

HONOUR AND ARMS

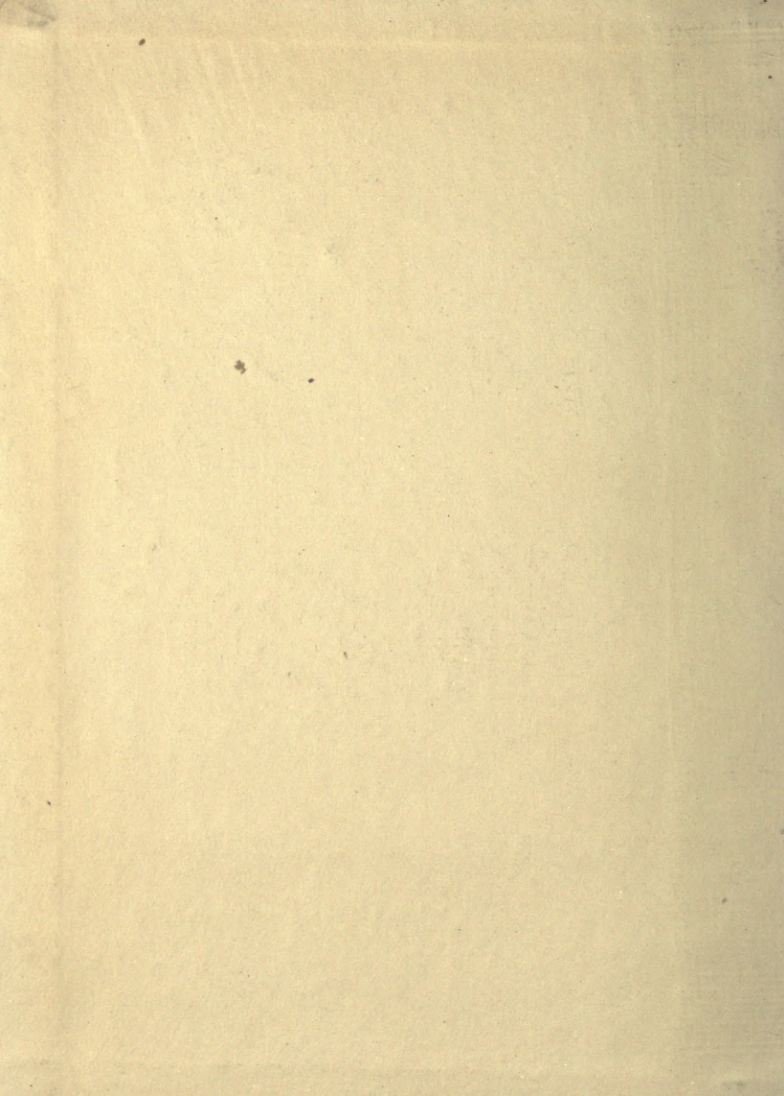
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HONOUR AND ARMS

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“‘Ah, SIRE, WHAT ARE YOU ABOUT TO DO?’”

HONOUR & ARMS

Tales from Froissart

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HONOUR AND ARMS

How the War began between France and England

HISTORY tells us that Philip, King of France, surnamed "the Handsome," had three sons, besides his beautiful daughter, Isabella, who was married to King Edward II. of England. Those three sons were also very handsome. The eldest was called Louis; the second, Philip the Long (or Tall); and the third, Charles. All these were Kings of France after their father King Philip, in lawful succession, and died without leaving any sons of their own to succeed them.

When the youngest brother, Charles, died, the twelve peers and barons of France did not give the kingdom to Isabella, the sister, for they held the country was so noble that

no woman was worthy to govern it ; neither did they give it to her son, who was now Edward III. of England, for they said the son could have no claim where the mother had none. For these reasons they gave the kingdom of France to Philip of Valois, nephew of King Philip the Handsome. Thus, as it seemed to many people, the succession went out of the right line, and this gave rise to the long and bitter wars between France and England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

King Edward III. thought he had a rightful claim to the throne of France, and was not disposed to give it up lightly. He therefore asked his Privy Council what they advised him to do. They all agreed it was too great a matter for them to decide, and counselled King Edward to consult the Earl of Hainault, whose daughter he had married. Ambassadors were accordingly sent over to Holland and Flanders, and the Earl of Hainault and many other rich and powerful lords said that if Edward would attack the French King Philip, they would stand

by him and bring a large army to help him.

It was agreed that this should be done the summer following, after the Feast of St. John the Baptist, which is June 24. When, therefore, winter was over, and summer come, and the Feast of St. John the Baptist drawing near, the lords of England and Germany made preparations to invade France. The King of France also made his preparations to meet them, for he was well acquainted with part of what they intended, though he had not yet received any challenge. King Edward collected his stores in England, and as soon as St. John's Day was passed, took them across the sea to Vilvorde, a small town in Brabant, between Brussels and Mechlin, on the river Senne. Here he remained till September, waiting for the German lords to bring up their troops as they had promised, but they kept on making constant excuses for delay. At last, in obedience to his summons, they came to Mechlin, where, after many debates they agreed that the King ought to be able to march in a fortnight, when they would be quite

ready; and in order that their cause might have a better appearance they determined to send challenges to King Philip. These challenges were given in charge to the Bishop of Lincoln, who carried them to Paris, and did his message so justly and well that he was blamed by no one.

A week after the challenges had been sent, and when he imagined the King of France had received them, a gallant English knight, Sir Walter Manny, collected about forty men on whom he knew he could rely, and rode night and day till he came to the borders of France. This he did because he had made a promise in England in the presence of nobles and ladies that he would be the first to enter France, and take some castle or strong town, and perform some gallant feat of arms.

A little before sunrise, Sir Walter Manny and his followers came to a town called Mortaigne, where luckily they found the wicket open. Sir Walter alighted, with some of his companions, and having passed the

wicket in silence, and placed a guard there, he then with his pennon marched down the street before the great Tower, but the gate and the wicket of the Tower were close shut.

The watchman of the castle heard their voices, and seeing them from his post began to cry out "Treason! Treason!" This awakened the soldiers and inhabitants, but they did not make any sally from the fort. Sir Walter on this retreated into the street, and after setting fire to some of the houses, which greatly alarmed the townsfolk, he marched away with his little band. After this he took two or three other strong castles, and then he returned to Brabant, to King Edward, whom he found at Mechlin, and to whom he related all he had done.

When King Philip received the challenges from King Edward and his allies, he collected men-at-arms and soldiers from all quarters. As soon as they knew war was declared, a band of corsairs—Genoese, Bretons, Normans, Picards, and Spaniards—whom King Philip supported at his own cost to harass

the English, landed one Sunday morning in the harbour at Southampton, whilst the inhabitants were at church. They entered the town, pillaged it, killed many, and injured more, and having loaded their vessels with booty, made sail for the coast of Normandy. They landed at Dieppe, and there divided the plunder.

Thus began the long and bitter war between France and England.

The Knights of the Hare

In the meanwhile there were many skirmishes in Flanders where King Edward was, for all the different States were quarrelling with each other, and some took side with the English, and some were against them. The old Earl of Hainault died, and the young Earl William consented to fight for King Edward only as long as he remained on Flemish ground; Earl William said the moment the King crossed the border into France he would have to leave him, for the French King, his uncle, had sent to him to

request his aid, and he did not wish to incur his ill-will.

When, therefore, they came to the river Scheldt, which was the boundary between the two countries, the young Earl took his leave, and turned back with all his troops. King Edward crossed the Scheldt, and entered the kingdom of France, and his people began to over-run the country and lay it waste. News soon came to him that Philip, the French King, was coming after him, with an army of a hundred thousand men. King Edward counted his own men, and found they amounted to more than forty thousand, so he resolved to wait for King Philip and offer him battle.

The King of France now advanced to within two leagues of the English, where he halted his army, in readiness to fight. Earl William of Hainault hearing news of this, pushed forward at once to join him, with about five hundred fighting men. When he presented himself before his uncle, King Philip did not receive him very graciously, because he had been fighting in Flanders

on the side of his adversary. Earl William, however, managed to excuse himself so handsomely that the King and his counsellors were well enough satisfied, and the marshal who had the arranging of the forces posted him not far from the English lines.

The King of England and the King of France were now both encamped on a great plain, so that neither had any advantage of ground. In the memory of man there had never been seen so fine an assembly of great lords as were there gathered together. For the King of France was there in person, and he had with him King Charles of Bohemia, the King of Navarre, and the young King David of Scotland, who was brother-in-law to King Edward III., but then at war with him, for there was constant strife between Scotland and England in those days. Dukes, counts, barons, and knights without number were also with the French King, and they were daily increasing. The King of England also had with him a gallant array of noble lords and warriors.

When the King of England knew that the

King of France was within two leagues of him, he summoned the chiefs of his army, and asked what was the best way to preserve his honour, for it was his intention to fight. The lords looked at each other, and requested the Duke of Brabant to give his opinion. The Duke replied that he was for fighting, as they could not depart in honour without it, and he advised that a herald should be sent to the King of France to offer him battle, and to have the day fixed.

A herald who could speak French well was chosen for this commission. King Philip willingly accepted the challenge, and appointed the following Friday for the battle, this being Wednesday. The herald returned to the English host, well clad in handsome furred mantles, which the French King and lords had bestowed on him for the sake of the message he bore. The day being thus fixed, the captains of both armies were told what had been arranged, and every one made his preparations accordingly.

When Friday morning came, the two armies got themselves in readiness, and heard

mass, each lord among his own people, and in his own quarters.

The English army was drawn out on the plain and formed three battalions of infantry. The first battalion was commanded by the Duke of Gueldres and other Flemish lords, the second by the Duke of Brabant, and the third, which was the greatest, by the King in person. King Edward had with him many gallant lords, and he created many knights on the field of battle, as was the custom of the times. When everything had been arranged, and each lord under his proper banner as had been ordered by the marshals, King Edward mounted an ambling palfrey, and attended only by Sir Robert d'Artois, Sir Reginald Cobham, and Sir Walter Manny, rode along the lines of his army, and entreated the lords and their companions to aid him to preserve his honour, which they all promised. He then returned to his own division, set himself in battle array, as became him, and ordered that no one should advance before the banners of the marshals.

In the French army there were four kings,

six dukes, twenty-six earls, upwards of five thousand knights, and more than forty thousand common men. The French were formed in three large battalions, each consisting of fifteen thousand men at arms, and twenty thousand men on foot.

Strange to say, after all these preparations there was no battle at all !

It was a matter of much wonder how two such fine armies could separate without fighting. But the French could not agree among themselves, and began to argue and dispute, each speaking out his thoughts. Some said it would be a great shame and very blameworthy if King Philip did not give battle when he saw his enemies so near, and drawn up in his own kingdom in battle array to fight with him according to his promise. Others said it would be a signal token of madness to fight, as they were not certain that some treachery was not intended. Besides, they said, if fortune went against them, King Philip ran a great risk of losing his kingdom, while even if he conquered he would be no nearer gaining possession of England.

Thus the day passed till nearly twelve o'clock in dispute and debate. About noon, it happened that a hare was started in the plain and ran among the French army, who began to make a great shouting and noise. Those in the rear imagined that fighting had begun in the front, and many put on their helmets and made ready their swords. In preparation for the coming battle, some of the French leaders began making fresh knights; in especial, the young Earl of Hainault, who in the excitement of the moment knighted fourteen of his followers. These were always known afterwards as "the Knights of the Hare."

In this situation the two armies remained all Friday, without moving, except as has been told. In the midst of the debates of the French King's council, letters were brought to King Philip from Robert, King of Sicily. This King was said to be a great astrologer, and full of deep and strange knowledge. He had often studied the influence of the stars on the lives of King Philip and King Edward, and according to his belief he found by astro-

logy that if ever the King of France fought with the King of England in person, the French King would surely be defeated. In consequence of this, he as a wise king, and much fearing the danger and peril of his cousin, King Philip, had long before sent letters most earnestly to beg King Philip and his council never to give battle to the English when King Edward should be there in person.

This letter from the King of Sicily, and the doubts they already felt, sorely disheartened many of the French lords. The King was told of this, and notwithstanding was very eager for the combat, but he was so strongly dissuaded from it that the day passed quietly, and each man retired to his quarters.

When the Earl of Hainault saw there was no likelihood of a battle he departed with all his people, and returned to Flanders. Then the King of England, the Duke of Brabant, and the other lords began to prepare for their return, packed up their baggage, and went that Friday night to Avesnes in Hainault, where they took up their quarters.

The King of France retired to his lodgings, very angry that the battle had not taken place. But his councillors told him he had acted very rightly, and had valiantly pursued his enemies, insomuch that he had driven them out of his kingdom, and that the King of England would have to make many such expeditions before he could conquer the kingdom of France. The next day King Philip gave permission for all to depart—dukes, barons, knights, and so on, most courteously thanking the leaders for having come so well equipped to serve and assist him. Thus ended this great expedition, and every man returned to his own house.

The Great Sea-Fight at Sluys

King Edward III. arrived back in England about St. Andrew's Day, 1339, and was joyfully received by his subjects, who were anxious for his return. Great complaints were made to him of the ravages which the Norman, Picard, and Spanish corsairs, under Sir Hugh Quiriell, had committed at South-

hampton; upon which he answered that whenever it came to his turn, he would make them pay dearly for it—and he kept his word before a year was out.

In the summer of the following year, 1340, King Edward again embarked for Flanders, in order to help his brother-in-law, Sir John Hainault, in his war against France, for the Duke of Normandy, eldest son of the King of France, had invaded his territory. Sir Hugh Quiriel, with a fleet of over a hundred and twenty large vessels, lay at anchor just outside Sluys, by order of the King of France, waiting the return of the King of England, to dispute his passage.

When the King's fleet had almost got to Sluys, they saw so many masts standing before it that they looked like a wood. The King asked the commander of his ship what they could be, and he answered that he thought they must be the band of Normans which the King of France kept at sea, which had so often done the English damage, had burned the good town of Southampton, and captured the large ship the *Christopher*.

“I have long wished to meet with them,” said the King, “and now, please God and St. George, we will fight with them; for in truth they have done me so much mischief that I will be revenged on them if possible.”

King Edward then drew up all his vessels, placing the strongest in the front, and his archers on the wings. Between every two vessels there was one with men-at-arms. He stationed some detached vessels as a reserve, full of archers, to aid such as might be damaged. There were in this fleet a great many ladies from England, countesses, baronesses, and knights' and gentlemen's wives, who were on their way to Ghent to attend the Queen. These the King had guarded most carefully by three hundred men-at-arms and five hundred archers.

When the King of England and his marshals had properly divided the fleet, they hoisted their sails to have the wind on their quarter, as the sun shone full in their faces, which they considered might be of disadvantage to them, and stretched out a little, so that at last they got the wind as they wished.



“THEY PERCEIVED BY HIS BANNER THAT THE KING OF ENGLAND
WAS ON BOARD.”

The Normans, who saw them tack, could not help wondering why they did so, and said they took good care to turn about, for they were afraid of meddling with them. They perceived, however, by his banner, that the King of England was on board, which gave them great joy, as they were eager to fight with him; so they put their vessels in proper order, for they were expert and gallant men on the seas. They filled the *Christopher*, the large ship which they had taken the year before from the English, with trumpets and other warlike instruments, and ordered her to fall upon the English. The battle then began very fiercely; archers and cross-bowmen shot with all their might at each other, and the men-at-arms engaged hand to hand. There were many valiant deeds performed, many prisoners made, and many rescues. The *Christopher*, which led the van, was re-captured by the English, and all in her taken or killed. Then there were great shouts of rejoicing, and the English manned her again with archers, and sent her to fight against the Genoese.

This battle was very terrible. Fights at sea are more destructive and obstinate than upon land, for it is not possible to retreat or flee—every one must abide his fortune, and exert his prowess and valour. Sir Hugh Quiriell and his companions were bold and determined men, had done much mischief to the English at sea, and destroyed many of their ships. This fight, therefore, lasted from early in the morning until noon, and the English were hard pressed, for their enemies were four to one, and the greater part men who were used to the sea. The King, who was in the flower of his youth, showed himself on that day a gallant knight, as did many of the nobles who were with him. They fought so valiantly that, with some assistance from Bruges, the French were completely defeated, and all the Normans and others killed or drowned. This was soon known all over Flanders, and when the news came to the two armies, the Hainaulters were as much rejoiced as their enemies were dismayed.

When King Philip of France heard of the defeat of his fleet, and that the King of

England was quietly landed in Flanders, he was much enraged, but as he could not amend it, he immediately decamped and retreated towards Arras.

A fresh plan occurred to him, however, by which he might drive King Edward back to his own country.

How Twelve Men took Edinburgh Castle

England and Scotland had long been at war, and the Scotch King David had entered into an alliance with the King of France, and, as we have seen, fought with him against King Edward.

The English had taken possession of a large portion of Scotland, but there was still a remnant that remained unconquered, and this was under the governance of Sir William Douglas, the Earl of Moray, Earl Patrick of Dunbar, the Earl of Sutherland, Sir Robert Keith, Sir Simon Fraser, and Alexander Ramsay. During the space of seven years they had secreted themselves in the Forest

of Jedworth, in winter as well as in summer, and from there had carried on a war against all the towns and fortresses where King Edward had placed any garrison, in which many perilous and gallant adventures befel them, and from which they won much honour and renown.

Now it occurred to the King of France that if he could stir up the Scotch to active warfare at this moment, King Edward would be forced to come back from Flanders to protect his own country. He therefore sent over some forces to Scotland, which arrived safely in the town of Perth, and entreated these Scotch nobles to carry on so bitter a war that King Edward would be obliged to desist from his present enterprise, promising them every aid if they did so. These lords, therefore, collected their forces and made themselves ready. They left the Forest of Jedworth, traversed Scotland, retook as many fortresses as they were able, passed by Berwick, and crossing the river Tyne, entered Northumberland, which was formerly a kingdom of itself, where they found plenty of

fat cattle. Having raided the whole country as far as Durham and beyond, they returned to Scotland and gained all the fortresses which the King of England held, except the good town of Berwick and three other castles, which they were much annoyed not to be able to secure.

These castles were so strong that one could scarcely find their equal for strength in any country ; one was Stirling, another Roxburgh, and the third, which may be termed the sovereign castle of Scotland, Edinburgh. This last is situated on a high rock, commanding a view of the country round about ; the mountain has so steep an ascent that few can go up it without stopping once or twice. The Governor of Edinburgh Castle at that time was a gallant English knight, called Sir Walter Limousin.

A bold thought came into Sir William Douglas's mind, which he mentioned to his companions, the Earl of Dunbar, Sir Robert Fraser (who had been tutor to King David of Scotland), and Alexander Ramsay, who all agreed to try to carry it out. They collected

upwards of two hundred Highlanders, armed with lances, purchased oats, oatmeal, coal, and straw, went to sea, and landed peaceably at a port about three miles from Edinburgh Castle, which had made a stronger resistance than all the other castles. When they had armed themselves they issued forth in the night time, and having chosen ten or twelve from among them in whom they had the greatest confidence, they dressed them in old threadbare clothes, with torn hats, like poor pedlars, and loaded twelve small horses, each with a sack filled with oats, meal, or coal. They then placed the rest of their troop in ambush in an old abbey, ruined and uninhabited, close to the foot of the mountain where the castle was situated.

At daybreak these merchants, who were secretly armed, took the road with their horses the very best way they could to the castle. When they had got about half-way up the hill, Sir William Douglas and Sir Simon Fraser went on before the others, whom they ordered to follow in silence, and came to the porter's lodge. They told this

man that, with many risks and fears, they had brought coal, oats, and meal, and if there were any want of such things in the castle, they would be glad to dispose of them at a cheap rate.

The porter replied that the garrison would thankfully have them, but it was so early that he dared not awake either the Governor or his steward; at the same time he told them to come forward and he would open the other gate. The false pedlars all then passed quietly through, and entered with their loads to the gate of the barriers, which the porter opened for them.

Sir William Douglas observed that the porter had all the other great keys of the castle gates, and in an apparently indifferent manner he inquired which opened the great gate and which the wicket.

When the first gate was opened they turned in their horses, and flung off the loads of two, which consisted of coal, exactly on the threshold of the gate, so that it could not be shut; then they seized the porter, whom they slew so suddenly that he did not utter a word.

Then they took the keys, and opened all the gates, and Sir William Douglas gave a blast on his horn as a signal for his companions; they then flung off their torn clothes, and placed all the remainder of the coal between the gates, so that they could not be shut.

When those in the ambush heard the horn they sallied forth, and hastened to the castle. The noise of the horn awakened the watchman of the castle, at that moment asleep, who seeing these armed men running up the castle hill, blew lustily on his horn, and bawled out, "Treason! Treason! Arm yourselves, my masters, as fast as you can, for here are men-at-arms advancing to our fortress!"

All the garrison roused themselves as quickly as they could, but Sir William and his twelve companions defended the gate, so that it could not be shut. The fight then grew hotter, but those from without held their ground with great valour until their companions from ambush arrived. The English garrison made a gallant defence, but Sir William and his party exerted themselves so much that the fortress was taken. The Scots

remained in the castle all that day, and, having driven out the English, appointed for governor a squire from the country near called Sir Simon de Vesci, and gave him many of his countrymen to guard the castle, when they left it.

King Edward in Normandy

The news that the Scotch had re-taken the Castle of Edinburgh was brought to King Edward while he was besieging the town of Tournay, in Flanders. After a very close siege of nearly eleven weeks, a truce was arranged, owing to the good offices of the Lady John de Valois, sister of the French King, who with great earnestness besought both parties to make peace. The truce was to last for one year. It was immediately proclaimed in each army, and as soon as it was agreed to and sealed, the King of France, the King of England, and all the other great princes and lords set off for their own countries.

In spite of this truce, however, war was soon raging more fiercely than ever. King

Philip treacherously put to death a noble French lord and several knights on pretence of treason, but really out of jealousy, because he imagined the King of England had shown them some favour. When news of the shameful and cruel death of the Lord de Clisson and the other knights was brought to King Edward, he was greatly enraged at it, and declared that the King of France had by this means broken and infringed the truce which they had agreed on, and from that moment he considered the truce at an end, and sent King Philip his defiance.

English troops were at once despatched to Brittany and Gascony, where the fighting grew hotter than before. The English overran a great part of the country, but the French attacked them valiantly, and scarcely a day passed without some engagement.

The King of England having heard how much pressed his people were, determined to lead a great army into Gascony, and for this purpose, about Midsummer Day, 1346, he embarked from Southampton.

On board the King's ship was his son, the

Prince of Wales, who was at that time only sixteen years old, and Sir Godfrey de Harcourt. The other lords, earls, and barons embarked as they had been ordered. There were about four thousand men-at-arms and ten thousand archers, not including the Irish and Welsh, who followed the army on foot.

When they embarked the weather was as favourable as the King could wish to carry him to Gascony; but on the third day the wind was so contrary that they were driven upon the coast of Cornwall, where they cast anchor, and remained for six days and six nights. During this time the King altered his mind about going to Gascony, through the advice of Sir Godfrey de Harcourt, who convinced him that it would be better to land in Normandy.

“Sir, that province is one of the most fertile in the world,” he said, “and you may land in any part of it you please without hindrance, for no one will think of opposing you. You will find in Normandy rich towns and handsome castles, without any means of defence, and your people will gain wealth

enough to suffice them for twenty years to come. Your fleet may also follow you up the river Orne as far as Caen."

The King paid much heed to what Sir Godfrey de Harcourt said. He commanded his sailors to steer straight for Normandy, and ordered the flag of the admiral, the Earl of Warwick, to be hoisted on board his ship. He took the lead, as Admiral of the Fleet, and made for Normandy with a very favourable wind. The fleet anchored near the district of Coutances, and King Edward landed at a port called La Hogue St. Vast. Having arrived there safely the King was the first to leap on shore, but by accident he fell, and with such violence that the blood gushed out at his nose.

"Dear sir," said the knights who were near him, "let us entreat you to return to your ship, and not think of landing to-day, for this is an unfortunate omen."

"Why," replied the King instantly, "I look on it as very favourable, and a sign that the land is desirous of me."

His people were much pleased with this answer.

The King having landed his forces, divided his army into three battalions, and proceeded to march through Normandy, conquering all the district as they went along. They found it rich and plentiful, abounding in all things, the barns full of every sort of corn, and the houses with riches; the inhabitants at their ease, having cars, carts, horses, swine, sheep, and everything in abundance which the country afforded. The English army seized whatever they chose of all these good things.

When King Philip first heard of the destruction the King of England was making in his realm, he swore that the English should never return without his fighting them, and that the mischief they had done to his people should be dearly paid for. He sent out letters to many great lords, begging them to come to his assistance, and one of the first was despatched to the gallant King of Bohemia, whom he much loved, and to the lord Charles of Bohemia, his son, who had now obtained the title of King of Germany.

In the meantime the English had advanced

towards Caen, which was then a large and prosperous town, full of draperies and all other sorts of merchandise, rich citizens, noble dames and damsels, and fine churches. There were two very rich monasteries, and the castle was the handsomest in all Normandy.

The townsmen at first prepared to defend the city valiantly, and marched out to oppose the enemy, but when they saw the English advancing with banners and pennons flying, and saw the archers, whom they had never been accustomed to, they were so frightened that they took to flight, and ran for the town in great disorder. They were eagerly pursued by the English, who soon took possession of the town.

Sir Godfrey de Harcourt, the Marshal of the King's army, always wise and humane, begged mercy for the inhabitants. He rode through the streets, his banner displayed before him, and ordered in the King's name that no one should dare, under pain of immediate death, to insult or hurt man or woman of the town, or attempt to set fire to any part of it. Several of the inhabitants on hearing

this proclamation, received the English into their houses, and others opened their coffers to them, since they were assured of their lives.

When King Edward had finished his business in Caen, and had sent his fleet to England laden with clothes, jewels, gold and silver plate, and a quantity of other riches, and upwards of sixty knights and three hundred able citizens prisoners, he continued his march as before.

His army advanced so near Paris that the Parisians were much alarmed, for the city was not then enclosed with walls. King Philip now began to stir, and left Paris for St. Denis, about two leagues away, where he found the King of Bohemia, Lord John of Hainault, the Earl of Flanders, and a great multitude of barons and knights ready to receive him.

When the people of Paris heard that the King of France was on the point of leaving Paris, they came to him, and falling on their knees, said :

“Ah, Sire and noble King, what are you

about to do? To leave your fine city of Paris?"

"My good people, do not be afraid," said the King; "the English will not come nearer than they have done."

"Our enemies are only two leagues off," said the people; "as soon as they know you have left us, they will come here at once; and we are not able to resist them ourselves, nor shall we find any to defend us. Have the kindness therefore, Sire, to remain in your good city of Paris, to take care of us."

"I am going to St. Denis, to my army," replied King Philip, "for I am impatient to pursue the English, and am resolved to fight with them whatever happens."

The Passage of the Ford

King Edward, in the meanwhile, continued his way through Normandy, and presently his army drew near to the good town of Abbeville. They were anxious to cross the river Somme, but were unable to find a passage anywhere. The King ordered some

French prisoners to be brought before him, and asked most courteously if any of them knew a ford below Abbeville where he could pass without danger, adding :

“Whoever will show us such a ford shall have his liberty, and that of any twenty of his fellow soldiers whom he may wish to select.”

There was among the prisoners a cunning fellow, whose name was Gobin Agace.

“Sir,” he answered the King, “I promise you, under peril of my life, I will conduct you to such a place, where you and your whole army may pass the river Somme without any risk. There are certain fordable places where you may pass twelve men abreast twice in the day, and not have water above your knees ; when the tide is in, the river is full and deep, and no one can cross it, but when the tide is out, the river is so low that it may be passed on horseback or on foot without danger. You must therefore set out early, so as to be at the ford before sunrise.”

“Friend,” replied the King, “if I find

what thou hast just said to be true, I will give thee and all thy companions their liberty; and I will besides make thee a present of a hundred nobles of gold."

King Edward gave orders for every one to be ready to march at the first sound of his trumpet, and to go forward.

He did not sleep much that night, but, rising at midnight, ordered his trumpet to sound. Very soon everything was ready, and the baggage being loaded, they set out at daybreak, and rode on under the guidance of Gobin Agace until they came to the ford of which he had told them, about sunrise. But the tide was at that time so full they could not cross. The King, however, determined to wait there for those of his army who had not yet come up; and he remained until after ten o'clock, when the tide was gone out.

The King of France, who had his scouts all over the country, was told of the situation of the King of England. He imagined he would be able to shut him up between Abbeville and the river Somme, and thus take him prisoner, or force him to fight at a disadvan-

tage. He ordered a great baron of Normandy, called Sir Godémar du Fay, to guard this ford, which was the only place where the English could cross.

On the arrival of the English, Sir Godémar du Fay drew up his men on the banks of the river to defend and guard the ford. The King of England, however, did not for that give up his intention of crossing; but as soon as the tide had sufficiently gone out, he ordered his marshals to dash into the water, in the names of God and St. George. The most doughty and the best mounted leaped in first, and in the river the fight began. Many on both sides were unhorsed into the water; there were some knights and squires from Artois and Picardy in the pay of Sir Godémar, and they seemed to be equally fond of tilting in water as on dry land.

The French were drawn up in battle array, near the narrow pass leading to the ford, and the English were much harassed by them as they came out of the water to gain the land; for there were among them Genoese cross-bowmen who did them much mischief. On

the other hand, the English archers shot so well together that they forced the men-at-arms to give way. At this ford many gallant feats of arms were performed on both sides, but in the end the English crossed over, and as they came on shore hastened to the fields. After the King, the Prince of Wales, and the other lords had crossed, the French did not long keep in the order they were in, but ran off as fast as they could.

The King of England, when he had crossed the Somme, gave thanks to God for it, and began his march in the same order he had done before. He called Gobin Agace to him, gave him his freedom without ransom, as well as that of his companions, and ordered the hundred nobles of gold to be given him, and also a good horse.

The Battle of Crecy

King Edward continued his march, thinking to take up his quarters at a good and large town called Nozelles, situated hard by; but when he was told it belonged to the

Countess d'Aumarle, sister to the dead Count Robert d'Artois, one of his faithful lords, he sent to assure the inhabitants, as well as all her farmers, that they should not be hurt.

The two other battalions of his army came on a Friday in the afternoon to where the King was, and they fixed their quarters all three together, near Crecy, in Ponthieu. The King of England, who had been told that the King of France was following him to give battle, said to his people: "Let us post ourselves here, for we will not go further till we have seen our enemies. I have good reason to wait for them on this spot, as I am now upon the lawful inheritance of my lady-mother, which was given her as her marriage portion; and I am resolved to defend it against my adversary, Philip of Valois."

On account of his not having more than an eighth part of the forces which the King of France had, his marshals fixed on the best situation, and the army went and took possession of it. He then sent his scouts towards Abbeville, to learn if the King of France meant to take the field this Friday;

but they returned and said they saw no appearance of it, on which King Edward dismissed his men to their quarters, with orders to be ready early in the morning, and to assemble in the same place.

Rising early the next morning, a solemn service of prayer was held, and King Edward and the Prince of Wales took the Sacrament, as did the greater part of his army. Afterwards the King ordered the men to arm themselves and assemble on the ground he had before fixed on. He had enclosed a large park near a wood, on the rear of his army, in which he placed all his baggage, waggons, and horses, and this park had but one entrance. His men-at-arms and archers remained on foot.

The army was then divided into three battalions. In the first he placed the young Prince of Wales, and with him the Earls of Warwick and Oxford, Sir Godfrey de Harcourt, and many other noble lords, knights, and squires. In this division there were about eight hundred men-at-arms, two thousand archers, and a thousand Welshmen.

They advanced in regular order to their ground, each lord under his banner and pennon, and in the centre of his men. The third battalion was commanded by the King, and was composed of about seven thousand men-at-arms and twelve hundred archers.

King Edward then mounted a small palfrey, and with a white wand in his hand and attended by his two marshals he rode at a foot's pace through all his ranks, encouraging and entreating the army that they would guard his honour and defend his right. He spoke this so sweetly, and with such a cheerful countenance, that all who had been dispirited were at once comforted by seeing and hearing him. When he had thus visited all the battalions it was near ten o'clock; he retired to his own division, and ordered the men to eat heartily. They ate and drank at their ease; and having packed up pots, barrels, and so on, in the carts, they returned to their battalions, according to the marshal's orders, and seated themselves on the ground, placing their helmets and bows before them

that they might be the fresher when their enemies should arrive.

That same Saturday the King of France rose early and heard prayers in the Abbey of St. Peter's in Abbeville, where he was lodged; having ordered his army to do the same he left that town after sunrise. When he had marched about two leagues from Abbeville, and was approaching the enemy, he was advised to form his army in order of battle, and to let those on foot march forward, that they might not be trampled on by the horses. King Philip on this sent off four knights to discover the position of the English army, who brought back the news that it was drawn up in three battalions waiting for him. One of the four knights was the Lord Moyne, who was attached to the King of Bohemia, and had performed very many gallant deeds, so that he was esteemed one of the most valiant knights in Christendom.

"Sir," said this Lord Moyne, "I would advise for my part that you halt your army here, and quarter them for the night, for before the rear shall come up and the army

be properly drawn out it will be very late ; your men will be tired and in disorder, while they will find your enemies fresh and properly arrayed."

King Philip commanded that it should be so done, and the two marshals rode, one towards the front and the other to the rear, crying out, "Halt banners, in the name of God and St. Denis!"

Those that were in the front halted, but those behind said they would not halt, until they were as forward as the front. When the front perceived the rear pressing on, they pushed forward, and neither the King nor the marshals could stop them, but they marched on without any order till they came in sight of their enemies. As soon as the foremost rank saw them, they fell back at once in great disorder, which alarmed those in the rear, who thought they had been fighting. There was then space enough for them to have passed forward, had they been willing so to do ; some did so, but others remained shy. All the roads between Abbeville and Crecy were covered with common people,

who, when they came within three leagues of their enemies, drew their swords, brawling out, "Kill! Kill!" and with them were many great lords, who were eager to make show of their courage. No man, unless he had been present, could imagine or describe truly the confusion of that day.

The English, who were drawn up in three divisions and seated on the ground, on seeing their enemies advance, rose undauntedly up and fell into their ranks. That of the young Prince of Wales was the first to do so.

You must know that these kings, earls, barons, and lords of France did not advance in any regular order, but one after the other, or any way most pleasing to themselves. As soon as the King of France came in sight of the English, his blood began to boil, and he called out to his marshals, "Order the Genoese forward, and begin the battle, in the name of God and St. Denis!"

There were about fifteen thousand Genoese cross-bowmen, but they were quite fatigued, having marched on foot that day six leagues, completely armed and with their cross-bows.

They told the Constable they were not in a fit condition to do any great things that day in battle. The Earl of Alençon hearing this, said, "This is what one gets by employing such scoundrels, who fall off when there is any need of them."

During this time a very heavy rain fell, accompanied by thunder and a very terrible eclipse of the sun; and before this rain a great flight of crows hovered in the air over all these battalions, making a loud noise. Shortly afterwards it cleared up, and the sun shone very bright; but the Frenchmen had it in their faces, and the English at their backs.

When the Genoese were somewhat in order, and approached the English, they set up a loud shout, in order to frighten them, but the English remained quite still, and did not seem to attend to it. They then set up a second shout, and advanced a little forward; but the English never moved. They hooted a third time, advancing with their cross-bows presented, and began to shoot. The English archers then advanced one step forward, and shot their arrows

with such force and quickness that it seemed as if it snowed. When the Genoese felt these arrows which pierced their arms, heads, and through their armour, some of them cut the strings of their cross-bows, others flung them on the ground, and all turned about and retreated, quite discomfited.

The English continued shooting as vigorously and quickly as before. Some of their arrows fell among the horsemen, who were sumptuously equipped, and killing and wounding many, made them caper and fall among the Genoese, so that they were in such confusion they could never rally again. In the English army there were some Cornish and Welshmen on foot, who had armed themselves with large knives; these advancing through the ranks of men-at-arms and archers, came upon the French when they were in this danger, and falling upon earls, barons, knights, and squires, slew many, at which the King of England was afterwards much exasperated. The valiant King of Bohemia was slain there.

“Gentlemen,” said this King to his at-

tendants before the battle, "you are all my people, my friends, and my brethren at arms this day; therefore, as I am blind, I request you to lead me so far into the engagement that I may strike one stroke with my sword."

The knights replied they would at once lead him forward, and in order that they might not lose him in the crowd, they fastened all the reins of their horses together, and put the King at their head that he might gratify his wish, and advanced towards the enemy. The King of Bohemia and his companions fought most gallantly. They advanced so far that they were all slain; and on the morrow they were found on the ground, with their horses all tied together.

Early in the day some French, Germans, and Savoyards had broken through the archers of the young Prince of Wales's battalion, and had engaged with his men-at-arms; on this, the second battalion came to his aid, and it was time, for otherwise he would have been hard pressed. The first division, seeing the danger they were in, sent a knight in great haste to the

King of England, who was posted upon an eminence near a windmill.

“Sir,” said the knight on his arrival, “the Earl of Warwick, the Lord Stafford, the Lord Reginald Cobham, and the others who are about your son, are hotly attacked by the French, and they entreat that you will come to their assistance with your battalion, for if their numbers increase, they fear they will have too much to do.”

“Is my son dead, unhorsed, or so badly wounded that he cannot support himself?” replied the King.

“Nothing of the sort, thank God!” rejoined the knight, “but he is in so hot an engagement that he has great need of your help.”

“Now, Sir Thomas, return back to those that sent you,” said the King, “and tell them from me not to send again for me this day, or expect that I shall come, let what will happen, so long as my son has life, and say that I command them to let the boy win his spurs. For I am determined, if it please God, that all the glory and honour

of this day shall be given to him, and to those into whose care I have entrusted him."

The knight returned to his lords, and related the King's answer, which mightily encouraged them, and made them repent they had ever sent such a message.

Late after vespers the King of France had not more about him than sixty men, every one included. Sir John of Hainault, who was of the number, had already given the King a fresh horse, for his first had been killed under him by an arrow.

"Sir," he said to the King, "retreat whilst you have an opportunity, and do not expose yourself so boldly; if you have lost this battle, another time you will be the conqueror." After this, he took the bridle of the King's horse, and led him off by force, for he had before entreated him to retire.

King Philip rode on till he came to the Castle of La Brozes, where he found the gates shut, for it was very dark. The King ordered the Governor of the Castle to be summoned. He came upon the battlements, and asked who it was that called at such an hour.

“Open, open, Governor ; it is the fortune of France,” replied the King.

The Governor, hearing the King's voice, immediately descended, opened the gate, and let down the bridge, and the King and his company entered the Castle.

Having taken some refreshments, King Philip set out again with his attendants about midnight, and rode on, under the direction of guides who were well acquainted with the country, until, about daybreak, he came to Amiens, where he halted.

The battle of Crecy was ended at the hour of vespers.

When on this Saturday night the English heard no more hooting or shouting, they looked upon the field as their own, and their enemies as beaten. They made great fires and lighted torches, because of the darkness of the night.

King Edward then came down from his post, where all that day he had not put on his helmet, and with his whole battalion advanced to the Prince of Wales, whom he embraced in his arms and kissed.

“Sweet son,” he said, “God give you good perseverance! You are my son, for most loyally have you acquitted yourself this day; you are worthy to be a sovereign.”

The Prince bowed very low, and humbled himself, giving all honour to the King his father.

The English, during the night, made frequent thanksgivings to the Lord for the happy issue of the day, and without rioting; for the King had forbidden all riot or noise.

The Siege of Calais

On the Thursday after the great battle of Crecy, King Edward, the Prince of Wales, and all the other English came before the strong town of Calais.

A Burgundy knight, named Sir John de Vienne, was Governor of Calais, and with him were many other knights and squires.

On the King's arrival before Calais he laid siege to it, and built, between it and the river and bridge, houses of wood; they were laid out in streets, and thatched with straw or

broom; and in this town of the King's there was everything necessary for an army, besides a market-place where there were markets every Wednesday and Saturday, for butcher's meat and all other sorts of merchandise; cloth, bread, and everything else, which came from England and Flanders, might be had there, as well as all comforts, for money. The English made frequent expeditions into the neighbouring country, from whence they brought great booty back to the army.

King Edward made no attacks on the town, as he knew it would be only lost labour, and he was sparing of his men and artillery, but he said he would remain there so long that he would starve the town into a surrender, unless the King of France should come there to raise the siege.

When the Governor of Calais saw the preparations of the King of England, he collected together all the poor inhabitants, who had not laid in any store of provisions, and one Wednesday morning sent upwards of seventeen hundred men, women, and children out

of the town. As they were passing through the English army, they asked them why they had left the town? They replied, because they had nothing to eat. The King, on this, allowed them to pass through in safety, ordered them a hearty dinner, and gave to each two pieces of money, as charity and alms for which many of them prayed earnestly for the King.

While King Edward was absent at the war in France, his wife, Queen Philippa, was undertaking the defence of his own realm against the Scotch, who had seized that opportunity to invade it. A great battle was fought at Neville's Cross, three miles from Newcastle, on October 17, 1346. The English gained the field. The King of Scotland was taken prisoner, fighting most gallantly. After seeing him, with other prisoners, placed safely in the Tower of London, Queen Philippa set out for Calais, which she reached about October 28. The King on her arrival held a grand court, and ordered magnificent entertainments for all the lords who were there, but more especially for the ladies, as the

Queen had brought a great many with her, who were glad to come, in order to see fathers, brothers, and friends, who were engaged at the siege.

The siege of Calais lasted a long time, during which many gallant deeds of arms and adventures happened. There were frequent skirmishes near the gates and ditches of the town ; sometimes one side gained the advantage, sometimes the other. However, no provisions could be brought into the town except by stealth, and by the means of two mariners who were guides to such as ventured ; one was named Marant, the other Mestriel ; both of them lived in Abbeville. By their means food was frequently brought into Calais, and by their boldness they were often in great danger, many times pursued and almost captured, but they escaped and slew and wounded many of the English.

The siege lasted all the winter.

King Edward, finding he could not conquer Calais but by famine, ordered a large castle to be constructed of strong timbers, in order to shut the communication with

the sea, and he directed it to be built and embattled in such a manner that it could not be destroyed. He placed it between the town and the sea, and garrisoned it with forty men-at-arms and two hundred archers. These guarded the harbour and port of Calais so closely that nothing could come out or go into the town without being sunk or taken. By this means he grieved the people of Calais more sorely than by anything he had hitherto done, and soon brought famine among them.

About Whitsuntide the King of France made an attempt to save the people of Calais, by coming with a large army to try and raise the siege. But he found the English were in far too strong a position to attack, so marched away again without giving battle.

When the people of Calais saw the French troops depart, it gave them great grief; they saw clearly that all hope of succour was at end, which occasioned them so much sorrow and distress that even the hardest could scarcely support it. They therefore

most earnestly entreated the Lord John de Vienne, their Governor, to mount upon the battlements, and make a sign that he wished to hold a parley. The King of England, on hearing this, sent to them Sir Walter Manny and Lord Basset.

When they were come near, the Lord de Vienne said to them :

“Dear gentlemen, you who are very valiant knights, know that the King of France, whose subjects we are, has sent us hither to defend this town and castle from all harm and damage; this we have done to the best of our abilities. All hope of help has now left us, so that we are most exceedingly straitened; and if the gallant King, your lord, have not pity on us, we must perish with hunger. I therefore entreat that you will beg of him to have compassion on us, and to have the goodness to allow us to depart in the state we are in, and that he will be satisfied with having possession of the town and castle, with all that is within them, as he will find therein riches enough to content him.”

To this Sir Walter Manny replied :

“John, we are not ignorant of what the King our lord’s intentions are, for he has told them to us. Know then, it is not his pleasure you should get off so ; for he is resolved you should surrender yourselves solely to his will, to allow those whom he pleases their ransom, or to put them to death ; for the people of Calais have done him so much mischief, and have by their obstinate defence cost him so many lives, and so much money, that he is mightily enraged.”

“These conditions are too hard for us,” said the Lord de Vienne. “We are but a small number of knights and squires, who have loyally served our lord and master, as you would have done, and have suffered much ill and disquiet ; but we will endure more than any men did in a similar situation before we consent that the smallest boy in the town should fare worse than the best. I therefore once more entreat you out of compassion to return to the King of England, and beg of him to have pity on us ; he will, I trust, grant you this favour, for I have

such opinion of his gallantry as to hope, through God's mercy, he will alter his mind."

The two lords returned to the King of England and related what had passed. The King said he had no intention of complying with the request, but should insist that they surrendered themselves unconditionally to his will.

"My lord, you may be to blame in this," said Sir Walter Manny, "as you will set us a very bad example; for if you order us to go to any of your castles, we shall not obey you so cheerfully if you put these people to death, for they will retaliate on us in a similar case."

"Gentlemen, I am not so obstinate as to hold my opinion alone against you all," said the King. "Sir Walter Manny, you will inform the Governor of Calais that the only grace he must expect from me is, that six of the principal citizens of Calais march out of the town with bare heads and feet, with ropes round their necks, and the keys of the towns and castles in their hands. These six persons shall be at my absolute disposal and the remainder of the persons pardoned."

Sir Walter returned to the Lord de Vienne, who was waiting for him on the battlements, and told him all he had been able to gain from the King.

“I beg of you,” said the Governor, “that you will be so good as to remain here for a little, while I go and relate all that has passed to the townsmen, for as they have desired me to undertake this, it is proper they should know the result of it.”

He went to the market-place and caused the bell to be rung; upon which all the inhabitants, men and women, assembled in the Town Hall. He then related to them what he had said, and the answers he had received, and that he could not obtain any conditions more favourable, to which they must give a short and immediate answer.

This information caused the greatest lamentation and despair, so that the hardest heart would have had compassion on them; even the Lord de Vienne wept bitterly.

After a short time the most wealthy citizen of the town, by name Eustace de St. Pierre, rose up and said:

“Gentlemen, both high and low, it would be a very great pity to suffer so many people to die through famine, if any means could be found to prevent it; and it would be highly meritorious in the eyes of our Saviour if such misery could be averted. I have such faith and trust in finding grace before God, if I die to save my townsmen, that I name myself as first of the six.”

When Eustace had done speaking, they all rose up and almost worshipped him; many cast themselves at his feet with tears and groans. Another citizen, very rich and respected, rose up and said he would be the second to his companion, Eustace; his name was John Daire. After him James Wisant, who was very rich in merchandise and lands, offered himself as companion to his two cousins; as did Peter Wisant, his brother. Two others then named themselves, which completed the number demanded by the King of England.

The Lord John de Vienne then mounted a small hackney, for it was with difficulty that he could walk, and conducted them to

the gate, attended by all the sorrowing townfolk. The Governor ordered the gate to be opened, and then shut behind him and the six citizens, whom he led to the barriers.

“I deliver up to you, as Governor of Calais, with the consent of the inhabitants, these six citizens,” he said to Sir Walter Manny, who was there waiting for him. “And I swear to you they were, and are at this day, the most wealthy and respectable inhabitants of Calais. I beg of you, gentle sir, that you will have the goodness to beseech the King that they may not be put to death.”

“I cannot answer for what the King will do with them,” replied Sir Walter, “but you may depend I will do all in my power to save them.”

The barriers were opened, these six citizens advanced to the pavilion of the King, and the Lord de Vienne re-entered the town.

When Sir Walter Manny had presented these six citizens to King Edward, they fell on their knees, and begged him to have

mercy and compassion on them. All the barons, knights, and squires, that were assembled there in great numbers, wept at the sight. The King eyed them with angry looks (for he hated much the people of Calais, for the great losses he had formerly suffered from them at sea), and ordered their heads to be stricken off. All present entreated the King that he would be more merciful to them, but he would not listen to them.

“Ah, gentle King, let me beseech you to restrain your anger,” then said Sir Walter Manny; “you have the reputation of great nobleness of soul, do not therefore tarnish it by such an act as this, nor allow any one to speak in a disgraceful manner of you. In this instance all the world will say you acted cruelly if you put to death six such respected persons, who, of their own free will, have surrendered themselves to your mercy in order to save their fellow-citizens.”

The King's only reply to this was, “Let it be so,” and ordered the headsman to be sent for; for that the people of Calais had

done him so much damage, it was proper they should suffer for it.

Then the Queen of England fell on her knees before the King.

"Ah, gentle sir," she said with tears, "since I have crossed the sea with great danger to see you, I have never asked you one favour; now I most humbly ask as a gift, for the sake of our Lord Christ, and for your love to me, that you will be merciful to these six men."

The King looked at her for some time in silence.

"Ah, lady," he said at last, "I wish you had been anywhere else than here. You have entreated in such a manner I cannot refuse you; I therefore give them to you, to do as you please with them."

The Queen led the six citizens to her apartments, and had the halters taken from round their necks, after which they were newly clothed, and served with a plentiful dinner; she then presented each with six gold nobles, and had them escorted out of the camp in safety.

The siege of Calais began in August 1346, and the town surrendered about the end of August 1347.

After presenting the six citizens to the Queen, King Edward sent Sir Walter Manny and his two marshals, the Earls of Warwick and Stafford, to take possession of the town and castle. All the inhabitants were driven out, and handsome houses were given to many English knights, in order to induce them to settle there. On his return to England, King Edward sent over thirty-six substantial citizens, with all their wealth, to exert all their influence in such a manner that the inhabitants of the town should henceforward be wholly English.

The Battle of Poitiers

In August 1350, King Philip of France died, and on the 26th of September following, his eldest son, John, was crowned King.

The war with England still continued, and in 1356 the King of France, who was then in Paris, heard that the Prince of Wales,

with his whole army, had invaded his kingdom, and was fast advancing towards the fertile country of Berry. When this was told him, King John said he would at once set out after him, and give him battle wherever he should find him. He issued a special summons, and all nobles and others who held fiefs under him, that they should not under any pretence whatever absent themselves, without incurring his highest displeasure, but immediately set out to meet him on the borders of Touraine and Blois, for he was determined to fight the English. Great crowds of troops and men-at-arms came to him from all parts of France.

News came to the Prince of Wales that the King of France was in the city of Chartres with a very large army, and that all passes and towns on that side of the Loire were secured, and so well guarded, that no one could cross the river. The Prince of Wales, who had already over-run the country of Auvergne, resolved to return to Bordeaux, through Touraine and Poitou, for all that district is very rich and full of forage for

men-at-arms. He took much plunder on the way, but had several sharp skirmishes with the enemy.

When the King of France heard that the Prince of Wales was making as much haste as possible to return, he thought that the English could not in any way escape from him. With his whole army he marched at once, and crossing the river Vienne at Chauvigny came the next day to the city of Poitiers, where he encamped in the open fields outside the town.

The English were quartered that night in a very strong position, among vineyards and hedges, and both armies were well guarded.

About this time, Pope Innocent VI. had sent into France two cardinals, to try to make a peace between the King of France and his enemies. The Cardinal of Perigord was at the city of Tours when he was told that the King of France was marching in all haste after the English. He therefore left Tours and hurried to Poitiers, as he had learned that the two armies were approaching near to each other in that quarter.

The day after their arrival the French army were drawn up in full battle array, and were on the point of marching to their enemies, when the Cardinal of Perigord came full up to King John, and making a low reverence, entreated him, for the love of God, to halt a moment, that he might speak to him.

“Most dear Sire,” he began, “you have here all the flower of knighthood of your kingdom, against a handful of people, such as the English are, when compared with your army. You may have them on other terms than by a battle, and it will be more honour and profit to you to gain them by this means than to risk such a fine army, and such noble persons as you have now with you. I therefore beseech you, in all humility, that you will permit me to go to the Prince and remonstrate with him on the dangerous situation he is in.”

“We agree willingly,” said the King, “but make haste back again.”

The Cardinal on this set off, and went in all speed to the Prince of Wales, whom he found on foot in the midst of his army,

in the thickest part of a vineyard. When the Cardinal came there, he dismounted and advanced to the Prince, who greeted him most courteously.

“Fair son,” said the Cardinal, “if you have well considered the great army of the King of France, you will permit me to make up matters between you both, if I possibly can.”

The Prince, who was but in his youth, replied: “Sir, my own honour and that of my army saved, I am ready to listen to any reasonable terms.”

“Fair son, you say well,” said the Cardinal, “and I will bring about a treaty, if I can; for it would be a great pity that so many worthy persons who are here should meet in battle.”

The Cardinal returned to the King of France, and said:

“Sir, you have no occasion to be so impatient to fight with them, for they cannot escape from you; I therefore entreat you will grant them a truce from this time until to-morrow’s sunrise.”

King John at first would not agree to it;

however, the Cardinal spoke so eloquently he at last assented. He ordered a very rich and handsome pavilion of red silk to be pitched on the spot where he stood, and dismissed his army to their quarters.

All that Sunday the Cardinal rode from one army to another, and was very anxious to reconcile the two parties. But the King of France would not listen to any other terms than that four principal persons of the English should be given up to his will, and that the Prince of Wales and his army should unconditionally surrender themselves. Many proposals were made. The Prince offered to surrender to the King of France all the towns and castles he had conquered in this expedition; to give up without ransom all his prisoners, and to swear that he would not for seven years take up arms against the King of France. King John and his council refused to accept this, and the matter remained some time in suspense; at last they declared that if the Prince of Wales and a hundred of his knights did not surrender themselves prisoners to the

King of France, he would not allow them to pass without an engagement. The Prince and his army disdained to accept such conditions.

The Cardinal de Perigord, not being able by any means to reconcile the King of France and the Prince of Wales, returned to Poitiers late in the evening. The French had kept in their quarters all that day, where they lived at their ease, having plenty of provisions. The English, on the other hand, were but badly off, nor did they know where to go for forage, for they were so hemmed in by the French they could not move without danger.

On Monday morning the Prince and his army were soon in readiness, and as well arrayed as on the former day. They were few in number, but posted with great judgment in a very strong position, the only road open to an attack being a lane so narrow that scarcely four men could ride through it abreast. There was only one entry, and the hedges at the sides had been fortified and lined with some of the archers. At the end

of this lane, amongst vines and thorns, where it was impossible to ride or march in any regular order, were posted the men-at-arms on foot, and before them were drawn up the archers, in the form of a harrow, so that it would be no easy matter to defeat them.

The Prince had ordered some valiant and intelligent knights to remain on horseback, and he also commanded three hundred men-at-arms, and as many archers on horseback, to post themselves on the right on the small hill, that was not too high nor too steep, and by passing over its summit to get round the wing of the Duke of Normandy's battalion, which was at the foot. The Prince himself was with the main body, in the midst of the vineyards; the whole completely armed, with their horses near, if there should be occasion for them. They had fortified and enclosed the weaker parts with their waggons and baggage.

The whole army of the Prince, including every one, did not amount to eight thousand; while the French, counting all sorts of persons, were upwards of sixty thousand

combatants, among whom were more than three thousand knights.

When the Prince of Wales saw, from the departure of the Cardinal without being able to obtain honourable terms, that a battle was inevitable, and that the King of France held both him and his army in great contempt, he thus addressed himself to them :

“Now, sirs, though we be but a small company compared to the might of our enemies, let us not be cast down on that account, for victory does not lie in the multitude of people, but where it pleases God to send it. If it fortune that the day be ours, we shall be the most honoured people of all the world; and if we die in our rightful quarrel, I have the King, my father, and my brothers, and ye, also, have good friends and kinsmen; these shall revenge us. Therefore, sirs, I require you do your duty this day, for, if please God and St. George, this day ye shall see me a good knight.”

By such words as these the Prince spoke to his men, as did the marshals, by his orders; so that they were all in high spirits.

Sir John Chandos placed himself near the Prince, to guard and advise him; and never during that day would he on any account leave his post.

The Lord James Audley remained also for some time near him, but when he saw they must certainly fight, he said to the Prince:

“Sir, I have ever served most loyally my lord your father and yourself, and shall continue to do so as long as I have life. Dear sir, I must now acquaint you that formerly I made a vow, if ever I should be engaged in any battle where the King, your father, or any of his sons were, that I would be the foremost in the attack, and the best combatant on his side, or die in the attempt. I beg therefore most earnestly as a reward for any services I may have done, that you would grant me permission honourably to leave you that I may post myself in such wise to accomplish my vow.”

The Prince granted this request.

“Sir James,” he said, holding out his hand to him, “God grant that this day

you may shine in valour above all other knights."

The knight then set off and posted himself in front of the battalion, with only four squires, whom he kept with him to guard his person. This Lord James was a prudent and valiant knight, and it was by his advice that the army had thus been drawn up in order of battle.

Another gallant knight, Sir Eustace d'Ambreticourt, in like manner took great pains to be the first to engage, and was so, or near it. Placing his lance in rest, and fixing his shield, he galloped up to a battalion of Germans, who were attached to the French interest, under the command of the Earl John of Nassau. A German knight, called Lord Lewis de Concibras, seeing Sir Eustace approach, made up to him; the shock of their meeting was so violent that both fell to the ground. Sir Eustace rose nimbly, and was hastening to the German knight, who was wounded in the shoulder, when five German men-at-arms came upon him, struck him down, and made him prisoner.



“THEY TIED HIM TO A CART.”

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They led him to those who were attached to the Earl of Nassau, who did not pay much attention to Sir Eustace, but tied him to a cart with some of their harness.

The engagement now began on both sides. The battalion of the French marshals, three hundred of the most expert and boldest in the army, well armed and excellently mounted, entered the lane where the hedges on both sides were lined with archers, for it had been arranged that they should clear a way for the men-at-arms to attack hand to hand. But their horses, smarting under the pain of the arrows, would not advance, but turned about, and by their unruliness threw their masters, who could not manage them, nor could those that had fallen get up again, because of the confusion; so this battalion of the marshals never approached the Prince of Wales. In a short time it was totally discomfited, for the riders fell back so much on each other that the army could not advance, and those who were in the rear, not being able to get forward, fell back upon the battalion commanded by the Duke of

Normandy, which was soon thin enough, for when they learned that the marshals had been defeated, they mounted their horses and set off. The English archers were of infinite service to their army, for they shot so thickly and so well that the French did not know which way to turn to avoid their arrows; by this means they kept advancing little by little and gained ground.

When the English men-at-arms saw that the first battalion was beaten, and that the one under the Duke of Normandy was in disorder, they hastened to mount their horses, which they had ready prepared close at hand. As soon as they were mounted they gave a shout of "St. George for Guienne!" and Sir John Chandos said to the Prince, "Sir, sir, now push forward, for the day is ours. God will this day put it in your hand. Let us make for our adversary, the King of France, for where he is will lie the chief stress of battle. I well know that his valour will not let him fly, and he will remain with us if it please God and St. George! But he must be well fought with, and you have

before said that you would show yourself this day a good knight."

"John, get forward!" replied the Prince. "You shall not see me turn my back this day, but I will always be among the foremost." Then to his banner-bearer, Sir Walter Woodland, he said: "Banner advance, in the name of God and St. George!"

As the Prince of Wales fought his way in search of the King of France, he met the battalion of Germans under the Earl of Nassau, who had taken prisoner Sir Eustace d'Ambreticourt. They were soon overthrown and put to flight. In the confusion Sir Eustace was rescued by his own men, who gave him a horse; he afterwards performed many gallant deeds of arms, and made good captures that day.

The King's battalion advanced in good order to meet the English; many hard blows were given with swords, battle-axes, and other warlike weapons. King John, on his part, proved himself a good knight, and if the fourth of his people had behaved as well, the day would have been his own. Those,

however, who had remained with him acquitted themselves to the best of their power, and were either slain or taken prisoners. Scarcely any who were with the King attempted to escape. Many gallant deeds of arms were done that were never known, and the combatants on each side suffered much. King John himself did wonders, but in the end was forced to surrender.

He was conducted by the Earl of Warwick and the Lord Cobham with the greatest courtesy to the Prince of Wales, who that night gave a supper in his pavilion to the King of France, and the greater number of his princes and barons who had been taken prisoners.

The Prince seated the King of France and his young son, the Lord Philip, at a raised and well-covered table, with some of the chief French nobles. The other knights and squires were placed at different tables. The Prince himself served the King's table, as well as the others, with every mark of humility, and would not sit down at it, in spite of all his entreaties for him to do so,

saying that he "was not worthy of such an honour, nor did it beseem him to sit at the table of so great a King, or of so valiant a man as he had shown himself by his actions that day." He added also with a noble air: "Dear sir, do not make a poor meal because the Almighty God has not gratified your wishes in the event of this day; for be assured that my lord and father will show you every honour and friendship in his power, and will arrange your ransom so reasonably that you will henceforward always remain friends. In my opinion you have cause to be glad that the success of this battle did not turn out as you desired; for you have this day acquired such high renown for prowess, that you have surpassed all the best knights on your side. I do not, dear sir, say this to flatter you, for all those of our side who have seen and observed the deeds of each party, have allowed this to be your due, and decree you the prize and garland for it."

At the end of this speech there were murmurs of praise heard from every one;

and the French said the Prince had spoken nobly and truly, and that he would be one of the most gallant princes in Christendom, if God should grant him life to pursue his career of glory.

The Battle of Poitiers was fought on the 19th of September 1356.

How a Servant saved his Master

AMONG the possessions held by the English in France in the year 1383 was the famous town and castle of Lourdes, which is near the borders of Spain. The country round was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting recorded in the war, although the powerful lord of the territory of Béarn, the great Count Gaston de Foix, would not take part with either side, and was on good terms with both the King of France and the King of England, neither of whom was he willing to anger.

The English garrison at Lourdes made frequent excursions at a distance from their fort, in which they did not always have the advantage, for the neighbouring towns and castles were also well garrisoned and full of French troops. When they heard that those of Lourdes had made any excursion towards Toulouse or Carcassone, they collected them-

selves to form an ambuscade and carry off what pillage the English had gained; sometimes several on each side were killed, at others those of Lourdes passed unmolested.

It happened once that a knight of Lourdes, called Ernauton de Sainte Columbe, set off with another knight and six score lances, good men-at-arms, and advanced round the mountains between the two rivers Lesse and Lisse as far as Toulouse. On their return they found in the meadows great quantities of cattle, pigs, and sheep, which they seized, as well as some prosperous men from the flat countries, and drove them all before them.

It was told to the Governor of Tarbes, a squire of Gascony, how those of Lourdes were overrunning and harassing the country, and he sent information of this to various French leaders, adding he was determined to attack them. These knights and squires of Bigorre, having agreed to join him, assembled their men in the town of Tournay, through which the garrison from Lourdes generally returned. They were altogether about two hundred lances. Both parties

sent out spies to discover the strength of their opponents, and were so active that each knew the force of the other.

When those of Lourdes heard that the French garrison were waiting for them at Tournay, they began to be alarmed, and called a council to determine how to conduct their pillage in safety. It was resolved to divide themselves into two parties : one, consisting of servants and pillagers, was to drive the booty, and take by-roads ; the other division was to march in order of battle, and try to draw off the attention of the enemy, so that the baggage might cross the river in safety at another point. They were to meet all together at a place called Montgaillard, from whence they would soon be at Lourdes. This plan they carried out.

There remained with the principal division Ernauton de Sainte Colombe and full eighty companions, all men-at-arms ; there were not ten varlets among them. They tightened their armour, fixed their helmets, and, grasping their lances, marched in close order, as if they were instantly to engage ; they indeed

expected nothing else, for they knew their enemies were in the field.

The French, in like manner as those of Lourdes, had called a council respecting their mode of acting. "Since we know the men of Lourdes are bringing home great plunder and many provisions," they said, "we shall be much vexed if they escape us. Let us therefore form two ambuscades, for we are enough for both." It was ordered therefore that the Count d'Espaign with a hundred spears should guard the passage of Tournay, for the cattle and prisoners must necessarily cross the river, while another detachment of a hundred lances should reconnoitre, if perchance they could come up with them.

They accordingly separated, one troop posting themselves to guard the river, the other riding to a spot called the Larre, where they met the English. Both parties instantly dismounted, and, leaving their horses to pasture, advanced with pointed lances, shouting their battle-cries, "St. George for Lourdes!" "Our Lady for Bigorre!"

They charged each other, thrusting their

spears with all their strength. The combat was very equal, and for some time none were struck down. When they had sufficiently used their spears they threw them down and began to deal out terrible blows with battle-axes. The fight lasted three hours, and it was marvellous to see how they fought and defended themselves. When any were so worsted or out of breath that they could no longer support the fight, they seated themselves near a large ditch full of water in the middle of the plain, when, having taken off their helmets, they refreshed themselves; this done, they replaced their helmets and returned to the combat. There was not so well fought or so severe a battle as this of Marteras in Bigorre since the famous conflict of thirty English against thirty French knights in Brittany in the year 1351.

They fought hand to hand, and Ernauton de Sainte Colombe, an excellent man-at-arms, was on the point of being killed by a squire of the country, called Guillonet de Salenges, when he escaped in rather a strange manner. Ernauton de Sainte Colombe had a servant

who was looking on at the battle, neither attacking nor attacked by any one; but seeing his master pressed so hard by Guillonet that he was quite out of breath, he ran to him, and wresting the battle-axe from his hands, cried "Ernauton, go and sit down! Recover yourself; you cannot longer continue the battle!" With the battle-axe he advanced on the squire, and gave him such a blow on the helmet as made him almost stagger and fall down.

Guillonet, smarting from the blow, was very wroth, and made for the servant to strike him with his axe on the head; but the varlet avoided it, and grappling with the squire, who was much fatigued, turned him round, and flung him to the ground under him, crying: "I will put you to death, if you do not surrender yourself to my master."

"And who is thy master?"

"Ernauton de Sainte Colombe, with whom you have been so long engaged."

The squire, finding he had not the advantage, being under the servant, who had his dagger ready to strike, surrendered on con-



"Grappling with the squire, flung him to the ground."

dition to deliver himself prisoner within fifteen days at the castle of Lourdes, whether rescued or not. Of such service was this servant to his master.

Many gallant feats of arms were that day performed, and many companions were sworn to surrender themselves at Tarbes and at Lourdes. In order that the memory of this battle should be preserved, a cross of stone was erected on the spot where two opposing knights of great valour fought and died, thus putting an end to the combat, for all their comrades were so worn out they could no longer wield their weapons.

In the meanwhile those from Lourdes who were conducting the pillage, when they came to the Bridge of Tournay, below Malvoisin, where they intended to cross, found the Count d'Espaign in ambush, who on their arrival sallied out on them. The English could not retreat, and were obliged to abide the event. The combat was as severe and long, if not longer, than that at Marteras. The Count d'Espaign performed wonders; he was well formed

for fighting, being largely sized and very strongly made. With his own hand he took four prisoners. In short, the pillage was rescued from the people of Lourdes, and all who conducted it slain or made prisoners; for not three escaped, excepting varlets, who ran away and crossed the river Lesse by swimming. Thus ended this business, and the garrison of Lourdes never had such a loss as it suffered that day.

The prisoners were courteously ransomed or mutually exchanged; for those on both sides who had been engaged in this combat had made several prisoners, so that it behoved them to treat each other handsomely.

The Count d'Espaign, spoken of above, had no equal in Gascony for vigour of body, and for this he was esteemed as a brother in arms by the great Count Gascon de Foix. There is a wonderful feat of strength related of him.

One Christmas Day when the Count de Foix was celebrating the feast with numbers of knights and squires, as is customary, the weather was piercingly cold, and the Count

had dined, with many lords, in the hall. After dinner he rose and went into a gallery, which had a large staircase of twenty-four steps; in this gallery was a chimney where a fire was kept when the Count inhabited it, but not otherwise; and the fire was never great, for he did not like it; it was not for want of blocks of wood, for Béarn was covered with wood in plenty to warm him if he had chosen it, but he had accustomed himself to a small fire. On this occasion, when reaching the gallery, the Count de Foix thought the fire too small, for the weather was freezing.

“Here is but a small fire for this weather,” he said to the knights around him.

The Count d’Espaign instantly ran downstairs, for from the windows of the gallery, which looked into the court, he had seen a number of asses laden with billets of wood for the use of the house. Seizing the largest of these asses with his load, he threw him over his shoulders, and carried him upstairs, pushing through the crowds of knights and squires who were around the chimney, and

flung ass and load down on the hearth!
All who saw were delighted and astonished
at the strength of the knight, who had
carried with such ease so great a load up
so many steps.

The Sad Story of the Count de Foix's only Son

AMONG all the kings, princes, and nobles living at that time, there were none to surpass in beauty, valour, and loftiness of character the great Count Gaston Phœbus de Foix. He was so perfect in form and feature that one could not praise him too highly. He loved earnestly the things he ought to love, and hated those it was right to hate. He was a prudent knight, full of enterprise and wisdom, and he was also most devout and charitable. Every day alms were distributed at his gates. He was liberal and courteous in his gifts, and well knew how to take when it was proper, and to give back where he had confidence. He never liked any foolish works nor ridiculous extravagance, and knew each month the amount of his expenditure. In his apart-

ments were certain coffers from which he took money to give to knights, squires, or gentlemen when they came to wait on him, for none ever left him without a gift.

It was a custom of the Count, which he had followed from infancy, to rise at noon and sup at midnight. When he left his chamber at midnight for supper, twelve servants bore each a lighted torch before him, which were placed near his table, and gave a brilliant light to the room. The hall was full of knights and squires, and there were plenty of tables laid out for any person who chose to sup. No one spoke to him at his table, unless he first began a conversation. He had great pleasure in hearing minstrels, as he himself was well skilled in music, and he made his secretaries sing songs, ballads, and roundelays.

Those who had lived much at the courts of other kings, princes, dukes, and noble ladies, found none that pleased them more than this of the Count de Foix at Orthès. There were knights and squires to be seen in every chamber, hall, and court, going

backwards and forwards, and conversing on arms or lovely ladies. Everything honourable was there to be found. All intelligence from distant countries was there to be learned, for the gallantry of the Count had brought visitors from all parts of the world.

But in the midst of all this glory and splendour, the great Count Gaston de Foix had one abiding grief; his only son had perished by a tragic death, and it was the father's hand that caused it.

For many years before, the Count and Countess de Foix had not been on good terms; the dissension arose from the King of Navarre, who was the lady's brother. The King of Navarre had offered to pledge himself, to the sum of fifty thousand francs, for the Lord d'Albreth, whom the Count de Foix held prisoner. The Count de Foix, knowing the King of Navarre to be crafty and faithless, would not accept his security, which piqued the Countess, and made her indignant with her husband.

“My Lord, you show but little confidence in the honour of my brother, the King of

Navarre, when you will not trust him for fifty thousand francs," she said. "You know you are to assign over my dower, which amounts to fifty thousand francs, into the hands of my brother; therefore you cannot run any risk for the repayment."

Out of affection for his son Gaston, the Count finally consented to his wife's entreaties, and set the Lord d'Albreth at liberty, on the assurance of the King of Navarre that he would be guarantee for the sum demanded for his ransom. The Lord d'Albreth in due course paid over to the King of Navarre the fifty thousand francs as agreed; but the King of Navarre never paid them to the Count de Foix.

The Count on this bade his wife go to her brother in Navarre and tell him he was very ill-satisfied with him for withholding the sum he had received. The lady went cheerfully, and her brother, the King of Navarre, received her with much joy, but absolutely refused to hand over any of the money. He declared that it belonged to herself, as her dower from the Count de Foix, and that as



“My lord, you show but little confidence in the honour of
my brother, the King of Navarre.”

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long as he had possession of it, it should never leave the kingdom of Navarre.

The Countess de Foix, not being able to obtain any other answer, remained in Navarre, not daring to return home. The Count de Foix, perceiving the malice of the King of Navarre, began to be enraged with his wife for not returning after she had delivered his message, though she was in no way to blame. In truth, she was afraid, for she knew her husband to be a cruel man when he was displeased with any one. He had a very violent temper, and in his fits of fury he sometimes did deeds which he bitterly repented afterwards.

Thus things remained. Gaston, the son, grew up, and became a fine young gentleman. He was very handsome, and exactly resembled his father in form and feature.

When he was about fifteen or sixteen years old, he took it into his head to make a journey into Navarre to visit his mother and uncle. It was an unfortunate journey for him and his country. On his arrival in Navarre he was splendidly entertained, and he stayed

some time with his mother. On taking leave he entreated her to go back with him, but, hearing that the Count de Foix had given no orders as to this, his mother was afraid to trust herself with him. She therefore remained behind, and the heir of Foix went to take leave of his uncle.

On his departure the King of Navarre made him handsome presents. The last gift the King gave him was the cause of his death, and this is how it happened.

As the youth was on the point of setting out, the King took him privately into his chamber and gave him a bag of powder, which was of such evil quality that it would cause the death of any one who ate of it.

“Gaston, my fair nephew,” said the King of Navarre, “will you do what I am about to tell you? You see how unjustly the Count de Foix hates your mother, who being my sister, it displeases me as much as it should you. If you wish to reconcile your father to your mother, you must take a small pinch of this powder, and, when you see a proper opportunity, strew it over the meat destined for

your father's table; but take care no one sees you. The instant he tastes it, he will long for his wife, your mother, to return to him; and they will love each other henceforth so dearly, they will never again be separated. But do not tell this to any one, for if you do it will lose its effect."

The lad, who believed everything his uncle had told him, replied he would cheerfully do as he said, and on this he departed and returned to Orthès. His father, the Count de Foix, received him with pleasure, and asked what was the news in Navarre, and what presents and jewels had been given him. "Very handsome ones," answered the boy; and showed them all, except the bag which contained the powder.

Now a young kinsman called Evan slept in the same chamber as Gaston; they loved each other, and were dressed alike, for they were very nearly of the same size and age. It fell out that their clothes were once mixed together, and, the coat of Gaston being on the bed, Evan, who was malicious enough, noticing the powder in the bag, said to

Gaston, "What is this that you wear every day on your breast?"

Gaston was not pleased at the question, and replied, "Give me back my coat, Evan; you have nothing to do with it."

Evan flung him his coat, which Gaston put on, but he was very thoughtful the whole day.

Three days after, Gaston quarrelled with Evan at tennis, and gave him a box on the ear. The boy was vexed at this, and ran crying to the Count, who asked what was the matter.

"Gaston has beaten me," replied Evan, "but he deserves beating much more than I do."

"For what reason?" asked the Count.

"Ever since his return from Navarre he wears on his breast a bag of powder," said the boy; "I know not what use it can be, nor what he intends to do with it, except that he has once or twice told me that his mother would soon return hither, and be more in your good graces than ever she was."

"Ho!" said the Count, "hold your tongue,

and be sure you do not mention what you have just told me to any man breathing."

"My lord, I will obey you," replied the youth.

The Count de Foix was very thoughtful on this subject, and remained alone till dinner-time, when he rose up and seated himself as usual at his table in the hall. His son Gaston always placed the dishes before him and tasted the meats. As soon as he had served the first dish and done what was usual, the Count cast his eye on him, having formed his plan, and saw the strings of the bag hanging from his tunic. This sight made him very angry, and he said, "Gaston, come hither; I want to whisper you something."

The boy advanced to the table, when the Count, opening his tunic, with his knife cut away the bag.

The lad was thunderstruck and said not a word, but turned pale with fear, and began to tremble greatly, for he was conscious he had done wrong.

The Count opened the bag, took some of

the powder, which he strewed over a slice of bread, and calling a dog to him, gave it him to eat. The instant the dog had eaten a morsel he fell down and died.

The Count was enraged at this, and indeed had reason, for he thought the powder was meant by his son to poison him. Rising from the table, he would have struck at his son with a knife, but the knights and squires rushed in between them, saying, "For God's sake, my lord, do not be too hasty, but make further inquiries before you do any ill to your son. Perhaps he was ignorant of what was in the bag, and may therefore be blameless."

"Well," said the Count, "let him be imprisoned in the dungeon and safely guarded."

Gaston was therefore imprisoned in the tower.

The Count de Foix took the matter most bitterly to heart, as was plainly to be seen, for he assembled at Orthès all the nobles and prelates of Foix and Béarn, and the other principal persons of the country. When they were met, he told them why he had summoned them, and how guilty he had

found Gaston, so much so, that he considered him deserving of death. They all at once begged him to spare his son's life. When the Count heard them speak in favour of Gaston, he hesitated, and thought he might be sufficiently punished by two or three months' imprisonment, when he would send him on his travels for a few years, until his ill conduct should be forgotten, and he feel grateful for the mercy that had been shown him. He therefore dissolved the meeting, but those of Foix would not leave Orthès until the Count had assured them Gaston should not be put to death, so great was their affection to him. The Count promised this, but said he should be kept some time in prison. It was a most bitter thought to him that the son whom he loved so dearly, and for whom he had always done so much, should prove such a traitor, and seek to murder him by poison. And all this time Gaston never sought to excuse himself or explain what he had thought was the real object of the little bag of powder.

Gaston was put into a room in the dungeon,

where there was little light, and there he remained ten days. He scarcely ate or drank anything of the food that was regularly brought to him, but threw it aside. It is said that after his death all the meat was found untouched, so it was marvellous how he could have lived so long. The Count would not permit any one to remain in the chamber to advise or comfort him; he therefore never put off the clothes he had on when he entered the prison. The boy's heart was broken; he had never expected so much harshness; he cared no longer to live.

On the day of his death those who brought him food said, "Gaston, here is meat for you."

"Put it down," said the boy, paying no attention to it.

The person who served him, looking about, saw all the meat untouched that he had brought there the last days. Shutting the door, he went to the Count and said :

"My lord, look to your son; he is starving himself in his prison. I do not believe he has eaten anything since he was put there, for I

see all that I have carried to him lying on one side untouched."

On hearing this, the Count was enraged, and without saying a word went to the prison of his son. In an evil hour he had in his hand a tiny knife, with which he had been paring his nails; he held it by the blade so closely that barely the tiniest edge of the point appeared. Pushing aside the tapestry that covered the entrance of the prison, he chanced by ill-luck to graze the throat of his son, as he exclaimed, "Ha, traitor, why dost thou not eat?" and instantly left the room, without saying or doing anything more.

The boy was much frightened at his father's arrival, and also exceedingly weak from fasting. The point of the knife, small as it was, cut a vein, which as soon as he felt he turned himself on one side and died.

The Count had barely got back to his apartment when the attendants of his son came and said:

"My lord, Gaston is dead."

"Dead!" cried the Count. He would not believe it, and sent one of his knights to

see. The knight on his return said it was true.

The Count was now bitterly affected, and cried, "Ah, Gaston, Gaston, what a sorry business has this turned out for thee and me! In an evil hour didst thou go to visit thy mother in Navarre. Never shall I again enjoy the happiness I had formerly!"

He then ordered his barber to be sent for, and was shaven quite bare; he clothed himself and all his household in black. The body of the boy was borne, with tears and lamentations, to the church of the Augustin Friars at Orthès, where it was buried.

This was the death of young Gaston de Foix. His father indeed killed him, but the King of Navarre was the cause of the sad event.

The Magic Messenger

THE story I am about to relate will astonish my readers. It was told by a squire of the Count de Foix at Orthès to Sir John Froissart, who was staying there at that time.

About the middle of the fourteenth century, there lived, in the country of Béarn, a baron called Raymond, Lord of Corasse. This Lord of Corasse had a suit at Avignon against a clerk of Catalonia, for the tithes of his church, which were worth a hundred florins a year. The clerk proved his right so clearly that judgment was given in his favour, and he hastened to Béarn to secure the money; but the Lord of Corasse refused to pay anything.

“Master Peter, I do not believe you will be bold enough to collect anything belonging to me,” he said, “for if you do, your life shall pay for it. Go elsewhere and seek for tithes,

for you shall not have anything from my estates."

The clerk was afraid of the knight, for he knew him to be a cruel man, and dared not persevere. Before setting out on his return to Avignon, he came again to the Lord of Corasse, and said to him: "By force, and not by justice, you deprive me of the rights of my church. I am not so powerful in this country as you are; but know that, as soon as I possibly can, I will send you a champion that you will be more afraid of than you have hitherto been of me."

The Lord of Corasse, not alarmed at his threats, replied: "Go, in heaven's name, go! Do what you can. I fear you neither dead nor alive, and will not for your speeches lose my property."

The clerk then departed, but he did not forget what he had told the Lord of Corasse on leaving him. About three months after, when the knight least thought of it, and was asleep in bed in his castle of Corasse, there came invisible messengers, who made a great noise, knocking about everything they met



"I will send you a champion that you will be more afraid of."

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within the castle, as if they were determined to destroy all within it, and giving loud raps at the door of the knight's chamber. The knight heard it all, but did not say a word, as he would not have it appear that he was alarmed, for he was a man of sufficient courage for any adventure. These noises continued in different parts of the castle for some time, and then ceased.

On the morrow all the servants of the household assembled and went to their master.

"My lord," they said, "did you not hear what we have all heard this night?"

The Lord of Corasse pretended not to know what they were talking about; they related to him all the noises they had heard, and that the plates in the kitchen had been broken. He began to laugh, and said it was nothing; they had dreamed it, or that it had been the wind.

On the following night the noises and rioting were renewed, but much louder than before; and there were such blows struck against the door and windows of the knight's room, that it seemed they would break them

down. The knight could no longer refrain from leaping out of bed, and calling out, "Who is it that at this hour thus knocks at my chamber door?"

"It is I," was the instant answer.

"And who sends thee hither?" asked the knight.

"The clerk of Catalonia whom thou hast much wronged, for thou hast deprived him of his rights. I will therefore never leave thee quiet until thou hast rendered him a just account, with which he shall be contented."

"What art thou called," said the knight, "who art so good a messenger?"

"My name is Orthon."

"Orthon," said the knight, "serving a clerk will not be of much advantage to thee; I beg thou wilt leave him and serve me."

Orthon was ready with his answer, for he had taken a liking to the knight.

"Do you wish it?" he said.

"Yes," replied the knight; "but no harm must be done to any one within these walls."

"Oh, no," answered Orthon; "I have no

power to do ill to any one; only to awaken thee and disturb thy rest, or that of other persons."

"Do what I tell thee," added the knight; "we shall well agree. Leave this worthless fellow and serve me."

"Well," said Orthon, "since thou wilt have it so, I consent."

Orthon took such an affection to the Lord of Corasse that he came often to see him in the night-time; and when he found him sleeping he pulled his pillow from under his head, or made great noises at the door or windows; so that when the knight was awakened, he said "Orthon, let me sleep."

"I will not," replied he, "until I have told thee some news."

"Well," said the knight, "and what news hast thou brought me?"

Orthon used to reply that he had come from England, Hungary, or some other place, which he had left the day before, and that such and such things had happened. Thus did the Lord of Corasse know by Orthon

all things that were passing in different parts of the world.

This connection lasted five years, Orthon visiting his master two or three times a week, and telling him all the news of the countries he frequented. But in the meanwhile the knight could not keep the secret to himself, and made it known to Count Gaston de Foix. The Count marvelled greatly how the Lord of Corasse knew what was happening in England, Scotland, Germany, or some other country, so the knight told him about his magic messenger. The Count was delighted at such a method of learning news. "Have you never yet seen your messenger?" he asked once, when they were talking about the subject.

"No, by my faith, never; nor have I ever pressed him on this matter," replied the knight.

"I wonder at that," said the Count, "for had he been as much attached to me, I should have begged of him to have shown himself in his own proper form; and I entreat you will do so, that you

may tell how he is made, and what he is like."

"Since you request it, I will do all I can to see him," said the Lord de Corasse.

It fell out that when the Lord de Corasse, as usual, was in bed, Orthon arrived, and shook the pillow of the knight, who was asleep. On waking, he asked who was there.

Orthon replied, "It is I."

"And where dost thou come from?"

"I come from Prague in Bohemia."

"How far is it from here?"

"Sixty days' journey."

"And hast thou returned from there in so short a time?"

"Yes, I travel as fast as the wind, or faster."

"What, hast thou got wings?"

"Oh, no."

"How then canst thou fly so fast?"

"That is no business of yours."

"No!" said the knight. "I should like exceedingly to see what form thou hast, and how thou art made."

"That does not concern you to know," said

Orthon. "Be satisfied that you hear me, and that I bring you intelligence you may depend on."

"By my faith," said the Lord de Corasse, "I should love thee better if I had seen thee."

"Well," replied Orthon, "since you have such a desire, the first thing you shall see to-morrow morning, in quitting your bed, shall be myself."

"I am satisfied," said the knight; "you may now depart; I give thee thy liberty for this night."

When morning came, the knight arose, and, leaping out of his bed, he seated himself on the bedstead, thinking he should see Orthon in his own shape, but he saw nothing that could induce him to say he had seen him. When the next night arrived, Orthon came and began to talk in his usual manner.

"Go," said the knight, "thou art a liar; thou oughtest to have shown thyself to me this morning, and hast not done so."

"No!" replied Orthon. "But I have."

"I say, no."

“And did you see nothing at all when you leaped out of bed?”

The Lord de Corasse was silent, and having considered awhile said, “Yes; when sitting on my bedside, and thinking of thee, I saw two straws which were turning and playing together on the floor.”

“That was myself,” replied Orthon, “for I had taken that form.”

“That will not satisfy me,” said the Lord de Corasse. “I beg of thee to assume some other shape, so that I may see thee and know thee.”

“You ask so much that you will ruin me and force me away from you,” replied Orthon, “for your requests are too great.”

“You shall not leave me,” said the Lord de Corasse; “if I had once seen thee, I should not again wish it.”

“Well,” replied Orthon, “you shall see me to-morrow, if you pay attention to the first thing you observe when you leave your chamber.” And so he departed.

On the morrow, about the hour of eight, the knight had risen and was dressed; on

leaving his room he went to a window which looked into the court of the castle. Casting his eyes about, the first thing he observed was an immensely large sow; but she was so poor she seemed only skin and bone, with long hanging ears, and a sharp-pointed lean snout.

The Lord de Corasse was disgusted at such a sight, and, calling to his servants, said: "Let the dogs loose quickly, for I will have that sow killed and devoured."

The servants hastened to open the kennel and to set the hounds on the sow; she uttered a loud cry, and looked up at the Lord de Corasse, leaning on the balcony of his window, and was never seen afterwards—for she vanished, and no one ever knew what became of her.

The knight returned quite pensive to his chamber, for he then remembered what Orthon had said to him.

"I believe I have seen my messenger Orthon," he said to himself, "and repent having set my hounds on him, for perhaps I may never see him more. He often told

me that if I ever angered him, I should lose him."

Orthon kept his word, for never did he return to the castle of Corasse, and the following year the knight died.

A Child-Queen

KING EDWARD III. was dead, and so was his son, the gallant Prince of Wales (better known to us, perhaps, under the name of the "Black Prince"), and Richard II., son of the Black Prince, was on the throne of England. War still smouldered between France and England, but the kings of both countries were weary of it, and after some discussion a truce of four years was agreed on. King Richard was especially anxious that a stable peace should be established. He said that the war had lasted too long, and that too many valiant men had been slain on both sides, to the great weakening of the defenders of the Christian faith.

King Richard's first wife being dead, he wished to marry again, and research was made everywhere to find a suitable lady. Various princesses were suggested, but his

thoughts were so bent on the eldest daughter of the King of France that he would not hear of any other. The Princess Isabella was at that time only eight years old. The people of England wondered greatly that he should be so eager to marry the daughter of his adversary, and they were not at all pleased at the idea of the marriage. To put it out of the King's mind they told him the lady was by far too young, and that for several years to come she would not be of a proper age for a wife. He replied by saying that every day she would grow older, and in addition gave his reasons for preferring her, that since she was so young he should educate her, and bring her up to his own mind, and to the manners of the English; and that for himself he was young enough to wait until she should be of proper age for his wife. In short, nothing would make him alter his intention, so in due course the Earl Marshal and the English Ambassadors went to Paris to demand the hand of the Princess Isabella from her father the King of France.

They were excellently well entertained by the French King and his court; their negotiations were successful, and the marriage between the King of England and the Princess Isabella was agreed on. She was betrothed and espoused by the Earl Marshal as proxy for the King of England, and the young princess ever after was styled "Queen of England." It was told at the time it was pleasant to see that, young as she was, she knew well how to act the Queen. She had been well educated, as she showed the English lords when they first came to see her. When the Lord Marshal had dropped on his knees, saying, "Madame, if it please God, you shall be our Lady and Queen," she replied instantly, and without any one advising her, "Sir, if it please God, and my lord and father, that I be Queen of England, I shall be well pleased; for I have been told I shall then be a great lady." She made the Earl Marshal rise, and, taking him by the hand, led him to her mother, the Queen of France, who was much pleased at her answer, as were all who heard it. The ap-

pearance and manners of this young princess greatly pleased the English Ambassadors, and they thought among themselves that she would be a lady of high honour and great worth.

When this business was completed, and the different treaties signed and sealed, the Ambassadors returned to England, leaving the Child-Queen still in the care of her parents.

At last the day came when King Richard was to claim his young bride. It was arranged that the King of England and the King of France should meet at a spot near Calais, and great preparations were made for this event. No expense was spared on either side, and the lords of each country were all eager to outshine each other.

The day before the Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude (which falls on the 28th October) 1396, the two Kings left their lodgings on the point of ten o'clock, and, accompanied by their attendants, went to the tents that had been prepared for each of them. From there they advanced on foot to a certain spot which

had been fixed on for their meeting, and which was surrounded by four hundred French and as many English knights, brilliantly armed, with swords in hand. The two Kings advanced slowly towards each other through the ranks of these knights, and when they were on the point of meeting, the eight hundred knights fell on their knees and wept for joy. The two Kings met bare-headed, and, having saluted, took each other by the hand; then the King of France led the King of England to his tent, which was handsomely and richly adorned. Here they were served with wine and spices, as were also the princes, dukes, counts, and all the other nobles in the tent.

The following day King Richard, attended by all the noblemen who had accompanied him from England, waited on the King of France in his tent. They were received by the King, his brother and uncles, with great pomp and most affectionate words. The dinner-tables were then laid out, that for the Kings was long and handsome, and the side-board covered with the most magnificent

plate. The two Kings were seated by themselves, the King of France at the top of the table, and the King of England below him, but at a good distance from each other.

When dinner was over, which did not last long, the cloth was removed, the tables carried away, and wine and spices brought. After this the young Queen of England entered the tent, attended by a great number of ladies and damsels. The King of France led her by the hand, and gave her to the King of England, who instantly after took his leave. The Queen was placed in a very rich litter which had been prepared for her, but only one of her French ladies went with her, for there were many of the principal ladies of England who received Queen Isabella with great joy.

On the Tuesday following, which was All Saints' Day, King Richard was married by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the Church of St. Nicholas at Calais, to the Lady Isabella. Great were the feastings on the occasion, and the heralds and minstrels were so liberally paid, they were well satisfied. Two days later

the King and Queen set sail for England, and in less than three hours landed at Dover.

The young Queen made her entry into London fifteen days after, grandly attended by lords, ladies, and damsels. She slept one night in the Tower, and the next day was conducted in great pomp through the streets to Westminster, where the King was waiting in his palace to receive her. The Londoners made rich presents to the Queen, which were graciously accepted, and while the court was at Westminster a great tournament was ordered to be held in Smithfield, notice of which was proclaimed beyond the sea, and as far as Scotland.

Alas, these golden days of pomp and pleasure were soon to pass. Within three years the young Queen's reign was over. The fickle people, stirred up by the King's cousin, Henry, Duke of Lancaster, rose against Richard, and he was carried prisoner to the Tower of London. The household of the young Queen was broken up. All her French attendants were sent back to France, and neither French nor English

were left with her who were attached to King Richard. A new household was formed of ladies, damsels, officers, and varlets, who were strictly enjoined never to mention the name of King Richard in their conversation with her.

In September 1399, King Richard II. resigned the throne of England to the Duke of Lancaster, and on 13th October, Henry IV. was crowned in Westminster Abbey.

It is to be hoped that the new King had some feeling of tenderness and compassion for the unhappy Child-Queen whom he had thrust from her rightful position. Her father, the King of France, hearing that his son-in-law was a prisoner in the Tower, sent over two French lords of high rank to inquire into the situation of Queen Isabella. They were allowed to visit her, on condition that they promised on oath not to speak to her about what had lately happened in England, nor to mention Richard. The two knights replied they would not infringe this command; all they wanted was to see and speak with her. They found the young

Queen well attended by noble ladies and with several companions. She conversed some time with them, asking questions about her parents, the King and Queen of France. They kept the promise they had made by never mentioning the name of King Richard; and when they had been with her a sufficient time, took leave and returned to London.

They dined at the Palace at Eltham with King Henry IV., who presented them with some rich jewels. On taking leave, the King parted with them amicably.

“Tell those who have sent you,” he said, “that the Queen shall never suffer the smallest harm or any disturbance, but keep up a state and dignity becoming her birth and rank, and enjoy all her rights; for young as she is, she ought not as yet to be made acquainted with the changes in this world.”

The knights were very happy to hear King Henry IV. speak thus, and went back to the King and Queen of France and related to them what you have read here.

The Heart of King Robert Bruce

ROBERT BRUCE, King of Scotland, who had been a very valiant knight, waxed old, and was attacked with so severe an illness that he saw his end was drawing near. He therefore summoned together all the chiefs and barons in whom he most confided, and, having told them that he would never get better, he commanded them upon their honour and loyalty to keep and preserve faithfully and entire the kingdom for his son David, and obey and crown him king when he was of a proper age, and marry him with a lady suitable to his station.

After that he called to him the gallant Lord James Douglas, and said to him in presence of the others :

“My dear friend, Lord James Douglas, you know that I have had much to do, and have suffered many troubles during the

time I have lived to support the rights of my crown; at the time I was most occupied I made a vow, the non-accomplishment of which gives me much uneasiness—I vowed that if I could finish my wars in such a manner that I might have quiet to govern peacefully, I would go and make war against the enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the adversaries of the Christian faith. To this point my heart has always leaned; but our Lord was not willing, and gave me so much to do in my lifetime, that, since my body cannot accomplish what my heart wishes, I will send my heart in the stead of my body to fulfil my vow. And as I do not know any one knight so gallant and enterprising, or better formed to complete my intentions than yourself, I beg and entreat of you, dear and special friend, as earnestly as I can, that you would have the goodness to undertake this expedition for the love of me, and to acquit my soul to our Lord and Saviour; for I have that opinion of your nobleness and loyalty that, if you undertake it, it cannot fail of success—

and I shall die more contented ; but it must be executed as follows :

“I will, that as soon as I shall be dead, you take my heart from my body, and have it well embalmed. You will also take as much money from my treasury as will appear to you sufficient to perform your journey, as well as for all those whom you may choose to take with you in your train ; you will then deposit your charge at the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord, where He was buried, since my body cannot go there. You will not be sparing of expense—and provide yourself with such company and such things as may be suitable to your rank—and wherever you pass, you will let it be known that you bear the Heart of King Robert of Scotland, which you are carrying beyond seas by his command, since his body cannot go thither.”

All those present began bewailing bitterly ; and when the Lord James could speak, he said :

“Gallant and noble King, I return you a hundred thousand thanks for the high

honour you do me, and for the valuable and dear treasure with which you entrust me; and I will most willingly do all that you command me, with the utmost loyalty in my power; never doubt it, however I may feel myself unworthy of such a high distinction."

"Gallant knight, I thank you," replied the King. "You promise it me then?"

"Certainly, sir, most willingly," answered the knight. He then gave his promise upon his knighthood.

"Thanks be to God!" said the King, "for I shall now die in peace, since I know that the most valiant and accomplished knight of my kingdom will perform that for me which I am unable to do for myself."

Soon afterwards the valiant Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, departed this life, on the 7th of November 1337. His heart was embalmed and placed in a golden casket, and his body was buried in the monastery of Dunfermline.

Early in the spring the Lord James Douglas, having provided everything that

was proper for his expedition, embarked at the port of Montrose, and sailed directly for Sluys in Flanders, in order to learn if any one were going beyond the sea to Jerusalem, that he might join companies. He remained there twelve days, and would not set his foot on shore, but stayed the whole time on board, where he kept a magnificent state, with music of trumpets and drums, as if he had been the King of Scotland. His company consisted of one knight banneret, and seven others of the most valiant knights of Scotland, without counting the rest of his household. His plate was of gold and silver, consisting of pots, basins, porringers, cups, bottles, barrels, and other such things. He had likewise six-and-twenty young and gallant esquires of the best families in Scotland to wait on him; and all the high nobles who came to visit him were handsomely served as if they were in some royal presence.

At last, after staying at Sluys twelve days, he heard that Alphonso, King of Spain, was waging war against the Saracen King of Granada. He considered that if he went

thither to aid the Christians in their war against the infidels he should be carrying out the wishes of King Robert Bruce, and when he should have finished fighting against the Saracens in Spain he would journey onwards to the Holy Land to complete the vow with which he was charged. He made sail therefore towards Spain, and landed first at Valentia; from there he went straight to the King of Spain, who was with his army on the frontier, very near the Saracen King of Granada.

It happened soon after the arrival of the Lord James Douglas that the King of Spain issued forth into the field to advance nearer the enemy; the King of Granada did the same; each King could easily distinguish the other's banners, and they both began to set their armies in array. The Lord James placed himself and his company on one side, to do better work and make a more powerful effort. When he saw that the battalions on each side were fully arranged and that of the King of Spain in motion, he imagined they were about to begin the onset; and as he

always wished to be among the first rather than last on such occasions, he and all his company stuck their spurs into their horses, charged into the midst of the King of Granada's battalion, and made a furious attack on the Saracens. He thought they would be supported by the Spaniards; but in this he was mistaken, for not one that day followed his example. The Moorish cavalry fled, and Douglas with his companions eagerly pursued them. Taking from his neck the casket which contained the Heart of Bruce, he threw it before him and cried, "*Now pass thou onward as thou wast wont, and Douglas will follow thee, or die!*" The Moors rallied, and surrounded the small body of Scottish knights; they performed prodigies of valour, but it was of no avail; they were all killed. Douglas fell while attempting to rescue Sir William St. Clair of Roslin, whom he saw in jeopardy and who shared his fate. Robert and Walter Logan, both of them knights, and many of his companions were also slain with their master.

On the succeeding day his few surviving

companions found his body in the field, together with the casket. Sir Simon of Lee, a distinguished companion of Douglas, took charge of the casket, and that and the body of Lord James Douglas were reverently conveyed to Scotland. The Heart of Robert Bruce was placed in the Abbey at Melrose; the body of Lord James Douglas was buried in the grave of his fathers in the parish church of Douglas.

A nobler death on the field of battle is not recorded in the annals of chivalry. His countrymen have kept his fame for ever alive by the name they have bestowed on him, "the good Sir James Douglas."

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