

The Complete Crockett

*The Galloway Raiders*

*digital edition*

Scottish works



RED CAP  
ADVENTURES

S.R. CROCKETT

# Galloway Raiders Digital Edition

First Published by Adam & Charles Black in 1908.

This Galloway Raiders digital edition published in 2021 is part of a decade long project (2012-2022) to bring the works of Samuel Rutherford Crockett (1859-1914) together in one place. The Complete Crockett comprises 66 published works, re-edited and re-formatted by volunteer labour to the highest standard.

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RED CAP ADVENTURES

RED CAP ADVENTURES  
BEING THE SECOND SERIES  
OF 'RED CAP TALES'

STOLEN FROM THE TREASURE CHEST OF THE  
WIZARD OF THE NORTH, WHICH THEFT IS  
HUMBLY ACKNOWLEDGED BY

*S. R. Crockett*

## INTRODUCTION

Published in 1908 by A&C Black, this is the sequel to *Red Cap Tales* of some four years earlier. This time, instead of telling the stories, Crockett co-opts the children to tell their own version of Scott's tales. By doing so he hopes to draw them into a love of Scott. The deal is struck thus: *'you must take one of the Waverley novels which has not been told before, read it, make one or more stories out of it — and I will give them one golden sovereign for each that is good enough to print!'*

*'Oh!'* said Sir Toady Lion, *'but that's not fair — you get more than that!'*

*'Yes, sir,'* I said sharply; *'but there's your food and clothing and schooling to pay for, young gentleman — besides one or two other things which, if lucky, you will find out in due time for yourself!'*

The lure of money is strong and each child chooses and tells their own version of a story. In the telling of the stories we gain a greater insight both into Scott and the particular characteristics of these 'fictional' Picton Smith children, modelled as they are closely on Crockett's own four children: Maisie, Philip, George and Margaret.

Crockett himself is always aware of the value of his children and tells us tongue in cheek: *'the more of the real opinions of youth I jotted down, the easier would be my task of editor.'*

*Red Cap Adventures* begins where *Red Cap Tales* left off with Crockett as Picton Smith retelling the story of *Ivanhoe*. The children aren't completely

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happy with it – especially the ending and Sweetheart is told: *I silenced her by telling her that if she wished to take liberties with the Great Unknown and his characters, she had better tell the tale over to herself.*

Thus the storytelling project begins. Sweetheart struggles to recount *The Fortunes of Nigel* but is consoled by her father: ‘Sweetheart,’ I said, ‘the best story for telling is not always the one you like best to read. I think I like *The Antiquary* best of all, but it was the hardest to tell to you children.’

Hugh John who likes ‘serious reading’ picks the heroic *Quentin Durward*. He introduces us to the story: ‘It begins (said Hugh John) about a young Scottish fellow — like us, or maybe a bit older, who had gone to France to push his fortune. Fellows didn’t go into offices then. I bet you, no. *Quentin Durward* didn’t, anyhow. He had learned all about how to use the sword and the single-stick and everything like that up in *Glen Houlakin*, where he came from. This is to say, the *Glen of the Midges*. But a fellow can’t live on midges (though midges can on you), and like all the other young Scots of his time he went abroad to seek for a chance to fight under the banner of some great lord or another.’

He then treats us to a boy’s version of a Scott tale – heavy on the fighting and slim on the romance.

Toady Lion is not keen on reading, he’s much more of an outdoor boy. He is cheeky and capricious and first tries to change the story of *The Pirate* to suit his own passion, bird-nesting. Remonstrations follow and he then tells the story of *Captain Dalgetty and the Children of the Mist*. The youngest child, Maid Margaret can barely read and so her story takes the form of retelling a dream she has. It is funny and poignant. She is a child still steeped in

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'fairies' and in her dream meets Sir Walter Scott and the Red Cap Demon herself who help her to come up with a story worth her sovereign. This is the first time we have really seen Margaret in Crockett's stories. She is anxious about telling the stories and her father consoles her: *'Margaret,' I said, 'never mind. You just do your best, and you shall have something!'*

*I heard a little sob.*

*'Oh, I don't know what I shall say — I don't know — I get it all in my head, and then I forget!'* she mourned.

*'Do not mind,' I said; 'say whatever comes into your head, and don't care for anybody. They will be glad to hear such a little girl tell a story, instead of only having one told to her.'*

Once again this gives us an insight into Crockett's relationship with his children and how well he understands childish emotion.

*'I know I shall never deserve even a penny!'* she said, *'but I shall try!'*

*And that is no bad frame of mind in which to prepare for an ordeal.*

Throughout *Red Cap Adventures* we are always working on at least two narrative levels. We have the retelling of the Scott classic stories and (for my money the most captivating part of the book) the narrative of the Picton Smith family. The book starts with Picton Smith (Crockett) at his wits end because of the noise the children are making playing outside his study window. His attempt to get them to read and undertake quieter, more structured activity only partially succeeds. In the development of the story the audience grows to include Nipper Donnan (who we first saw in the 1897 book *Sir*

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*Toady Lion*) and his father Butcher Donnan as well as an assortment of gamekeepers and locals who prove themselves up for being told a good story. It may seem odd to us to imagine a group of adults and children sitting round each day listening to stories out loud, but this simply serves to remind us what people did before television!

It's a clever technique, embedding Scott into a more modern environment. Picton Smith (and Crockett's) aim is to get the children interested in reading his fiction and it does work by extension for the reader of *Red Cap Adventures*. To a degree. But for me, what sucks me in to the narrative is not Scott but Crockett's lively and entertaining telling of the 'family' story.

He is working to get us interested in Scott – in '*Ivanhoe*,' and wherever else he can get away with it, he reads passages directly from Scott – *It was good that they should think that Scott was better to read than I to listen to* but mainly it's a retelling that will appeal to rowdy children and the local Butcher and Gamekeeper. These are not drawing room tales for the aspirational classes but down to earth stories for those who relate the incidents to their own lives and times. And that in a way is a skill – being able to take stories of heroism and adventure from history and make them relevant to the audience. The audience (both adults and children) retain a certain degree of scepticism and demand to be entertained first and foremost. As Butcher Donnan observes: '*Between you an' me*' (he began), '*the man that wrote down yon yarn, put in a bit of a stretcher here an' there.*

In *Red Cap Adventures*, I think that Crockett succeeds where perhaps Scott fails, at least for

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many – the thrust and goal of Crockett’s writing is to entertain and it does just that. Depending on your point of view the strength, or weakness of *Red Cap Adventures* is that the antics of the Picton Smith family steal the scene from Scott at every step of the way. For me it’s the greatest strength. Scott purists may disagree – but even those who love Scott confess that he’s dense to read and that ‘skipping bits’ is not just acceptable but advisable. So really, Crockett is doing us all a favour.

He feels that his goal is achieved as he says, *‘they were learning how to tell the stories which Sir Walter wove, so marvellously, so easily, lifting the difficult threads of his story as if he had been playing cats’ cradle, and inventing deathless characters — ‘another one before dinner,’ as a friend of mine says.’*

There is much humour in seeing how the children interpret and act out the deeds of derring from the stories – we get an insight into the ‘smoutchies’ (again from *Sir Toady Lion*) and into the lives of their parents. The boys are interested in marbles, and in forming an alliance against gamekeepers and the police while they carry out their own juvenile inter-necine wars.

When Nipper Donnan is introduced to *Ivanhoe* his response is: *‘So a man Scott wrote all that, did he?’ Nipper Donnan inquired.*

*‘Yes,’ said Hugh John, anxious to run sea and land to make one proselyte, ‘and father says that he’s the greatest history writer that ever was!’*

*‘My father backs the man that writes up the ‘scraps’ in the Sporting Pink!’ said Nipper Donnan; ‘and I bet he knows as well as yours. You should see my father turn to page three to get ‘the latest!’ Wonderful set on literature is father! And never was*

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*but three days at school, including the day they had to take the master to the Infirmary!*

*'If you like, I'll nab the book and read bits to you, and then we can do the things that's in it — down in our meadow, or somewhere!'*

Crockett has several carefully placed and humorous jibes about the nature of literature, reminding us that stories are for everyone. We may find much humour in Butcher Donnan's attitude to books

*'Books are all right,' continued Butcher Donnan; 'though I don't read them much myself — only the Sporting Pink — there's a paper for you, now!'*

*I expressed my agreement. I had the testimony of my eyes upon many bookstalls that it was a paper.*

He espouses a broad kirk view to reading: *'One wet afternoon the children were in the library. The boys, as usual, were prone on the floor, poring over the sets of Graphics and the Illustrated London News — which is their idea of what a library should contain.'*

Crockett knows that tastes differ and times have changed but he always treats Scott with respect. Scott was Crockett's favourite author as a child (he threw away all his 'penny dreadful' boy's own magazines when he discovered Scott) and he wants to share this with his children who have access to a more varied diet of reading than he did as a child. The children are encouraged (and need little encouragement) to act out the stories as they did in *Red Cap Tales*, but in *Red Cap Adventures* we go a step further and they are engaged in the process of storytelling.

Crockett loves books and reading himself, but in

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his goal to engage both children and adults we see that the story takes precedence over making a fetish of the written word. He certainly espouses a more active engagement with stories than simply sitting reading a book. He himself may own expensive editions, but he's happy to promote the cheap sixpenny editions... anything as long as Scott is read.

When Toady is disrespectful he is chastised. His father remonstrates with the 'style' of his storytelling: *'You are not required to provide your own criticisms,' I said to the youth; 'that is, not if you want to be paid cash for your story.'*

And later: *'See here,' I said, 'Toady Lion, let it be understood that there are to be no monkey tricks. We are glad to see your eggs and to hear all about them. But no one is to make fun of any of Sir Walter's books —'*

Toady (George) is once more the most entertaining of the Picton Smith children. He has a robust and unique view on the world. He is described as *'such a libertine in speech and action, and generally so much accustomed to play a lone hand — that everyone was on tenter-hooks to know what he would do to earn the golden Edwards which attracted him as strongly as any of the others.'*

*That he would get them, no man doubted. But how? That was the question.'*

Toady is pretty unimpressed with Scott and particularly disappointed in *The Pirate* which he feels does not live up to its name. *'of course I thought it would be a proper worth-the-money pirate — like Captain Kidd, with an island, and barrels of treasure, and walking the plank. But I looked over — yes, skipped if you like; Sis taught me how — the first*

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*three hundred pages, and never a pirate! — It was just like the first two volumes of Rob Roy. [Puzzle — Find Rob!]*

I'm sure I'm not the only failed reader of Scott for whom this comment rings true!

As a pragmatic realist Toady is similarly unimpressed by other of Scott's tales; *'Maybe!' said Sir Toady, calmly; 'wearing a sword is all right — looks fine, and waggles about among your legs so as to make you feel grand. But for fighting, give me a proper good thick stick, that doesn't kill anybody, but dresses them down properly. And that, after all, is what you want!'*

There are any number of examples like this - and if you liked the Toady Lion stories you will enjoy picking up more of his homespun philosophies. He is a real little boy- and a real character. And a study in irreverence: *'This is that Sir Toady Lion who (they say) obtained nomination to a certain college for his reply to one of the examiners, who asked to know if he had read any of the books of a near relative.*

*'Oh, yes,' said the examinee, carelessly, 'some. But — I like Treasure Island better.'* Excellent criticism, excellent honesty, excellent policy! He was admitted at once.'

In *Red Cap Adventures*, Toady (George) is at Naval College. The Picton Smith children's views on schools are revealed more than once in this book and offer an interesting insight into education of the time. As in Crockett's previous children's books, in *Red Cap Adventures* we are treated to all the humorous detail of the chaotic life of the Picton Smiths. The children play out and get dirty. They are cheeky, rowdy and 'real' in every sense of the word. If you've enjoyed the Toady Lion stories then

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the *Red Cap* stories give more insight into the 'family' – Maid Margaret (Crockett's youngest daughter) is introduced here as a character in her own right for the first time.

Of the Scott stories I leave you to make your own engagement. Whether you stick with the stories the way the children tell them, or whether this sends you to the original source is your own choice. For me, there's much more than Scott to Crockett's *Red Cap* books. It is the insight into the barely fictionalised Crockett family that interests me most and their story which gives me most pleasure. But Crockett has done fairly by Scott nonetheless. No more could be asked of him. As he says: *'He cannot be a bad man who loves his Waverley truly and from the heart. If cleanliness is next to godliness, surely Sir Walter is the best mixture of both attainable in letters.'*

I can't say I love *Waverley*, but I do appreciate Crockett's attempts to engage others nearly as much as I admire his ability to weave a number of narrative voices together as part of the complex whole. For me, Scott becomes Crockett's foil rather than his master. And at the end of the day, Crockett gives an honest appraisal of his own views of authorship, one which I find both profound and interesting, and it seems only right to give Crockett the last word on authors and heroes: *'all authors have just one hero, that is the Self they would have liked to be, the gallant boy they were not, the fellow who defied the master when they whimpered to be let off, who fought the wounded tiger when they would have gladly shinned up a tree, who cleft a way through the hostile ranks when they would have followed Boer tactics and got behind the nearest rock.'*

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*That's your 'hero' — just the author if he had shoes of swiftness, helmet of invisibility, and a shirt of mail that would defy all the Dreadnought's twelve-inchers firing into him at once.'*

*Cally Phillips*

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Being the Second Series of 'Red Cap Tales'

TALES TOLD FROM 'IVANHOE'

It is a blessed thing to be a father, engaged in the daily production of immortal works. A rose-covered library set on the verges of a wood, gardens, the green sweep of a valley, the chime of a distant village clock — how ideal, how peaceful, saith the visiting stranger. Any one could work under such conditions!

But could he? Wait! Hearken!

There is a tramp of feet, all striking the hard, pebbly path with martial energy. Some one is exercising a company of soldiers beneath the latticed window, with the 'Hi! —'Ell! —Ump!' caught from the local drill-sergeant.

Eight footsteps fall as one. Arms of various calibre are grounded with a clatter immediately beneath the sill. Then the drill-sergeant proceeds to point out the shortcomings of his units with the brusque directness peculiar to his profession.

'You, Sweetheart, are a goose! I saw you looking over your shoulder thrice, to see if any one was coming. You are frightened of any one seeing you! Proper soldiers aren't frightened!'

'They would be if they were girls, and had to wear Zouave trousers!' said Sweetheart, with point.

'Coward! Coward!' said Sergeant-Major Hugh

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John, tauntingly.

Sweetheart threw down her arms with an extreme haughtiness fitted to chill all beholders.

'Won't play at your silly soldiers!' she cried. 'So, there!'

'Mutiny! Mutiny!' shouted the commander-in-chief. 'Seize her! To the dungeon with her!'

This, of course, he knew very well they could not do. For, firstly, fleetfoot Sweetheart could run faster than any of them. And, secondly, as soon as any punishment was attempted, Sir Toady Lion would take the side of the person attacked. He was the Buck, ever ready for the fray. There remained Maid Margaret, who would only laugh.

Never was a commander-in-chief more helpless. Dignity forbade him to yield directly. Yet what general can face his entire force in a state of mutiny?

'I resign the command of this army!' said Hugh John. 'Elect whom you please. I have done with you! You are worse than John Silver's buccaneers — you — you disgraces to civilisation!'

The army disbanded without showing any signs of its degraded position. Part immediately betook itself to the kennels to sing to the dogs. This was Sir Toady Lion. He had discovered that there was one long-drawn falsetto note 'with a dying fall' which no dog could resist. In five minutes he had them all singing away in maddening chorus. From my desk I could discern the 'wolf's long howl on Oonalaska's shore,' which proceeded from that first cousin of the wolf, our deerhound Ross. Huge 'Boom-pluff' Sampson thundered an earth-shaking bass, and even Sir Toady's own fox-terrier pointed his nose to the sky and sang with shrill rapture.

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Maid Margaret sat on a post and applauded. If she had known she would have gone for an ancient bugle, which, with the nozzle of a pair of bellows thrust deep into its battered throat, produced sounds calculated to freeze the blood of a licensed victualler. But as it was, the entertainment was too good. She could not miss a fleeting moment. Such moments are too rare. Here the superior force comes on the scene.

For a faithful author seeking inspiration (with his head between his hands and cotton-wool in his ears) felt the charm somewhat less. He selected a supple but efficient ash-plant, surnamed 'Early Piety,' from a rack crowded with umbrellas and camera legs, which stood by the door. Then he stepped softly out.

But that wide-awake youth Toady Lion had caught the slight rasping sound made by 'Early Piety' on the rim of the umbrella stand. So that when I descended the steps into the lower garden, there were only the hounds left to chastise.

A single application of the ash-plant sent them whimpering to their private apartments.

Remained the real culprits. These I discovered perched like crows upon the paling, which has for office to separate the home plantation from the big woods — six miles of woodlands free behind, every inch known to them. I could have caught them, of course. But somehow I didn't want to. It was a hot day, and Russian tactics were more comfortable. So I prepared to beat a masterly retreat — the only thing I could find to beat, owing to these rascally woods.

However, I rebuked them for making so much noise. They listened with their usual

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hypocritical humility. But I am far from being taken in by assumed penitence.

‘It was the dogs,’ Sir Toady explained; ‘I was trying to stop them!’

‘Oh, you story!’ broke out his elder brother, involuntarily. Then correcting himself on the verge of talebearing, the one Sin Without Forgiveness, he added, ‘Of course I didn't see! I wasn't there!’

‘No,’ said I, ‘and of course not one of you knows anything about it!’

In this I was correct. They had all heard the dogs, but none of them knew anything about ‘why they went on so.’

Toady Lion volunteered the suggestion that ‘it might be the weather.’

Nice dependable young persons! Yet I commended their solidarity, and when I had finished, Sweetheart, who is an adept in changing the subject, remarked that if I would only ‘tell them another story,’ it would be certain to ‘make the boys behave.’

This is Sweetheart's philosophy. Girls behave by nature. They are made so. Boys, on the contrary, need to be coerced into behaviour — or bribed.

Well, my afternoon was spoilt at any rate, and in a weak moment I said, ‘Well, come on then!’

‘It's all right!’ announced Sweetheart to the boys, who had been hovering farther off along the edges of the woods; ‘he's going to tell a story!’

How often have I represented to them that ‘he’ is the cat, and that the word ‘father’ is at once more natural and more descriptive.

They broke for the plantation green with cries of joy which had the effect of setting the dogs to their orisons again. But this time Sir Toady

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entered the bricked court and remorselessly kicked them into silence. He has a way with him, this young man.

'Stories from Ivanhoe! Nonsense!' I said, when I had yielded so far as to allow them to install themselves under the shade of a great beech, and begin to eat grass like so many oxen. 'No — indeed! Ivanhoe — you can read that for yourselves —'

'Only the fighting at the tournament!' said Hugh John.

'The shooting-match,' said Sir Toady, 'because it is in our school reader, and we can't help it!'

'I don't know nothin' about it at all!' said Maid Margaret, secure in the pure virtue of entire ignorance; 'go on. Tell me!'

'Besides,' coaxed Sweetheart, 'ever so many people have written to you asking for 'Ivanhoe' stories. And they surely know what's good for them. Only please make Wilfred marry—'

Now I knew well what this reckless young person was about to recommend. So I silenced her by telling her that if she wished to take liberties with the Great Unknown and his characters, she had better tell the tale over to herself. But I did not need to insist. The other listeners know very well 'when he is just going to begin,' and woe be to the wretch who interjects a remark likely to turn 'him' from his purpose. 'Shut up, Sis!' 'Sssssshut up, will you!' came from all sides. Sweetheart shrank back into alarmed silence. The trio settled themselves to eat grass with bovine steadiness and devotion, and I began

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## THE FIRST TALE FROM 'IVANHOE'

### 1. THE KEEPER OF SWINE

In the deepest glades of the forest of Sherwood, Gurth the swineherd and Wamba the Jester were getting their unhandy flock together. Or rather Fangs the wolfish lurcher, half mastiff, half greyhound, did it for them.

This all happened a long time ago. For round each of the men's necks was soldered a broad ring of brass, marking them for 'thralls' of one Cedric of Rotherham. Also Fangs had three toes cut from each forefoot as his badge of servitude to the Norman forest-ranger who had caught him chasing the deer.

Yes, it was so long ago as that. Richard of the Lion Heart was king of England, — or rather he ought to have been. But he had gone a-crusading to the Holy Land to deliver the Holy Sepulchre instead of staying at home to help deliver his people, who were not accounted holy at all. He had not got on very well, however, in spite of all his courage. Knights Templar and Knights of the Order of St. John had thwarted him, counting Palestine entirely their own; while his enemy, the Duke of Austria, had seized him on his return journey, and shut him up in the castle of Durrenstein on the Danube, in hopes of obtaining a great ransom before letting loose on the world so famous a king.

At home, he was almost forgotten. Prince John, his wild, half-cowardly, half-tyrannical brother, reigned in his stead, and did not hurry about sending the money for the royal ransom.

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But Gurth the swineherd and his friend Wamba the Jester did not talk much about these things in the glades of Sherwood. Low in the west a thunder-storm was rumbling. The swine would take no leading. Even Fangs only drove them hither and thither, instead of collecting them for their homeward journey. Gurth's temper was uncertain at the best, and Wamba, fool though he was, took care not to provoke his comrade beyond a certain point.

'Let them go,' he said, as the pigs broke away; 'they will be all Normans before the morning — and so be no more trouble to you!'

'What do you mean, fool?' growled Gurth the thrall, letting the gleam of a red and sullen eye fall upon the cap-and-bells of the fool; 'I have no time to be guessing riddles tonight!'

'What do you call these grunting beasts running about on four legs?' asked Wamba the Fool, pointing to the herd which Fangs was at last beginning to get into order.

'Why, swine, of course, fool!' growled Gurth, 'every ass knows that!'

'And those white woolly fellows on the slopes yonder?' he continued.

'Sheep, of course, fool!'

'Yes,' Wamba went on, making his cap nod and his bells jingle, 'and at home in the pen at your cottage-end are several little milk-swilling masters whose name is 'Calf' for the present. But these, when they appear upon the table of your betters, will be called Monsieur Veal, like good Normans. For, look you, good Gurth, as long as these beasts need tending and feeding they are Saxon, — Swine, Sheep, Calf, — all good Saxon. But when they come to be eaten, it is by Norman teeth and under

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Norman names, as pork, veal, mutton! What say you to that, Gurth the swineherd — friend Gurth the swineherd?’

Gurth sadly shook his head.

‘It is but too true,’ he muttered; ‘little is left to us Saxons now — hardly even the air to breathe. The best of everything for them — scarce the leavings remain to us — and even these given with a grudge!’

‘Treason against the Norman!’ cried Wamba. ‘What if I were to tell Reginald Front de Boeuf or Philip de Malvoisin that you spoke thus — why, if so, you were but a castaway herdsman. Why, man, you would waver in the wind from one of these Sherwood trees, like a broken-necked reed in the winds of winter!’

The storm now began to creep nearer, but by the help of Fangs, Gurth managed to head his charge homewards so as to escape before the breaking of the tempest. But Wamba's ear caught the sound of horses' hoofs, the jingle of rich caparisons, the clink of knightly armour.

Now Gurth, whose master was Cedric the Saxon, was noways anxious that armed Normans (for such the riders were almost sure to be) should come across his charge. Herds of swine were easily driven to the nearest castle and the herdsman left lying with a wound in his throat, so deep and wide that the open mouth above it would never more tell tales. So he hastened his march as best he might. But Wamba looked out for every village maid who passed, waving her a salute, or snatching here a handful of brambles and there a cluster of nuts by the wayside, in despite of both storms and Normans.

At last the horsemen came up, ten in

number, of whom two were obviously chiefs. The first was a churchman with little churchly about him, save the outward fashion of his robes. In fact it was no other than Aymer, the Prior of the Abbey of Jorvaux, a jolly priest and a lover of all good cheer and good company. There was accounted to be no great harm in him, and at sight of his monkish robe Gurth heaved a sigh of relief. But when he looked at the other, it was different. He, too, wore a monkish mantle. But underneath gleamed a suit of chain mail. His face was burned almost black with exposure to Eastern suns, while the Maltese cross on his shoulder proclaimed him a crusader, and one of the famous and powerful Order of Knights of the Temple. His dusky followers were slaves captured from the Saracen, now serving a new master while retaining the dress, customs, and weapons of the old.

So astonished was Wamba the Jester at the sudden appearance of these dark faces and gleaming weapons, that he could hardly collect himself enough to misdirect them when they demanded the road to the house of his master, with whom they might find shelter and hospitality for the night.

For Cedric the Saxon had stood bravely in the breach. He had upheld his countrymen in perilous times, and now was likely enough to suffer for it. Wamba the Fool resolved that it should not happen through him.

‘Go to the left after you pass the Sunken Cross,’ he said, ‘and within a mile or two you will come without fail to the house of our master.’

But when they were both gone, monk and crusader alike, he held up his hands before his face,

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looked from one to the other, and cried out that never had there been such luck. He had mistaken his right hand for his left!

But this stratagem did little good either to the fool or to his master. For at the foot of the Cross, when they came to it, lay a man worn out with weariness, by his dress a 'palmer' or returned pilgrim to the Holy Sepulchre. The Crusader bade thrust him with the lance-butt to awake him. But before the slave could obey the man sprung up, and, upon hearing their need, offered immediately to guide them to the dwelling of Cedric the Saxon, which he declared to be intricately situated in the midst of marshes and woods, and not to be found without assistance.

To the Crusader's reproach, that, being a palmer, he had better have remained to fight for the recovery of the tomb of Christ from the infidel, he replied as fiercely, that 'when those under oath to recover the Holy City were found so far afield, it was no wonder if simple peasants grew tired of the task which their betters had abandoned!'

The Templar was about to make some angry reply, but the Prior, who desired most of all to reach some place of shelter for the night, checked him, and soon they came in sight of Rotherham.

The dwelling of Cedric was an extensive building, or rather collection of buildings — a real 'town' of the Saxons. It was no mere Norman keep or tall cliff of masonry with a few huts of retainers battened upon it like so many swallows' nests of mud, but a real dwelling for men of different ranks — men who, though not equal, yet even as master and thrall respected each other, and counted all from 'jarl' to swineherd as of one family.

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Rotherham was not defenceless. It had fosse, stockade, and drawbridge, according to the rules of war. Indeed Cedric's enemies, of whom he had many, declared that it was but a perpetual armed camp, like that of his ancestor Hereward, threatening the tall stone castles of his Norman neighbours. Gurth was late in arriving, and Cedric the Saxon had long grown most uneasy. Though his words were rough, he loved his thralls like a father, and he much feared that some Norman free-lance had stolen the herd and left their faithful guardian lying in his blood, as had often been done before to others of his nation and calling.

Cedric of Rotherham was a stout, hearty man of great courage and general good nature, but with an eye which denoted frequent bouts of temper.

'Ah,' he muttered to himself as he thought of his wrongs, 'if only Wilfred had not been so hot and foolish, I should not have been left alone among these hungry Norman tyrants.'

But just then the horn of the Templar without the gate waked him from sad thoughts of his absent son. He ordered the strangers to be received and well cared for — all the more so that they were Normans, and the Templar, at least, a man of dangerous reputation. Cedric would be accounted, even by his foes, no niggard churl.

'Oswald,' he said to his butler, 'go broach the oldest cask, pour out the most sparkling cider, the richest mead, the moral of honey and mulberries — and' (here he turned to a smart waiting-maid) 'let the Lady Rowena know that to-night we shall not expect her in hall, unless such be her especial pleasure!'

'But it will be her especial pleasure,' returned

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the maid, pertly, like one who is sure of her favour, 'for I warrant she will like to hear the latest news from Palestine!'

'Silence,' cried Cedric; 'deliver my message without comment. If the Lady Rowena comes, we must make the best of it. Here at least she shall reign like the daughter of King Alfred!'

The handmaiden had spoken truth. Either curiosity or the desire to tease her protector — perhaps also in part Elgitha's account of the two gallant Norman gentlemen — brought the Lady Rowena to the hall as usual, where the Prior paid her compliments, and the Templar stared her out of countenance till she was obliged to draw her veil about her face.

Meanwhile the night had broken into fiercer storm without, and the guests were hardly seated, before a yet more bedraggled wayfarer was announced — this time a Jew, one Isaac of York by name. He was an old man, tall and spare, clad in the long gabardine and yellow cap of his race. His welcome was of the most scanty. Cedric indeed insisted on admitting him — though the Normans, his first guests, cried sacrilege and cursed the Israelite aloud. None, however, made place for him at the table. The sturdy Saxon men-at-arms squared their shoulders and went on eating. Even the Saracen slaves laid their hands on their daggers and growled threats against the 'Yahoudi!'

So that after having gone from one end of the hall to the other, looking vainly about him for a friendly face, the old man was about to retire, hoping to find, perhaps, some kindlier shelter among the cattle in byre or barn, when a hand was laid on his arm. He started violently, for grasps

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which fell thus upon Jewish gabardines were not generally those of friendly fingers. This time, however, it was the palmer, who had quitted the great chimney corner and now drew the Jew to his vacant place.

'I have eaten,' he said; 'my clothes are now dry — you are both wet and hungry. Sit down!'

And walking to the board with the freedom of his order, he brought the persecuted Jew a smoking mess of pottage and seethed kid heaped together in a great platter.

In the hall about the high table the talk had fallen as usual upon the Wars of the Holy Places, and who were the bravest of the Crusaders. The Templar De Bois-Guilbert held for his own order, as was natural. The Prior, for the Knights Hospitaller, because he had a brother of that order. Cedric maintained that Richard, their English King, had taken with him the bravest of the brave — the pick of the nation, Saxon and Norman alike.

Suddenly the palmer, who had been listening, unseen, to the discussion, struck in as Cedric ceased speaking.

"Right," he said; "I saw our King Richard and five of his knights, after the taking of Acre, hold a tournament against all comers. On that famous day each of the six English knights ran three courses, and threw to the ground three opponents. *And Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert well knows the truth of what I say!*"

The Templar purpled with anger, for he had been one of those fallen opponents. He gripped his sword as if on the spot he would have slain the palmer. But this he could not do, because Cedric, simple and childlike of heart, openly triumphed in

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the news so opportunely brought by the pilgrim.

'What did I tell you?' he cried; 'I wager there were Saxons among them. I will set a gold bracelet on your wrist if you will but tell me their names.'

'That will I do,' said the palmer, 'but without reward. I have a vow which keeps me from touching gold — in this house,' he added, in his heart.

'The King was first,' said the palmer, 'that day as always. After him came the Earl of Leicester. Sir Thomas Multon of Gilsland was the third.'

'Of Saxon descent, he at least!' cried Cedric.

'Sir Foulk Doilly!'

'Saxon by his mother's side!' cried Cedric, clapping his thigh.

'Then Sir Edward Turneham!'

'Genuine Saxon, by the soul of Hengist!' shouted Cedric; 'now name the sixth. If he should also prove Saxon, that would put us as far forward as we were on the day of the Battle of the Standard, when we fought the Scots side by side with the Normans!'

The palmer hesitated. For the first time his memory seemed confused.

'I have forgotten,' he said; 'it was, I believe, a young knight who was added, more to make up the number than because of any bravery or skill.'

'Sir Palmer,' cried the Templar, 'you shall not thus escape after remembering so much. I will tell the name of this last knight, before whom, owing to a splintered lance and a faulty horse, even I went down. He was called the Knight of Ivanhoe. Nor was there one of the six, for his years, that had more renown in arms. But this I will say and loudly, that were he in England and dared repeat in this week's tournament at Ashby the challenge of Acre, I would

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gladly give him every choice and advantage of weapons and abide the result.'

'Words are cheap,' said the palmer; 'if Wilfred of Ivanhoe were in England, he would take up your challenge — and even now I will be security for him!'

'Faith, a goodly security!' sneered the Templar, looking at the poor garb of the pilgrim; 'and what do you offer as a pledge?'

'This precious casket of ivory containing a piece of the true cross, brought from the Monastery of Mount Carmel!' said the other, instantly setting a beautiful box upon the table.

At sight of it the Prior reverently crossed himself, and said a Paternoster aloud, in which all except the Jew, the Moslems, and the Templar joined. The latter merely took from his neck a golden chain, which he flung on the table, crying, 'Let Prior Aymer hold my pledge and that of this nameless vagrant, in token that so soon as the Knight of Ivanhoe comes within the four seas, he must fight Brian de Bois-Guilbert, or be proclaimed a coward on the walls of every Temple Court in Europe!'

'And I also will be surety for him,' cried the Lady Rowena, checking herself with a bright flush as if she would gladly have said more if she had dared.

'And I, myself, though offended and justly offended — I would be the boy's surety, if such were needed!' growled Cedric, across whose face pride, anger, and scarcely concealed pleasure had been chasing each other.

'Now we must to bed !' said the Prior, who, though fond of company, was a man of peace, and saw that in such a house, betwixt Saxon host and Norman guest, a little spark might kindle a very great fire.

## 2. COUNCIL OF CONNOISSEURS

There was a serious pause. At another time I should have known what that meant. Sometimes, when much in the humour, I have been known to 'keep on,' and so get them off 'Prep' or 'Stale'—which, as all boys know, consists in pretending to do tomorrow's class lessons and doing something else for today. On this occasion, however, there could be no such intention. For it was the heart of the 'Long,' when lessons and the need to do them were as far from their minds as the Hydrography of the Mountains of the Moon — or any other 'ography,' 'ometry,' or 'ology' whatsoever. Chocolate creams and more fruit than was good for them, for the moment bounded their desires. Frequently I had represented the folly of this.

'There is,' I pointed out, 'always a tomorrow when one must pay for having 'too much' of anything in this world.' 'The little more and how much it is,' I quoted to them, directing their thoughts to the family medicine chest. But all four were rank opportunists, and went on serenely picking gooseberries.

'Oh, bother Tomorrow!' said Sir Toady Lion, always the chief scorner of the wisdom of the ages. His buoyant youth cares about no greybeard sermon — that is, till it comes to the application, and even that had better be brought home to him with an ash-plant.

As they ate grass and sorrel stalks afterwards they threw comments over their shoulders. Some of these concerned the quality of the juice, while others were designed to compel me

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to continue the tale of Saxon and Norman without conditions. A few, but those of modern and informative character, concerned the part of the story I had been telling them.

‘D’ye ever notice,’ said Hugh John, the elder of the two boys, to his standing accomplice, Sir Toady Lion, ‘that there are always storms coming on at the beginning of books? Then all the good people scuttle somewhere else to keep dry, just where the bad people are waiting to nab them?’

Toady Lion, cramming four sorrel stalks into his mouth at once so as not to lose time, replied that he had noticed it, but that on this occasion it was the bad people whom the storm drove out of their way to find the good people.

‘I don’t like that one they found pretending to be asleep by the Sunken Cross — him that told them the road, you know!’ he added seriously.

At this Sweetheart smiled serenely and glanced at me. She likes to be ‘in the know.’ Besides, she has already read the book, though she very kindly listens all the same. Hugh John caught the look, to which he particularly objected.

‘Sis Sweetheart thinks she is mighty clever,’ he cried; ‘she is looking over at father. I bet that old palmer fellow was somebody. I bet he’s Richard Coeur de Lion come back again — the fellow you were named after (this he explained in an aside to Sir Toady Lion), and he’s going to make old Templar Brian de Something-Just-Awful-Grand as sick as he can be. I’ll bet you my new knife to your old catapult it goes like that!’

‘Of course,’ agreed Sir Toady; ‘any fellow could see that. But I don’t believe that he is King Richard — not grand enough, nearly!’

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'Oh,' sneered Hugh John, with whom irony was a favourite mode of expression, 'I suppose he should have come home as an archbishop, or dressed up like a Lion holding his 'heart' between his teeth!'

'You nasty, horrid boy!' exclaimed Sweetheart, who has a dislike to the metaphors of the butcher's shop.

Meanwhile Maid Margaret, official Wheedler-in-Chief to the quartette, perched herself upon the tale-teller's knee, and addressed the following words in a low tone in his immediate ear: —

'Won't you — mumble-mumble — then -they will stop . . . mumble-mumble — ? Boys is so silly, you know!'

Girls, of course, are anything but. For at that moment she pleaded for a continuation of the tale, pressing a wisp of blond curl soft as silk against my cheek, and letting the words '*Won't you — won't you NOW?*' escape with a liquid gurgle from her throat, so that the Second Tale from *Ivanhoe* was as good as told. But I did not mind. Maid Margaret lay still in my lap, listening, and encouraging the narrator with soft little pats and caresses, which fell indiscriminately on his cheek, neck, nose, hair, and coat collar.

The boys, especially Hugh John, sniffed loudly upon the nose of contempt. But the Maid kept on, not minding them a bit. She knew her business value. And in their heart of hearts they, too, knew the power of such things. Not for nothing, but very much for the advantage of the community, had she been named Wheedler-in-Chief to the forces in the field.

## THE SECOND TALE FROM 'IVANHOE'

### 1. THE SPLINTERED LANCES OF ASHBY

On the morrow the house of Cedric the Saxon awoke to find itself lacking two of its guests. The palmer and the Jew Isaac of York had departed silently in the night. Gurth the swineherd, too, had mysteriously vanished. Another must lead out his grunting charge that morning into the oaken glades of Sherwood.

And all owing to certain words spoken in the Saracen tongue, which the palmer had overheard the Templar address to his slaves the night before, ordering them to seize the Jew, and convey him for torture and ransom to the keep of one of the cruel Norman lords who were Cedric's immediate neighbours.

It had proved a busy night for the palmer. First he had been commanded to speak with the Lady Rowena, who wished to know more about Wilfred of Ivanhoe, the knight of whom he had spoken in hall. Then, returning to his cell, he had awakened the Jew, in order to tell him of his danger, and last of all the surly swineherd Gurth, in whose ear he whispered a word which brought him out of his bed and to his knees in a moment.

In the morning, therefore, there was in Rotherham no palmer to give further news of the absent to the Lady Rowena, no swineherd to guide the flocks of Cedric, and no rich Jew from whom the Templar might extract alternate teeth and sequins.

But in Rotherham also there was little time

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to think of such things. None, except perhaps the Lady Rowena, thought of anything but the great tournament. The Templar was the chief challenger at the lists of Ashby. His pavilion was already erected in the midst of the other four, between those of Front de Boeuf and Philip de Malvoisin. Rowena and Cedric were on their way as spectators. Isaac of York had joined his daughter Rebecca, and both were already safe with friends of their own nation. As for the palmer and Gurth — where these two had hidden themselves must be told later.

Prince John, the King's half-rebel brother, was to sit in the Royal seat at the lists. A long programme had been arranged, beginning with the battles of steel-clad knights, and ending with the popular sports, by which the Prince hoped to win the commons to stand by him, if ever his brother returned from captivity.

The tournament field was something like this — an enclosure of strong palings a quarter of a mile long and half as broad. Within were five pavilions or large decorated tents at the southern end, where there was a kind of rising ground. These were for the challengers.

A pennon waved from a lance before each, guarded by a squire dressed as a savage or wild Man-of-the-Woods — from which custom comes the supporters upon heraldic coats-of-arms.

Down either side there were pavilions built like grandstands for the princes and nobles with their ladies. A lower belt of seats like the pit of a wide theatre was for the rich yeomen and burghers, while about the barriers thronged the commons — broad in jest and free in comment as ever.

Prince John, who hated all things Saxon, and

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who had borrowed much money of Isaac of York, was mischievously resolved to place the Jew and his daughter next to the seats of Cedric and Rowena. Their neighbour Athelstane of Coningsburgh, a Saxon of the line royal, a strong but unready man, was sharply ordered to move in order to make room. He sat still.

'Touch the Saxon porker with your lance, De Bracy!' cried the Prince; 'he is either asleep or else minds me not!'

And De Bracy, a free-lance, who cared nothing either for Saxon or Celt, and but little for Norman so that he earned his pay, would have obeyed the Prince's order, had not Cedric as swift as lightning unsheathed the short sword he wore, and striking once, he severed the point of De Bracy's lance from the shaft.

'Bravo! Oh, bravo!' cried a yeoman from the crowd. Prince John, not venturing for the moment to offend the Saxons further, bent angry brows upon the bold yeoman, but the man went on applauding, nothing daunted. Fiercely Prince John demanded what he meant by clamouring so in his hearing.

'I always add my hollo,' answered the man, 'when I see a good shot or a gallant blow!'

'Sayst thou,' sneered the Prince; 'then I warrant you can hit the white yourself?'

'A woodman's mark, at woodman's distance I can hit!' quoth the yeoman.

'Well,' cried the Prince, 'we will try you.'

'Ay, Wat Tyrrel's mark at a hundred yards!' cried a voice from the crowd, meaning that even Prince John must not presume too far, or the fate of William Rufus, his not distant kinsman, might be his. The Prince's face flushed, partly with fear, more

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with anger. But the speaker remained invisible, so that he could do no more than order his escort to keep an eye on 'that braggart,' as he called the yeoman who had applauded Cedric's stroke.

Still, however, he insisted on the Jew climbing up to sit beside the Saxon lords, whom he delighted above all things to humiliate.

'Up with you,' he bade the unwilling Isaac, 'or I will have your infidel hide tanned for horse furniture! And let me see who dares to hinder you!'

Cedric the Saxon was obviously prepared to hurl the Jew down as soon as he reached the top of the narrow stairs, and in that case a serious outbreak might have been expected. But Wamba the Jester, who had brought a solid square of brawn with him, wherewith to while away the long hours of tourneying, suddenly thrust it in the Jew's face like a shield, and, waving his sword of lath over his head, so terrified the old man that he stumbled and fell headlong down the ladder.

At this every one laughed, and Prince John thought it well to laugh also.

'Make room for the Jew in the lower ring,' he said, 'we cannot put the victor on the same level as the vanquished.' And, demanding a handful of gold byzants from the Jew, he threw a couple of them to the fool and rode off, amid as much laughter and applause from the spectators as if he had done some honest and worthy deed.

The first assault upon the challengers was made by parties of five, chosen by lot out of the crowd of knights gathered in the southern enclosure. It was Allcomers' Day. But Bois-Guilbert and Front de Boeuf with their companions were easily victors — somewhat too easily indeed to please Cedric the

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Saxon, who hinted hopes of glory to his companion Athelstane of Coningsburgh to spur him on to match his huge strength against the victorious Normans.

But he only replied, lazily as ever, that he did not think it worth while to arm today, but that he would tilt in the melee tomorrow.

After the fourth tilt, however, there was a general and marked disinclination to try conclusions with challengers who had so often been victorious, and especially with Front de Boeuf and the redoubtable De Bois-Guilbert.

The Saracen music breathed ever more harshly and scornfully from behind the Northern tents, and it was only after long waiting that a solitary trumpet blew, and, the gates being opened, a challenger clad in steel and gold with his visor down rode into the lists. He had on his shield the device of a young oak pulled up by the roots, and the Spanish motto 'DESDICHADO,' which means Disinherited.

After their manner the crowd, Saxons mainly, was friendly to the newcomer.

'Take Vipont!' they cried, giving the name of the one of the challengers who was accounted the weakest.

But instead the Disinherited Knight rode straight up to the pavilion of De Bois-Guilbert, and struck the suspended shield with the sharp end of his lance till the steel rang again.

[But even to listening bairns I could not bring myself to retell the Passage of Arms at Ashby in other words than those of the Master. So I took the book itself from my pocket, and opening at the best-thumbed passage I read aloud the moving pages,

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which have been, in all times, a boy's best introduction to Sir Walter.]

The two champions stood opposed at the two extremities of the lists. The public expectation was strained to the highest pitch.

The trumpets had no sooner given the signal, than the champions vanished from their posts with the speed of lightning, and closed in the centre of the lists with the shock of a thunderbolt. The lances burst into shivers up to the very grasp, and it seemed at the moment that both knights had fallen, for the shock had made each horse recoil backwards upon its haunches. The address of the riders recovered their steeds by use of the bridle and spur; and having glared on each other for an instant with eyes which seemed to flash fire through the bars of their visors, each made a demivolt, and, retiring to the extremity of the lists, received a fresh lance from the attendants.

A loud shout from the spectators, waving of scarfs and handkerchiefs, and general acclamations, attested the interest taken by the spectators in this encounter; the most equal, as well as the best performed, which had graced the day. But no sooner had the knights resumed their station, than the clamour of applause was hushed into a silence, so deep and so dead, that it seemed the multitude were afraid even to breathe.

A few minutes' pause having been allowed, that the combatants and their horses might recover breath, Prince John with his truncheon signed to the trumpets to sound the onset. The champions a second time sprang from their stations, and closed in the centre of the lists, with the same speed, the

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same dexterity, the same violence, but not the same equal fortune, as before.

In this second encounter, the Templar aimed at the centre of his antagonist's shield, and struck it so fair and forcibly, that his spear went to shivers, and the Disinherited Knight reeled in his saddle. On the other hand, that champion had, in the beginning of his career, directed the point of his lance towards Bois-Guilbert's shield, but, changing his aim almost in the moment of encounter, he addressed it to the helmet, a mark more difficult to hit, but which, if attained, rendered the shock more irresistible. Fair and true he hit the Norman on the visor, where his lance's point kept hold of the bars. Yet, even at this disadvantage, the Templar sustained his high reputation, and had not the girths of his saddle burst, he might not have been unhorsed. As it chanced, however, saddle, horse, and man rolled on the ground under a cloud of dust.

To extricate himself from the stirrups and fallen steed was to the Templar scarce the work of a moment; and, stung with madness, both at his disgrace and at the acclamations with which it was hailed by the spectators, he drew his sword, and waved it in defiance of his conqueror. The Disinherited Knight sprang from his steed, and also unsheathed his sword. The marshals of the field, however, spurred their horses between them, and reminded them that the laws of the tournament did not, on the present occasion, permit this species of encounter.

'We shall meet again, I trust,' said the Templar, casting a resentful glance at his antagonist; 'and where there are none to separate us.'

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'If we do not,' said the Disinherited Knight, 'the fault shall not be mine. On foot, or horseback, with spear, with axe, or with sword, I am alike ready to encounter you.'

Without again alighting from his horse, the conqueror called for a bowl of wine, and, opening the beaver or lower part of his helmet, announced that he quaffed it, 'To all true English hearts, and to the confusion of foreign tyrants.' He then commanded his trumpet to sound a defiance to the challengers, and desired a herald to announce to them that he should make no election, but was willing to encounter them in the order in which they pleased to advance against him.

The gigantic Front de Boeuf, armed in sable armour, was the first who took the field. He bore on a white shield a black bull's head, half defaced by the numerous encounters which he had undergone, and bearing the arrogant motto, '*Cave, adsum*' Over this champion the Disinherited Knight obtained a slight but decisive advantage. Both knights broke their lances fairly, but Front de Boeuf, who lost a stirrup in the encounter, was adjudged to have the disadvantage.

In the stranger's third encounter, with Sir Philip Malvoisin, he was equally successful; striking that baron so forcibly on the casque, that the laces of the helmet broke, and Malvoisin, only saved from falling by being unhelmeted, was declared vanquished like his companions.

In his fourth combat, with De Grantmesnil, the Disinherited Knight showed as much courtesy as he had hitherto evinced courage and dexterity. De Grantmesnil's horse, which was young and violent, reared and plunged in the course of the career so as

to disturb the rider's aim, and the stranger, declining to take the advantage which this accident afforded him, raised his lance, and, passing his antagonist without touching him, wheeled his horse and rode back again to his own end of the lists, offering his antagonist, by a herald, the chance of a second encounter. This De Grantmesnil declined, avowing himself vanquished as much by the courtesy as by the address of his opponent.

Ralph de Vipont summed up the list of the stranger's triumphs, being hurled to the ground with such force that the blood gushed from his nose and mouth, and he was borne senseless from the lists.

The acclamations of thousands applauded the unanimous award of the prince and marshals, announcing that day's honours to the Disinherited Knight.

'Who is he? Who is this hard-driving fighter?' Over and over the question was asked by those about the person of Prince John.

'Some stray Crusader of King Richard's, straggling home from Palestine,' was the general answer.

'But who?' they asked again. 'Salisbury is bigger in the bone — Sir Thomas Multon —?'

'It might be the king — perhaps Coeur de Lion himself!' None knew from whom the whisper came, but the very breath of it paled the cheek of Prince John.

'Over-Gods forbode!' cried he, using his favourite oath, 'Waldemar, Bracy, remember your promises and stand by me!'

'No danger!' said Waldemar Fitzurse, the chief of Prince John's councillors, a little scornfully; 'are you so ill acquainted with the gigantic limbs of

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your father's son as to think that they could be contained by yonder suit of armour?'

And the Prince Usurper was in fact somewhat reassured when the marshals brought forward the Disinherited Knight to receive his own prize of a noble warhorse, and to hear his princely words of commendation. The victor received also the famous Crown of Love and Beauty with full liberty to give it to any lady present at the tournament, who, from that moment, must be served by all with queenly honours so long as the gathering lasted.

But the Prince, always building up with one hand what he knocked down with the other, recommended the victor to bestow the crown upon Alicia, the daughter of the formidable Fitzurse, hoping thus to please his chief councillor, and to make an enemy for the Disinherited in case of his choosing in another quarter. But Fitzurse told him plainly that a dozen such Crowns of Love and Beauty would make no difference to his daughter, and that it was the undoubted right of the victor freely to choose a Liege Lady according to his own mind.

So when the Disinherited laid his crown at the feet of Rowena, all the Saxons shouted as at another victory over the Normans.

They cried even in the hearing of the Prince: 'Long live the Saxon princess! Long live the race of Alfred!'

The short night passed quickly and busily. Few slept at all. Armourers clanked hour after hour about their glimmering fires on the outskirts of the camp, altering and mending the arms and armour to be used on the morrow. The royal guards were

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changed every two hours, as were also those about the camps of the knights. For such gatherings attracted robbers and bandits from every quarter, and the whole neighbourhood of Ashby was notoriously unsafe.

Meanwhile the Disinherited One had withdrawn to his tent, after declining with courtesy the invitation of the Prince to banquet with him, on the plea of a vow to keep his face covered for certain days. We find him under the hands of a former swineherd, to whom he had trusted his secret, and who that day had with some success represented a Norman squire. After having arranged with the messengers of the vanquished knights for the ransom of their chargers and armour upon easy terms, the Disinherited Knight sent off Gurth with the price of the armour in which he had fought to the Jew Isaac of York.

Eighty zecchins was the price, and Isaac, still shuddering at the thought of the gold pieces the Prince had reft from him that day in the lists, dropped them into his purse to the very last one. But as Gurth descended the stairs, a figure clad in white, standing in a doorway, beckoned him mysteriously into a side chamber.

At the sight, the superstitious Saxon could hardly restrain a cry of fear and astonishment. But he was still more astonished when Rebecca, the beautiful daughter of the Jew Isaac, thrust a bag of a hundred gold pieces into his hand, telling him that her father had but jested, and that he owed more to his master than he could ever pay. Twenty of the tale he was to keep for himself. His master had previously given him ten. This day, therefore, went far beyond any day the swineherd had ever known.

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‘Such another,’ he muttered to himself, ‘and Gurth will have enough red gold to redeem his bondage and be as free as any man in England!’

Yet it was to be a night of adventures for the herdsman. It chanced that, in order to regain his master's tent, he had to pass the straggling cottages, and plunge between deep banks, on which the broom and the hazel bushes stood up like black plumes against the light of the harvest moon.

He had just reached the top of the copse when four men sprang suddenly upon him out of the underbrush, and, though he struggled valiantly, Gurth was soon dragged along into a more open space, where two others joined them, visored and equipped with short Saxon swords at their sides. There was no need to tell him that these were members of a robber band.

‘What money have you?’ demanded the leader.

‘Thirty zecchins of mine own to purchase my freedom!’ said Gurth, determined to save his master's wealth if he could, knowing how great need he would have of it. Then came a further catechism to which poor Gurth made such answers as he could find. He explained that the money he carried (which the robbers had soon snatched from him) was the ransom of the knights who had that day been defeated.

‘Then,’ said the chief, ‘your master, the Disinherited Knight, has let them off too easy — only two hundred zecchins for all the five horses and their equipment!’

‘And what,’ he continued, ‘were you doing so late in Ashby? Paying Isaac the Jew for the horse and armour he had lent to your master to fight in?’

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How much? Eighty zecchins, and he gave you a hundred back! Lying knave that you are! A Jew gives nothing back. If you tell us such lies we will have every farthing and break thy head into the bargain!’

They began to believe Gurth's word, however, when they found the embroidered purse of the Jewess within the wallet of the swineherd.

Upon this the chief of the band cried out that for this time they must let the servant of such a man go.

‘This Disinherited is too like ourselves,’ he said; ‘dog does not eat dog, when there are foxes and wolves in abundance!’

‘Like ourselves!’ objected one of the robbers’ gang; ‘I would like to hear that made good!’

‘Why, fool?’ answered the captain, fiercely; ‘is he not poor and disinherited, just as we are? Does he not win his gear at the sword's point like us? Has he not beaten Front de Boeuf and Malvoisin as we would gladly do if we could? Is he not the mortal enemy of Bois-Guilbert, whom we have such good reason to fear? Shall we treat such a man worse than this Hebrew Jew?’

Hearing this they were all silent, except for a single discontented grumble from a short, thickset man whom they called the Miller.

‘Then I suppose we shall lose our night,’ he muttered; ‘even this insolent peasant must go scatheless!’

‘Not if you can scathe him, Miller!’ cried the chief; ‘there, take a couple of quarter-staffs, and fall to. He seems a ready loon with his weapons. Let a cudgel keep his head, and if he be beaten — why, I think I must e'en pay the sturdy knave's ransom myself!’

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Therefore in the cleared space and in the full moonlight, they fell to. And this is the tale of their fight: The two champions, being alike armed with quarter-staves, stepped forward into the centre of the open space, in order to have the full benefit of the moonlight; the thieves in the meantime laughing, and crying to their comrade, 'Miller! beware thy toll-dish.' The Miller, on the other hand, holding his quarter-staff by the middle, and making it flourish round his head after the fashion which the French call *faire le moulinet*, exclaimed boastfully, 'Come on, churl, an thou darest; thou shalt feel the strength of a miller's thumb!'

'If thou be'st a miller,' answered Gurth, undauntedly, making his weapon play around his head with equal dexterity, 'thou art doubly a thief, and I, as a true man, bid thee defiance.'

So saying, the two champions closed together, and for a few minutes they displayed great equality in strength, courage, and skill, intercepting and returning the blows of their adversary with the most rapid dexterity, while, from the continued clatter of their weapons, a person at a distance might have supposed that there were at least six persons engaged on each side.

Long they fought equally, until the Miller began to lose temper at finding himself so stoutly opposed, and at hearing the laughter of his companions, who, as usual in such cases, enjoyed his vexation. This was not a state of mind favourable to the noble game of quarter-staff, in which, as in ordinary cudgel-playing, the utmost coolness is requisite; and it gave Gurth, whose temper was steady, though surly, the opportunity of acquiring a decided advantage, in availing himself of which he

displayed great mastery.

The Miller pressed furiously forward, dealing blows with either end of his weapon alternately, and striving to come to half-staff distance, while Gurth defended himself against the attack, keeping his hands about a yard asunder, and covering himself by shifting his weapon with great celerity, so as to protect his head and body. Thus did he maintain the defensive, making his eye, foot, and hand keep true time, until, observing his antagonist to lose wind, he darted the staff at his face with his left hand; and as the Miller endeavoured to parry the thrust, he slid his right hand down to his left, and with the full swing of the weapon struck his opponent on the left side of the head, who instantly measured his length upon the greensward.

‘Well and yeomanly done!’ shouted the robbers; ‘fair play and Old England forever. The Saxon hath saved both his purse and his hide, and the Miller has met his match.’

### 2. BATTLE GENERAL

The next day was that of the melee, or fight general. The body of the knights was divided into two parts, one led by the victor of the first day, the Disinherited Knight, the other by Bois-Guilbert, who had been named second champion.

The rules of the melee as proclaimed by the heralds were few and simple. Knights whose lances were broken might continue to fight with swords. Dismounted men might only fight with one another. If one combatant forced another against the barriers, he had conquered him.

The Lady Rowena presided that day over the

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lists as Queen of Beauty, and even Prince John did her obeisance. The signal for the onset being given, fifty steel-clad knights on either side hurled themselves together. The party of the Disinherited Knight held fewer champions than that of Bois-Guilbert. For not only did all the old challengers adhere to it, but they were joined, much to the astonishment of Cedric, by the huge Saxon Athelstane of Coningsburgh, who had not forgiven the Disinherited One for choosing Rowena (whom he looked upon as his own property) as Queen of Beauty. Besides, Rowena herself appeared far too much interested in the Knight of the Plucked-up Oak Tree. Accordingly, he, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, would punish his temerity by fighting against him in the melee.

As yet the knights held their long lances upright, their bright points glancing in the sun, and the streamers with which they were decorated fluttering over the plumage of the helmets. The trumpets sounded — the spears of the champions were at once lowered and placed in the rests — the spurs were dashed into the flanks of the horses, and the two foremost ranks of either party rushed upon each other in full gallop, and met in the middle of the lists with a shock, the sound of which was heard at a mile's distance. The rear rank of either side advanced at a slower pace to sustain the defeated, and follow up the success of the victors of their party.

The consequences of the encounter were not instantly seen, for the dust raised by the trampling of so many steeds darkened the air, and it was a full minute ere the anxious spectators could see the fate of the encounter. When the fight became visible, half

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the knights on each side were dismounted, — some by the dexterity of their adversary's lance, some by the superior weight and strength of their opponents, which had borne down both horse and man. Some lay stretched on earth as if never more to rise; some had already gained their feet, and were closing hand to hand with those of their antagonists who were in the same predicament; and several on both sides, who had received wounds by which they were disabled, were stopping their blood with their scarfs, and endeavouring to extricate themselves from the tumult. The mounted knights, whose lances had been almost all broken by the fury of the encounter, were now closely engaged with their swords, shouting their war cries, and exchanging buffets, as if honour and life depended on the issue of the combat.

Meantime the clang of the blows, and the shouts of the combatants, mixed fearfully with the sound of the trumpets, and drowned the groans of those who fell and lay rolling defenceless beneath the feet of the horses. The splendid armour of the combatants was now defaced with dust and blood, and gave way at every stroke of the sword and battle-axe. The gay plumage, shorn from the crests, drifted upon the breeze like snowflakes. All that was beautiful and graceful in the martial array disappeared, and what was now visible was only calculated to awake terror or compassion.

The leaders of each band, mingling in the thick of the fight, encouraged their companions both by voice and example. Both displayed great feats of gallantry, nor did either Bois-Guilbert or the Disinherited Knight find in the ranks opposed to them a champion who could be termed their

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unquestioned match. They repeatedly endeavoured to single out each other, aware that the fall of either leader might be considered as decisive of victory.

But when the field became thin, the Templar and the Disinherited Knight at length encountered hand to hand, with all the fury that mortal animosity, joined to rivalry of honour, could inspire. Such was the address of each in parrying and striking, that the spectators broke forth into a unanimous and involuntary shout expressive of their delight and admiration.

But at this moment the party of the Disinherited Knight had the worst; the gigantic arm of Front de Boeuf on the one flank, and the ponderous strength of Athelstane on the other, bearing down and dispersing those exposed to them. Finding themselves freed from their immediate antagonists, it seems to have occurred to both these knights at the same instant, that they would render the most decisive advantage to their party by aiding the Templar in his contest with his rival. Turning their horses, therefore, at the same moment, the Norman spurred against the Disinherited Knight on the one side, while the Saxon charged home on the other. It was utterly impossible that the object of this unequal and unexpected assault could have sustained it, had he not been warned by a general cry from the spectators, who could not but take interest in one exposed to such disadvantages.

'Beware! Beware, Sir Disinherited!' was shouted so universally, that the knight became aware of his danger, and, striking a full blow at the Templar, he reined back his steed in the same moment, so as to escape the charge of Athelstane and Front de Boeuf. These knights, therefore, their

aim being thus eluded, rushed from opposite sides betwixt the object of their attack and the Templar, almost running their horses against each other ere they could stop their career. Recovering their steeds, however, and wheeling them round, the whole three pursued their united purpose of bearing to the earth the Disinherited Knight.

Nothing now could have saved him except the remarkable strength and activity of the noble horse which he had won on the preceding day.

This stood him in the more stead, as the horse of Bois-Guilbert was wounded, and those of Front de Boeuf and Athelstane were both tired with the weight of their gigantic masters, clad in complete armour, and with the preceding exertions of the day. The masterly horsemanship of the Disinherited Knight, and the activity of the noble animal which he mounted, enabled him for a few moments longer to keep at sword's point his three antagonists, turning and wheeling with the agility of a hawk upon the wing, keeping his enemies as far separate as he could, and rushing now against one, now against the other, dealing sweeping blows with his sword, without waiting to receive those which were aimed at him in return.

But although the lists rang with the applauses of his dexterity, it was evident that he must at last be overpowered; and the nobles around Prince John implored him with one voice to throw down his warder, and to save so brave a knight from the disgrace of being overcome by odds.

'Not I, by the light of Heaven!' answered Prince John; 'this same springal, who conceals his name, and despises our proffered hospitality, has already gained one prize, and may now afford to let

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others have their turn.' As he spoke thus, an unexpected incident changed the fortune of the day.

There was among the ranks of the Disinherited Knight a champion in black armour, mounted on a black horse, large in size, tall, and to all appearance powerful and strong, like the rider by whom he was mounted.

This knight, who bore on his shield no device of any kind, had hitherto evinced very little interest in the event of the fight, beating off with seeming ease those combatants who attacked him, but neither pursuing his advantage, nor himself assailing any one. In short, he had hitherto acted the part rather of a spectator than of a party in the tournament, a circumstance which procured him among the spectators the name of *Le Noir Faineant*, or the Black Sluggard.

At once this knight seemed to throw aside his apathy when he discovered the leader of his party so hard bestead; for, setting spurs to his horse, which was quite fresh, he came to his assistance like a thunderbolt, exclaiming in a voice like a trumpet-call, 'Desdichado, to the rescue!' It was high time; for, while the Disinherited Knight was pressing upon the Templar, Front de Boeuf had got nigh to him with his uplifted sword. But ere the blow could descend, the Sable Knight dealt him a stroke on the head, which, glancing from the polished helmet, lighted with violence scarcely abated on the steed, and Front de Boeuf rolled on the ground, both horse and man equally stunned by the fury of the blow. *Le Noir Faineant* then turned his horse upon Athelstane of Coningsburgh; and, his own sword having been broken in his encounter with Front de Boeuf, he wrenched from the hand of

the bulky Saxon the battle-axe which he wielded, and, like one familiar with the use of the weapon, bestowed such a blow upon his crest, that Athelstane also lay senseless on the field. Having achieved this noble feat, for which he was the more highly applauded that it was totally unexpected from him, the knight seemed to resume the sluggishness of his character, returning calmly to the northern extremity of the lists, leaving his leader to cope as he best could with Brian de Bois-Guilbert. This was no longer matter of so much difficulty as formerly. The Templar's horse had bled much, and gave way under the shock of the Disinherited Knight's charge. Brian de Bois-Guilbert rolled on the field, encumbered with the stirrup, from which he was unable to draw his foot. His antagonist sprang from horseback, waved his fatal sword over the head of his adversary, and commanded him to yield himself; when Prince John, more moved by the Templar's dangerous situation than he had been by that of his rival, saved him the mortification of confessing himself vanquished, by casting down his warder and putting an end to the conflict.

Thus ended the memorable field of Ashby-de-la-Zouche, one of the most gallantly contested tournaments of that age. For although only four knights, including one who was smothered by the heat of his armour, had died upon the field, yet upwards of thirty were desperately wounded, four or five of whom never recovered. Several more were disabled for life; and those who escaped best carried the marks of the conflict to the grave with them. Hence it is always mentioned in the old records as the Gentle and Joyous Passage of Arms at Ashby.

But when the double victor, at last called

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upon to unhelm himself before the Queen of Love and Beauty, revealed at last that he was no other than the crusading knight of Ivanhoe, the disinherited son of Cedric, not only Rowena but all the Saxons at the tournament were thrilled with pride. But of this the brave Ivanhoe was unconscious. He had hardly bent to receive the wreath of chivalry, when his head fell forward, and he slipped, fainting and motionless, at the feet of the Lady Rowena, a lance-head sunk deep in his side.

END OF SECOND TALE FROM 'IVANHOE'

LINK NUMBER TWO

I INCREASE MY AUDIENCE

'I say,' said Hugh John, 'we must sneak — I mean, ask father for the loan of the *Ivanhoe* book, and read it to the Smoutchy boys down in Edam. Then we will have a proper tournament all of our own!'

'Bad, horrid boys!' said Sweetheart; 'I shouldn't ever speak to them again. Why, they hung you up by the thumbs and tortured you and put you in dungeons!'

This referred to ancient history, and as for the tale thereof — is it not written in the book of the chronicles of 'Sir Toady Lion,' that most surprising knight? But the boys had, for the time being, an *entente cordiale* with the boys of Edam, and especially with the chief of all, a certain Nipper Donnan, now frequently to be seen at the back door of Windy Standard, the residence of the boys and their sisters, with a butcher's basket over his arm,

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his hands in his pockets, and whistling shrilly the latest music-hall ditty, to show how much he cared for the cook.

The present 'peace' was one of mutual respect and accommodation. It rested on sundry scufflings and one great pitched battle, on many wounds and bruises given and taken (and nothing said about them), on several poaching expeditions, and an alliance, offensive and defensive, against all gamekeepers and the entire body of the rural police. Homing pigeons also had to do with it, and ratting 'tarriers' were nowadays foreign to the matter.

So the next day Hugh John and Sir Toady waited for Nipper Donnan, chief 'Smoutchy' of Edam, presently following the profession of his father, Butcher Donnan, in the subordinate capacity of errand-boy. The immediate business of this meeting was to exchange against cash down in boys' currency, various pieces of meat and bone (called 'snackets' and of no commercial value) for the 'tarriers' aforesaid. But as they chattered in terms of marbles and fish-hooks, the boys conversed also on subjects of common interest.

'Say,' began Nipper Donnan, 'one o' them 'alleys' wot you gave me las' week was no better than a 'clay' — it split in two the first whack!'

'Then you must have whacked it with a sledgehammer!' retorted Sir Toady Lion, promptly, the short hair behind his ears bristling up like a hackle.

'No, I didn't!' said Nipper Donnan; 'I only plunked it, and it broke the first go!'

(Which is to say that Nipper threw it with force at a row of marbles arranged in front of a wall, from the distance of several yards. In this game the

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striker gets all he can displace.)

'Well,' said Hugh John, who is not fitted for a commercial life, 'if you say that on honour, here's another!'

First Nipper held out his hand, then more slowly he withdrew it — and blushed.

'A 'piggy' will do,' he said; 'I did hit the 'alley' against the wall the time it burst in two!'

This shows that honour begets honour. If any one had tried to 'do' Nipper Donnan, or if he had even suspected as much, he would (to use his own strong phrase) have 'lied like a horse-dealer.' But these Windy Standard boys were certainly disarming.

They actually believed you, if you said it was so.

Consequently Nipper Donnan took their word with never a murmur, sometimes even to his own disadvantage. And he hardly ever 'did' them or 'had them' without explaining afterwards, and never without warning them against dealing with Jo Cormick and other 'real bad boys,' who had none of his (Nipper Donnan's) honourable scruples.

Nipper went on to relate the details of a ratting expedition down at the Black Sheds, and how his dog 'Spot,' a short-bodied, hang-lipped, stub-tailed brute had, literally, carried all before him. Spot was waiting at the moment at the end of the avenue for his master. Indeed he was passing the time by fighting with the parson's collie, so that the whole street and neighbourhood were filled with the alarms and excursions of canine war.

Hugh John interrupted Spot's master. He had a question to ask.

'Ever hear of a fellow called Ivanhoe?' he

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demanded, as he stowed the 'snackets' away in a piece of stained brown paper and committed the package to the bottom of his jacket pocket well out of the reach of prying eyes.

'Ivan How?' said Nipper, in the far-away, tell-you-tomorrow tone of one who searches deep in an evasive memory. 'No-o-o-o! But — there's John How, our shopman. He threw a two-pound weight at your big dog Boom-pluff, and got him in the ribs. Ay, and garred him drop the bone he had stolen; and father says that he will have it put down in next week's account!'

At this the boys laughed. In which they had reason. For they knew that such an item could not possibly pass the shrewd eyes of Janet Sheepshanks.

'Your father may put a whole live ox in the 'book,' retorted Sir Toady, 'and swear that our Boomy swallowed him tail first. But catch Janet paying it!'

'Oh, well,' said Nipper, 'I dare say father will forget all about it.' This was not at all unlikely, seeing that the youth had made up the whole incident from beginning to end.

'Well, anyway,' he said, taking his stand on that part of the story which would bear examination, 'our salesman is John How — rum name! Ivan How is rummer, though!'

'Humph!' said Hugh John, scornfully, 'you wouldn't say that if you knew about him. He's a 'oner!'

'A regular buster!' added Sir Toady Lion.

'Could fight, eh?' Nipper's eyes twinkled, and he turned his head to the side with the questioning, combative, bull-pup look with which he always

measured a possible opponent.

'Fight?' sang out Sir Toady; 'why, he fought five one day, all done up in armour like a battleship — yes, and whacked them till they cried!'

'Armour—' said Nipper, looking puzzled; 'that's not according to Queensberry rules. Why did the committee allow it? What, didn't Ivan How's backers see that t'other fellows peeled decent? If *my* father had been there, I bet the silly jossers would have come out of them iron shirts quicker'n wink! Ay, man, he'd have had them out by the hair o' the head!'

Hugh John explained at length. Nipper listened with his brows drawn down so that you could only see the little glistening sparks of two sloe-black pupils, while all the time his under jaw seemed to get bigger, and push out as if some one were moulding it underneath with plasticene — and plenty of it, too.

'So a man Scott wrote all that, did he?' Nipper Donnan inquired.

'Yes,' said Hugh John, anxious to run sea and land to make one proselyte, 'and father says that he's the greatest history writer that ever was!'

'My father backs the man that writes up the 'scrap's' in the *Sporting Pink!*' said Nipper Donnan; 'and I bet he knows as well as yours. You should see my father turn to page three to get 'the latest! Wonderful set on literature is father! And never was but three days at school, including the day they had to take the master to the Infirmary!'

'If you like, I'll nab the book and read bits to you, and then we can do the things that's in it — down in our meadow, or somewhere!'

Hugh John was very earnest now.

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'What kind of things?' said Nipper, shifting his basket from one arm to the other, preparatory to emerging from the shrubbery at the end of the Hague conference. He heard the clock strike ten and knew that his parent would be looking for him. He was dead set on keeping the Fifth Commandment, which in his case was indeed a commandment with promise.

'Oh, a tournament!' said Toady Lion, unable longer to keep his oar out of the discussion.

'Quoiting?' demanded Nipper, with a sniff. 'That's no class. 'Sides, Ned Kerr from Rerwick would scoop your old Ivan every time!'

'Fighting — not quoiting,' said Hugh John, giving Toady Lion 'such a look'; 'just proper! You can bring some fellows if you like — and me and Toady will slip off with the book up our waistcoats. It's got A1 pictures. An' I'll read it.'

'Father u'd like that too,' said Nipper, when Hugh John had finished; 'there's never enough 'scraps' in the 'Pinky' to keep him going, and he takes no stock in glove contests — unless, that is, he sees the gloves!'

And so it was arranged.

For the purpose of informing those interested as to the most suitable portions to read, various leading questions were put to me that night. But I did not realize what a stir my relation of the adventures of Sir Walter's Disinherited Knight was making in the community till I came across Mr. Butcher Donnan 'Senior,' with whom I have numerous business relations — not only those of paying my monthly bill, but also those of arranging the letting of a grazing park upon which I have some

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feudal rights not very clearly defined.

Now Butcher Donnan is a worthy man who went early to America, abode there prosperously for a time, and returned suddenly (some say), owing to an affair in which a 'shelalah' and a man's head were too intimately mixed up together. He is our chief sporting authority in Edam, and the church Catholic and the Queensberry rules occupy the two sides of his brain, where their authority is about equal.

'Beg pardon, sir,' he said, after strict business was finished, 'will that be aaall nonsense that your boys were gettin' off to mine the other night? I'm expectin' not, for it was out of a printed book, Nipper said!'

Evidently Faith is not dead in Israel.

'Books are all right,' continued Butcher Donnan; 'though I don't read them much myself — only the Sporting Pink — there's a paper for you, now!'

I expressed my agreement. I had the testimony of my eyes upon many bookstalls that it was a paper. But Butcher Donnan had something more to ask.

'The book that your kids — children, I mean — brought down under their waistcoats — is it expensive?'

Being the first edition, in three volumes in uncut state, it was. But I did not say so. Donnan, in his shirtsleeves and a steel by his side, did not look like a man you could talk first editions to. So instead I let him develop his wishes.

'Why do you ask?' I said, smiling, to him.

'Why, sir, I asked because I was took by the fighting — though getting up on horseback only for

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to try to knock each other off again ain't no sort o' way o' fighting — to my mind, that is. And all them iron plates — no, it's not my way. But I will not deny it makes good readin' — as good as I want. Better no man can ask. But they stopped off, your boys, just at a place —'

'They had to hurry back to supper, I suspect!' said I. 'I noticed they came in rather late and that their hair was combed with their fingers!'

'Just so,' said Butcher Donnan; 'but now would you mind tellin' me who was that there fellow wot shot so well with a bow an' arrow — him that Prince John threatened he would hamstring and drum out o' the regimental camp if he didn't beat all the other chaps at their own target too? Eh, he was a tough lot, that Prince John. If me or Billy Waite could have got a matter of three rounds at him with his steel shirt off — u-r-r-r-r!'

And Butcher Donnan's growl indicated very clearly that if the three rounds spoken of had indeed taken place, in all probability Magna Charta would never have been signed.

Butcher Donnan's face was a study in florid colours. I managed, however, to make out what he was driving at. Or at least thought I did.

'I will lend you the book with pleasure,' I said; 'or rather, if you will accept a copy, I will send you another one. They sell them at the station for sixpence, so you need not think you are in my debt!'

'Oh, no, thank ye,' said Butcher Donnan, 'I ain't no scollard. But to tell the truth I was thinkin' that — it's the slack time of the day with me when you are tellin' them yarns to the kids — to the young ladies and gentlemen, I mean. And if I might make so bold as to step over—'

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‘Certainly — certainly!’ I cried eagerly, but not too eagerly.

‘An’ that young ruffian o’ mine, Nipper, I dare say he can get off for an hour. He’s just jumpin’ his toes out of his boots to come —’

‘Oh, bring him — bring him!’ I agreed— heartily, this time.

‘Thank ye, sir,’ said Butcher Donnan, gratefully, ‘and if he misbehaves I’ll —u-r-r-r-r-r!’

And with a jerky attempt at a salute he took himself off down the avenue.

It was in this way that the increase of my audience began.

THE THIRD TALE FROM 'IVANHOE'

It was a sharp, clean-aired night. The north wind, having driven a thunder-storm boisterously away, now turned to bite us. It was impossible to continue the tales out-of-doors, so I made up a fire of logs in the big library, which stands all by itself on the edge of the wood, and there awaited my audience.

The usual home four arrived tumultuously by way of the plantation, through which it was forbidden to pass after rain. I could hear them scuffing outside and inquiring of each other 'if it showed behind'—IT being the wetting of the raindrops from the leaves upon their garments.

'Go on!' said the laggards to Maid Margaret, as they entered tumultuously and flung themselves down with the familiarity of so many favourite dogs on carpet and hearthrug, according to their liking.

'Hold on!' I replied; 'there are more coming!'

For I had heard a cough without, a moment before. And now, without sound or fall of footsteps, Butcher Donnan, sleek and prosperous, appeared holding his son Nipper by the collar, as if he feared that hope of his house might run away at the last moment. Which indeed was a thing by no means unlikely. For Nipper had all the furtive, surly fear of a wild animal brought into unfamiliar surroundings. The walls of books in rows and interminable rows — the thought of being left alone with all these — perhaps to read — rode the boy's mind like a nightmare.

So his father, perhaps half conscious of a similar feeling, kept a prudent hand on his collar. It

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was evident that Butcher Donnan regarded what I was about to tell him as an important lesson in history, by which Nipper would be well to profit. It was also clear that I must be careful.

Luckily it was of Archer Locksley that I had to speak.

### THE TALE OF THE PEELED WILLOW WAND

Prince John had taken a pick at Locksley, the yeoman who had applauded when Cedric the Saxon made his brave stroke at De Bracy's lance-head. He was one of the people who always manage to forget their promises, whether to pay a bill or to do a good act, but who will get up in the small hours as often as there is a neighbour to be harmed or a fancied slight to be avenged.

'See here, sirrah,' he said, when he had found the yeoman at the same spot as on the previous day, 'you are to shoot against the best of the royal archers. If you beat them, I will put twenty gold nobles into your purse along with the prize. But if, after all your boasting, you fail, I will have you stript of your Lincoln green, your bow and arrows broken, and you yourself scourged from the lists as a wordy braggart!'

(That was noways fair — prince or no prince!' exclaimed Butcher Donnan, clapping his great hand on his thigh.)

'So Locksley himself said,' I continued, while Nipper, fresh from the discipline of the Board School, tried to make his father understand that it was not the correct thing to interrupt the lecturer. The Butcher was quieter after this, but ever and

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anon he emitted muffled and explosive sounds, snorts, and defiances, applause and encouragement, evidently designed for the characters of the tale, who were all quite real to him.

### THE TALE CONTINUES

So Locksley took the Prince at his word. He would, he said, shoot at any mark the winning archer liked to set up, provided that the aforesaid champion, whom he was to defeat under penalty of disgrace, would in his turn shoot at the 'woodsman's' mark which he, Locksley, would choose.

Even the Prince could not deny the fairness of this.

A large target was brought into the lists, with a white centre. Each archer was to shoot three arrows, and the best was to shoot against Locksley. Only eight abode to try their luck after seeing their opponents, and remembering the certainty of the Prince's certain anger if they did not acquit themselves well.

At this point I glanced cautiously at the big-print *Ivanhoe* open on the table before me. Though all very well for children, I was resolved that Butcher Donnan should take his 'Locksley' as he took his liquor, without water. I watched his face as I began to read. It never altered, intent and concentrated in its severity. I am not even sure that he observed the change as, like a wise man, I consulted my documents.

One by one the archers, stepping forward,

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delivered their shafts yeomanlike and bravely. Of twenty-four arrows, shot in succession, ten were fixed in the target, and the others ranged so near it, that, considering the distance of the mark, it was accounted good archery. Of the ten shafts which hit the target, two within the inner ring were shot by Hubert, a forester in the service of Malvoisin, who was accordingly pronounced victorious.

‘Since it be no better,’ said Locksley, ‘I am content to try my fortune; on condition that when I have shot two shafts at yonder mark of Hubert’s, he shall be bound to shoot one at that which I shall propose.’

‘That is but fair,’ answered Prince John, ‘and it shall not be refused thee. If thou dost beat this braggart, Hubert, I will fill the bugle with silver pennies for thee.’

‘A man can do but his best,’ answered Hubert, ‘but my grandsire drew a good long-bow at Hastings, and I trust not to dishonour his memory.’

The former target was now removed, and a fresh one of the same size placed in its room. Hubert, who, as victor in the first trial of skill, had the right to shoot first, took his aim with great deliberation, long measuring the distance with his eye, while he held in his hand his bended bow, with the arrow placed on the string. At length he made a step forward, and, raising the bow at the full stretch of his left arm, till the centre or grasping-place was nigh level with his face, he drew the bow-string to his ear. The arrow whistled through the air, and lighted within the inner ring of the target, but not exactly in the centre.

‘You have not allowed for the wind, Hubert,’ said his antagonist, bending his bow, ‘or that had

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been a better shot.'

So saying, and without showing the least anxiety to pause upon his aim, Locksley stepped to the appointed station, and shot his arrow as carelessly in appearance as if he had not even looked at the mark. He was speaking almost at the instant that the shaft left the bow-string, yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer to the white spot which marked the centre than that of Hubert.

'By the light of heaven!' said Prince John to Hubert, 'an thou suffer that runagate knave to overcome thee, thou art worthy of the gallows!'

Hubert had but one set speech for all occasions. 'An your Highness were to hang me,' he said, 'a man can but do his best. Nevertheless, my grandsire drew a good bow—'

'The foul fiend on thy grandsire and all his generation!' interrupted John; 'shoot, knave, and shoot thy best, or it shall be worse for thee!'

Thus exhorted, Hubert resumed his place, and, not neglecting the caution which he had received from his adversary, he made the necessary allowance for a very light air of wind, which had just arisen, and shot so successfully that his arrow alighted in the very centre of the target.

'A Hubert! a Hubert!' shouted the populace, more interested in a known person than in a stranger. 'In the clout! in the clout! a Hubert forever!'

'Thou canst not mend that shot, Locksley,' said the Prince, with an insulting smile.

'I will notch his shaft for him, however,' replied Locksley.

And his arrow, let fly with a little more precaution than before, lighted right upon that of

his competitor, which it split to shivers. The people who stood around were so astonished at his wonderful dexterity that they could not even give vent to their surprise in their usual clamour. 'This must be the devil, and no man of flesh and blood,' whispered the yeomen to each other; 'such archery was never seen since a bow was first bent in Britain.'

'And now,' said Locksley, 'I will crave your Grace's permission to plant such a mark as is used in the North Country; and welcome every brave yeoman who shall try a shot at it to win a smile from the bonnie lass he loves best.'

He then turned to leave the lists. 'Let your guards attend me,' he said, 'if you please — I go but to cut a rod from the next willow bush.'

Prince John made a signal that some attendants should follow him in case of his escape; but the cry of 'Shame! shame!' which burst from the multitude, induced him to alter his ungenerous purpose.

Locksley returned almost instantly with a willow wand about six feet in length, perfectly straight, and rather thicker than a man's thumb. He began to peel this with great composure, observing at the same time, that to ask a good woodsman to shoot at a target so broad as had hitherto been used, was to put shame upon his skill. 'For his own part,' he said, 'and in the land where he was bred, men would as soon take for their mark King Arthur's round table, which held sixty knights around it. A child of seven years old,' he said, 'might hit yonder target with a headless shaft; but,' added he, walking deliberately to the other end of the lists, and sticking the willow wand upright in the ground, 'he that hits

that rod at five-score yards, I call him an archer fit to bear both bow and quiver before a king, an it were the stout King Richard himself.'

'My grandsire,' said Hubert, 'drew a good bow at the battle of Hastings, and never shot at such a mark in his life — and neither will I. If this yeoman can cleave that rod, I give him the bucklers — or rather I yield to the devil that is in his jerkin, and not to any human skill; a man can but do his best, and I will not shoot where I am sure to miss. I might as well shoot at the edge of our parson's whittle, or at a wheat-straw, or at a sunbeam, as at a twinkling white streak which I can hardly see.'

'Cowardly dog!' said Prince John. 'Sirrah Locksley, do thou shoot; but if thou hittest such a mark, I will say thou art the first man ever did so. Howe'er it be, thou shalt not crow over us with a mere show of superior skill.'

'I will do my best, as Hubert says,' answered Locksley; 'no man can do more.'

So saying, he again bent his bow, but on the present occasion looked with attention to his weapon, and changed the string, which he thought was no longer truly round, having been a little frayed by the two former shots. He then took his aim with some deliberation, and the multitude awaited the event in breathless silence. The archer vindicated their opinion of his skill; his arrow split the willow rod against which it was aimed. A jubilee of acclamations followed; and even Prince John, in admiration of Locksley's skill, lost for an instant his dislike to his person. 'These twenty nobles,' he said, 'which, with the bugle, thou hast fairly won, are thine own; we will make them fifty, if thou wilt take livery and service with us as a yeoman of our

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bodyguard, and be near to our person. For never did so strong a hand bend a bow, or so true an eye direct a shaft.'

'Pardon me, noble Prince,' said Locksley; 'but I have vowed that if ever I take service, it should be with your royal brother, King Richard. These twenty nobles I leave to Hubert, who has this day drawn as brave a bow as his grandsire did at Hastings. Had his modesty not refused the trial, he would have hit the wand as well as I.'

Hubert shook his head as he received with reluctance the bounty of the stranger; and Locksley, anxious to escape further observation, mixed with the crowd, and was seen no more.

It was with an edifying modesty that I took the praise due to the successful tale-teller, praise which was so little my own that even the children were not deceived. I could see them nudge each other and whisper: 'Father's reading!' 'Yes — from the book— every word!' 'I mean to sneak that book after!'

Hearing this, I was rejoiced. It was good that they should think that Scott was better to read than I to listen to. Well, indeed, if that sank in!

Butcher Donnan, too, after the first burst of delight, praised not the manner but the matter of my relation.

'If that Lock-shy 'ad been a volunteer in the Edam corps or a small boresman, I'd ha' backed him heavy at Bisley! We'd ha' gone up there, him an' me — ay, and made more money in a week than at the butchering in a score of years!'

'If you could have got anybody to take your bets,' I reminded him, gently.

'Man,' he burst out, the fact that he used the

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word proving his excitement, 'man, d'ye no see — he would be the dark horse. Ay, not a man o' them would guess his form. And I would nurse this here Locksley, and manage him like a trainer that knows his business. He would lose all the events there was nothing in — for to keep down his aggregates, ye see. But whenever a big pot came along, in he would go and scoop it! Yes, man — he would win the big events but no by a great deal — no sky-scrapin' scores. No, no, that only frightens the rest. Look at Hubert there. He would not so much as put cheek to butt against him at the long range. See the wisdom o' my plan! I wager any money that this here Locksley would never be let shoot at the same place again — Ashby, was it, thank'ee — without getting from the committee a bonny-like handicap to carry — going on in that reckless, braggin' way, lettin' everybody ken the 'triple blue' he was, and never a penny the more in his pouch when all was done.'

We accepted all this wisdom from the sporting butcher without a murmur. And I am sure that when he went away that night, taking the drying-green railings in his stride, he was carrying in his head the hope that one day he and Locksley might meet, when it would not be Butcher Donnan's fault if they did not, in his own words, 'rig up a deal that would scoop the very — interior parts — out of Bisley.'

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### THE FOURTH TALE FROM 'IVANHOE'

After this it was difficult for me to live up to the bold cut-and-thrust of Locksley's archery. But observing the open mouth and fixed gaze of Butcher Donnan, and urged by the children, I was fain to proceed. All four felt that the honour of the house was at stake. They had boasted with vain words about these tales. It was my part to make those boasts good. Well, I could only try. Like Hubert — a man can but do his best. So I proceeded at once with the tale of

### THE CASTLE OF FRONT DE BOEUF

'The Sluggard Knight' (as he had been called in the lists of Ashby, the same whose prompt assistance in the melee had won the victory for the side of the wounded Ivanhoe) promptly disappeared from the lists at the breaking up of the tournament. In fact he rode away northward through the forest of Sherwood, and by sunset he had completely lost his way.

In the waste, a feeble light guided him to a hermit's cell, where he found shelter; and presently, when his host had thawed a little, entertainment of the best. This hermit was a certain famous Friar Tuck, called at the time the Jolly Clerk of Copmanhurst, and his cell was in a dell not far from where the ruins of Fountains Abbey now stand. He wore the robe of an order, and was indeed a proper priest, shaven and shorn. But all the same he was ready to drink the wassail down, sing a gallant song,

or in the event of a quarrel, to hold his own with the broadsword and targe, like a good outlaw of the greenwood. The Sluggard Knight asked so many questions, that the hermit called him impertinent, for wanting to know if the good venison they were eating came from one of the royal bucks, found transfixed with a clothyard shaft in the course of some moonlight walk.

But, with a song and a jest, the hermit's anger passed over as quickly as it had come; and the pair were in the midst of a shouted chorus when a knock fell upon the outer door, which frightened the hermit so much that he instantly began to intone a churchly chaunt, while, as far as might be, he shovelled into their hiding places the remnants of the feast.

The newcomer, however, was no other than the bold Archer Locksley, who came with news that a band of pretended outlaws had seized Cedric the Saxon and his ward, the Lady Rowena, together with the Jew Isaac of York and his daughter Rebecca. These were now held for ransom in Front de Boeuf's castle of Torquilstone, and plunder and torture were the least they had to fear.

The Sluggard Knight seemed astonished at the news, and particularly demanded if Front de Boeuf had stooped to be a robber and an oppressor.

'An oppressor he always was,' cried Locksley the Archer, instantly.

'And as for thief,' added the priest, 'I will warrant that he is none so honest a man as many a robber of my acquaintance.'

Indeed the news was but too true. Cedric's party had been surrounded and captured by De Bracy and some of his Free Companions assisted by the

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Templar Bois-Guilbert. All had been disguised as Saxon woodland outlaws with bow, quiver, and coat of Lincoln green. Cedric had fought bravely, and Athelstane the Unready would also have fought if there had been time. But in the end the whole party, with the single exception of Wamba the Jester, was safely shut up in the dungeons of the Torquilstone, the castle of the cruel Front de Boeuf.

Here Cedric and Athelstane remained in prison, though treated with some civility. But Front de Boeuf began his preparations for torturing the Jew into giving him a great ransom. On the other hand, De Bracy began to pay his court to the Lady Rowena, whose great lands and possessions he had long desired, while the Templar, less honourably, resolved at all hazards to carry off the beautiful Rebecca, the daughter of the Jew Isaac of York.

But outside the castle walls the storm was brewing. Wamba the Jester had found Gurth the swineherd, whom he informed that his wounded master, Wilfred of Ivanhoe, had also been seized by De Bracy, and shut up in the castle of Front de Boeuf — so that, if he wished to save any of the race of Cedric, he must haste to gather all available men to assault the castle. It seemed, and might well seem, a desperate undertaking.

But in the nick of time the outlaw Locksley offered his assistance. And it was while summoning his men that on knocking at the door where dwelt stout Friar Tuck in the greenwood of Copmanhurst he stumbled on the knight called the Black Sluggard.

As the Black Knight was a Crusader, newly returned from the wars, and therefore learned in the manner of taking castles, as well as victor over Front

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de Boeuf in the lists of Ashby, Locksley and his band chose him as their leader in the venture.

An opportunity of speaking with the prisoners was given by the besieged themselves. On receiving the summons of the Black Knight, called in the Norman-French language *Le Noir Faineant*, the captors sent back a defiance in the hand of the Templar (who was indeed the only one of them able to write). And to this they added these words: 'Touching the prisoners, we do in Christian charity require you to send a man of religion to receive their confessions and reconcile them to religion. For it is our fixed intention to execute them this morning before noon, so that their heads, placed on the battlements, may show how lightly we esteem those who have bestirred themselves to their rescue.'

The Saxons outside did not believe that the besieged would carry out their threat — not from any motive of pity, but because such good ransoms as those of Cedric and Athelstane, not to speak of that of Isaac of York, would not be lightly thrown away. However, the Black Knight considered it absolutely necessary that they should know the strength and spirit of the defenders, in order to profit by the weakness of their defences or the fewness of their numbers.

Friar Tuck having refused to put his head into the throat of the wolf, Wamba volunteered, trusting to his ready tongue and his witty folly to carry him off. Also, in case of capture, he could plead that, being a fool, he had only acted according to his profession.

Accordingly, when Wamba arrived at the castle of Torquilstone, he was received without suspicion as the holy man whom they had demanded. The

numbers of the party within the castle were few. De Bracy had sent on his band of Free Companions to York, where were also most of Front de Boeuf's Normans. The Templar, as usual, travelled with his Saracen slaves. There remained therefore only those who had taken part in the capture, and the two or three men who had been left behind as sufficient to secure so strong a castle as that of Torquilstone against sudden attack.

The supposed monk was instantly asked how many of the besiegers there might be outside, and threatened with death if he did not speak truly.

Wamba gave five hundred as a probable figure, whereupon the knights resolved to send a written summons by his own hand to York to summon the full muster of De Bracy's band to their master's relief.

While this message was being penned on a small piece of parchment such as might be hidden in the heel of a sandal or the hollow of a staff, Wamba set off, muttering scraps of Latin as he went, to prepare Cedric and Athelstane for their doom.

He found Cedric, full of energy as ever, pacing his dungeon floor, chafing against fate, while easy-going Athelstane awaited for the announcement of death as carelessly as if it had been his dinner. To these Wamba was not long in declaring himself.

Hardly indeed had he spoken when Cedric cried out that he should know that voice — upon which Wamba threw back his monk's hood.

'The voice is that of your trusty slave and Jester!' said Wamba. 'And had you taken a fool's advice before, you would not have been here. Ay, and even if you will take it now, you shall not

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remain here long!’

‘What do you mean, knave?’ demanded Cedric.

‘Take my robe and cord, which are all the orders I ever had,’ said the fool; ‘then walk quietly out of the castle, leaving me your cloak and girdle in which to take the Long Leap in your stead!’

‘Why,’ said Cedric, at once astonished, ‘they would hang you, my poor-fool!’

‘Well,’ retorted Wamba, ‘without disparagement to your birth, I think I could hang in a chain with as much gravity even as you. My grandfather was an alderman and wore a chain round his neck soberly enough. I promise you, Master, that your poor fool will not shame you in the manner of his dying!’

Cedric was touched. The tears stood in his eyes.

‘Be sure,’ he said, ‘that I will come back and deliver this faithful fool as well as my kinsfolk and friends!’

And in his turn he assumed the monk's dress, while Athelstane and Wamba gave him advice how to act the part.

‘Remember, a good friar never refuses meat and drink,’ said the huge Saxon thane, wishing that it had been his luck to be offered either.

‘And whatever they say to you,’ urged Wamba, ‘remember to answer only in a grave churchyard tone *‘Pax Vobiscum.’* That will carry you through. These words are the witch's spell of all holy brothers!’

So, equipped with robe, cord, and cowl, and muttering his *‘Pax Vobiscum’* to himself, Cedric went out. He had not proceeded far when the soft voice of

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the Jewess Rebecca called him to the help of a wounded Saxon. She had been permitted by her attendant (a Saxon woman named Urfried, daughter of the former Lord of Torquilstone, long held in captivity by Front de Boeuf and his father) to attend Ivanhoe after his capture by De Bracy. But Urfried came back before Cedric, in the character of a priest, could be brought to the bedside of his son. Urfried also desired a priest to whom, in that abode of iniquity, she could confess herself.

The story she told was a terrible one, and in the course of it, when she found out that the pretended priest was no other than her father's old friend and ally, Cedric of Rotherwood, it was not difficult to persuade her to do what she could to assist the prisoners, because in so doing she would also be revenging herself on Front de Boeuf for all the cruelties and indignities he and his father had caused her to undergo.

'There is,' she whispered, 'a force beleaguering Torquilstone from without. Cedric, go and lead them, and when you see a red flag wave from the eastern turret, press them hard. For then the Normans will have enough to do within the castle. Now begone — follow your own fate and leave me to mine.'

She had no time to say more. Neither could Cedric make any reply. For the voice of Front de Boeuf was heard without, in the passage, cursing all loitering priests who sowed treason among his domestics. Yet even Front de Boeuf did not penetrate the disguise of the Saxon thane. He was indeed too full of his own angers and plottings to think of anything else. He ordered the priest to give the Saxon besiegers of the castle an account of the

poverty of the defenders, and the scarcity of all the munitions of war. He was to cheer them with the hope that they could take the fortress, and then to slip away to the castle of Philip Malvoisin, who would forward the written scroll to York as fast as horse could gallop.

‘Tell him,’ said Front de Boeuf, ‘to fear nothing if he makes reasonable haste. He will find us safe and sound behind the battlements. Shame on it that even for a moment we should be compelled to hide from a pack of runagates, who are wont to fly at the flash of our pennons and the tramp of our horses.’

It was Front de Boeuf himself who convoyed Monk Cedric to the gate, and even slipped a piece of gold into his hand, which the messenger, so soon as he was clear of the drawbridge, threw back at him with the cry, which happily was not heard by the savage knight, ‘Thy money perish with thee, false Norman!’

It was then the turn of Wamba, who, wrapped in Cedric's mantle and with the Saxon's sword by his side, made a very passable franklin, at least with his flat cap pulled low over his face in the darkness of the hall.

Front de Boeuf had the false Cedric and his neighbour Athelstane called before him, and with many reproaches commanded them to speak out, and say what they considered the worth of the lives of such Saxon dogs as they were — for if not, he would hang them by the feet to the window bars till the crows picked them clean.

‘Not a doit will I offer for mine,’ said Wamba, ‘and as for hanging by the feet, my poor brains have been always so topsy-turvy, that turning me upside

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down might perchance set them right again!

‘Saint Genevieve!’ cried Front de Boeuf; ‘what have we here?’

With the back of his hand he struck Cedric's bonnet from the Jester's head, and, throwing open his collar, showed the silver neck-collar, the badge of servitude.

Then he called aloud to his men.

‘Giles — Clement — dogs and varlets, what have you brought me here?’

‘Why,’ exclaimed De Bracy, who came in at the moment, ‘this is no other than Cedric's clown — he who vanquished Isaac of York with his shield of brawn upon an affair of precedence.’

‘I will settle their quarrel,’ cried Front de Boeuf; ‘they shall both hang on the same gallows, unless his master is ready to pay well for his life, as they must for their own. Now, rascals (he turned to his own servants), go and bring the right Cedric before me and I will pardon your error for once, the more that you but mistook a fool for a Saxon franklin!’

But no Cedric could be found in all the castle of Torquilstone, high or low.

‘Saints of heaven!’ cried De Bracy, ‘he must have escaped in the monk's garments!’

‘Fiends of hell!’ shouted the furious Front de Boeuf; ‘and I myself guided the Saxon knave like a linkman, and dismissed him at the gate with my own hands! But thou (he turned to Wamba) — I will scalp thy crown for thee! And when that is done, pitch thee headlong from the battlements. Now, man, thy trade is to jest, canst thou jest now?’

‘If you give me the red cap you propose,’ said Wamba, whom nothing could dismay, ‘you are better

than your word. For out of a simple monk you will make a cardinal!

‘Poor wretch,’ said De Bracy; ‘he faces death with good heart — and on his lips a jest. Give him to me to make mirth for my Free Companions!’

De Bracy's timely interference and an urgent alarm on the ramparts saved Wamba's life for the moment, though Front de Boeuf was far indeed from having forgiven the escape of Cedric.

But a real monk was at the gate, a messenger from the jovial Prior Aymer of Jorvaux. He too had reason to complain. He was, it seemed, in the power of the Saxon outlaws, and desired assistance or ransom.

‘His money-bags are ten times as heavy as ours,’ said Front de Boeuf, angrily, when the letter was read, ‘and how shall we succour any one, who are ourselves herded closely by yonder pack of wolves!’

Meanwhile, in a turret high above, Ivanhoe was lying wounded on his bed. Rebecca, the beautiful Jewess, was watching him. He had heard with impatience the noise of soldiers taking their places on the ramparts, the shouted orders of the knights, the rattle of arms and armour. Cries of fierce defiance came up from without. Now and then an arrow would ‘spat’ viciously on the stone of the castle wall, sending the plaster — stout shell lime burned upon the shores of the German Ocean — in clouds of dust past the narrow lattice.

Ivanhoe mourned his evil luck, which kept him tied to his bed on such an occasion, and besought Rebecca to look out and tell him what she saw.

‘They may never come to any battle!’ she

said, soothingly; 'the terrible sounds have ceased for a while.'

'You know nothing about it,' cried Ivanhoe, with the impatience of a sick man. 'I tell you that silence is just the pause which always happens when the men are on the walls, waiting for instant attack — ah, if I could but reach the turret window yonder —'

'Do not harm yourself,' said Rebecca, softly. 'I myself will look out and tell you, as well as I can, what is happening below.'

'Do not,' cried Ivanhoe. 'You shall not — you must not — each lattice — each smallest slot will be a mark for arrows — some random shaft—'

'It would be welcome!' said Rebecca, with a sigh. She had loved the gallant young knight of Ivanhoe from the first, and though he had looked kindly enough upon her, she knew well that he would never wed one of the 'accursed race,' as the Jews were called at that time.

'Rebecca — dear Rebecca,' exclaimed Ivanhoe, 'this is no maiden's pastime. Do not expose yourself to wounds, and so make me forever miserable to have been the cause!'

But seeing her determined, he added, 'If you must, then at least cover yourself with the old buckler which hangs on the wall yonder, and show as little as possible of your person at the lattice.'

'The skirts of the wood are dark with archers,' said Rebecca, peeping cautiously out. 'At the outer fortification there is a gate beyond the drawbridge, at which are gathered a great number of the besieged — Front de Boeuf at their head. Ah, now the Saxons are advancing to the attack.'

'Under what banner?'

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‘Under none that I can see!’ said Rebecca, looking carefully; ‘but for a leader they have a knight in black armour whom all about him obey!’

‘What device does he bear on his buckler?’ demanded Ivanhoe, hastily.

‘Something like a bar of iron, and a padlock painted blue on the black shield!’

Ivanhoe was meditating who might be the bearer of this remarkable coat of arms, when Rebecca, uttering a sharp cry, which was half a prayer for protection and half the instinct of girlish fear, informed the wounded knight that the assailants were at last approaching the castle under cover of huge shields and defences made of planks.

The Saxon bugles blew loudly beneath. The Norman trumpets threw back their defiance from the ramparts. The assailants cried, ‘Saint George for Merry England!’ The Normans answered with loud cries of ‘*En avant De Bracy! Beau-seant! Beau-seant! Front de Boeuf a la rescousse!*’ as each man-at-arms called the war-cry of his own commander.

[At this point, unperceived by the children and my other auditors, I dropped my eye upon my author, the only begetter of these wonderful tales.]

The archers, trained by their woodland pastimes to the most effective use of the long-bow, shot, to use the appropriate phrase of the time, so ‘wholly together,’ that no point at which a defender could show the least part of his person escaped their cloth-yard shafts. By this heavy discharge, which continued as thick and sharp as hail, while, notwithstanding, every arrow had its individual aim, and flew by scores together against each embrasure

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and opening in the parapets, as well as at every window where a defender either occasionally had post, or might be suspected to be stationed, by this sustained discharge, two or three of the garrison were slain and several others wounded. But, confident in their armour of proof, and in the cover which their situation afforded, the followers of Front de Boeuf and his allies showed an obstinacy in defence proportioned to the fury of the attack, and replied with the discharge of their large crossbows, as well as with their long-bows, slings, and other missile weapons, to the close and continued showers of arrows; and, as the assailants were necessarily but indifferently protected, did considerably more damage than they received at their hand. The whizzing of shafts and of missiles, on both sides, was only interrupted by the shouts which arose when either side inflicted or sustained some notable loss.

‘What dost thou see, Rebecca?’ again demanded the wounded knight, eagerly.

‘Nothing but the cloud of arrows flying so thick as to dazzle mine eyes, and to hide the bowmen who shoot them.’

‘That cannot endure,’ cried Ivanhoe; ‘if they press not right on to carry the castle by pure force of arms, the archery may avail but little against stone walls and bulwarks. Look for the Knight of the Fetterlock, fair Rebecca, and see how he bears himself; for as the leader is, so will the followers be.’

‘I see him not,’ said Rebecca.

‘Foul craven,’ exclaimed Ivanhoe; ‘does he blench from the helm when the wind blows highest?’

‘He blenches not! he blenches not!’ said Rebecca. ‘I see him now; he heads a body of men

close under the outer barrier of the barbican. They pull down the piles and palisades; they hew down the barriers with axes. His high black plume floats abroad over the throng, like a raven over the field of the slain. They have made a breach in the barriers — they rush in — they are thrust back! Front de Boeuf heads the defenders; I see his gigantic form above the press. They throng again to the breach, and the pass is disputed hand to hand, and man to man. God of Jacob! it is the meeting of two fierce tides — the conflict of two oceans moved by adverse winds!’

She turned her head from the lattice, as if unable longer to endure a sight so terrible.

‘Look forth again, Rebecca,’ said Ivanhoe, mistaking the cause of her retiring; ‘the archery must in some degree have ceased, since they are now fighting hand to hand. Look again, there is now less danger.’

Rebecca again looked forth, and almost immediately exclaimed: ‘Holy prophets of the law! Front de Boeuf and the Black Knight fight hand to hand on the breach, amid the roar of their followers, who watch the progress of the strife. Heaven strike with the cause of the oppressed and of the captive!’ She then uttered a loud shriek, and exclaimed, ‘He is down! — he is down!’

‘Who is down?’ cried Ivanhoe; ‘for Our dear Lady's sake, tell me which has fallen?’

‘The Black Knight,’ answered Rebecca, faintly; then instantly again shouted with eager joyfulness — ‘But no — but no! — the name of the Lord of Hosts be blessed! he is on foot again, and fights as if there were twenty men's strength in his single arm. His sword is broken — he snatches an

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axe from a yeoman — he presses Front de Boeuf with blow on blow. The giant stoops and totters like an oak under the steel of the woodman — he falls — he falls!

‘Front de Boeuf?’ exclaimed Ivanhoe.

‘Front de Boeuf!’ answered the Jewess. ‘His men rush to the rescue, headed by the haughty Templar; their united force compels the champion to pause. They drag Front-de-Boeuf within the walls.’

‘The assailants have won the barriers, have they not?’ said Ivanhoe.

‘They have—they have!’ exclaimed Rebecca; ‘and they press the besieged hard upon the outer wall; some plant ladders, some swarm like bees, and endeavour to ascend upon the shoulder of each other; down go stones, beams, and trunks of trees upon their heads, and as fast as they bear the wounded to the rear, fresh men supply their places in the assault. Great God! hast thou given men thine own image, that it should be thus cruelly defaced by the hands of their brethren!’

‘Think not of that,’ said Ivanhoe; ‘this is no time for such thoughts. Who yield? who push their way?’

‘The ladders are thrown down,’ replied Rebecca, shuddering; ‘the soldiers lie grovelling under them like crushed reptiles. The besieged have the better.’

‘Saint George strike for us!’ exclaimed the knight; ‘do the false yeomen give way?’

‘No!’ exclaimed Rebecca; ‘they bear themselves right yeomanly. The Black Knight approaches the postern with his huge axe; the thundering blows which he deals, you may hear them above all the din and shouts of the battle.’

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Stones and beams are hailed down on the bold champion; he regards them no more than if they were thistledown or feathers!

‘By Saint John of Acre,’ said Ivanhoe, raising himself joyfully on his couch, ‘methought there was but one man in England that might do such a deed!’

‘The postern gate shakes,’ continued Rebecca; ‘it crashes — it is splintered by his blows — they rush in — the outwork is won. O God! they hurl the defenders from the battlements — they throw them into the moat. O men, if ye be indeed men, spare them that can resist no longer!’

‘The bridge — the bridge which communicates with the castle — have they won that pass?’ exclaimed Ivanhoe.

‘No,’ replied Rebecca, ‘the Templar has destroyed the plank on which they crossed — few of the defenders escaped with him into the castle — the shrieks and cries which you hear tell the fate of the others.’

### END OF THE FOURTH TALE FROM ‘IVANHOE’

The children scattered into the dim and misty twilight of the Park Near Wood, there to commit mutual assault and battery. Nipper Donnan accompanied them. His father sent a hail of warning after him.

Nipper (it appeared) had to be ‘in,’ in time to wash counters and ‘clean up.’ He was also required ‘not to hurt the young ladies and gentlemen.’ His father stated the attached pains and penalties in detail, and these, if carried out with rigour, would have made the days of Nipper Donnan brief in the land.

## RED CAP ADVENTURES

However, from information received, I was able to reassure Mr. Butcher Donnan. The young gentlemen, not to mention the ladies, were quite able to look after themselves. Once there had been warfare of a serious kind between the house of Donnan and that of Windy Standard. But now all that was (literally) no more than 'a tale that is told.'

So I remained alone in the growing dusk with Mr. Butcher Donnan. The night-jar, upon whose visits we so greatly pride ourselves, swooped past with a soft 'woof' of feathers.

'Pity that fellow Locksley isn't here to put an arrow through that there owel!' said Donnan.

I informed the good Butcher that if Locksley attempted such a thing, I should certainly speak to the police.

'Holy Bridget!' said Mr. Donnan, 'ye don't mean to say now that ye preserves varmin like them. What good does the like o' him do?'

I explained that the night-jar did no harm. On the contrary, that he ate moths which laid caterpillars, which ate vegetables — also flies which made the meat in butchers' shops go bad!

'Does he so?' cried Mr. Donnan, interested by this very sketchy natural history; 'thin, can you tell me where that there 'jarry-owel' has his nest? I'll send that Nipper o' mine to get a pair o' young ones. Them flies in the shop is a pest and all! Sure this 'jarry-owel' goes for the big blue 'uns?'

I was sure. Bushels was no name for the quantity of 'big blue 'uns' one single 'jarry-owel' could account for in a day.

It was arranged, therefore, that if our night-jars nested, a pair were to be the portion of Nipper Donnan, who was to feed them for his father.

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Privately I arranged, for natural history reasons, that nothing of the kind should take place.

Then what I had been waiting for occurred. Mr. Butcher Donnan began his impressions of 'Ivanhoe.'

'Between you an' me' (he began), 'the man that wrote down yon yarn, put in a bit of a stretcher here an' there. Now don't be thinkin' I mean about the splitting of that saugh-wand — I've done some neat things with a rook-rifle myself. But them all runnin' about with priests' duds on, and one bein' took for another regular as Saturday's pay-day. Think I'd not know you, sir, if you was dressed up in Father Phil Flannigan's togs, or you me? 'Donnan,' sez you, 'come out of that harness. There's no good comes of such doin's' — and right you would be. Regular treadin' on the coat-tails of Holy Saint Peter, I call it.'

But I pointed out to Mr. Donnan that the times had changed during seven centuries, and how monks and priests were freer in their actions in those days.

'I should say so, indeed,' cried Mr. Donnan. 'Now that Friar Tuck was a regular hedge priest, with his poachin' and potheen drinkin'. But for all his claymore an' Highland sports rig-out, I'll wager Father Phil Flannigan could crack his head with a sprig of the tidy black-thorn in four seconds by a stop-watch.'

I explained about Robin Hood and the hatred of Saxon to Norman on account of old sores about evictions and loss of landed property.

'No wonder, then, that when Ivanhoe an' his Saxons got the upper hand again wid their Magny Charty to help them (and a fine fellow I'll be bound

he was!) they came over and started the same game wid us in Ireland. 'Twas the same old Norman medicine they gave us — ay, an' to this very day, as I've heard my grandfather tell — '

But here Mr. Butcher Donnan began to talk high treason, into which we will not follow him. To turn him from his fixed idea of a modern application for Ivanhoe, I suggested that it might be well to superintend the siege of Torquillstone down in the valley, where an old castellated ruin stood on a long low island in the river, and represented the strength of Front de Boeuf.

There was no doubt about the genuineness of the siege of this Torquillstone. Nipper had been the only one of the company who would take the part of the gigantic 'Front de Boeuf.' He would do anything so long as there was good fighting and plenty of it. Anyone could call him 'Front de Boeuf' with impunity. But if the noblest of earth's sons had called him 'Beef Head,' Nipper would have held it a trade insult, only to be wiped out in immediate blood.

Maid Margaret had been put in a high turret out of harm's way, with a shawl about her and an imaginary Ivanhoe to nurse.

But immediately on the outbreak of hostilities, desolated at being left so decidedly out of things, she descended and began actively to assist Front de Boeuf Donnan against her own kith and kin, that noble Saxon, Hugh John Locksley, the good knight Sir Toadac, and the beautiful amazon Sweetheart-ofrida.

These last three, as we passed the bridge and came in sight of the castle wall, were manfully attacking the partisan and swarming up the

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whiffletree to the top of the Gothic carapace. (This is what I was told. There was no time to think of the exact words in the enthusiasm of the moment.)

At any rate they were getting over certain half-ruined walls, and directing a hail of deadly bulrushes against the solitary champion in the gateway.

These huge reeds had been plucked out of the marshes of the Castle Isle and, with a lump of the roots still adhering to each, they flew well and made capital javelins.

'Oh, come on, will you! Again, again! Well shot, my merry men,' cried Locksley. 'Well hit, fetched him on the noddle, Sweetheart-of-rida!'

Then the real hearty Saxon cheer went up, led by the Black Knight Sir Toadac, who was returning with an armful of reeds of superior calibre.

But a sudden and terrible thought came into the head of Maid Margaret, who ought according to the text to have been attending to Ivanhoe up aloft, but in reality was dancing about, fighting side-by-side, and round the corner and under the armpits of Front de Donnan.

There was a dungeon in the corner of the keep, the bottom of which, ever since certain events already historically recorded, had been filled with a liquid black sludge, owing to the bricking up of the passage-exit. Margaret the Turncoat Maid accordingly gathered up all the shot darts — quite an armful they were — and, leaning over carefully, dabbled the roots in the ink-black porridge.

THE BESEIGERS HAD ON WHITE SUMMERY  
CLOTHES

## RED CAP ADVENTURES

This was the thought. The besiegers also had Powers-that-demand-to-be-told 'How did you get so dirty?' Maid Margaret wore dark blue and even these were protected by feudal walls and the aforesaid carapaces and baroccos and vanilla tureens. (The Maid never could remember these long words exactly.)

After that the outside leopards changed their spots very often indeed, by the familiar process of simple addition. Sweetheart-ofrida soon had enough, and retired from the field, almost sobbing.

'It's too bad — too bad,' she mourned; 'it's spoilt — ruined — simply ruined! And all that mischievous little — oh, wait till I get her!'

Archer Hugh John Locksley and the good black (and white) knight Sir Toadac fought on. But the verdict of the first attack on Torquilstone was clearly reversed.

Sternly Front de Donnan continued to hold the great gate, and behind him Maid (Rebecca) Margaret danced, cheering wildly, herself speckless, as she saw three dishevelled spectacles led away in the direction of Windy Standard for court martial and punishment.

THE END (Moral sixpence extra)

Owing to Butcher Donnan's preoccupations for several days, the Red Cap Demon had perforce to remain in his great oak chest in the Wizard's Hall.

Finally, however, Mr. Donnan arrived one afternoon on the heels of tea. It was Sir Toady who caught sight of him with his cap already in his hand, pulling an apologetic forelock at the garden gate. Nipper lurked in the shadows, and Nipper's

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terrier Spot fraternised with Boss the fox-terrier who was unto Sir Toady as the apple of his eye.

The days were not very distant when such signs would have been warlike and discourteous. Now, however, all was changed.

'If you please, sir,' said Butcher Donnan (spoken with a faint far-away whiff of the *if-ye-plaize, sorr* of his native Connaught), 'but if it was convenient for you — an' the youngsters — but I see *them* comin' as fast as their legs can carry them. Faith, it's no bad use that ye'll be puttin' my foine beef an' mutton to, in rearing such calves as them!'

Like many people Butcher Donnan was easily pleased with a joke — when he made it himself. So as this one combined (as it were) business and pleasure, he laughed heartily. He refused a cup of tea as not being 'his habit,' but compromised on 'a little *somethink* neat,' which he tossed off with a knowing twitch of his little finger, and the ghost of a wink.

We gathered under the slopes of a woody hill. The Esk ran clear as crystal beneath, doves cooed across among the birch copses, rooks sailed aloft, playing catch-as-catch-can, and to a full house, and a specially attentive gallery (consisting of Nipper, Sir Toady, and the two fox-terriers), I began

## THE FIFTH TALE FROM 'IVANHOE'

### 1. THE SACK OF TORQUILSTONE

When Cedric the Saxon escaped from the castle, he found the besieging force strengthening their newly captured positions. Though much of the castle was yet to take, these furnished a capital base for another attack. Neither he nor the Black Knight were inclined to trust much to Urfried's message. All the same they knew it was good to have a well-wisher within a castle which they must shortly take by storm.

All agreed that immediate attack was necessary to save the lives of the prisoners. There was no time to lose with a murderous savage like Front de Boeuf, of whose fall they knew, but not how severely he was wounded. But the axe of the Black Knight had bitten deep, and Front de Boeuf lay dying the death of the blasphemer and the parricide.

At the second assault, Locksley again took charge of the archery, declaring that he defied a man to show himself on the defences without being struck as full of arrows as a gammon of bacon is of cloves at Christmas.

Cedric offered to fight with the foremost in the ranks, but steadfastly declined any command. He had no skill, he said, either in holding or in taking Norman castles.

The Black Knight therefore rallied the yeomen who were to follow him in the hardest part of the assault. The moat must be crossed, and for

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this purpose a raft was constructed, or rather a kind of long floating bridge.

The heaviest of the attack fell to the Black Knight. He was to push across upon the raft as soon as the attention of the besiegers was occupied by Locksley and his archers on the opposite side. Accordingly the Black Knight made a sudden attack, closely followed by Cedric, and reached the gate of the castle. The huge axe he carried instantly began to thunder upon it. His followers, however, were not quick enough, nor did they receive the same protection as the two closer to the wall. Two were shot with cross-bow bolts, two more fell into the moat, while the rest retreated abruptly to shelter behind the barbican.

Cedric and the Black Knight were now in a very perilous position. The arrows of the archers alone gave them a breathing space.

'Shame on ye all,' De Bracy cried from above to the wavering Normans; 'do ye call yourselves cross-bowmen and let these two dogs keep their place at the castle portal? Heave over the coping stones on their heads — get pick-axe and levers, and down with that pinnacle!'

But at this very moment of danger and discouragement Locksley, from his station on the opposite side of the keep, caught sight of the red flag, Urfried's promised signal. He hastened round and in a moment saw the danger of the two leaders.

'Saint George!' he cried, 'Merry Saint George for England! To the charge, bold yeomen! Why leave ye the good knight and noble Cedric to storm the pass alone? Make in, mad priest; show thou canst fight for the rosary. The castle is ours! We have friends within. Torquilstone is ours!'

## RED CAP ADVENTURES

With two arrows in succession Locksley slew the soldiers who were loosening the pinnacle to cast it down upon the heads of the two assailants by the gate. The men-at-arms were daunted. Plate armour itself seemed no defence against this tremendous archer.

‘Do ye give ground, base knaves?’ cried De Bracy, ‘*Mount joye Saint Denis!* Give me the lever!’

Thrice did Locksley send a shaft fair against De Bracy's breast, and three times did the arrow rebound from his armour.

‘Curse on thy Spanish steel-coat!’ cried Locksley; ‘had English smith forged it — these arrows would have gone through it as through silk! Comrades, friends, noble Cedric, bear back and let the ruin fall!’

But in the din of battle and the onfall of the Black Knight's huge axe on the postern gate, no one heard, or at least none paid any attention.

But, closely following the red signal flag, flames broke from all the western side of the keep. The Black Knight with his huge axe burst the door and rushed into the castle, dealing blows to right and left. De Bracy hastened to meet the champion. But though he fought valiantly, a blow, which would have killed him on the spot if he had not partly caught it on his shield, levelled him to the ground.

Even thus he refused to yield without knowing the name of his captor. The Black Knight stooped and whispered a word in his ear which caused him suddenly to change his tone.

‘Go to the barbican,’ commanded the victor, ‘and there await my further orders.’

‘First,’ said De Bracy, ‘let me tell you what you ought to know. Wilfred of Ivanhoe lies yonder

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wounded and a prisoner. He will perish in the burning castle unless help be taken to him immediately.'

'Wilfred of Ivanhoe!' cried the Black Knight, fiercely; 'if a hair of his head perish, the neck of every man in the castle shall answer for it! Show me the chamber!'

De Bracy pointed to a stair, and himself asked permission to show the victor the way. But the Black Knight repelled him with a cold 'I do not trust thee, De Bracy! To the barbican, as I bade thee!'

In Ivanhoe's chamber, the smoke had been thickening, the red tongues of the flames began to dance above the turrets, and the crackling of the burning rafters drowned all other sounds.

Again and again Ivanhoe begged Rebecca to save herself, but she only answered that, if it were death, they would die together.

This, however, was not to be granted her. From two sides rescuers were approaching. First came the fierce Templar Bois-Guilbert, who burst suddenly into the chamber, his gilded armour hacked and reddened with the fury of battle, his plume burnt and shorn with fire and sword.

'Come, Rebecca,' he cried; 'there is but one path to safety. I will cut my way through fifty perils to carry you away!'

'Alone,' said Rebecca, 'I will never follow you. If any heart is left in you, save my aged father — save this wounded knight!'

'A knight,' answered the Templar, calmly, 'must encounter his fate whether it meets him in the shape of sword or flame. And who cares how or where a Jew meets with his?'

## RED CAP ADVENTURES

So saying, he seized the terrified maiden, and in spite of her shrieks carried her out of the room amidst the vain taunts and helpless defiances of Ivanhoe. At that moment the Black Knight entered the chamber hurriedly. Ivanhoe besought him in a breath to seize the traitor — to save the Lady Rowena — to look to the noble Cedric.

‘In their turn,’ answered the Knight of the Fetterlock, ‘but yours first!’

So with no more words he caught up Ivanhoe in his arms as easily as the Templar had carried off the slender form of Rebecca.

Such was that famous sack of Torquilstone, the castle of Front de Boeuf, at which quarter was neither asked nor given. Stairs and pavements grew slippery with blood. Only Bois-Guilbert with a little troop held firm, surrounding Rebecca, who had been placed on horseback before one of his Saracen slaves. Notwithstanding the fury of the fight he showed every attention to her safety. Repeatedly he was at the side of the Jewess, defending her with his triangular shield, careless of his own defence. Then again, starting suddenly, he would charge out, crying his war-cry, and, striking the foremost of his assailants to the earth, would be back the next moment at her bridle-rein.

At last Athelstane, who had noticed the female figure in the midst of the Saracens and made no doubt that it was Rowena, cried out that he alone would rescue her from the proud knight.

‘Think what you do,’ said Wamba the Jester; ‘yon dark locks are none of the Lady Rowena’s; and for yourself, forget not that silk bonnet stops not steel blade.’

But Athelstane, if unready, was also

obstinate. He attacked the Templar stoutly enough, but Bois-Guilbert, causing his horse to rear, brought down his sword so trenchantly that it shored through the silken bonnet, and Athelstane fell dead on the ground.

In the confusion which followed, the Templar, after vainly calling upon De Bracy, galloped off with his followers and Rebecca still captive in the midst.

Higher and higher the flames mounted till they enveloped the witchlike figure of the Saxon Urfried, as she stood tossing her arms in wild exultation, as if queening it among the vengeance she had wrought upon the house of her shame.

At last, with a dreadful crash, the whole turret gave way, and Urfried perished in the flames which had already consumed her tyrant. All made the sign of the Cross, and then the voice of Locksley was heard: 'Shout, yeomen — the den of tyrants is no more! To the Trysting-tree with your spoil! There we will most justly divide the booty with our worthy allies in this great vengeance!'

What followed is soon told. The outlaws assembled under a great oak, which stood in the inmost glade of Sherwood. It was the Trysting-tree, a sort of Parliament House for the band. Robin Hood, laying aside his borrowed names of Archer Locksley and Cleave-the-wand, presided over the strange gathering. At one side of his throne sat the Black Knight and on the other the Noble Cedric.

But neither of these would accept any part of the spoils of the castle of Front de Boeuf. The Saxon franklin answered that for himself he was rich enough out of his own wealth to reward his followers. The Black Knight asked only the life of

## RED CAP ADVENTURES

Maurice de Bracy, whom he took a little apart and dismissed with a stern caution as to his future behaviour. Cedric, on the petition of Wamba the Jester, freed Gurth the swineherd, because he had so well tended his son. He became, therefore, a free man and a vassal instead of a serf and a slave.

Before the feast was finished the Black Knight accepted the hunting horn of Robin Hood, and was taught a call upon it, which, said the outlaw, might in some day of utmost need, rally about him some few sturdy comrades.

‘Better help than thine and that of thy rangers would I never seek,’ the Black Knight answered, ‘were it in the face of Death itself!’

The Black Knight departed alone through the woods to the north. Cedric conveyed Rowena back to Rotherwood. The outlaws were left with the Jew Isaac and a new prisoner led in by Friar Tuck. This was no other than Prior Aymer of Jorvaux, a most dignified churchman, ready to curse all and sundry concerned in his capture.

It was decided that the Jew and he should name each other's ransoms. Six hundred crowns was the amount named by the Jew for the Prior. The Prior declared that the Jew could easily pay a thousand.

‘A sentence! A sentence! Solomon could not have done better!’ cried the outlaws, laughing aloud.

But Locksley, or rather Robin Hood, was touched by the grief and anxiety of the Jew for his lost daughter. He accepted, therefore, only a moderate sum, or rather the promise of it, and bade Isaac make all speed to Templestowe, where he might possibly be able to buy his daughter back for a heavy ransom. Nay more, for a bag of silver marks

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and the promise of more, the Prior was willing to write a letter which might aid the Jew in the recovery of Rebecca.

He took the tablets from Isaac's hand, but, struck with a sudden scruple, he declared that rather than use the pen of an unbeliever he would fast for twenty-four hours. Locksley, however, proved himself as usual equal to the occasion. He bent his bow and aimed a shaft at the leading goose of a flock which was winging its way overhead down to the distant and solitary fens of Holderness. The bird came fluttering down, transfixed by the arrow.

'There, Prior,' said the outlaw, 'I have provided all the monks of your abbey with pens for a hundred years, unless they take to writing chronicles.'

So without more ado the letter to the Templar was written and Isaac of York went on his way with it, somewhat sadly, it must be owned. For, indeed, he knew not what awaited himself or his daughter in that abode of their enemies.

### 2. REBECCA'S CHAMPION

When Bois-Guilbert reached Templestowe with Rebecca and his Saracen followers, he found shelter indeed, and comparative security. The Preceptory of the Knights Templar was strong beyond any power of Saxon outlaw to besiege. But, all unwitting, he had fallen into a far greater peril.

For Lucas Beaumanoir, the Grand Master of the Order of the Temple, had arrived. He found the Preceptories of his Order in England in a state of laxity and confusion that deeply shocked him. He was a severe and aged man, a great warrior in his

day, but with the narrow soul of a persecuting priest.

Philip Malvoisin, the Chief of the Order at Templestowe, dared not tell him that Bois-Guilbert had brought a Jew maiden like Rebecca within the very precincts of the fortress-abbey itself. Beaumanoir, however, learned the matter for himself. He intercepted the letter which Isaac of York brought from Prior Aymer to Bois-Guilbert, and, pushing his right of Grand Master to its limit, he opened and read it.

In the letter so hastily written with the grey-goose quill under the eyes of Locksley, the Prior spoke of Rebecca as the Witch of Endor, and as the Jewish sorceress whose black eyes had bewitched the Knight Templar.

These careless jesting words were enough to kindle the ever-smouldering hatred of the Grand Master against all sorcery. So, hearing that Rebecca had learned the art of healing from a witch — one of those poor old women who had been condemned and executed for working magic, Beaumanoir immediately determined that Rebecca also should be tried for practising diabolic arts upon Bois-Guilbert, and thus causing him to break the rules of his Order.

To be tried for such a crime before a fanatic like the Grand Master of the Temple was to be condemned, and it was only by means of Bois-Guilbert himself, who succeeded in passing a paper to Rebecca, that she was saved from an immediate death by fire. Bois-Guilbert, in whose breast a deep and sullen anger against the Grand Master was burning, wrote in the Arabic character on a slip of paper, 'Demand a champion!' Doubtless that grain

of good which remains in the heart of every man, however evil, moved him to do this in order that he might gain time to save Rebecca. But his comrades of the Order made his case worse than before by moving the Grand Master to select him as the champion of the Temple against the accused.

Three days were granted Rebecca for the appearance of a knight willing to do battle for her life.

One Higg, son of Snell, a poor churl whom she had cured of a sore disease which had held him long bedridden, volunteered, though maimed and lame, to carry a letter to Rebecca's father. It was all that he could do, and he excused him to his fellows by saying that he did not believe that she who had cured his body meant any harm to his soul.

This mission Higg, son of Snell, carried out like the valiant joiner he was. Speeding York-wards on the hired work-horse of his neighbour Buthan, Higg met two Jews riding southward. He knew them from afar by their dress and their huge yellow caps. One was a certain Rabbi, a learned man, and the other no other than Isaac of York himself. At the first sight of the letter brought at such peril by Higg, son of Snell, the Jew fell to the ground insensible. For with all his heart, though not with all his gold pieces, Isaac of York loved his only daughter Rebecca.

The scroll informed him that she was condemned to be burned at the stake for sorcery, if a champion could not be found to do immediate battle for her at Templestowe. The last part of Rebecca's letter bade her father send the news at once to Ivanhoe, whom she had nursed while a prisoner in the castle of Front de Boeuf.

## RED CAP ADVENTURES

‘One Nazarene warrior there is’ (so Rebecca wrote) ‘who might indeed bear arms on my behalf — even Wilfred, son of Cedric. But he may not yet endure the weight of his armour. Nevertheless, send the tidings to him, my father. For he hath favour among the strong men of his people and he may yet find some one to do battle for my sake. Tell him that I am wholly innocent, whether I live or whether I die.’

The Rabbi, being a wise man, bade Isaac take courage about his daughter. Wilfred of Ivanhoe might indeed help, seeing that he had great favour in the eyes of Richard the King, who was certainly on his way back to England. ‘Besides,’ added the Rabbi, cunningly, ‘with gold thou canst buy the valour of the Gentiles. I also will be up and doing. I will hie me to the city of York, where many warriors and strong men are assembled, and I doubt not but that in case of need I will find some one to do battle for thy daughter. Only do you bear me out in the matter of the money I shall have to pay!’

That night Rebecca, alone in her cell, was surprised by a visit from Bois-Guilbert. At sight of the Templar she shrank back as having been the cause of all her troubles.

However, on this occasion he came with offers of assistance, freedom, great honour, indeed, if Rebecca would only consent to cast in her lot with his.

He declared that it had been his intention to come and fight for her, disguised as a roving knight in search of adventures, had not the choice of the Grand Master fallen upon him to represent the Order.

Rebecca could only reply that all was now too

late.

‘Still,’ said the Templar, with a graver earnestness than he had yet shown, ‘I am ready to make the great sacrifices for your sake. None have ever been able to withstand me in the lists or in battle — except Richard of England and his minion Ivanhoe. Of these Ivanhoe is wounded and cannot bear arms, while Richard is in a foreign prison. If I enter the lists against you, your doom is sure. But I need not enter them. Rebecca, for your sake I will become a disgraced and outcast man. I will renounce my highest ambitions. I will go to Palestine, where Conrade Marquis of Montserrat is my friend. I will join Saladin if no better may be. For you I will hew out a kingdom. You shall sit on its throne a crowned queen!’

But Rebecca refused, steadfastly and calmly. These were but dreams, she said, but even if true, not thus would she be saved, by a renegade and a traitor to his own Order and religion.

‘Then,’ retorted the Templar, ‘if you will not, you seal your own doom. Once lance in rest in the lists and nothing shall move me. The fiery death of the condemned sorceress shall be yours, instead of the happy future which I now offer you.’

‘Even so, I forgive you,’ said the Jewish maiden, ‘as freely as ever victim forgave her executioner.’

The Templar went out deeply moved, and it was with infinite difficulty that the Preceptor Malvoisin kept him from bearding the Grand Master on his chair, renouncing his vows, and demanding to be permitted to defend instead of to accuse the honour and life of Rebecca.

But Malvoisin soon showed Bois-Guilbert

## RED CAP ADVENTURES

that this would only be to lose himself without benefiting Rebecca. He would certainly be treated as mad, and thrust into a dungeon a hundred feet underground. More than all he would be denounced in every Christian land as a recreant knight, for whom not even the victim that he had thrown away all for had any pity or gratitude. This last argument was conclusive. The third day would find Bois-Guilbert in the lists to do battle for his Order against the sorceress.

So at Templestowe Rebecca lay waiting death or a deliverer till the third day. Then at the appointed time the heavy bell of the church of St. Michael's of Templestowe began to toll. The sullen sounds chilled the hearts of the multitude assembled. All eyes were turned to the great gate of the castle, expecting the approach of the Grand Master, the champion, and the criminal.

At length the drawbridge fell, the gates opened, and a knight, bearing the great standard of the Order, sallied from the castle, preceded by six trumpets, and followed by the Knights Preceptor, two by two, the Grand Master coming last, mounted on a stately horse, whose furniture was of the simplest kind. Behind him came Brian de Bois-Guilbert, armed *cap-a-pie* in bright armour, but without his lance, shield, and sword, which were borne by his two esquires behind him. His face, though partly hidden by a long plume which floated down from his barret-cap, looked ghastly pale, as if he had not slept for several nights. Yet he reined his pawing war-horse with the ease and grace proper to the best lance of the Order of the Temple. His general appearance was noble and commanding; but, looking at him with attention, men read that in

his dark features from which they willingly withdrew their eyes.

On either side rode Conrade of Mont-Fichet and Albert de Malvoisin, who acted as godfathers to the champion. They were in their robes of peace, the white dress of the Order. Behind them followed other Companions of the Temple, with a long train of esquires and pages clad in black, aspirants to the honour of being one day Knights of the Order. After these neophytes came a guard of warders on foot, in the same sable livery, amidst whose partisans might be seen the pale form of the accused, moving with a slow but undismayed step towards the scene of her fate. She was stripped of all her ornaments, lest perchance there should be among them some of those amulets which Satan was supposed to bestow upon his victims, to deprive them of the power of confession even when under the torture. A coarse white dress, of the simplest form, had been substituted for her Oriental ornaments; yet there was such an exquisite mixture of courage and resignation in her look, that even in this garb, and with no other ornament than her long black tresses, each eye wept that looked upon her, and the most hardened bigot regretted her fate.

This slow procession moved up the gentle eminence on the summit of which was the tilt-yard, and entered the lists. They marched once around them from right to left, and, when they had completed the circle, made a halt. There was then a momentary bustle, while the Grand Master and all his attendants, excepting the champion and his godfathers, dismounted from their horses, which were immediately removed out of the lists by the esquires, who were in attendance for that purpose.

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The unfortunate Rebecca was conducted to the black chair placed near the pile. On her first glance at the terrible spot where preparations were making for a death alike dismaying to the mind and painful to the body, she was observed to shudder and shut her eyes, praying internally, doubtless, for her lips moved, though no speech was heard. In the space of a minute she opened her eyes, looked fixedly on the pile as if to familiarise her mind with the object, and then slowly and naturally turned away her head.

Meanwhile, the Grand Master had assumed his seat, and when the chivalry of his Order was placed around and behind him, each in his due rank, a loud and long flourish of the trumpets announced that the court was seated for judgment. Malvoisin, then, acting as godfather of the champion, stepped forward, and laid the glove of the Jewess, which was the pledge of battle, at the feet of the Grand Master.

‘Valorous lord, and reverend father,’ said he, ‘here standeth the good knight, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Knight Preceptor of the Order of the Temple, who, by accepting the pledge of battle which I now lay at your reverence’s feet, hath become bound to do his devoir in combat this day, to maintain that this Jewish maiden, by name Rebecca, hath justly deserved the doom passed upon her in a chapter of this most Holy Order of the Temple of Zion, condemning her to die as a sorceress; here, I say, he standeth, such battle to do, knightly and honourable, if such be your noble and sanctified pleasure.’

The Grand Master commanded the herald to stand forth and do his devoir. The trumpets then

again flourished, and a herald, stepping forward, proclaimed aloud — ‘*Oyez, oyez, oyez.* Here standeth the good knight, Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, ready to do battle with any knight of free blood who will sustain the quarrel allowed and allotted to the Jewess Rebecca, and to such champion the reverend and valorous Grand Master here present allows a fair field, and equal partition of sun and wind, and whatever else appertains to a fair combat.’ The trumpets again sounded, and there was a dead pause of many minutes.

‘No champion appears for the appellant,’ said the Grand Master. ‘Go, herald, and ask her whether she expects any one to do battle for her in this her cause.’ The herald went to the chair in which Rebecca was seated, and Bois-Guilbert, suddenly turning his horse's head toward that end of the lists, in spite of hints on either side from Malvoisin and Mont-Fitchet, was by the side of Rebecca's chair as soon as the herald.

‘Is this regular, and according to the law of combat?’ said Malvoisin, looking to the Grand Master.

‘Albert de Malvoisin, it is,’ answered Beaumanoir; ‘for in this appeal to the judgment of God, we may not prohibit parties from having that communication with each other which may best tend to bring forth the truth of the quarrel.’

In the meantime, the herald spoke to Rebecca in these terms: ‘Damsel, the Honourable and Reverend the Grand Master demands of thee, if thou art prepared with a champion to do battle this day in thy behalf, or if thou dost yield thee as one justly condemned to a deserved doom?’

‘Say to the Grand Master,’ replied Rebecca,

‘that I maintain my innocence, and do not yield me as justly condemned lest I become guilty of mine own blood. Say to him that I challenge such delay as his forms will permit, to see if God, whose opportunity is in man's extremity, will raise me up a deliverer; and when such uttermost space is passed, may His holy will be done!’ The herald retired to carry this answer to the Grand Master.

‘God forbid,’ said Lucas Beaumanoir, ‘that Jew or pagan should impeach us of injustice. Until the shadows be cast from the west to the eastward, will we wait to see if a champion shall appear for this unfortunate woman. When the day is so far passed, let her prepare for death.’

The herald communicated the words of the Grand Master to Rebecca, who bowed her head submissively, folded her arms, and, looking up towards heaven, seemed to expect that aid from above which she could scarce promise herself from man. During this awful pause, the voice of Bois-Guilbert broke upon her ear — it was but a whisper, yet it startled her more than the summons of the herald had appeared to do.

‘Rebecca,’ said the Templar, ‘dost thou hear me?’

‘I have no portion in thee, cruel, hard-hearted man,’ said the unfortunate maiden.

‘Ay, but dost thou understand my words?’ said the Templar; ‘for the sound of my voice is frightful in mine own ears. I scarce know on what ground we stand, or for what purpose they have brought us hither. This listed space — that chair — these faggots — I know their purpose, and yet it appears to me like something unreal — the fearful picture of a vision, which appals my sense with

hideous fantasies, but convinces not my reason.'

'My mind and senses keep touch and time,' answered Rebecca, 'and tell me alike that these faggots are destined to consume my earthly body, and open a painful but a brief passage to a better world.'

'Dreams, Rebecca — dreams,' answered the Templar; 'idle visions, rejected by the wisdom of your own wiser Sadducees. Hear me, Rebecca,' he said, proceeding with animation; 'a better chance hast thou for life and liberty than yonder knaves and dotard dream of. Mount thee behind me on my steed — on Zamor, the gallant horse that never failed his rider. I won him in single fight from the Soldan of Trebizond — mount, I say, behind me — in one short hour is pursuit and inquiry far behind — a new world of pleasure opens to thee — to me a new career of fame. Let them speak the doom which I despise, and erase the name of Bois-Guilbert from their lists of monastic slaves! I will wash out with blood whatever blot they may dare to cast on my scutcheon.'

'Tempter,' said Rebecca, 'begone! Not in this last extremity canst thou move me one hair's breadth from my resting place — surrounded as I am by foes. I hold thee as my worst and most deadly enemy — avoid thee, in the name of God!'

Albert Malvoisin, alarmed and impatient at the duration of their conference, now advanced to interrupt it.

'Hath the maiden acknowledged her guilt?' he demanded of Bois-Guilbert, 'or is she resolute in her denial?'

'She is indeed resolute,' said Bois-Guilbert.

'Then,' said Malvoisin, 'must thou, noble

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brother, resume thy place to attend the issue. The shades are changing on the circle of the dial. Come, brave Bois-Guilbert — come, thou hope of our holy Order, and soon to be its head.'

As he spoke in this soothing tone, he laid his hand on the knight's bridle, as if to lead him back to his station.

'False villain! what meanest thou by thy hand on my rein?' said Sir Brian, angrily. And, shaking off his companion's grasp, he rode back to the upper end of the lists.

'There is yet spirit in him,' said Malvoisin apart to Mont-Fitchet, 'were it well directed — but, like the Greek fire, it burns whatever approaches it.'

The judges had been now two hours in the lists, awaiting in vain the appearance of a champion.

It was, however, the general belief that no one could or would appear for a Jewess accused of sorcery; and the knights, instigated by Malvoisin, whispered to each other that it was time to declare the pledge of Rebecca forfeited. At this instant a knight, urging his horse to speed, appeared on the plain advancing toward the lists. A hundred voices exclaimed, 'A champion! a champion!' And, despite the prepossessions and prejudices of the multitude, they shouted unanimously as the knight rode into the tilt-yard. The second glance, however, served to destroy the hope that his timely arrival had excited. His horse, urged for many miles to its utmost speed, appeared to reel from fatigue, and the rider, however undauntedly he presented himself in the lists, either from weakness, weariness, or both, seemed scarce able to support himself in the saddle.

To the summons of the herald who demanded his rank, his name, and purpose, the

stranger knight answered readily and boldly, 'I am a good knight and noble, come hither to sustain with lance and sword the just and lawful quarrel of this damsel, Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York; to uphold the doom pronounced against her to be false and truthless, and to defy Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, as a traitor, murderer, and liar; as I will prove in this field with my body against his, by the aid of God, of Our Lady, and of Monseigneur Saint George, the good knight.'

'The stranger must first show,' said Malvoisin, 'that he is good knight, and of honourable lineage. The Temple sendeth not forth her champions against nameless men.'

'My name,' said the knight, raising his helmet, 'is better known, my lineage more pure, Malvoisin, than thine own. I am Wilfred of Ivanhoe.'

'I will not fight with thee at present,' said the Templar, in a changed and hollow voice. 'Get thy wounds healed, purvey thee a better horse, and it may be I will hold it worth my while to scourge out of thee this boyish spirit of bravado.'

'Ha, proud Templar!' said Ivanhoe; 'hast thou forgotten that twice didst thou fall before this lance? Remember the lists at Acre — remember the passage of arms at Ashby — remember thy proud vaunt in the halls of Rotherwood, and the gage of your gold chain against my reliquary, that thou wouldst do battle with Wilfred of Ivanhoe, and recover the honour thou hadst lost! By that reliquary, and the holy relic it contains, I will proclaim thee, Templar, a coward in every court in Europe — unless thou do battle without further delay.'

Bois-Guilbert turned his countenance

irresolutely towards Rebecca, and then exclaimed, looking fiercely at Ivanhoe, 'Dog of a Saxon! take thy lance, and prepare for the death thou hast drawn upon thee!'

'Does the Grand Master allow me the combat?' said Ivanhoe.

'I may not deny what thou hast challenged,' said the Grand Master, 'provided the maiden accepts thee as her champion. Yet I would thou wert in better plight to do battle. An enemy of our Order hast thou ever been, yet would I have thee honourably met with.'

'Thus — thus as I am, and not otherwise,' said Ivanhoe; 'it is the judgment of God — to his keeping I commend myself. Rebecca,' said he, riding up to the fatal chair, 'dost thou accept of me for thy champion?'

'I do,' she said, fluttered by an emotion which the fear of death had been unable to produce, 'I do accept thee as the champion whom Heaven hath sent me. Yet, no — no — thy wounds are uncured. Meet not that proud man — why shouldst thou perish also?'

But Ivanhoe was already at his post, and had closed his visor and assumed his lance. Bois-Guilbert did the same; and his esquire remarked, as he clasped his visor, that his face, which had, notwithstanding the variety of emotions by which he had been agitated, continued during the whole morning of an ashy paleness, was now become suddenly very much flushed.

Then the herald, seeing each champion in his place, uplifted his voice, repeating thrice — '*Faites vos devoirs, preux chevaliers!*' After the third cry he withdrew to one side of the lists, and again

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proclaimed that none, on peril of instant death, should dare, by word, cry, or action, to interfere with or disturb this fair field of combat. The Grand Master, who held in his hand the gage of battle, Rebecca's glove, now threw it into the lists, and pronounced the fatal signal words, '*Laissez aller.*'

The trumpets sounded, and the knights charged each other in full career. The wearied horse of Ivanhoe, and its no less exhausted rider, went down, as all had expected, before the well-aimed lance and vigorous steed of the Templar. This issue of the combat all had foreseen; but although the spear of Ivanhoe did but, in comparison, touch the shield of Bois-Guilbert, that champion, to the astonishment of all who beheld it, reeled in his saddle, lost his stirrups, and fell in the lists.

Ivanhoe, extricating himself from his fallen horse, was soon on foot, hastening to mend his fortune with his sword; but his antagonist arose not. Wilfred, placing his foot on his breast, and the sword's point to his throat, commanded him to yield him, or die on the spot. Bois-Guilbert returned no answer.

'Slay him not, Sir Knight,' cried the Grand Master, 'unshriven and unabsolved — kill not body and soul! We allow him vanquished.'

He descended into the lists, and commanded them to unhelm the conquered champion. His eyes were closed, — the dark red flush was still on his brow. As they looked on him in astonishment, the eyes opened — but they were fixed and glazed. The flush passed from his brow, and gave way to the pallid hue of death. Unscathed by the lance of his enemy, he had died a victim to the violence of his own contending passions.

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'This is indeed the judgment of God,' said the Grand Master, looking upwards — 'Thy will be done!'

### 3. CONCLUSION

Meanwhile King Richard had had an opportunity of testing the value of Robin Hood's gift. With his usual carelessness he had ridden away towards the city of York, sure that the rebellion of his ungrateful brother John could not stand for a moment before his presence.

But on the way he fell into a trap. The traitor Fitzurse and his men-at-arms beset him in the woods, crying, 'Death to the tyrant!' The King, as ever, fought splendidly, striking down an opponent at each single uplift of the axe. But a knight in blue armour charged from behind, and wounded the royal charger, bringing the King to the ground.

'A felon stroke!' cried Richard, springing nimbly to his feet, and drawing his sword to defend himself, his back to a great oak. Wamba, who alone had accompanied him on his journey, now got possession of Locksley's hunting-horn and, without more ado, blew most lustily upon it the prearranged call for assistance. The outlaws heard it, and came rushing to the King's assistance. So stoutly did they fight that very soon the traitors fled, and their leader Fitzurse was left alone on the field to answer for his treachery.

After this failure the rebellion melted away. Prince John came posting from York, whimpering at the knees of the brother whom he had wronged. Yet all that Richard said to him was only, 'Go to thy mother, boy. Thou seest that I have some angry men with me who might do thee a hurt!'

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So by Cedric's permission and with his approval, Ivanhoe wedded the fair Saxon Princess Rowena, in the minster of York, Gurth acting as his squire, and Wamba jesting gaily as became the occasion, in a brand-new set of cap-and-bells with motley to suit.

One morning soon after, while Rowena was still in her chamber, a handmaiden brought word that there was a damsel below who desired to speak with her. She was accordingly brought up, and as soon as Eligitha, the handmaiden, had been ordered to withdraw, she fell on one knee and kissed the hem of Rowena's tunic.

'What is the meaning of this homage to me?' said the princess. Rebecca the Jewess rose to her feet and, throwing back her veil, she answered, 'Because to you, Lady of Ivanhoe, I may lawfully pay the debt of gratitude I owe to Wilfred your husband. I am the unhappy Jewess whom he saved from a fearful death in the tilting yard of Templestowe.'

'Damsel,' said Rowena, 'Wilfred of Ivanhoe but rendered back in a slight measure your great kindness towards him in his wounds and misfortunes.'

Rebecca then asked Rowena to accept a little silver casket with its contents as a marriage gift. The princess, opening it, found therein a magnificent necklace of diamonds. At first she would not accept so valuable a gift. But Rebecca besought her, saying, 'Let it be seen that you judge not so harshly of our nation, as is the common report of you. Think not that I prize such sparkling stones above my liberty, or my father above the honour of his child. Accept them, lady! To me they are valueless. I shall never wear jewels again!'

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'You are, then, leaving England?' asked the princess.

'We go to place ourselves in the Kingdom of Granada, where my father's brother is high in the councils of King Boabadil. There we shall have peace and protection, whilst I — I shall devote myself to the good work of tending the sick and needy, as is the fate of our maidens who die unwedded. Tell this to your lord, if by chance he should ever inquire after the fate of her whose life he saved.'

Afterwards Wilfred of Ivanhoe became a great lord in the service of Richard of the Lion Heart, and he and Rowena lived a long life happily together. But he never forgot Rebecca, the beautiful Jewess who had nursed him in the dungeons of Torquilstone, and for whom, still weak with sickness, he had laid lance in rest in a last forlorn hope within the lists of Templestowe.

The close of the Last Tale from *Ivanhoe* was greeted with few of the signs of favour which had welcomed the Siege of Torquilstone, the Gentle Passage of Arms at Ashby, and the Famous Shooting of Cleave-the-wand. As always, young and old of my audience preferred the End Sentimental to the End Profitable.

'Um-m-m-m!' said Hugh John, elevating his nose in the air, 'just like a hero — lay about sick all the time and then, when he had a ripping chance at last, instead of whacking the Templar over the head and killing him good, he let him die 'a victim to his contending passions' — whatever that may be.'

'Why, Athelstane did better than that,' said Sir Toady Lion; 'he fought like a lion and went down

cloven to the teeth —'

'Oh, but, father, Sir Walter says that Athelstane —' began Sweetheart, who had been reading the book 'on the sly,' as the boys said — so as to be 'bucked up and horrid superior, pretending to know more than we do!'

Rather more briskly than I ought, perhaps, I told Sweetheart to hold her tongue. Athelstane was a tabooed subject. You had to read the book, and find out about him.

Indeed I had not dared to retail the too marvellous resurrection of the brawny Saxon. I knew it would not be well received by the Butcher Donnan, who was accustomed to make a clean job of his own little affairs, and would have despised the Templar forever after if his weapon had turned in his hand.

'That Ivan How,' said Mr. Donnan, rubbing his solidly moulded, well-scraped chin with his forefinger, thoughtfully, 'that there Ivan How. He done his best at the fightin', and I don't say he wasn't right to marry one of his own sort. Quality will to quality — that's right enough—'

He paused a moment, and then burst out with strong emphasis —

*'But — if it had been ME!'*

And that, after all, is the general, the almost universal, verdict. Time and a myriad of readers have reversed the verdict upon appeal. And if we had our way — which it is well that we have not — Rowena would have wedded her fitting mate, that other dull descendant of Alfred — while Rebecca, the Jewess, baptized and ennobled, would have held Ivanhoe's hand in the minster of York.

'It is such a pity!' said Sweetheart, summing

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up the situation with a long-drawn sigh.  
And there was no more to be said.

THE END OF THE RED CAP TALES FROM  
'TVANHOE'

RED CAP ADVENTURES  
TOLD FROM  
THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL

THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL

By this time I felt that the stories from Sir Walter ought to be beginning to bear their fruit. For more than a year, at intervals determined by school vacations, and the ardour of youth to display itself in field sports, I had been laboriously retelling the great tales.

From my audience I had indeed received the most flattering signs of success. But — had they read Scott the more? Well, Sweetheart had — though the boys cast it in her teeth on numberless occasions that she only read on ahead, so as to be able to show, by various nods and becks and wreathed smiles, that she was ‘in the know.’

But boys — ours at any rate — will say anything, if by saying it they can annoy their sisters. Of course, they are singular in this, different from other boys. Only, you see, the thing is for girls not to be annoyed, and this Sweetheart had learned at school.

She had gone there with the most philanthropic ideas of being kind to every one, of having all and sundry be kind to her, and she had come away with a very good notion of keeping things square by giving as good as she got — an imperfect

method for Christian martyrs, but rather practical, as against two such aggressive brothers as Hugh John and Sir Toady Lion. Maid Margaret, who looked so sweet (and sometimes even said 'please'), needed no school to teach her. She used her natural weapons, especially those fitted with neat round-toed boots, with great effect against the enemy. She had not yet got as far as 'Christian Martyrs' in her history book.

One wet afternoon the children were in the library. The boys, as usual, were prone on the floor, poring over the sets of *Graphics* and the *Illustrated London News* — which is their idea of what a library should contain. Sweetheart was curled up on a sofa, eating an orange, reading and gazing out at the window all at one and the same time — or so at least it appeared to me.

Maid Margaret unaffectedly yawned, and drummed on the rain-battered library panes with her fingers. It seemed a propitious moment for me to make my proposal.

'See, here,' I said, 'I suppose you are all fearfully rich?'

I had reason to know the contrary, owing to the recent plague of birthdays which always rages under the July dog-star.

'No!' they chorused, the boys springing up from their prone position to do it. 'We are just fearful poor!'

The adjective was not a proper one, used adverbially, but was allowed to pass under the circumstances.

'Do any of you want to earn money?'

'Just don't we? Tell us how, that's all!'

A more suddenly industrious, but rather

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unthrifty, family, you could not have seen without going miles.

'Well,' I said, 'see here; each of you can take a book of Sir Walter's — any one you like; read it, and tell the story to the others in your own fashion!'

I could see the faces of the boys swiftly darken, while Sweetheart's lighted up with a great and sudden joy. As for Maid Margaret, she resumed her drumming on the window-pane like one who has neither art nor part in these things.

But even for her, there arose a light in the gloom of hopes (financial) deferred.

'Can I have Ellie to read the book — and then me tell it?' she inquired.

This the boys considered 'not fair.' Their objection was however overruled on the ground of age. Maid Margaret was only beginning to struggle with words of two syllables, and the handicap would have been quite too great, thus to compel her to read the whole for herself.

'If,' said I, laying down the Code Napoleon of the affair, 'you tell such a story as the others will listen to, half an hour in length, I'll give you a prize like the others!'

'To do what I like with?'

'Certainly!'

'Snacks!' cried the boys, simultaneously; 'I bag *Ivanhoe*!'

'Won't do,' said Sweetheart; 'why, you've only just been told that story, and you have been playing it for weeks, along with Nipper Donnan and the other boys of Edam.'

'Certainly; you must take one of the Waverley novels which has not been told before, read it, make one or more stories out of it — and I will give them

one golden sovereign for each that is good enough to print!’

‘Oh!’ said Sir Toady Lion, ‘but that’s not fair — you get more than that!’

‘Yes, sir,’ I said sharply; ‘but there’s your food and clothing and schooling to pay for, young gentleman — besides one or two other things which, if lucky, you will find out in due time for yourself!’

The reply silenced, but, I fear, failed to convince — as is so often the case when the arguments of experience are supplied to youth.

Still, as the family went to sleep that night, there shone before the eyes of each member a book written by a certain Walter Scott, and in the centre, instead of the well-known lineaments of the author of *Waverley*, the image and superscription of H. M. Edward VII, done in pure minted gold, and surrounded with an aureole!

Yet his present Gracious Majesty did *not* write the *Waverley* novels!

It was with a particularly peaceful smile that Sweetheart stole away to bed that night. She had visited the shelf of ‘Scotts,’ and carried off one, quite obviously secreted about her person. Of course the boys had first to quarrel about first choice, pillow-fight it out in the privacy of their chamber, and then start in a good day after the fair. As for Maid Margaret, what she was going to do, rested a profound secret — so profound indeed that she did not know herself. She, however, took council with a certain domestic good genius, who, after stopping the pillow-fight and seeing that ‘all was quiet along the Potomac,’ stopped before the *Waverley* shelf, and regarded the volumes with the same grave attention she is wont to bestow upon a sermon by her

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favourite preacher. What she took away will afterwards be manifest.

It was of course a foregone conclusion that long before the others were halfway through their chosen book — even by the aid of vigorous skipping, Sweetheart was ready with her narrative.

Hugh John and Sir Toady Lion reclaimed a superior price for their articles 'because she's always telling us stories.' Therefore, according to them it would come easier.

However, I declined to penalise Sweetheart for her goodness to the very ingrates who now lodged the complaint.

Sweetheart, a little eager about the eyes, but otherwise calm, clasped her hand about one knee and was ready to begin. For me, I had a notebook in one hand, a pencil in the other — while the audience, picturesquely disposed about the carpet, prepared itself to listen to the narrative in a purposely fatigued manner. You see there were others to come after — in a future more or less remote, and these were not precisely the sort of young men to depreciate the value of their own merchandise.

Sweetheart began in the easy conversational tone of the practised tale-teller. The first Golden Edward was as good as her own already — perhaps others similarly minted, a regular royal procession of milled sovereigns.

'Go on, Sis!' said Hugh John; 'and mind, if we don't like it, we have got the right to say so!'

'No, only father has!' said Sweetheart, unsweetly; 'you mind your own business!'

'Say *'please!'*' added Maid Margaret, who had so often been caught out for forgetting, that she now

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went about catching other sinners by omission.

'Go on, Sweetheart,' I said; 'don't mind any of them — they will be sorry when you get your pay!'

'Oh, no, *I* won't!' called out Sir Toady, who was finishing a sketch of a weasel and a crow disputing rights to a dead rabbit. This was such unwonted and surprising magnanimity, that I asked the youth why he would not grudge his sister her golden sovereign.

'Because,' he said, as he put in the shading with care, 'my birthday comes next!'

'Well,' said Sweetheart, 'what I am going to tell you about is THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL.'

And accordingly, following my notebook, this is something like the way she told it.

### THE FIRST TALE FROM 'THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL' MASTER AND MAN

It was in the time after King James VI of Scotland had become King James I of England. Many Scots went to London to seek their fortune, and some were good, and some were middling, and some were bad. Yes, they were; you need not deny it, boys. But nearly all of them had long swords, and the ticklish honour which was ready to make the long swords spring out of the battered scabbards. They were all kinsfolk, too, or so at least they said. And so, partly because they were poor and partly because they let nothing stand in the way of their advancement in the world, the Londoners, and especially those who served the court, heartily detested them.

Now there was a fine handsome young

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Scottish lord who came to London also on his business. His name was Lord Glenvarloch. He was tall and brave, but very poor, though the King owed him money which he would not pay.

(I could hear the low growl of the boys, which said very plainly that the beginning was a well-known one. I enjoined silence with a threatening gesture of the hand.)

And so (continued Sweetheart, catching fire at the thought of good-looking misfortune) this young lord had to live in a mean street by the water-side near Old Saint Paul's — not the one you have seen — which was built by Christopher Wren —

'Oh, yes,' said the boys, 'we know old Circumspice! Besides, we have been right to the top of the dome, while you stopped at the Whispering Gallery! Much you know about history!'

The name of the landlord of the lodgings was John Christie, a ship-chandler, and he had a wife Nelly, twenty years younger than himself (which, said Sweetheart, in a lower tone, ought not to be allowed). Now Nelly liked the young Scots lord. She was kind to him and gave him nice things to eat.

['What sort of things?' asked the boys, together. It was a question that touched them nearly.

'Oh, powdered beef, and carrots, and greens!' answered Sweetheart, easily.

'No puddings?'

'I dare say!' said Sweetheart.

'Oh,' said Sir Toady Lion, 'you're no good. All you care about is who this lord-fellow made love to!'

I quenched these interrupters sternly, promising, together with other immediate penalties, that they should not even get the chance of earning

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a golden Edward, if they did not let Sweetheart tell her story in her own way.]

Well (she went on), Lord Glenvarloch had a servant, Richard Monyplies, who had followed him for a good deal of love and very little wages, in order that he might help him to present his suit to the King.

But it was a hard time for creditors of royalty, and perhaps the young Lord Glenvarloch was too modest. He did not care to force himself among the crowd of bullies and favourites that filled up all the doors of the court. His petitions were tossed aside by secretaries. He had never even spoken to the King, and as a last resort he had sent his servant, Richard Monyplies, to get a chance of presenting his request to the King.

['Shy!' said Sir Toady Lion, scornfully. 'I shouldn't have been shy. He hadn't been at our school, or he would have learned different!']

'Be quiet!' said Hugh John, giving his brother a touch with the toe of his boot to remind him that little boys should be seen and not heard.]

At any rate (continued Sweetheart), this Richard Monyplies went from Mistress Nelly Christie's lodgings along by the rows of booths and shops which is now called Fleet Street and the Strand —

['They sell stamps there! — Oh, yes, and field glasses — I've been there — I've been there!']

So they did in the time Richard Monyplies went along — at least glasses — I don't know about stamps. The book does not say so. Only the shops were all open in front just like booths at a fair, with all the things laid out and 'prentices to call out, 'What d'ye lack?' 'What d'ye lack?' to the passers-by.

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Now there was one of these booths with two 'prentices in it, both busy calling out to passengers the watches and spectacles that their master David Ramsay had made. The name of one 'prentice, a curly-headed, stout lad, was Jin Vin, or Jenkin Vincent, while the other, taller and quieter, was named Tunstall. The booth was quite near Temple Bar, where the griffon now stands on his tail, but it was a proper bar then, with men's heads stuck along the top!

[Here the boys looked interested, and began to think that Sweetheart was really going to deserve well of her gold sovereign. They demanded what these men had done, to have their heads thus summarily removed.

'Oh, committed treason, or been wiser than the King — or something!' said Sweetheart, who did not care about this part; 'at any rate, it does not come into the story.'

But (she went on) David Ramsay, the watchmaker, was an old, rather crabbed, musty-fusty old fellow, who was always doing mental arithmetic in his head — sums about the making of watches — no, they were not all made in factories then — one man made a whole watch. Clever of him, wasn't it, but, I dare say, rather trying to the temper! Well, David Ramsay of Temple Bar had his house just behind his shop, and he had one lovely young daughter, as sweet-tempered and good as she could be, in addition to her prettiness. *Crusty old fathers often have!*

['Our father isn't never crusty!' said Sir Toady Lion, seeing a chance of getting even without danger; 'perhaps that's the reason he hasn't got 'one lovely' -

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'Shut up, Toad!' said Hugh John, who, in these latter years, has somewhat broken the bonds of fraternal contempt, and become a sincere admirer of his elder sister — as adding considerably to the attractiveness of a house in the eyes of his friends, not to mention girl friends who come to help play games.]

Now, this Richard Monyplies was just like you boys, only he was grown up — always ruffling his feathers, squaring his elbows, and wanting to fight somebody. He was a butcher's son and had no money in his pockets— just only his father's old 'Andrea Ferrara' sword by his side!

Well, down the Fleet he went, gaping at the shops, gazing at old Adam and Eve playing their ding-dong on the steeple of St. Dunstan's church, his blue bonnet with the feather in it cocked to the side, his grey eyes, his yellow hair, and the sword with a ton of iron in the handle—

[Oh, come, Sis!' said Hugh John, who is a stickler for exactitude.]

Well, so it is written in the book. Jin Vin said so, but then he was like you boys when you are telling of your wonderful feats — perhaps it was not quite a ton. And this Ritchie had a threadbare cloak and stepped out like a Frenchman (which was to say at that time, he strutted). He was long in the face like a Spaniard. He had a book at his girdle on the one side, and a broad dagger at the other. Such was Ritchie Monyplies, and perhaps it was no wonder that the 'prentices laughed.

Still, they knew that it was ill carrying the jest too far.

Jin Vin tried his hand, for he remembered the proverb that the English had made against the

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Scots who had followed their King to the south: —  
*'In Scotland he was born and bred,  
And though a beggar, must be fed!'*

So he invited Ritchie to buy a watch that he might count the hours of plenty since he had left Berwick town, a pair of spectacles to see the English gold that lay ready for his grip. 'Or buy physic for a proud stomach,' cried Jin Vin; 'there is a 'pothecary's on t'other side of the way.'

So they teased him. But Ritchie Monyplies halted only a moment to look at his tormentors; then, tossing his head scornfully, he went on his way.

But there were others worse than Jin Vin and his comrade. A little along Fleet Street Ritchie knocked a crockery-seller who had insulted him over among his stock in trade. Instantly the cry of "Prentices!" "Prentices!" "Clubs!" "Clubs!" arose. Jin Vin and Tunstall snatched each his weapon and ran out to join the fray, leaving the shop in the care of their master, who came out growling at being disturbed.

And if it had not been for these two, there might well have been murder done on poor Ritchie Monyplies. As it was, they rescued him with only a broken head, and brought him back to their master's house by Temple Bar, where at first, to tell the truth, the master received him none too cordially. Here he was set down in a great chair, and, after recovering himself a little, was called upon to explain himself to David Ramsay and his guest, a certain Master George, a city merchant of great wealth and standing about the court.

His name, he said, was Richard Monyplies.

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He was of noble descent, son of the noble house of Monyplies of Castle Collop, in the West Port of Edinburgh.

‘And pray what do you call a Port?’ demanded Master George.

‘Oh, a kind of gate,’ said the Scot; ‘like those of Whitehall yonder, but more noble and with more trimmings of architecture!’

‘But, sirrah,’ cried Master George, ‘you do not mean to compare the gate of Edinburgh with the royal Gates of Whitehall, which were planned by the great Holbein himself, any more than you would dare to say that there is at Edinburgh a wide, navigable river like the Thames, crowded with shipping!’

‘Ay, but wad I no!’ cried the Scot; ‘as if London and the Thames were for one moment to be compared to Edinburgh, where we have not only the Water o’ Leith, but the Nor’ Loch as well!’

‘Ay, fause loon,’ cried Master George, suddenly speaking in the broad Scots accent, ‘and the Pow Burn, and the Quarry Holes, and the Gusedubs! More than that, I believe you are a son of old Mungo Monyplies, who was a flesher in the West Port, an honest man, and a deacon in his trade. I am sorry to see his son here with so poor a coat!’

‘Indifferent,’ said Ritchie, glancing at his cloak, which had been torn in the fray on the street, when a left-handed lighterman had given him a knock while Jin Vin and his comrade were engaged in saving him, ‘indifferent, sir. But more is the pity that it is now the ordinary livery of honest burghers’ sons. There is a fine crop of oats in the Grassmarket, and where my father’s booth stood you will find as much grass as would feed all the

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cattle he ever killed. The King's going to England has taken away all custom from the poor town of Edinburgh.'

'True,' said Master George; 'it ought to be thought upon, Master Ramsay, that while we make fortunes here, there are those left behind us in the Guid Toon who are hard put to it for daily bread.'

Now Master George was no other than Master George Heriot, the rich goldsmith of the King — which in those days also meant banker. The greatness of his wealth made him a natural head for the Scots colony in London, but he was a man of great and varied benevolence as well. His kindness to his poor countrymen, together with his position at court, and the familiar talks he had with the King, made him a man looked up to by everybody.

Master George asked if Ritchie Monyplies had any other master except 'Dame Want,' as the Scot had reported of himself.

'I am the servant of young Lord Glenvarloch,' said Ritchie; 'yes, in spite of my coat—all the follower he is likely to have!'

'I have seen his father,' said George Heriot, 'with four gentlemen and the lackeys, all rustling in laces and velvets at his heels — a changeful world — a changeful world!'

'Ah,' cried Richard Monyplies, that his master might not be shamed before these London 'prentices, 'my master is in no more than present need — a slight pinch, nothing worse. He has money in the Royal Treasury for the asking! Which is to say,' he whispered to Master George, 'that the King owes him a heap of money, and it will be somewhat hard to come by, I fear!'

The jeweller looked as if he believed in this

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thoroughly, having doubtless had his own experiences. Then he asked further concerning young Lord Glenvarloch, where his lodging was, and what it was that he wanted from the King. Ritchie, however, either could not or would not give him any but the vaguest direction.

‘He has left his lordship behind him,’ he said, ‘and now, under the family name of Nigel Olifaunt, he lodges in a Wynd by the waterside, with a ship-chandler, one of the name of John Christie.’

However, because of the love he had borne the elder Lord Glenvarloch, George Heriot promised himself to find out his son's dwelling. He did not say that he meant to do all that he could to further his cause with the King, because he knew at the same time that King James, so familiar and so kindly generally, became quite otherwise when it was a question of the payment of money.

[The boys had grown restless with all these preliminaries.

‘It's nearly as bad as having to read the book!’ they said. ‘Get on, Sis!’

‘It's not so easy as you would think,’ said Sweetheart; ‘you will find out when your turn comes.’]

But at any rate, the next morning, after spending his night in a graveyard with his sword ready in his hand to keep him from midnight thieves and evil characters of all kinds, Ritchie Monyplies arrived belated at his master's lodgings, just when young Nigel Olifaunt was on the point of going out to lay a complaint of his servant's disappearance with the nearest sitting justice.

He had recovered somewhat from his crack on the head, having, as he said, been reared in the

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West Port, with a head that was more like to break a stick than a stick to break it.

But he had a sorrowful tale to tell of his reception at court. He had carried his master's supplication — he called it 'sifflication' — to Whitehall. He had been able to wait for the King's mounting his mare to go to the hunting, by the interest of one Linklater, a scullion in the royal kitchen.

But when the King appeared, he was surrounded by his lords, and Ritchie had to elbow his way through as best he could, much in the same way indeed as Jin Vin had done through the Fleet Street crowd. The people he pushed out of his way did not love him the better for it, and still more when they saw his appearance of, as they said, 'a hungry Scot.'

As Ritchie attempted a bow, the King's mare became startled. His Majesty, who sat a horse 'no better than a draff-sack,' swerved and came near to being thrown. He tossed the supplication among his horse's feet, and bade them seize the rascal who brought it. There was talk of hanging. There was talk of scourging. But finally King James, hearing the loud cries for mercy raised by Ritchie for the purpose of reaching his ear, recognised a countryman and called to let him off, to give him a copy of the proclamation, and 'send him down to the North again by the first light collier!'

When Master George Heriot presented himself the next day at the lodging of the young lord, he found Nigel at first a little more than haughty. He feared to be made a show of in his poverty, but the kindness of the great merchant, his respectfulness even, his genial humour, softened Lord Glenvarloch,

and he finished by telling all his tale to George Heriot.

The King's jeweller and banker could hardly believe his ears. He knew it was impossible that the King, if he had rightly understood what was asked, could have thus treated the son of his former chancellor and the wisest man in his kingdom, one also who had lent him great sums of money when he stood sorely in need of them.

But the worst was that the Glenvarloch estates stood in danger of being lost for a sum only a tenth of their value, because of a wadset or mortgage held by one Peterson of Campvere — according to George Heriot a mere cover for the Lord Chancellor of Scotland, who had a mind to secure them for himself! The King's jeweller at once declared that the proclamation could never have been meant for the son of a great Scots lord. Either the messenger must have been unsuitable, or something must have been added to the petition.

He asked for Nigel's permission to call up Ritchie Monyplies, and to put a few questions to him. The serving-man appeared, evidently called from dinner, and in a few moments George Heriot had made him confess that he had 'slipped in a bit note' of a debt due to his father, the West Port butcher, long ago by the King's mother, 'when about a certain Christmas time she supped with the Earl of Bothwell!'

Here at once was the explanation. The King would not like to be reminded of the mother whom he had left to be executed in the same kingdom over which he at present ruled. More than that, the name of the Earl of Bothwell, his mother's last husband, springing to his eye in Ritchie Monyplies,

'sifflication,' would be as a red rag to a bull.

No wonder, also, that King James, always afraid of assassination, had ordered Ritchie out of his presence. But as for the petition of Nigel Olifaunt, the young Lord of Glenvarloch, Heriot did not believe that the King had ever seen it. He offered, before leaving, to have it properly engrossed, and to place it in the hands of the King himself on an early occasion, which occasion he would take care to make a favourable one.

Lastly, he suggested that (as the custom was in these times), since he was not only a jeweller but a moneylender, if Nigel were in need of a hundred pounds or so to put himself in good trim for going to court, the money was at his disposition, at a suitable interest. He could repay it when his affairs were in better condition.

'But,' said Nigel, 'I do not know that they will ever be.'

'Let me take the risk of that,' said the goldsmith; — 'if they should not, the loss of the money will be nothing in comparison with other griefs that I shall have!'

Before taking leave, George Heriot told Nigel that the King was a man naturally anxious to be just, but that he was surrounded by those who wished to keep all things for their own advantage. Still — he thought that the King only needed to be properly approached to carry out the just demands of the son of his former statesman. And as for himself, he believed that he saw his way through the business.

As he went downstairs he spoke to Nigel's landlady, telling her to see to it that the young lord wanted for nothing, and to let him know in case of

any need. Mistress Nelly replied that she would look to the latter herself, and not only so, but she would step as far as Lombard Street to let his Honour know how matters passed.

The old goldsmith, however, was strict on discipline. He did not wish his premises cluttered up with pretty young wives, so he said a little severely, 'Let your husband come. He is an honest man and punctual to the minute, as I have found in my dealings with him.'

'Precise old Scotch tinsmith!' murmured pretty Mistress Nelly, stamping her foot in a quickly passing anger as Master George Heriot went down the steps to his coach.

With the young lord's suit on his mind, and perhaps some of his own business also, Master George went on to see the King at Whitehall. On his way he stopped at the booth of a writer (or scrivener, as the lawyers who merely engrossed were called). Here he had the supplication properly copied on behalf of Lord Nigel.

It was as easy a matter for George Heriot, the wealthy goldsmith and banker, to gain entrance to the royal closet as it had been difficult for Lord Glenvarloch's messenger. The usher merely nodded his head in the direction of the King's chamber, and in a minute George Heriot found himself before the King. He did not look every inch a King. Indeed no inch of him did.

His dress was quilted thick to prevent the danger of dagger-stroke. It was buttoned all awry as if put on in a hurry.

[Here Maid Margaret looked at Sir Toady Lion to intimate that *she* knew Somebody who would have made him button it properly.]

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There were fine pictures and rich jewels all about, on the walls and on the floor. But dust lay everywhere, thick upon the pictures, and even on the kingly high-crowned hat which lay upon the floor with a carcanet of balas rubies gleaming duskiy about it.

'Hey, Jingling Geordie,' cried the King, 'what new clatter-traps have you brought with you, to cheat your lawful and native prince out of his siller?'

'God forbid,' said Heriot, 'that I should have any such disloyal purpose. I was only unwilling to let the piece of plate which I have with me pass into the hands of a subject without bringing it first to your Majesty's notice.'

It was an ancient salver, by Benvenuto Cellini — wrought with the judgment of Solomon, a subject which pleased the King greatly. More so, indeed, than did the price, which was a hundred and fifty pounds.

However, after haggling awhile, the King ordered the piece to be taken away and set where Baby Charles and 'Steenie' would see it on their return from Richmond, meaning his son and his favourite the Duke of Buckingham.

'Maybe,' he said to the jeweller, 'I am no just able to pay it ye at this moment, but I am brawly weel able to owe it ye!'

Then the bargain being completed, the King began to tell his gossip and goldsmith how nearly his High Majesty had been thrown from his horse on the previous day, owing to a rash 'gutterbluid' of Edinburgh rushing into his sacred presence with a supplication — something about a debt due by 'my honoured mother.'

'Ud's death, Geordie,' he cried, suddenly

getting excited, 'there's not a loon among them all that knows how to deliver a supplication as it ought to be brought before the face of Majesty.'

Here George Heriot professed himself willing to be taught — 'that he might instruct his poor ignorant countrymen in better fashions.'

Whereupon King James showed him how to approach the Vicegerent of Heaven, with his hand held edgeways to his eyes as if to signify that he was approaching the sun in his splendour. Then how to kneel, as if to kiss the hem of the royal garment, whereupon the royal Solomon, ever willing to be kindly and debonair, prevents him with a motion of the hand, as if to raise him to his feet. Lastly the subject (the King explained) slips his hand into his pouch and places his dutiful supplication into the hand of his sovereign.

All which instructions the goldsmith carefully followed to his master's satisfaction, and at the last, fitting the action to the word, he put into the King's hand the petition of Lord Glenvarloch.

The King reddened with quickly passing anger, as George Heriot, who knew so well the moods of his master, began to recall so many merry tricks of the old hard days in Holyrood, and the merry pranks they played, so that King James was soon won to a good humour again.

'D'ye mind,' said the King, entering into the spirit of the goldsmith's reminiscences, 'how often we had more wooden plates and latten platters than meat to put on them — and how once we were fain to send six of the Blue-banders to harry the Lady of Loganhouse's pigeon-tower and poultry yard, so that the King should not die of want in his own palace? Also of the terrible plaint that the Lady made against

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Jock o' Milch, an Annandale thief, who, though guilty of much, was at least as innocent of that particular deed as I am of murder!

Finally the King, always scarce of money, arranged with his goldsmith to pay to Lord Glenvarloch two hundred pounds, that he might come decently to court, and also commanded him to do his best in the city for the raising of £50,000, out of which to pay the wadset or mortgage upon the Glenvarloch estates.

## RED CAP ADVENTURES

### THE SECOND TALE FROM 'THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL'

#### NIGEL AT COURT

At this point everything seemed to be going right (continued Sweetheart, with great penetration) — only, you know, it wasn't really, or else the book would have ended just then. Well, next day George Heriot gave a dinner, to which he had invited a number of Scottish folk to meet the young lord, or Master Nigel Olifaunt, as he still preferred to be called. There was Sir Mungo Malagrowth, a deaf, bitter old man, who had been King's whipping boy in his youth — that is, when the King did wrong or did not know his lessons, his playmate was horsed and whipped instead of him! There came also David Ramsay and his pretty daughter Margaret, besides several other citizens and friends of George Heriot.

And out of this dinner came many things. First, a certain aching in the heart of pretty Peggy Ramsay, of pity for the poor young lord, and the hope that perhaps she might be able to find a way of making him happier. At any rate (said Sweetheart) she was anxious to try, which was very nice of her. Don't you think so?

Then afterwards something very strange happened to Lord Nigel at the family prayers, which were still a custom at the close of every day in the goldsmith's house.

George Heriot asked Nigel to stay, saying that his father would not have left the house before worship. A place was left vacant as the family entered to take their places. Then a young lady, tall

and pale, dressed in white, her black hair flowing down her back, entered and seated herself. Till service began her eyes remained fixed upon the face of Lord Nigel. But at the close of worship, she kneeled and was blessed by the hand of George Heriot laid lightly upon her head. Then she bowed low to Aunt Judith, and so passed out as mysteriously as she had entered.

So deep an impression did this mysterious figure make upon Nigel, that he could think of nothing else, hardly even of the way in which, according to George Heriot, he should behave when presented at Court!

Going home that night, however, Ritchie Monyplies told his master what he had heard when he and the 'prentices were waiting in hall for their masters and mistresses, how that this mysterious lady was no real living being, but only the spectre of one who had been dead many years, now in the quality of familiar spirit attached to the household of Heriot, haunting their mansion in Lombard Street, sleeping in her own coffin, and having food passed in upon a circular table!

Lord Nigel, though struck by the story, made merry at the idea of an evil spirit with a suite of apartments, which partook of food and attended divine service. But Ritchie answered that all Lombard Street knew the fact, and that it was even whispered that George Heriot himself wore the cloven hoof under his black silk hose and shoes of Cordovan leather.

Whereupon Nigel threatened to break his head for a rascal who partook too freely of a gentleman's good cheer and then dared to defame him behind his back!

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But the sad face of the young lord had also made Margaret Ramsay singularly unhappy. So much so that her serving-maid, Scotch Janet, took it upon herself to call in one Dame Ursula Suddlechop, the wife of Ben the Barber, a lady much sought after in the matter of giving advice to people who fancied themselves in love.

[Here the boys groaned, and even Sweetheart smiled at the idea of any girl, however young, not knowing her own mind in such matters.]

That night Nigel's ear ought to have burned, for Margaret and the Dame talked much of him, and they parted only when Ursula promised that she would do her best to find out about Lord Nigel, and also maybe a way of making him less sad.

['She was in love, I suppose, the little silly!' said Sir Toady Lion, scornfully.

'No, she wasn't then!' Sweetheart denied the crime sharply. 'Only she wanted to help, as you will find out, if only you keep quiet and listen.']

When Nigel appeared at court with George Heriot on the following day, he found the palace already crowded with those waiting to be received. There was some difficulty about the matter at first, for Maxwell, the usher of the royal chamber, demanded with whom he had come.

'With Master George Heriot!' said Nigel.

'That is not sufficient,' said Maxwell; 'the name of Master Heriot, though good for much gold and silver, is not sufficient to admit any one into the presence chamber.'

But it chanced that an old adversary of Nigel's father, the Earl of Huntingtower, heard the usher's words, took his arm, and in spite of opposition pushed right in to the presence of King

James.

The King seemed pleased with the young man, especially with his readiness in the use of the Latin tongue, which he had learned in Holland. But as soon as Nigel presented his supplication, James cried out that nobody ever came from Scotland but to ask something of him, and it needed all the credit of the Earl of Huntingtower to obtain an order from the King upon the Scottish Exchequer for the money due to Nigel's father.

This, however, was at last obtained, and Huntingtower brought the goldsmith back with him to draw up the deeds, and also to introduce Nigel to his son, who was the ordinary companion of Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham.

On their way they met the favourite, the handsomest man of his age, but as ever proud and unscrupulous. And the Duke of Buckingham declared without the least form of politeness that Nigel might consider him as his enemy.

'I thank you for your plainness, my Lord Duke,' said Nigel; 'an open enemy is better than a hollow friend.'

But through the anger of the court favourites, and the difficulties of the King about the payment of his debt, there pierced the true design. The Duke of Buckingham wanted a hunting forest in Scotland, and, having heard of the Glenvarloch estates, he was now eager to obtain them at a price which was a mere nothing in comparison to their value. Peterson of Campvere, the Lord High Chancellor of Scotland himself, were no more than tools in the hands of the Duke of Buckingham.

Thus poor Nigel had found his open enemy. He was now to find the still worse hollow friend.

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Dalgarno, the son of the Earl of Huntingtower, received Nigel, apparently, with open arms. But secretly he was doing all he could to destroy him. He dissuaded him from going to court, saying that till he had made his peace with the favourite it was useless. He took him to gambling-hells, and, when Nigel played cautiously, he sent the whisper abroad that Lord Glenvarloch only 'plucked poor pigeons,' but was too cowardly to play for high stakes with 'a cock of the game.'

Then at court, whenever the King asked for Lord Glenvarloch, Dalgarno would pretend to defend him, but really managed to prejudice the King against him, by regretting that his friend was prevented from attendance at the court by a too great devotion to the pleasures of the gaming-house.

However, after a time Nigel began to have his suspicions. Not only did he meet averted eyes, even in the taverns which he frequented, but his faithful Ritchie Monyplies told him plainly that he had had enough of his service. He was laughed at everywhere, he informed him. Dalgarno himself spoke evil of him, and that, in short, Ritchie Monyplies, who had served him so long for love, was not going to wait and see his master ruin himself in London gambling rooms.

The next day he received a letter warning him that Dalgarno was his worst enemy, and was every day betraying him to the Duke of Buckingham, while pretending to be his friend.

Nigel was naturally hot-blooded, and so, after he had been insulted by the Prince himself, he met Dalgarno, and in the heat of a quarrel drew his sword, and with it struck his false friend. The penalty for this was the loss of the right hand, for

brawling within the precincts of the park.

Nigel had instantly to flee as best he could, making for the only place where he had immunity — or might be supposed to have it — to the Sanctuary of Whitefriars, called Alsatia, just beyond the Temple. Happily he fell in with a young Templar, named Reginald Lowestoffe, who took him to his rooms and disguised him for his stay in Alsatia.

Reginald Lowestoffe proved a very friend in need. He conducted Nigel in safety through the streets of that dangerous 'suburb,' swarming with rogues and bullies. He introduced him to the one-eyed inn-keeper who governed it by the aid of a privy council. He pleaded his case before the out-at-elbows Council of Duke Hildebrod, threatening that if Nigel Graeme were not received, the Templars would close their gates, which meant that access to Alsatia would be made much more difficult and dangerous for its inmates.

Nigel Graeme — for in the meantime he had taken his mother's name — was allotted as lodger to a certain Trapbois, a miser, who lived with one ugly, crabbed daughter, down the water-side, as Lowestoffe said, in the only clean house in Whitefriars. Here Nigel, for the moment safe from his pursuers, was left by the Templar. But all that he had gained of court favour was in a way to be lost. George Heriot was in Holland on business; Lord Huntingtower could not very well stand his friend because of his strife with his son Dalgarno — even Ritchie had forsaken him. There was only the roystering Templar and little Margaret Ramsay to care about him. And of the interest of the latter he was still ignorant. But if he had forgotten Margaret, she had not forgotten him.

THE END OF SWEETHEART'S SECOND TALE  
FROM 'THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL'

'Well,' said Sir Toady Lion, critically, at the close of Sweetheart's tale, 'I don't suppose this Nigel will ever do any good. Just fancy letting people suck up to you like Dalgarno, and you never know any difference, and gambling — rubbish! Once a boy bet with me — and he wanted to take my sixpence, too, just because he won. Only I hit him and made him give it back!'

'Then you were a little brute, Toady Lion,' said Hugh John, who has high ideas of sportsmanlike behaviour.

'No, I wasn't,' said Sir Toady. 'I'm going in for the navy, and father says that gambling isn't allowed in our service!'

'Oh,' said Hugh John, 'father says that, does he?'

'Well — words to that effect.' Sir Toady hesitated a little. 'P'raps he did not say exactly that, but anyway it's bad form and isn't allowed when you're young.'

'Hum,' said Hugh John, 'stunts your growth, like smoking, I suppose!'

'Of course,' said Sweetheart, rather remorsefully, 'it's all ever so much better when you read the book. You'll see when you begin to tell. You have to leave out the very nicest bits, just because they are too nice to tell over again at all. But you can just hear the story first, and then read all about it in the book afterwards. I will tell you the good chapters.'

'We've both got our own books to read,' said

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Sir Toady, dolefully, who found consecutive reading of any kind much inferior to scouring the woods after birds' nests.

Hugh John, who takes to serious reading as a duck to water, at first found Sir Walter chiefly interesting in the notes — because (as he said) 'you can believe *them*.' However, he had taken the most historical of the adventurous romances, and was 'reading up' all round it so as to throw new light upon the text.

A singular silence fell on the little company when I asked what they thought of the tale. It lasted for some time, while the boys potted with pencils and finished sketches.

'Oh, up to the present it's no great shakes of a tale,' said Sir Toady, frankly; 'but perhaps it's better in the book!'

'Of course it is — ever so much,' said Sweetheart, despondently; 'that's what I'm always telling you! But then, you see, you won't read the book! So if I don't tell you, you won't know!'

This contained too much of naked truth to be denied, and Sir Toady had perforce to fall back upon the hopefulness of Nigel's position in Alsatia, and the possibilities of the miser Trapbois.

Condemnation with such faint praise nearly brought the tears into Sweetheart's eyes, though she had long ago left behind the melting mood. But I, who knew the nature of young men with a golden sovereign to be won, told her that they merely did not want, by overpraising her performance, to show how far short theirs came of the mark.

'Oh,' said Sweetheart, 'they never could be so mean — not even boys!'

However, the young gentlemen concerned

made no great pretensions to virtue, and said only that 'it was well enough' — but that Sweetheart 'used too many book words, and did not get on fast enough' — to all which the retort was obvious.

'Well, wait till your turn comes, and see if you do better!'

But in spite of all I could say the tale-teller was downcast, till Maid Margaret (who really had not listened to more than half, owing to the superior attractions of a blue-bottle booming from window to window) came up, and taking her about the neck whispered: 'Don't you mind what the boys say. If you don't get a gold pound, I'll give you half of mine!'

Which was at least quite practical sympathy, and showed a pretty confidence in self.

She was, however, still more comforted by the criticism of one more experienced.

'Sweetheart,' I said, 'the best story for telling is not always the one you like best to read. I think I like *The Antiquary* best of all, but it was the hardest to tell to you children.'

'I like them all so much,' mourned Sweetheart, 'Nigel, and Margaret, and George Heriot — yes, even the bad people, Dalgarno and Trapbois!'

'Oh, yes, that was famous!' Hugh John allowed, 'that part about Nigel whacking Dalgarno in the park!'

'He should have *stuck* him!' said the bloodthirsty Sir Toady, 'and why not in a park? Wasn't that the best place? He couldn't have said, 'Kindly come upstairs into the second-best parlour, and there I'll let daylight through you with my whinger, double-dyed traitor that you are!''

Sir Toady's sense of the humorous was various — so much so indeed that at school he was

frequently in danger of 'getting licked for it.'

'Because,' said Sweetheart, 'King James was so afraid of death by assassination. He had so often been in danger in Scotland that, when he went to England, he forbade all duelling and brawling within the bounds of the Royal Park under penalty of the brawler losing his right hand.'

'Well, I'd have waited for him with a big stick, and whacked him well when he came out,' affirmed Sir Toady. 'I'd have given the park-keeper a sixpence to tell me when he was coming, and then — I'd have cured Mister Dalgarno of telling tales on me!'

'You couldn't,' said Sweetheart; 'clubs were only for 'prentices. And if you had been in the story, you would have had to use a sword or be disgraced!'

'Maybe!' said Sir Toady, calmly; 'wearing a sword is all right — looks fine, and waggles about among your legs so as to make you feel grand. But for fighting, give me a proper good thick stick, that doesn't kill anybody, but dresses them down properly. And that, after all, is what you want!'

'You would be like Jin Vin, the watchmaker's apprentice,' said Sweetheart, scornfully, for she was entirely of Miss Margaret Ramsay's mind. A hero to her was a hero, and had both to be treated and to behave as such.

'Well and suppose,' said Sir Toady. 'Jin Vin was about the best man of the lot by a sea mile. He was nearly good enough for the navy!'

'If he had gone into the army he would have needed to join a line regiment!' said Hugh John, who prided himself on his height — quite scorning the often cited proverb about its requiring superior grace. 'But Jin Vin would have made a good 'non-com!'' he added reflectively.

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This I doubted, but said nothing. After all, the more of the real opinions of youth I jotted down, the easier would be my task of editor.

Then Sir Toady delivered himself, lifting himself into a sitting posture to do it.

'This is it,' he said. 'Father told the 'Red Cap Tales' just like the book, only not so long. Sweetheart thinks there's nothing like the hero and who made love to who —'

'I don't — I haven't!' exclaimed Sweetheart; 'at least not yet!'

'Ah, but wait till *I* tell my story — you'll think John Silver was comed back again!' cried Toady. And he cried in a loud green-parrot voice, '*Pieces-of-Eight! Pieces-of-Eight!*'

This is that Sir Toady Lion who (they say) obtained nomination to a certain college for his reply to one of the examiners, who asked to know if he had read any of the books of a near relative.

'Oh, yes,' said the examinee, carelessly, 'some. But — I like *Treasure Island* better.' Excellent criticism, excellent honesty, excellent policy! He was admitted at once.

And still he is popularly believed to be thoroughly informed on which side his bread is buttered.

As for Hugh John, he said nothing. But he knew that his turn came first. Then he turned, kicked Sir Toady painstakingly, and delivered himself thus:—

'See here, all this is dashed unfair to Sis. She has got to get through her story or get no 'sov.' Now I happen to know that she needs the chips —'

'Sis always does,' said Sir Toady Lion; 'she's not a good little boy like somebody I could name —'

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never find any green missionary box under *her* pillow!’

‘Shut up, Toadums!’

The authority of an elder brother being readily backed by a fist which Sir Toady knew to be large and forceful and bony, the knight closed the alleys of his speech. Once more Sweetheart had the floor.

THE THIRD TALE FROM 'THE FORTUNES OF  
NIGEL'

Alsatia was no very pleasant place to hide in for a while (Sweetheart continued). It was full of all the scum of the city, which, contrary to the usual behaviour of 'scum,' did not rise to the top, but lay festering along the water-side marshes.

Besides, it was what you boys would call a jolly good thing that Nigel had not gone directly there, for even Alsatia could not stand against a writ of the Star Chamber, backed by a search warrant from the Lord Chancellor. However, it had already been searched before Nigel descended thither; in fact, while he remained in Reginald Lowestoffe's lodgings in the Temple. But the next day the 'rattling Templar' could not come to see him, because many of the Senior benchers were displeased at his meddling in so serious a matter, and one which so deeply concerned both the Prince and the favourite Buckingham. The day after Lowestoffe was 'laid in lavender' —which is to say, put in prison — for his kindness to Nigel, so that the young man was more than ever alone in the house of Trapbois, the miser, by the water-side of Whitefriars.

The daughter of Trapbois was an old maid of a severe and unbeautiful countenance. But she kept her father's house well, and did her best to keep him from showing his miserliness and unhappy spirit. Martha Trapbois was a sensible woman, and in her way kind to Nigel, though she did not hide her contempt for the brawling and gambling that had brought him where he was.

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Her father was constantly making offers of service to his lodger, but none of these would Martha Trapbois permit Nigel to accept. In spite of the plainness of her looks, the miser's daughter was considered a great match in all the quarter. A blustering bully, named Captain Colepepper, proposed again and again for her hand. Duke Hildebrod came in person to make a match between her and Nigel. Her dowry was supposed by the Alsations to amount to fifty thousand pounds at least.

Often Nigel would ask why she and her father remained in so dangerous a locality, but the only answer he got from the miser's daughter was that so long as her father lived, they were safer there than elsewhere.

But Nigel wearied his life out in such a den. He had nothing to read. There were no books in the house, except Mistress Martha's Bible, which she would not lend, and the second volume of an arithmetic belonging to her father, which Nigel declined to borrow. Duke Hildebrod, however, sent him a dog-eared quarto, but this, at a first trial, did not interest him greatly. The Templar, being still kept in prison, could not for the moment do more for his friend. Every day there was fear of a descent in force to search for him. Yet all the time he was in the house, he could not help admiring more and more the character of Martha Trapbois, who, though she loved her father, did all she could to prevent him cheating his guest, or pestering him with offers of assistance 'for a consideration.'

It happened one day that Nigel, in consideration of his good treatment, had added a gold piece to the payment of his bill. The miser

leaped on it at once, claiming it as his. But his daughter made him give it back. All day, however, he lingered about the passages watching for his chance, and even at night he returned, partly to make sure of the gold Jacobus which Nigel had left upon the table, and partly because for his own ends he wished to steal the King's order upon the Scottish Treasury for the money which was to redeem the estates of Glenvarloch.

Martha Trapbois was constantly advising Nigel to have no dealings with her father, to be his own servant and sole confidant, to make no intimates, borrow no money, make no display of what property he had, and last of all to get out of Whitefriars as soon as he could.

Nigel thanked her, saying to himself that a gnarled tree might bear good fruit, and a harsh nature give good council.

That very night Nigel was reading for the second time Duke Hildebrod's book, *God's Revenge against Murther*. The strange, weird tales fascinated him, thus read in the silence of the night and in such a place. It was wearing late, but Nigel still read on. Suddenly the tapestry flapped against the wall as if a door had been opened. The flames of the candles waved, and there before him Nigel saw the bloodless countenance, meagre form, and ghastly aspect of 'old Trapbois.

Moved partly by what he had been reading and partly by the place in which he found himself, Nigel sprang to his feet, placed the sword which he had unsheathed at the old man's breast, and demanded what he meant by breaking into his room at midnight. They were standing thus; when Martha Trapbois appeared from behind the tapestry. She

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had a lamp in her hand, and coming close to Nigel, she attempted to push aside his naked blade with her hand.

‘For shame!’ she cried, ‘to draw your sword on a man of eighty years and more! Is this the honour of a Scottish gentleman? Give it to me to make a spindle of!’

‘Stand back!’ said Nigel; ‘I mean your father no injury, but I *will* know what has caused him to prowl all day long, and even at this late hour of night, around my arms!’

‘Your arms!’ repeated Martha Trapbois, sadly. ‘Alas, young man, all the arms in the Tower of London would be of little value to my father in comparison with that single piece of gold which was left this morning on the table by a young spendthrift, too careless to put that which belonged to him into his own purse.’

And indeed so it was. The old miser had made use of a passage, long disused, to enter his guest's chamber when he fancied him asleep, and so obtain what he had been yearning for all day.

‘It is mine! It is mine!’ he cried. ‘He gave it me for a consideration. I will die ere I part with my property!’

‘It is, indeed, his own, mistress,’ said Nigel, ‘and I entreat you to restore it to the person to whom I gave it, and let me have my apartment in quiet!’

‘I will account with you for it, then,’ said the maiden, firmly. She gave it most reluctantly to her father, who pounced upon it like a hawk seizing its prey. Then he made a muttering, contented noise over it, like an old dog that has been fed, before following his daughter through a little sliding door which could be seen when the hangings were drawn

apart.

'This shall be properly fastened tomorrow,' said Martha Trapbois under her breath to Nigel; 'tonight I shall watch him closely. I wish you good repose!'

It was the first time that his grim hostess had used such civil words to Nigel, but the wish was not to be accomplished. Nigel failed to get to sleep. He watched the dying embers of the fire till his eyes were dazzled. He listened to the dull moaning of the wind, the creak of many swinging signboards, and the baying of homeless dogs, till his ears grew weary. Sleep, however, seemed as far off as ever.

Suddenly, through this monotony, pierced a shriek that brought Nigel to his feet in a moment — a woman's cry of utmost distress. Then another — and another!

Nigel armed himself swiftly; sword and pistol were luckily at his hand. He ran to the door of the chamber. The cries came from the room of the miser, and the brave young lord shook the closed door of the corridor in his impatience. Then the secret passage occurred to him. He went back, and, lighting a candle, he rushed along the narrow vaulted entrance, guided by the noise, which now burst more loudly on his ear.

He heard the voices of men encouraging each other to kill some one. 'Strike her down — silence her — beat her brains out!' Then the voice of Martha Trapbois, almost exhausted, repeated the cries of 'Help—murder!' which had so effectually aroused him.

At the bottom of the last few steps was a small door, through which Nigel precipitated himself upon the scene of action, his pistol in his right

hand, the candle in his left, and a naked sword under his arm.

Two ruffians were on the point of overpowering the miser's daughter. She had made a desperate resistance. Her dress was torn to pieces. One ruffian was attempting to strike at her with a long clasp-knife when he was surprised by the entrance of Nigel.

They turned towards him at once, as being the more dangerous foe, but Nigel shot the fellow with the knife dead on the spot. Then, advancing towards the other, he threw the candlestick at his head and attacked him with the sword. It was dark, but there was some pale moonlight straggling in from the window. The second ruffian, after firing a pistol, and trying a pass or two with the sword, lost heart, made for the window, leaped over it, and so escaped. Nigel fired his last pistol after him at a venture, and then called for a light.

'There is light in the kitchen!' said Martha Trapbois. 'Stay, I will fetch it. You do not know the way. Oh, my father, my father! *They have murdered my father!*'

When Martha Trapbois returned with a light, a ghastly scene was before them. On the floor lay the robber whom Nigel had shot. He had died without a groan. But beside him was another body, on which the miser's daughter threw herself in agony. It was that of her unhappy father.

'There may be life in him yet!' she cried, striving to lift old Trapbois in her arms. But it was evident that he was dead — a scarf had been drawn tightly about his throat to stifle his cries for assistance. It is indeed likely that he had died in defence of the very sovereign which Nigel had given

him. It was still clasped in his dead hand, while from the other dropped a key.

'It is in vain — in vain!' said Martha Trapbois at last; 'I always knew that it would be so, and now I have witnessed it.'

Nigel ascended to his room to recharge his weapons. Then Martha went to Duke Hildebrod's to claim assistance. Nigel was left alone with the dead bodies. He thought that he could hear the damask nightgown of the miser flutter about his thin legs, the foot of the dead assassin scraping the floor in vain attempts to rise, or the breathing of new assailants under the window!

Then entered a gang of tragic drunkards, fresh from the revels at Duke Hildebrod's, stumbling stupidly among the bodies, and speaking to each other in thick, stammering whispers. The Duke took evidence well and rapidly, examining Martha and afterwards Nigel, looking first at the scarf left behind and then at the open bars of the window through which the men had come, by which also the survivor had escaped.

The suspicions of both the miser's daughter and Duke Hildebrod were fixed on the Captain Colepepper, called Peppercull. Martha offered money for revenge, and Duke Hildebrod promised her justice in exchange.

Before leaving, the Duke introduced a messenger from Lowestoffe to Nigel. A warrant from the Lord Chief Justice had been issued and would be put in force tomorrow. A party of musketeers would search Alsatia for him, a force which the Alsatians neither could nor yet would resist.

'And so, squire,' said the man in the green plush jerkin, who had carried it, 'my wherry lies for

you at the Temple stairs, and if you would give the bloodhounds the slip — why, you may!’

‘Did Master Lowestoffe send me any token?’ said Nigel, a little suspiciously.

‘Ay, that did he,’ said the man, ‘and I have not forgot it. You were to believe me — because your name began with an ‘O’ for Graeme. Well, shall we meet in two hours, and go down the river with the tide like a twelve-oared barge?’

‘Where is the King?’ demanded Lord Glenvarloch.

‘The King went to Greenwich yesterday. He was to have hunted this week, but instead they are all down the river, and as merry as minnows.’

‘Well,’ said Nigel, ‘I shall be ready at five, and do you come here and carry my baggage.’

‘Ay, ay, master,’ said the man, taking his leave along with the disorderly rout of Duke Hildebrod, which was also ebbing away after that functionary had ‘set the seals’ upon the chamber of death.

To Martha Trapbois, Nigel explained that he was under the necessity of leaving Whitefriars within a few hours. He wished to know if she desired him to communicate her position to any friends.

She cut him short — ungraciously as ever.

‘The miserable have no friends,’ she said bitterly. Then, changing her mind quickly, she added, ‘You are about to leave the Friars. I will go with you — *I will persuade my father* — ’

But then all that had passed crowded in upon her memory. She wept bitterly, but even the tears calmed her. She declared that her mind was made up. Here she had no friends. She would go with Nigel. Otherwise she had no chance of escaping

from Alsatia.

Nigel attempted to dissuade her. His own way in all probability lay straight to a dungeon. Why should she put herself into like danger? But Martha Trapbois was willing to take all risks, that she might escape out of this haunt of robbers and murderers. More than that, she would take her money with her, if only to purchase vengeance upon the slayers of her father.

She bade Nigel return to the room where the miser had slept. He must push the bedstead aside. Beneath each of the posts he would find a brass plate as if to support the weight. But he was to press the corner of that nearest to the wall on the left. It would spring up, and through the trap-door a small chest would be seen.

Nigel did not quite like his task. But Martha both encouraged and accompanied him. The bed of the miser showed the trace of the slight pressure of his body. He had been surprised when asleep. What he had striven so long to conceal was soon laid bare. The strong-box was so heavy that, without Martha's assistance, Nigel could hardly have lifted it out of its bed.

He also tore down an old hanging, to form a cover, lest the peculiar shape and weight might raise suspicions as to its contents. Then Nigel changed the rascally suit in which he had first appeared in Alsatia for one more courtly and becoming his quality.

The boatman came at his hour, just when the yellow-grey light was beginning to shine through the Thames fogs. He had a companion with him. There was, however, trouble about the baggage. One of the men was sufficiently loaded (in his own

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estimation, that is) with Lord Glenvarloch's scanty 'traps.' But the moving of the miser's treasure chest was another matter. The second boatman, after one attempt, pitched it down, declaring that it was as reasonable to expect a man to carry St. Paul's on his back!

'Let them leave it!' said Martha Trapbois; 'let them leave everything so be that we may escape from this horrible place.'

But Nigel was very strong and very athletic, even for a time when all had to be athletic. Also he was very indignant at this treatment. So he slung the ponderous strong-box upon his own shoulders and marched off with it — the waterman following in amazement and some remorse, calling out, 'Why, master, master, you might as well gie me t'other end on't!'

Nigel was fain to accept, for the chest was so heavy that when it was at length brought to the wherry, it sank the bow of the boat so deep as nearly to upset it.

There was almost another waterman's rebellion when Martha Trapbois got ready to come aboard.

Nigel proposed to pay double fare, but this was refused with characteristic rudeness by the waterman in the green jacket. His comrade, however, thought otherwise. For double fare, they were, according to the proverb, 'bound to row a witch in her egg-shell!'

When they got out into the stream they found themselves the butt for all sorts of water-side wit. The sailors and lightermen made merry on the good looks of Nigel in comparison with the extreme plainness of Mistress Martha. Green Jacket and his

companion, however, proved themselves fully capable of replying in the same strain. Nigel asked Martha if she knew of any place where she could be received safely. The miser's daughter knew of none. To assist her father, and to remain near him, she had cast off all her friends.

Then Nigel bethought himself of John Christie, the ship-chandler at Paul's Wharf, where he had formerly lodged. He wrote a note upon his tablet, addressed to his landlord, asking John Christie, as his old and good friend, to afford her the shelter of his roof for a short time. Accordingly St. Paul's Wharf was reached and the lady put ashore — two porters being engaged to carry her box to the well-known house of John Christie, while the boat, lightened of its load, went on its voyage down the Thames by so much the faster.

But when Martha Trapbois reached the house of the ship-chandler, she hesitated. She knew the power and the danger of so great a sum when in the possession of a woman. The events of the night were still fresh in her mind. Besides, a quarrel was proceeding, and a tall, raw-boned, hard-favoured man stalked forth followed by a decent elderly tradesman. The subject of quarrel was no other than Lord Glenvarloch, whom the ship-chandler was accusing of having in some way wronged him.

Martha was of course too well accustomed to the squabbles and quarrels of Alsatia to be either surprised or terrified. She stopped John Christie and presented him with Lord Glenvarloch's letter. But the angry ship-chandler threw it on the ground and retired into his house with a hearty curse on all smooth-tongued Scots knaves, including those who brought him letters from them.

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Martha could only call out, — though not of a temperament which bent itself easily to ask favours, — ‘Good master, hear me for a moment, for mercy’s sake, for honesty’s sake!’

‘No hope of ‘mercy or honesty’ from him, mistress! He is horn-mad!’ said the Scot (who of course was no other than Ritchie Monyplies defending the honour of his master against the charge of having carried off Dame Nelly). Ritchie lifted the paper to hand to her. But as he did so the signature caught his eye.

‘Glenvarloch?’ he said in surprise; ‘do you know Lord Glenvarloch?’

‘I had the paper from one Nigel Graeme,’ said the daughter of Trapbois, sulkily.

‘Nigel Graeme! *Umph* — oh, ay, very true! I had forgot,’ said Richard; ‘a tall well-set-up young man about my height, bright blue eyes like a hawk’s, a pleasant speech, somewhat leaning to the North Country accent like my own?’

Martha Trapbois owned that all this was very true, but did not see what this other Scot with the red head had to do with it.

‘And so,’ continued Ritchie, who made no scruple to read the letter of his master, ‘if honourable lodging and shelter is all you are seeking, I, who am Nigel Graeme’s servant, can help you to it’

‘These are all I need,’ said Martha, ‘and as you are a man and a Christian, you will help me to them!’

‘A man I am,’ said Richie, ‘and as much of a Christian as any one can be after all this while in England, where there is but little pure doctrine — all being polluted with men’s devices. If ye be an honest

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woman (here he peeped under her muffler), as an honest woman ye seem likely to be, I will advise you of a decent house where you will get douce, quiet entertainment on reasonable terms, as well as the occasional benefit of my own counsel and direction.'

Thus Martha Trapbois, for all her wealth, did not find any more notable protector than honest Richard Monyplies, the discarded serving-man of Nigel, Lord Glenvarloch.

### THE RECEPTION OF SWEETHEART'S TALES CONCERNING TRAPBOIS, THE MISER

There was a subtle triumph on the face of Sweetheart as she leaned back to take breath.

'As good as *Treasure Island*?' she suggested softly.

'As good as anything,' said Hugh John. 'Why didn't Sir Walter always make his heroes like that?'

'Like what?' said Sweetheart.

'Oh, *you* know — don't pretend, Sis!'

'Yes, of course she knows,' said Sir Toady, breaking out; 'she's as pleased as a stroked pussy about Trapbois and all that.'

'And right she is,' Toady Lion continued, after a pause of deep thought. 'Nigel is the proper sort of hero, after all. No more silly gambling, but *bang* — *whack* — candlestick at one fellow's head—bullet into another. *He* never gives a kick. And only one left to get away, so that there might be a good chase after him, with more fighting, and no end of a row!'

'Listen to Admiral Tuppens!' said Hugh John, indicating Sir Toady vigorously with his toe; 'dear little cherub that sits up aloft and watches the fate of Poor Jack!'

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'No, we don't,' said the expert; 'no officer is allowed to sit down when on the bridge!'

'De-e-e-ar child,' continued his elder brother, 'fighting and rows and head-breaking. These are his joys — to hear him talk, anyway. In reality, what he cares about is pottering through the woods after birds' eggs, and—'

'Watching the nesting habits of the Common Buzzard through a x 25 power Aitchison field-glass! And father says there isn't anything much more interesting in the world than that!'

This was Sir Toady turning the tables on his brother by bringing me into the question. It was, in another form, an appeal to Caesar.

Still, there was no doubt that, in the present case, Sweetheart had scored a success. She had marked the centre of the bull's-eye, and Maid Margaret nestled up to her with tacit congratulation.

As for me, I thought it was a good moment for producing a real new golden sovereign which I had got from the Bank that day.

I handed it over to Sweetheart, telling her that she had told quite the worth of it, and that we were ready for more whenever she felt like it.

But like a wise young woman, she preferred to rest on her laurels and pocket the coin. She spent the rest of the day in paying various debts, arranging for Sir Toady's birthday present, advancing infinitesimal sums to a little lady called upon occasion the 'Undischarged Bankrupt'—owing to a chronic inability to pay twenty shillings in the pound — or rather twelve pennies in the shilling.

Then it was discovered that the boys were missing — 'Them Boys' — as James the gardener called them when they trampled his careful flower-

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plots or made havoc among the half-ripe gooseberries.

Moreover, the Fortunes of Nigel in the illustrated Abbotsford edition was wanting also.

There was no doubt as to who had taken it, and as the purpose was almost equally clear, the seniors interested started at once in pursuit, laying aside work-basket and pen.

It was a clear evening after heavy rain. Eden Water was in flood. There was no good dry accommodation on the grass—neither under the leaves of the forest trees. But I knew the spot, down by the waterside, where there is a thick square of wall — perhaps the spring of the arch of some bridge long since disappeared. But to the boys, beyond all dispute, the remains of an ancient fortress!

We could peep over and observe the group below. The murmur of a voice came regular and clear. On tiptoe we looked over the hedge, and there, near enough to be touched by the staff in my hand, was Butcher Donnan in his blue blouse, the 'steel' of his profession laid across his knees and his eyes, injected and wide open, fixed on the reader.

Beside him crouched his son Nipper, with several of the more worthy of the Edam boys, listening to the marvellous tale of the Death of Miser Trapbois. Nipper's mouth was so wide open that Sir Toady occupied his leisure in trying to pitch hawberries into it, flipping them knowingly with his thumb-nail in a way familiar to all boys.

But Nipper never so much as looked in his direction. Only the reader, Hugh John, annoyed by the frivolity of the interruption, ordered him sharply to 'Stop that — you!'

Butcher Donnan, now a Scott enthusiast,

could not keep still. His fingers played about his steel as if it were a dagger. It was clear to be seen that if only he had been in the house of Trapbois that night, Nigel would not have had to do his fighting single-handed.

“Brave young lord’ — yes, that he were, lord or no lord!’ The words came from the equally brave heart that beat beneath the blue overalls of Butcher Donnan. The wearer did not, in a general way, approve of lords temporal. But this one seemed quite worth his salt.

‘He heard the poor lass cry, and he went a-bursting in without knowing but what there might have been a round dozen of them. Nipper — you hear that!’

Nipper heard. With his mouth he would have heard, even if the ordinary channels had been closed off. But he was so eager for the story to go on that he did not even answer his father. Not that it was necessary.

Butcher Donnan knew that Nipper heard. He had trained him to hear the paternal voice through the deepest slumber possible to mortal boy. Nipper was not, save in this one thing, a model boy. But he respected the fifth commandment — that one which begins ‘Honour thy father!’ For he knew that it was the commandment ‘with promise’—particularly in the breach!

It was evident to us that Sweetheart's seed had not fallen on barren ground. Butcher Donnan asked the price of ‘that there history book,’ and from the deadly implacable looks on the faces of the younger listeners, it was evident that many wretched miserly Trapboises would be saved, many unknown villains bite the dust — always supposing, that is,

that there were any misers or villains to be shot down and assassinated. For it was quite evident that every boy present, including Butcher Donnan of the grey locks, was, in his own imagination, one more valorous Nigel, Lord of Glenvarloch.

Silently we stole away. The Abbotsford Nigel was a beautiful copy, the binding green morocco, the paper unfoxed, the wood-engravings some of the finest the world ever saw. But nevertheless we left it to pass rashly from hand to hand. For it was missionary endeavour of the true kind. He cannot be a bad man who loves his Waverley truly and from the heart. If cleanliness is next to godliness, surely Sir Walter is the best mixture of both attainable in letters.

Having arrived at the age of discretion, Sweetheart could not quite tell her tales before the butchers' boys of Edam. Well, perhaps she might, but old-fashioned though not unrespectable prejudices forbade it! But the boys, two long-legged birds of the air, readily carried the matter. It came all the better at second-hand, riddled with the free slang of boys fresh from school, every word of uncertain meaning expounded by vigorous translation into the language of living and fighting Edam.

Unconsciously, too, betwixt reading, furnishing links and explanations, the boys were preparing for their own trials yet to come. The golden Edwards were nearer to them because of Nipper Donnan and his blue-bloused father with the dangling steel.

In retelling Sweetheart and 'reading the best bits,' they were learning how to tell the stories which Sir Walter wove, so marvellously, so easily, lifting

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the difficult threads of his story as if he had been playing cats' cradle, and inventing deathless characters — 'another one before dinner,' as a friend of mine says.

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### SWEETHEART'S FOURTH TALE FROM 'THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL'

#### THE TRAITOR'S GATE

You know how Nigel had heard (continued Sweetheart) that the King was to hunt that day in Greenwich Park. In spite of Green Jacket, the waterman, and his comrade, in spite of the good ship *Royal Thistle* which was to convey him to Scotland, Nigel resolved to make a direct attempt to see the King and lay his case before him.

He was therefore put ashore, after writing a certificate to the green-jacketed waterman that he had demanded to be set down at Greenwich of his own accord — furthermore that Jack-o'-the-green and his companion were ready and willing to carry out their promise to set him on board the *Royal Thistle*.

Nigel went first to a barber's to have his hair and beard trimmed and put into order. Then he found Linklater, the scullion or under-cook, who had been the means of first bringing Ritchie Monyplies into the royal presence. He had become a high kitchen official, owing to his aptitude for tickling his master's palate with what he called 'gusty Scottish dishes,' unknown to the English and French cooks about the court.

Hearing the sound of horns, Nigel went into the park, and had the good fortune to come on the King when he had just killed a buck. Indeed, it was not till all was finished that King James observed who his assistant was.

At last the King looked, and the blood left his cheek as he recognized Lord Glenvarloch. Instantly

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he reached the conclusion that Nigel was about to commit an assault on his sacred person.

In vain Nigel begged him to be composed and listen to what he had to say. But this James, fearful by nature, could by no means do. It was half fear, half a ludicrous kind of anger that his dignity was affronted. He kept making little runs at his horse and trying to mount, muttering all the while: 'We are a free King, man — we are a free King — we will not be controlled by a subject. In the name of God, what keeps Steenie? Hillo—ho—here, here! Steenie! Steenie!'

The Duke of Buckingham galloped up, calling out that fortune as usual had favoured 'our Royal Dad,' as he was accustomed to call the King.

King James, being now safe, began to feel that he had escaped from great peril. He might have been assassinated, he said, and no one would have been there to help him — not even his dear Steenie.

The Duke took the supposed assault as having been committed, and ordered them to seize Nigel.

'Are you wounded, my liege?' he cried affectionately; 'are you wounded?'

'Not that I ken of,' said the King; 'but search him. I am sure I saw firearms under his cloak. I am sure I smelled powder!'

And so when Nigel's cloak was stripped off and his pistols were discovered, a shout of execration went up from the crowd.

'Away with the wretch — the parricide — the bloody-minded villain!' The words were echoed on all sides.

And the King himself took up the cry. He really began to believe that he had escaped by the

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strength of his own arm from a dangerous conspiracy.

The Prince rode up hastily and asked also if the King were hurt.

'Not that I am sensible of, Baby Charles,' said the King; 'only a wee matter exhausted from struggling single-handed with the assassin. Steenie, fill us a cup of wine—the leathern bottle is hanging at our pommel.'

Then after he had thus taken his cup of comfort, he continued, 'Buss me, Baby Charles. Oh, man, the Commonwealth and you have had a fair escape this day! Woe is me, black cloth would have been dear in England, and dry e'en scarce!'

And at the very idea of the universal grief at his own death, the good-natured monarch cried heartily himself.

Prince Charles, however, who knew his parent, demanded that any one who had been a witness of the attempt should speak. The King called on Buckingham to testify if he had not seen Nigel struggling with the monarch.

'I cannot term it so, my lord,' said the Duke, who, with many faults, would have scorned an untruth; 'he seemed rather desirous of detaining his Majesty, who, on the contrary, appeared to wish to mount his horse!'

The Prince unloaded Nigel's pistols of the double bullets with which they were charged. Then he reproached Nigel for bringing prohibited weapons into his Majesty's presence.

Nigel answered that he wore them in self-defence, and that only an hour or two ago they were necessary for the defence of the lives of others.

Nigel boldly demanded a hearing, and at last

both the King and the Prince promised to look into his case—‘when time and place were fitting,’ said the former.

When Nigel had been removed, the Prince said to Buckingham that he could hardly believe that a gentleman of such happy presence and good countenance, who behaved with such calm firmness in difficult circumstances, could really have attempted to commit a crime so useless and desperate.

Buckingham answered that he had neither love nor favour for the young man, but that he agreed with the Prince that ‘our dear gossip’ had been somewhat hasty in apprehending personal danger from him.

‘By my saul, Steenie,’ cried the King, ‘you are not blate to say so! Who nosed out the Fifth of November, if not I? And now ye would tell *me* that I cannot smell powder?’

Nigel was soon put into a boat with the pursuivant, two yeomen of the guard, and rowed as fast as six stout oarsmen could take him to the Tower of London by way of the projecting, low-browed archway called Traitor's Gate.

The Lieutenant of the Tower said that it was his duty to place Lord Glenvarloch under some restraint, but that he would make it as easy as duty permitted.

Nigel found himself in a long, low apartment, with scanty furniture, in which the warder received orders to light a fire. It had long been used as a prison of state, and Nigel, while waiting events, amused himself by deciphering the dainty handwriting of Lady Jane Grey, the Bear and Ragged Staff of the Dudleys, the last testimonies of

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Catholics awaiting the cruel mercies of Elizabeth, and Protestants for whom the fires of Smithfield were already being lighted.

While thus employed Nigel was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of a warder, who came to tell him that he must immediately receive a fellow-prisoner, who would furnish both company and, if necessary, attendance also.

But Nigel wished for neither — only to be left alone. However, the warder told him that the Lieutenant was the best judge of how his prisoners should be accommodated, adding that the boy was 'such a slip of a thing as hardly to be worth while turning a key upon.'

The lad was brought in trembling with confusion and terror. Nigel, though he would fain have been alone, tried to cheer him up, telling him that one so young could not have done anything to keep him long in such a place.

'Think that you have been shut up here for playing truant,' he said, 'and though you have no beard as yet, do not dishonour your manhood by crying like a girl!'

But the intense agony of his companion affected Nigel, who sat down beside him and tried to console him. He drew his hand over the boy's long curls, but was astonished to note that he shrank away from even that light touch.

Nigel, therefore, sat down on the farther side of the hearth and began to question his companion.

'Tell me who and what you are,' he said; 'consider me as a companion who wishes to be kind to you, if only he knew how.'

But all the answer he could extract was only that the boy was unhappy.

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'You are very good, sir, — my lord, I mean, — and I — am very unhappy! What is worse, I have only myself to thank for my misfortunes.'

'That,' said Nigel, smiling, 'is the rule with the misfortunes which we are unhappy about. But you are so young — you can have very little to answer for.'

'Indeed,' said the boy, 'there is no harm about me. I am innocent. That is, I have done wrong, but nothing to deserve being put into this frightful place. I left my father's house without leave to see the King's hunt in Greenwich Park. There came a cry of treason, and the gates were shut. Then I was found by some rangers, and as they said I could give no good account of myself, I was sent here!'

Nigel observed that the boy's story sounded strangely. If he had told his name and his means of getting into the park, surely they would have let him go.

But the boy had not told his name to the rangers, and would not do so to Nigel. He had, he said, told too much already to one whose heart he had hoped to move. More he would not say.

Nigel offered him his couch to rest upon, but the boy preferred to remain in his great chair, drawing his cloak about him so as to hide his face. Meanwhile Nigel continued his pensive walk to and fro in his prison cell.

But he was to have other visitors to try his patience more severely — first of all John Christie, who came to ask concerning Dame Nelly, and departed still unbelieving, though Nigel assured him over and over again that he had nothing to do with the matter of his loss.

After the ship-chandler was gone, Nigel

looked again at his companion, who appeared to have been weeping, and sleeping at the same time. He was not long in finding out that the lad was only a girl dressed in boy's clothes!

Nevertheless, Nigel renewed his offers of service, if she would tell him her name, adding that from him she had nothing to fear.

The meal that was now served to the two was ample and well-cooked, and as they partook of it Nigel could see at once that his companion had been well brought up. She behaved with the most decorous grace and charm, and her dress added to the strange fascination she was beginning to exercise over Nigel — a feeling so strong as to make him forget his own danger.

Hardly was the meal over, and his companion returned to her great chair, than a second visitor was announced, no other than George Heriot. The jeweller was very angry — or at least appeared to be so. He rated Nigel for his past conduct — his gambling, his ill name even among those with whom he habitually associated, his supposed carrying off of Dame Nelly, the disappearance of Martha Trapbois, and other matters.

But Nigel, while acknowledging his faults and mistakes, denied all that was serious in the accusation.

In order to prove the truth of his word he sent for his casket, to show the papers contained in it. They were all there, but — *the King's order for the Glenvarloch money had disappeared!*

Whereupon Heriot accused Nigel of having pledged it for some petty sum. Nigel could only say that if the old lands of Olifaunt must go, — firth and

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forest, lea and furrow, lake and stream, — well, then, good-by to them!

‘Zounds!’ cried Heriot, ‘you are enough to make a saint swear! Does the loss sit so light on you? Is that all you have to say? S’death, my lord, you will make more moan for it ere you die!’

‘Not I, my old friend,’ said Nigel. ‘If I mourn, Master Heriot, it will be for having lost the good opinion of a worthy man — and lost it, as I must add, most undeservedly.’

‘Undeservedly!’ said the jeweller; ‘you will as soon make me believe that this masquerading mummer on whom I now lay the hand of parental authority is your French page who speaks no English!’

So saying, he snatched away the page's cloak, somewhat unceremoniously, and revealed to full view the daughter of the old watchmaker, and his own goddaughter, pretty Mistress Margaret Ramsay.

‘Here is goodly gear!’ he cried, giving the girl a shake for her naughty wilfulness; ‘and I have a great mind to make her smart for her folly on the spot!’

‘Master Heriot,’ said Nigel, ‘whatever rights you have over this maiden elsewhere, remember that while in my apartment she is under my protection.’

‘A very proper protector!’ cried Heriot; ‘and pray how long have you been under my lord's kind protection?’

‘For two hours,’ said Margaret, blushing; ‘but it was against my will.’

‘No doubt — no doubt!’ said Heriot; ‘so his lordship here will take oath, but methinks some of his words want a warrant.’

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'Godfather,' said Margaret, who began to recover her natural spirits, 'I cannot be silent. You do me wrong. Also you wrong this young nobleman. You say his words want a warrant. Well, I know where to find a warrant for some of them, and the rest I devoutly believe without one!'

George Heriot demanded a clear explanation from his god-daughter of how she came to be in this place. Margaret told him that she had gone down that morning to Greenwich Park with Monna Paula, the Lady Hermione's waiting-maid, to present a petition to the King.

'Gad-a-mercy!' cried Heriot, 'is she in the dance, too? Could she not have waited my return before moving in her affairs? But what had this petition to do with your present absurd disguise?'

'Monna was frightened,' said Margaret Ramsay, 'and I promised to go with her to give her courage. And as for the dress, you must surely remember that I wore it at a Christmas mumming, and you thought it not unbecoming.'

'Yes, for a Christmas parlour,' said Heriot, 'but not to gad up and down the country in.'

'When the alarm arose in the park and the gates were shut,' Margaret continued, 'I ran till I fell into the arms of a very decent serving-man, one named Linklater. I told him I was your god-daughter. So, he kept the rest from me, and even got me speech with his Majesty, as I entreated him to do!'

'The only sign you have showed all through that common sense had not utterly deserted your little skull!' said Heriot. 'Now I will escort you back to the Lady Mansell and tell her that when next she is intrusted with a goose, she must not give it to the

fox to keep!'

As Nigel stood watching Margaret Ramsay go out on the arm of her godfather, he made her a profound bow, which somehow had the art of calling the happy flush to her face.

She returned his farewell timidly, clung to George Heriot's arm, and when the door shut, the apartment, dark before, appeared to the prisoner ever so much darker.

### THE END OF SWEETHEART'S FOURTH TALE FROM 'THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL'

The senate was sitting. Sweetheart had finished her tale with the air of one who is saving something good for the last. The boys, being experienced, knew exactly what to make of that. But it was more difficult to explain to Nipper Donnan and his father.

Butcher Donnan had been so delighted with the Tale of Trapbois that this time he had not only come himself to the Feudal Tower, but had brought two friends with him.

One of these, in leather leggings and stout velveteens, was John Chesnay, the gamekeeper, over at Colonel Davenant Carter's. The second was George Elphinstone (called Elphie), who was supposed to know more about game than the gamekeeper himself. On the hill, on the moor, along the riverside, these two were embattled enemies. For 'Elphie,' patrolling the roads, mending here a culvert, and there planning out a 'barrow' of stones to be broken, could keep his eye all day on the comings and goings of the game.

And from the height of a knoll on the hillside, deep-hidden among the heather, or with his face

glued to a hole in the dry stone dike, John Chesnay kept his eye upon Elphie. For Elphie was a poacher — but by no means a common, sell-them-in-the-nearest-town, pot-hunting poacher. Elphie had as good a wage as the gamekeeper. He was a poacher for pleasure, an artist for art's sake — though all the same he could enjoy a pheasant done to a turn by his wife Eliza. Only he did the carving himself, and insisted on bread crumbs! Thus you see Elphie was very far indeed from being an ordinary poacher. He was rather 'a man who poached' — a very different thing, as all gamekeepers know.

I can see Elphie yet, hammering away at his pile of wayside stones, or with his goggles pushed up to give his eyes a rest as he talked — for he dearly loved a gossip, no man more.

Our boys admired both. But each was a partisan. As usual, Hugh John stood for law and order. He was of the gamekeeper's faction. He did not wander the woods with Sir Toady in quest of eggs, nor yet bring home surreptitious game which he had 'found' — in the company, doubtless, of the aforesaid Elphie.

True, Hugh John did not spoil sport, but he did not wish the honour of the house and of his Majesty's Navy to be sullied by night poaching upon friendly ground. He would therefore remark casually, after a visit to the keeper's cottage, 'It's going to be a stormy night — you stop at home, Toadums, you hear!'

And owing to circumstances (connected with fist law and some three years' difference of age), the ornament of the senior service stayed where he was. But on the neutral ground of 'Sir Walter' all three men were free and equal.

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A confirmed sportsman himself, doubtless Butcher Donnan preferred to take his 'evenin's' and 'mornin's' with Elphie. But John Chesnay was a knowledgeable fellow also, and there was no doubt he understood about dogs. Generally he was a man of few words, spoken in the strictest line of business, such as, 'That pup's got distemper!'

Seated on the broken wall of the Feudal Tower, the three men listened to a third retelling of the fight with the robbers in the house of Trapbois. It seemed as if they would never tire of it.

'Near as good as t'a *Police News!*' said Elphie, who took in that paper, as John Chesnay, the gamekeeper, affirmed, 'for the purpose of learning how to behave on the scaffold when his turn came.'

But the stag-hunting exploit in Greenwich Park came in for most bitter censure on the part of experts.

'To hunt within a stone wall — in a deer park — hunt 'em with dogs — a poor beast that never had a chance from the start! Call that sport?' Such were the united testimonies of John Chesnay, gamekeeper, and Elphie, expert in game-poaching.

'No sort of a way at all,' repeated Chesnay, who had had experience in the Highlands; 'as well go into a cage and kill the canaries!'

This was strong talking for the silent gamekeeper, while as for Elphie, he seemed to regret that Nigel had not taken his chance and fired a pistol into the King's High Majesty.

'He's naught o' a man!' he said, over and over again. 'He would never have made a p — stone-breaker, I mean!'

The eye of the gamekeeper rested on his sometime foe, keen as a needle-point — but only for

a moment. He grunted and resumed his pipe. All three men, being disciplinarians in their own families, agreed as to the necessities of Peggy Ramsay's case.

'Should be well whipped and sent to bed!' said Butcher Donnan.

'Supperless!' added John Chesnay.

'*And* a sound tongue-lashing from her mother the next mornin'!' said Elphie, whose wife was reported to be gifted that way.

At this treason against Sir Walter, Hugh John stirred, sat up, and looked from one to the other. Sir Toady was about to speak, but a look from Hugh John reduced him to silence.

'Maybe,' said Hugh John, slowly, 'you would have thought differently about it, when you were as young as Nigel Olifaunt. More than that — the girl had no mother!'

'Ayl' said Butcher Donnan, nodding thoughtfully.

'That makes a difference — that does,' said Poacher Elphie, 'and her father doubtless out from morning till night, addling his bread!'

Keeper Chesnay said nothing, yet even his dour will seemed to change a little in the matter of Mistress Margaret.

He stretched out his hand for the book, and gazed long at the picture of George Heriot discovering Peg-a-Ramsay in Nigel's dungeon in the Tower.

'She's no unbony!' he said, after a lingering look, as he handed it back; '*only* —'

He paused so long that it seemed as if the sentence were finished.

'Only what? — speak out, man!' cried

Butcher Donnan.

'If the quean were a bairn o' mine,' said he, slowly and sententiously, 'I wad hae waited for that young man, and him and me wad hae pitten up the banns!'

The inwardness of this was lost on the boys, who were already foraging through the volume for other and more interesting incidents. However, the session took end naturally. Nipper Donnan was ordered off by his father to 'shut up the shop' and to take a pound each of 'best neck' to several poor families of his own communion.

The keeper rose with a sigh and, with a lift of his thumb over his shoulder, indicated the direction of the pheasant coops, where his comrade Jo Gill would be waiting for relief.

'Good e'en to ye,' he said, as briefly as George Heriot himself.

Only the butcher and the roadman-poacher remained. The boys were still knocking their heads together over the volume, ending, however, by finding and reading the interview in the dungeon between Heriot and the young lord.

'Impident *he* was!' said Butcher Donnan; 'it's not me that would have taken as much lip as that from any man — jeweller *or* grocer!'

'He owed him money! That wad be it!' said the wary poacher, who had had many a long 'rick' himself at various shops — including that of Butcher Donnan himself — when it was his bad season.

'Owed him money!' cried Butcher Donnan; 'why, sir, in Ireland — in County Kerry where I come from — 'tis the man that does NOT owe money that is disrespected— shot, maybe, if so be that money is

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rent!

At this point Elphie rose and made his salutation to the company. He had an engagement, he said. Sir Toady had one, too. But the fraternal toe induced him to give it up.

The butcher eyed the brothers with a small twinkling eye, deeply set in his huge face. He grinned. Then he uttered a great truth.

'If Nipper had had a big brother,' he said, 'I know an honest butcher-man that wud have been saved a deal of trouble!'

THE LAST TALE TOLD BY SWEETHEART FROM  
'THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL'

Nigel (said Sweetheart) was still in the Tower. Nothing seemed changed. He had dreamed, it is true, about Margaret Ramsay. He saw her little foot peeping out from under her cloak —

['Ha — ha!'] suddenly screamed Sir Toady, who, at this period, had no romantic illusions as to the power of female beauty, — "*her little foot- peeping out from beneath her cloak*" — (he was mimicking) 'oh, *won't* our fellows laugh!'

'Well, at least *you* won't,' said his elder brother; 'how do you like the 'peeping of that little foot' — *eh — eh — eh?*'

'Elephant — hippo — hog!' cried Sir Toady, in shrill crescendo, as the coercion proceeded on the best fraternal lines. 'Well, then, I won't — no, I won't interrupt Sis — but it — *hic — hic — was — funny!*'

This inset piece being thus satisfactorily finished, the narrator was about to continue.

'Say it all over again, Sis,' commanded the Senior Disciplinarian, 'exactly as before, word for word. And if so much as a smile flits over that intelligent naval countenance, the Benbow won't know him when he goes back!'

But the face of the young salt became at once of the proper sea-faring lack-of-expression, as if at the word of command.

'Say it slow, Sis!' commanded Hugh John; 'it's for his good!' And he himself leaned a little forward with his left fist lightly closed.

'He saw in dreams her little foot peeping out from beneath her cloak —' repeated Sweetheart,

rather adding than subtracting.

'Well done, Brass and Brine!' said Hugh John, who had been watching for the least flicker of expression on the fraternal countenance.]

Well, when Nigel woke (here Sir Toady, seeing the brotherly eye regarding the distant hills through the window, grinned), he heard a voice which he had thought a good three hundred miles to the northward of the Tower of London. For an instant it seemed that he was deceiving himself. He heard the voice of Ritchie Monyplies, his old servant, whom he had thought long ago back in Edinburgh town.

'Humph, ay,' said the voice, 'time that both cloak and jerkin were through my hands. I question if brush has passed across them since we parted. But many of the gold buttons of the cloak are no more — as I'm an honest man, a round dozen of them are gone! This comes o' Alsatia frolics!'

Looking through the curtains of his bed, Nigel beheld the stiff and bony length of Ritchie, with a visage charged doubly with importance. He was employed in brushing his master's cloak, and whistling Scottish ballad music as he did so.

'In the name of heaven, Ritchie,' cried his master, for once surprised into familiarity, 'is that you?'

'And who else should it be?' said Ritchie, brushing away. 'It is little likely that your lordship's levee in this place should be attended by any save those who, like me, are old and faithful servants!'

'But I thought you were in Scotland — you parted from me once and for all!'

'No such thing,' said honest Ritchie; 'if your lordship does not ken when he has a guid servant, I ken when I have a kind master! More than that, you

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will be the easier served, that here you will have but little chance of breaking bounds!

'I hope,' said Nigel, smiling, 'that you will not take advantage of my situation to be too severe on my past follies.'

'God forbid, my lord!' replied Ritchie; 'I do not forget that even I myself am human, and conscious of some small weaknesses. There is no perfection in man!'

Nigel laughed at the idea of Ritchie, in his own opinion, coming as near that perfection as is possible for human creature.

'But,' he added, 'your service here can be of little benefit to a prisoner, and may be very prejudicial to yourself!'

Ritchie, however, stuck to it with his ordinary dogmatism, that he could be of great service, yet he himself no whit prejudiced. However, he made the condition that, as he was employed on urgent private business, he should only do his service for his master at such times as were convenient for himself!

Lord Nigel pointed out that this arrangement would hardly do for a free man, but that as a prisoner, he was not in the position to be a chooser. It was characteristic that Ritchie, after he had made his terms, assisted as usual at Nigel's toilet, and waited upon him at breakfast with every mark of respect. The master could not help being touched by such fidelity — in spite of the anticipation, sure to be fulfilled, that he would yet have to stand many lectures upon the lightness of his character and the lack of seriousness in his behaviour.

Meantime Ritchie was not losing his time. From the Tower he betook himself to the palace,

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where we find him intriguing with Linklater, now principal kitchen clerk and favourite king's cook, that he should have another interview with Majesty.

Linklater at first cried out in horror at the idea. Ritchie would infallibly lose his own head, and what affected him much more, cause Linklater to lose his place in the royal kitchen.

But Ritchie insisted that the 'bit sifflication' he had would be most grateful to the King. Still the cautious Clerk of the Kitchen held out. He would move neither hand nor foot in the matter. He had risked enough already. However, he was not opposed to Ritchie slipping the 'sifflication' between the bowl and the platter of the Scottish broth he was just sending up to the royal chamber. 'For,' said he, 'the King always drinks out the bowl. Only' (he added) 'if this brings you to the gallows or the scourging post, it is your ain wilful deed.'

'I will blame none other!' said the undismayed Ritchie, and so waited to see what should be the upshot.

It was not long in arriving. In a few moments Maxwell himself came down to demand who had placed a writing on the King's trencher.

Ritchie, stepping boldly forth, answered, 'I am the man!'

'Follow me, then!' said Maxwell, after first looking at him with great curiosity. They went to the King's chamber by the private staircase, where Maxwell left him to speak with the King. Ritchie caught the conclusion of the interview.

'Ye are sure he is not dangerous? —I was caught once. Bide within call. If I speak loud, start to me like a falcon. If I speak low, keep your lang lugs out of earshot. And now show him in.'

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So Ritchie found himself alone in the presence of Majesty.

But Master Monyplies had too good an idea of himself to be in the least put out by any such trifling circumstance. He stood before James stiff as a hedge-stake.

‘Have ye gotten them, man? Have ye gotten them?’ said James, in a fluttered state, between hope and eagerness, with yet something also of fear. ‘Before ye speak a word, gie them to me — I charge you on your allegiance!’

Ritchie bent on one knee and presented a box to the King, which, when opened, showed the carcanet of balas rubies which had formerly ornamented the King's hat. James fell into a kind of childish rapture, kissing the gems, and behaving so that a kind of grim smile broke over Ritchie's face as he watched.

‘Take heed, sir,’ said the King, looking up; ‘do not laugh at us — we are your anointed sovereign!’

‘I was only trying, with indifferent means, to bring my countenance into conformity with that of your gracious Majesty!’ said Ritchie, who was conceited enough to fancy himself a good courtier, now that he had the opportunity.

Upon which the King commended him and asked his name.

‘Ah,’ said the King, laughing, when he had learned who his Northern subject was, ‘ye are the self-same traitor that nearly sent us end-lang on the causeway of our ain courtyard! Only we stuck to the mare. Weel, Ritchie, how came ye by the jewels? Come you on the part o' George Heriot?’

‘In no sort,’ said Ritchie. ‘I come, as Harry Wynd fought, utterly for my ain hand ! I call no man

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master — save God, your Majesty, and the noble Nigel, Lord of Glenvarloch, who maintained me as long as he could maintain himself, poor nobleman.'

'Glenvarloch again!' cried the King; 'by my honour, he lies in ambush for us at every corner. But whisht! Maxwell knocks at the door — I will wager that is George Heriot come to tell us that he cannot find these very rubies! Get behind the arras — stand close, man — sneeze not, cough not, breathe not!'

Then began one of the homely jestings which the King loved so greatly — especially with George Heriot, who (as he said) was so cursedly backward with his gold-ends of money and so cursedly forward with his gold-ends of wisdom, that now he was glad, through all his royal soul, to 'get a hair in his neck!'

For the first time on record the great goldsmith was at a loss. He had indeed taken the crown-jewels as a pledge, and now he could not replace them. He pleaded, indeed, that he had told the King beforehand how that the lender of the money was no very creditable person, whereupon James had replied, '*Non olet*' — meaning that the gold did not smell of the means of getting it.

'But,' said the King, 'as a loyal subject you ought to have taken care that they remained where it was within your King's power to redeem them! That the blame and the shame should not fall upon your monarch.'

Heriot pleaded that the sudden and violent death of the man himself, the disappearance of his daughter and all his wealth, the hue and cry that had been made everywhere (though without effect), might show that he at least had done his best.

'It has been found quite impossible to recover

them!' said the goldsmith, a trifle sadly. For he clearly saw that, though perfectly innocent, he was in a difficult position as the intermediary in such a business.

'Difficult, ye mean, Geordie — not impossible,' said the King. 'What is impossible must remain impossible. What is only difficult may be resolved by the aid of wisdom and patience — as, for instance, Jingling Geordie, look here!'

And he displayed the recovered treasure before the eyes of the astonished jeweller, crying, 'What say ye to that, Jingler? By my sword and sceptre, the man stares as if he took his native prince for a warlock. But gang thy way, honest Geordie. Thou art a good plain man in thy way, but none of the seven sages of Greece!'

As Heriot was going out the King burst into a roar of royal laughter at the goldsmith's rueful countenance, which in turn was echoed from behind the arras. If the King laughed, so, according to Ritchie, must the good subject also.

The King ordered him to come out and be silent. There was, he said, no need to 'nicker' like a young horse, even at so good a jest and one of his own royal framing. But though George Heriot was too good a courtier to interfere with the King's triumph, he darted a look of some displeasure at Ritchie, who, encouraged by the King, still held himself on the broad grin.

But on this occasion, as often before, the King's uncertain temper suddenly turned against Ritchie, as soon as he began to ask that, in consideration of the jewels and other moneys, the King would be pleased to look favourably upon the case of Lord Glenvarloch.

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‘Out with him, and pay him all his dues!’ cried the King; ‘what, sell my Justice! Out with the fause knave!’

And so presently Ritchie, no farther advanced apparently, found himself on the street, while George Heriot went back again to the King's chamber.

When George Heriot returned to the King's anteroom, he found there the old Earl of Huntingtower. The King was breaking some bad news to him, with many Latin quotations. The old soldier grew somewhat restive under these, though he declared that if the roughness of his nature did not enable him to bear any trouble, he would try to eke out his courage with a text of Scripture. He prayed James to tell him what the calamity was. But the King, as was his custom maundered off into the great pity it was that Lord Huntingtower could not read the Scriptures in the original, as he himself was used to do. But the old warrior, waxing impatient, cut him short by saying that if the telling of the bad news was to be put off till he was capable of reading Hebrew like his Majesty, it was to be feared that he would die in ignorance.

Whereupon the King informed him a little brusquely that his son Dalgarno (whom he had thought a very saint, being so much with Steenie and Baby Charles) had turned out a very villain!

‘Villain!’ cried the old Earl. Then, checking himself instantly, he added in a lower tone — ‘But it is your Majesty that speaks the word!’

King James stepped back at the ring of the first word as if he had received a blow.

‘Yes,’ said the King, ‘it is indeed I who say so — read!’ And he thrust a paper into Lord

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Huntingtower's hand, with the recommendation not to speak so loud in the royal presence — the King not being deaf.

The crime of Dalgarno had reference to his ill-usage of the Lady Hermione, George Heriot's ward. Her he had secretly married, then deserted and ill-treated. Lastly, taking advantage of the different laws of the countries, he had denied any marriage at all, and would have handed her over to the Duke of Buckingham— who, though strongly prejudiced by Dalgarno against the character of the Lady Hermione, nevertheless scorned to avail himself of her distress, even giving her the means of getting out of her difficulties by coming to England, where she found a strong protector in the old friend of her father, George Heriot, the jeweller of Lombard Street.

'It was e'en like himsel' —blessings on his bonny face,' cried the King, 'and to tell the truth I believed the lady's tale the mair that she spake nae ill o' Steenie! And it is the opinion of our council and ourselves, as weel as of Baby Charles and Steenie, that your son must marry this lady or undergo such disgrace and discountenance as we can bestow.'

For a time Lord Huntingtower stood like an ancient statue of the times of chivalry — every line of his body immovable and rigid, his very eyelashes still and his eyes seeing nothing.

The next moment, overcome by the news, he had sunk to the ground with a heavy groan.

The King raised his old servant in his arms, and wept over him unrestrainedly, comforting him with the philosophy that Dalgarno was to marry a lady of good birth, of ample wealth, and the most unspotted fame.

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'I am sorry for it,' said the embittered old man. 'It is long since I saw my son to be hard and selfish — but this! — I never dreamed that a blot like this would have fallen on our race! I will never look on his face again!'

'Nonsense!' said the King; 'on the contrary, you must take him to task roundly.'

But here the old Earl asked leave to retire. His grief was not for the curious eyes of a court.

After he had departed the King began to tell Heriot how, even before the very council, Dalgarno had brazened it out till he heard of the lady's rich dowry. 'They gave him half an hour,' said the King, 'to read the schedule of the bride's substance. I left Steenie and Baby Charles laying his duty before him, and if he can resist what they desire of him — why, I only wish he would teach me the gate o't! Oh, Geordie, Jingling Geordie, it was grand to hear Baby Charles layin' doon the guilt of dissimulation, and Steenie lecturing on the evil of incontinence!'

'I am afraid,' said Heriot, more hastily than prudently, 'that I might have thought of the old proverb of Satan reproving sin.'

At this moment the council was again summoned. Dalgarno, still flouting them, sneered as much as he dared, insulting even the King under the mask of humility, making face to proud Buckingham, and holding himself as arrogantly as before, at last declared himself willing to marry the Lady Hermione immediately in the Chapel Royal. Here he took his place smilingly, as easy and unembarrassed as if he had been in reality a willing and happy bridegroom.

According to the royal arrangement, Dalgarno and the Lady Hermione were to live

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separately. A maintenance was to be allowed to Lady Dalgarno out of her own money. Her husband was to have the rest.

‘But,’ he said, with haughty meaning in his tone, ‘it was only a single line in the schedule which bribed me to take that woman's hand in mine.’

‘That must have been the sum total,’ said the King, at the same time telling his son to be quiet, that he might the better hear what the ‘frontless loon’ would say.

‘Not so, sire,’ said Dalgarno, ‘though no doubt the sum total might have been an object to Scottish kings at no distant date. It is the entry which gives me power of vengeance over the family of Glenvarloch, and the power of burning her mother's house to ashes.’

The King asked Heriot what Dalgarno was speaking about, but the latter continued, answering for himself.

‘This friendly citizen, my liege,’ said he, indicating Heriot, ‘hath expended a sum belonging to this lady — consequently to me. A certain mortgage has passed into my hands, and if the money is not paid in to my scrivener by noon tomorrow, I shall take possession of all the properties of Glenvarloch, my house's enemy and my own.’

‘But the warrant on our exchequer?’ said the King to Heriot.

‘Lord Glenvarloch is a most unlucky youth,’ Heriot answered; ‘in the adventure which cost him for a time your Majesty's favour, he lost the writing, and now it cannot be found. From which it results that even you, sire, cannot aid him without paying your debts twice over!’

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'I have scarce the means of paying them once, Geordie!' said the King.

'I will take no advantage,' said Dalgarno, 'though you give me news. I will wait till noon tomorrow, and if any one will pay the money to my scrivener, with whom the deeds lie, so much the better for Lord Glenvarloch. If not, I shall travel forward on the next day to take possession of my new estates in the North!'

'Take a father's malison with you, unhappy wretch!' said Lord Huntingtower, turning away.

'And a King's, who is father of his country!' said James.

'I trust to bear both lightly,' said Dalgarno, bowing and going out, leaving all a little overawed by such determined effrontery. Lord Huntingtower took with him his new daughter-in-law, and the sitting of the Privy Council was continued, though the hour was already late.

It was evident that the King was in mood for a speech. He began by informing those present how he had come to know all this. In the Tower he had caused to be built a 'King's lug,' or ear, by sitting in which all the conversation of the prisoners in the next dungeon could plainly be heard. Here the Prince cast a look of great disgust at Buckingham. Buckingham shrugged his shoulders, but so slightly that the motion was almost imperceptible.

The King went on to relate how he had listened here when Nigel was sent to the Tower. The King had thus overheard his various talks with Margaret, with Christie, with George Heriot, and with Sir Mungo Malagrowth. In all which trials, said the speaker, 'Glenvarloch had acquitted himself nobly, never uttering a word against his anointed

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King, and behaving far better than you, Steenie, might not have been tempted to do, for all your laughing.'

'I am glad,' said the favourite, 'that you have resolved to pardon Glenvarloch, though I never should have dreamed of the way you arrived at the certainty of his innocence.'

'And I trust,' said Prince Charles, 'that it is not a path that your Majesty will think consistent with your high dignity to tread frequently.'

'Never while I live again, Baby Charles,' said the King; 'I give you my royal word for it! The 'King's lug' shall be instantly built up. You are right, Baby Charles, the groans of the prisoner were never intended to be brought in evidence against him — the more so that my royal back is sore with sitting for a whole hour hearing ill tales of myself!'

The next day, a little after eleven, Andro Skirliewhitter, — the former scrivener whom George Heriot had employed (now grown rich, though not altogether by honest means), — waited eagerly the hour of twelve, which would put his client Dalgarno in possession of the Glenvarloch estates. But in this he was to be disappointed.

Ritchie Monyplies, with Master Reginald Lowestoffe and another Templar, arrived to be witnesses of the payment of twenty bags of gold which Ritchie had brought with him to redeem the Glenvarloch estates.

The scrivener wished to gain time by sending for Lord Dalgarno. But the Templar knew better. Finally, the scrivener had to sit down there and then and write a full receipt for the money offered.

As they went out they met Dalgarno, who told Ritchie that if Glenvarloch was still of the same

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mind as to their quarrel, he would meet him the next day on Enfield Chase, on his way North, which would be a fitter place than the park for fighting it out.

'If he is aught but an Alsatian bully, he will meet me at Camlot Moat - he knows the place; but if he fail to meet me there, your master must seek me in Scotland, where he will find me possessed of all his father's estates and properties.'

Ritchie Monyplies had not the least intention of doing this commission. Nigel would never hear a word of the matter from him.

But when Dalgarno heard from his scrivener that the money had been paid, he seized and shook the wretched man till the collar of his black velvet suit came away from the cassock.

Then Dalgarno, instantly changing his idea, resolved to use the redemption money paid by Ritchie to hold the castle of Glenvarloch against its owner. Accordingly, he ordered the scrivener to find porters and send all the gold to his lodging.

But before the money could be got off, the scoundrel, Captain Colepepper, entered. He had been at the killing of Trapbois — most probably the actual murderer, or so at least his daughter thought. It had, however, been by means of Andro Skirliewhitter that the gang got wind of the manner of entering the apartment of the miser. It had been previously arranged that Trapbois was to steal (and actually did steal) the parchment on which the King's order on the treasury in favour of Glenvarloch was written. This would be one barrier the more in the way of Nigel redeeming his estates.

But the sudden appearance of Nigel on the scene of the murder had disconcerted their plans.

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Now, however, Colepepper, advised by Skirliewhitter, saw that the halting of Dalgarno at Camlot Moat was an exceedingly good chance of getting the money which had been paid by Ritchie Monyplies.

For Colepepper had become a common highwayman, and it was easy for him to get a fine lot of rascals about him: Black Feltham, Dick Shakebag — that made three — and another yet to be found.

'The thing is well worth the doing, however it may turn out,' said the scrivener to himself, after he had got rid of Colepepper by giving him two gold pieces. 'If the ruffian fails, then he cannot tug longer at my purse-strings because of that matter at Whitefriars. If Lord Dalgarno dies, as is most likely — then I am in a thousand ways safe — safe — safe —!'

Meanwhile, after dining his two witnesses well at Beaujeu's, Ritchie was returning eastwards when he met Jin Vin, once 'prentice to David Ramsay, but now far down the hill, having taken to gambling and lost his all.

Worst of all, and the cause of all, he had lost Margaret Ramsay. He had loved her long, and from the first had cherished the hope that a tight 'prentice might yet live to marry his master's daughter.

But now, when he met Ritchie Monyplies, he had most surprising news to tell. No less than that the King had meddled in the matter, and that ever since he had seen her in her boy's dress it was Peg-a-Ramsay this and Peg-a-Ramsay that other. He had even found a grand pedigree for her, and — she was to be married to Nigel, Lord Glenvarloch.

Of this, however, Ritchie would at first believe nothing at all, the idea of a great Scottish

lord marrying the daughter of a city mechanic being to him absurd!

‘Speak civilly,’ cried Jin Vin, at once taking fire; ‘she is the prettiest girl between the Bar and Paul’s — I will uphold it! But now the King has made her into a kind of gentlewoman, takes an interest in the match, and runs about cackling like an old gander about Peggie, ever since he hath seen her in hose and doublet! And no wonder!’ added poor Jin Vin, with a sigh.

‘But are ye sure ye have lost her?’ repeated Ritchie, in whose ears the whole matter sounded strange and incredible.

‘Why, no sooner was my Lord clear of the Tower,’ said the ex-apprentice, ‘than there came Master Heriot direct from the King to propose for her, and our old dullard watchmaker multiplied six figures progressively and then — gave his consent!’

‘And what did you do, Jin Vin?’ asked Ritchie.

‘I rushed out of the shop half mad. And, in search for counsel, I went across the road to Dame Ursula Suddlechop, who had promised me many a time that I should have Margaret. And all that she could suggest was that I should go ‘on the road’ with that villain Colepepper — that is, turn highwayman like him!’

‘Ah,’ said Ritchie, ‘if you can tell me anything about that smaik, ye will be doing me a very sincere service, Master Jenkin!’

‘Oh, as to that, the woman spoke of my meeting him on Enfield Chase with some other ‘good fellows’ — to do a robbery on a nobleman who rides northward with a great treasure.’

Upon this Ritchie thought awhile, and then,

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suddenly enlightened, asked if Jin Vin would not join him in a little private expedition to Enfield Chase. He knew that Reginald Lowestoffe and his friend Ringwood, the Templar, would readily be of the party, if there were blows going. These four would go out and see if the true men could not in their turn rob the thieves.

At the appointed time Dalgarno rode northward with only a lady and a little page in their company, but at the entrance of the Chase they dismounted and walked together through the woodland to a mound known as Camlot Moat. Here he was resolved to meet with Glenvarloch, to fight, and if possible to kill him — in which case he would go to Scotland, with some at least of his former credit restored and sufficient gold to sustain it.

But though the four riders meant to reach the spot of the intended robbery first, they came too late. They had not calculated upon the robbers beginning with murder, which indeed was not the custom of English highwaymen, though the common practice abroad.

The rescuers arrived at full gallop on the field the very moment when the first shot was fired. Ritchie Monyplies, for his own reasons, desired to hold immediate count and reckoning with Captain Colepepper. The Captain, by a quick attack, dismounted Ritchie, who, truth to tell, was not altogether at home upon a horse. But Monyplies, nothing daunted by his fall, struck at him with the knife he had wrenched from the villain's hand, and then killed him instantly with the blow of the butt of a musketoon.

Lowestoffe had put his opponent to flight when the other Templar suddenly called out, 'If ye

be men, come hither,—here lies Lord Dalgarno, murdered!’

Lowestoffe and Ritchie ran to the spot, where presently the whole company stood gazing with horror on the dead body of the wicked young nobleman.

As for Lutin, the page, he had disappeared with — [‘With the loot!’ said Sir Toady the incorrigible.]

The marriage of Nigel and Margaret was to be graced by the presence of the King himself. James, when he could get his way, loved all manner of comfortable intimacies with his subjects. He was a homely monarch and in his way a diplomatist. He laboured with his own royal eyes to find out Margaret Ramsay's pedigree, till (so he said) he nearly wore out a pair of her father's best barnacles. And one day when Sir Mungo Malagrowth was bemoaning in the royal presence the pity it was that so fair a maid had no pedigree, the King cut him short with: ‘Ye may save your grief for your ain next occasions. For, by our royal saul, we will uphaud her father, David Ramsay, to be a gentleman of nine descents, whose great-grandsire came of the auld martial stock of Dalwalsey!’

Accordingly the King came to the wedding, on the providing of which George Heriot had spent his means freely. James had so manoeuvred that both the Prince and Buckingham had been despatched on a mission to Newmarket. Thus he might indulge himself in the homely gossiping habits which were as dear to him as they were distasteful to his formal son and haughty favourite.

After preparing his master for his marriage, and giving his locks ‘the last touch of the redding

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comb,' Ritchie Monyplies kneeled down, kissed Nigel's hand, and asked leave to discharge himself of his lordship's service.

'I suppose,' said Nigel, smiling, 'that you mean to enter that of my wife.'

'I wish her good ladyship that is to be, and you, my master, in time the blessing of as good a servant as myself. But fate has so ordered it that I can only be your servant in the way of friendly courtesy.'

'Let it be according to your will, Ritchie,' said Nigel, and thought no more about his servant's whims, upon that day of all days in the year.

The marriage took place in St. Paul's. The King himself gave away the bride — to the great relief of her father, who thus had time to calculate the exact quotient for a report-wheel in a timepiece he was then putting together.

By special permission of the King, Ritchie Monyplies was allowed to enter the splendid Foljambe apartments in Heriot's house in Lombard Street, where James was delighting himself in his freedom — mumping, gossiping, ambling hither and thither, and cracking jests, all to the accompaniment of his own sturdy laughter. On first entering, the King had thrown down his hat, cast off his belt and sword as if they burnt his fingers, and now in safe and congenial society, he was enjoying himself, as perhaps he had never done since the old days in Holyrood.

Upon receiving an assurance that Ritchie Monyplies did not come seeking his money, James caused him to be admitted at once his name was sent up.

Hardly had he done speaking when the door

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opened, and to the great surprise of Lord Glenvarloch, his late serving-man, Ritchie Monyplies, entered, gorgeously attired in a superb brocaded suit, and leading by the hand — who but Martha Trapbois, all in black velvet, strangely enough suited to the severe melancholy of her countenance.

‘What the deil,’ exclaimed the King, ‘has the fellow brought here? Is it a corpse that has run off with the mort-cloth?’

‘May I sifflicate your Majesty to be gracious unto her?’ said Ritchie, ‘being as she is my ain wedded wife, Mistress Martha Monyplies!’

‘Saul o’ my body, man, but she is wondrous grim,’ answered the King; ‘she looks as though in her time she might have been maid of honour to Queen Mary, our kinswoman of red-hot memory!’

‘She has brought me fifty thousand pounds in good siller — and better,’ said Ritchie, ‘and that has enabled me to pleasure both your Majesty and other folk.’

‘How came you by her?’ said the King, who did not like such topics as the owing of money.

‘In the auld Scottish fashion, my liege,’ said Ritchie; ‘she is the captive of my bow and spear. There was a convention that I should wed Mistress Martha when I avenged her father's death. So I slew, and took possession!’

His bride drew out a bundle of parchments, and delivering them to Lord Glenvarloch, said aloud, ‘I take this royal presence and all here to witness that I restore the ransomed lordship of Glenvarloch to the rightful owner, in all respects as ever it was held by any of his ancestors.’

‘I witnessed the redemption of the mortgage,’

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said Lowestoffe, 'though I little dreamed by whom it was redeemed.'

'There would have been small service in crying, 'Roast-meat,' when such gallants as you were abroad!' said Ritchie, unabashed.

'Peace,' said his wife; 'I have here yet another paper!' And she placed in Nigel's hand the original order of the King upon the Scottish exchequer — the same which had so long been lost.

'My lord,' she said, 'it was not only the piece of gold which brought my father to your room that fatal night, but also the hope of purloining this paper.'

Then the King, who loved not such stories, cut short this one by complimenting Martha on her husband's wit and bravery.

'There are fools who have wit,' she made answer, 'but I chose this man, because he was my protector when I was desolate. He is truly honest and has a heart and hand that make amends for some follies. Since I am compelled to find a protector, I thank God I have fallen on no worse!'

'Let us see if we cannot make him better,' said the King. 'Lend me your rapier, somebody — you, Master Langstaff; do not flash it out that gate, Templar fashion, as if you were about to pink a bailiff!'

The King took the drawn sword, and with averted eyes laid it on the shoulder of Ritchie, who, taken by surprise, tried to rise, but was held down by Lowestoffe.

'Rise up, Sir Richard Monypies of Castle Collop!' he said. 'And now, my lords and lieges, let us to our dinner, for the cock-a-leekie is cooling.'

'And what came of Jin Vin?' said Sir Toady, who

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had an affection for that bold 'prentice.

Sweetheart answered him gravely.

'He went back, turned a good boy, stuck to his work, and, after David Ramsay had retired, took over the business along with his fellow-apprentice Tunstall. In fact,' concluded Sweetheart, 'he lived happily ever after!'

'Found out how silly it was to bother about a girl, I suppose,' said Sir Toady, ungratefully; 'as if there were not lots!'

THE END OF SWEETHEART'S 'TALES FROM THE  
FORTUNES OF NIGEL'

RED CAP TALES TOLD FROM  
QUENTIN DURWARD

HUGH JOHN PREPARES TO TELL HIS TALE

‘Say,’ precluded Sir Toady Lion, looking if there was a safe way out of the wood, if the worst came to the worst, ‘say, you ones, Sis has stopped being too awful good. She doesn't get up to go to morning church on week-days any more — not since she has been to school. Now she lies longer in bed, has to wait for her bath, and so is late for breakfast instead.’

‘Well, what business is it of yours, Toadums?’ Hugh John smiled a stern, repressive smile. ‘What do you mean by it, anyway?’

‘Oh, only that she tells a better story. I like her style better!’

‘Conceited little beast! I'll teach you to like anything you are not told to like by your elders and betters!’

Butcher Donnan nodded his head. Nothing like discipline in families! Better a little too much than any short weight. These were his principles, business and domestic.

We were all seated down at the Feudal Tower, Sweetheart keeping a little retired with a person of her confidence where they could exchange whispers without being seen by the boys; the youngers, male and female after their kind, a-sprawl on the green grass — Butcher Donnan, John

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Chesnay, and the Poacher Elphie seated amicably on the wall.

‘Well,’ said Hugh John, ‘father says that if the rest of us tell the story, just as we would to one another, little mistakes won't be counted, and we will get our sov all the same! Sweetheart thinks this quite fair, because she has a better memory.’

Hugh John looked over at Sweetheart, who stopped whispering to nod back. That young lady was rich beyond the dreams of avarice — her claims having been commuted for two sovereigns cash, and other three towards her dress account, which last item the boys, who got their school outfit given them, considered as good as nothing at all.

‘I am to tell the story just as I like, and if anyone interrupts — ’

‘No one shall interrupt!’ I said hastily, fearing that the sounds of war might delay Hugh John's first tale.

### THE FIRST TALE OF QUENTIN DURWARD'S ADVENTURES AS THESE APPEARED TO HUGH JOHN

Of course (said Hugh John) in the book there's a lot of stuff that is no good to a boy. I left that out.

But I read the notes — they were prime. It is a good plan to read the notes first, and then you can wade through the story after — oh, ever so much easier — lovemaking and all!

[Various murmurings arose.

‘Why don't you go on, then? Quit yarning about nothing! I don't believe he can at all! He's funkng!’

Hugh John cast a sort of promissory note to

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each of the interrupters and plunged at once into *medias res*.]

He had chosen Quentin Durward by a sort of instinct, the character, indeed, in some degree resembling his own — adventurous, self-reliant, and with a strong sense of personal dignity, which would not render his passage through the world the easier.

### THE SCOTS ADVENTURER

It begins (said Hugh John) about a young Scottish fellow — like us, or maybe a bit older, who had gone to France to push his fortune. Fellows didn't go into offices then. I bet you, no. Quentin Durward didn't, anyhow. He had learned all about how to use the sword and the single-stick and everything like that up in Glen Houlakin, where he came from. This is to say, the Glen of the Midges. But a fellow can't live on midges (though midges can on you), and like all the other young Scots of his time he went abroad to seek for a chance to fight under the banner of some great lord or another.

['Why didn't he stay at home and join the army or the navy?' said Sir Toady, who believed in patriotism.]

Because there weren't any (said Hugh John, informed by the notes, and by information about Louis XI, laboriously spelled out of *Lavisse*), and besides, if you wanted to be anybody in the Scottish wars with England, you had got to go and learn all about it first from the French or the Emperor's people — what we call the Austrians now. But they called themselves Emperors of Rome, which was all in my eye.

Well, there was this young Quentin in

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France, and he felt pretty gay, for though he was hungry, it was a fine morning. His clothes were all right, only a bit worn, like your 'footer' things after two winters —

[‘Or a sixth termer's cap!’ interjected Sir Toady, ‘brushed but bashed.’]

Quentin had wristlets and pouches for flying a hawk, but carried no bird. In his smart blue bonnet there was an eagle's feather, and by his side a long hunting-knife in a sheath.

Well, he sailed along, saying, ‘So ho, you fellows!’ — like that, to all the world, and wishing it was breakfast time, when, presently, he came to a river. This was swollen with the floods, and he shouted out to two men on the farther side to know if the ford were passable.

They did not answer; so, taking it for granted, in he went.

But it wasn't, not by chalks. These two were regular old soldiers, and didn't care a lump of mud whether Quentin got drowned or not. However, he managed to scrape through all right. But, naturally, he was as mad as a hatter when he got there, and threatened to crack the crown of the one who went to help him out. What for? For *not* telling him, of course.

He made his hunter's pole twirl like mill-flappers about the man's head, till the elder, an old fellow, very well dressed, who was called Master Pierre, said to himself that if he did not hurry up, the young fellow would ‘beat his Gossip for the only charitable action he had ever seen him do in all his life!’

And he was just in time. For Quentin had begun to call names —

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[‘What were the names?’ said Toady Lion, who wished to enlarge his verbal armoury for future occasions.]

Oh, he just said, ‘Discourteous dog!’ — same as I might call you ‘Mean Little Pig!’ before thumping you (explained Hugh John). It comes just to the same thing.

So Master Pierre said that Quentin was a young ass for quarrelling with a man who was going to help him, and that he did not speak French well enough to make them understand what he wanted, and a lot of grown folks’ taffy like that — of which Quentin believed just as much as he pleased.

But as this Master Pierre was a decent old chap to look at, and his father had taught him to speak respectfully to people older than himself, Quentin answered that he would not have cared a ‘dockan’ leaf about the ducking he had got, only he thought they were cheeking him — or at least that the younger (whom Master Pierre called his ‘Gossip’) was.

Well, the old fellow, who did not look quite so grim as his surly ‘Gossip,’ offered Quentin a good breakfast, to call things square, and you had better believe that Quentin was pretty glad to hear about it. For he was hungry as a hawk, and he knew by the look of Master Pierre that he must be a citizen of the neighbouring town of Tours, and pretty well caulked with coin, too—a money-broker or banker, maybe, like those Medici fellows in Florence. But the ‘Gossip’ had a butcherly, sullen look about him, as if he could not only eat — but would have liked to kill and eat too.

Well, the first old boy went on talking all the time like one o’clock, and Mr. Butcher followed,

saying not a word. Quentin felt sure that they were burgesses of Tours, and suspected that the elder was a bit of a miser. For at that time everybody who was anybody had a badge of gold or silver in his cap, and Master Pierre only wore an image of the Virgin in lead, like what poor pilgrims bring back from Loretto.

['Who was headmaster there then?' Toady Lion called out.

'You dry up, Toad; it wasn't *that* Loretto, and you know it!' said Hugh John, lowering his voice for a second.]

And Master Pierre asked him what he was doing with all that hawking tackle, when no hawking was permitted on a royal chase.

'I was taught that lesson,' said Quentin, 'when a rascal forester of the Duke of Burgundy shot the falcon I had brought with me from Scotland near Peronne.'

'And what did you do?' said the merchant.

'I whacked him — beat him, I mean — as near to death as one Christian may another — without having his blood to answer for!'

'But don't you know,' asked the merchant, 'that if the Duke of Burgundy had caught you, he would have hung you up like a chestnut to a tree?'

'Ay, sir,' he answered; 'I guessed as much, and so I skipped over the frontier pretty quick before I began to laugh!'

'The Duke will miss sorely such a paladin as you are, if the truce breaks with the King of France!' said the elder of the two.

Then, of course, Quentin saw that they were making a fool of him, and he got mad. So would nearly every chap.

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'Now,' he said, 'I have stood a lot because you are older than I, and I can be polite as well as the next fellow. But I've had enough of your sauce, and I am man enough to thrash the pair of you, if you give me any more of it.'

Something like that he said, and Master Pierre seemed nearly to choke with laughter. But the Master Butcher laid his hand on his sword, as if it was no sport to him. He was going to draw it, but just then Quentin, who had a pretty quick eye, dropped the end of his hunting pole across his wrist. This touched him up sharply, so that he could not grasp his sword-hilt.

'Come, no more violence,' said Master Pierre; 'drop it, you Scot, and you, Gossip, take that frown off your face! You have got to cry quits, both of you — the ducking against the rap on the wrist. The game is called all square. And now let's go to breakfast!'

That was the gist of what he said. Oh, yes, and he asked Quentin if he was a born gentleman, and he told him yes — by fifteen descents.

So — when old Pierre heard this, he said that he was 'a proper Scot — plenty of blood, plenty of pride, and a great scarcity of cash! And now for a hunter's mass at Saint Hubert's chapel, and then — breakfast!'

The service was not long — just a hunter's mass, and out again. Master Pierre told Quentin not to stray off the path, because all the ground about the royal chateau was chock full of pitfalls and traps — scythes that came together and snipped off your legs before you could say — well, *pasques-dieu* or *ventre-gris*, or any of the things that used to relieve great folk so much in those times — oh, and

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calthrops that stuck your foot through, and pitfalls that buried you alive, — and any number of things, all to keep you at a good distance from Louis, King of France.

But Quentin said that if *he* were King of France, he would do away with all those wolf-traps, and trust to the valour of Scottish gentlemen. He would call about him all the brave and the wise, and reign so justly that there would be no need for hiding behind ditches and barricades.

Then Master Pierre smiled, but more kindly and tolerantly, as if he liked Quentin — even his cheek in thus giving advice to the King of France. He asked how he would like being a Royal Archer of the Scottish Guard, dressed like a prince, fed high like an abbot, and set close about the King's person in peace and war.

'If I had any such thought,' Quentin said, 'it is off!' Master Pierre was much surprised and asked why.

'Because I am like the Douglas,' he said; 'I like to hear the lark sing better than the mouse squeak. I would not love to be stuck in a swallow's nest, nor kept mewed up in a guard-room. Moreover, I like not a castle of which the gateway oak bears such acorns as you!'

And he pointed at a fair tree from which dangled the dead body of a man in a grey jerkin like his own.

But Master Pierre answered that if he lived to be a loyal subject of his Prince, no perfume would be so sweet to him as the scent of a dead traitor.

Quentin answered boldly that that would be after he lost the sight of his eyes and the scent of his nostrils; and at any rate, if he were King Louis, he

would hang the rascals somewhat farther from his palace.

But Quentin was quite reconciled when at last they reached the little inn where they were to have breakfast ready for them. There was something about Master Pierre which he could not quite understand. The landlord did not chatter, or recommend his dishes to him. He only bowed when Master Pierre asked him if a gentleman had ordered breakfast.

Not only breakfast, but a fire also was waiting. Master Pierre did not eat much himself, but he watched with a kind of pleasure Quentin marching deep into the bowels of a mighty pasty, making little of ragouts, balls of French bread, cups of wine, confections, and lots of other things. It was a noble feed, and after he had got through with it, Quentin thought the countenance of Master Pierre looked far more kindly than before.

Then after Quentin had been drawn out to declare that the Wild Boar of the Ardennes was a captain of pillagers, and the Duke of Gueldres a man who had ill-used his own father, Master Pierre said laughingly that he had better become a captain himself — for where would one find a chieftain wise enough to command him?

Of course Quentin Durward knew that Master Pierre was making fun, but this time he took no offence, and only lamented that Saint Quentin must have forgotten his son, to let him go a day without food and then get a ducking into the bargain.

Just as Master Pierre was taking Quentin to task for blaspheming the saints, and telling him that perhaps the blessed Quentin had done better for

him than he knew, a girl came in. She was pretty, of course, and the name which Master Pierre called her was Jacqueline — no, *not* the usual sort of story-book girl — so there! Oh, no, she went about like a princess — something like the girls in the Latin grammar examples.

['Humph,' said Sir Toady, 'a jolly lot of princesses you have ever seen!']

'You had a heap better —' began Hugh John, but did not pursue his threat. 'That's what Sir Walter says, and you may bet that *he* knew — oh, ton-loads of them!'

'Pshaw,' continued Sir Toady, 'I've seen them come to the Coll. to visit some of our chaps, and they are just like other people, only with less side!'

'Well,' continued Hugh John, doggedly, 'that wasn't the kind of princess Jacqueline was. She was dark and had eyes —'

'I don't like 'em blind myself!' said Sir Toady, with the air of a *blase* connoisseur, 'but fair — and *oop*, with curling ringlets, *be-loo* eyes, and lips like a cherry. *Only I'd rather have the cherry!*'

'Sir Toady,' said I, severely, 'I don't care whether Hugh John thrashes you afterwards or not, but if you interrupt again like that, for no proper cause, you shall not have even a chance for the sovereign — you understand?'

The youth understood. The bats and cuffs of glorious uncivil war he could support with an equal mind, but this was his money *and* his life.]

Master Pierre spoke harshly to the girl, even accusing her of not telling the truth. This made Quentin angry, and he declared that he would throw down his gage to any one who would dare to say

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that such a face could be otherwise than true and pure! Privately Quentin had made up his mind that he would like to see again the girl with the black eyebrows. He ordered a flagon of fine vernot, and, as was then the custom, sent it by the landlord, with the compliments of Quentin Durward of Glen Houlakin, a Scottish cavalier, to the girl and her guardian.

It was a rum thing to do (Hugh John admitted), but they did that sort of thing and thought nothing of it in those days. However, the flask of wine was sent back with a civil message that the ladies could not receive it. They thanked him very much — only, as they were residing there in privacy, they could not receive his visit.

‘All the same,’ thought Quentin, ‘I will see that girl with the dark brows again, whatever it costs.’

Then the landlord showed Quentin up to his chamber. It was in a corner tower, everything nice, and looked to him quite like a little palace. Quentin, you see, had had pretty rough sleeping-quarters for a while, and as for food, as often as not he had to do without any at all — especially since he lost his falcon near Peronne.

Of course he went to the window and looked out as soon as he could. He could see the towers of the royal castle of Plessy, where his uncle Lesly served as one of the guards of the King of France. But instead of looking if he could see him on the walls, do you know what Quentin did?

[Apparently nobody knew — at least all were silent.]

He actually set to watching a window, a lattice window of the inn (tone of contempt), — yes,

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with all that big castle right before his nose, with its defences, and the men of the Royal Guard walking about on top of it, their halberds shining and the plumes on their bonnets waving.

And all because the girl was singing — you know the song, Sis — sing it to us. You said you would when I got to the part.

And from behind, aided by the deeper notes of contralto, Sweetheart piped like a blackbird, while Sir Toady twanged on an imaginary lute and said *tink-a-tank* as often as he dared.

This was the song: —

*'Ah, County Guy, the hour is nigh,  
The sun has left the lea,  
The orange flower perfumes the bower,  
The breeze is on the sea.  
The lark his lay who trilled all day,  
Sits hushed, his partner nigh,  
Breeze, bird, and flower, confess the hour —  
But where is County Guy?'*

*The village maid steals through the shade  
Her shepherd's suit to hear;  
To beauty shy, by lattice high,  
Sings high-born Cavalier.  
The Star of Love, all stars above,  
Now reigns o'er earth and sky;  
And high and low the influence know —  
But where is County Guy?'*

Thank you, Sis (said Hugh John), that's about it, and it would have been all the better without Sir Toadum's confounded *tink-a-tank* — for which, in due season, I shall whale him.

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Well, Quentin leaned out to have a look at the girl — no, not to fling a clothes'-brush, Master Toadums — you are heaping up wrath — just you wait, my son!

But as soon as the singer had twigged him at the window, down went the curtain, and Master Quentin saw no more of the girl he was in such a fret about.

Now (he concluded), that's about all I can tell just at one time. It is ever so nice the way I get it in my head to tell, but when it comes out, and I have to say the words, it sounds just drivelling!

'Surely you don't think *that* a sov's worth?' sneered Sir Toady.

'Oh, no,' cried Hugh John, distressed at the suggestion; 'all that I shall have to tell out of the whole book won't be worth so much!'

'Mine will, though — whole purses full!' said Sir Toady, who saw no good in undervaluing his merchandise beforehand.

'Oh, wait till you try!' said Hugh John. 'It's easier to *think* you can do it than to do it.'

And so the first Red Cap seance of *Quentin Durward* down at the old Feudal Tower was broken up.

### THE SECOND TALE OF QUENTIN DURWARD

#### THE GUARDSMAN OF THE SCOTTISH ARCHERS

You just believe (said Hugh John) that Uncle Lesly looked fine when Quentin went down to see him next morning. They met in the room where he had breakfasted. He was called Le Balafre, or the

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Scarred One, because of a great wound which had but partly healed, going from the brow to the ear, across one side of his face.

But he looked martial, I tell you, and his dress was still finer. On his head was a Scottish bonnet, tufted with feathers, with a Virgin in silver for a brooch. Then came the body armour, all of the finest steel. His shirt of mail glittered like frost-work. Over all he wore a loose surcoat of blue velvet open at the sides, with the cross of Saint Andrew barred across it. He had hose of mail and shoes of steel. A broad dagger was at his side, and in his hand a huge two-handed sword, which the rules of his service forbade him to lay aside.

This Le Balafre had a squire, a valet, a page, and a *coutelier*, or 'Happy Despatcher,' all in his suite, the last for the purpose of finishing the work which his master had begun in case of a battle or skirmish.

Over a tankard of wine the Scarred One asked about his sister and her family. He was surprised, but not very much cast down, by the news that now Glen Houlakin was a wilderness, that his sister was dead and all their kin, that his father, uncle, and most of the clan had been slain in a fight with the Ogilvies of Angus — the whole strath harried by these Ogilvies, and not a reeking hearth nor a standing stone left in Glen Houlakin.

His uncle said that such was the fortune of war, and sent some links of his gold chain to pay for masses for the souls of his dead kindred, and part more to pay for curses on the Ogilvies of Angus-shire 'in the best way that the Church might come at them.'

But he did not seem to think it was

necessary to open his purse to his nephew, which made Quentin think that perhaps, after all, he would have done better to have stayed with the Duke of Burgundy, than have come here to find an uncle so completely wrapped up in himself.

But the Scarred One meant better than he said, and ended by telling his nephew to be at the castle by eight the following morning, to keep the straight path, and to ask the sentinel on duty for Ludovic le Balafre.

But Quentin came near never going to the castle of Plessy at all. That same day he was taking a walk along the riverside when he saw a man being hanged on a tree. There were some talismanic marks on the bark, meant to represent a *fleur-de-lys* — the royal emblem. But, knowing nothing of this, Quentin ran quickly and cut the man down. He was a gipsy, but already too far gone to bring round again. The whole tribe were upon Quentin in an instant. For a while he was in danger of his life, till some French soldiers charged down upon them, and captured Quentin like the rest.

Master Pierre's 'Gossip,' whose wrist he had cracked with his pole, was at the head of them. He would listen to no argument, but ordered him to be strung up along with the others.

And strung up Quentin would certainly have been, but for one of the Scottish Guard, which was at feud with the Provost Marshal and his men.

Cunningham was the man's name who saved him. He drew his long sword, with one touch of his weapon cutting Quentin's bonds and setting him free. Whereupon Quentin wrenched a halberd from the nearest marshal's man, and putting his back to Cunningham's, bade the others come on if they

dared.

Accordingly the third executioner was sent after the Provost Marshal, and the second undertook to keep the two Scots in the place where they were — that is, if they could.

But at the same time as the Provost Marshal came in sight, riding round one side of the hill, half a dozen Scottish archers rode up, with Le Balafre at their head.

And when he saw Quentin and his comrade standing on their defence, he called out, 'Thank you, Cunningham! Gentlemen, comrades, lend me your aid! It is a young Scottish gentleman, my own sister's son — Lindsay — Guthrie — Tyrie — draw and strike in!'

It was touch-and-go for the prettiest fight you ever saw. The Marshal's men were most in number, but the Scottish Archers were the better armed.

Le Balafre and the rest would hear nothing from the Provost Marshal. They would be judged only by the King or their own Captain. They would be hanged by none but Sandie Wilson, the Marshal's man of their own body, who, they said, was as decent a man as ever tied noose upon hemp.

'Our Privileges — our Privileges!' they called out, with force enough to daunt even Tristan l'Hermite, the famous Justicer of the King of France.

'Whatever your privileges may be,' said the Provost Marshal, 'this young man is not of you! He is not an Archer of the Guard Royal.'

'Stand to it yet, countrymen,' whispered Cunningham; 'say he is enrolled with us.' Whereupon Le Balafre swore to it, and parting with the angry Provost Tristan, they went back at once to

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find Lord Crawford, the Captain of the Royal Scottish Guard, an old man, but still stout and strong, though on the borders of eighty.

He had ridden into Orleans with the Maid, Dunois, and De Retz, one on either side. He was one of the last of those noble Scots who had fought for France against England in the great wars of the Independence.

The Captain was first of all for giving them a good scolding for getting him again into trouble with the King. The worst of the lot, he said, were the Scarred One and Archie Cunningham. But since a quarrel there was, he would rather have it with that Provost Marshal than with any one else.

So he got down quickly the roll of the Guard and entered Quentin Durward's name as esquire to his uncle. That was pretty good of him, you see. For of course he had to go at once to the King and get his story told before Tristan got a chance at Louis. With the help of Oliver Dain, the King's barber and confidant, he managed this, which, of course, made Tristan l'Hermite very mad. He even came up to make a kind of apology, no doubt by order of the King, but Quentin's uncle could see that he was just grilling with anger.

'You have made an enemy there,' said the Scarred One to Quentin; 'so, for that matter, have I, and all of us. But we are above his flight, we lads of the Scottish Archers. We do not fear either Master Tristan or his noose!'

They drank in hall that night to the new recruit, and Lord Crawford joined them to take a cup and to tell old tales of Scotland. By this time a uniform of esquire had been got for Quentin, so that he could brave the anger of the Provost Marshal in

open day.

There was news. Lord Crawford said, to cheer them, 'that the old banner of France would be again on the field —'

'With a breeze from Burgundy to fan it!' cried an Archer. And, indeed, war seemed likely. For the Count of Crevecoeur's suite had been seen down below at the Hostelry. The King had declined to receive him at the castle, though he was the ambassador of the Duke of Burgundy. The Count was of hot temper and little likely to stand it.

Besides, they had not only fallen out about the usual frontier rows, but there was a girl in the question. A ward of the Duke of Burgundy had run away to escape being married to one of his Italian favourites, and was now with the King of France. Her name was the Countess of Croye, and she had brought a sort of guardian with her. At any rate, the Duke, who thought himself every bit as good and as powerful as the King of France, was sure to take offence, and there would be war between the Overlord and his great vassal.

This news delighted the Archers greatly, and they hoped for an early chance to go at the Burgundians. At any rate, there was sure to be something worth seeing when Louis XI of France had audience of the Count of Crevecoeur bearing the Duke's message, which they all believed to be a cartel of defiance.

Well, of course, being now the esquire of an acting officer of the Scottish Guard, Quentin had to go to court. He was dressed much like his uncle, but his partisan was of a lighter make and his armour not so heavy or so gorgeous.

First of all, Dunois was there, a fine soldier,

and though he was popular and much liked by everybody, the King was not jealous of him. Indeed, he sometimes called him to his councils. There was also the Cardinal Balue, a bishop who liked to be thought half a soldier and half a courtier, whose shrewd advice the King took when it suited him, though he knew he was not altogether to be trusted.

Then, leaning on the arm of Dunois, there entered the heir to the throne, afterwards Louis XII, carefully guarded and melancholy, who was to be compelled to marry Joan, the youngest daughter of the King, a poor deformed girl. But when the King himself came into the presence-chamber and all bowed before him, Quentin nearly dropped his partisan with astonishment. For the King was no other than Master Pierre, the merchant of Tours to whom he owed his breakfast the day before.

The King came straight up to the place where Quentin was posted, and said: 'So, young man, I am told that you have been brawling on your first arrival in Touraine. But I pardon you, as it was chiefly the fault of a foolish old merchant, who thought that your Caledonian blood needed to be heated in the morning with wine of Beaune. If I can find him, I will make him an example to all those who would debauch my Guards.'

And as a mark of favour he ordered that the day, hour, and minute of Quentin's birth should be written down and given to the King's barber, Oliver Dain. Louis himself meant to search out the young man's horoscope.

It was a good beginning, and Le Balafre bowed to the ground before the King. He was not much of a king to look at. The dress he wore was an old hunting-dress, dark blue, with a rosary of ebony,

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and on his head he wore a hat the band of which carried a full dozen of little saints stamped in lead set all round about.

The King was ready to mount for the chase, when Dunois told him that the Count of Crevecoeur demanded an audience in terms so insolent that had it not been for his character of envoy, he would have made him eat them himself.

At this the King laughed.

'Body of me, Dunois,' he said, 'how is it that you, one of the most impatient fellows alive, shouldst have so little sympathy with the same infirmity in our blunt and fiery cousin, Charles of Burgundy? Why, man, we mind no more his blustering messages than the castle towers up there do the whistling of the northeast wind, which also comes from Flanders.'

'My liege,' said Dunois, 'Crevecoeur has his master's orders that if the audience be not accorded, he is to nail his gauntlet to the palisades of the castle as a token of mortal defiance, cast fealty to the winds, and proclaim instant war.'

'Ay,' said Louis, frowning under his shaggy eyebrows, 'will he so? Nay, then, Dunois, there will be nothing for it but to unfold the Oriflamme and cry *Dennis Montjoye!*'

'Marry and Amen — a happy hour that will be!' said Dunois. And the stir among the guards in the hall at the good tidings was enough to produce a low but distinct sound of clashing arms.

For a moment the King looked, and perhaps felt, like his father — him who had fought the English so long. But the next moment Louis remembered that Edward IV was on the throne of England, a brave and victorious king, whose sister

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was Duchess of Burgundy, and that Cardinal Balue was, as he said, a good conceited animal of a bishop whom Rome had put there to watch him. He would therefore put off fighting as long as he could. The next shuffling of the cards might give him a stronger hand!

Accordingly, with these intentions, he bade them admit the envoy of Burgundy to the presence.

'Blessed are the peacemakers!' said the Cardinal Balue, who was pleased with this decision.

'Yes,' answered the King, 'and your Eminence knows that those who humble themselves shall be exalted.'

The Cardinal said 'Amen' to this. But every one else was ashamed for Louis's giving way, for so it seemed to all present. Poor Louis of Orleans blushed, and the Scarred One let the butt of his partisan fall heavily on the floor. He was reprovved for this by the Cardinal, who gave him a rousing lecture on the method of handling his arms in the presence of his sovereign.

To this, of course, Le Balafre answered nothing, but Dunois at once said that he had a boon to ask of his Majesty.

'You do not often ask, Dunois, and that should be in your favour!' said the King.

'I wish, then,' said Dunois, 'that your Majesty would send me to Evreux to regulate the clergy.'

'That were indeed beyond your sphere!' said Louis, smiling.

'I might order priests as well,' replied the Count, 'as my Lord Bishop of Evreux (or my Lord Cardinal, if he likes the title better) can exercise the soldiers of your Majesty's guard.'

Louis soothed the angers of Dunois by

bidding him be patient. All would yet come right. He would put both Rome and Burgundy under his foot.

Then the Count of Crevecoeur came in, all clad in steel embossed with gold, leaving only his head bare. He wore the cordon of the Golden Fleece, his master's order. A page carried his helmet behind him, and a herald went before, bending on one knee to present his master's letters of credence to the King of France.

The Burgundian was as insolent as he could be. He dared the King to his face, accused him of having been seen in the unworthy disguise of a merchant of Tours talking to the runaway Countess of Croye at the little inn where Quentin had had breakfast.

In fact, he charged the King with the exact, identical thing he had done. But Louis was far too cunning for the brave rough Flemish Count.

'Bring forward your witness,' said the King; 'place the man before my face who dared maintain these palpable falsehoods.'

'You may well speak in triumph, my lord,' said the Count; 'for you are well aware that he was a certain Bohemian, Zamet Magraubin by name, whom you had hung by your Majesty's Provost Marshal to prevent him standing here to witness to the truth of what I say.'

It was the man whom Quentin had cut down when he so nearly got his own neck stretched for doing it by Tristan l'Hermite.

The King told the envoy that it was quite evident he had come there simply for purposes of insult, that he had better say what he had to say and be done with it. Thereafter the master who had sent him should answer for it.

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The Count of Crevecoeur threw his gauntlet on the floor and challenged King Louis in the name of his master, the Duke of Burgundy, pronouncing him false and faithless, and defying him as a prince and as a man.

Then Dunois, Orleans, Lord Crawford, and others strove which should lift the gauntlet of defiance, while the hall rang with cries of 'Strike him down! Cut him to pieces! He comes here to insult our King in his own palace!'

But Louis cried out above them all in a voice like thunder which overawed every other sound: 'Silence, my lieges! Lay not a hand on the man, nor a finger on the gage! And you, Count, is your duke made of different metal from other princes that he asserts his quarrel in so rude a manner?'

'He is, indeed, framed of nobler metal,' said the Count, quite undaunted; 'for when not one of the princes of Europe dared to give shelter to you, — King Louis, — when you were an exile and pursued by your own father, you were received and protected like a brother by my noble master, whose generosity you have so grossly misused. Farewell, sire, my mission is discharged!'

And the Count left the room abruptly and without leave-taking.

Then the King would not allow any of his soldiers to lift the gage, except the Cardinal Balue, who, he said, 'might use his sacred office to make peace among princes.'

So the Cardinal hurried away to try the force of his persuasion on the stiff-necked envoy of Burgundy, while Dunois and the French nobles raged behind, that they were not permitted to take up the gage of battle in their King's name.

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But the King would not give way. Every hour of peace was precious. They knew it, he said. The country had had enough of war. It had need of repose, even for a little while. And so he tided over their anger, till Balue returned with the news that the Count of Crevecoeur had consented to remain twenty-four hours more at the Hostelry of the Fleur-de-Lys, and till that time to take back his gauntlet.

'Twenty-four hours — that is no long time,' said the King, 'but yet it may be worth a year. At any rate, it need not interfere with our hunting. To the forest, my gallant lords! Here, Dunois, lend me your boar-spear. Take mine. It is too heavy for me. But when did you complain of such a fault in your lance? To horse, gentlemen — to horse!'

The boar hunt in the forest was not long in coming to an end. The Cardinal Balue was run away with by his horse amid the laughter of the hunters, in which for once the King joined heartily. But after his fall, the Cardinal was not long in being joined by the envoy of Burgundy, who courteously offered a staid, quiet pony for the Cardinal's use, and marvelled at the customs of the French court which thus permitted them to go off and leave on the ground their wisest statesman at the mercy of the chase.

Louis was a good huntsman, and rode straight at the great boar. But as the horse shied from the charge, the spear was not heavy enough to kill. So Louis, dismounting, advanced against the beast alone, holding in his hand one of these short, sharp-pointed swords that are good against boar at close quarters. The boar left the dogs to charge him, and Louis held his sword firm. But at the moment, owing to the wetness of the ground, his foot slipped,

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the sword went along the beast's side, and Louis fell flat on the ground. The boar rent his hunting-cloak and passed over him. He turned, however, to charge again, and Louis might have been slain, had it not been for Quentin, who had followed the blasts of the King's horn when the chase was thrown out. He came up, however, just right, and transfixed the boar with his spear.

The King measured the animal, said a prayer to the little leaden images in his cap, and then, looking at Quentin, said: 'So it is you, my young Scot. You have done well. This pays for the breakfast over yonder. But say nothing about having helped a king at a pinch. Build on no man's favour but mine — not on your uncle's — not on Crawford's. Silence does it — silence and good service!'

It was something like that he spoke, and Master Pierre made good his words. For soon after Quentin was called by the King for special military duty. The Scarred One could not believe his ears when Barber Oliver brought the news to send along his kinsman.

'It must mean me! My nephew is but an esquire serving under my banner, not one of the Archer Guard.'

'No,' said Oliver Dain, 'his Majesty sent for the register half an hour ago and enrolled Quentin Durward among the full members of the Royal Guard!'

WHAT THEY THOUGHT OF MASTER QUENTIN  
DURWARD AS IT WAS RELATED BY HUGH JOHN

'I think it is splendid,' said Sweetheart, who with

two sovereigns in her pocket, and three to her current account, could afford to be generous.

'*And me!*' said Maid Margaret, who, however, wondered why people should take such trouble fighting and hunting pigs with spears, when they could be rolling over and over on the grass and making daisy chains.

'Umm—' said Sir Toady Lion, 'there's less girl in this, anyway. That's one comfort.'

The criticism of the three grown-up hearers was reserved till the juniors had dispersed. Nevertheless, I heard it. Indeed, I made a point of doing so.

'That boy will deserve his severing,' said Butcher Donnan, 'even though he does tell it like boys jawing together after a football match, and not like as a tale out of a book to be told — with long words and beautiful sentiments! That is, to my mind.'

I answered that I had every intention of bestowing the effigy of Edward VII done in the heavier of the precious metals upon the sagaman, but added that it was best to read the book itself for the sentiments and reflections.

'Oh,' said silent Chesnay, the gamekeeper, 'I have lots of time to make suchlike for myself. Anyway, that there King of France was a hot 'un, so far as I can see — that is, if young Master Hugh John has got his facts to rights.'

These were, I thought, fairly correct. But the real stiff stuff was yet to come. I knew that Hugh John had been spelling out Michelet and Lavissee — two histories of France with which my library was furnished.

'No,' said Elphie, the narrow-eyed, many-

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wrinkled man-of-the-woods, 'I know that other young master best — him that is always botherin' about eggs and the habits of birds — he's a —!'

But here he halted, out of consideration, I fear, for the feelings of a close relative of the aforesaid young master.

'Speak it out,' said I; 'Chesnay there knows that he trespasses, and will not take advantage of information got on neutral ground. And as for me, I think I know the worst of this young man!'

Now certainly I did not mean to propose Sir Toady for the good-conduct prize in an infant school. But beyond cheek, cool and calculating, a roving propensity which refused respect to the game laws of his native country, and a perfect irresponsibility as to the 'trespassing-in-pursuit' of wild birds' eggs, there was nothing against the young man. He could be trusted to speak the truth, and he had been carefully and even austere educated in obedience by his elder brother.

'I know that other,' said Elphie, 'him they call Sir Toady among themselves, and it's my opinion he'll be up to some trick when his turn comes. I asked him if he was reading his book. And he said to me, says he, 'I've enough swotting to do at our old Coll. without that. Let's go and look up that nest of young jays in the Low Bridge Croft. I want them as soon as they are fledged.' That's what he says, says he.

"And what in the world do you want jays for?" says I to him.

"To put under my big sister's window in the mornings," says he, 'so that their singing will cheer her when she wakes! She will hear them jays even in her dreams of me — yes, I bet she will! And say,

'Good, kind brother,' she will.'

'Oh, he is a card — that boy — no end.

'So I says to the young gentleman (what he knows already) that jays did not sing at all — only yell. But he answers, that was all *I* knew. Really, when put under the window of any one that you wanted to wake up as mad as a hatter, they sung a beautiful song. He had tried it on the mathematical master, he said, at his school. And it acted just beautiful. Only the birds died — the result of a fall, cage and all. It appeared that the string broke. He is going to use wire the next time. Oh, as sweet and thoughtful a young gentleman as ever lived!'

'Humph!' said Chesnay, 'he can take all the jays he likes for me, so long as you and he let my pheasants' eggs alone.'

There came a glint in the old poacher's wary eye, answering one in Butcher Donnan's, who had just got his game license renewed after a warning. This meant that it was not the eggs that interested them.

'I never saw such a man for duty as you,' said Butcher Donnan to the gamekeeper; 'early and late it's stuffing them pheasants. You get all the work and none of the thanks. And then, when at last you have got them as tame as poultry, there's the pleasure of havin' people you never saw before come out of town for a day and blow their blessed heads off — 'Tommy-wi'-the-Long-Tail,' and 'Hirpling Dick,' and 'One-Eyed-Poll,' all them birds you've given names to and that you know near as well as your own kids!'

The gamekeeper moved uneasily, but said nothing.

There was too much truth in Butcher

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Donnan's sketch. His finger was on a sore spot.

Now John Chesney's master, Colonel Davenant Carter, had been a fine sportsman in his day, and even now preserved strictly. But he had killed tiger in the Mysore jungles with Canaree trackers scattering every way to let him have a fair chance to stop the charge of angry 'Stripes.' He had been in the elephant keddahs with Sanderson, and killed snow leopard with Younghusband. He had even trailed the white tiger among the Amour mountains before the war.

So he counted little, as far as his own idea of sport was concerned, upon the pheasants which Chesnay reared with such care. He paid his obligations with them, however, and it was counted by many that a day in the Colonel's preserves was no mean privilege.

The Colonel was a personal friend of Sir Toady Lion's, and to him that youth recounted his iniquities on the express condition that, speaking as from one gentleman to another, he should on no account tell either John Chesnay or even old Keeper Dixon — now retired, but still a friend of the game.

'It's not those gentlemen who come from the city that do the most harm among my pheasants,' said Chesnay, slowly; 'they don't know enough. They only fire at what we put for them. Them what know enough to nab the pheasant harmful, live nearer home!'

There was a silence after this somewhat pointed remark, and I hastened to ask the company over a cigar apiece, offered as a pipe of peace, what they thought of Quentin Durward.

'A good lad,' decided the Butcher, arbiter of taste, 'oh, a good lad — must have been well taught

by his father. Smart, too, except in not seeing at once who that there burgess was — sort o' town-councillor he looked. Course outside of a *novelle*' (Butcher Donnan pronounced the word French fashion) 'a boy as smart as Quentin would have spotted at once that it was the King. But what I object to is, making them say all through that that hangman brute was like a butcher! Now do *I* look like a hangman?'

And Mr. Donnan turned a sturdy, round, apple-cheeked countenance upon us, with only a little narrowing about the eyes, and two deep lines, one at each side of the mouth, to warn the onlooker that he had before him an ex-middle-weight champion, and not mine host of the Fleur-de-Lys serving out drinks on a feast day to the Archers of the Guard.

It was the unanimous opinion of all present that Butcher Donnan did not look like a hangman. Poacher Elphie was particularly strong on this point.

"A butcherly fellow!" quoted Mr. Donnan; 'how often I have heard those words in books and stories! I wish I could get at the man that said them first, or even at one of the follow-my-leaders — I would learn them!'

'This Quentin had great luck,' said Elphie, critically, to change the subject. 'Either he came up just at the nick of time, and saved the King, or else somebody came up and saved him, with the rope already round his neck and old Tristan saying, 'Heave ho, boys — up she goes!''

'That,' said I, feeling myself an expert at the business, 'is the way with all real heroes. Many have tried to alter it, but nobody will read their books! So they have just to change back again to the old style

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of hero. You don't know many of them in actual life, but I knew one!

Here all gazed at me, obviously in search of information.

'And who might he be?' said Butcher Donnan, who had the greatest liberty of speech.

'Why, myself!' I said firmly.

'Oh!' said Butcher Donnan.

'Ah!' said Elphie, the Poacher.

As for Gamekeeper John Chesnay, he said nothing. But he looked at me from head to foot and shaped his mouth as if to whistle.

I nodded firmly, sure of my quality.

'You see it is this way,' I said: 'all authors have just one hero, that is the Self they would have liked to be, the gallant boy they were not, the fellow who defied the master when they whimpered to be let off, who fought the wounded tiger when they would have gladly shinned up a tree, who cleft a way through the hostile ranks when they would have followed Boer tactics and got behind the nearest rock. That's your 'hero' — just the author if he had shoes of swiftness, helmet of invisibility, and a shirt of mail that would defy all the *Dreadnought's* twelve-inchers firing into him at once.'

They thanked me for the information, but evidently preferred to accept their heroes at face value, without inquiring whence they came.

'But was there *never* such a man as Quentin?' demanded Donnan, who still kept the severe gravity of his face, frowning as over a problem; 'coz if there weren't, I, for one, am not coming back to listen to lies!'

I hastened to reassure these anxious inquirers.

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'Certainly,' I said; 'not only one, but many of them. Not only Glen Houlakin, but every glen in Scotland sent out its own Quentin to fight 'for his ain hand' — either to finish up under sod in the common trench of some battle-field, swing on a foreign gallows-tree, or become a gallant archer in some King's Guard.'

'Thankee,' said Butcher Donnan; 'it's a real comfort to hear that the laddie's tale is true. I suppose you would not let us club together, and put a bit to the sov you are going to give him.'

I thought not. The precedent was bad, though I appreciated the kind thought.

'Well,' said Butcher Donnan, 'there's no harm in sending him down a good bone for the dog — now, is there?'

'And if I should see him in my woods —' began Keeper Chesnay. He meant there would be nothing said. I asked him if he could not extend that courtesy to a certain younger brother.

But the grim man of leggings shook his head, and answered dubiously: 'That's as may be. At any rate, tell him to keep away from the pheasant hutches!'

This came perilously near to slander, but it was of the sort to which, as a father, I was well accustomed, and, as a man, I could support with equanimity. So I nodded to the Keeper, as he put my Havana cigar away in his pouch, because (as he said) 'she smokes better chopped up with some real tobacco!'

I was left alone with Elphie, who grinned at the keeper's back. 'Master Toady,' he said, in a low voice, 'is a better judge than to meddle with his hutch-hatched eggs. Why for should he? Does not

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John Chesnay and his master kindly feed up the Poultry-with-the-Long-Tails — yes, better than fighting-cocks. They buys good hen eggs from all the farms. Why, I sell them six dozen at a time myself, and all for what? — to chop up and feed to them blessed birds! Lift their eggs? No — not by a great deal. We know better. Most kind it is of John Chesnay, and of the Colonel! And it would not be me — nor yet, begging your pardon, the young gentleman aforesaid — that would meddle with them nice clutches of eggs down yonder — not till there's something that a man can eat with a knife and fork, and not just with a teaspoon and a little salt!

Elphie looked about him with a vaguely wistful expression.

'It's a pity,' he said, 'that such talents as that young gent has should be wasted on a sailor. At sea, now, he won't have no scope to make his name. It's in the woods!'

'Yes, I know,' I remarked, cutting him short, '*on a shiny night — in the season of the year.*' But after all, he will be better on the high seas keeping his King's laws than breaking them on shore.'

'I hope,' said Elphie, shrewdly, 'that your Honour does not 'emply' that remark to a little friendly visiting of plantations — *looking for moths.* Very fond o' moths is our young gentleman — *and I helps him!*'

This was well and very well for the House of the Conscript Fathers, the Red Cap Senate, as it were.

*'But by the yellow Tiber,  
Was terror and affright'*

Quentin and Le Balafre (which is to say, Hugh

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John and Nipper Donnan) had captured King Louis (Maid Margaret) and a very angry and revengeful Tristan l'Hermite in the person of her younger brother. They were endeavouring to hang them with their own cord — the Maid's skipping-rope — to the branches of a neighbouring noble elm.

Maid Margaret was almost ready to cry with rage, and Sir Toady was kicking his loyal best, when Sweetheart arrived on the scene armed with the largest garden squirt, and at once changed the aspect of affairs. Nipper received the first discharge full in the neck, and, turning to view his new assailant, was adroitly pushed by Sir Toady into the 'yellow Tiber,' from which, along with his pockets full of water, he was presently rescued, an angry boy, indeed — as eager to break the heads of all his assailants (except Sweetheart) as was ever Quentin rising dripping from the unnamed tributary of the Cher.

This put a stop to the irregular and incorrect representation of 'Quentin' upon the stage of the water-side meadow. Nipper Donnan's ardour became suddenly so moderated that he made haste to 'hook it'—in order, as he confessed, to reach home before the 'Dad.' Thus he would get a chance to change his wet clothes. For Butcher Donnan, having to pay for the family clothes, did not believe in renewing them oftener than the strictest necessity required. He was, indeed, accustomed to take the amount out of the 'hide' of the clothes-destroyer, on the principle that the hide aforesaid would mend for itself, but the damaged clothes would not.

Nipper felt that there was a flaw in this reasoning, though he was not able to say just where.

When he was gone, the House of Commons

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sat upon the case of Master Quentin Durward. Hugh John was Speaker on this occasion. That is to say, he was the only one who did not speak.

'I don't call Louis XI a proper king at all,' said Sweetheart. 'Why should he not have had tournaments, and courts of love, and splintering lances, and Queens of Beauty, like the rest?'

'I suppose you would have put up for that last!' suggested Sir Toady Lion, sneeringly.

The Speaker said nothing, but bent upon the honourable member a look which said as plain as print, 'I'll lick you, Toadums, as soon as this honourable sitting is over.'

The young man was undaunted — that as a matter of course. Lickings, taken or given, arrived too much in the ordinary course of nature to be matter of remark.

'Oh, *of course*,' he went on — 'how like a girl! Sis thinks that nobody can be a king who does not prance about in his crown all day long! It would be like going into a wood to — observe the habits of birds — with three drums and the town band. Look at our King. I suppose none of you dare say that there is any better king going, or one-half so good. But does he take his whole navy around and a thousand men of his guard? Does he say, 'Now, all you little people, come out and see how grand I am!'

'You better believe not. He nips about in his yacht, here today and gone tomorrow. And he says, 'Won't you come aboard and see the fittings? Got some nice things to show you — and we can have a talk and a smoke, feet on the chimneypiece, something iced at your elbow, and everybody as thick as thieves!''

'Oh,' said Sweetheart, 'I know, but that is

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nowadays. There were not any steam yachts then, and if there had been, Louis would have stopped in his old castle just the same!

'Rubbish!' said Sir Toady; 'don't tell me! He would have done like the others. Everybody who has a yacht will go in her — costs a jolly lot of money, though!'

'I know somebody who wouldn't go in a yacht — not if he had whole navies of them!' said Sweetheart, triumphantly.

This singular personage was also well known to Sir Toady, and the discussion was felt to be closed on this head.

'And what about the King?' asked Sweetheart of Hugh John, who had acquired a considerable fund of information outside of the tale he was telling. 'Was he really as bad as he is made out?'

'Worse, if anything, I think! Oh, loads worse!' said Hugh John; 'he was pretty bad to his father, worse to his children, and worst of all to any one who offended him, or came in the way of what he wanted to do. Only he wasn't such a bad king for the people or for France. He kept out of war when he could, cheating people instead, and ended by making France a proper kingdom. But of course Quentin, being the hero, naturally had to see the best of him, especially at first.'

'Well,' said Sweetheart, 'after all, *I* like Charles the Bold better — the Duke of Burgundy, I mean!'

Hugh John sighed, for in his secret heart so did he. But he had identified himself with Royal Archer Quentin Durward, and as such he was bound to support the Auld Alliance, even when represented by the Eleventh Louis.

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So he only said, 'Charles the Bold should be really named 'Charles the Rash.' He was what King James VI in Nigel called Francis I — 'A fechtin' fool!'

'Well,' said Sweetheart, who, since she has been at school, is sometimes inclined to let her tongue run away with her, 'if you two enter the army or the navy —'

But she stopped in time, and applied herself to her needlework, while Hugh John began to read up for his next attempt, and Sir Toady and Maid Margaret had their usual friendly tussle with the dogs on the green.

WHICH IS THE END OF HUGH JOHN'S SECOND  
TALE FROM 'QUENTIN DURWARD'

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### HUGH JOHN'S THIRD TALE FROM 'QUENTIN DURWARD'

#### ON THE KING'S BUSINESS

Adventures came to Quentin (said Hugh John, when all were again gathered at the Feudal Tower) as they should to a proper hero.

The King sent for him to place him on duty, first in a lonely hall, and afterwards in the banqueting chamber, where he was entertaining the Cardinal Balue and the envoy of Burgundy.

Louis did nothing openly that he could do secretly, so he placed Quentin right behind the buffet, with his long-barrelled gun charged and his slow-match burning. The King feared treachery. Indeed, he spent his life that way. He knew that Crevecoeur and Cardinal Balue had met on the day of the boar hunt, and he was doubtful of Balue being true to him.

Anyway, he was not going to run the risk. He ordered Quentin to listen to all that passed, and if he should hear the King call out, '*Ecosse, en avant!*' he was instantly to throw down the buffet and fire upon Crevecoeur.

'As for the Cardinal,' the King added, 'Oliver and I can manage him. But if your piece fail, close with Crevecoeur and use the knife.'

The banquet was splendid and complete, as Quentin afterwards tested. He had gone without dinner that night in the hurry of making ready to obey the summons of the King. Louis talked of old days in Burgundy, of nobles and ladies whom he had known during his exile there. Nothing seemed farther from his mind than any treachery. Yet he

sometimes gave a look full of meaning in the direction of the buffet, behind which Quentin stood, ready, if called upon, to step forward and slay his principal guest. Nothing, however, happened. Whatever secret there was between the Cardinal and the Count had to be kept till another time.

But Quentin's night of adventure was not yet finished. He was recalled by the King to the same Hall of Roland where he had been placed on duty at first.

'Take notice,' said Louis, 'that you have never left this post. Not a word to your uncle or to your comrades. Put this chain of gold about your neck to buckle the fact on your memory. Now, you are to watch here in this hall. You are to listen and you are to repeat to me what you hear. No man, save Oliver Dain or I, must enter here this night, but there will be ladies. If spoken to, let your answers be brief and soldierly. Remember, I have bought you, body and soul!'

In his heart Quentin thought that there might be two words about that, but he only betook him to his duty. First there entered the King's daughter, Joan, then the two escaped ladies, the Countess Hameline and the Countess of Croye. These three began to talk without knowing the Princess for the King's daughter. She had doubtless been sent on ahead to try them, with Quentin as a check upon them all. Quentin came very near losing the King's favour by letting in the Duke of Orleans. Quentin admitted him only on condition that he should bear him witness with the King that he had done the duty of his post, so far as the will of the first prince of the blood permitted.

'Do your duty,' said the Prince, 'but not

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against Louis of Orleans!

The Duke openly neglected the pale Joan, to whom he was promised in marriage, and paid what court he could to the beautiful Countess of Croye till Joan grew almost ill. Indeed, at last she fainted altogether, and had only come to herself in the Duke's arms when the King entered the Gallery.

First of all, he said angrily to Orleans, 'You here, fair cousin?' And then, turning to Quentin, he demanded sternly, 'Had you not charge?'

'Forgive this young man, sire,' said the Duke; 'he did not neglect his duty, but I was informed that the Princess was in the Gallery!'

But after they were gone and the King and he were left alone, Louis gave the young guardsman a severe lesson.

'Thou hast done foul wrong, and deserve to die!' said the King. 'What hadst thou to do with dukes or princesses? What with anything but my order?'

'But please, your Majesty,' said Quentin, 'what could I do?'

'Do?' cried the King, scornfully; 'what could you do when your post was forcibly passed? Why, put your piece to your shoulder, and if the presumptuous rebel did not retire on the instant, he should have died within this very hall.'

Quentin was pretty glad to get off so nicely, as you may think. Things might easily have gone much worse with him, but he was only packed off to his quarters with the message that on the way he was to send Oliver Dain to the King.

Oliver Dain, the King's barber, was his closest adviser. He was called Oliver the Bad, or sometimes Oliver the Devil.

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['Six cuts in the gym for swearing!' said Sir Toady; 'three howls, and not a stain upon your character afterwards. It was all owing to that bad, bold book *Quentin Durward!* I know!']

Sometimes called Oliver the Devil (Hugh John went on, in a level voice, without paying the least attention), and he and the King held a council. They made up their mind that the best thing to do would be to send Isabelle of Croye to the care of the Bishop of Liege, who was a prince as well, and an elector of the Empire all in one.

Louis decided to send them under the escort of Quentin Durward, in whom he had great faith, because (as he said) he had been sent to him directly from the saints.

Secretly, however, Louis meant to deliver up Isabelle of Croye to a kind of noble bandit, William de la Marck, called the Wild Boar of the Ardennes. He was of good birth, but prided himself on doing all sorts of abominable things. For this he was generally barred by all decent people, had been excommunicated by the Pope, and put under the ban of the Empire — none of which, however, troubled him very much. He had about him lots of bad, bold soldiers, pretty much like bandits and assassins, but because of that he could carry on war against any one except the two great powers of France and Burgundy.

Now you see this King of France couldn't do a straight thing if he tried—and he didn't even try. He wanted to make William de la Marck marry the Countess of Croye. So he arranged to have a message sent by a Bohemian (or gipsy) to the Wild Boar of the Ardennes, that he could catch a rich and beautiful bride by keeping watch on the right hand

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of the Maes near Liege, where they were to pass.

He did not bother at all about Quentin, who, of course, would fight to the death. If he lost one faithful servant, he said, Saint Julian would find him another. To annoy Burgundy and its duke was the principal thing at present. For this he would deliver Isabelle of Croye to a kind of ogre, and allow his good servant Quentin to be done to death.

But during the journey, of course, Quentin had fallen in love with the young Countess. To start with, he had fought against two knights who came out to take her out of his hands. One of these, whom he unhorsed, was no other than the Duke of Orleans, first prince of the blood, and the other Dunois, the best knight in Europe. He held his own (at least) against Dunois, in spite of having his helmet cleft at the first blow. But Lord Crawford, at the head of a body of archers, put an end to the fight, and left Quentin at liberty to go his way, while he carried off Dunois and Orleans to the Dungeons of Loches, the strongest and most terrible castle in France, a perfect rabbit warren of underground dungeons.

As Quentin went on his journey, he kept good watch. But at the same time he talked as much as he could with the two ladies of Croye — with the younger when he could, and with the elder when he had to.

His guide was a brother of the Bohemian whom on his first day in Touraine Quentin had cut down. He was none the better of that, having treachery in his blood. Indeed, the only good things about him were the capital horse which he rode and a certain liking for Quentin — whom, however, he meant to betray just the same!

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One night on their journey, Quentin, suspecting evil, watched the gipsy steal cautiously away, after getting himself turned out of the monastery where they were lodging. He traversed a meadow till he came to a stream about which grew many little clumps of willow and alder. Then the gipsy stood still and blew some low notes on his horn.

'I will stalk him,' said Quentin to himself, 'as if he were a Glen-Isla deer. Why should *I* fear vagabond gipsies? I have crossed swords with Dunois, the best knight in France. By Saint Andrew, they will find me both stout and wary!'

So he stepped down into the channel of the stream and ascended it noiselessly (which is a good way to get to any bird's nest, Master Toady, if you don't know already, the sound of the water dulling the footsteps).

Then he came to an ancient weeping willow, and catching by a branch, lifted himself into the branches, where he was perfectly concealed.

But the man whom his guide was talking with was one of his own tribe. They talked gipsy talk, and Quentin could not understand a word, though by the guide rubbing himself with his hand here and there, and jumping about, he made out that he was making merry at the beating he had got when turned out of the monastery.

But it was not long before a tall, stout, soldierly man joined them, evidently a German mercenary in the pay of William de la Marck. With him the two gipsies discussed the ambush at the Cross of the Three Kings — on the way to Liege, where the ladies were to be taken.

But the guide made the soldier of the Wild

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Boar swear that he would save the life of Quentin, to whom he had taken a liking. The Ardennes man swore he would, by the Three Kings of Cologne, turning his face to the east to do it.

But whether he meant to keep it is quite another matter. At any rate, for his own sake as well as that of his ladies, Quentin did not give him a chance either to break or keep. He changed his route from the right bank of the river to the left, and arrived safely at Liege, where he delivered his charges safely to the good Prince Bishop.

The Bishop was a fast ally of Burgundy, and not only gained in safety from this, but in authority, also. For it was known that whoever harmed the Prince Bishop had to do with Charles of Burgundy. Only the people of Liege had waxed rich and were inclined to kick, as it says in the Bible. Wealth had made wit to waver, and so they were to pay for this, not once, but twice.

Willy-nilly, the Liege people would have it that Quentin was an envoy of the King of France. They wanted a chance to rebel and hoped for the support of Louis. They pointed in proof of this to the Saint Andrew's cross and *fleur-de-lys* in his bonnet.

'Surely he is of the Guard of King Louis!' said one of the city syndics, by name Pavillon, and when Quentin owned it, saying, 'Well, and what then?' Pavillon turned about to the crowd, crying out: 'He has confessed it! Long live the Scottish Guard! Long live Louis, the guardian of the liberties of Liege!'

Finally he managed to escape by means of one of the syndics, and reach the Schonwaldt, or Bishop's Palace, where his ladies were staying under the care of the Bishop's sister, the Abbess of a severe order, who gave Quentin little chance to talk

with them.

The only pretty silly thing that Quentin did was to take a love-letter written by the silly old Countess Hameline for one which Isabelle of Croye did not write! Hameline was a regular old fool, though, the book says, nice enough to look at for her age.

However, Quentin went on dreaming that the young Countess was in love with him, and he would have been quite mad enough to tell her of it — that is, if he had had the chance.

Luckily for him, on the fourth night he got something else to think about. He was awakened by a terrible noise in the city. The gipsy spy came into his room and told him that the people of Liege were up, that the bandit William de le Marck was assaulting the city, and that now was the time to secure a bride and earldom.

Of course Quentin thought at once of the love-letter and of Isabelle of Croye. He heard in the streets the shouts of, 'Liege! Liege! Sanglier! Sanglier!' These were answered from within the Schonwaldt by weaker ones of 'Our Lady for the Prince Bishop,' — weaker because the men inside were fewer, and the words more difficult to shout out loud.

['Yes, of course,' interrupted Sir Toady, eager for a modern instance; 'it is easy enough to call out 'Torwood! Torwood!' 'Galloway! Galloway!' or even 'Mean Pig! Mean Pig!' if you are far enough off, but ever so much harder to keep on shouting, 'God bless the Tweedbridge Presbyterian Kirk, its minister, office-bearers, and choir!' Of course they could not keep on shouting *that!*

'Shut up, Toad,' said Hugh John, severely; 'it

is serious, this time!' Also, to steady the young man still further, I put my hand on the pocket where I carry my purse. So, for the time being, the fountain of folly was dried up.]

Yes, the Wild Boar of the Ardennes was assaulting the castle. But the Bohemian had one Marthon, a girl of his tribe, with the ladies, and she thought, or pretended to think, that it was the Lady Hameline whom Quentin was in love with.

[That's the worst of being in love,' muttered Sir Toady, philosophically, to himself; 'a fellow is always making mistakes about which one it is.']

Well, in the midst of all this turmoil, the Bohemian and Quentin got away from the castle with the two ladies, both well wrapped up in long veils. Of course Quentin thought that the one hanging on his arm was the young Countess. But it wasn't — not by miles. It was old Hameline, and the other was Marthon, the gipsy.

You be sure that Quentin let go in the crack of a whip, and took the road back to the castle to look after the genuine article. It was his duty, of course.

[So he wasn't a fool, as Toady says he was. Toady ought to know about fools. But he does not even know how big a one he is himself — always to keep croaking away like a polly in a cage, when a fellow is doing his best to tell a story.

A severe look on his brother's face as he delivered this reproof, and a hand still laid significantly on a certain right-hand trousers pocket, between them caused Sir Toady to defer his reply to a more convenient season.]

Quentin found that to get back into the castle was a good deal more difficult than it had

been to get out. First of all, he was compelled to swim the moat, getting out of the way of the drowning wretches who had been thrown into it from above. Then a *lanzknecht*, or free-lance, stood ready to strike him down when he came to the little postern. But Quentin took the masterful air of one of the victors — in which his cap of the Archers of the French Guard helped him. For, you see, the Wild Boar of Ardennes and the Liege people had made it known that they had among them an envoy of the French King.

‘To the Western Tower, if you want to be rich!’ he cried; ‘the Priest’s treasure is in the Western Tower!’

Before reaching the turret where the ladies had been confined, Quentin had to drag several dead men out of his way. One of these, however, objected that he was not dead, and offered to help Quentin if he would raise him to his feet. He was more in danger, so he said, of being smothered like a pig in his own armour.

Quentin saw that this man might possibly help, so, seating him on a stone, he found that he was no other than the Syndic Pavillon — unwounded, but much out of breath.

‘Sit down and get your breath back again,’ said Quentin; ‘I will be with you instantly.’

‘What, my lively young archer!’ said Syndic Pavillon; ‘I have found a friend in this fearful night, and I am not going to quit him. Go where you will — I follow, and if I can manage to get some tight lads of the guild together, then I may be able to help you in my turn.’

In his heart Quentin cursed the obstruction of having the fat Syndic to lead about like a bear,

but there was no help for it. He searched the first two rooms of the suite, finding only rifled trunks, with here and there a dead man. At last he came upon a secret door, and, bursting it open, found the Countess of Croye — Isabelle herself. He pressed her to his bosom, entreating her to cheer up and help him by doing her part. For, you see, they would have to step lively, if she was going to be saved.

She asked Quentin not to abandon her, and of course he said he never would. More than that, he meant it.

‘A love affair,’ said a rough, broken voice behind them. ‘I see — I see — I am as sorry for you, I declare, as if you had been my own daughter Trudchen!’

‘But you must have more pity on us — you must help protect us, Mynheer Pavillon,’ said Quentin, turning sharply upon him. ‘This young lady was put under my care by the King of France, and if she comes to any harm, your city will lose the favour of Louis.’

Pavillon said that the thing would be difficult, but he would do his best. He halooed lustily from the window for all the men of the ‘curriers’ guild, and so got together two or three of his own followers! Others followed, till he had quite a respectable gathering.

Above, the bell was tolling for a military council, and Peterkin, the Syndic's lieutenant, told his master that the gates were up and guarded. There was some noise that the ladies of Croye had escaped, which had angered De la Marck very much.

However, it was resolved that Isabelle should for the time being become Trudchen, the Syndic's daughter.

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And, wrapped in a long Flemish veil, there seemed some chance that one might pass for the other.

As they approached the great hall, the shouts, yells, and brutal laughter that came from it made Isabelle of Croye shrink instinctively close to Quentin.

She had, she whispered, a favour to ask of him. He said that it was granted before it was asked.

'It is that you will plunge a dagger into my heart,' she said, 'rather than let me fall into the hands of these monsters!'

Quentin did not answer, but only pressed her hand. Thus leaning on her young protector, the Countess entered the dreadful hall. The men of the Wild Boar's army were more like carousing devils than anything else, but Quentin and his party had to face them as best they could. Even Pavillon put on a bold face.

The Wild Boar himself sat unhelmeted at the table-head. Over his armour he wore a strong surcoat, made of the dressed skin of a wild boar, the hoofs being of solid silver and the tusks also of the same metal. When he drew the boar's mask over his head, as he often did when without his helmet, the effect was that of a grinning, horrible monster.

On the banquet-table all the sacred plate of the Church was mixed with leathern 'black-jacks' and beer cannikins. The Wild Boar cared nothing for sacrilege, having been already cursed by the Pope and put to the ban of the Empire. But a *lanz-knecht*, who had stolen one of these off the board, had been 'knitted up' to one of the staunchions of the window, and hung there even now, in the midst of the feast, before the very eyes of Quentin and Isabelle as they

entered the hall with their protector.

De la Marck received the Syndic readily enough, as one of the civic magistrates of the city he had conquered. But he ordered Isabelle to unveil.

Pavillon pleaded for her as his daughter, saying that she wore her veil on account of a vow to the Three Kings of Cologne.

'I will absolve her of it,' cried the Wild Boar; 'by a stroke of a cleaver I will consecrate myself Bishop of Liege, and I trust that one live bishop is worth three dead kings!'

Then De la Marck went on to do one of the worst acts of his bad and cruel career. He ordered the Prince Bishop to be brought in. All the Burgomaster's followers kept close behind him, and though some of them whispered that this could not be Trudchen, the girl being much taller, none made any sign to betray their master. Quentin placed himself near the only person of whom De la Marck was known to be fond. In a fit of passion the Wild Boar had killed the lad's mother with a single blow, and now what of fondness he had, returned upon the boy, her son.

The noble old Bishop of Liege, Louis of Bourbon, was now brought in. He was dishevelled, and the robes of his office had been thrown over him anyhow, as if in mockery. Then followed a scene, short and fearful. The Bishop now showed great dignity and calmness. He was composed and undismayed even in the prospect of death.

'Louis of Bourbon,' cried the truculent soldier,— or bandit, rather, —'I sought your friendship — you rejected mine. What would you now give that it had been otherwise? Nikkei, be ready!'

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The butcher of Liege, who had brought over his trade to help William de la Marck, seized his weapon, and stealing with it behind De la Marck's chair, stood with it uplifted in his bare and sinewy arms.

'Look at this man, Louis of Bourbon,' said the Wild Boar; 'what terms do you offer now to escape this hour?'

The Bishop looked, quietly and sadly, at the grisly satellite. Then he answered with firmness.

'These are the terms,' he said, 'which I offer to this ruffian, William de la Marck. He has stirred up to sedition an Imperial city. He has assaulted and taken the palace of a Prince of the Holy German Empire. He has broken into the sanctuary of the Lord — denied the house of God with blood and rapine, like a sacrilegious robber —'

'Have you done?' cried the Wild Boar, as if gnashing his tusks.

'Such are his crimes; now hear the terms,' said the Prince Bishop. 'Setting aside all personal offence, forgiving each particular injury to myself — if he will fling down his leading staff — renounce his command — unbind his prisoners — take a palmer's staff in hand and go barefooted on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, we will be his intercessors with the Imperial chamber at Ratisbon for his body, and with our father the Pope for his miserable soul.'

In the heart of the Wild Boar astonishment gave place to anger, then to a blind rage like that of the charge of the beast itself. As soon as the Bishop ceased, he looked to Nikkei Blok, and raised his finger without speaking a word.

The ruffian struck, as if he had been doing his office in the common shambles, and the

murdered Bishop sank without a groan at the foot of his own episcopal throne.

The folk of Liege, who had expected when they heard the bells ring, that there would be a council and the proposing of terms, cried out against the crime with unanimous horror. But the voice of the Wild Boar was louder than all.

‘How now, ye porkers of Liege!’ he shouted, ‘ye wallowers in the mud of the Maes! — Do ye dare mate yourselves with the Wild Boar of the Ardennes? Up, ye boar’s brood; let these Flemish hogs see your tusks!’

Every one of his followers instantly started up at his command and, drawing a broad dagger, seized his neighbour by the collar. But no one struck. The townsfolk of Liege were too surprised to resist, and perhaps, even in his carousing, De la Marck did not want to do more than frighten them.

But Quentin soon gave a new turn to the affair. He took by the throat the young lad near him, the son of the Wild Boar — and, they said, the only person of whom he was fond, and crying, ‘Two can play at that game!’ put his dirk at the boy’s throat.

‘Hold! Hold! It was but a jest!’ cried De la Marck. ‘But who are you who thus take pledges of us in our very lair?’

‘I am the King of France’s archer, sent to watch your proceedings,’ said Quentin, ‘and I warn you that, if you behave not differently, then good-by to any hope of help from my master against Charles of Burgundy.’

‘France and Liege! France and Liege!’ cried the burghers, each citizen standing up alongside his companion, the bandit who had so lately had him by the throat, and looking a little wonderingly, hardly

yet knowing whether to treat each other as friends or foes.

But the thought of the coming vengeance of Burgundy, and of all that depended on what the King of France did in the matter, made even the Wild Boar's men waver. The leader would dearly have liked to finish Quentin on the spot, as he had already slain the Bishop. But he saw that he would not be supported even by his own followers.

Therefore he asked Quentin to remain to partake of the feast in the Bishop's castle, ordering the serving-men at the same time to take away 'that carrion' — which had been the means of introducing so much ill feeling among allies.

And as he spoke, he pushed the headless body of the Prince Bishop with his foot.

Quentin thanked William de la Marck, but said that he must remain with the Burgomaster, to whom he had been accredited. Finally they got away, but as Isabelle was nearly fainting, and speed was the great object, Quentin lifted her in his arms, and Isabelle, throwing one arm about his neck, forgot everything except the desire of escaping from that horrid den.

It was Trudchen, the pretty daughter of Pavillon, who devised the means of escape, and provided her own 'bachelor' to help — which is to say, her sweetheart. But the Syndic's wife, Mother Mabel, being by nature jealous, would not see either the Countess or Quentin, and it became necessary to leave Liege at once.

Quentin, suitably arrayed, went to find Isabelle, all ready in the dress of a well-to-do Flemish peasant girl. Meanwhile Trudchen had sent word to her 'bachelor' to meet the pair at the eastern

gate of the city. His name was Hans Glover, and for recompense Trudchen only asked that the Countess should say nothing about Hans to her father.

'He is never to see my face again if he cannot guide you safe to the frontier,' said Trudchen, 'and the world must be changed indeed if two maids and their devoted bachelors cannot succeed in a disguise and an escape!'

Quentin was now attired like a 'boor' of the better class, and there was Trudchen's bachelor duly at the gate, a hearty, healthy, smiling youth of Flanders, good-humoured and kindly, but (thought Quentin) hardly worthy of pretty Trudchen!

'Take us to the borders of Brabant!' said Isabelle of Croye. 'I go to a prison in my own native country. I know it. The Duke will be very angry, but I shall take care that you do not share his anger.'

'Think only of yourself,' said Quentin; 'my affairs matter little.'

At two of the afternoon, their guide, pale with fear, brought them word that they were pursued by a party of De la Marck's Black Riders — as bad and as cruel men as the world contained.

The three made for the shelter of a wood. But it was certain that in the end they must have been ridden down, had not a body of knights and men-at-arms issued out at the moment as if to cut them off.

'They must be Burgundians,' said Isabelle; 'they have bright armour! Yes,' I see, it is the banner of the Count of Crevecoeur, a noble Burgundian. To him I will surrender myself.'

Quentin Durward sighed. His bright dreams of carrying the Countess to Scotland were over in a minute. Though what he would have done with her when he got her there, with Glen Houlakin a

wilderness and he as poor as a rat, Quentin could not have told himself. Still, his knight-erranting had been as pleasant as it had been dangerous. But now that it was over, he did not much care (so he told himself) what happened to Quentin Durward!

The Black Riders tried to dispute the matter, but a single charge of the Burgundian ended the affair in five minutes. Crying his war-cry and followed by his men-at-arms, he galloped rapidly forward to charge the Swartz-reiters. They were tumbled every way, having no such discipline and little martial spirit among them.

Crevecoeur told Isabelle that she had used her wings of late to such wild purpose, that she must be content to fold them for a little. However, he would take her himself to Peronne, where the Duke was. She might, he said, chance to stand in need of an intercessor.

Honest Hans Glover was dismissed with a string of pearls as a remembrance. There was no harm in him, said her new captor. But when Crevecoeur looked at Quentin, it was another matter.

The Countess Isabelle asked that Crevecoeur would be pleased to be favourable to 'this young gentleman.'

'Umph!' said Crevecoeur, looking at Quentin as he had at Hans Glover, but not with the same satisfactory result; 'ay, but this is a blade of another temper. And pray what has this very young gentleman done to deserve your intercession?'

'He has saved my life and honour!' said the Countess.

The Count asked the youth to ride with him to the front of the party, as soon as Quentin had

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declared that he belonged to the body-guard of the King of France. He had, he said, 'been sent to place the ladies under the protection of the late Bishop of Liege!'

'The *late* Bishop!' cried Crevecoeur; 'of what did he die?'

Then Quentin told the story of the assault and capture of the palace, and of the bloody murder of the Prince Bishop. The Count would hear nothing of Quentin's claims. He must instantly come on with him to the castle of his master at Peronne, to stand the judgment of Charles of Burgundy. And as for Isabelle of Croye, he placed her in the Cistercian convent of Charleroi, where the Lady Abbess was a near relative of his own and also of Isabelle's family.

When they got to Peronne, a surprise was waiting for them.

The King of France had ridden into the town, and put himself within the power of the Duke of Burgundy, for the purpose of arranging all disputes, as he said, face to face!

'This time the Fox has fallen into his own snare!' thought Crevecoeur, when he heard of it. 'Balue said when I was at Plessy that he could so work upon the superstitions of his master as to give the Duke the chance of arranging peace on his own terms. But I never thought Louis would have swallowed the bait so like a gudgeon!'

'And that,' said Hugh John, 'is the end of one part and the beginning of the next. Another time I will tell you the rest as quickly as I can.'

And accordingly, to the secret pleasure of the young man, I took two sovereigns out of my purse

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and presented them as a guerdon to the teller of tales.

'I don't think I should have two,' he said a little wistfully; 'better wait till the end, like Sweetheart!'

So, unwilling to check self-sacrifice, I allowed him to give back one of the gold pieces, and to bestow the other with a certain shamefaced pride in his purse.

Sir Toady regarded his brother with undisguised contempt. *He* would not give back money that had been given him. Just think what the fellows would say at the Coll.! What heaps of 'feeds' could be got for that amount! Altogether it was too shameful to be dwelt upon.

'That was a pretty bad business—about the Bishop,' said Elphie, who was an Orangeman; 'not that I hold with bishops myself—'

'What! You would not *preserve* even bishops!' said the head keeper, with a quaint look at the poacher.

Elphie scorned the insinuation.

'Nobody that is a man would do such a thing as that to an old man,' he said; 'what think you, Neighbour Donnan?'

But the Man of the Steel sat silent, a frown upon his brow. I asked him what was the matter.

'It's that everlasting misliking of butchers,' he said; 'the man who wrote that is always down on us, but I'll wager he liked butcher's meat as well as anybody!'

'Why, what has Sir Walter done?' I asked, in surprise.

'He made the 'Butchers' the only guild in the town which joined with that rascal Marck! And it

was their Dean of Guild, Nikkei Blok, who chopped off the poor old priest's head. If I had that Nikkei, I would learn him that he had to settle matters with Michael Donnan, for bringing discredit upon the craft.'

I tried to soothe the wrathful butcher of Edam, but he refused all consolation.

'Pretty hearing this for Nipper, who is wild to list even as it is, if he only dared. But he darsent! If he did — why, one soldier of the King's would have a long spell of hospital, the first time I caught him out!'

I pointed out, however, that the moral did not seem to have struck the young man very deeply. From the safe watch-turret of a tree-crotch, Sweetheart was looking down upon a fierce assault which was being delivered upon the Feudal Tower. Arrows began to rain where we stood, and really it was no safe place for peaceable men. I caught the peculiar *hist* of catapult ammunition, among ourselves a forbidden weapon in civil or uncivil strife — only to be used against the malignant attacks of an outside foe.

We grown-ups turned our backs upon the stricken field, and as we looked back at the gate, we saw Nipper Donnan, a huge rhubarb-leaf cleaver in his hand, beheading a comic bishop in the person of Sir Toady Lion, while Hugh John, his head turned away from the ribaldry, was secretly worshipping at Mammon's shrine. In other words, he was taking a sly peep at the gold piece lying snugly at the bottom of his purse.

That night, at Sweetheart's instigation, I went to his room at the churchyard hour, when all the house was asleep, and placed the second beside

it — so that in the morning I should hear the whoop of delight, and a voice outside the door of my morning study declaring that Master Hugh John was one golden sovereign the nearer his heart's desire — an 'Aitchison Twenty-Five!'

For Hugh John liked to view the world afar off through the highest power of field-glass obtainable, then to gird his loins and go forth to seek for the place that had pleased him. At home he was called 'The Lost Ten Tribes,' because of this wandering Ishmaelitish habit — said to have been contracted from a near relative to whom all the children's vices are invariably set down. Their virtues, few and doubtful, were all their own.

### HUGH JOHN'S LAST TALE FROM 'QUENTIN DURWARD'

#### THE KING'S DANGER

The nearer hope of the 'Aitchison' perhaps quickened Hugh John's imagination. For he was exceedingly ready with his yarn next evening down at the Feudal Tower. There was a full house. And Sir Toady, anxious to make his peace with the keeper, had presented him with an old but very sharp knife for the purpose of cutting his tobacco, before rolling it in his hand. John Chesnay was evidently touched by the attention, but all he said was, 'Only mind to keep away from the pheasant coops!'

Evidently there was a hiatus; there were then other places, not pheasant coops, to which Sir Toady was to be allowed access. Or, at least, his misdeeds were to be winked at more indulgently than in the

past.

Perhaps a private inspection of Sir Toady's collection of the eggs of local birds of prey, which I had allowed the keeper a glimpse of, had modified his opinion of the results of Sir Toady's occasional presence in his woods.

*'Faint as a figure seen at early dawn,  
Down at the far end of an avenue,  
Going he knew not whither —'*

That was generally how Keeper Chesnay saw our 'Admiral Tuppens.' But now under the new and tacit treaty he agreed to turn his eyes discreetly the other way. Personally, I offered no pledge of good conduct. I only said that he must just hope for the best.

As for Hugh John, he was entirely non-suspect. *He* might come and go at will. For his bent was the open face of the scaur, the sky-line ridge, the wilderness of heather and rock, which with the intervention of a river-valley or two ran clear sixty miles to the Solway.

It was not at the council (continued Hugh John), but in the gayest time of feasting, that the storm broke on Peronne. Louis and Duke Charles were at the banqueting-table. Two hunters, both nobles of Burgundy, entered with faces gloomy and downcast. They had met the Count of Crevecoeur, just returned from Brabant. The Duke was impatient to see him, and demanded what news he had brought. But naturally neither of the two wanted particularly to be the bearer of bad news, so they said nothing till Crevecoeur came in himself.

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The guests all knew that something serious was in the air, and Crevecoeur was saluted by his master with the information that he must speak at once, since the very rumour of his coming had chased mirth from the table.

‘I suppose,’ added the Duke, ‘from your melancholy face the burghers of Liege are again in revolt?’

‘They are, my Lord!’ said Crevecoeur, very gravely.

‘You could not have brought the news at a better moment,’ said the Duke; ‘for here is our own suzerain to teach us how to deal with traitors. But you have more news in your packet! Out with it, man, and then explain why you went not forward yourself to assist the Bishop.’

‘No aid of mine, my Lord, could have helped the good Bishop!’ said Crevecoeur. ‘William de la Marck, uniting with the rebel Liegeois, has taken the castle of Schonwaldt and murdered him in his own hall!’

‘*Murdered him!*’ said the Duke, in a low and terrible voice; ‘you have been imposed upon, Crevecoeur — some wild report —’

‘I have it from an archer of the King of France's Scottish Guard, who was in the hall when the Bishop was slaughtered by De la Marck's orders.’

‘And who was doubtless aiding and abetting in the sacrilege,’ exclaimed the Duke. ‘Bar the doors of the hall, gentlemen — secure the windows — let no stranger stir from his seat. Gentlemen of my chamber, draw your swords!’

And turning toward the King of France, he put one hand to his sword-hilt as if to draw it also

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and fall on him. But Louis kept cool, showing no fear, and only saying, 'These news, fair cousin, have staggered your reason.'

'No,' said the Duke, addressing the King, 'they have only awakened a just resentment. I will hold myself in no longer. Murderer of thy brother! Rebel against thy father! Treacherous ally! Tyrant over thy subjects! Perjured king and dishonoured gentleman, thou art in my power, and I thank God for it!'

'Thank rather my folly,' said the King; 'when we met on equal terms at Montlhery, you wished yourself farther from me than you are now.'

The Duke was still ready to strike, but the King never moved a muscle. So far the King had had decidedly the best of it. The Duke could not strike a man who sat still, smiling quietly and offering no resistance.

But everywhere there was confusion. Though Dunois was just out of prison (and that no ordinary prison), his voice was the first to be heard. He reminded the Duke that he was a vassal of France, and that they, his guests, were Frenchmen. If anything were attempted against the King, the gentlemen of France would feast as high on the best blood of Burgundy as they had done on its wine!'

Lord Crawford, too, though the oldest there, thrust himself forward, all ready for the fray, crying, 'I have fought for his sire and his grandsire, and by Saint Andrew, be the matter what it will, I shall not fail him at this pinch.'

The Duke seemed about to give the signal for a combined onset, which could only have ended in the massacre of the French, who were fewer in numbers. But Crevecoeur rushed between the King

and the Duke and cried in a voice like a trumpet: 'My Lord, this is your hall. Here is your sovereign lord. He is your guest. So are these French gentlemen. He came here under your own safeguard. For the sake of your house's honour, do not revenge one horrid murder by another yet more vile.'

'Out of my way!' cried the Duke; 'the wrath of kings is to be dreaded like that of heaven!'

'Only when, like that of heaven, it is *just!*' cried the undaunted Crevecoeur, who could face his own sovereign as well as the King of France; 'and I advise you, gentlemen of France, since all would be useless, to put up your swords and take things quietly.'

The King seconded him in this, and bade Orleans, Dunois, Crawford, and the rest to yield up their swords upon their oaths of allegiance.

The Duke of Burgundy hung a moment in the wind, unwilling to give up his vengeance. Then he said that all Europe should acknowledge his justice. He bade the French yield up their swords, all saving the King.

But Dunois and Crawford refused, till they were at least assured of the safety of the King. Again Louis commanded them, telling them that the noble Burgundians who accepted such pledges would be more able than they to protect him.

Still the French hesitated, till at last, upon the King's direct command, Crawford threw his sword to Crevecoeur, crying, 'Take it, and the devil give you joy of it! It is no dishonour to me. We had no fair play!'

Then the Duke, in a voice broken by passion, commanded the French gentlemen to retain their swords, but only on condition of not using them. He

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ordered the King to Earl Herbert's Tower, to be kept a prisoner there till matters were cleared up between them and Louis proved to have no part in the slaughter of the Prince Bishop of Liege.

The King was allowed to choose six gentlemen of his train to wait upon him. The Scottish Guard were to be quartered elsewhere. The Black Walloons were to surround the castle, patrols of horse and foot were to be established, and all sentinels were to be trebled.

He ended by ordering his men to look to the person of Louis as they valued their lives.

The choice of the King's companions was a curious one. In fact, everybody talked about it. Instead of choosing Dunois and his great nobles like Orleans, he asked for the attendance of Oliver Dain, his barber, of Tristan l'Hermite and two of his people, of Le Balafre, and of his astrologer Martius Galeotti.

Forty serving-men, carrying alternately naked swords and blazing torches, served as Louis's guard from the hall of Peronne to his prison. As he went he saw the slain bodies of some of his Scottish Guard who had disputed the order given to them to quit their post near the King's apartments. The Duke's Walloons had fallen upon them, and before the officers could interfere several lives had been lost. The King paused in sorrow for his faithful Scots, but Le Balafre, just behind, comforted him with the thought that it was numbers that had carried the day. Even he himself, he said, did not care to fight more than two men at once — that is, except on special duty, when there was no time for counting heads.

Once in the King's apartments, events marched

toward another tragedy. He was to be guarded in the tower where his predecessor, Charles the Simple, had been murdered. At first all seemed dreary enough, but after passing the great hall, and disturbing the bats and owls which lodged there, they came to the chamber, in which arras had been hastily tacked up, a fire lighted in the rusty grate, and pallets laid down for the gentlemen who were to pass the night there.

But Louis had in his mind before all other things — revenge. Two men had brought him to Peronne by their advice — Cardinal Balue and Galeotti, the astrologer. He proposed that Galeotti should be hanged on the spot, and it was with this purpose that he had chosen Tristan and his two hangmen as his companions for the night.

However, Galeotti frightened the King by prophesying that his own death should happen within twenty-four hours of the King's. You would not have thought that a thing like that would have frightened a man like Louis, who believed that chivalry and the old way of ruling were all bosh. But it did.

The block and tackle was reared outside, and Tristan and his two hangmen there told off to do the astrologer's business. But when he heard about his death, Louis was so anxious for Galeotti's safety, that he kept hold of his robe till he had passed under the cord and block, saying all the while, 'Go in peace! Go in peace!'

The Duke Charles was just as disturbed that night — indeed, during all the next day and night. His best counsellors preached moderation. But it was hardly in the nature of Charles the Rash to practise it.

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Then Philip de Comines, the great historian of Burgundy and a very wise man, was sent to sound Louis on what conditions he was prepared to discuss as the price of getting free. These included the giving up of all feudal claims on Burgundy — the Duke to become a reigning king, the yielding of the right to coin money, the marriage of the Duke of Orleans to Isabelle of Croye instead of to the King's daughter — these were some of the hard terms which, on the advice of Campobasso, Burgundy had resolved to demand from France.

There was, in addition, to be a public trial of the accusations made against Louis, of having helped or counselled the murder of the Prince Bishop. Crawford and others were in the greatest fear lest Quentin should blame the King for having sent him off with a traitor for a guide. One other person knew of the Bohemian Hayrabbín — Isabelle of Croye. So, using his opportunity, Quentin asked for an interview with her — perhaps for the purpose of warning her to be silent about the King — perhaps for the sake of the kiss with which the interview closed.

Crawford and Crevecoeur had been watching. Crawford laughed, but Crevecoeur was very angry. He threatened Quentin with punishment when all these matters of state should be wound up.

But Lord Crawford good-humouredly bade him 'Rein up!' and ordered Quentin on his side to be silent and go to his own quarters.

'And hark you, Count of Crevecoeur,' said Crawford, after Quentin had gone out of sight, 'this young Durward is as good a gentleman as the King — only, as the Spanish proverb says, not so rich.'

'Well,' said Crevecoeur, 'I meant no

disrespect to yourself or Scotland, but I shall take good care that these two do not meet again.'

'Fire and tow!' said the old lord, still laughing. 'They may beat you for all that. Mortal creatures have legs, and youth and love to set them in motion. They will meet in spite of you. Yon kiss, Crevecoeur, came tenderly off — methinks it was ominous!'

The Duke himself invited the King to a High Council, and during the interview Louis was as calm as in his own palace; Charles of Burgundy hoarse with a passion he could hardly contain.

The Council was marshalled by Toison d'Or, the herald of Burgundy. The King of France was seated in the higher chair, but although he was the sovereign and president, he might just as well have been in the dock as the accused.

Isabelle of Croye was the first witness called. She stood motionless while the Duke reproached her with having brought two great kingdoms to the brink of war. She had meant to throw herself before Charles and implore him to take all her estates and permit her to retire to a convent. But before these princes and in face of such a storm of anger she could only stand dumb and stricken.

But the Countess of Crevecoeur, who came with her, made no bones about speaking her mind to the Duke, and that pretty firmly.

'My fair cousin,' she said, 'is under my protection. I know better than your Grace how women should be treated, and we will leave this presence instantly, unless you use a tone more suitable to our rank and sex.'

The Duke burst out laughing. 'Crevecoeur,' he said, 'your tameness at home has made a lordly

dame of your Countess. I would do no harm to the girl yonder. I rather design much honour for her. Let her sit down.'

With that he began to question the girl.

Isabelle admitted that to escape the marriage proposed for her by the Duke, she and her aunt had fled to France. But the King had certainly not invited her thither, or even treated her very kindly when there. He had placed them in privacy, but had taken the earliest chance of sending them on to Liege to the care of the Bishop. Here the King waved his hands round the circle. He cared nothing for the reproaches of a girl — much for the verdict of the Council now assembled. Finally Isabelle asked that her lands and castles might be forfeited and she herself allowed to retire to a convent. This made the Duke yet more angry, for now, to humiliate Louis, he meant to marry her to the Duke of Orleans, and above all he could not bear his will to be thwarted.

But the Countess of Crevecoeur led her away, and Quentin was called on to bear witness in her place. The Duke tried his hardest to make him implicate the King of France. But Quentin, answering simply that he had obeyed his instructions (which he produced in writing), told how he had been treacherously led on by the Bohemian, how he had listened in the willow, and so taken the left bank of the Maes from Namur, as being both the safer and the nearer road to Liege. But Quentin denied that the King had anything to do with such treachery.

'Even if such infamous fellows as the Bohemian or the *lanz knecht* of William de la Marck had said so, which they did not, I should not have believed them, having the King's word against

theirs!'

At this reply from Quentin Louis drew a long breath, while the Duke looked gloomy. He saw the game was going against him.

'You are a faithful messenger,' said Duke Charles, 'but I will wager that but for what happened after, you would have disappointed his expectations in a way you would have smarted for.'

'I do not understand,' said Quentin. 'King Louis sent me to guard these ladies to Liege. I did it as best I could, both on the journey and during the scenes which followed the taking of the Schonwaldt. I understood the instructions of the King to be honourable, and I executed them honourably. Had they been dishonourable, they would not have suited one of my name or nation!'

'*Fier comme un Ecosais!*' said Charles, who, though disappointed, could not help being struck by the boldness of the young Scot, and even, in a way, admiring it. Then he questioned Quentin as to his behaviour at Liege, asserting that he acted as if he were an envoy of the French King, delivered speeches, and even took it upon him to speak in the name of France.

But Quentin showed how he had his charge to defend, and said that he snatched at any weapon just as one may grasp a shield with another man's bearings in a moment of great peril.

Crevecoeur could contain himself no longer, but burst out that his young companion had acted with spirit and good sense!

At this moment a herald from the city of Liege was announced. 'A herald from nailers and weavers!' cried the Duke, 'but admit him at once. Perhaps he will tell us more than this young Archer

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of the Guard seems inclined to do.'

The herald, more fantastically dressed than usual, carried himself with a mixture of boldness and fear, as if he knew that only the utmost audacity would carry him through the task he had undertaken.

He declared that he was 'Rouge Sanglier, officer-at-arms to William de la Marck, by the grace of God and the free election of the chapter, Prince Bishop of Liege.'

'Ha!' said Charles, and subduing his anger bade him go on.

'And in right of his wife, the Lady Countess Hameline of Croye, Count of Croye and Lord of Bracquemont.'

Charles seemed stricken dumb by such boldness in his presence. The envoy concluded with a request as modest as the prologue.

'I require you, Duke Charles, to desist from all interference with the city of Liege, to restore its banners, to rebuild its walls, and to acknowledge my master, William de la Marck, as Prince Bishop, to give up to him the castles of Bracquemont and the earldom of Croye!'

The Duke had allowed the herald to continue, each time marking him up for hotter revenge when he finished. The final straw was when William de la Marck threatened Duke Charles with instant war if he did not 'instantly release our ally, the King of France.'

The Duke, furious with anger, had begun, 'Now, by Saint George of Burgundy!' when the King interrupted him in a tone of such authority that Charles could not continue.

'Sirrah herald, or whatever thou art,' said

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Louis, 'carry back notice to that perjured outlaw and murderer, William de la Marck, that the King of France will be presently before Liege to punish his kinsman's murderer, and that he proposes to gibbet De la Marck alive for terming himself the ally of France, and putting his own royal name into the mouth of one of his base messengers.'

For the herald the Duke ordered 'largesse' of a new sort; that is, to be thoroughly scourged before he was turned out of Peronne.

Some of the nobles protested, saying that, after all, he was a herald.

'No herald,' said the Duke. 'I see by his blazoning that he is no herald. Step forward, Toison d'Or, and question him.'

The herald of Burgundy soon proved, learnedly, that 'Rouge Sanglier' was no better than an impostor. The Duke proved it effectively by bringing him to the confession that he was a herald 'only for the occasion.'

Whereupon 'Rouge Sanglier' was hunted with dogs out of the courtyard of Peronne, affording good sport and making the King and the Duke laugh till they almost grew friends again in their mirth.

But Oliver Dain whispered to Louis that this was the Bohemian spy, and that on no account must he have speech in private with the Duke. Accordingly, Tristan l'Hermite stepped forward and claimed him as 'game of his.'

'My *fleur-de-lys*' he said, 'is on his shoulder, as all may see.'

So, with the permission of the Duke, they led out the false herald, but true gipsy, to be hanged. He asked only one favour, that he might speak alone with Quentin. And for this Quentin had to pay the

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executioners at the easy rate of a guilder a minute.

The Bohemian told Quentin how he had always liked him, and that he would have helped him to a wealthy bride, only that he thought he preferred the elder to the younger lady of Croye. But now he wished to leave his horse to him, and also a great secret, which was that when the Burgundians came to besiege Liege, De la Marck's men were to come out dressed in French uniforms, and he himself was to wear the arms of Dunois. This would set the French and Burgundians at each others' throats and preserve Liege for the cunning Wild Boar of the Ardennes. He knew that he could not withstand the Burgundians in open field, neither defend a town with a broken wall, but he hoped that by setting King's men and Duke's men against each other, he would succeed in winning the French to his side, and so keep the city for himself.

After the execution of the gipsy, Quentin found himself richer by a beautiful horse, which came at the whistle the Bohemian had carefully taught him before he was turned off.

The Duke had set his mind on marrying Isabelle of Croye to the Duke of Orleans. That young man was naturally very glad, but Isabelle would have none of him. The Duke of Burgundy might take her estates, but for the rest it was her purpose to enter the Convent of the Ursulines.

'The hand of no gentlewoman can be disposed of by force!' said the Countess of Crevecoeur, backing her up.

This made the Duke exceedingly angry. 'She shall be sent to the 'Spinning House,' he said; 'the discipline there will teach her to obey.'

But Crevecoeur interpreted the general

murmur of anger.

‘My Lord Duke,’ he said, ‘let such a thing not be thought on. If she has done wrong, she must be punished. But it shall be in a manner befitting her rank and ours, who are her relatives!’

The Duke looked at him with the stare of a bull, but suddenly he gave way, seeing that his very anger was helping the cause of Louis.

‘You are right,’ he said; ‘I have a better plan. She has forfeited her estates. We will give them to whoever will bring us the head of the Wild Boar of the Ardennes. And if she will not marry *him*, to the convent she shall go!’

Isabelle reminded the Duke that she was the daughter of his old and brave servant, and so ought not to be set up as a prize to all the swordsmen in the army.

The Duke answered that so her ancestress had been won, also that he would take care that the winner should be of good birth and a gentleman, however poor.

‘And what of us who have got wives already?’ demanded Crevecoeur; ‘are we to look on at the game without ever a stroke at the Wild Boar?’

‘Strike in boldly,’ said the Duke, now altogether taken up with his new idea, ‘and if you cannot wear her yourself — why, let your nephew, Count Stephen, try his eloquence against that of the Lady Abbess.’

Only Le Balafre, saying nothing to any one, went over in his mind an old prophecy of the soothsayer of Glen Houlakin, ‘that the house of the Durwards should be set up again by a marriage.’

‘Now, Saunders Souplejaw, hold thine own!’ he said; ‘never had you such a chance as this to

keep your word!’

The siege of Liege was a great undertaking. The Burgundian army was splendid and powerful, and the best knights in France were there also — perhaps, however, more as hostages than as fighters, their numbers being so few by comparison with the Duke's men.

As they rode out, Quentin handed a letter to Isabelle on the point of his spear. She was sitting with other ladies on a balcony. It was from her aunt Hameline, now the wife of the Wild Boar of the Ardennes. She begged her niece not to believe the reports about ‘William,’ but to wait till she knew him personally. He had his faults, of course, like other men. William was addicted to wine, but then so had been her grand-sire, the gallant Sir Godfrey. He was somewhat hasty in his temper, but so again had been her brother Reinold of blessed memory. He was blunt in speech. Few Germans were otherwise — a little wilful and peremptory, but she believed that all men loved to rule. Finally, if Isabelle would come to the Court of Liege, any little differences as to succession could be got over by marrying her to William's son, the Earl Eberson!

But Isabelle was too anxious for vengeance on the murderer of the good Bishop to mind at all what her aunt said.

However, a postscript was added to the effect that, for purposes of policy, ‘William’ was going to wear the armorial bearings of Dunois, and that she was busy embroidering the proper coats for the first engagement.

There was also a slip which had not come from the aunt, *‘If you do not hear of me soon, and that by the trumpet of fame, count me dead, but not*

*unworthy.*'

And it is strange that ere the troops were fully on their march, Quentin received back from an unknown hand the letter of the Lady Hameline, marked with three crosses at the postscript, and the words added:

'He who feared not the arms of Orleans on the breast of their gallant owner, cannot dread them when displayed on that of a tyrant and a murderer.'

There could be no proper siege of Liege. After the last battle the walls had never been repaired. But, as usual, the Burgundians underestimated their foe. The breaches had been left purposely undefended, and a part of the Burgundian vanguard, entering too rashly, were fallen upon by the townsfolk and thrown back with a good many killed.

As the evening grew darker, the fate of the Burgundians, still left in the city, became uncertain. Louis made the Duke still more angry by offering to send French men-at-arms into the town to rescue his unfortunate vanguard. But two Burgundian captains rallied them instead, returning, however, to find their own army in great confusion.

To complete all, the night came down black as a wolf's mouth. The ground was muddy, and the whole camp was full of captains seeking for their soldiers, and soldiers searching for their proper standards.

Two villas or pleasure-houses were at last found for the two princes, and a guard was set about each of them. The King of France went to the quarters of the Duke, and his arrival was made the occasion for an informal council of war. As they were making out the order of attack the next day, Quentin Durward sent word that he prayed

earnestly to be heard, about which there was no difficulty. Quentin revealed the purpose of De la Marck to make a sally under the uniforms and arms of the French, so as to bring discord between the King and the Duke.

The King said this did not matter to him, because he would order his men to wear white scarfs over their arms, but secretly he was much annoyed with Quentin for blurting out the truth like that.

'This Scot,' he said to Oliver le Dain, 'is such a mixture of shrewdness and simplicity that I know not what to make of him. Think of his folly in bringing out honest De la Marck's plan in the face of Burgundy, Crevecoeur, and all the rest, instead of rounding it in my ear, and giving me a chance of abetting or defeating it.'

'It is better as it is, sire,' said Oliver; 'there are many with you, who would not turn against an ally on the field of battle, or put themselves on the side of De la Marck!'

'Right, Oliver,' said the King; 'such fools there are in the world. Now go and tell all the captains to give the order to shoot as sharply on those who cry, 'France' and 'Saint Dennis' as if they cried 'Hell and Satan!' I myself will sleep in my armour!'

Quentin knew that the assault would not be made till it was light enough in the morning to let the Burgundians see the false French uniforms — also the Dunois coat-of-arms that the Lady Hameline had lately been busy with for her lord and master.

The Archers were all ready, and it was Quentin who fired the first shot. As soon as the alarm was given, the King rode off to Duke Charles's

camp, as it was of the utmost necessity to persuade that hotheaded leader of his good faith. Louis got there only in time. For the Duke, angry at the onfall of the Liege troops on both sides, was still more disturbed by the cries of 'France!' and 'Dennis Montjoye!' which came from the followers of the Wild Boar. He had just ordered his men to fire on everything French, black and white.

The arrival of Louis, attended only by Le Balafre, Quentin, and half-a-score of Archers, restored confidence. Soon the fight closed all along the front. The Duke toiled in the first line, shouting, hacking, and hewing like an ordinary man-at-arms, while in the absence of their general Crevecoeur and D'Hymberecourt acted as the proper leaders, bringing their men into array and dismaying the assailants by the use of artillery.

As usual Louis behaved well. He was calm, collected, and sagacious. He neither sought nor avoided danger, and the Burgundian captains, deprived of their proper chief, obeyed him readily.

Finally, as it was evident that the French had made good their defence, Le Balafre and Quentin were sent to order Dunois to cut in between the burghers and the city.

'By Heavens,' said Lord Crawford to Dunois, when they got clear at last, 'if *thou* wert not riding by my side, I should say that I saw thee among yonder banditti, marshalling them with thy mace!'

'Yes,' said Dunois, 'yonder is a caitiff with my bearings. For the which I shall presently punish his insolence.'

Quentin begged that the vengeance should be left to him.

'To thee indeed!' cried Dunois; 'well, that is a

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modest request. But no — such an insult allows of no substitute to avenge it!

And he gave the order to charge.

While it lasted it was one of the hottest of fights. The enemy 'made the hedgehog,' as it was called, with their spears — the first rank kneeling, the second stooping, and the third standing behind.

Nevertheless, Dunois and Quentin fairly broke their way into the phalanx. They contended who should first reach the spot where stood the false Dunois, still urging on and rallying his men. Then Dunois, seeing in another part of the field the usual boar's head and tusks of William de la Marck, called out to Quentin to go on and avenge the arms of Orleans.

It was in the very breach that Quentin brought this wearer to bay. The Wild Boar stood in his borrowed armour, making terrible use of his mace. Certainly, in the hour of danger, he was a magnificent fighter, however cruel he had been in life. Quentin dismounted and ascended the breach to measure swords with the Wild Boar of the Ardennes, who turned on him with mace uplifted.

But suddenly the Wild Boar heard behind him the noise of battle. To avoid being taken in the rear, he retreated — a body of his own followers keeping about him till at last they were brought to bay by Quentin and the Archers.

Six of the Wild Boar's brood remained with him to fight it out. They were to perish, he said, but first they would kill as many as they could of these Scottish adventurers.

Quentin had only time to bid his uncle and companions as they were gentlemen to stand back. Dunois had given him a charge.

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Then De la Marck, with a bound like a tiger, and timing his mace to fall along with his weight, sprang upon Quentin, but light of foot and quick of eye, Quentin leaped aside.

Then they closed, boar and boarhound, Le Balafre roaring for fair play, calling out that he would venture his nephew upon him were he as 'wight as Wallace.'

The blows of the despairing robber fell like hammer on anvil. But still the quick swordsmanship of Quentin enabled him to escape. The end was near. The Sanglier stood in a puddle of blood, though fighting with unabated courage.

Then (added Hugh John, with a sigh) something happened that spoiled it a bit. But I can't help it. It is in the book.

Quentin heard behind him a voice which he knew. In a moment he saw that it was Trudchen Pavillon, the girl who had saved both him and the Countess of Croye. She was in great danger and called for his help. Of course, I suppose, he had to go and save her, as she had saved him. But it let in Le Balafre, who in a sharp contest killed the Wild Boar and brought his head to Louis and Charles, where they were hearing claims for services done during the battle.

Of course the most difficult was to decide who had killed the Sanglier. Crevecoeur showed a boar's skin such as De la Marck usually wore. Dunois produced a cloven shield with De la Marck's bearings. But Lord Crawford appeared dragging Le Balafre after him like an unwilling mastiff towed in a leash.

'Away with your hoofs and hides, your painted iron,' cried Crawford. 'No one save he who

slew the Boar can show the tusks!

And he flung down before them the bloody head of William de la Marck.

'Crawford,' said Louis, while Duke Charles sat gloomily apart, regretting that he had put so great a prize on such a rash venture, 'Crawford, I trust it is one of my faithful Scots who has won the prize.'

'It is Ludovic Lesly, sire, whom we call Le Balafre,' answered the old captain of the Guard.

'But is he noble?' said the Duke; 'otherwise our promise is void.'

'He is a cross, ungainly piece of wood enough,' said Crawford. 'But I will warrant him a branch of the tree of Rothes for all that.'

'Then I have been overhasty,' said the Duke; 'the fairest and the richest heiress in Burgundy must be the wife of a rude mercenary like this, or die in a convent!'

'Hold an instant,' said Crawford; 'hear what the Cavalier Lesly has to say for himself. Speak out, man — and a murrain on thee!'

But Le Balafre was abashed in the presence of so many, and after some tremendous contortions of countenance, all he was able to get out were the words, 'Saunders Souplejaw'—and then stuck fast.

Lord Crawford had therefore to speak for him.

'Your Majesty and your Grace,' he said, 'it was prophesied by a seer in his own country that his house should be restored by marriage. Now he is, like myself, something the worse for wear. He loves the winehouse better than a lady's summer parlour, and has some barrack tastes and likings. So he resigns the pretensions acquired by slaying the Wild

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Boar to his nephew — who, to be just, did the most of the fighting in any case!’

The King was delighted when he heard of Quentin's good luck.

‘I can vouch for the youth,’ he said; ‘it was he who made us aware of the night sally.’

‘Then,’ said the Duke, ‘I suppose I owe him some amends for doubting his word. But I have yet to inquire what are the lady's sentiments toward this fortunate young adventurer!’

‘By the Mass,’ cried Crevecoeur, ‘from what I saw at a certain wicket, and heard of their wanderings in company, I do not think your Grace need trouble about that! You will find Mistress Isabelle much more amenable to your authority on this occasion!’

‘Of course,’ said Hugh John, hastening to get in his own criticism ahead of the others, ‘I would have liked Quentin to finish up the whole thing. But he had to save Trudchen. It was so in the book. I could not make it otherwise!’

‘Dee-ar littol George Washington!’ sneered Sir Toady Lion; ‘like the man who said he had shot ninety-nine ducks with one shot, and they asked him why he did not make it a hundred at once, our Hugh John wouldn't tell a lie for one — *hum* — *hum* — duck!’

This was a lickable offence, and Hugh John with one droop of the eye conveyed a post-dated cheque for the amount to Master Toady.

‘And what came of them after?’ said Sweetheart.

‘And did the poor Lady Hameline ever finish that piece of embroidery?’ chimed in Maid Margaret, who had plain seams on the brain at the time. Not

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that she loved them — on the contrary. Football with her brothers and trees to climb — these pleased her better than all the tapestry in the world.

The others were somewhat silent, but gradually thawed, till Butcher Donnan heaved himself up mountainously from his seat on the hearthstone of the Feudal Tower, and putting a huge paw on Hugh John's shoulder by way of accolade, he made him free of the down-trodden and misrepresented Guild of Fleshers.

'And, as I said before, whenever you want a bone for the dog, sir, you have only to intimate as much to Nipper there!'

'And me,' said Sir Toady, 'how about me, Mister Donnan? I have a dog too, and as I have to be away so much on his Majesty's service, I can't always see that he is properly fed.'

'Don't trouble, young master,' said Keeper Chesnay; 'when I see that ere fox-terrier o' yours, he has mostly three-quarters of him in a rabbit hole.'

'And I don't need to give *him* no bone,' said the butcher, 'for he comes to my shop as bold as a County Inspector, and is off with a pound of rump steak (special cut, as like as not, for my own dinner) before I can so much as get my hand on a lump of good stamped brass to throw at him.'

Elphie slowly shook his head, and gazed with appreciation at Sir Toady, '*He* knows how to look after hisself, that tarrier — and maybe it is like master, like man, as the sayin' is, if it ain't no offence!'

As for me, I agreed to see what I could do about the Aitchison x 25 when business took me to the city.

And with this promise in hand and two

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sovereigns in his pouch, Hugh John envied not a whit the good luck of Quentin Durward — in right of his wife Earl of Croye and Lord of Braquemart.

‘But I wish I had a few uncles like that,’ said Sir Toady; ‘it would come in handy for a fellow — courting done, fighting done, bloody head on the floor, nothing for you to do but to send a postcard to the lady that you will be at her splendid castle with your traps at half-past-five. Then you go in, order dinner, and hang up your hat. That may be soldier’s luck, but it does not often happen in the senior service!’

‘See here, Sir Toady,’ I suggested, ‘it is your turn next — you had better be off to study your tale.’

‘All right, father,’ said the young man, coolly, ‘I will.’

He changed a handful of small shot from his trousers pocket to one more convenient, looked to the fittings of his catapult, and in a moment was lost in the wood behind, as a trout drops into a pool.

‘Well of all the — cheek — I never did see!’ exclaimed Keeper Chesnay.

And out of the green depths came back a cheerful cry of ‘So long, Chesnay — keep your pecker up, Chesnay! *So long! So long!*’

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TOLD FROM  
THE PIRATE  
AND  
A LEGEND OF MONTROSE

Of all the tales told at the Feudal Tower, none had ever been waited for with such expectation as Sir Toady Lion's. That worthy (or unworthy) knight had so long been airy butterfly, licensed jester, arbiter on woodcraft, birds' eggs, and natural history generally, — so various a practical and unpractical jester, such a libertine in speech and action, and generally so much accustomed to play a lone hand — that everyone was on tenter-hooks to know what he would do to earn the golden Edwards which attracted him as strongly as any of the others.

That he would get them, no man doubted. But how? That was the question.

The youth appeared to give himself no trouble about the matter. He had not been seen with a volume of the Abbotsford save on the very first day of the promise-making, and then the pictures alone seemed to interest him.

Every known spare moment he had spent in the wood, either alone or in company with Elphie.

Now it was a noble July evening when we gathered at the Feudal Tower, all of us, I think, a little earlier than usual, like people going to hear a popular preacher — or, for that matter, clown.

But, early as we were, Sir Toady was there before us. Elphie also. They had something laid out

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on the ruined wall which outlined one side of the Feudal Tower. It was a little too low at that place to be used as sitting accommodation. Whatever was underneath the dust-cloths was hidden, and Sir Toady kept careful guard, while Elphie nodded and smiled upon all like a genial host.

We of the house descended by the avenue. The elders of the city, which is to say, Butcher Donnan and the head keeper, strolled along the waterside footpath, while various casual youngsters bobbed up suddenly out of the bed of the river, easy to be forded almost anywhere during the drought of these splendid dog-days.

We were all assembled. All was as it should be. Nobody turned away and not a vacant seat in the house. Sir Toady stood with his cap in his hand, and began, mock-heroically, with a sweeping salutation to the eager little amphitheatre.

'Ladies, gentlemen, — *and* kids,' he said, 'we have heard a heap about kings and big pots — people, I mean. And Sweetheart and Hugh John are just busting with 'Ho! my Liege's, and 'Hey! my Lady's. But we have not heard anything about the places they ruled over — except that they hunted deer and pigs, as it were, in the back garden.

'Now since 'my home is on the deep' (no, I don't *yet* command the Channel Fleet!), of course I wanted to tell about that. So I bought a sixpenny Scott's *Pirate*. And of course I thought it would be a proper worth-the-money pirate — like Captain Kidd, with an island, and barrels of treasure, and walking the plank. But I looked over — yes, skipped if you like; Sis taught me how — the first three hundred pages, and never a pirate! — It was just like the first two volumes of Rob Roy. [Puzzle — Find Rob!]

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'Anyway *I* couldn't dig out any pirate — not to call a pirate. There was no wicked black schooner, scudding offshore, with rakish masts and a hitch to her trowsies, engaging an East Indiaman, before making all the East Indians into Spratt's Patent Food for the dog-fishes. There is no coral hereabouts for their bones to be worked up into.

'But the book was all about Shetland, and I can tell you about that — at least about the eggs that come from there. I've got them here.'

A wink to Elphie, and the two of them lifted the dust-sheets and displayed the finest collection of sea-birds' eggs in the county — as Sir Toady himself obligingly explained.

'Of course,' he said, 'these are just the notes, same as in the proper book! Introduction and Notes by Sir Toady Lion, R.N., here present and certified fit for duty. But you will get the tale as well, don't be afraid, same as if you had all paid for it — when it is only father who will.

'Well,' he continued, in a graver tone, 'in the place where these eggs came from — that is to say, Shetland — there was once a fine old fellow, called Magnus Troil. He wasn't Scottish, like us. Nor English, like most of our fellows at the Coll. Nor yet Irish, like Bobs. No, he was Norwegian, and he liked to be called 'Udaller.' If you wanted to buck him all up, and get something fearful nice out of him, you had to address him as 'Jarl,' which is to say Earl. But he wasn't great and grand at all — only comfortable, except that he had the misfortune to have two daughters and no fine noble sons!'

Here Sir Toady bowed to the company, with a hand laid impressively on his heart, like a man who has to reply to the toast of his own health at a

banquet.

‘And there were a lot of men who came to his house, some to see the girls, but more because he always had the rippingest of feeds. Only to smell the smoke out of the chimney when dinner was cooking was as good as living in a pastry-cook's back-shop — and about as filling as looking through the plate-glass windows.

‘But nobody went on the cliffs or by the loch-sides to look at the eggs, because nobody cared about such things in those days except, that is, to eat. And so the big skuas kept up the mountains and dared anybody to go near them. Yes, Bonxie was the King of Shetland at that time, and I'll bet none of those down at the Udaller's house ever knew it.

‘You see Bonxie is the big skua, and he is about half an eagle. I never saw a great auk except in a museum; but from the silly look of him, I'd back Bonxie to finish him in two rounds.

‘Why, he nearly did for Boss, my dog, when we went there. Bonxie is death on dogs, and battered us all about the head pretty warmly. He made his wings crack like a whip all over the place.’

Then he pointed to a large moss-green, seaweedy-looking egg which occupied a place of honour in his collection.

‘Got that on my last cruise,’ he said haughtily, ‘but I shan't tell where. I don't want to get anybody into trouble.’

‘I suppose you were with the real Pirate?’ said Hugh John, to call his ornithological brother back to the realms of the Wizard of the North.

‘No,’ said Sir Toady, unabashed; ‘there would have been less poetry and fooling, and more egg-

collecting if I had been up there. I don't mind piracy, - at least, not to read about, — but all that slack-jaw poetry the fellow called Claud Halcro got off nearly made me sick.'

'You are not required to provide your own criticisms,' I said to the youth; 'that is, not if you want to be paid cash for your story.'

Toady Lion waved his hand about over the eggs.

'You pay for going into an exhibition, don't you?' he said; 'and you will go a long way before you find as fine a one as that; eh, Chesnay?'

Keeper Chesnay had been wandering from point to point, shaking his head and looking wise. Now he spoke.

'If I were a betting man, which I ain't, Master Toady,' he said, 'I could wager that some o' them eggs came from places a deal nearer than the Shetland Islands — ay, a deal nearer! And as for the Pirate, I could put my hand on him this minute, if it were not for the respected gentleman on whose wall we are at present sitting!'

Which, at least, shows the advantage of being respectably connected, if you are a pirate.

'More story and less Bonxie, please!' said Hugh John, to divert attention.

'Cover up the pearls!' said Sir Toady, disgustedly, with a pointed Biblical reference for which a more serious person would doubtless have been expelled the meeting.

Then he struck an attitude and, throwing down an imaginary gauntlet, announced in quarter-deck tones, 'You shall have it — ha, ha!'

Accordingly he announced:

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### THE STORY OF PIRATE CLEVELAND, OR, THE BENEVOLENT BUCCANEER.'

'See here,' I said, 'Toady Lion, let it be understood that there are to be no monkey tricks. We are glad to see your eggs and to hear all about them. But no one is to make fun of any of Sir Walter's books —'

'But what if it *is* funny?' said the Incurrible One.

'Then go and be funny elsewhere,' I said; 'there is room enough in the woods —'

'Yes, too much room!' interjected Keeper Chesnay, sorrowfully. He had found specimens of the eggs of some of his rarest game-birds, discreetly retired indeed, but easily patent to his practised eye. Only the pheasant was conspicuous by its absence.

'But you said that I could tell the story in my own way!' objected Sir Toady, 'and this is my way.'

'Well, then, go on!' I cried, weary of the strife, 'or if you can't, leave the way clear for Maid Margaret.'

'*Can I have my two sovereigns then?*' demanded the ornament of fleets.

'Certainly not!' I replied, aghast at such superiority of cheek; 'not one little half-farthing!'

'And that's worth something too,' said Sir Toady. 'One of our fellows has one that he says brings him luck. He wears it about his neck night and day.'

'Are you going to tell the story, or are you not?'

'Certainly — certainly—' said Toady Lion, with the most innocent expression in the world. 'That is what I have been wanting to do for half an hour — if only you people would let me!'

SIR TOADY LION'S STORY OF 'THE PIRATE,'  
WHICH HE TOLD FOR LOVE

Now I've dug in that book (said Sir Toady, his hand stealing under the dust-sheet to verify the position of one of his egg-cases), I've dug and I've dug. And all I can find about a pirate is this.

He was a chap called Captain Cleveland. And at first, and for a long time, nobody took him for a pirate. You see he stayed all day long about the Udaller's house, eating and drinking and thinking of sweet things to say to the girls, especially to Minna, the eldest. She was a girl with lots of go, but somehow had fallen in love with this fellow. You never can tell what girls will be up to.

Of course he meant to keep away from all his bad associates, whom in the past he had led astray. For his ship was off the coast, and the pirates stepped ashore and took sheep for their dinners, and kissed the girls, and got drinks and dinners without paying for them — oh, a lot of dastardly things like that — just the same as their own precious Captain was doing — all except the sheep.

But, of course, the Captain was noble, and they were all perfect brutes.

Well, after the Captain had had the run of the Udaller's house for ever so long, he began to tell Minna — who must have been pretty soft to believe one-third of it — how he had been all his life fighting the Spaniards on the Spanish main. So she wanted him to stop being a pirate, get a fleet together, set sail, and blow all the Spaniards in the Indies to eternal smithereens, and come sailing back to claim Minna.

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Of course Captain Cleveland knew a good deal better than that. For he said: 'That is all very well. But what if you are a bride or a wife when I come back!'

Then she said that she would swear to be true to him, by the Promise of Odin given at the Standing Stones of Stennis. She was full up as a cow in a clover meadow with all that sort of superstitions — about Odin and Thor as well as the heroes of her warlike race who had stood up to them and given them fits.

Of course, after this promise, it was time for her to ask her lover to confide to her 'the story of his life.'

[Here Sir Toady sighed audibly.]

I give it to you as it is in the book (he said sorrowfully), but if ever a girl asks me for the story of *my* life — I hope I shall make a better use of my opportunities!

'I ought to tell you,' said the Pirate, 'that I spent my earliest years upon a solitary plantation in the little island of Tortuga, under the charge of my father. We were often plundered by the Spaniards, and at last reduced to such a depth of despair, that out of revenge he became a chief of buccaneers. He had good luck and bad luck, but he died suddenly when trying to stop some violence among his comrades. He had been a poor planter, but he died a good pirate.

'A short while before my father's death, I came, though then very young, into the command of a sloop, manned with thirty as desperate fellows as ever handled musket. We cruised for a long time with poor success, taking nothing but wretched small craft, laden with turtle and other trumpery.

## RED CAP ADVENTURES

‘Well, of course, it was all I could do to keep my fellows from revenging on the crews of these baubling shallops the disappointment they had caused us by being so poor.

‘At length we grew desperate, and made a descent on a village where we were told we should intercept the mules of a certain Spanish governor, laden with treasure. We carried the place; but while I was endeavouring to save the inhabitants from the fury of my followers, the muleteers escaped into the woods.

This filled the cup of my unpopularity. I was thought to be too tender-hearted for a real working pirate, and my people, who had long been discontented, became openly mutinous.

I was deposed from my command in solemn council, and condemned, as having too little luck and too much humanity for my business, to be marooned on one of these little sandy, bushy islets called 'keys,' which are only frequented by the turtle and the sea-fowl.

Many of these are said to be haunted — some by the demons worshipped by the old inhabitants, some by *caciques* or native chiefs whom the Spaniards had put to death by torture to compel them to discover their hidden treasures.

My place of banishment was about two and a half leagues to the southeast of Bermudas. It was called Coffin Key, and, they said, was all crowded up with spectres. The fellows who landed me would hardly stay there an hour, even in open daylight, and pulled for the sloop, afraid to look behind them.

‘So I was left alone on a speck of sand, surrounded by the boundless Atlantic, and haunted by the most malignant demons.

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Well, I supported life as well as I could on sea-fowl, aptly called boobies, which were silly enough to let me approach so near that I could knock them down with a stick. I ate also turtle-eggs, when the boobies began to know me better.

‘And the demons? Well, of course, at first I was a good deal scared. I had been brought up among people who were frightened of such things. In broad daylight or in utter darkness I did not mind them much. But in the misty dawn or when night was falling I saw, during my first week on the key, many a dim and undefined spectre, now resembling a Spaniard with his *capa* wrapped about him, and his huge sombrero, as large as an umbrella, upon his head. Now I saw instead a Dutch sailor, with his rough cap and trunk-hose; or again an Indian chief with his feathery crown and long lance of cane!

‘Oh, yes, I always went forward to address them, but — I can’t help it if you are disappointed — whenever I drew near them, the phantoms changed into a bush, or a piece of driftwood, or a wreath of mist.

‘So at last I cared nothing whatever about them, minding the solitude more than I would half-a-dozen good companionable ghosts.

‘Four weeks of wretched existence did I spend on that islet, when I was relieved by the crew of a vessel which came thither a-turtling. Yet my time of misery was useful to me. For on that barren spot I forged the iron mask which has ever since been my chief security against the mutiny or treason of my followers.

‘I made up my mind to seem no more humane, or better instructed, or softer-hearted than the others. Brave, skilful, and enterprising I had

been before, but now I resolved to sink all the better part of me in the rude seaman.

‘Soon after my escape I was at the head of a new body of these reckless adventurers. I sought after those who had betrayed my father, and on them I took a revenge which was sufficient to stamp me with a name for inexorable ferocity. I wanted my men to think I was really like that. My speech, manner, everything, seemed totally changed. So much so that those who knew me before put the difference down to my intercourse with the demons that haunted the sands of Coffin Key.’

And that (said Toady Lion, lifting his eyes suddenly from the back of Elphie's coat, on which, it is now suspected, a leaf of the sixpenny *Pirate* had been pinned) is what Captain Cleveland the Pirate told Minna Troil about his own life. What is more wonderful, she believed him.

After that she urged him to reform, and he said he would, though going on living upon her father all the while. He might have succeeded, too, only that the Udaller was captured along with his daughters by these very pirates — under their new captain, a rascal named Goffe, and a jolly kind of fellow called Jack Bunce, who had learned to be a pirate while an actor in London.

On board the pirate ship they drank punch in cans and made merry on deck. For their Captain Cleveland was still on shore, and it took Jack Bunce all his time to get the girls sent safely to Kirkwall. But they kept the Udaller as a hostage for their Captain, and also to get provisions from the Kirkwall people for the voyage.

Minna and Brenda would hardly leave their father, but he bade them begone as soon as possible

while the pirates were in the mood. As for him, he cared little for himself so long as his daughters were safe.

Bunce, who was Cleveland's best helper, gave Minna a pistol to defend them both, as he himself had to remain by the ship. Minna left word with her guide that whatever was the answer from the town, the pirates were to take their ship round to Stromness and send a boat ashore for Captain Cleveland when he should see a smoke on the Bridge of Broisgar, a kind of rocky point jutting out into the sea.

Cleveland was still a hostage in Kirkwall. He was watched, but not kept in prison. He was allowed to walk about — and being a pirate, of course, he never went near the public-houses, but spent his time in the Cathedral, mourning that no one would put up a marble monument with armorial bearings over *him!*

'My whitening bones,' he said, 'will swing in the gibbet-irons, on some wild beach or lonely cape, and the old mariner, as he passes the Sound, will shake his head and tell of my name and actions as a warning to his younger comrades.' [At this point the tale-teller was again called to order.]

Well, anyway (he continued), he was just enlivening himself up with thoughts like these, when Minna Troil stood beside him. She told him how that she had been among the pirates and had been saved by the power of his name 'which was all that reminded her of the noble qualities she had once thought her Cleveland's!'

'Yes,' he said proudly, 'my name has power over them even when at their wildest. But what can I do for your father?'

## RED CAP ADVENTURES

Minna told him to take her cloak and steal out in the gloaming. Wrapped in that, he could easily pass the guards, to whom she had given the means of carousing. By that time they would not know the difference between a six-foot pirate and the prettiest girl in Kirkwall. Then he was to go to the Bridge of Broisgar, and the vessel he commanded would send a boat ashore for him.

The Pirate cast his eyes up to heaven and said he would flee — *for her father's sake!* Then Minna went to the house where she lodged, where she told the magistrate (when he came to make inquiries) that she had parted with Cleveland in the Cathedral about two hours before.

Well (continued Toady Lion), as soon as Cleveland got on board of the *Fortune's Favourite* (which was the name of his pirate ship), he ordered Magnus Troil to be put on shore pretty quick. And he saw that it was done, too.

But it wasn't all finished then, as you might think. What did this Minna Troil do, but she must go and stay at a lonely place called the House of Stennis, all because she had got a letter from Cleveland asking her for a 'last interview.' It was written in character 'more like fire than ink' —gold paint, most likely.

Now Cleveland was a first-class fool, because he was risking his neck, and Minna and Brenda were two more to leave a safe town and put themselves where they might be easily captured. Indeed, they came mighty near it, as it was. For Jack Bunce resolved to carry them off, as soon as he heard of it. He thought he was a little in love with Brenda himself, and that if Minna was so sick about his captain, her sister might fancy him. But it didn't

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work. For you see there was another fellow called Mordaunt looking after the girls — especially Brenda. He had raised quite a decent little force of men, and generally turned out as plucky as they are made. Mordaunt didn't like pirates — especially Cleveland. So he had sent word to one of his Majesty's ships, the *Halcyon*, to come up from Wick and blow the *Fortune's Favourite* out of the water.

The 'last interview' was to take place at the Standing Stones of Stennis — a place like Stonehenge — at sunrise, when the black-backed gulls were just leaving their nests, and the guillemots rising like so many white dots into the air off the shelves. (Show the eggs, Elphie, please! That's right!)

But I don't believe either Minna or the Pirate ever noticed *them*. Nor yet the Pirate's crew, who were creeping up to nail the girls. Nor yet Mordaunt and his men, who had cut in between them and their boats.

Cleveland did not get much good out of his 'last farewell.' For Minna had just done calling him an 'unhappy man,' asking him 'Why didst thou seek this aggravation of our woe?' and telling him to 'depart in peace' — when Mordaunt and his men set on the sailors, and the sailors on the girls, or t'other way about. Anyhow, it was pretty mixed for a while. But when the scrimmage cleared a bit, Mordaunt, who had seen the sisters in full flight to the house, advanced on Cleveland, with his cutlass drawn. Then the Pirate did his best for the last time, and it was a corker!

'Mordaunt,' he said, as he fired his pistol in the air, *'I never missed my aim.'*

All the same he was a noble pirate and

allowed himself to be taken peaceful-like, to avoid any disturbance. Indeed, he created quite a lot of sympathy. The captain of the *Halcyon* man-of-war found out that Cleveland had done a lot of fearfully noble things out in the Indies — saved Spanish ladies and got tipped the 'black-spot' for it. He seemed to have passed his life that way. Indeed (Sir Toady summed up), any one less fitted than Cleveland for the responsible post of pirate captain, I have not come across in all my reading.

['No comments, sir, if you want any of the prize-money,' I said. Sir Toady touched his cap, navy-fashion, and resumed.]

When at last the *Fortune's Favourite* did show some fight against the *Halcyon*, her captain and Jack Bunce were snugly jailed in the House of Stennis.

They saw old Goffe mistake his Majesty's ship for a West Indiaman laden with rum and sugar. He slipped his cable and gave chase, when his only chance was to run into shallow water. This made them mad.

'The fool! the dotard! the drivelling, drunken idiot!' said Cleveland; 'now he will get his flip hot enough, for that ship is the frigate *Halcyon*. Look — she hoists her colours and fires a broadside. There will soon be an end of the *Fortune's Favourite*. I only hope they will fight her to the last plank.'

Well, they did what they could (said Sir Toady), after all that naval language (why couldn't he have talked like that to Minna?). Then the Jolly Hodge, which is to say the Jolly Roger, went up — the pirate's death's head and cross-bones, or sand-glass as they had then.

The sloop, though hard pressed, maintained

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a running fight, the frigate in full chase, without firing, showing that she wanted to board and take her for the sake of the plunder on board.

'Now, Goffe — now, boatswain!' exclaimed Cleveland, 'stand by sheets and tacks — rake her with a broadside, when you are under her bows. Then about ship and go off on the other tack like a wild goose. The sails shiver — the helm's a-lee — ah, deep sea sink the lubbers! They miss stays and the frigate runs them aboard!'

Now (said Sir Toady, who felt that this was really a naval matter), that's what the fellow said — issued his orders at two miles' distance through a spy-glass instead of commanding on his own quarter-deck like a man — all because he wanted to hear a girl slang him for the last time. *Blow* (concluded the naval hero, contemptuously!) I don't care if I do get docked for it, but I will say that this Mister Cleveland may have been a good pirate, but he was no good officer. He never stood by his ship for more than five minutes at a time, and then even he was on tenter-hooks to get sneaking off again.

[This, being expert opinion, was allowed to pass, specially as the critic had really risked his all upon his criticism, and, as it were, signed his name in full at the bottom.]

Well (he continued), the pirates couldn't even blow up the ship properly — not enough gunpowder — just a fizz and some black smoke. Then Cleveland and Bunce were sent for by the captain of the *Halcyon* — as you would have thought, to be hung. But instead, it was found out that Cleveland had been formerly called Clement Vaughan. He was a long-lost half-brother of his captor Mordaunt, and once he had protected, at the hazard of his own life,

two noble Spanish ladies. So had Jack Bunce — just the same, all except the half-brother. And the captain called them 'the Quempoa heroes' and very nearly gave them his own cabin! They were a different sort from our captains now — weather eye not nearly so wide open, and this *Halcyon* fellow was easy to 'green' — oh, remarkable! I wish we could get round our 'owners' as easy! The navy would be a happier place!

['Ah, me!' sighed Sir Toady Lion.]

Well (he continued), Cleveland, Bunce, and one or two of the less guilty pirates were employed in the West India service. They became distinguished for putting down piracy in the Spanish main. In this good work the ex-pirate Cleveland was much helped by a letter from Minna — the last of all her last wills and testaments. It began, 'Farewell, Cleveland! We part forever, and it is right that we should. *Be virtuous and be happy!*'

And Cleveland, with a deep emotion, which he testified even by tears, read it a hundred times over, and then clasped it to his bosom.

*End of the Pirate — Molly-coddle!* (cried Sir Toady, joyously, unable to resist the epithet).

Again I felt it was my duty to check Master Toady, to whom I intimated very plainly that his tale had not been related in the proper spirit. And that, till he told another with less mockery, and with more reverence, no money would pass between us.

'But you said that I was to tell the story in my own way!' urged Sir Toady.

'Certainly,' I answered, 'but let that be a reverent way!' Here Sir Toady spread his hands abroad to signify that I was asking impossibilities, and I must add that the audience generally agreed

with him. So, in deference to this feeling, I temporised: 'Well, then, take some book which you really like — tell the story as well as you can, without monkey tricks, and I will give you your two guineas like the others.'

'Even if the story be shorter?' said Sir Toady.

'Even *if*—' I said.

'I couldn't have half a sov *now*, on account, could I?' he suggested.

My answer to this was the more emphatic of the two monosyllables available.

But Sir Toady did not seem at all cast down. He suggested that the audience might see their way to 'taking up a collection.' Then, finding this vetoed, he said that he was prepared to sell a dozen selected eggs, properly blown and labelled, for ten shillings. There were no takers. So he and Elphie sadly slid the lids on the cases of eggs and began to carry them up to the harness-room.

Our three grown-up guests were clearly not of my faction. As for Elphie, his disapproval was expressed even in the contours of his back, but I was not prepared for the strong feeling of John Chesnay in the matter.

'Discipline is discipline,' he said gravely; 'I know it well. But it do seem to me — begging your pardon, sir — that you was just a bit overhard on the young gentleman. 'Twas a good story *as* he told it, and I never did hold wi' pirates. Though I will not deny that there Captain Kidd and Amory Black Beard and the rest make interesting readin' in old *Johnston's Lives of Pirates and Sea Robbers*'

Butcher Donnan stood by his original proposal — 'to make up a bit for the young gentleman!' He had not seen anything funny or

improper in the telling of the tale, and considered the conclusion both edifying and instructive. So much so, that he called Nipper's wandering attention to the value of immediate reform in the matter of getting up in the morning — founding his argument in some vague way on the good services of Captain Cleveland, reformed pirate, on that very Spanish main which he had once filled with his iniquities.

'All very well,' grumbled Nipper; 'I would get up in the morning, too, if, instead of having the shop to brush out, I could make my living catching pirates on the Spanish main.'

'You do what I tell you, Nipper,' said his father, 'or what I'll give you will be worse than all them faked pirates put together! You hear?'

'Yes, sir!' said Nipper Donnan.

His father gazed fixedly at Nipper for a good while, as if to make sure that he understood. Nipper did not disappoint an anxious parent. Any more obedient boy than Nipper at that moment could not have been found in half-a-dozen counties. Convinced on this point, Butcher Donnan returned to the charge.

'I like the young gentleman's tales,' he said; 'and if he does carry his tail a bit high like his own fox-terrier — well, that's naught again' a sailor as ever I heard!'

'Well,' I said, 'we will give him another chance. So far as the past is concerned, I can't go back on what I have said.'

'Well, no!' said both men together, 'of course not; but if we was you, sir, we should go a bit easy on him the next go!'

The only person entirely uninterested was

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apparently Sir Toady himself. He was listening to the proposals of his elder brother, who, as a budding soldier, had become attached as 'galloper' to the local corps of volunteers. There was to be a sham fight on Saturday, and it was the purpose of both boys to be good active scouts, and to keep the local commander-in-chief well posted as to movements of the enemy advancing from the great city of Dunedin.

As he listened Toady grinned approval. He ought to have been deep in his new book, but for that very reason Saturday was sure to find him on the moors.

There was much fighting. Deadly deeds of valour were done with blank cartridge. Hugh John, far in front of the firing line, worked his Aitchison, and rode back to make his reports in noble style. More than once the two heroes were almost captured, so far did Hugh John push his reconnoissances against the invaders. Then, blotted from sight behind a hastily raised mound of peat, he took stock of the enemy's numbers and line of advance. What was his horror, on turning round, filled with all the noble enthusiasm of war, to find Sir Toady eagerly scanning the ground in search of birds' eggs!

'Lie down, Toady Lion; don't you know you're under fire?' hissed Hugh John. 'Lie down, or I'll lick you!'

'It's a ring-ouzel,' said Sir Toady, calmly, continuing his search; 'first I've seen on the moors this year. There's his mate. Its nest is bound to be somewhere about.'

'Lie down, Toad; you hear me?' growled his elder brother. 'Don't you know we have got to fall back in ten minutes? *They are advancing!*'

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'Oh, are they?' said Sir Toady, all unmoved. 'Ten minutes isn't much, but I'll do my best!'

And he continued his search among the scattered bushes of gorse and heather. At last, under the shelter of a juniper bush overhanging a steep bank, he found a nest of coarse grass, mud plastered, and lined with soft grass and feathers. Four eggs were within, pale sea-green with dots of Vandyke brown — the property of the aforesaid ring-ouzel without a doubt.

He bounded upon the find with joy.

'I'll take two — she will lay six,' said the egg-collector. 'Charging, are they? Well, let them charge! Their old colonel is a friend of father's. *I'm going to have the eggs!*'

'Fall back — fall back! Don't you hear the bugle?' cried Hugh John.

'Oh, I hear well enough, but I'm going to have the eggs!' and the young martyr to science put three in his mouth — an extra one to make sure.

'See here, Toad,' cried Hugh John, fairly out of himself, 'if you don't fall back when you are ordered, I'll smash you and your eggs too!'

Accordingly they mounted their steely steeds, and made good going across country, bumping and swaying as they went.

'I say, Toadums,' said Hugh John, hours afterwards, when peace had been made, 'what made you gasp and guggle when we had to ride through that ditch to escape being nailed?'

'Ring-ouzel's egg in my mouth,' explained the young man, simply; 'half-hatched it was. Beastly! That one broke. But the other two are all right. I've blown them. Luck, wasn't it?'

'Toadums, you're a beast!' exclaimed his

elder brother; 'but I really don't think you can help it.'

### THE SECOND RED CAP TALE, WHICH TOADY LION TOLD FOR MONEY

'Bound to have the *gelt* this time,' Sir Toady prophesied cheerfully, as he lay on his breast and elbows over a green-covered volume with pictures. 'This looks the shortest one, anyway, and there's a funny man in it. So father can't dock me for being like him — wish I had thought of that sooner!'

'Dry up, and get through with it,' said Hugh John; 'then you can pay me back the half-sov you borrowed out of my money when I settled last week!'

There was silence deep as death, only broken by the sound of rustling leaves and the muttered explanations of Sir Toady, as he worked his way through what he called (unlawfully) *talkee-talkee*. There was also the dry rub of India-rubber as Hugh John fixed on paper the various phases of the great engagement of Saturday last.

Presently Sir Toady got up and looked over his shoulder. 'I say, are you going to keep that for ever and ever?' he demanded.

'Certainly,' said the fearless Hugh John — not knowing the future exigencies which would reduce his baggage of campaign to one valise of the lightest make.

'Well, then, let me mark on your map my ring-ouzel's nest, the number of eggs, and the date!'

The words which Hugh John used with regard to that poor plundered ring-ouzel and its nest

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have really no bearing upon the story. So they are better omitted.

Sir Toady said he did not care. He could do better. So he went and got out his Saunders's *British Birds*. In it he made an entry on the margin of facts and dates — which was indeed much more practical. Then, with a sigh, he lay down again, and committed himself to a study of

### A LEGEND OF MONTROSE

This is the way he told it that night at the Feudal Tower.

There was a clan in the Highlands called the Children of the Mist, and their proper name was the McEaghs. They were very savage and dangerous and they hated the next clan, the McAulays, as much as if they had had to translate one of their chief's essays into Latin prose, as I have had often!

[‘Toady!’ said I, warningly.]

That's local colour! (said the historian of the earlier McAulays, triumphantly). And without waiting for a reply, he proceeded.

Now these McEaghs, or Children of the Mist, were a tough lot. And just because the King had promoted McAulay's brother-in-law to be the warden of the Royal Forest, they lay in wait for him, and had his head off before he could say — well, anything. Then these Children of the Mist were not satisfied with that, but went off to the castle of his brother-in-law. The laird was absent, luckily for him, but the lady of the house, the warden's sister, did her best for them, spreading the table and even going out herself to get them good things to eat.

While she was gone, the Children of the Mist

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thought it was a good joke to put her own brother's head on the table with a piece of bread between his teeth, bidding them do their office now, for many a good meal they had eaten there!

When his sister came back and saw her brother's head, she fled like an arrow out of the house into the woods, crying out as if she was mad. And I daresay so she was — and no wonder.

Indeed she was thought to be dead. For the McEaghs went away, thinking they had done enough, while the servants and her husband sought her everywhere in vain. The barons and people all about took arms against the Children of the Mist and made seventeen heads pay for the one. But still no sign of the lost lady!

But it is the custom in summer to send the cows to the upland pastures for the sake of the grass, and the maids of the village and the daughters of the family go up to milk them morning and evening.

While they were doing this, they saw that they were being watched at a distance by a pale, thin, meagre figure — some thought the ghost of their lost mistress.

Some started to seek her, but she fled with a wild shriek. However, her husband managed to find her and bring her home. She was, as you may think, quite mad. No one knew how she had kept herself alive. Some said she had been nourished by the fairies, or that the wild does had given her milk. But pignuts and raspberries had more likely to do with it — not to speak of other things *I* could find — wild strawberries, blackberries, cranberries, and so on. Anyway, she was alive, and when her second little boy was born, soon after, she had sense enough to

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teach him how to hate the Children of the Mist. Then she died.

When little Allan grew bigger, instead of going after birds' eggs and things like that, he hunted the Children of the Mist. Sometimes he got the head of a chief, sometimes of a common man, sometimes two at a time! He brought them home with him as proudly as if they had been nice rare flowers he had been looking for a long while.

But he was pretty strong as well as wary, and being cracky into the bargain, people generally let him alone. Besides, so long as he only killed McEaghs, nobody minded. On the contrary, they gave him good-conduct marks.

The Children of the Mist minded, though, you may be sure. Neither gun, dirk, nor bow and arrow were any good against Allan McAulay. They said the fairies had taught him, and so it came to pass that half a dozen of the stoutest Caterans in the Highlands would take to their heels at a blast of Allan's horn.

Allan lived in the house of his brother, who was now the head of the clan. It was the time when the Scottish Cavaliers were going to try their first rising against the Covenanters. A Scottish army was in England helping the Parliament against Charles I, and every one thought the time was well chosen — the best that could be, in fact.

There was to be a gathering of Highland chiefs at McAulay's, and the laird had come back out of England with two English gentlemen, Sir Miles Musgrave and Christopher Hall. The old servant of the house, Donald, was in great fear about a wager that his master had taken on in England, which was that he had more candlesticks

and better candlesticks in his castle at home than were to be found in any hall in Cumberland.

'At Musgrave Hall there were six, all of solid silver, on the table at the time,' said Donald, 'and the English gentlemen clinked the laird down for a bet of two hundred marks as fast as a Lowland smith could hammer shoon on a Highland shelyty. So he took the wager, rather than be shamed before the Englishmen — and I think (added the old man) that is what is keeping him so long at the hill!'

Mad Allan, who had been brooding on the settle, and apparently not listening, suddenly ordered everybody out. And though there was present Lord Monteith and a Scottish captain who had been in the wars of the great Gustavus Adolphus, they went. Because in the Highlands it was not thought safe to go against the wish of one who was mad. ['I should not have judged it safe in Allan's case, anyway,' interjected Sir Toady, feeling if his head were safely fixed on.]

There was also a man named Anderson (he continued), who was said to be a follower of Lord Monteith's, but he seemed pretty sure of himself to be only a servant. And indeed his master talked to him constantly. So when the Chief came in with the English gentlemen off the hill, they had all to go in to dinner, and McAulay was very doleful at the thought of where he was to find all that money to pay the bet, even if he borrowed it out of twenty purses.

For there were no candlesticks in the house, except the old iron branches that had been there ever since Laird Kenneth's time, and some tin sconces made by Willie Winkie the tinkler when the laird's father was alive.

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But Allan had found a way to clear his brother and chief, and do honour to his clan at the same time.

The two English gentlemen were ushered into the great hall. The large oaken table was spread with substantial joints of meat. The seats were placed in order for the guests.

Behind every chair stood a gigantic Highlander, completely dressed and armed in Highland fashion. He held in his right hand his drawn sword, with the point turned downwards, and in the left a blazing torch made of the bog-pine.

The Englishmen were startled by the red glare of the torches, the strange dress, the glittering arms of the 'Laird's Candlesticks,' while the smoke eddying up to the roof of the hall made a canopy of vapour over their heads.

Then Allan, pointing with his sheathed broadsword, said, 'Behold, gentlemen Cavaliers, the chandeliers of my brother's house, the ancient custom of our name. Not one of them knows any law but his chief's commands. Would you compare to them the richest ore that was ever dug out of mine? How say you, Cavaliers? Is your wager won or lost?'

'Lost — lost!' said Musgrave, gaily; 'my own silver candlesticks are all melted down and riding upon horseback by this time. I only wish the fellows I enlisted were half as trusty as these!'

### THE TALE OF CAPTAIN DALGETTY AND THE CHILDREN OF THE MIST

He thought a great deal of himself, this Scottish soldier who had followed Lord Monteith to the gathering of the clans. He had been sometime a

student at Mareschal College, Aberdeen. He had fought long in the wars of Gustavus Adolphus, under the Emperor. He had taken service with the Spaniards, and afterwards with the Dutch.

But hearing that there was something doing in his own country that year, he had come over to take service either with the Covenanters or against them, according as he could get the highest pay.

He did not care a button for whom he fought, so that he got his wages. But for half-a-dollar a day Montrose arranged with him to drill the Irish levies sent over by the Earl of Antrim. And so long as he was in the service, Dalgetty would be faithful to his general. So much he promised and meant to hold to.

Now the Marquis of Argyle was the head of the Covenanters in Scotland. He was called Gillespie Grumach, because he squinted, and he liked to do things quietly and (some people thought) treacherously. At any rate, he was Grand Justicer of Scotland and could hang and behead anybody he liked.

Sir Duncan Campbell of Ardenvohr, a relative of Argyle's, had come as a kind of messenger to the assembled chiefs at the house of McAulay, and Captain Dalgetty was sent back to the Marquis of Argyle with Montrose's answer, but chiefly perhaps to keep his eyes about him and spy out the strength of the enemy.

But Gillespie Grumach was a difficult person to play the spy upon. *He* did not care for introductions or flags of truce or anything. As soon as Captain Dugald Dalgetty had delivered his message, he clapped him into a deep dungeon, where he found himself in company with one of the McEaghs — indeed, with the very man whose three

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sons were even then dangling on the gallows of Inverary.

The Chief of the Children of the Mist asked Dalgetty if he knew Sir Duncan Campbell, and revealed to him the secret how when his tribe had taken the castle of Sir Duncan, and slain all his children, one girl had escaped, who was now being brought up in the house of the McAulays under the name of Annot Lyle.

While he was telling him this story, the Marquis of Argyle had entered the dungeon by a secret door, and had been listening also. He had not, however, heard all, but he promised that if what McEagh said about Annot Lyle were true, he should be set at liberty.

Then he tried in vain to seduce Captain Dalgetty, asking him what were the numbers of the Montrose's Cavaliers, and how many Irish there were in the ranks. Dalgetty soon saw that it was the Marquis himself with whom he had to do, and springing suddenly upon him, he choked him nearly to death. Then he made him write a permission to pass and give him the password. If he hadn't, he would have killed him. He went up into the Marquis's room, took a purse of gold and what arms he could find, then went out by the way of the chapel, attended by McEagh. They found the chaplain, who as soon as he heard that Captain Dalgetty had served with the saviour of Protestantism, the Lion of the North, went himself to bring Captain Dalgetty's horse, and even attended them to the castle gate.

They passed the guard in safety, and Dalgetty rode away, leaving the Marquis tied fast in McEagh's plaid and locked up in his own dungeon.

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They had not got into the mountains, however, when they heard the tolling of the castle bell, and afterwards the deep baying of a bloodhound on their trail.

But still dragging his ponderous boots and encumbered with his armour, Captain Dalgetty managed to reach the top of the pass. Here McEagh whistled. He was answered equally softly, and when they came out into the moonlight, it was in the midst of a party of ten or twelve stalwart Highlanders. Dalgetty's horse Gustavus had already been left behind in the care of a boy who crept out of a heather bush, while his master had gone on with his late fellow-prisoner, Ranald McEagh.

The men and women, on hearing how Dalgetty had saved their chief, pressed about him clamorous to kiss even the hem of his garment.

'They are plighting their faith to you,' said Ranald McEagh. But Dalgetty, though flattered, was eager rather to get the matter settled as to how best to defend the position.

He was astonished to hear that the best weapons of the Children of the Mist were bows and arrows.

'Ha! ha! ha!' cried Dalgetty; 'have we Robin Hood and Little John back again? Bows and arrows! Why, the sight has not been seen in civilised warfare for a hundred years — why not weaver's beams, as in the days of Goliath?'

The bay of the bloodhound was now approaching nearer, and McEagh bade Dalgetty be quiet. They could even hear the voices of the people who accompanied the brute and encouraged it to follow the track.

All was now dead silence. Even Dalgetty said

nothing, for he understood the nature of an ambush as well as any other part of military service.

The moon gleamed on the broken pathway, and on the projecting cliffs about which it wound. The darkness beneath was all copse wood, the rounded tops of the bushes looking like a dimly seen ocean. From the bosom of this darkness, and close to the precipice, the hound could be heard at intervals baying fearfully. Then voices of men sounded immediately below.

At length a shadowy figure was seen ascending, and Dalgetty at once remarked the long gun he carried behind his back.

'Thousand devils!' he muttered; 'they will make an end of us if they have brought musketry to encounter our archers.'

The narrow path had been discovered. The man, who by the feathers in his bonnet was some one in high command, had reached a rock about halfway up, when an arrow whistled from the bow of one of the Children of the Mist, and his dead body fell crashing into the depths below. But Dalgetty had leaned too far forward.

'The Sassenach,' cried a voice from below; 'the Sassenach *sidier!* I see the glitter of his breastplate!' Three muskets were discharged at him. And while one bullet rattled against the corselet of proof, another penetrated the armour that covered his left thigh and stretched him on the ground.

Ranald McEagh bore him back from the edge of the precipice, still muttering: 'I always told the immortal Gustavus, Wallenstein, Tilly, and other men of the sword that, to my poor mind, taslets ought to be made musket-proof. And do not forget, McEagh, if I die, to tell Montrose that I did my duty

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to the last like a true follower of the Lion of the North.'

He began to wander a little in his mind as the blood flowed fast. But in spite of this his tongue never kept still a moment.

'Advance your stands of pikes!' he said. 'Hold fast there, dragoons on the left flank! If it comes to a retreat, leave some matches burning on the branches of the trees — it looks as if they were lines with musketeers. But I forgot, ye have no matchlocks nor habergeons — only bows and arrows, which is a laughable thing — bows and arrows — ha! ha! ha!'

And the man of the continental wars fainted even as he laughed.

Well, Dalgetty recovered of his wound by the care of the women of the McEagh clan, and was able to be with Montrose at Inverlochy, when the rest of the Highlands took their vengeance on the hated Campbell clan. Here he had his horse Gustavus killed beneath him. Here at the end of the day he was made a knight by Montrose, who had the King's commission to do such honour to those who fought well. But immediately afterwards he found himself in the midst of a deadly quarrel with Allan McAulay because he wanted to slay his old enemy McEagh.

However, instead of killing Dalgetty, Mad Allan, who had got dreaming of all sorts of things, wounded Lord Monteith, when he was just on the point of being married to Annot Lyle, who had been proved to be the only daughter of Sir Duncan Campbell of Ardenvohr, carried off by the Children of the Mist.

Montrose called to them to shut the gates, swearing that the criminal should die if he were his

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own brother. But striking down a sentinel, Allan escaped, running like a mountain deer. He was pursued by all who had heard the alarm, but he threw himself into the river, and swimming across was soon lost in the woods.

Then, in a wonderfully short time after the deed was committed, he burst into a room in the castle of Inverary and threw the bloody dirk on the table.

'Is it the blood of James Grahame?' demanded the Marquis, eagerly. For he had a hope that it might have been Montrose who had been slain.

However, Monteith, though severely wounded, was not killed. He lived to marry Annot, now the heiress of the knight of Ardenvohr.

As for Sir Dugald Dalgetty, he followed Montrose to the last. He was captured at Philiphaugh, and came near being executed with the other officers. He was, however, offered service with the Covenanters. This, to the great surprise of every one, he declined, because the time of his service with the King was not yet quite expired.

However, as it had only a fortnight to run, he was reprieved over that period, and immediately afterwards took the position of Major in Kirk's Own Regiment of Horse, and died in possession of his paternal estate of Drumthwacket, having married the widow of the Aberdeen Covenanter.

'There!' cried Sir Toady, holding out his hand like an offertory plate in church; 'nobody can say I told that funnily, and it wasn't long, either! I even kept out ever so much of the fun there was in it, so as to be done the sooner. Please, can I have my money now, so that I can pay Hugh John the ten

shillings he is always dunning me for?’

He could. He did. And immediately there was a vacancy in the little encampment sheltered by the rowan tree which sprang from the crumbling fragments of the Feudal Tower.

Toady Lion had departed. He was not one who waited for criticism — after the cash had been paid down on the nail. He was of opinion that the true test of genius in tale-telling are a man's publishers' accounts.

He was next heard of in consultation with the joiner-cabinet-maker of the village, treating doubtless for new ‘lined’ drawers for his eggs.

‘I'm glad we did not live in those times!’ said Sweetheart.

‘Bow and arrow would do little against a covey — you could not give them a proper right and left at all,’ said Keeper Chesnay.

‘I must go and make sure of my half-sovereign, if I want to see it at all,’ said Hugh John.

As for Maid Margaret, she began to look anxious. It was her turn next, and I judged that she would pass a troubled night. So I went over to where she sat, her daisy chains scattered about her, and her fingers knitting and twisting nervously.

‘Margaret,’ I said, ‘never mind. You just do your best, and you shall have something!’

I heard a little sob.

‘Oh, I don't know *what* I shall say — I don't know — I get it all in my head, and then I forget!’ she mourned.

‘Do not mind,’ I said; ‘say whatever comes into your head, and don't care for anybody. They will be glad to hear such a little girl tell a story, instead of only having one told to her.’

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This proved some slight consolation, but still it was with sadness that she gathered up her flowers and took her way up to the house.

‘I know I shall never deserve even a penny!’ she said, ‘but I shall try!’

And that is no bad frame of mind in which to prepare for an ordeal.

RED CAP ADVENTURES  
TOLD TO  
MAID MARGARET IN A DREAM

THE LAST TALE IN THE BOOK CALLED 'RED  
CAP ADVENTURES'  
BEING  
THE TALE THAT RED CAP TOLD TO MAID  
MARGARET IN A DREAM

On the night before the final proof, when Margaret was to pass her trials, the prevailing feelings in the household were certainly pity and hope. More than any one, Sir Toady had awakened curiosity. Hugh John had carried a certain chivalrous dash into his narrative by identifying himself with his hero, Quentin. Sweetheart won all our sympathies by her gallant struggle with the most difficult story of all to retell briefly.

But Maid Margaret, being greatly the youngest, and perhaps, like most youngests, just a little spoiled by all, carried with her something more tender. A certain wistfulness stirred our hearts, and I am quite sure that if she had not been granted a prize, no power of mine could have prevented those present from 'putting up a bit' for her.

As it was, she arrived late, and I think it must have taken all her courage to face the assembly, in the midst of which she had been accustomed to sit so much at ease playing with her daisy chains.

She was a little pale, and her lips were slightly trembling.

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But she put her hands behind her and began in a low voice, with her eyes cast on the ground.

I can't tell you about a book, because I'm too little to remember properly how things come — or at least to say them all over again. Except, maybe, Jack-in-the-Beanstalk or something like that.

So I did not know what to do. Once or twice I thought I would pray to God to help me. But then, as it was just the money I wanted, I did not think it was proper to trouble God about a little thing like that. So I cried — yes, I did — I cried a lot. It was last night that I cried the most. I wanted so to have the money like the others — to earn it, I mean.

[For her quick eye had seen Butcher Donnan's kind right hand stealing in the direction of his pocket.]

Perhaps I did pray a little, after all, but I tried hard not to. For I knew it was wrong. But I heard a man preaching in church say that little children had angels that were always regarding them. So I thought I would ask the angel — in the morning, when maybe he would be in a good humour, because of the night being past and the light come again. Everybody is brighter then, and you get things easier out of them. Have you noticed? At any rate, I stopped crying and fell asleep.

Well, you never could think what I saw when I woke up — a pretty, old-fashioned house, but not really old, with the river in front, just like this, only much nearer. I knew in a moment that it was Abbotsford, where Sir Walter lived. And so I thought I would go and see him there. I knew somehow that he was not dead, as they say in books — it seemed like that, you know, in my dream — just as if he were living there still, and no tourists or anything

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paying to go in — only the sound of the Tweed running over its pebbles on a September afternoon, the sound which he loved most dearly of any on the earth.

And I wasn't afraid or anything. Oh, not a bit! For I knew he would help me and be kind to a little girl. It was a nice warm day, — afternoon, from the warm, hot smell of meadows, — and I must have been paddling in the water, for I had my shoes in my hand.

I went up the steps. They were not a bit high, but there was a big cool hall. I knocked on the open door. It was all nice and quiet inside. At first nobody seemed to hear me, but presently a big deer-hound, like Hugh John's Ross, came bouncing out and jumped up on me.

So I said, 'Get down, Maida!' Quite naturally I said it. You see I had known Maida ever such a long time.

And then HE came out to see what was the matter— the kindest man. When he took off his big grey hat and stood with it in his hand, my heart gave a great jump, for I saw it was Sir Walter. You could tell by his brow. He was smiling, you know; not as if he wanted to laugh, but just because his heart was warm and kind and sunny like the September afternoon. I said it was September, didn't I? And the reapers were in the fields.

So I told him that I was a little girl who could not tell over again the stories he had written, though I had tried very hard.

'Oh,' he said, 'you belong to that family which has been pestering my poor Red Cap in the big chest upstairs to tell all the old tales over — and making him so cross he will hardly tell *me* even a

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tale — though I have asked him several times.'

'Oh, please,' said I, 'if I could only see Master Red Cap, I think he might tell me something — something for a little girl to remember, — something not in the printed books, — do you think he would?'

'Well,' said Sir Walter, 'often and often he won't for me. But perhaps, as you are a little girl and this is the first time, he might. At any rate, we can only go and see.'

So he took me by the hand and led me through the hall and past the armour, and as we went all the figures in the iron dresses turned their heads to look after me, as much as to say, 'Wherever is that little girl going?'

So we came to the library. And I knew it all by heart, with the gallery round, and Red Cap's big chest in the corner and all just as in the picture.

'Better stop there,' said Sir Walter (always in my dream), putting a sword with a cross on the hilt into my hands, 'and if Master Red Cap is cross or anything — make a circle with the point on the carpet and then I can jump inside!'

'But is he often naughty, this Red Cap?' I asked.

'No,' said Sir Walter, smiling, 'not generally. But he is getting old and has done a lot of work in his day. So he is sometimes not in the best of humours when he awakes — especially on hot afternoons.'

So he went forward to the big chest, and tapped gently on the lid. Then I heard what was like a little cross whine inside — something between an angry pussy and a naughty baby.

Sir Walter shook his head — of course in the dream.

'He does not want to be disturbed, I can hear that,' he said; 'but I will tell him that it is a little girl who has come a long way to see him, and that she will cry if she doesn't. That will make him come out if anything will!'

So he whispered a little through the keyhole, and — up jumped the lid of the chest, and out stepped the funniest little man all dressed in — but *there*, I promised not to describe him — only he had a red cap on his head, and under it the queerest face, no part of it keeping still a moment, but all dancing and pimpling and bubbling — well, just like a pot before it boils.

The door of the library gave a loud bang — loud like thunder. Sir Walter went away to shut it properly, but I ran after him and caught him by the hand.

'Ha! ha! ha!' cried Brownie Red Cap in the funniest crackling voice (he was sitting on the Big Box, cross-legged, like a Turk), 'the little girl has seen me and she is frightened. Ho! ho! Ha! ha!'

'Well, and what of that—' said Sir Walter; 'so was I, for that matter, the first time in Castle Street — you remember when you wrote the last two volumes of Waverley in one night, and the people stood watching your hand through the window, tossing down sheet after sheet! They thought it was the Great Unknown, as they called him, but he had his law business to attend to and did not believe much in the story-telling at any rate!'

The recollection made Red Cap laugh. So, after a while, he looked at me again more kindly and said, 'Well, what does this little girl want? Now that she has come, we must see what can be done for her. The Queen of the Fairies and I were just having

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a rare good gossip over our afternoon tea.'

'What!' I said, for I was much surprised, 'have you afternoon tea in Fairyland?'

He bent his brows at me, and said, 'Why, where have you been brought up, not to know that? Yes, certainly. Isn't China called the Flowery Land? So, of course, there are more fairies there than anywhere else in the world. And of course, too, the Queen has to have the best — Extra Special Celestial Golden Tips, flavoured with gooseberry seeds, and served in buttercups! In fact, tea is her favourite flower!'

'So it is mine,' I said; 'but was it a set-down tea like in the nursery, or a serve-and-stand-round tea like what they have in the drawing-room?'

'Oh, a set-down tea — the only proper kind of tea!' he said. 'That was what made it all the harder to come away!'

'Well,' said I, 'if you come to our house when everybody is out, I know where everything is — everything that is mine, I mean. Sunday afternoon is a good time — the boys are always in the woods, and the rest say they are reading, but really they are asleep — *you know!*'

'Thank you,' said Red Cap, bowing very politely over the top of the big box, 'but as I am bound always to be at My Master's call (here he nodded at Sir Walter, who was still smiling), I cannot come to any one else's house. But all the same, if you want a story to tell, so that you can get two pieces of the nasty heavy golden dross — yes, he called it that — which men like so much and can't be happy without — why, just you tell them that you've been here. And that My Master brought me up specially from the Court of the Queen of

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Fairyland — where Old Tom and she and I were having tea together — just to see you. At least, Tom had some mead for himself instead. For he's old-fashioned, you see, but not at all a bad sort of a fellow, though he will go on believing in his old prophecies—'

['Thomas the Rhymer!' said all the children, in an awe-stricken whisper; 'just fancy seeing—'

'Hush,' said I, 'let her finish.']

And so he told me just to stop there a minute. 'I will just step down below and see if the old fellow has got any prophecy about you, my little girl. For really, now that I have got over being disturbed, it is nice and kind of you to come and see a cross-grained old thing like me!'

'You are not cross-grained,' I said; 'and you don't look half your age, but only nice and kind!'

He pulled the peak of his red cap three times in acknowledgment, and I could see he was pleased. I always know when men are pleased. So he shut down the lid, and Sir Walter put his finger to his lip as a signal that we must not speak till he came back.

But instead, we stood holding each other's hands.

It seemed a great while before there was a rumbling in the chest again, and little Brownie Red Cap thrust his head out and nodded the tassel of his bonnet thrice three times — which by the multiplication table made nine. I know, because I am at four times myself now. I was promoted last week.

'I can only work for My Master,' he said; 'I can tell stories for nobody else. It is not allowed. But I've been to True Thomas, who never told a story in

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his life. He doesn't know how. And I told him to prophesy something that would certainly come true — something about you.

‘And the old fellow — he doesn't look old, you know — not even like me, only he has old-fashioned ways — he bade me tell you that, by his halidom, and as sure as you would suck the honey out of a honeysuckle blossom the next time you saw one in the hedge, your father would pay you two round pieces of golden dross, the same as to your brothers and sister! And all for telling about Red Cap and Red Cap's Master — for loving them and thinking that they looked nice — when really they were very grumpy inside at being disturbed in the hot middle of the afternoon. So good-bye, little lady!’

And then (concluded Maid Margaret), with that the lid shut with a bang. I saw no more of Red Cap. But Sir Walter brought me to the door, and just as he was stooping to kiss me — Ellie put her hand on my shoulder and said that it was time to get up and dress or I should be late for lessons.

*‘But Thomas the Rhymer was a true prophet, wasn't he, father?’* And this time, at least, he was. I made him so on the spot. Indeed, had I not done so, I should instantly have been sent to Coventry — my society abjured by all honest men, such as Butcher Donnan and Keeper Chesnay, considered unworthy even by licensed depredators like Elphie, looked down upon by my own family, and in especial, held in dangerously bad odour at the Court of Fairyland.

With the two bits of ‘golden dross’ shining in her small palm, Maid Margaret said triumphantly, ‘Now, all you people who won't believe, tell me whether there are no real fairies nowadays on the earth!’

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‘And who ever doubted it?’ I cried, catching up the friend of Red Cap in my arms — a happy fairy, for had she not spoken with the Master of us all?

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- 1912 Anne of the Barricades
- 1912 Sweethearts at Home
- 1912 The Moss Troopers
- 1913 Sandy's Love
- 1913 A Tatter of Scarlet
- 1914 Silver Sand

## RED CAP ADVENTURES

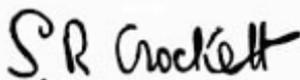
### POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATIONS

- 1915 Hal o' the Ironsides
- 1917 The Azure Hand
- 1920 The White Pope
- 1926 Rogues' Island
- 2016 Peter the Renegade

Find out more about Crockett's life literature and legacy at: [www.gallowayraiders.co.uk](http://www.gallowayraiders.co.uk)

[www.srcrockett.weebly.com](http://www.srcrockett.weebly.com) and The Galloway Raiders YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

'Mayhap that is the best fortune of all – to be loved by a few greatly and constantly, rather than to be loudly applauded and immediately forgotten by the many.'

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. R. Crockett". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large "S" and "R" at the beginning.

