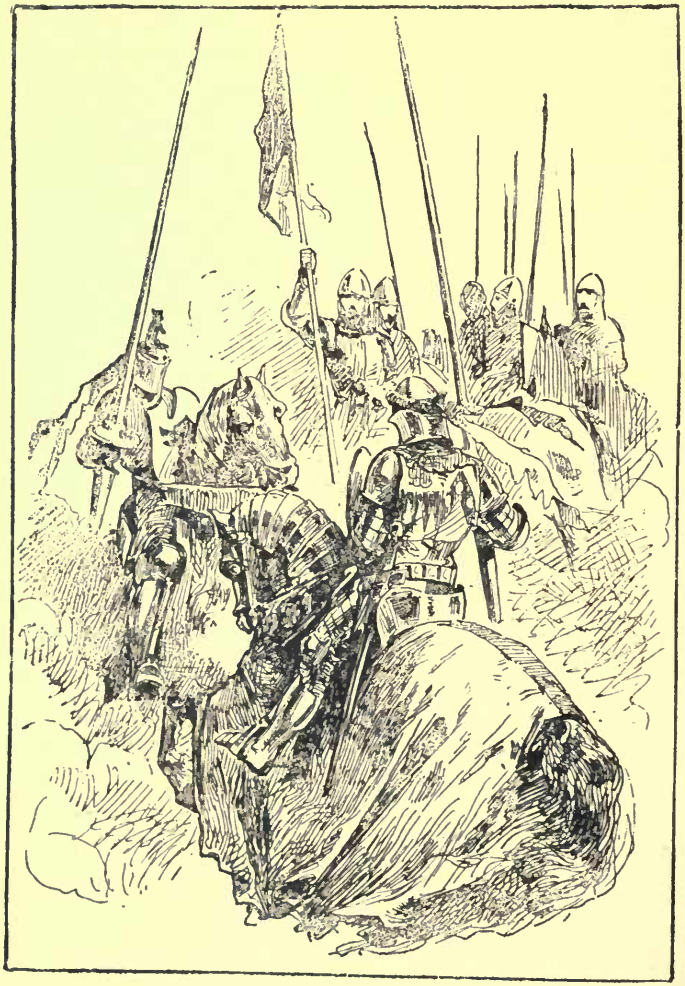


THE CHEVALIER BAYARD,

A Hero of France.

"Indeed he seems to me
Scarce other than my own ideal knight,
Who reverenced his conscience as his king;
Whose glory was redressing human wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor listened to it."

Idylls of the King.



CHAPTER III.

AS PAGE AND SQUIRE.

PIERRE DU TERRAIL, commonly called Bayard, was born in the year 1476, at the family castle, near the Grande Chartreuse, in the Province of Dauphiné, where the ruins of the ancient chateau may still be seen. He was descended from one of the noblest families in the Province, and his ancestors had been renowned as brave soldiers in the wars of their country for generations before, his great-grandfather having been killed at the Battle of Poitiers, and his grandfather in that of Agincourt.

His father, Aymond du Terrail, who was noted for his great strength and stature, was also a good soldier, and had been severely wounded in the wars of Louis XI. He trained the future Chevalier in manly exercises and active habits, whilst his mother, who seems to have been a lady of deep piety and religious feeling, taught him that respect for the observances of their faith and the modest and kindly manners which characterised his after life.

Of his boyhood, and the years spent beneath the paternal roof, we have no record, except that at an early

age he seems to have been remarkable for his gentle demeanour and skill in horsemanship. When thirteen years old, having chosen to follow the profession of arms, he was sent as a page to the Court of the Duke of Savoy, to be trained in all the accomplishments of Chivalry, according to the custom of the times. Here he zealously applied himself, as became an aspirant to knightly honours, to learn all the exercises of arms and arts of pleasure suitable to the scion of a noble house.

When he had been some months at the Duke's castle the latter went to Lyons, where Charles VIII., King of France, for the time held his Court. This visit had an important bearing on the life of our hero, for the Count de Ligni, one of the lords-in-waiting, having observed his manly and graceful bearing, informed the King, who requested him to take the young page into his service. This was, of course, considered great promotion, as the royal service offered more opportunities for advancement than that of an independent nobleman like the Duke of Savoy; but Pierre had a reason of his own for regretting the change, for among the maidens in attendance upon the Duchess was one of noble birth, who excelled all the others in wit and beauty, and although both were so young, a strong friendship had sprung up between them, which, on his side at least, soon ripened into love, and it was his ambition to be able in after years to wear her colours in the tournament, and win her by noble deeds as a true

knight should. Fate, however, decreed otherwise, and he, not being so fortunate in love as in war, did not meet her again till eight years afterwards, when, as a soldier whose merit was already known, he visited the Duke's Court, and found her the bride of one of the lords-in-waiting.

Returning to Paris with the royal suite, of which he was now a member, Pierre remained for a considerable time in the household of Count Ligni as one of his pages; but after some months, when he had made great progress in strength and vigour, the Count, who had a great affection for him, and wished to advance him in every way, sent him, when sixteen years of age, to Picardy, to learn the duties of a man-at-arms with a company of artillery there under the command of Louis d'Ars. He accordingly left the Royal Court, where he had been nearly two years, during which he had gained many friends by his habitual modesty and courtesy, and went with his friend Bellarbre to join his regiment.

Here he signalised his arrival by challenging his young companions in arms to a tournament, in which he was himself first opposed by a young squire called Aymond de Salvaing, who was so equally matched with him that in the first round both their lances were broken. In the second encounter, however, he was more fortunate, and succeeded in throwing his opponent from his charger, and thus came off victorious. On the following day he was equally successful against another antagonist, so that at the end of the tournament he was

unanimously declared victor; but with characteristic generosity he refused to accept the prizes himself, and accordingly awarded one to his friend Bellarbre, and the other to David Fougas, a Scotch gentleman in the French service.

This reluctance of Bayard to claim the just reward of his prowess thus early manifested shows that unselfish disposition which characterised all his after life, and prevented him from ever attaining any position of great power, which a little more self-assertion might have gained for him, but was also one of the causes of that wonderful popularity he enjoyed, and the influence he exercised over all who came in contact with him.

Two years were passed in Picardy, during which the young squire spent his time in learning the duties of a lancer, or man-at-arms, and making himself thoroughly proficient in all the military exercises, in order that he might have an early opportunity of winning his golden spurs, which honour he hoped to obtain through the favour of his commander and Count Ligni.

But, in the meantime, clouds were gathering on the political horizon, and events were marching on apace to bring about a change of circumstances which was destined to fulfil Bayard's hopes even sooner than he himself anticipated.

King Charles, who was a man of great ambition but little ability, preferred vast schemes of foreign conquest to any useful plans for the government of his country, and one of his favourite projects was the invasion of

Italy, which at this time was divided into a number of independent kingdoms and republics, and was therefore unable to offer united opposition to a foreign foe. The King's arrangements for the invasion were completed early in 1494, and Bayard was summoned to join the army at Lyons. He found the French army had already assembled at the foot of the Alps, ready for the expedition; but the King and his Court still remained in the city, spending the time in balls and festivities.

A tournament had just been arranged in which Lord Vaudray was to challenge all comers, and Pierre's heart was at once set on entering the lists; not that he had any expectation of defeating so distinguished a knight as the challenger, but because he wished for an opportunity of trying his prowess with that of soldiers of renown, so as to profit by their skill.

The ambitious desire of the young squire soon became known to Count Ligni and the King, and the former, seeing what progress his favourite had made in strength and proficiency, was determined to gratify him.

It was of course necessary for Bayard to obtain the Order of Knighthood before he could enter the lists against other knights, and the Count, perceiving how well he had been endowed by nature for the high duties of Chivalry, and hearing from all sides his reputation for courage and generosity, thereupon dubbed him Chevalier, and besides this, appointed him a man-at-arms in his own company of horse, a position similar to that of a cavalry subaltern at the present day.

Full of delight at this sudden promotion, the youthful Chevalier appeared on the morning of the tournament, and, along with the most distinguished soldiers of France, signified his intention of trying his skill against the challenger in the usual manner by striking the shield of the latter with his lance. The tournament was held in presence of the King and his Court, who filled the galleries surrounding the lists; and when Bayard, completely clothed in armour, rode boldly in to take his place, his youthful appearance and graceful air gained him the sympathy of all. When the trumpet blew to the charge, Pierre galloped forward, his lance pointed at his opponent's breast; and although, no doubt, so experienced a knight as Lord Vaudray could easily have dismounted him, the latter, pleased with his courage and address, generously allowed him to obtain some advantage, so that when, after the encounter, he rode round the lists with the visor of his helmet open as was usual, he received so much applause from the spectators that the Queen of Beauty awarded him a high prize.

The army now received orders to advance, and they accordingly crossed over the Alps, and quickly advanced towards Florence. The Florentine Republic was at this time ruled by Pietro de Medici, whose family had some years before usurped the government; but there was a strong party led by the hero-priest Savonarola, whose aim was to expel the Medici and restore the ancient liberties of the Republic, which was to be ruled by a sort of theocracy, with Christ as the head.

This party was strongly in favour of the French, and when the latter arrived they were received with open arms. But Charles mistook the deference and honour paid to him for tame submission, and by threatening to exercise the rights of a conqueror by imposing a fine on the citizens he awakened their alarm. The solid palaces of Florence, with small windows at a great elevation from the ground, and secured by massive bars of iron, have the air of prisons and the strength of fortresses—for which, indeed, they often served in the factious wars of the Republic—and these the wary Florentines filled with armed men. When, therefore, the citizens energetically protested against the intentions of the King, and he exclaimed, "Then I shall order my trumpets to sound to arms." "Sound them," replied the chief magistrate, "and they will be answered by our bells summoning the people." Charles, seeing he had gone too far, consented to modify his demands, and shortly afterwards resumed his march towards Rome.

The reigning Pope was Alexander VI., whose crimes and vices have caused him to be considered by Catholics and Protestants alike as a disgrace to the Papacy, and he, finding resistance useless, shut himself up in the Castle of St. Angelo. Thus, without striking a blow, the French army, with Bayard, entered Rome in triumphal procession. In front marched the serried battalions of the Swiss mercenary foot soldiers, armed with long pikes, whose robust and warlike figures were displayed to advantage by their tight jackets and panta-

loons of variegated and brilliant colours. Then came the French light infantry and crossbowmen, remarkable for agility rather than strength, and these were followed by the long columns of about ten thousand lancers, among whom was the young Chevalier. The King himself came next, surrounded by his bodyguard of five hundred gentlemen in magnificent costumes. He was clad in gilt armour, adorned with jewels, wearing his crown, and was mounted on a splendid charger.

The rear was brought up by the artillery, and the entrance of the whole army, numbering about sixty thousand men, took from three o'clock in the afternoon till nine at night, when the last ranks passed through by torchlight.

Shortly after the occupation of the French army, the Pope was compelled to enter into a treaty with them, and the King left Rome, carrying with him as a hostage the Pope's son, the infamous Cæsar Borgia, the murderer of his brother, and of whom it has been said that he seemed to be born only that a man might be found wicked enough to execute the designs of his father.

As the French army approached Naples, most of the towns on the way declared in their favour, and the King, Ferdinand, having been deserted by Trivulzio, his general, fled to Sicily, leaving the whole country at the mercy of the enemy, and King Charles accordingly, on 12th May, 1495, made a solemn entry into Naples as a conqueror, without having had to fight a single battle.

The French king, however, soon alienated the hearts of his Italian allies by his caprice and dissipation, so that a league of the Northern States was speedily formed against him, and, fearing that his road home would be cut off, he left the Neapolitan kingdoms in charge of the Duke of Montpensier and Stuart d'Aubigné, a Scotch nobleman, and started off homewards with an army of ten thousand men, among whom was Bayard. As he again approached Florence, Savonarola met him, and, reproaching him for the breach of his engagements to that Republic, foretold that he would escape with honour all the perils of his march, but that, if he did not amend his life, the hand of God would be heavy upon him. This prophecy was soon to be fulfilled, but the fate of the heroic monk himself was not destined to be more fortunate. After governing Florence with ability and success, and sternly setting himself to remove the abuses of the Church and reprove the crimes of the Pope, he was at length, in 1498, arrested and tried before two papal commissioners, who condemned him to torture, after which he was burned at the stake. Thus perished one of the great precursors of the Reformation, who endured all the trials while obtaining little of the honour due by posterity to a Reformer.

But to return to the march of the French army: they at length reached the village of Fornova, in Lombardy, where they suddenly found themselves opposed by an army of sixty thousand men, principally composed of

Venetians. The latter were confident of success, and a battle immediately took place, in which the Italian troops, instead of attacking the French soldiers as they were ordered, rushed off to plunder their baggage, which had been left some distance behind. The King, seeing this, charged upon their flank with his bodyguard, followed by the rest of his army, and attacked the main body of the Italians, who were thus taken at great disadvantage. The young Bayard, though only nineteen years old, fought with great gallantry, and in the charge upon the enemy's infantry had two horses killed under him, but fortunately his armour-proof protected him, and he succeeded in defeating a company of fifty men-at-arms, whose ensign he captured.

The battle, which lasted an hour or two, ended in a complete victory for the French, who only lost about two hundred men, while of the enemy over four thousand were slain. The safety of the royal army was thus assured, and they were able to continue their march into France, so that Bayard arrived at Lyons in the following November, 1495, after an absence of fourteen months.

Those who had remained at Naples were not so fortunate, for the King had not left them a week when his competitor, Ferdinand, landed with a large army, and after defeating the French in several battles, compelled them in the following year to evacuate the country, so that only a small remnant of the army returned to France.

For nearly three years after his return from the expedition into Italy, Bayard remained at the King's Court, assiduously attending to his military duties, while he advanced in the esteem of all his associates, and was rapidly establishing a reputation as one of the most promising young knights of his time.

During this period King Charles was meditating another descent upon Italy, but his ambitious designs were frustrated by a sad and unforeseen event. On the 7th April, 1498, he was proceeding with his wife to see a game of tennis on the castle lawn, when, in passing through a dark gallery, he struck his head against the door with great force. Although a little stunned by the blow, he passed on to view the sports, conversing cheerfully with those around him, when he was suddenly struck with apoplexy, and expired shortly afterwards, in the 28th year of his age.

CHAPTER IV.

AS KNIGHT AND WARRIOR.

THE Duke of Orleans, who now ascended the throne of France as Louis XII., had some time before endeavoured to raise a revolt, and been imprisoned by the magistrates of Orleans, who in great alarm sent a deputation to ask pardon for the indignity he had suffered, but he dismissed them with the generous and celebrated answer, "It ill becomes the King of France to revenge the injuries of the Duke of Orleans."

Bayard was at this time visiting at the Court of the Duke of Savoy where he had formerly been a page, but he was soon summoned thence by the news that the Duke of Milan had raised an army, and was about to drive the French out of his territory. He hastened to join the Count de Ligni, who was in command of the King's troops in Milan; but a general insurrection having broken out, the French were obliged to retire from that city, which was shortly after occupied by the Duke's forces. War between two hostile armies was at

this period carried on by a succession of independent forays by small bodies of men, who would attempt to take the enemy by surprise; and it was now, when in garrison about twenty miles from Milan, that Bayard led the first of those sorties for which he was afterwards to become so celebrated. Having ascertained that there was a small body of the enemy stationed at a village some distance from the French camp, he organised a party of about fifty gentlemen, who set out before daybreak in order to surprise the Duke of Milan's party.

The latter were, however, informed of their approach, and when Bayard's lancers arrived they found the others prepared, so that shouting the war-cry, "La France," they at once rode to the charge. The battle was at first uncertain, but at length the French, animated by their leader's valour, succeeded in breaking the Italian ranks, and the latter fled in disorder towards Milan. The young knight, with all the rashness of his age, hotly pursued them right into the city, where he was speedily overcome and led prisoner to the Duke. The Prince was filled with admiration at the audacity of the young soldier who had thus ventured into the lion's mouth, and his conduct is a striking instance of the singular attraction of Bayard's character, whose dignity and grace impressed even his enemies. The young hero naturally expected that he would be detained as a prisoner of war, but what was his surprise when the Duke, having questioned him about the

circumstances of his capture, informed him that, through admiration for his bravery, he would at once liberate him without ransom. The Chevalier had not expected such generosity from an enemy, and was deeply grateful.

Kneeling before the Duke to thank him, he promised that, if at any time it should be in his power to serve so noble a prince without disloyalty to his king and country, he would hold himself bound by his honour as a knight to do so. His sword and charger were then restored, and a guide sent to conduct him to the French camp, where he soon arrived, much to the astonishment of his comrades, who, having heard of his capture, were preparing to negotiate for his ransom.

The generous Duke was soon to receive very different treatment, which Bayard was powerless to prevent, at the hands of the French, by whom he was hated on account of the suspicion that he had usurped the Duchy of Milan by murdering his nephew.

The two armies met at Novarro in April, 1500, and the Swiss mercenaries in the service of the Duke having deserted him, he was compelled to surrender unconditionally. He attempted to escape from the town disguised as a monk, but was betrayed by one of his followers, and carried prisoner into France, where he was confined in the Castle of Loches in an iron cage only a few feet long. Here he remained in captivity for ten years, but when liberated, died from the effects of the sudden transport of joy.

After the recovery of Milan by the French, Bayard proceeded with Count Ligni to Voghiera, and here occurred one of those instances of his total disregard for wealth which made him, though but a poor man, one of the most eminent examples of knightly munificence. The citizens of this place had, like those of Milan, rebelled against the French, and the Count had threatened to punish them with fire and sword; so that on his approach to the town he was met by a long procession of men and women bare-headed, and clothed in white, carrying a large quantity of valuable plate as a peace-offering to appease his anger.

They all precipitated themselves on their knees before the Count and begged for mercy, but he remained inflexible, and ordered them to be put to death in punishment for their accursed rebellion. Fortunately for them, the sight of their distress moved the heart of the gallant Louis d'Ars, who, stepping forward hat in hand before the Count, knelt with one knee on the ground and pleaded for the lives of the citizens "for the sake of God and His Son Jesus Christ." The Count de Ligni was moved almost to tears—"Go," he said, "I pardon you for the sake of this gallant soldier, who deserves more from me than I can ever bestow." Then turning to Bayard, he told him to take the silver, as he could not accept it himself. A present of such immense value would not have been received with much hesitation by most poor knights with but little to support their dignity, but such was not the young soldier's

nature, for, bowing to the Count with deep respect, he said, "I thank you from my heart for the gift; but God forbid that the money of traitors and false lieges should ever be used by me," and, taking the plate, he distributed it piece by piece among those present, not keeping any for himself.

The King of France was now anxious to follow up his success in Italy by regaining the Kingdom of Naples which had been won and lost by his predecessor; and he therefore contracted an alliance with Ferdinand of Spain for the partition of the South of Italy between them, and the French army was accordingly ordered to set out for Naples in the spring of 1501. Count Ligni was at this time suffering from an illness of which he shortly afterwards died, and Bayard, who had served under him for more than ten years, took leave of him with great regret, and went southward with his regiment, which was now commanded by Louis d'Ars, the entire army, amounting to thirteen thousand men, being under the command of Stuart d'Aubigné.

Frederick, King of Naples, being attacked in front by the French and in the rear by the Spaniards, was able to make little resistance, and after the surrender of Capua, which was surprised by the French army in July, he entered into negotiations with General D'Aubigné, and agreed to evacuate the kingdom.

The French and Spanish leaders being thus left in undisturbed possession of the country soon began to quarrel among themselves, and the Spaniards, though at

first defeated, succeeded in driving their former allies out of every place except Barletta, which was strongly fortified. It was in the combats round this place that Bayard, now in his twenty-seventh year, gained by his deeds of generosity and courage his reputation as the model of Chivalry, and that proudest of titles, "*Le Chevalier sans peur et sans reproche.*"

Such confidence had his comrades in his ability and valour, that whenever he chose to organise any sortie against the enemy, the bravest and most skilful officers in the army were always anxious to serve under him, and this, as well as his own genius, contributed to the almost invariable success which attended his arms on these occasions.

On one of these expeditions they happened unexpectedly to fall in with an equal number of Spaniards under a distinguished captain called Soto Mayor, and the French, desirous of the honour of being the first to attack, lowered their visors and charged. The enemy received them at the point of the lance, and the fight lasted for nearly half-an-hour without either party gaining any decisive advantage, when Bayard, seizing the opportunity when the Spaniards were hotly engaged, drew off half-a-dozen of his men and attacked them in the rear. This so dismayed Soto Mayor that he turned and fled, closely pursued by the Chevalier, who called upon him to stop and fight the battle out by single combat. After a hard-fought duel the Spaniard's sword broke in two, and he was thus placed at the

mercy of his opponent and brought with the other prisoners to the French camp, where, according to the usage of Chivalry, he was released upon his word of honour that he would not attempt to escape. He, however, soon wearied of captivity, and as the amount of his ransom had been agreed upon though not yet paid, he considered it would be merely a technical breach of faith to leave before he was formally released, and he therefore started off at night for the Spanish garrison. His flight was speedily discovered, and a troop being sent in pursuit, he was recaptured before he had proceeded very far, and brought back to Bayard, who was extremely indignant at such a breach of knightly honour.

About a fortnight after the ransom arrived, and Soto Mayor was set at liberty; but when he returned to his own army he complained of the manner in which he had been treated while a prisoner. This soon reached Bayard's ears, and he, considering it a reproach upon his honour, sent a formal challenge to a duel. The challenge having been accepted, and the place of meeting arranged, a long and obstinate conflict ensued, which terminated in the Spaniard being carried off the field severely wounded.

The war between the French and Spaniards continued for about a year longer, with results rather adverse to the former, who were compelled to act entirely on the defensive, and were annoyed by the frequent attacks of the enemy.

On one occasion the camp was attacked by a large body under Don Pedro de Pais, who, though barely four feet high, was one of the boldest and most enterprising of their leaders. The French were taken by surprise, and would have suffered a disastrous defeat but for the presence of mind of Bayard, who rushed out with a few followers to the bridge leading to the camp, and defended this post so obstinately that the entire body of Spaniards were held at bay until help arrived, when they were driven off, and pursued for some distance. The fugitives were reinforced by another troop, and the order to retreat being given, the French cavalry drew off towards their own lines, the Chevalier bringing up the rear, as was his custom, considerably behind the others. The Spaniards, seeing this, made a sudden charge, by which they succeeded in overpowering him, and his condition would have been desperate but for the great love borne for him by all his companions in arms, who were ever ready to risk their lives for his safety; for they, discovering his capture, at once turned back, and notwithstanding that they were greatly outnumbered, charged the Spaniards vigorously, and Bayard having succeeded in freeing himself, seconded them so well that the enemy went off at full gallop, leaving their prisoner behind.

Shortly after this event, the French army, having been completely defeated in the Battle of Garigliano (at which our hero was not present), was compelled to evacuate Naples, and Bayard accordingly returned once

more to France, where he remained for some time among his own people.

His services were, however, too necessary to his country to admit of his being left long to enjoy the pleasures of idleness, and the King's ambition for foreign conquest was urging him into another war in Italy.

The Republic of Venice was at this period the proud "Queen of the Adriatic," from which her merchant navies sailed to all parts of the world, and she had been for years the most powerful State in Italy; but latterly her influence had begun to decline, owing to reverses received in a lengthened war with the Turks, and the opportunity of her temporary weakness was seized by some of the neighbouring States, jealous of the remains of her former greatness. The "League of Cambrai" was accordingly formed between the Emperor of Germany, the King of France, and the Pope, the object of which was to seize the Venetian possessions, and divide them among the allies.

The preparations for the war with Venice were completed in March, 1509, and Bayard having been appointed commander of a company of a thousand men, joined the King's army, amounting to about one hundred thousand, and crossed the Alps with them in safety. They arrived at the River Adda without meeting with any opposition, and were marching along its banks, when, at a bend in the stream, they suddenly found themselves face to face with the Venetian army forty-five thousand strong.

Both parties were equally surprised, but the French, recovering themselves first, attacked the flank of the enemy, and Bayard leading his men across the river up to their necks in water, fell upon the rear. The Venetians made a vigorous defence, but taken thus at a disadvantage, they were at length cut down and dispersed. This victory enabled the French to take possession of all the territory claimed by them with little further trouble, and the King soon returned to France with the greater part of his army, leaving the Chevalier and the remainder to garrison the towns and co-operate with his allies.

The situation of Venice, hard pressed as the Republic was on all sides, seemed desperate, when the Doge issued the famous decree by which all her dependencies were released from their allegiance, and she thus stripped herself of what her enemies were seeking to obtain, and reduced her empire to the islands and lagoons which had been its cradle. The Emperor Maximilian now appeared on the scene to take possession of the territory assigned to him by the treaty between the allies, and Bayard joined his army with five hundred lancers and two hundred gentlemen volunteers. The army then advanced to besiege Padua, in which the Venetians had placed a large garrison, determined to defend it to the last. Four strong barriers, protected by deep trenches, had been erected outside the walls of the town, and upon these the Emperor decided to make three separate assaults at different points.

The attack began early in the day, and the Chevalier led his men forward on one side against the first barrier, which was stubbornly defended by the Venetians, and after a hard fight it was forced, and the enemy driven back to the second trench. After half-an-hour's fighting this was also taken, and so impetuous was the charge of the French that the defenders were driven past the third barrier into the fourth, which was close under the ramparts. Here the garrison were assisted by a deadly artillery fire from the walls, and they fiercely contested the advance of the French inch by inch, so that after an hour's hard fighting it became evident that the palisade could not be taken from without. Bayard therefore determined upon a desperate expedient, and leaping from his horse he waved his sword to the others to follow, and sprang over the barrier into the midst of the enemy, where he was quickly reinforced by his comrades, who drove the defenders from their position into the town.

Night coming on, the assault was discontinued; but on the following day the Imperial artillery directed a heavy fire upon the walls, which soon opened a considerable breach, and the Emperor ordered an immediate assault to be made. After a severe struggle, some of his troops had at length driven back the Venetians, and established themselves upon the bastion, when a terrible calamity occurred. The defenders, foreseeing that they would not be able to hold the position, had undermined the works, and so

soon as the Germans captured them, the mine was fired, and the victors blown into the air. Consternation now seized the attacking force, who were charged by the garrison and driven from every post.

The siege was still continued with great vigour, and frequent sorties were made by both sides, in which the Chevalier, as usual, distinguished himself by his display of the wonderful combination of prudence and audacity which formed his character.

An incident now occurred which caused the failure of the siege, and illustrates the punctilious pride of the nobles of the period. The Emperor, wishing to take the town by assault before the breach could be repaired by the garrison, wrote to the commander of the French cavalry (which was, of course, entirely composed of nobles and gentlemen), requesting that, as they were all renowned soldiers who would be better able to cope with the veterans of the garrison than his own troops, they would dismount and try another assault with the German foot soldiers of his own army. This request was received by the French knights with astonishment, and Bayard boldly declared that, though poor, he was still a gentleman, and could not degrade himself by fighting on foot with common soldiers, but that if the German nobles would dismount and go to the assault instead of the infantry, they would lead them to the breach. This feeling was shared by all the others; but when the Emperor requested the nobles of his own army to dismount and go to the assault with the French

knights, they refused to do so, on the ground that it was derogatory to gentlemen to fight except on horseback. The Emperor, finding that all his endeavours to persuade them to make the assault on these terms were useless, and not having funds to maintain the army till the town should be obliged to capitulate, hastily left the camp, after instructing his generals to raise the siege.

The army having retired from before Padua, went into winter quarters, and Bayard accompanied the French portion to Novara, where he remained for some months, the monotony of which was broken by occasional expeditions against isolated detachments of the enemy. So firm was the knight's adhesion to the strictest precepts of Chivalry, that in these sorties he could never be persuaded to bring a greater number of soldiers than were in the body he attacked, and this scrupulousness more than once brought him into imminent danger through his troops being opposed by a greater number then he expected. He was often greatly annoyed by the conduct of the German soldiers, who were accustomed to burn and destroy everything before them, and the knight sternly set himself to prevent this, by inflicting summary punishment upon all offenders who came within his reach, and thus in many ways doing all in his power to mitigate the horrors of a barbarous mode of warfare.

The Venetians had gained some important successes in the war, and Pope Julius II. having obtained all he

expected from his alliance with the French, now made peace with the Republic, and hastened to declare war against the Duke of Ferrara, who was an ally of Louis.

Towards the end of the year 1510, the papal army advanced to besiege Mirandola, one of the Duke's frontier towns, and here the Pope himself directed the operations, placing his guns in battery and hastening their fire. Armed with cuirass and helmet, he constantly showed himself on horseback to his troops, animating them with hopes of plunder, and sharing all the counsels, fatigues, and dangers of the siege. In one of the excursions which he was accustomed to make in the neighbourhood, he was very nearly taken prisoner by Bayard, who had laid an ambuscade for him, and he with difficulty escaped into the Castle of San Felice, by jumping out of his carriage, and helping to raise the drawbridge with his own hands.

Mirandola was, on 20th January, 1511, compelled to surrender, a heavy frost having come on which enabled the besiegers to cross the moat on the ice.

After its capture, the Pope and the Venetians directed their whole attention to Ferrara; but before attacking that town, it was necessary for them to obtain possession of the Castle of La Bastia, commanding the district of the Lower Po, from which Ferrara obtained supplies of provisions. The army therefore proceeded to lay siege to it, and the Duke of Ferrara, having been informed of this, was greatly alarmed, knowing that it was the key

to his city, and was badly garrisoned. Bastia was twenty miles from Ferrara, and any party going to its relief would be obliged to pass through a narrow defile where only one man could go at a time, so that it could easily be guarded by the enemy. But the genius of Bayard was equal to the occasion, and he at once hit upon the only feasible plan of relieving the castle, which was to send a division of infantry by boats down the River Po, and a troop of cavalry by land at night, so that the two bodies could meet the next morning and take the Papal army by surprise.

The plan succeeded admirably, and when the Duke's forces approached La Bastia early in the morning, Bayard divided them into three bands, two of which went round to attack the besiegers on the flank and rear, while the other marched straight down and took them in front. The attack, though sudden and unexpected, was met by the Pope's troops with great courage, and the battle raged fiercely for over an hour, but finally the Duke's army triumphed, driving the enemy from the field, with the loss of five thousand prisoners, and all their artillery, baggage, and horses.

The success of this expedition, which preserved the whole Duchy from invasion, gained great praise for the gallant knight, who was well rewarded on his return to Ferrara with the smiles of the Duchess, the lovely Lucrezia Borgia, esteemed the most beautiful woman of her time, and the idol of the poets and literary men who swarmed to that Court.

The Pope having thus failed to detach the Duke of Ferrara from his alliance with the French by force of arms, decided to try diplomacy, and accordingly commissioned a scoundrel called Guerlo to go to the Duke and persuade him to desert the French. The Duke received the emissary well, and listened to his proposals, of which he at once informed Bayard, who was indignant at the contemplated treachery, and pressed for the instant expulsion of the enemy. The Duke, however, being an Italian, and accustomed to the practice of diabolical artifices, which even at this time other nations regarded with horror, had thought of another method, which was simply to bribe the Pope's messenger to poison him. This Guerlo readily agreed to do upon the promise of a large reward, and the Duke went to inform Bayard of the success of his scheme.

Thinking that the latter would see his meaning, and wishing to break it gently, he told him that he did not think they would be troubled by the Pope much longer, as he had arranged with his commissioner, who had promised that within a week his master would be a dead man. The knight, who was himself too pure to suspect such a horrible design in others, was at a loss to understand the hint, and asked how this fellow could enter into the secrets of Providence by predicting the time of any man's death. When, however, from a plainer intimation he finally learnt that Guerlo was to poison the Pope, his horror was intense, and he told the Duke that he wondered how so great a Prince could

for a moment have entertained such a design, and that if he thought it was really intended he would himself warn the Pope at once. The Duke attempted to appease him by enlarging on the intended treachery towards the French; but Bayard was so angry at the idea, that he left him in order to seize and hang the man who engaged to commit such a horrible villainy; Guerlo, however, having received timely warning, escaped from the city and went to Brescia, where he was shortly afterwards executed for another crime.

CHAPTER V.

THE MIRROR OF CHIVALRY.

THE Chevalier Bayard was now thirty-five years of age, and in the prime of life. His appearance is said to have been dignified and prepossessing. He was well made, and above the middle height, with sad, deepset eyes, a fair ruddy complexion, and open and friendly countenance. His manner was singularly pleasing; and when not troubled with serious business, he was jovial and light-hearted in the extreme, a man who could hold his own at the table or in the field, yet was ever ready with a kind word or pleasant jest. Few could withstand his lance in the tournament; but in battle he was calm and determined, and though never known to be deterred by danger, he was ever prudent and watchful for the safety of his companions. In the words of his contemporary biographer, "three traits marked him as a great soldier: he was a greyhound in attack, a wild boar in defence, and a wolf in retreat."

He was fond of conversing on the precepts of Chivalry, and the worthlessness of rank or riches as compared with the noble aims a true knight should have at heart; but he enlivened this moral discourse

with frequent jokes and ready repartee. Many of his sayings have been preserved; and on one occasion, a companion having sneered at the wisdom and prudence which the knight praised so highly, saying he would prefer a nice little estate, with some money

which he could see and use, to all the virtue in the world, which was invisible,—"Ah," replied Bayard, "do not, because you are blind and unable to discern true beauty, therefore suppose that there is nothing nobler in the world than the end of your eyelashes, which is all you do see." Such a man as this was but a bad courtier, and he seldom attended upon the King in time of peace, so that while titles and provinces were freely awarded to flatterers and favourites he was left unnoticed; but in time of war he was supreme, for then his aid was worth more to his country than an army, and the idol of the soldiers, wherever he led, they were prepared to follow even to the death. His reputation as one of the bravest and most skilful, and at the same time the most honourable and noble, of the knights of France was now fully established, and even in foreign countries he was looked up to as the model and pride of Chivalry throughout the world, a position of which his title, "*The knight without fear and without reproach*," was the public recognition.

Towards the end of the year 1511, the command of the French troops in Italy was given to the King's nephew, Gaston de Foix, Duc de Nemours, a young officer of distinguished ability, who, though only in his twenty-third year, soon showed that the army could not have been entrusted to more competent hands, for in a short career of two months he revealed to France the true secret of her military power—the capacity of her infantry to perform marches of extraordinary rapidity.

Before his time the chief reliance had always been placed in the cavalry, the French knights being renowned throughout Europe for their prowess; but he brought the infantry into greater prominence, and the maxim of Marshal Saxe, that battles are gained not with the hands but with the feet, was never more strikingly illustrated than by the operations of this youthful commander.

In January, 1512, the enemy was closely investing Bologna, and had already made a breach in the walls by their artillery fire, when the Duke hastened to its relief, and, after marching day and night, succeeded during a storm of wind and snow in getting into the town without meeting a single sentry of the enemy, who were obliged shortly after to raise the siege and retire. He was deterred from pursuing them by the news that the inhabitants of Brescia had admitted the Venetians and driven out the French garrison, so that it would be necessary for him to proceed there without delay. He now made a more extraordinary march than his former one, for, placing a garrison of five thousand men in Bologna, he left it with the remainder of the army, and making the infantry cover as much ground as cavalry usually did, he hastened by forced marches over broken roads and overflowed rivers, and appeared near Brescia on the sixteenth of February before the Venetians had any idea he was approaching, having on the way attacked and defeated a division of their army with a troop of cavalry led by Bayard, which had travelled fifty miles without drawing bridle.

The assault upon the town was arranged to take place early on the following morning, when the attacking force was divided into several sections, one of which was commanded by the Chevalier, who led a company of picked men, most of whom were officers, but preferred the honour of serving under him to commanding troops themselves.

The attack was made with great spirit, but the defence was equally determined, and the battle-cries of "France and Bayard!" and "Marco, Marco!" the patron saint of Venice, resounded on all sides. The French having at length succeeded in driving the defenders back some distance, Bayard seized the opportunity to leap up upon the rampart, where he was quickly followed by all his company, who captured the first fort; but their leader paid dearly for his rashness, having received a severe thrust from a pike, the point of which broke off and remained in his side, inflicting a wound which was feared to be mortal. He himself, seeing the great flow of blood which his soldiers vainly tried to stanch, told them to carry him out of the fray, as he was wounded to the death, and he was immediately removed to a large house in the vicinity. The Duke of Nemours, seeing Bayard fall, and believing he was killed, headed the attack himself, calling upon his followers to avenge the noblest knight of France. The defenders were driven back, and the French, following the retreating soldiers into the town, took it by assault, in spite of the obstinate defence of the inhabitants, who discharged stones and boiling water upon them from

the tops of their houses; and then, mainly owing to Bayard's absence, there ensued a terrible massacre, in which twenty thousand persons are said to have been slain.

The lady of the house to which the Chevalier was brought had been expecting every moment that some of the bands of plunderers which always follow a victorious army would break in upon her, and so, when she saw the wounded officer carried in, she fell on her knees, imploring him to save the lives and honour of herself and her two daughters. He, though scarcely able to speak, and believing himself to be mortally wounded, was touched by her distress, and ordered the soldiers who carried him to station themselves at the gate and kill anyone who attempted to force an entrance, promising to indemnify them for their loss of the plunder of the town.

In the meantime the Duke's surgeon arrived in all haste, and, after examining and dressing the wound, gave them the comforting assurance that it was not fatal. For more than six weeks he lay slowly recovering from his hurt, enduring the pain and his forced inactivity with great fortitude, and during this time he was assiduously attended by the lady and her daughters, who had become greatly attached to the wounded hero, notwithstanding that he belonged to their enemies; and they whiled away the weary hours of his illness with music and song.

By this time the Duke of Nemours had returned with the French army to Bologna, where he was opposed by a

large Spanish force under General Cardona, who retired before them, manœuvring in order to avoid a battle, which he succeeded in postponing for several weeks.

Bayard, having now almost recovered from the effects of his wound, and being urged by the Duke to join the army before the expected battle, at which he said the Chevalier's presence would be as good as a reinforcement of a thousand men, informed his hostess that he would leave on the following day. She, being well aware that by the recognised laws of war all her property, worth about ten thousand pounds, belonged to him as captor, expected she would have to pay a heavy ransom, as this was the only means the knights had of maintaining themselves; but knowing he was a man of noble disposition, she determined to appeal to his generosity to accept a small sum.

Accordingly, on the morning of his departure, she brought him a casket containing about one thousand pounds, and thanking him with heartfelt gratitude for saving the lives and property of herself and daughters during the sack of the town, she asked him to accept this money in payment of their ransom. Instead, however, of refusing the amount as too small, Bayard declined to accept anything whatever, saying he had been more than repaid by their kindness and attention to him during his illness.

The lady was deeply affected by such unlooked-for generosity. "Flower of Chivalry!" she exclaimed, "with whom none can compare, may the blessing of God

reward you, as He alone can, in this world and in the next." As she still continued to press him to accept it, he sent for her daughters, and dividing the money into three parts, presented one to each as a marriage portion, and gave the third to their mother, requesting her to distribute it among the poor, who had suffered most from the pillage of the town. He then ordered his carriage and bade them farewell, all the party weeping with joy and gratitude, and the girls having first given him some little presents worked by themselves, for which he was as grateful as if he had received the entire ransom.

His generosity is the more remarkable, as he had no private means whatever to support the dignity of his rank, and in this case had not only lost his share of the booty, but had been obliged to indemnify the soldiers for theirs.

When he reached the French camp, he found the army shut in between Ravenna, which was held by the Italians, and the camp of their Spanish allies, and his arrival was hailed with joy by all his comrades.

A breach having been made in the walls of Ravenna, a general assault was arranged for April 9th. On this day, accordingly, several determined attacks were made; but as the breach was small, and the post stubbornly defended by the citizens, the French were driven back, and the Duke therefore determined to engage the Spanish army on the other side.

The following day a heavy cannonade was opened on both sides, which lasted for nearly three hours—the

French artillery, placed at the extremity of their left wing, doing immense damage by a terrible cross fire, which carried off whole ranks of the enemy.

Before the armies engaged, an incident occurred which curiously displays the chivalrous spirit of the times. The Duke, who was conspicuous by his gorgeous armour embroidered with the arms of Foix and Navarre, wishing to watch at a distance the movements of the Spaniards, rode with his staff a short way along the banks of the canal to some rising ground near which they saw Don Pedro de Pais, with several distinguished Spanish knights, who had come to have a look at the French. At this moment some of the sharpshooters on both sides opened fire on the groups of officers, whereupon Bayard, advancing towards the Spanish general, saluted him, and requested that, as they were both waiting for the battle, he would stop the riflemen on his side and they would do the same on theirs. To this Don Pedro readily agreed, and, after congratulating the Chevalier upon his recovery from his wound, he asked the name of the distinguished-looking French general, and being told it was the Duke of Nemours himself, the Spanish officers dismounted and saluted him courteously. The cannonade now became more vigorous, so that the knights were obliged to separate with mutual expressions of goodwill.

As both sides were now tired of cannonading each other at a distance, the French army, which was drawn up in a form of a crescent, was ordered to advance to the attack, and many of the companies, in their eagerness to

be first across, waded up to their necks through the river dividing the hostile camps.

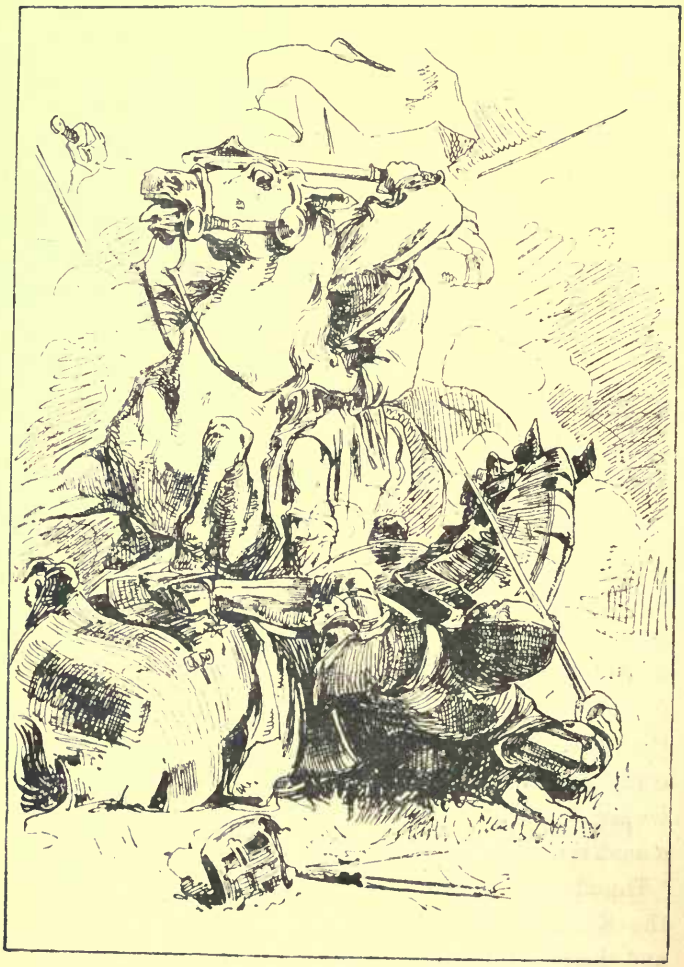
The Duke in person led the cavalry to the charge, and a short but terrible encounter ensued, both armies contesting the ground inch by inch. At length General Cardona, dismayed by the impetuous onslaught, commenced a retreat, and this was speedily followed by the complete defeat of the Spanish and Papal cavalry, which fled from the field, hotly pursued by Bayard and Louis d'Ars.

In the first charge the Chevalier had been dismounted, his famous horse, "La Carinau," which he had won at the taking of Brescia, having received so many wounds that he left it for dead. The next day, however, it was found grazing in a field close by, and being brought to the knight's quarters, allowed itself to be handled, and its wounds probed and dressed without stirring, and in the end completely recovered; and ever after, when in battle, if it saw any of the enemy using a sword, it would run and seize it with its teeth and fight like a human being.

The struggle between the infantry was not so soon decided, the Spaniards being at this time the best foot soldiers in Europe; and being armed with short swords and bucklers, they were able to break through the French phalanx fighting with long spears, which were useless at close quarters. The Duke of Nemours, seeing that some of his infantry were getting the worst of it, and not observing that most of the cavalry were at a distance pursuing the fugitives, called upon his body-

guard to follow, and charged into the midst of the Spaniards with only about twenty French officers. They were received with a deadly volley, which killed their horses, and thus, dismounted and surrounded by the enemy, they fell one by one, fighting gallantly to the last, the Duke being pierced with more than twenty wounds, any one of which would have been fatal.

The Spaniards, seeing the day was lost, at once retreated, and were met at some distance by Bayard returning from the pursuit with a few men who were too fatigued to engage them. He, not knowing of the General's death, and seeing that his force was too small to attack them with success, contented himself with taking possession of their colours and allowing them to go free; an act which afterwards caused him the keenest regret, when he found that these were the very men who had slain the Duke. Most of the Spanish leaders were taken prisoner, including Pedro Navarro, the famous engineer, who subsequently entered the French service, and Cardinal de Medici, afterwards Pope Leo X., who was dressed in full canonicals in the midst of the fray. The victory of the French was indeed complete, but at what cost, for they had lost their leader, who had in the course of a few months achieved a most brilliant military reputation, and was known as the "Thunderbolt of Italy." "Would to God," exclaimed the King, "that I had lost all Italy, and that Gaston and those who fell with him were safe." Vain wish, for who can recall the glorious dead, and what avails remorse,



when the word that might have saved them was not spoken till too late! The city of Ravenna surrendered on the following day; but the loss of the French had been so great, through the death of their leader and many other brave captains, that it was decided to retire to Milan, and the body of the late Duke was accordingly brought there by the army amid universal sorrow and mourning.

The Italians now began to recover confidence, and occupied all the places evacuated by the French; and as the Swiss and Venetians were pressing on their flank, the latter were compelled to retire before them as far as Pavia. They had only been here a couple of days when a large body of Swiss succeeded in forcing an entrance, and the alarm having been given, Bayard hastily collected a few of his men and rushed to defend the gate, where, by vigorous efforts, he kept the enemy at bay for over an hour. As, however, the number of the enemy greatly exceeded that of the French, they were obliged to evacuate the town, and after a bloody engagement the army slowly retreated by the bridge over the River Ticino, closely followed by the Swiss. So soon as all had crossed, the Chevalier proceeded to destroy the passage, so as to prevent pursuit; but when this had been almost completed, he was struck by a spent cannon ball, which dislocated his shoulder. The French army was now in full retreat, and the wounded officer was carried with them into Lombardy, whence he went into France to the residence of his uncle, the

Bishop of Grenoble. While here he was attacked by a violent fever, brought on by the fatigues and hardships of the late campaign. It was at first thought that this illness would terminate fatally, and the brave knight was tormented by the fear that he who had faced death so often in the field of battle would, after all, die in his bed like a woman.

However, his strong constitution and temperate habits carried him safely through, and he was soon completely restored to health, a happy result which was hailed with heartfelt rejoicing by the whole country.

While staying at Grenoble, an episode occurred which displays the generous and chivalrous disposition of our hero. A beautiful girl, of noble birth, was compelled by extreme poverty and fear of starvation to throw herself upon him for protection, and Bayard, finding that she was good as she was beautiful, inquired into the matter, and ascertained that she was deeply attached to a young man in the town who was too poor to marry her, and he thereupon settled an income upon them out of his own purse, so that the young couple were forthwith united, to the mutual satisfaction of themselves and their generous benefactor. This is merely one instance out of many, as it is recorded that at different times he dowered more than one hundred poor damsels, and thus enabled them to marry and live in comfort.

The year 1513 opened with a declaration of war by England against France, and in June King Henry VIII.

landed at Calais and proceeded to lay siege to Terouenne. The town made a brave defence, and the inhabitants were at first able to get provisions into it; but the investment having become closer, the rations began to run short, and it became evident that the garrison must soon surrender unless supplies could be passed through the besiegers' lines. The French, therefore, determined to send a large body of cavalry to make a feint of an attack upon the English camp, and while the attention of the latter was thus occupied, another party were to provision the town. This plan was discovered by the English, who promptly stationed a large force of infantry and artillery upon the hill of Guinegate, overlooking Terouenne, so that when the French cavalry passed to attack the camp their retreat was cut off.

Bayard, at the head of his troops, had a sharp skirmish with the English and Burgundian cavalry, and was commencing to retire according to arrangement, when some of the other troops, seeing the large body of the enemy on the hill in their rear, were seized with panic and turned to fly. These fugitives galloped in upon the main body, causing general confusion, which the British speedily took advantage of by attacking them all along the line.

The Chevalier, after in vain endeavouring to rally the cavalry, retreated slowly, facing about upon his pursuers, and keeping them at bay till he reached a narrow bridge over a river. Here he determined to make a

stand, and kept the enemy in check until a large body succeeded in fording the river lower down, so as to attack him from behind. Seeing them approaching, and knowing that further resistance was useless, he called upon his companions to save themselves, and, with that presence of mind that never deserted him in the direst emergencies, he galloped to a spot at some distance, where he perceived a Burgundian knight with his helmet off resting under a tree, and putting his sword to the officer's throat, he called upon him to surrender, rescue or no rescue, and the latter, taken unawares and not being able to help himself, was compelled to do so. Bayard thereupon handed him his own sword, saying that he yielded to superior numbers, and they went together to the English camp.

Thus ended what is known as the "Battle of Spurs" —so called from the precipitous flight of the French cavalry—in which, though but few were slain on either side, many of the most distinguished French captains, who like Bayard had disdained to fly, were taken prisoner.

Terouenne capitulated shortly after, and was razed to the ground, and the whole country was in a state of alarm, fearing an immediate march upon Paris; but instead of pushing on there, the English turned aside to besiege Tournay.

Bayard, in the meantime, was detained at the camp, but, believing that according to the laws of Chivalry he was entitled to go free on account of the

other knight having first surrendered to him, he requested the latter to get him permission to return to his own army. The Burgundian, however, looked at the matter in a different light, and after debating both sides of the question, they agreed to refer the dispute to King Henry. The Chevalier accordingly appealed to him, and was received most graciously, as his great reputation deserved, and the question having been stated, the King, after some consideration, decided that, according to the strict laws of Chivalry, both knights having surrendered to each other should be quits, and that therefore Bayard was entitled to his liberty, on condition that he would give his parole not to join the French army for six weeks.

The knight agreed to these conditions, and was given a safe-conduct into Flanders; but before he left, the King, who recognised his great ability and merit, made him offers of high rank and honour if he would enter into his service. To him Bayard replied, as he had before done to the Pope, and to all others who had endeavoured to entice him from his allegiance, that he had but one master in heaven, who was God, and one upon earth, who was the King of France, and that he would serve no other. Thus, notwithstanding the neglect with which his extraordinary services and ability had ever been received, he continued steadfastly faithful to his duty, esteeming his loyalty to king and country incomparably higher than any mere personal advantage to himself.

Shortly after this, Tournay also surrendered to the British arms, but winter coming on, King Henry returned home, and the campaign terminated.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST VICTORY.

EARLY in the year 1515, Louis XII. died, and was succeeded by Francis I., then only twenty-one years of age, but tall, handsome, and excelling in all martial exercises. The young King was thirsting for military glory, and his ambitious spirit soon drew him into new schemes for the conquest of the Italian possessions which the French sovereigns looked upon as their lawful inheritance, and he therefore requested the Chevalier and the other leaders to be in readiness to take command of the army at an early date.

Having made peace with England, and entered into an alliance with the Venetians, he was prepared by the middle of July to cross Italy with an army of sixty thousand men. The passes of Mount Cenis and Mount Genèvre were at this time considered the only practicable routes over the Alps, and a large army of Swiss already occupied them, ready to fall upon the French troops, disordered by their long marches, so that the King was perplexed what course to pursue. This difficulty was, however, soon overcome by the genius of Pedro Novarro,

the celebrated engineer, who discovered that there was a path to the north of Briançon which, though never before traversed by an army, might be practicable for cavalry, and by this Bayard went with a troop of one thousand horse. After encountering tremendous difficulties, they got safely through, and reached the Italian side without the enemy having any knowledge of their approach. Here they learned that Prospero Colonna, the commander of the Papal troops, was at Villa Franca with only seven hundred men, and the Chevalier hastened there, where his arrival was so unexpected that Colonna, who was just sitting down to dinner in false security, was captured, with all his men and a large amount of booty, without striking a blow, and in the very teeth of a body of four thousand Swiss coming to his assistance who entered by one gate while the French were leaving by another.

In the meantime, the main body of the army was crossing the Alps by a path through the valley of Barcelonette, which, though hardly safe for pedestrians, was, by the daring ingenuity of Novarro, made practicable even for artillery.

Enormous masses of rock had to be blown up, bridges were thrown across deep chasms, and heavy guns were hoisted up the heights, and swung from peak to peak; and so successful was he, that on the fifth day the army stood on the plains of Saluzzo, before the Italians were aware that their march had begun, which was fortunate, as the French had carried only a few days' provisions, so

that their situation would have been desperate had the enemy known of their approach and blockaded the pass. On his arrival, Francis and the Swiss army first heard of the daring capture of General Colonna, and such was the consternation of the Swiss that they retired in dismay to Milan, pursued by the French, who continually harassed their rear. When they arrived here, negotiations were commenced on both sides, and the Swiss had been so astonished at the exploit of the invaders, that they were quite prepared to enter into a treaty of peace. However, after its terms had been agreed upon, but before it was signed, they were unexpectedly reinforced by another army of twenty thousand men. As this gave them a considerable superiority in numbers, they refused to complete the treaty, and determined at once to attack the French at Marignano, where the latter were encamped.

Accordingly, on the evening of the thirteenth September, the horns of Uri and Unterwalden resounded through the streets of Milan, and the Swiss army marched out in battle array. As they approached the camp, the French artillery opened a heavy fire upon them, but, nothing daunted, they continued their advance, and were attacked on the flank by a body of French infantry. After a sharp conflict, the latter were defeated and driven into a morass, where they would all have been slain but for Bayard, who, seeing the position of affairs, charged the enemy's vanguard with his cavalry and put them to flight. Just at this moment an accident occurred which threatened to put an end to our hero's career, for

his horse, excited by a wound from a pike, suddenly slipped his bridle, and carried his helpless rider straight through the enemy into a vineyard close at hand, where, becoming entangled in the roots, the horse fell. The Chevalier was thus enabled to dismount, and after several hairbreadth escapes from capture, he got safely back among his own troops.

The battle raged on till midnight without any decisive advantage for either side, and the moon having gone down, leaving all in darkness, both parties drew off a short distance to bivouack for the night.

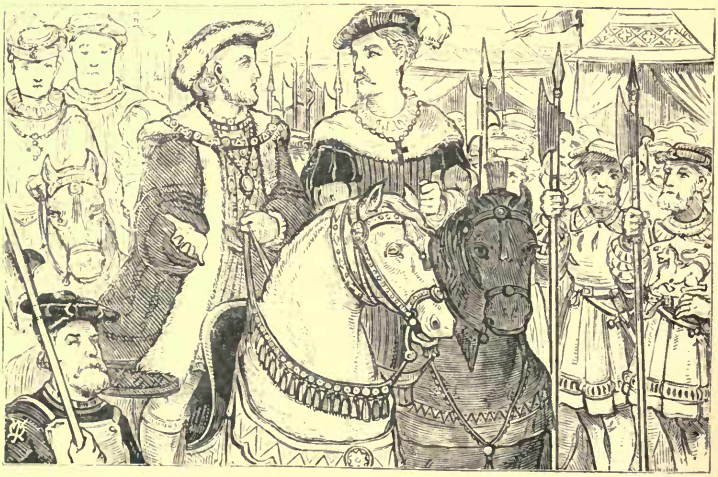
At daybreak the next morning the contest was renewed with fresh vigour, and the Swiss attacked the French artillery, and succeeded in capturing some batteries; but, on the other hand, the Constable Bourbon, after repeated efforts, broke through their right wing and put them to rout. After four hours' fighting, the issue was still undecided, when, about nine o'clock, the war-cry of the Venetian allies of the French was heard in the rear of the Swiss army, and the latter, fearing that they would be surrounded, began to retire, but in such good order that the French were unable to inflict much further loss upon them.

The young King, who had displayed the utmost gallantry, was now surrounded by his knights, who hailed him victor; and he, calling upon Bayard as the greatest knight of Chivalry, first asked him if he had worthily earned his golden spurs that day, and receiving a reply full of warm praise, requested the Chevalier to

dub him knight. Bayard at first begged to be excused, saying he was unworthy of the honour of knighting his sovereign, but on receiving a positive command, he complied, and there, surrounded by thousands of brave warriors, amid all the terrible sights and sounds of the battlefield, he asked the King to kneel, and repeating the formula alluding to the hero-knights of Chivalry of the time of Charlemagne and the Crusades, "Sire, may this be as efficacious as if done by Roland or Oliver, Godfrey or Baldwin his brother," he gave the kneeling monarch three blows on the shoulder with the flat of his sword, and calling upon him to rise, added, "God grant that in battle you may never fly."

Thus was fought one of the great battles of the world's history, in which the slaughter on both sides had been tremendous, the Swiss having lost fourteen thousand on the field, while of the French nearly six thousand were killed, including several distinguished officers. The veteran General Trivulzio, who had fought in eighteen great battles, declared that all the others were mere child's play compared to Marignano, which was a veritable combat of giants. The Swiss army, now completely broken, retreated into Switzerland, and shortly afterwards made peace with the French, who took undisputed possession of the whole Duchy of Milan, where Francis remained till January, 1516, when he returned home with Bayard and most of the army, leaving the remainder in garrison under the command of the Duke of Bourbon, Constable of France.

A profound peace throughout Europe succeeded to the numerous wars which had been raging for so many years, and Bayard was thus able to obtain almost the only repose he enjoyed throughout his arduous life, and he resided in his own province of Dauphiné, of which he had been appointed Lieut.-General; and here he found plenty of occupation in the performance of his duties as Governor, and in taking part in the numerous fêtes and tournaments at which his presence was essential to ensure success.



MEETING OF HENRY VIII. OF ENGLAND AND FRANCIS I. OF FRANCE.

During the summer of 1520 took place the famous meeting between the Kings of France and England, which, from the gorgeous and lavish splendour of both Courts, is known to history as "The Camp of the Cloth of Gold." Here Bayard came with the French nobles

and knights, of whom he was the chief ornament, and once more met King Henry, whose acquaintance he had made under rather unfortunate circumstances after the "Battle of Spurs." A shield given by the Chevalier to the King upon this occasion has been preserved in the Guards' Chamber at Windsor Castle, where it may still be seen.

A bitter feeling of hostility had for a long time existed between Francis and the Emperor Charles V., which, in 1521, culminated in the latter invading French territory and capturing the frontier town of Mouzon. Francis was totally unprepared for this, and as the town of Mézières, on which the Imperialists were marching, was neither provisioned nor fortified to withstand a siege, he determined to destroy it and lay waste the surrounding country—a proceeding which, though it would ruin thousands of loyal subjects, would have the effect of stopping the enemy's advance through want of supplies. Bayard, whose heart revolted against this cruel injustice to his fellow-countrymen, strongly opposed this counsel, and at length prevailed with the King by offering to go himself and defend the town to the death; and such was the renown of his name, that over a hundred of the best knights of France at once volunteered to follow him on this forlorn hope. He accordingly hastened to Mézières with about five thousand men, and, finding the place but ill-prepared for a siege, he ordered all those who could not fight to leave the town, and he at once set to work to repair the fortifications and collect provisions.

Two days after his arrival, the Imperialist army of fifteen thousand men under General Sickengen, together with another body of twenty thousand men under his ally the Count of Nassau, encamped before Mézières. Believing that the town could not be defended, and not wishing to injure the reputation of so noble a knight as Bayard by taking it by assault, they on the following day sent a herald calling upon him to surrender. To him the Chevalier replied, that he had been sent there to defend the post, and would do so to the last; and he then called the soldiers and citizens together, and, telling them that as the loss of Mézières would leave the whole country open to the enemy they had not only their own safety but the honour and welfare of France in their keeping, he made them all swear to defend it to the death. His words were received with enthusiasm, and by his energy and coolness he infused new courage into all, and incited every man with the desire to follow his heroic example.

The Imperialists opened a heavy cannonade upon the town, and attacked it on all sides, so that it required the utmost vigilance on the part of the defenders to prevent them from entering through the breaches. This continued for three weeks without the enemy being able to force an entrance, notwithstanding their immensely superior forces; but Bayard was well aware that he could not hold out for any length of time against such overwhelming odds, and he therefore determined to try stratagem, and, being ingenious as he was brave, he hit upon a plan to divide the besiegers' forces.

The Duke of Bouillon, who had quarrelled with the Emperor and was now in alliance with the French, was a relative of the Count of Nassau, who commanded one of the attacking armies; and the Chevalier now wrote the Duke a letter, saying he heard the Count was secretly anxious to join the French, and would do so if his cousin asked him.

This letter he gave to a countryman, directing him to carry it to the Duke, and to go by a road which would take him near General Sickengen's lines. The messenger was, as Bayard expected, arrested before he had proceeded far, and the letter brought to Sickengen, who, on reading it, at once took for granted that the Count of Nassau, with whom he had had a dispute shortly before, was secretly conspiring to desert him for the French. Fearing that he would be betrayed, and thus shut in between them, he at once ordered the drums to beat to arms and the camp to be struck, and when all was ready he retired along the road leading past the Count's encampment. The latter, not understanding the cause of these strange proceedings, sent to enquire, but Sickengen, calling him a traitor, refused to see him or his messenger, and thinking his late allies were coming to attack him, the Count also put his men under arms and awaited the other's approach. Bayard, who was watching the success of his manœuvre with delight, now opened a heavy artillery fire upon them, so that both Generals withdrew in different directions without coming to an explanation, and did not discover the

trick that had been played on them for a long time after.

Thus Mézières was saved, and the approach of the French army, which the King had at length succeeded in raising, prevented any danger of invasion in that quarter.

The Chevalier's return to Paris was a triumphal progress, and on all sides he was hailed as a conquering hero. On his arrival at the capital he was publicly received by the King and all the nobility, while the Parliament thanked him in the name of the nation, giving him the grateful title of Saviour of his Country.

Shortly after this he returned home to Dauphiné, where had broken out that terrible and mysterious scourge known as the plague, which in these ages carried off so many millions of people whom a little knowledge of sanitary rules and precautions might have saved.

It is often the case, that men endowed with great physical courage, and who, under the excitement of battle, will incur any risk, are the veriest cowards when brought face to face with a danger that requires moral strength, such as a horrible and painful disease. The noble-hearted Chevalier was not one of these. The chief man in the province, he set an example to all, high and low, by himself going among the stricken population of Grenoble, and personally attending to their wants. He brought physicians from all parts,

whom he paid to attend the sick poor, for whom he provided medicines and necessaries; and the result of this energetic charity was that the course of the terrible plague was at length stayed, and Bayard earned the gratitude of thousands who had been saved by his means, and another claim to be called "the knight without fear and without reproach."

The year 1523 opened with a disastrous event for France. The Duke of Bourbon was the most powerful nobleman in the kingdom, and had for a long time held the office of Constable of France, which gave him the right of commanding the van of the army in battle, with authority even superior to the King's.

Francis, being probably jealous of his great power, had taken an unreasonable dislike to him, which was manifested by repeated insults not to be borne by the haughty spirit of the Constable, who, driven to extremity, and forgetful of his duty to King and country, at length determined upon the desperate step of leaguing himself with the Emperor and Henry VIII. for the invasion of France; and his treachery having been discovered, he was compelled to fly for safety into Germany.

At this time the King had raised a large army, which he intended to command himself, for the purpose of making a fresh invasion of Italy; but alarmed by Bourbon's desertion, he at the last moment decided to remain at home, and accordingly gave the command to Bonnivet, one of his favourites, and a man of little

ability or military experience. The French army, numbering about forty thousand men, assembled at Susa, and advanced to lay siege to Milan, while Bayard was sent forward with ten thousand men to attack Lodi. Bonnivet wasted the entire season in petty operations which had no useful result, but the Chevalier pushed on with his usual vigour, and, after driving the Duke of Mantua out of Lodi, he garrisoned it with French troops, and then advanced to Cremona, which he besieged with such effect that the defenders were about to capitulate, when the approach of the allied army compelled him to retire into winter quarters, after gaining the only success scored by the French in this campaign.

The war in Italy was renewed early in the spring of 1524, when Bourbon took supreme command of the allied army, and advanced to attack his former comrades; and Bonnivet now allowed himself to be outmanœuvred by letting the other get in his rear, and compelling him to shut himself up in Novara. The position of the French here soon became unbearable, closed in as they were without provisions, and it was therefore determined to retire to Ivrea, so as to get into France through the Bas Valais. A march of thirty miles would have placed them in safety, but this short retreat proved most disastrous, for Bourbon closely pursued the retreating columns, and harassed them in every way. Bayard, who had command of the rear guard, defended it with spirit, and by making repeated charges kept the enemy at bay. The next day the retreat was continued, and in a combat

on the Sesia, Bonnivet received a wound in the arm which compelled him to resign the command of the army to the Chevalier. The latter determined at all cost to save the artillery and colours, and while they were being hurried forward the enemy made a fierce attack on the flank. A desperate struggle ensued, in which Bayard, with a small troop of faithful followers, resisted for a long time the whole strength of the allied army, and thus secured the retreat of the French, who were now approaching Ivrea, where they would be in safety. But when the van had already reached this haven, and Bayard was making a last charge to protect the rear, he was suddenly struck by a musket shot, which fractured his spine.

He at once felt that the wound was mortal, and that his last hour had come; but even in face of the great King of Terrors his presence of mind never deserted him. Ordering his companions to retire, and continue to protect the rear of the army, he caused himself to be placed at the foot of a tree, with his face still turned to the enemy, before whom he had never fled; and in this position he calmly prepared himself for death. The pursuing army now approached, and the leaders were dismayed to see him whom all looked upon as the noblest ornament of the Order of Chivalry in this position. A tent and bed were immediately brought, in which the dying hero was placed with careful hands, and he was tended with respectful sympathy by those against whom he had been so recently fighting. The Duke of Bourbon, hearing the sad news, rode up, and,

weeping to see his old friend and former companion in arms wounded to death, addressed to him words of sorrowful pity; but Bayard, rallying his failing strength, replied, "I, who die happily as a knight and a patriot should, desire not your compassion, which ought rather be bestowed on yourself, who have the misfortune to be waging war against your friends, your country, and your King." He then begged to be left alone, and a guard having been stationed near the tent to protect him from intrusion, he remained attended only by his faithful servant, and devoted himself to prayer. Using the crosshilt of his sword as a crucifix, he solemnly kissed it, and prayed, "My God, who has promised a refuge in Thy mercy to the greatest sinners, I place all my trust in Thee, and all my hope in Thy salvation;" and thus solemnly recommending his soul to his Creator, he breathed his last, deeply lamented by friend and foe.

The French army had by this time succeeded in reaching Mount St. Bernard, to the foot of which they had been pursued, and the Imperial Generals having caused solemn masses to be performed for him, sent the remains of the dead hero into France. On the arrival of the sad cortège in Dauphiné, it was escorted by the entire population of the places through which it passed with profound mourning till they reached Grenoble, Bayard's native town and his final resting-place, where his body was laid, amid the tears and blessings of a sorrowing nation.

Thus died, on the 30th of April, 1524, at the age of forty-eight, one of the noblest heroes of Chivalry, and his death was worthy of a life spent in great and unselfish devotion to the service of his country and his King. His loss was felt as a national one to France, for, ever foremost in battle, he had fought for her in a hundred fights; his dashing gallantry made him the idol of the soldiers; his kindly disposition, generous to a fault, endeared him to the poor and distressed; while his high principles of knightly duty made him the model and example of all who sought to follow the noble calling of Chivalry throughout the world.

The bare record of his life given in the preceding pages appears to us, separated as we are by three centuries, and with only the cold and imperfect light of history to guide us, to be but a long series of campaigns and battles. But it has been well said, "Happy is the nation or individual that has no history"; and we can easily believe that the best and happiest years of his life were those spent in uneventful peace and quietude at his own home, and among his own people, by whom he was so well beloved.

But of these all too brief periods we have scanty information, and it is only when he is once more called by the stern behest of duty to act his part with the nobles of the earth in the great national drama that was being enacted, that we see his noble presence re-appear through the dim light of that far-off scene, and once

more behold him doing true and manly work in the world's great battlefield.

But it is not Bayard's courage and gallantry, conspicuous as they always were, which have earned his right to be looked upon as the model of a mightier time. It was because there was in him a pure and lofty soul imprinting all his actions with the mark of true nobility; so that, bred up as he was from boyhood in the service of arms, which at this time was of all others the least likely to encourage those noble feelings of humanity and pity which he ever displayed, his most earnest endeavour was to mitigate the horrors and suffering caused by war, and to protect the helpless and distressed from lawless violence. Although his services to the State were greater than those of any other man of his time, they never obtained their fair recognition from any of the three Kings of France whom he served; yet when he received the most brilliant offers from the Pope, and at another period from King Henry VIII., both of whom appreciated him better than his own Sovereign, he never for one moment set his own personal interest in the scale with his duty to his country.

Often pressed to use unfair means to gain an advantage over an opponent, his manly and open nature recoiled with horror from such a course; and though for many years the official receiver of the immense revenues of Dauphiné, as Lieutenant-General of the province, so faithful was he to his trust that he gained no pecuniary advantage from the appointment, and not-

withstanding the large sums he acquired as his share of the booty captured in the different expeditions, he died without having added much to his patrimony, as almost all his income had been spent in generous gifts to others. In a word, he steadfastly followed all those virtues which we sum up in the name Duty, and he rightly thought that no momentary gain or pleasure to himself could ever compensate for a breach of the highest laws of manhood. It is these traits of character, consistently followed throughout his life, which make him a hero indeed, and an example for a later age, when progress and civilisation seem to mean but the deification of those selfish ends of mere personal gain to the detriment of every noble principle and ideal.

INTERLUDE.

Que faire et que penser ?—Nier, douter ou croire ?
Carrefour ténébreux ! triple route ! nuit noire !
Le plus sage s'assied sous l'arbre du chemin,
Disant tout bas : "J'irai, Seigneur, où tu m'envoies."
Il espère ; et, de loin, dan le trois sombres voies,
Il écoute, pensif, marcher le gerne humain !

VICTOR HUGO.

CHAPTER VII.

INTERLUDE.

THE period between the death of Bayard in 1524 and the birth of Sidney in 1554 shows a rapid advance in the transition from the middle ages to modern times, a transition which is marked by three great events: the discovery of the New World, the Reformation in religion, and the substitution of a constitutional government over a free people for the authority of a number of feudal lords over their dependants.

This was the age of that splendid revival of literature and of the arts known as the Renaissance, which caused not only a renewed interest in the ancient classical learning, but produced most of the great original works of the literature and art of modern times. The darkness and ignorance which had prevailed in Europe for so many centuries was first partially removed in Italy, where the Greek fugitives came after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, and brought with them a knowledge of, and interest in, the great classical

masterpieces which soon spread among the more enlightened spirits of the age. The result of this was a determined revolt in the human mind against the trammels which the Church had so long imposed upon it, and which was destined to revolutionise in turn the spheres of religion, learning, and politics, with that wonderful action and reaction which the struggle for liberty in each branch had upon the others.

In the domain of literature, its effect in Italy, the cradle of modern European civilisation, was speedily manifested in the writings of Ariosto, and the renewed study of those of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio; while in art it produced the consummate grace and dignity of the paintings of Leonardo and Raffaelle, and reached the sublime in the sister arts of sculpture and architecture, in the works of those masters whose names are registered in the immortal roll of fame.

From Italy this noble revival was soon, by the invention of printing, carried into the other countries of Europe which the culture of Chivalry had prepared for its approach, and in the time of Bayard its appearance in France was marked by the erection of the exquisite Palais de Justice at Rouen, the Hôtel de Cluni in Paris, and many other buildings of great beauty. England, owing to its insular position, was later in feeling the influence of the Renaissance, which, as we shall see, only began to appear in the time of Sidney, before which a native literature can hardly be said to have existed.

A second remarkable effect of the awakening of human intelligence and fresh research into the foundations of the faith was the Reformation, which, though arising in many different places at very different periods, may be dated from about the year 1520, when Luther publicly burned the Pope's bull of excommunication at Wittenberg, and thus formally separated himself from the Roman Church. The new teaching quickly spread through Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands; but England, after the horrors of Mary's reign became, under Elizabeth, completely estranged from the papal fold, and was the first country that, as a nation, formally embraced the reformed faith.

It is difficult for us now to realise the isolation in which the Protestantism of England involved her at this time, and the antagonism in which it placed her to almost every other country in Europe. Excommunicated by the Pope, her land given to the first invader, her subjects absolved from their allegiance, and her life at the mercy of any fanatic who wished to gain an easy entrance to heaven, Elizabeth stood alone, protected only by the loyalty of her people; and to the eternal honour of the Catholics be it said, that with but few exceptions they placed patriotism before party, and, in the face of the anathemas of their Church, gallantly stood by their Queen against every foe.

Another most important event marking this age was the invention of the compass, and through it the discovery of the New World of America and the West

Indies. For centuries the Mediterranean had been considered to be, as its name implies, the world's great centre, and all the mighty nations of ancient days—Israel, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Carthage—were washed by its tideless sea, and even at the period we speak of, the greatest maritime powers of the time, Spain and the Italian States, were situated around it. But a new era was approaching, in which Nature was to reveal an unknown and mighty Empire, as yet untrodden by any of the European race, and to carry the tide of civilisation and commerce from East to West, to the land of the setting sun. In 1492 Columbus set sail with his little squadron of three ships, the largest of which was under one hundred tons burthen, and after a tempestuous voyage, during which he braved all the perils of navigation through unknown seas, and mutiny of his crew, he at length discovered the Bahamas and several other important islands. A few years later, while making a third voyage, he reached the American continent, and annexed all these valuable possessions for the Spaniards, by whom they were colonised, and to whom they were a source of immense wealth through the discovery of gold and other precious products. England was not altogether without participation in these great maritime discoveries, for in 1497 Sebastian Cabot, a native of Bristol, sailed round the northern coast of Labrador to Hudson's Bay, in the attempt to find a north-west passage to India; but it was not till long afterwards, upon the outbreak of the war with the Spaniards, that

their weak and wealthy settlements in the West became of such great interest to the hardy British sailors, who were there able to attack the enemy with great profit to themselves.

These were the principal events which marked the time immediately preceding the birth of Sidney; and if we endeavour to picture to ourselves the position of England in the middle of the sixteenth century, we shall see how few signs there were of the future greatness of an empire which now covers nearly one-fourth of the earth's surface.

Spain was at this period the most powerful nation in Europe, and exercised more or less powerful sway over Germany, Holland, Belgium, and the principal Italian States, besides her West Indian possessions, and as she was the most ardent supporter of the papal power, was necessarily in direct antagonism to England. France was also hostile to the Reformation, and only maintained an uncertain alliance with Elizabeth through fear of the immense power of her Spanish rival. Scotland was still a separate kingdom, and Ireland a prey to continual anarchy and rebellion. We will thus see that England was only beginning to take her place as a first-rate power, and that her position as the head of the Reformation involved an opposition to the other great powers that might have been disastrous but for the heroic spirit of the nation, which, when the long-threatened blow at length descended in the "Invincible Armada," enabled them to perform such deeds of valour and heroism as dashed the haughty power of Spain from shore to shore.

We shall see in the following pages how much our country owes to that spirit of enterprise and adventure inculcated by Chivalry, a spirit which was encouraged by the extraordinary tales of discovery in the West, and by the heroic struggle of a weak nation against the apparently invincible might of the greatest power in Europe. It was this spirit of adventure which sent such men as Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Martin Frobisher, and other gallant knights of the time, to sail far over the seas in search of the great unknown lands, and made them ready to meet whatever fortune befell, as true knights should. It was the deeds of men such as these which have made the British Empire what it is, and in every corner of the globe heroes like them have been found who have been ready to do and die for England, home, and duty.

That spirit of fearless enterprise and daring which has always characterised the British nation, was afterwards destined to win for her America, India, and Australia, and has made her strong to hold them against all the world but her own children; and it was at this time displayed in many a weary voyage over unknown and tempestuous seas never before crossed by man, and in many a daring attack upon the haughty Spaniards' possessions, when to fail meant a horrible death by torture thousands of miles away from friends and succour.

Such was the Chivalry of the sixteenth century. The days of knights-errant and lonely quests were fast passing away, but the true knight had still noble deeds

to perform in sailing over the trackless seas, and laying new empires open for the ever-increasing tide of humanity.

At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, the military and naval resources of the country were inconsiderable, the exchequer was encumbered with debts, and her territory was supposed by the European powers to be an easy prey to the strongest, and was only protected from invasion by the mutual jealousy and distrust of Spain and France, neither of which would allow the other to seize the prize. This precarious position is the key to the apparently over-cautious policy of the first half of the reign, when the uncertainty as to the loyalty of a large section of the nation compelled the Government to abstain from all direct interference in foreign politics; and the result of this policy was to give the country a long period of uninterrupted peace and prosperity, during which her resources were carefully husbanded for the inevitable struggle which could be postponed but not avoided. For a long time before the coming of the Armada, war between England and Spain had been indirectly carried on at sea, where the daring adventurers attacked the richly-laden Spanish galleons on their return from the Indies, and captured immense booty; and the hardy British sailors, believing themselves to be the champions of faith and freedom, waged determined war in face of tremendous odds, and thus became inured to deeds of gallantry and daring, which in the end made their country supreme mistress of the sea, and gave her a dominion which has been retained ever since.

Thus Sir Francis Drake sailed from Plymouth in 1577, in his little ship, "the Pelican," of only one hundred and twenty tons, for South America, and attacked the Spanish settlements there, and after braving the perils of sea and land, returned home by the Cape of Good Hope, richly laden, having gained the additional honour of being the first Englishman who had sailed round the globe. Again, in 1585, with a small squadron, he attacked Vigo, spreading dismay among the Spaniards, who were too astonished at his temerity to defend themselves. Sailing thence to their settlements in the West Indies, he took San Domingo and Carthagena by assault, and captured great booty. Returning by Virginia, he found the remains of a colony which had been placed there by Sir Walter Raleigh some years before, and so unsuccessful was this first attempt at colonisation that the settlers were glad to abandon it, and return home with him. These expeditions, from the fortunes made by the adventurers, and their report of the weakness of the enemy, did more than any official encouragement could to increase the maritime strength of the country; and they were the first of those blows which shook the Spaniards' confidence in themselves, and the world's belief in their invincibility. In this way was begun the foundation of the maritime greatness of Britain, which was completed when, in 1588, the "Invincible Armada" of one hundred and fifty ships and thirty thousand soldiers and sailors composed of the flower of Spanish chivalry, sailed in

the spring, and there returned in the autumn only the shattered wrecks of fifty-four vessels, with their loads of worn and starving men, most of whom had escaped the British guns and the wild Northern seas only to die at home, and of whom barely two hundred survived.

In the history of these early struggles we can see through every page the mark of the splendid legacy bequeathed to our country by the great Order of Chivalry; that spirit of individual enterprise and daring which was the surest mark of the true knight—a spirit which was destined to win for Britain an empire in every part of the world. India was won by the East India Company of merchants, who left home and country to seek their fortunes in the land of the rising sun; America, by those early settlers who sought in that far-off land for liberty—which they could not find at home—to worship God in their own way; and that great empire in Oceana has been peopled by a hardy band who left their homes to found another Britain in the South.

The Elizabethan age in literature has been most justly called the most glorious in the annals of Britain. Before that time a national literature hardly existed, and it is this fact which explains the apparent erudition of the educated women of the time, such as Queen Elizabeth and Lady Jane Grey, whose acquaintance with Greek and Latin astonishes us moderns; but in reality they were no more learned than a well-educated woman of the present day, whose knowledge of the masterpieces of

her own language more than compensates for ignorance of the classics, which were at that time the only resource. It was this age which gave to Britain those names of world-wide and immortal fame—Shakspere, king of poets and dramatists; Bacon, prince of philosophers; Spenser, sweetest of poets; and Hooker, whose prose works may still be read with pleasure and delight.

THE TOWER OF LONDON.

Let us soar away for a moment on the wings of fancy, and picture to ourselves some of the noble figures which might be seen gathered around their sovereign in those far-off days. Elizabeth was, with all her faults, every inch a Queen, and, in whatever way we look at her, the

worthy ruler of a noble people; and though she has now been lying for nearly three hundred years in Henry VIII.'s Chapel, her memory is still dear to the hearts of a free nation. Around her was that distinguished group which the last of the bards saw from the top of Snowdon encircling the virgin Queen.

> "Many a baron bold,
> And gorgeous dames and statesmen old,
> In bearded majesty."

There was Cecil, Lord Burleigh, the tried and true; Sir Francis Walsingham, the dexterous diplomatist; Lord Oxford, the impetuous; Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, the graceful and courteous; Lord Essex, the ornament of court and camp, the munificent patron of genius, whom great virtues, great courage, great talents, the favour of his sovereign, the love of his countrymen, all that seemed to ensure a happy and glorious life, led to an early and ignominious death; Sir Walter Raleigh, the soldier, sailor, scholar, courtier, orator, poet, historian, philosopher, whom we picture to ourselves sometimes relieving the Queen's guard, sometimes giving chase to a Spanish galleon, then answering the chiefs of the country party in the House of Commons, then again murmuring one of his sweet love-songs too near the ears of her Highness's maids of honour, and soon after pouring over the Talmud or collating Polybius or Livy,—those two incomparable men, Shakspere and Bacon, the prince of poets and prince of philosophers, who have made the Elizabethan age a more glorious and important era in

the history of the human mind than the age of Pericles, of Augustus, or of Leo; and, lastly, the all-accomplished Sidney, whose chief glory it was to represent every phase of the noblest life of the time. Himself a writer of truth and genius, the less fortunate literary men of merit found in him a generous patron; the treasures of the New World, and the great Empire to be won there for his country, excited his warmest attention, and in undying confidence in the greatness of Britain, and in stern determination to carry on the battle for truth and freedom to glorious victory, he gave his life on the field of Zutphen.

It is by thus representing the new life of England in the field of literature, in the New World enterprise and discovery, in the active battle against the enemies of his country, and, above all, in that pure and magnanimous spirit which ever marked him as a true descendant of the heroic knights, that he becomes so fitting an example of the highest Chivalry of an age renowned in the annals of our country for its lofty achievements and noble deeds.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY,

A Hero of England.

One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward ;
Never doubted clouds would break ;
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph ;
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

Browning.

CHAPTER VIII.

AS SCHOLAR AND STUDENT.

IN a sweet Kentish valley, in sight of the flowing Medway, Philip Sidney was born on 29th November, 1554, at the family mansion of Penshurst. It was the reign of Mary the unfortunate, and the martyrs' fires had already begun to burn while he was lisping his mother tongue and learning the first secrets of existence; but although his family were in no way involved in the religious troubles of the time, his early years were clouded by the tragic fate of those near and dear. The Sidneys were a knightly race, tracing back their descent for four hundred years, ever loyal to their sovereign; but by the mother's side he was closely related to the Dudleys, she being the daughter of the Duke of Northumberland, who, with his son Guildford Dudley, had been beheaded about a year before our hero's birth for the attempt to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne.

Thus his youth was clouded by family misfortunes which cast a gloom over his home—and this may have been the cause of that serious demeanour and precocious wisdom which characterised him at an early age—and were the first lessons taught by that great schoolmistress, Sorrow.

For ten years he lived quietly at Penshurst, rambling through the leafy woods, and over "the pleasant lower land that to the river bends" of which Ben Jonson writes; and something of the sadness which had fallen upon the country seems to have penetrated even into this sheltered retreat.

In November, 1564, he was entered, at the same time as his lifelong friend Fulke Greville, as a scholar at Shrewsbury, which at this time is said to have been "the largest school in all England for the education of youth, Thomas Ashton the first schoolmaster of which being a person of great worth and integrity."

Here he was near his father, Sir Henry Sidney, who, as Lord President of Wales, lived in state at Ludlow Castle, about thirty miles distant on the southern border of Shropshire.

He was an apt pupil, and as Fulke Greville writes, "Of his youth I will report no other wonder than this, that though I lived with him, and knew him from a child, yet I never knew him other than a man with such staidness of mind, lovely and familiar gravity, as carried grace and reverence above greater years, his talk ever of knowledge, and his very play tending to enrich his mind, so as even his teachers found in him something to observe and learn above that which they had usually read or taught; which eminence by nature and industry made his worthy father style Sir Philip in my hearing, though I unseen, *Lumen familiæ suæ*."

Sir Henry Sidney's duties prevented him from seeing much of his son during these earlier years, but he endeavoured to make up for his absence by letters of fatherly advice, which for sound wisdom and good sense have never been surpassed. Thus he says:—

"Be courteous of gesture and affable to all men, with diversity of reverence according to the dignity of the person, there is nothing that winneth so much with so little cost; use moderate diet, so as after your meal you may find your wit fresher and not duller, and your body more lively and not more heavy. Seldom drink wine, and yet sometimes do, lest being enforced to drink upon the sudden you should find yourself enflamed; use exercise of body, yet such as is without peril of your bones, it will increase your force and enlarge your health. Delight to be cleanly as well in all parts of your body as in your garments, it shall make you grateful in each company and otherwise loathsome. Give yourself to be merry, for you degenerate from your father if you find not yourself most able in wit and body to do anything when you be most merry, and let your mirth be ever void of all scurrility and biting words to any man, for a wound given by a word is oftentimes harder to be cured than that which is given with the sword. Be you rather a hearer and learner of other men's talk than a beginner and procurer of speech. If you hear a wise sentence or an apt phrase, commit it to your memory with respect of the circumstance when you shall speak it. Let never oath be heard to come out of your mouth, nor word of ribaldry. Be modest in each assembly, and rather be rebuked of light fellows for maidenlike shamefacedness than of your sad friends for pert boldness. Think upon every word that you will speak before you utter it, and remember how nature hath ramparted up, as it were, the tongue with teeth, lips, yea, and hair without the lips, and all betokening reins or bridles for the loose use of that member. Above all things tell no untruth, no, not in trifles, the custom of it is naughty."

Philip Sidney remained at Shrewsbury school till the middle of 1568, when he left it to enter Christ Church, Oxford, where for three years he diligently studied the classics, history, and philosophy, for which the University was then famous, and formed several life-long friendships; but he was compelled to leave without taking a degree, owing to the Colleges being closed on account of a terrible plague which broke out in the City.

A few years' travel on the Continent was at this time considered an essential part of every gentleman's education, and accordingly, in May, 1572, when eighteen years of age, he left England for a tour through Europe, and made his first stop at Paris, where he arrived at an eventful moment.

The wars which had for years been waged in France between the Duke of Guise's party and the Huguenots were apparently ended, and peace was to be cemented by the marriage of the Protestant leader, Henry of Navarre, to Margaret, sister of King Charles the Ninth.

Most of the prominent Huguenots, including the Admiral Coligni, the Prince of Condé, and Count Louis of Nassau, had come to Paris to be present at the ceremony; and in that gay city of pleasure all was joy and merriment after long years of strife.

Sidney's introduction to Sir Francis Walsingham, the British Ambassador, at once admitted him to the inner circle of the French Court, and he was appointed by the King Gentleman-in-ordinary to the Bedchamber, and became acquainted with most of the leaders of both parties in the State.

On the 18th August the marriage was celebrated in the Cathedral of Notre Dame with stately pomp and ceremony, and the next five days were given up to rejoicing, with daily jousts, dances, and triumphal shows, till the sun set on the eve of the Feast of St. Bartholomew.

That night the whole city seemed wrapped in peaceful slumber, when suddenly, at two in the morning, the palace bell pealed a sudden alarm which echoed through the silent streets. In an instant lights were placed in every window, soldiers emerged from hitherto dark corners, and thousands of men, armed and disguised, with the mark of the cross fastened to their sleeves, streamed out of the houses and joined in the cry, "For God and the King!" All was confusion, and the shouts of the murderers and cries of the helpless Huguenots were mingled in the midnight air. For days the butchery continued, while the wretched King stood at his palace window encouraging the assassins with the cry of "Kill, kill!" The streets flowed with blood, and in Paris and the provinces over a hundred thousand Huguenots were slaughtered.

During all this time Sidney was in comparative security at the Ambassador's house, but he had seen enough of France, and so, as soon as it was safe, he hastily proceeded through Lorraine to Strasburg, and thence past Heidelberg to Frankfort.

Here he met Hubert Languet, one of the prominent reformers, with whom, though much older than himself,

he formed a warm friendship which lasted through life. To this friend more than to any other he owed the high ideal which he ever kept before him, and which the former did everything in his power to encourage. It is of him that Sidney writes in his "Arcadia"—

> "For clerkly reed and hating what is naught,
> For faithful heart, clean hands, and mouth as true,
> With his sweet skill my skilless youth he drew
> To have a feeling taste of Him that sits
> Beyond the heavens, far more beyond our wits."

After remaining some time together at Frankfort, the two friends left it early in the summer of 1573 for Vienna, where they parted, and Sidney continued his journey into Italy.

In this land of culture and of art he spent his time in studying the useful arts and sciences at the fountain-head of learning, and in making himself acquainted with the state of political affairs in Europe, a knowledge of which was eminently necessary for his future career. Here also he became acquainted with many of the greatest men of the time, including Paul Veronese, Titian, and Tintoretto, and returned home early in June, 1575, after an absence of three years.

He reached England just in time to join in a royal progress the Queen was making through the country, and her first visit was to Kenilworth Castle, the seat of Sidney's uncle, the Earl of Leicester, who had determined to give her such a reception as subject had never before given to sovereign. Sidney, fresh from

his travels, and being introduced to Court-life by his uncle, the Queen's chief favourite, entered heartily into all the plans for her entertainment during her stay at Kenilworth, and each day vied with the other in gorgeous pageants and spectacles. At the termination of the royal visit he returned to London, where he took up his position at Court, and was in constant attendance upon the Queen, and rapidly gained the esteem of the noblest of those who surrounded the person of their sovereign.

But his active spirit was ever on the look-out for some useful employment, and in the autumn of 1576 he got his initiation into diplomacy, being appointed Ambassador-Extraordinary from the Queen to Rudolf II., the new Emperor of Germany, to congratulate him on his election to the Empire. He also, at his own request, obtained leave to endeavour to carry out his pet scheme of forming a league of the Protestant princes of Germany, for the protection of liberty of religious worship, and the resistance of the tyranny of Spain. Leaving England in February, 1577, he journeyed in state with his retinue to Prague, where the Emperor was then residing. Maximilian, the late Emperor, though a Catholic, allowed full liberty of religious worship throughout his dominions, and had steadily resisted the usurpation of Spain; but the new Emperor, who had been educated in that country, had no sooner been elected than the persecution of the reformers began. Sidney had therefore been instructed to endeavour to induce him to follow in his father's footsteps, and this

he did with great boldness, pointing out in the Queen's name the danger which, in the alliance between the Pope and the King of Spain for the spiritual and temporal dominion of the world, menaced the freedom of the German States, and that the only way to resist this was for the latter "to associate by an uniform bond of conscience for the protection of Liberty and Religion."

But the Emperor was not to be won over by his reasoning, and replied haughtily, thanking the Queen for her good wishes, but that as to his policy, God, who was the protector of the Empire, would provide him with fit counsel for its government; and so the audience ended, Sidney finding there was nothing to be gained through him.

He had also been commissioned to visit Louis and Casimir, the sons of the Elector Palatine, who had lately died, to convey to them the Queen's message of condolence, and to counsel them to unite in defence of the common faith, Louis being a Lutheran and Casimir a Calvinist, and through their differences disputes having arisen between the two sections of the Reformed Church.

Sidney therefore left Prague, and went to Heidelberg to see the Elector Louis, and impressed upon him, as he had already done upon Prince Casimir, the necessity for all to join together in these critical times in defence of their religion and liberty. After a satisfactory interview with the Elector, he then went on to visit some of the most important of the other Protestant German princes,

to urge upon them, in the Queen's name, the necessity for union and concord; but on the whole he found the result of this part of his mission very discouraging, these princes having no care but to make the best of the distressed state of their country for their own private advantage.

He was now about to return home, having fulfilled the terms of his commission, when he received a letter from the Queen, directing him to proceed to Flanders to present Her Majesty's congratulations to the Prince of Orange upon the birth of his son. The history of the gallant struggle of the Dutch Republic, under the immortal William the Silent, against the oppression of Spain, backed up by all the horrors of the Inquisition, is so closely connected with the history of England at this period, and with it the life of Sidney, that it is necessary to explain the position of affairs there at the time of his visit. The wealthy and independent merchants of Flanders had, at an early period, obtained political privileges which were unknown in the rest of Europe, and had, after a hard struggle, won a constitutional government, and the right of electing representatives to a general assembly of the States, without the sanction of which the Duke had no power to levy taxes or otherwise exercise any arbitrary power. When, however, the Kings of Spain, who had absolute authority in their own dominions, acquired the sovereignty of the Netherlands, they at once began a system of silent but gradual encroachment on their liberties, which was with equal steadiness resisted by this free and gallant people.

Thus matters stood at the accession of Philip II. to the crown of Spain, when matters became further complicated by the progress which the principles of the Reformation made among the people of the Netherlands, and Philip II., the most fanatical of bigots and most absolute of monarchs, determined to crush at the same time their political freedom and heretical opinions, and to attain these ends he did not hesitate to commit the most horrible barbarity upon a peaceful and unoffending country which history has ever recorded. A large army was sent to the Netherlands, under one of the most skilful and most ruthless generals; martial law was proclaimed throughout the country, and blood-councils were established before which thousands of helpless and unoffending victims were dragged, and condemned to wholesale slaughter. But the brave and hardy Hollanders were not thus to be crushed, and fortunately for them they found a leader who, for courageous and unselfish patriotism, has never been surpassed, and whom the direst failure and defeat never seemed to discourage—William, Prince of Orange. Town after town was besieged by the Spaniards, and defended by the inhabitants with unflinching heroism—men, women, and children banding themselves together in defence of their homes and religion, and fighting with undaunted courage against the most renowned soldiers in Europe; and when at length, starved out or taken by assault, one city after another was given up to ruthless massacre, the undaunted patriots raised the standard of liberty in

another, and so for years the fight went on. At one time so hard pressed that they were compelled to break down their dykes and let the sea and rivers cover their fields and homes rather than give the cruel Spaniard a foot of ground to stand upon, this brave little people fought a battle in which the whole world and especially England was concerned, for it was the war of liberty and religion against tyranny and superstition in which Britain had soon to join.

The Prince of Orange was in the midst of this great warfare when Sidney visited him and found him in council with the leading patriots, a citizen prince among his fellow-citizens, and yet, though more plainly dressed than any, showing that he was still every inch a prince; and the Englishman was filled with admiration for the gallant leader of a gallant people, and his whole soul burned with longing to join in the great struggle on behalf of the sacred principles for which they were fighting—a struggle which, notwithstanding the death of their noble leader eight years after by the hands of an assassin employed by the King of Spain, at length ended in glorious victory.

The interview caused mutual admiration and esteem between the two men, and the Prince afterwards informed Queen Elizabeth, that he considered her Ambassador would become one of the greatest statesmen of his age.

With his customary desire to become personally acquainted with the leaders of all parties, Sidney took

advantage of his proximity to pay a formal visit to the new Spanish Governor-General of the Provinces, the famous Don John of Austria, who had inflicted such an overwhelming defeat upon the Turks at the battle of Lepanto, and had now come resolved to crush the rebels. He received the British Ambassador with affability; but as he was suspected of designing an attack upon England, Sidney did not waste much show of friendship on him.

His work being now completed, he left Flanders, and arrived in England by the middle of June, having gained the friendship and goodwill of all whom he met, and being highly commended for the satisfactory manner in which he had discharged his duties.

CHAPTER IX.

AS COURTIER AND STATESMAN.

THE embassy which Sidney had so successfully conducted, as related in the last chapter, marks the decisive step from youth to manhood, and he now took his place among the most promising men of Elizabeth's Court. He was just twenty-two years old, but with a mind and appearance far beyond his age, and he is described as being above the middle height, with an exceedingly graceful and dignified carriage, and a courtly yet modest demeanour, "not only of an excellent wit, but extremely beautiful of face, with handsome delicately chiselled features, smooth fair cheeks, a fair moustache, blue eyes, and a mass of amber-coloured hair." His nature had all the daring and romance of the knight-errant, with the calm wisdom of the philosopher and statesman, and his open and winning manner made him liked and respected by all.

He had been steadily growing in favour at Court, and at this time all his influence there was necessary on

behalf of his father, who, as Lord Deputy of Ireland, had by his fair and impartial government made many enemies among the Irish nobles, who considered they should be exempted from taxation, which should only be levied from the impoverished peasantry; and as Sir Henry Sidney had demanded more money to carry on the work of pacification, the Queen, whose great fault was excessive economy, was only too ready to listen to complaints against his administration. To counteract this, and defend his father in his absence, Philip Sidney drew out an elaborate statement of the position of Irish affairs and the wisdom of the Lord Deputy's rule, showing that a lenient and vacillating policy would not "prevail in minds so possessed as the Irish with a natural inconstancy, with a revengeful hate to all English as their only conquerors, and that even when left to themselves, no nation under the sun lived more tyrannously than they do over each other." This statement, which was described by an eminent authority as "the most excellent discourse he had ever read," produced a favourable effect upon the Queen, who found herself compelled by the stern logic of facts to support Sir Henry Sidney's firm administration.

For the next two years Philip Sidney remained in constant attendance at the Court, exerting his influence in a quiet and unostentatious way in favour of any deserving object that came under his notice; but in spite of his wide popularity he soon tired of this unreal life, and longed to engage in the active conflict for truth and

liberty which was being waged in the Netherlands. His thoughts naturally found vent in poetry :—

> "Well was I while under shade,
> Oaten reeds me music made,
> Striving with my mates in song,
> Mixing mirth our songs among.
> Greater was the shepherd's treasure,
> Than this false, fine, courtly pleasure."

He bitterly complained of the cautious policy of the Queen and her advisers, who, for fear of giving offence to Spain, avoided taking any steps towards forming a union with the other Protestant States for mutual protection against Spanish and Papal tyranny ; and but for the state of his father's affairs, which required his constant presence at Court, and the society of his two bosom friends, Edmund Dyer and Fulke Greville, he would, notwithstanding the Queen's disapproval, have joined William the Silent's army, or gone out in command of one of the numerous expeditions in search of new countries, the discoveries of which were then creating such intense excitement in Europe.

But there was a still stronger tie to bind him to the Court, and this was his gradually increasing regard for Penelope Devereux, sister of the young and ill-fated Earl of Essex, a beautiful girl of seventeen, for whom he had a warm affection, which seems to have been reciprocated by her; but owing to her youth, and his occupation in other important affairs, matters at this time did not advance any further between them, and he often afterwards bitterly repented of having let slip this golden

opportunity of winning the object of his affections. In all the manly sports and exercises in which he was so proficient he looked to her approval as the highest reward, and writes of himself:—

"Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent by that sweet enemy France,
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,
Townsfolk my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from theirs who did excel in this,
Think nature me a man of arms did make.
How far they shoot awry! the true cause is,
Stella looked on, and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race."

Throughout his Court life he ever kept the object before him of using his influence for worthy objects, and never for his own personal advancement; and in many instances he is found interceding with his Sovereign on behalf of loyal subjects in difficulty or disgrace, and thus using on their behalf means which would have been employed by other courtiers for their own selfish ends. But in order to succeed as a Court favourite, it was necessary to flatter the Queen in the most barefaced manner, and to support all her whims and caprices, however injurious they might be to the State; and to a man of Sidney's open, straightforward character, such a course was utterly impossible.

He was now to be put to a severe test in being compelled to choose between his own advancement and the good of his country, for the Queen was contemplating a marriage with the Duke of Anjou, brother of the King of France. Her most faithful advisers easily discerned that an alliance with a Prince whose interests were directly opposed to those of England, and who, on account of his principles and religion, was an object of extreme dislike to the nation, would be most unwise; and to Sidney as the most able, and at the same time most popular of the party, was deputed the difficult task of openly remonstrating with his Sovereign on this subject. That such a task, in this age of absolute monarchy, was not only of extreme delicacy but also of considerable danger, is seen from the fact that the author and printer of a pamphlet directed against the proposed marriage had been condemned to have their right hands cut off, a sentence which was duly carried out.

But Sidney was not to be deterred from his duty by any feeling of personal risk, and in a plain but respectful address to the Queen he pointed out the objections to the alliance on which she had set her heart. She was, as may be imagined, exceedingly offended at his boldness in presuming to dictate to her on the subject; and his friends, fearing he would be exiled from the country, advised him to retire from Court for a time, which he did by going to reside at Wilton with his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, to whom he was

deeply attached, and with whom, notwithstanding his loss of favour, he spent many happy months occupied in study and literary works.

After the expiration of eight months, however, he received an intimation of the Queen's willingness to restore him to favour, on condition that he did not persist in his useless opposition to the French marriage; and being strongly advised by his friends to return to public life, where he had better opportunities of using his great talents for the nation's benefit, he decided to do so. But before he returned to Court, he was destined to meet with the great sorrow of his life in the marriage of Penelope Devereux, her friends having taken advantage of his absence in disgrace to arrange for her betrothal against her own inclination to Lord Rich, a wealthy but worthless nobleman. Sidney, in his first bitter grief and disappointment, seems to have judged her ready compliance with her friends' wishes too harshly, and wrote the dirge beginning—

Ring out your bells, let mourning shows be spread,
For love is dead!
All love is dead, infected
With plague of deep disdain;
Worth, as nought worth, rejected,
And faith fair scorn doth gain.
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female frenzy,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

He appears to have soon discovered the true facts of the case, which were that "she, being in the power of her friends, was married against her will to one against whom she did protest at the very solemnity and ever after, between whom from the first day there ensued continual discord." Such a trouble as this was likely to sour and embitter the noblest nature, and Sidney, in his anger against a cruel fate, for some time allowed himself to stoop to the unworthy practice of still continuing to pay his addresses, and to pour out his love in passionate sonnets to her under the name of Stella. Of this one blot in his noble record he soon bitterly repented, and in his poem of "Astrophel and Stella," which we shall hereafter consider, he shows the hard struggle and final victory over self and his lower nature, and the stern lesson of self-denial and renunciation which this struggle taught him—a lesson which was to bear abundant fruit in a noble life and a heroic death.

He wisely determined to seek the only true solace for such a sorrow by plunging into the thick of active life, and endeavouring in the distraction of work and duty to forget his own personal troubles. Early in 1581 he was elected to a seat in the House of Commons, and worked actively on committees appointed to take measures for the defence of the country and the protection of the Queen against seditious plots. In April, the Duke of Bourbon, accompanied by a retinue of French nobles, came over as delegate on behalf of the Duke of Anjou to arrange the terms of his marriage

contract with the Queen; and in order to impress them with the importance of the occasion, and show their respect and loyalty towards their Sovereign, it was decided by the English nobles to hold a splendid tournament, which would afford an opportunity for the display of the prowess and valour of the most eminent knights of the time. The design of the tournament was allegorical; a small but gorgeously decorated fortress having been erected in the tilt-yard at Whitehall, and this was supposed to be the abode of Elizabeth as the Queen of Beauty, and was to be attacked by the four chosen champions, Lord Arundel, Lord Windsor, Philip Sidney, and Fulke Greville, who were to challenge all comers to joust with them for the favour of the sovereign of the tourney.

On the morning of the tournament the four challengers took up their positions opposite the Fortress of Beauty, splendidly arrayed, and with a large suite of attendants. On the one side was Lord Arundel, and on the other Fulke Greville, while Lord Windsor and Philip Sidney occupied the middle, the latter being dressed in a magnificent suit of blue and gilt armour, and mounted on a splendid charger, while in his train were thirty gentlemen and yeomen and four trumpeters, all arrayed in magnificent costumes, with four spare horses led by pages.

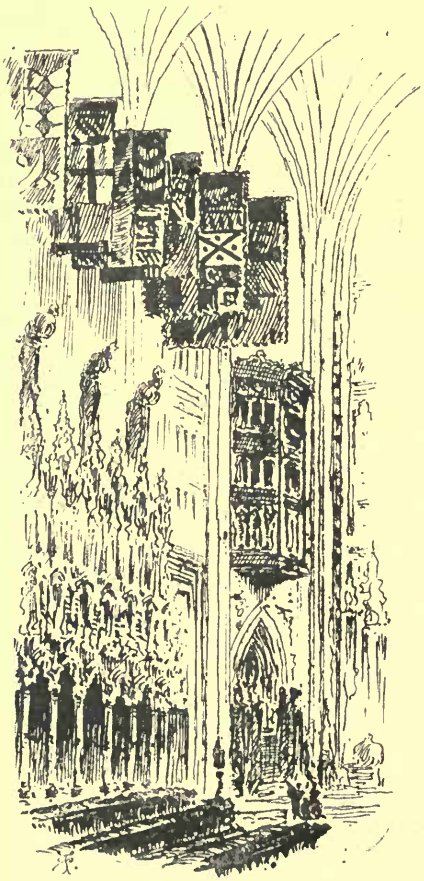
His reputation as one of the most skilful knights of the day prevented him from being challenged by any but worthy foes, and at the end of the first day of the

tournament the challengers, though still unconquered, found themselves hard pressed by the number of those who had come to try conclusions with them. On the next day the contest was continued with renewed vigour by a new set of opponents, and though the challengers, and especially Sidney, were by all allowed to have won the day by holding their own for so long against all comers, they were at length compelled by physical fatigue to send an envoy with an olive branch in his hand, who, approaching the throne of the Queen of Beauty, acknowledged that the Four Foster Children of Desire, as the challengers called themselves, were defeated in their essay against her fortress. Thus ended one of the most gorgeous pageants of the time, in which Sidney had well upheld his reputation as the model of British knighthood.

During the next year or so he remained at Court, fulfilling his duties there, and occupying all his leisure moments in the various compositions of which an account is given in the next chapter.

He had already on many occasions worthily earned his golden spurs, and the Queen now determined to confer on him the rank of knighthood, in order to enable him to appear as deputy for his friend Prince Casimir at the latter's installation as a Knight of the Garter. Accordingly, on eighth January, 1583, he was admitted into the order of knighthood with the usual ceremonies, and thenceforth became known as Sir Philip Sidney, Knight of Penshurst. On the thirteenth of the same

month he presented himself at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, to be installed as Knight of the Garter for Prince Casimir, the latter being unable to attend, and having nominated him as "his very dear friend," to act as his proxy at the ceremony.



ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR.

(Banners of the Knights of the Garter.)

Still burning with eager desire to take part in the adventurous expeditions of the day, he with great difficulty obtained a charter from the Queen, authorising him to search out and colonise territory on the continent of America; but not having sufficient means to equip a fleet of discovery, he was obliged to

assign his rights to Sir George Peckham, and postpone his adventurous intentions for the present. During all this time he was bravely struggling with his passion for Lady Rich, and his poem of "Astrophel and Stella" clearly displays the conflict he was passing through.

The earlier sonnets are all addressed to her, though the wife of another, in terms of passionate love, and she seems to have been a not unwilling recipient of his homage; but his better nature soon began to appear, and, as the poem proceeds, the dictates of truth and duty urge him to free himself from such a debasing feeling, and to follow the ideal of life and light he had so long consistently pursued. The later sonnets show how nobly he succeeded in conquering himself, and the following is his beautiful pæan of victory:—

"Leave me, O love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou my mind aspire to higher things;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust,
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.

Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke, where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.

O take fast hold! let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to chide,
Who seeketh heaven and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell world, thy uttermost I see;
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me."

The romance of his life was over, and though for him the supreme joy of love was not to be, yet in following the plain path of duty, and manfully endeavouring to do the right, he had still hope for the future; and it was not the least part of his burden, that the love which he had failed to keep or win from the idol of his heart was freely accorded to him by others of nobler birth and greater fortune, to all of whom he turned a deaf ear. For years Sir Francis Walsingham, the Secretary of State, had been one of his greatest friends; and in furthering his effort to follow out the plan he had set before him, and tear himself away from the evil influences of his life, he, in March, 1583, married Frances, the Secretary's eldest daughter. Although in every way he made her a good husband, his was not one of those natures that can love twice, and he seems in making her his wife to have been actuated more by friendship than by any stronger feeling.

CHAPTER X.

AS POET AND AUTHOR.

IT has been mentioned that during the events related in the preceding chapter Sidney was often employed in literary work; and in considering the products of his genius, we must remember that, believing in the maxim of Cicero that all virtue consisted in action, authorship was to him merely the pastime of his idle hours, for he expected to fulfil his life-work in the performance of the active duties of a soldier and statesman; and as Fulke Greville says, "His end was not writing even while he wrote, but both his wit and understanding bent upon his heart to make himself and others, not in words or opinion but in life and action, good and great."

He was early known as a generous patron of the less fortunate authors of his time, and innumerable works on every conceivable subject were dedicated to him as to one specially conversant with each of the themes treated of by them. Spenser dedicated the "Sheapherd's Kalendar" to "him that was the president of nobleness and chivalry," and in his house at Penshurst that poet

began his immortal "Faërie Queene," which still holds an honoured place in English literature. Sidney, Spenser, and several other leading writers of the time established a literary club, which they called the Areopagus, and endeavoured by it to found a new school of poetry, in which certain rules of English syllables were prescribed, in order to substitute the classical metres of hexameters, iambics, &c., instead of rhyme, and of which the following verse of Sidney's, in which he sets a shepherd to make love in hexameters without either much sense or rhythm, is an example:—

"Lady reserved of the heavens to do pastor's company honour,
Joining your sweet voice to the rural muse of the desert,
Here you fully do find the strange operation of love,
How to the woods love runs as well as rides to the palace;
Neither he bears reverence to a prince nor pity to a beggar,
But, like a point in the midst of a circle, is still of a nearness,
All to a lesson he draws; neither hills nor caves can avoid him."

That such an attempt as this, to substitute the quantities of feet and syllables in English poetry in place of the natural rhyme of verse, should have been made not merely as an exercise of ingenuity, as has been done in a few instances by Coleridge, Tennyson, and many modern poets, but in sober earnest, shows the great influence of the classical authors at this time, and the early stage at which a national English literature then stood. But the good sense of the finer spirits among them soon discovered that the classical metres were totally inapplicable to English verse, and as Nash said, "Though it be a gentleman of an ancient house, yet

this clime of ours he cannot thrive in. Our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in. He goes twitching and hopping in our language like a man running upon quagmires, up the hill in one syllable and down the dale in another, retaining no part of that stately, smooth gait which he vaunts himself with amongst the Greeks and Latins."

The importance of Sidney's own works is derived not so much from their intrinsic merit, though that is very great, as from the fact that he was the precursor of that glorious burst of literary genius which has made the Elizabethan age unrivalled in the history of literature, and from him many of those who came after derived their first inspiration, and erected mightier structures on a foundation which he had laid.

His principal works are the "Arcadia," a pastoral romance written for his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, and never intended for publication; the poem of "Astrophel and Stella," comprising the various sonnets addressed by him to Lady Rich; and "The Defence of Poesie," a statement of the methods and uses of poetry, with a criticism of the most important English poems then extant.

The heroes of the "Arcadia" are two youthful princes of Greece, Musidorus and Pyrocles, who, being bound by the closest ties of friendship, set out to travel, and see the world together. They are, however, shipwrecked, and Musidorus being rescued by two shepherds is brought to the house of Kalander, a hospitable noble

who dwells in Arcadia, a land where "there were hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble vallies whose base estate seemed comforted with the presence of silver rivers; meadows enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers, each pasture stored with sheep feeding in sober security; here a shepherd boy piping as though he would never be old, there a young shepherdess knitting and withal singing, while both voice and hands keep time together." Musidorus is most kindly received by Kalander, who entertains him for some days, but the latter soon after receives the sad news that his son Clitophon, who has been fighting in the Lacedemonian war against the Helots, has been taken prisoner, and Musidorus, desirous of repaying the good man's kindness, raises an army of Arcadians, and marches against the enemy.

A deadly battle ensues, in which Musidorus displays great bravery, and is astonished at the equal bravery of the Captain of the Helots; but soon the two leaders meet, and both armies pause to allow the battle to be fought out between them. After a fierce combat, the other champion strikes Musidorus a sudden blow, which knocks off his helmet, and leaves him at the other's mercy, who, instead of following up his advantage, fills him with amazement by embracing him, and this speedily changes to joy, when he finds that the Helot leader is no other than his lost friend Pyrocles. Clitophon is released, and all return in triumph to the house of Kalander.

Here, however, the two strangers meet with another adventure, for they fall in love with Pamela and Philoclea, the daughters of Basilius, Prince of Arcadia, whom the latter has removed to a castle in a lonely forest, into which no one is allowed to enter. The two heroes have therefore to disguise themselves, Musidorus as a shepherd and Pyrocles as an amazon, and by this means they gain admittance to the retreat of the Princesses, whose love they soon succeed in winning. But their difficulties were not yet over, and there are several minor plots within the principal one which take many pages to unravel; but at length, after many hairbreadth escapes, Musidorus succeeds in conveying Pamela safe to his home in Thessaly, and Basilius having consented to the union of Pyrocles and Philoclea, all ends happily.

There is no model for the "Arcadia" or any of Sidney's other writings, and although the whole work contains a curious mixture of classical fables with chivalrous romance—which, had he lived, he purposed to correct by re-writing the whole piece, and making it a heroical romance, with King Arthur as hero—yet the originality of the work, and the vigour and eloquence of the language, mark a fresh epoch in this transition period of English literature, and gave an impetus to the new life of the age. He considered that all writing should have a moral object in view, and in this his purpose has evidently been to inspire a lofty and heroic ideal by his description of the manly and chivalrous

characters of Musidorus and Pyrocles, and the pure and lovely natures of Pamela and Philoclea, rather than by any more direct method of inculcating virtuous precepts.

Of his poetry some specimens have already been given, and throughout the "Arcadia" several pretty sonnets are scattered, of which the best known is—

"My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for the other given.
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss;
There never was a better bargain driven.

"His heart in me keeps me and him in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides;
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
I cherish his because in me it bides."

We can see through all his later writings the profound lesson he had learned in the school of sorrow, and how he had grasped the great law of renunciation, and devoted himself to the good of others. The mysteries of life and death were even, in his early years, themes for thoughtful study:—

"Since nature's works be good, and death doth serve
As nature's work, why should we fear to die?
Since fear is vain, but when it may preserve,
Why should we fear that which we cannot fly?
Fear is more pain than is the pain it fears,
Disarming human minds of native might;
While each conceit an ugly figure bears
Which are not ill, well viewed in reason's light.
Our owly eyes, which dimmed with passion be,
And scarce discern the dawn of coming day,
Let them be cleared, and now begin to see
Our life is but a step in dusty way.
Then let us hold the bliss of peaceful mind,
Since, feeling this, great loss we cannot find."

The poem of "Astrophel and Stella," which contains most of his sonnets, has already been mentioned in connection with his regard for Lady Rich, and it was by it that he did most to implant the Italian method of sonnet-writing in English soil. "Blessed is the man who invented sleep," says Sancho Panza; and amongst the best of Sidney's poems is the following beautiful one from "Astrophel"—

"Come Sleep, O Sleep! the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low—
With shield of proof shield me from out the press
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw;
O make in me these civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay if thou do so.

Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland and a weary head;
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see."

But sweet and musical as many of Sidney's verses are, his chief fame as an author will always be from his prose writings, and especially that work of his maturer years, "The Defence of Poesie," which is the first precursor in England of that spirit of literary comparison and criticism which in these later days has grown to be such an immense power.

There had, he explains in his introduction, grown up a certain distaste for poetry, and misunderstanding of the proper purpose and method of that mode of composition, which he wishes to clear away; and he begins by showing at some length that in every age the poet has been the great teacher of culture among an unlearned people, and so much has his vocation been honoured that the Romans called him *vates—i.e.*, a prophet or diviner. In the term *poetry* he includes all romantic or imaginative writing, "for it is not rhyming or versing that maketh a poet, no more than a long gown maketh an advocate, who, though he pleaded in armour, should be an advocate and no soldier. But it is that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else with that delightful teaching which must be the right describing note to know a poet by; although, indeed, the senate of poets have chosen verse as their fittest raiment, meaning as in matter they passed all, so in manner to go beyond them; not speaking table-talk fashion, or like men in a dream, words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but piercing each syllable of each word by just proportion according to the dignity of the subject." The one end of learning is to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay lodgings, can be capable of, and "the poet ever so clothes goodness in his best clothes, that none can help being enamoured of her; and evil, when brought upon the stage, is so manacled, that no one is tempted to follow it." From this it appears that Sidney

believed all literary work should have a moral and a purpose—a view which will hardly be accepted at the present day, when the highest aim of poetry and art is to give an ideal representation of nature and truth, rather than go out of the way to point a moral to the tale where the great mother of all has failed to do so herself.

After thus considering generally the method and aim of literary and particularly poetical productions, Sidney goes on to give a short and pointed criticism of the principal poems in the English language published at that time, beginning with Chaucer, of whom he says—"I know not whether to marvel more either that he in that misty time could see so clearly, or that we in this clear age go so stumblingly after him," and going down to Spenser, whose "Sheapherd's Kalendar" had just appeared. He concluded with a criticism of dramatic representation, which at this time was still weighed down by the absurd theory of the unities of time and place, and there was as yet no attempt whatever at assisting the spectators to realise the nature of the surroundings of the piece by means of scenery, the most that was ever done being to fix up a board on the stage with a notice such as "This is Athens," or whatever the place was in which the scene was supposed to be laid. Under these circumstances, therefore, we need not be surprised at finding him writing—"The stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's precept and common sense, but one day; for when

you have Asia on the one side and Africa on the other, and so many other under-kingdoms that the player when he comes in must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now shall you have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage a garden. By-and-by we hear news of a shipwreck in the same place, then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while in the meantime two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?" This humorous description reveals to us some of the difficulties with which Shakspere and the earlier dramatists had to contend.

Sidney goes on to give an eloquent panegyric of poetry, and thus concludes—"But if ye be born so near the dull-making cataract of Nilus that you cannot hear the planet-like music of poetry; if you have so earth-creeping a mind that it cannot lift itself up to look to the sky of poesy; then, though I will not wish unto you the ass's ears of Midas, nor to be driven by a poet's verses as Bubonax was to hang himself, nor to be rhymed to death as is said to be done in Ireland; yet this much curse I must send you in behalf of all the poets—that, while you live, you live in love and never get favour for lacking skill of a sonnet, and when you die your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph."

This was the last of Sidney's longer writings, but in 1584 he began a translation of the "De Veritate Christiana" of Philip du Plessis Mornay, one of the prominent Huguenots; but being obliged on his departure for the Netherlands to relinquish this task, he handed it over to Arthur Golding to complete, who subsequently published it under the title of "The Treunesse of the Christian Religion." Sidney's object in translating this book was to enforce the belief—which he in common with many of the deepest thinkers of the time held—that Truth was one and universal, and though many errors had been made in the interpretation of its utterances, yet the Candle of the Lord had been implanted in every human heart, from which those who truly sought would obtain the highest light, and that nothing was needed but one grand comprehensive system of religion to gather all together in worship of the common Father. There was but one Divine Mind filling the world, of which every human mind was a particle or emanation; and the struggle between good and evil on the earth was, and the highest purpose of every true lover of humanity should be, to strengthen this part of the divine element which every man possesses, and help it to conquer the lower nature, and thus in the end attain unto the highest life.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

AT the beginning of the year 1585, the aspect of political affairs became very threatening, and greatly occupied the minds of Sidney and other thoughtful patriots, who saw that matters between Spain and England must soon come to a crisis; and the issue of a conflict with that great power, supported by all the resources of the Papacy, none could foresee.

As yet there had been no overt act of war on either side, but the King of Spain was known to be preparing a fleet for the invasion of the country, and from the steady increase of his power in Europe it seemed a foolish policy of Elizabeth to allow her powerful enemy to choose his own time for making the attack. Therefore Sidney, and those who thought with him, strongly urged the Government to sanction the fitting out of expeditions against the Spanish possessions in the West Indies, and by thus cutting off his supplies, and compelling him to send a large part of his fleet to defend these distant

settlements, Philip of Spain would have been compelled to relinquish his design of sending the Armada, which actually came three years later. He also exerted his influence to induce the Queen to renew the attempt he had made eight years before of forming an alliance among the powers opposed to Spain, and his efforts in this behalf were supported by an embassy from the United Netherlands, which came to implore the English Government to assist them in the gallant struggle they were carrying on against Spanish tyranny. The brave Hollanders were still holding their own in the fierce conflict, but were often on the verge of despair, and had lately received a terrible blow in the assassination of their leader, the noble William of Orange, who was shot with poisoned bullets by a religious fanatic employed by the King of Spain, and whose last words showed how unselfishly he had worked and fought for his country—"May God have mercy on my poor people."

Sidney was again doing good work in Parliament, having been elected as knight of his native county of Kent, and about this time he was also appointed Master of Ordnance jointly with his uncle, the Earl of Warwick, and busied himself in seeing that the defences of the country were in proper order.

He had, however, determined to be no longer a mere looker-on in the great world-battle that was being fought against despotism and superstition; and having become intimately acquainted with two of the great champions

of the day, Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh, he succeeded in inducing the former to plan an expedition for attacking the Spanish settlements, and of this Sidney was to take command jointly with Drake, and to provide money and volunteers, many of whom would be attracted by the reputation of his name.

It was necessary to keep Sidney's share in this enterprise secret, as the Queen could never be persuaded to consent to any of her favourites leaving Court, and having received an intimation from Drake that the fleet was ready to sail, he proceeded to Plymouth early in September, 1585. When he arrived there, however, he found the expedition was not yet prepared to start, Drake, who was apparently unwilling to share the honours with him, having brought him down too soon, so that his friends at Court might get wind of his intention. This object was only too well attained, as the order soon arrived forbidding him on any account to leave the country, and in case of his refusal to obey the whole fleet was to be stayed, but if he consented to remain behind the Queen promised to give him permission to join the army she was about to send to the Netherlands; and Sidney, relying on this promise of active work, was reluctantly obliged to return to Court.

Here he was kept in idleness for some time, till at length the opportunity for his active participation in the great battle for Faith and Freedom arrived. For years he had been burning with eager desire to be with

those who were so bravely fighting for their liberty and religion against overwhelming odds, but his Court duties, his father's troubles, and the necessity for the presence of a true and able statesman like himself at the seat of government, had obliged him to postpone his own personal wishes to the good of others and the great cause of freedom. Now, however, matters were coming to a crisis. The King of Spain was collecting a large army in the Netherlands, which was evidently to be employed for the invasion of England so soon as his fleet would be ready to co-operate with it, and it thus became necessary for Queen Elizabeth at last to discard her cautious waiting policy and assist the gallant Dutch in their struggle, if she did not wish her own country to fall a victim to the power of Spain and the Pope. She had now taken the decisive step by agreeing to send over an army to the Netherlands, under the command of the Earl of Leicester; and as surety for the payment of expenses, she was to get possession of the towns of Flushing and Brill and the Castle of Ramekins. A proclamation was therefore issued by the British Government, setting forth the usurpation of the Spaniards, and the danger to their liberty and religion, which had reluctantly compelled them to resort to a war, the holy objects of which were the procurement of peace to all holders of the reformed faith, the restoration of freedom to the Netherlands, and the safety of England. Sir Philip Sidney was appointed to the important post of Governor of Flushing and Ramekins, Sir Thomas

Cecil, Lord Burghley's eldest son, and Sidney's senior by a dozen years, to the inferior post of Governor of Brill, and the Earl of Leicester as commander of the forces and leader of the expedition.

Sidney was the first to start, and on 16th November, 1585, he set sail, arriving at Flushing two days later, where he was well received, and greatly pleased with the position in which he found himself. Flushing was, from a military point of view, one of the most important posts in the Netherlands, situated as it is at the mouth of the Scheldt, and commanding the approach by water to Antwerp, Brussels, Dendemonde, and Ghent; and the neighbouring Castle of Ramekins was strongly placed and fortified. He lost no time in putting matters into proper order, and encouraging the soldiers and citizens under his command to do their best; and he had great hopes of doing good service, not only in his own particular government, but also in other parts of the province, by making sorties against the weaker positions of the enemy in the neighbourhood. But he soon found that the difficulties he had to contend against were greater than he had supposed, and that it would take all his energy and patience to prevent some disaster through the mismanagement of his superiors.

Queen Elizabeth considered that she had done all that could be expected of her in sending over the army, and left the soldiers almost totally unprovided for—the pay of Sidney's own garrison being for a long time four months in arrear, and the soldiers on the verge of mutiny—and

the Earl of Leicester speedily displayed his incapacity for the command by wasting precious time in feasting and dissipation. The army itself was insufficient for garrison purposes for the defence of the country, without having any to spare for offensive operations, and Sidney wrote urging the Government to send reinforcements, as the number under his command was no more able to guard Flushing than the Tower was to answer for the city of London.

He found that the little town of Grave, which was besieged by the enemy, would be compelled to surrender if not speedily relieved; and having devised a plan for diverting the attention of the besiegers, he requested Lord Leicester to send him a few companies of soldiers, saying he would stake his life in being able to make the enemy raise the siege. But the reinforcements never came, and the town capitulated; and on all sides he was hampered by the indifference and incapacity of many of the other officers, who seem to have been jealous of his growing reputation, so that, as he said, the enemy were stirring on every side, while the English idled away the time. A letter written to his father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham, at this time, shows the noble spirit in which he determined to do his duty at all hazards. "I had," he says, "before cast my count of danger, want, and disgrace, and before God, sir, it is true in my heart the love of the cause doth so far overbalance them all that, with God's grace, they shall never make me weary of

my resolution. If Her Majesty were the fountain, I would fear, considering what I daily find, that we should wax dry, but she is but a means whom God useth; and I know not whether I am deceived, but I am faithfully persuaded that, if she should withdraw herself, other springs would rise to help this action; for methinks I see the great work indeed in hand against the abusers of the world, wherein it is not greater fault to show confidence in man's power, than it is to despair of God's work. I think a wise and constant man ought never to grieve while he doth play, as a man may say, his own part truly, though others be out; but if himself leave his hold because other mariners will be idle, he will hardly forgive himself his own fault. For me, I cannot promise of my own course, because I know there is a higher power that must uphold me, or else I shall fall; but certainly I trust I shall not by other men's wants be drawn from myself. Therefore, good sir, to whom for my particular I am more bound than to all men besides, be not troubled with my troubles, for I have seen the worst, in my judgment, beforehand, and worse than that cannot be."

Thus nine months passed, during which he governed his district with ability and success, and made some spirited sorties against the Spaniards; but a very desultory warfare was carried on by both sides without either gaining any decisive advantage. In May, 1586, he received the news of his father's death, and shortly after that of his mother, who had been ailing for many

years; but he had no leisure to indulge his personal sorrows, for he had now to organise one of the most important expeditions of the whole campaign. The town of Axel was held by the Spanish troops, having a garrison of about twelve hundred men; but deeming themselves secure, the guards were negligent, and it therefore occurred to Sidney, and his friend Count Maurice of Nassau, that there would be a good chance of taking it by surprise. They accordingly organised a band of soldiers and volunteers, and on the night of the sixth of July started by boat from Flushing for the mainland, and, arriving there, marched to within a mile of Axel. They were then prepared for the assault, and Sidney in a few inspiriting words exhorted them to remember that they were Britons, to whom death was as nothing to dishonour, and that they were fighting for Faith, Queen, and Fatherland.

Having waited till two o'clock, when the night was darkest, he chose out forty of the most reliable, and swimming with them across the moat of water surrounding the town, they scaled the walls and got inside without attracting the attention of the sentinels. They then rushed down, and having overpowered the guards, opened the gates for the rest of the band, who hurried in and took the whole garrison by surprise. A short and decisive struggle took place, and the enemy having suffered severely, and seeing that further resistance was useless, surrendered, so that the town was captured with the loss of very few of the attacking party.

The success of this well-planned expedition added greatly to Sidney's already high reputation for courage and ability, and was the most important victory the British army had as yet gained in the Netherlands. He hoped that by it the Earl of Leicester would be encouraged to attempt some decisive action, and having garrisoned Axel, and thoroughly provided for its safety, he joined the main body of the army at Arnheim.

One of the strongest positions of the enemy was the town of Zutphen, which Leicester was consequently anxious to capture, and he therefore proceeded to invest Doesburgh, a fortress in the direct road to that town. Sidney was now acting with the main body of the army, and was present at the capture of this fortress, which took place on the second of September, thus opening the way to Zutphen, which by the thirteenth of September was completely invested, he and Count Louis of Nassau being in command of the land forces, while Leicester himself superintended the blockade by sea. The conflict at this place was looked upon by both sides as most important, and great efforts were being made by the English for its capture, and by the Duke of Parma, the Spanish general, to keep the town well supplied and garrisoned.

On the twenty-first of September, Leicester received information that a large quantity of provisions had been collected a few miles from Zutphen, and were to be smuggled in before daybreak the next morning, and he therefore ordered a body of cavalry to reconnoitre about

the walls during the night and intercept the relief party. The morning of the twenty-second of September was so misty that the English could scarcely see ten paces ahead; but Sidney, who was in command of a troop of cavalry, was determined that no effort would be spared to prevent the introduction of the provisions into the town. He accordingly went early to the field, dressed in full armour, but meeting Sir William Pelham, who was but lightly armed, he deemed the honour of Chivalry forbade him being better protected than his friend, and therefore threw off the pieces of armour guarding his thighs, and thus inspired his followers with an equal disregard of danger. He foresaw that, unless most active measures were taken, the enemy would succeed in getting the supplies into the town under cover of the darkness; and though they were unable to see any length in front, he led his troop boldly forward for some distance, when suddenly the fog cleared off, and they found themselves directly under the walls of Zutphen. The enemy at once opened fire on them, and a body of about a thousand cavalry advanced to the attack, and Sidney, seeing it was impossible to retreat, led his men to the charge. His horse was killed under him, but after an hour's hard fighting they succeeded in retiring some distance in safety, and here, being reinforced by another troop of three hundred men, he mounted a fresh horse and joined in a second charge, by which the enemy were driven back to the walls of the town. Here, however, the latter were largely recruited, and pursued the retreat-

ing English, and in order to cover their retreat, Sidney was leading a third charge, when he was struck by a musket shot, which, entering the part of the leg where he should have been protected by the armour he had thrown off, fractured the bone, and glanced far up into the thigh. His frightened charger turned and galloped off the field, carrying its helpless rider for a couple of miles, when it was stopped, and Sidney carried into the camp.

On the way, occurred that memorable incident which showed how the dying hero, even in that supreme moment, could not forget the habit of patience and self-denial taught by sorrow. Parched with the terrible thirst which his great exertion and mortal wound caused, he asked for something to drink, and as he was about to put the bottle to his lips, he saw a private soldier, wounded to death, and for whose wants there was none of the care and attention his noble leader received, being carried past, who greedily eyed the precious draught. Water was scarcely to be had, even for the officers; and Sidney realised that this poor fellow would probably have to suffer the bitter pangs of thirst till death released him. He drank nothing himself, but, handing the bottle to the dying soldier, said, "Take this, for thy necessity is yet greater than mine."

At first, hopes were entertained of his recovery, but he himself seems to have known his wound was mortal, and he was heard to murmur thanks to God for giving him time to prepare for death. He requested the

surgeons to thoroughly probe the hurt, and not to neglect anything that would give a better chance of preserving his life through fear of the pain they might inflict upon him, and he bore the examination with heroic fortitude. For three weeks he lay upon his bed of pain, tenderly nursed by his wife, and surrounded by many loving friends, whom he continually exhorted to per-

SIR PHILIP SYDNEY AND THE WOUNDED SOLDIER.

severe in the battle for liberty and religion, and with whom he conversed on such subjects as the immortality of the soul and the future life, with a calm grace and sweetness which comforted the hearts of all in their distress at the prospect of losing the best and noblest knight of the time. "But," says his friend and biographer, "he discoursed these themes not that he

wanted instruction or assurance, but because this fixing of a lover's thoughts upon those eternal beauties was not only a cheering-up of his decaying spirits, but as it were a taking possession of that immortal inheritance which was given unto him by his brotherhood in Christ." He had no fear of death, for he said—"I have bound my life to God, and if He cut me off and suffer me to live no longer, then shall I glorify Him, and give myself up to His service." When he felt that the end was approaching, he began to fear that the pain would deprive him of his understanding; but the great unknown began to draw him towards it with mysterious and irresistible attraction, and he said—"I would not change my joy for the empire of the world." Waiting thus, on the seventeenth of October, 1586, God's finger touched him and he slept, passing away calmly and peacefully into the darkness, his last words to his brother being—"Love my memory; cherish my friends—their faith to me may assure you they are honest; but above all, govern your will and affections by the will and word of your Creator, in me beholding the end of the world with all its vanities."

Thus cut off in the prime of life, his death filled all the noblest men of the time with grief for the destruction of the bright hopes and ardent affection which his pure and noble spirit inspired in all who came in contact with him; and even the Spaniards expressed their regret at the loss to Christendom of so brave and chivalrous a knight, who was an example to all of the highest

virtues of the Order to which he belonged. His funeral was made the occasion of a solemn and stately pageant, over seven hundred mourners, representing every class in England, taking part in the procession to St. Paul's Cathedral, where he was buried, evincing the feeling of a national loss and the immense influence which his noble character and high reputation had exerted on the country at large.

The Queen was foremost in her demonstrations of grief at the loss of the idol of the court and camp, and "for months after it was accounted a sin for any gentleman of quality to appear at court or city in any light or gaudy apparel;" but what availed it to garland the tomb when they had not crowned the brow, and all came too late to cheer this pure and lofty spirit in its struggle for the higher life. "He was a true model of worth," writes his friend Fulke Greville; "a man fit for conquest, plantation, reformation, or what action soever is the greatest and hardest among men, withal such a lover of mankind and goodness, that whosoever had any real parts in him found comfort and protection to the uttermost of his power; his chief ends being not friends, wife, children, and himself, but, above all, the honour of his Maker, and the service of his prince and country."

And thus, as one of those whom the gods love, he died young, and to him were accorded none of the triumphs or victories or glory of this world; but after a life spent in following a pure and noble ideal, and in the earnest

pursuit of justice and truth, it was given him to gain that highest crown of all, that he did it without reward, so that the joy and pride which others have felt in the accomplishment of a noble purpose, and the realisation of a lofty aim, were changed for him into the renunciation of a work left incomplete, and the hope of a fulfilment that was not for him or of this world, but was part of the mighty fruition of the time to come.

The great battle for freedom and truth in which his whole soul was engaged, and in which he gave his life, still went on, and, as history relates, ended in the ultimate triumph of the weak over the strong, of the oppressed over the oppressor. And the great aim which he ever kept before him, whether at the Court, in the council chamber, or in the camp—to elevate by his own personal example and earnest precept the public life of the statesmen, courtiers, soldiers, and people of England—was perhaps achieved by him in part even in life, but more by his heroic death, and the example he silently offered to the world of one who had given up all for a lofty ideal and a chivalrous purpose.

Both as a statesman and author he was one of those inheritors of unfulfilled renown whose biographies are the saddest and yet the sweetest of all; for if the glorious promise of one who died at the early age of thirty-two had been fulfilled in a long and useful career, he would have taken his place as one of the greatest statesmen and authors the world has produced. But it was not to be; and to one such as he, who from

his earliest youth seems to have felt the utter worthlessness of the honour and glory of the world as compared with the greatness of the Infinite and the Eternal, the thought that he had bravely tried to do his duty must have been the best of all, and more than compensated for a personal loss which was the world's great gain.

L'ENVOI.

Wer immer strebend sich bemüht
Den können wir erlösen.

Goethe.

CHAPTER XII.

L'ENVOI.

WE have seen in the preceding pages something of the effect Chivalry had in the days of old in helping the work of that Great Power which makes for righteousness—how it ever held before men the high conception of endeavouring to attain to a noble and unselfish ideal of life and action, and, in the pursuit of that ideal, to renounce with a pure and manly self-denial the lower and grosser forms of enjoyment for the sake of such a glorious yet unsubstantial reward as the formation of habits of honour, justice, generosity, and magnanimity. From the result which this great ideal had in purifying and elevating the ideas and actions of the purest and greatest among the knights of old, and the splendid effect their thought and purpose had on the society of that and the subsequent ages, we may see something of the

power a great and lofty ideal will have in regenerating the life of this time, and what the noblest spirits of the present day may make of this beautiful world by loving and following the highest form of truth and beauty here.

The practical result always falls short of the high ideal sought to be attained; but as a great teacher has said, "Besouled with earnest human nobleness, did not slaughter, violence, and frenzied fury grow into a Chivalry—into a blessed loyalty of governor and governed. And in work which is of itself noble, and the only true fighting, there shall be no such possibility. Believe it not; it is incredible; the whole universe contradicts it. Some Chivalry of Labour, some noble Humanity and practical Divineness of Labour, will yet be realised on this earth. Or why *will:* why do we pray to Heaven without setting our own shoulder to the wheel? The Present, if it will have the Future accomplish, shall itself commence. Thou who prophesiest, who believest, begin thou to fulfil. Here or nowhere, now equally as at any time. That outcast helpneeding thing or person trampled down under vulgar feet or hoofs, no help possible for it, no prize offered for the saving of it—canst not thou save it then without prize? Put forth thy hand in God's name; know that 'impossible,' where Truth and Mercy and the everlasting Voice of Nature order, has no place in the brave man's dictionary. It is for thee now; do thou that, and ask no man's counsel but thy own only, and God's. Brother, thou hast possibility in thee for much: the possibility of writing

on the eternal skies the record of a heroic life. It is for you, ye workers, who do already work, and are as grown men, noble and honourable in a sort, that the whole world calls for new work and nobleness. Subdue mutiny, discord, widespread despair by manfulness, justice, mercy, and wisdom. Chaos is dark; deep as Hell; let light be, and there is instead a green flowery world. O it is great, and there is no other greatness: to make some work of God's creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier, more blessed, less accursed. It is work for a God."*

There is a magic in human example and manly influence which will enable a true follower of the light to lead many up with him toward the higher life; and every man who steadily and perseveringly pursues the true good, in spite of failure and discouragement, is slowly but surely building up his part of a great work destined for the salvation and regeneration of suffering humanity. Life is, as it were, a great battlefield, in which there are many soldiers, each of whom has independently to perform his own part faithfully and thoroughly in order to carry out successfully the combined movement, and the failure to perform which by any individual may ruin all. It is given to few to see and comprehend the broad plan of the great campaign, but it will not absolve any for the neglect of his own immediate duty, that he does not fully understand the

* Carlyle: "Past and Present."

bearing his conduct will have on the united action of all in helping or hindering the glorious victory of the time to come.

The days when the bravest and noblest spirits of the time were called upon to ride abroad on adventurous quests, or to perform deeds of physical courage and daring, are long since past; yet there are still wrongs innumerable—as many as of old—to be redressed by the brave and the true, and in a larger and more stirring arena than that of the combat or the tourney there is this God-given work for all: to fight against injustice and wrong wherever it appears; to pursue steadfastly and consistently a high and noble aim, and help others to follow the same faithfully to the end; to bring some comfort and hope to the hearts of the weary and worn toilers and workers, whose lives have little of joy or brightness in them; to help all to something of that illimitable wealth of happiness and contentment which a pure and steadfast heart alone brings. In work such as this, the poorest and most humble can win their golden spurs by deeds of chivalrous heroism and daring surpassing those of the knights of old.

The highest prerogative of cultured manhood and womanhood is that power of choice, selection, renunciation, which raises the being endowed with the divine light of reason above all the rest of the created world; and this power, when rightly used to discard, at whatever cost to the sensual and voluptuous part of our natures, every lower and unworthy object, and to follow

alone the true light which is implanted in the hearts of all, elevates them to be as gods, knowing good and evil, and choosing the good. Life is short, and yet there is time enough for every man to leave behind him the record of a heroic life; and for the shortest and most imperfect there is this heavenly comfort: that though but few have the joy of carrying out a great and noble purpose to its full completion, and of seeing the perfection of that for which they have bravely striven, yet what one man begins another completes, and thus through all, whether commencing or perfecting, the Great Power works its eternal righteousness, and each who so steadfastly helps on to the full extent of his capabilities the noble effort for something higher and better, by so doing, fulfils the highest end of his existence, and the loftiest purpose of life. The most earnest aim of all should be to

> Follow the Light and do the Right,
> For man can half control his doom.

We find much in this great world around us as if some lesser god had made it all, but had not force to shape it as he would, and it is in the continuous struggle to shape it to high and noble ends, to bring good out of evil, justice out of injustice, truth out of falsehood, that the divine element in every human soul is enabled to overcome the lower nature, and, in fighting the great battle against the powers of evil, to conquer himself, and live the divine life of self-sacrifice and renunciation. The manly determination

to make the best of life, and to live up to the highest light given to us, brings with it this great reward: that a man who honestly endeavours, in whatever sphere he is placed, to do his duty without regard to the opinion of the world or his own personal aggrandisement, is independent of the power of Fate, and, if he meets with good fortune in life, can enjoy it with all the zest of one at peace with Nature; but if the inexorable wheel of Destiny shall bring him its worst, he has still the glorious certainty that he lives not for himself or his own pleasure but for the welfare of all, and the supreme end of working for this, Fate cannot touch or crush.

To every man and woman in the world is given at some time or other the choice of Solomon; and they must choose well, for the time to choose is brief, but the consequences of that selection endless and eternal. Like Hercules, we are brought to the meeting of the ways, and must take our choice in life between a path which is crowded by many wayfarers, and which seems to lead to wealth, power, glory, advantage to ourselves, neglect of others, the travellers on which see ever before them the fateful mirage of Happiness, a flower that blooms not on this earthly soil, but the image of which ever flits before, luring all to their destruction, to the death of all spiritual and noble qualities; or that other path which, steep and rugged as it is, requires the renunciation of all selfish objects, and, with the firm determination to work for the good of Humanity, gives

in the end that highest joy of all—the sense of having faithfully tried to do our duty, and a mind at peace with Nature and with God.

"There is a destiny now possible to us—the highest ever set before a nation—to be accepted or refused. We have been taught a religion of pure mercy, which we must either now finally betray, or learn to defend by fulfilling. And we are rich in an inheritance of Honour, bequeathed to us through a thousand years of noble history, which it should be our daily thirst to increase with splendid avarice, so that Britons, if it be a sin to covet Honour, should be the most offending souls alive. A kingdom is open to us, but who is to be its king? Is there to be no king in it, think you, and every man to do that which is right in his own eyes? Or only kings of terror, and the obscene empires of Mammon or Belial? Or will you youths of England make your country again a royal throne of kings; a sceptred isle for all the world; a source of light; a centre of peace; mistress of Learning and of the Arts; faithful guardian of great memories in the midst of irreverent and ephemeral visions; faithful servant of time-tried principles under temptation from foul experiments and licentious desires; and, amidst the cruel and clamorous jealousies of the nations, worshipped in her strange valour of goodwill towards men? There are two oriflammes; which shall we plant on the farthest isles—the one that floats in heavenly fire, or that hangs heavy with foul tissue of terrestrial gold? There is indeed a

crown of beneficent glory open to us, such as never was yet offered to any poor group of mortal souls. And it must be, it *is* with us now—Reign or Die."*

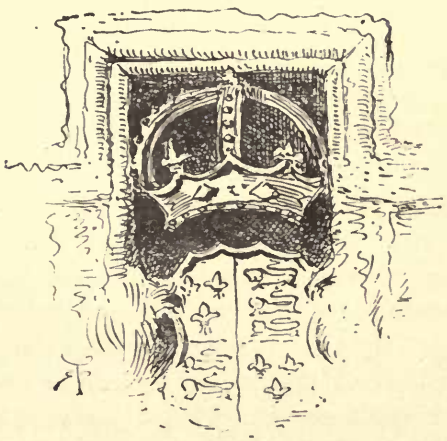
The highest crown of a noble and heroic life is open to all, but the work must be begun by each individual in the depths of his own heart. We must learn that the purpose of life is not be found in the debasing pursuit of amassing wealth at the expense of others, in acquiring power which brings good to none, in gaining glory by trampling upon every glorious principle; but in the habit of obeying in every step in life the highest dictates of honour, generosity, justice, self-sacrifice, and helping to promote, each in his own manner, to the fullest extent of his power, be it more or less, that highest good at which we can aim—the greatest happiness of the greatest number; assisting in our poor way the work of that Eternal Will, the everlasting purpose of which is to overcome evil with good.

The age of Chivalry has passed away, and the days of knights-errant, of lonely quests, and of stately tournaments are no more. But the spirit of Chivalry is not dead, so long as there are men ready to do and die for truth and liberty, as the saints and martyrs and heroes did and died in the days of old; so long as there are true-hearted men and women ready for what is harder still—to live noble and unselfish lives, bravely and steadfastly following out, through failure or success, through joy or sorrow, through good report or evil report, the divine light of a

* Ruskin: "Lectures on Art."

sublime ideal; so long as there are hearts that beat high at the tale of noble heroism and daring; so long as there are souls to feel in their inmost depths that man is man, the master of his fate, and are ready with a calm and steadfast purpose, ever mindful of their glory and their name, to work the eternal work of righteousness. Around us day by day, for those who can hear,

> "Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
> 'O just and faithful knight of God,
> Ride on! the prize is near.'"



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