

**YONGE
CHARLOTTE
MARY**

THE LANCES OF
LYNWOOD

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Charlotte M. Yonge

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PREFACE

For an explanation of the allusions in the present Tale, scarcely any Notes are necessary, save a reference to the bewitching Chronicle of Froissart; and we cannot but hope that our sketch may serve as an inducement to some young readers to make acquaintance with the delectable old Canon for themselves, undeterred by the size of his tomes.

The story of Orthon is almost verbally copied from him, and bears a curious resemblance to various German legends—such as that of "Heinzelman," to be found in Keightley's "Fairy Mythology," and to "Teague of the Lea," as related in Croker's "Irish Fairy Legends."

The old French "Vie de Bertrand du Guesclin" has likewise been drawn upon for materials, and would have supplied much more of great interest, such as Enrique of Trastamare's arrival in the disguise of a palmer, to consult with him during his captivity at Bordeaux, and many most curious anecdotes of his early childhood and youth.

To Breton tradition, his excellent wife Epiphanie Ragueneel owes her title of Tiphaine la fee, meaning that she was endowed

with magic power, which enabled her to predict what would be lucky or unlucky days for her husband. His disregard of them was thought to have twice cost him the loss of a battle.

We must apologize for having made Henry of Lancaster a year or two older than is warranted by the date of his birth.

CHAPTER I

Seldom had the interior of this island presented a more peaceful and prosperous aspect than in the reign of Edward III., when the more turbulent spirits among his subjects had found occupation in his foreign wars, and his wise government had established at home a degree of plenty, tranquility, and security, such as had probably never before been experienced in England.

Castle and cottage, church and convent, alike showed the prosperity and safety of the inhabitants, at once by the profuseness of embellishment in those newly erected, and by the neglect of the jealous precautions required in former days of confusion and misrule. Thus it was with the village of Lynwood, where, among the cottages and farm-houses occupying a fertile valley in Somersetshire, arose the ancient Keep, built of gray stone, and strongly fortified; but the defences were kept up rather as appendages of the owner's rank, than as requisite for his protection; though the moat was clear of weeds, and full of water, the drawbridge was so well covered with hard-trodden earth, overgrown at the edges with grass, that, in spite of the massive chains connecting it with the gateway, it seemed permanently fixed on the ground. The spikes of the portcullis frowned above in threatening array, but a wreath of ivy was twining up the groove by which it had once descended, and the archway, which by day stood hospitably open, was at night only guarded by two

large oaken doors, yielding to a slight push. Beneath the southern wall of the castle court were various flower-beds, the pride and delight of the old seneschal, Ralph Penrose, in his own estimation the most important personage of Lynwood Keep, manager of the servants, adviser of the Lady, and instructor of the young gentleman in the exercises of chivalry.

One fine evening, old Ralph stood before the door, his bald forehead and thin iron-gray locks unbonneted, and his dark ruddy-brown face (marked at Halidon Hill with a deep scar) raised with an air of deference, and yet of self-satisfaction, towards the Lady who stood on the steps of the porch. She was small and fragile in figure; her face, though very lovely, was pale and thin, and her smile had in it something pensive and almost melancholy, as she listened to his narration of his dealings with a refractory tenant, and at the same time watched a noble-looking child of seven or eight years old, who, mounted on an old war-horse, was led round the court by a youth, his elder by some ten or eleven years.

"See mother!" cried the child, "I am holding the reins myself. Uncle Eustace lays not a finger on them!"

"As I was saying, madam," continued Ralph, disregarding the interruption, "I told him that I should not have thought of one exempted from feudal service in the camp, by our noble Knight, being deficient in his dues in his absence. I told him we should see how he liked to be sent packing to Bordeaux with a sheaf of arrows on his back, instead of the sheaf of wheat which ought to

be in our granary by this time. But you are too gentle with them, my Lady, and they grow insolent in Sir Reginald's long absence."

"All goes ill in his absence," said the Lady. "It is a weary while since the wounded archer brought tidings of his speedy return."

"Therefore," said the youth, turning round, "it must be the nearer at hand. Come sweet sister Eleanor, cheer up, for he cannot but come soon."

"So many *soons* have passed away, that my heart is well-nigh too sick for hope," said Eleanor. "And when he comes it will be but a bright dream to last for a moment. He cannot long be spared from the Prince's side."

"You must go with him, then, sister, and see how I begin my days of chivalry—that is, if he will but believe me fit to bear shield and lance."

"Ah! Master Eustace, if you were but such as I have seen others of your race," said Ralph, shaking his head. "There was Sir Henry—at your age he had made the Scottish thieves look about them, I promise you. And to go no further back than Sir Reginald himself—he stood by the Prince's side at Crecy ere he was yet fifteen!"

"It is not my fault that I have not done as much, Ralph," said Eustace. "It is not for want of the will, as you know full well."

"No. Thanks to me, I trust you have the will and the teaching, at least, to make a good Knight," said Ralph. "And yet, while I think of the goodly height and broad shoulders of those that have gone before you—"

"But hark! hark!" cried Eustace, cutting short a comparison which did not seem likely to be complimentary. "Dost not hear, Ralph? A horn!"

"The Lynwood note! My husband's note! O thanks, thanks to the Saints!" cried the Lady, clasping her hands, whilst Eustace, vaulting into the saddle behind his little nephew, rode across the drawbridge as fast as the stiffened joints of old Blanc Etoile could be prevailed on to move. Gaining the summit of a rising ground, both at once shouted, "Our own pennon! It is himself!" as they beheld the dark blue crosslet on an argent field floating above a troop of horsemen, whose armour glanced in the setting sun.

"There are the Lances of Lynwood, Arthur," said Eustace, leaping to the ground. "Keep your seat, and meet your father like a brave Knight's son."

He then settled the reins in the child's hand, and walked beside him to meet the new-comers. They were about twenty in number, armed alike with corselets marked with the blue cross, steel headpieces, and long lances. In front rode two of higher rank. The first was a man of noble mien and lofty stature, his short dark curled hair and beard, and handsome though sunburnt countenance, displayed beneath his small blue velvet cap, his helmet being carried behind him by a man-at-arms, and his attire consisting of a close-fitting dress of chamois leather, a white mantle embroidered with the blue cross thrown over one shoulder, and his sword hanging by his side. His companion, who carried at his saddle-bow a shield blazoned with heraldic devices

in scarlet and gold, was of still greater height, and very slight; his large keen eyes, hair and moustache, black as jet; and his complexion dark brown, with a well-formed aquiline nose, and a perfect and very white set of teeth.

The instant the first-mentioned horseman perceived Eustace and Arthur, he sprang to the ground and hurried to meet them with rapid affectionate greetings and inquiries. In another moment Dame Eleanor appeared on the drawbridge, and, weeping with joy, was clasped in her husband's arms. Behind her stood the venerable chaplain, Father Cyril, and a step or two further off, Ralph Penrose, both of whom in turn received the kindly greetings of Sir Reginald Lynwood, as, with his wife hanging on his arm and his boy holding his hand, he passed under the gateway of his ancestral castle. Turning the next moment, he addressed his tall companion: "Friend Gaston, I bid you welcome! Dame Eleanor, and you, brother Eustace, I present to you my trusty Esquire, Master Gaston d'Aubricour."

Due courtesies passed between the Lady and the Squire, who, after a few words with the Knight, remained to see the disposal of the men, while Sir Reginald himself entered the hall with his wife, son and brother. Eustace did not long remain there: he found that Reginald and Eleanor had much to say to each other, and his curiosity and interest were, besides, greatly excited by the novelty of the scene presented by the castle court, so different from its usual peaceful monotony. The men were unsaddling their horses, rubbing them down, walking

them about, or removing the stains of dust and mud from their own armour, while others were exchanging greetings with the villagers, who were gathering in joyous parties round such of the newly arrived as were natives of the place.

In the midst stood the strange Squire, superintending a horse-boy who was rubbing down the Knight's tall war-horse, and at the same time ordering, giving directions, answering inquiries, or granting permission to the men to return home with their relations. Ralph Penrose was near, his countenance, as Eustace could plainly perceive, expressing little satisfaction at finding another authority in the court of Lynwood Keep; the references to himself short, brief, and rapid, and only made when ignorance of the locality compelled the stranger to apply for information. The French accent and occasional French phrases with which the Squire spoke, made him contract his brow more and more, and at last, just as Eustace came up, he walked slowly away, grumbling to himself, "Well, have it e'en your own way, I am too old for your gay French fashions. It was not so in Humfrey Harwood's time, when— But the world has gone after the French now! Sir Reginald has brought home as many Gascon thieves as kindly Englishmen!"

Eustace listened for a moment to his mutterings, but without answering them, and coming within a few steps of the stranger, stood waiting to offer him any courtesy in his power, though at the same time he felt abashed by the consciousness of his inferiority in accomplishments and experience.

It was the Squire who was the first to speak. "So this is Sir Reginald's old Keep! A fine old fortalice—would stand at least a fortnight's siege. Ha! Is not yonder a weak point? I would undertake to scale that tower, so the battering-rams made a diversion on the other side."

"I trust it will never be tried," said Eustace.

"It would be as fair a feat of arms as ever you beheld! But I crave your pardon," added he, displaying his white teeth with a merry laugh; "the state of my own land has taught me to look on every castle with eyes for attack and defence, and your brother tells me I am not behind my countrymen in what you English call gasconades."

"You have seen many sieges and passages of arms?" asked Eustace, looking up in his face with an expression at once puzzled and respectful.

"Since our castle of Albricorte was sacked and burnt by the Count de Bearn, I have seen little else—three stricken fields—two towns stormed—castles more than I can remember."

"Alas!" said Eustace, "I have seen nothing but the muster of arms at Taunton!"

D'Aubricour laughed. "Look not downcast on it," said he; "you have time before you and one year at Bordeaux is worth four elsewhere. But I forget, you are the young clerk; and yet that scarcely accords with that bright eye of yours, and the weapon at your side."

"They spoke once of making me a clerk," said Eustace; "but

I hope to show my brother that I am fit for his own way of life. Sir Squire, do but tell me, do you think I look unfit to sustain the honour of my name?"

"Mere strength is little," said the Squire, "else were that comely giant John Ingram, the best warrior in the army. Nor does height reckon for much; Du Guesclin himself is of the shortest. Nor do you look like the boy over whose weakly timid nature I have heard Sir Reginald lament," he proceeded, surveying him with a critical eye.

Eustace had, in fact, hardly reached the middle height, and was very slender; his limbs were, however, well proportioned, his step firm, and every movement full of activity and grace. His face, shaded with bright chestnut hair, was of a delicate complexion, the features finely moulded, and the usual cast of expression slightly thoughtful; but there was frequently, and especially at this moment, a bright kindling light in the dark blue eyes, which changed the whole countenance from the grave and refined look of the young scholar to the bold ardent glance of the warrior.

"A cavalier, every inch of you!" cried d'Aubricour, striking Eustace on the shoulder as he concluded his inspection. "I'll have the training of you, my *gentil damoiseau*, and see if I do not make you as *preux a chevalier* as the most burly giant of them all. Here, know you this trick?"

He caught up one of the lances which the men had laid aside; Eustace followed his example, and acquitted himself to his satisfaction in one or two chivalrous manoeuvres, till a summons

to supper put an end to the sport.

CHAPTER 2

The house of Lynwood had long been famed for loyalty, which had often cost them dear, since their neighbours, the Lords of Clarenham, never failed to take advantage of the ascendancy of the popular party, and make encroachments on their privileges and possessions.

Thus when Sir Hugo Lynwood, the old Crusader, was made prisoner by Simon de Montfort's party at Lewes, he was treated with great severity, in order to obtain from him a recognition of the feudal superiority of the Clarenhams; and though the success of the royal party at Evesham occasioned his liberation, his possessions were greatly diminished. Nor had the turmoils of the reign of Edward II. failed to leave their traces on the fortunes of the Lynwoods. Sir Henry, father of the present Knight, was a staunch adherent of the unfortunate monarch, and even joined the hapless Edmund, Earl of Kent, in the rising in which that Prince was entrapped after the murder of his brother. On this occasion, it was only Sir Henry's hasty flight that preserved his life, and his lands were granted to the Baron Simon de Clarenham by the young Edward III., then under the dominion of his mother Isabel, and Roger Mortimer; but when at length the King had freed himself from their trammels, the whole county of Somerset rose to expel the intruders from Lynwood Keep, and reinstate its true master. Nor did Simon de Clarenham make

much resistance, for well knowing that an appeal to the King would occasion and instant revocation of the grant, he judged it advisable to allow it to sleep for the present.

Sir Henry Lynwood, therefore, lived and died unmolested. His eldest son, Reginald, was early sent to the Royal Camp, where he soon distinguished himself, and gained the favour and friendship of the gallant Prince of Wales. The feud with the Clarenhams seemed to be completely extinguished, when Reginald, chiefly by the influence of the Prince, succeeded in obtaining the hand of a lady of that family, the daughter of a brave Knight slain in the wars in Brittany.

Since this time, both the Baron de Clarenham and his son, Sir Fulk, had been on good terms with the Knight of Lynwood, and the connection had been drawn still closer by the Baron's second marriage with the Lady Muriel de la Poer, a near relative of Sir Reginald's mother. Many a time had Dame Eleanor Lynwood ridden to Clarenham castle, under the escort of her young brother-in-law, to whom such a change from the lonely old Keep afforded no small delight.

Eustace, the only one of Sir Henry's younger children who survived the rough nursing or the over-nursing, whichever it might be, that thinned in former days the families of nobles and gentleman, might as well, in the opinion of almost all, have rested beneath a quaint little image of his infant figure, in brass, in the vaults of the little Norman chapel; for he was a puny, ailing child, apt to scandalize his father and brother, and their warlike

retainers, by being scared at the dazzling helm and nodding crest, and preferring the seat at this mother's feet, the fairy tale of the old nurse, the song of the minstrel, or the book of the Priest, to horse and hound, or even to the sight of the martial sports of the tilt-yard.

The last five years had, however, wrought a great change in him; he began to outgrow the delicacy of his constitution, and with it, to shake off his timidity of disposition. A diligent perusal of the romances of chivalry filled him with emulation, and he had applied himself ardently to all knightly exercises, looking with great eagerness to the time when he might appear in the Prince's court. He had invested it with all the glory of the Round Table and of the Paladins; and though he knew he must not look for Merlin or the Siege Perilous, the men themselves were in his fancy Rolands and Tristrems, and he scarcely dared to hope he could ever be fit to make one of them, with all his diligent attention to old Ralph's instructions.

Some of Ralph's manoeuvres were indeed rather antiquated, and afforded much amusement to Gaston d'Aubricour, who was never weary of teasing the old seneschal with descriptions of the changes in the fashion of weapons, tourneys, and machines, and especially delighted in histories of the marvellous effects of gunpowder. Ralph would shake his head, vow that it would soon put an end to all true chivalry, and walk off to furbish his favourite cross-bow, with many a murmured reflection on the folly of quitting good old plans, and especially on that of

his master, who must needs bring home a gibing Gascon, when honest English Squires were not scarce.

Very different was the state of the old Keep of Lynwood from the quiet, almost deserted condition, in which it had been left so long, now that the Knight had again taken his wonted place amongst the gentry of the county. Entertainments were exchanged with his neighbours, hunting and hawking matches, and all the sports of the tilt-yard, followed each other in quick succession, and the summer passed merrily away. Merrily, that is to say, with Sir Reginald, whose stirring life in camp and court had left him but few and short intervals for enjoying his home and the society of his wife; with Eleanor, who, relieved from long anxiety, began to recover the spirits and health which had nearly failed her; and with Eustace, to whom the arrival of his brother and his followers brought a continued course of novelty and delight; but less joyously with the Knight's followers, who regretted more and more the gay court of Bordeaux, and grew impatient at the prospect of spending a tedious winter in a peaceful English castle.

Their anticipation of weariness, and the contrary expectations of Sir Reginald, were destined to be equally disappointed: for two months had not passed since his return before a summons arrived, or, more properly speaking, an invitation to the trusty and well-beloved Sir Reginald Lynwood to join the forces which the Duke of Lancaster was assembling at Southampton, the Prince of Wales having promised to assist King Pedro of Castile

in recovering the kingdom from which he had been driven by his brother Enrique of Trastamare.

Sir Reginald could not do otherwise than prepare with alacrity to obey the call of his beloved Prince, though he marvelled that Edward should draw his sword in the cause of such a monster of cruelty, and he was more reluctant than ever before to leave his home. He even promised his sorrowful Eleanor that this should be the last time he would leave her. "I will but bestow Eustace in some honourable household, where he may be trained in knightly lore—that of Chandos, perchance, or some other of the leaders who hold the good old strict rule; find good masters for my honest men-at-arms; break one more lance with Du Guesclin; and take to rule my vassals, till my fields, and be the honest old country Knight my father was before me. Said I well, Dame Eleanor?"

Eleanor smiled, but the next moment sighed and drooped her head, while a tear fell on the blue silk with which she was embroidering the crosslet on his pennon. Sir Reginald might have said somewhat to cheer her, but at that instant little Arthur darted into the hall with news that the armourer was come from Taunton, with two mules, loaded with a store of goodly helmets, swords, and corselets, which he was displaying in the court.

The Knight immediately walked forth into the court, where all had been activity and eagerness ever since the arrival of the summons, the smith hammering ceaselessly in his forge, yet without fulfilling half the order continually shouted in his ears; Gaston d'Aubricour and Ralph Penrose directing from

morning to night, in contradiction of each other, the one always laughing, the other always grumbling; the men-at-arms and retainers some obeying orders, others being scolded, the steel clanging, hammers ringing without intermission. Most of the party, such at least as could leave their employment without a sharp reprimand from one or the other of the contending authorities, the Seneschal and the Squire, were gathered round the steps, where the armourer was displaying, with many an encomium, his bundles of lances, his real Toledo blades, and his helmets of the choicest fashion. Gaston d'Aubricour and Ralph were disputing respecting a certain suit of armour, which the latter disapproved, because it had no guards for the knees, while the former contended that the only use for such protections was to disable a man from walking, and nearly from standing when once unhorsed.

"In my day, Master d'Aubricour, it was not the custom for a brave man-at-arms to look to being unhorsed; but times are changed."

"Ay, that they are, Master Penrose, for in our day we do not give ourselves over the moment we are down, and lie closed up in our shells like great land tortoises turned on their backs, waiting till some one is good enough to find his way through our shell with the *misericorde*."

"Peace, peace, Gaston," said the Knight. "If we acquit ourselves as well as our fathers, we shall have little to be ashamed of. What think you of this man's gear?"

"That I could pick up a better suit for half the price at old Battista, the Lombard's at Bordeaux; nevertheless, since young Eustace would be the show of the camp if he appeared there provided in Ralph's fashion, it may be as well to see whether there be any reasonableness in this old knave."

Before the question was decided, the trampling of horses was heard, and there rode into the court an elderly man, whose dress and bearing showed him to be of consideration, accompanied by a youth of eighteen or nineteen, and attended by two servants. Sir Reginald and his brother immediately stepped forward to receive them.

"Sir Philip Ashton," said the former, "how is it with you? This is friendly in you to come and bid us farewell."

"I grieve that it should be farewell, Sir Reginald," said the old Knight, dismounting whilst Eustace held his stirrup; "our country can ill spare such men as you. Thanks, my young friend Eustace. See, Leonard, what good training will do for an Esquire; Eustace has already caught that air and courteous demeanour that cannot be learnt here among us poor Knights of Somerset."

This was to his son, who, with a short abrupt reply to the good-natured greeting of Sir Reginald, had scrambled down from his saddle, and stood fixing his large gray eyes upon Gaston, whose tall active figure and lively dark countenance seemed to afford him an inexhaustible subject of study. The Squire was presented by name to Sir Philip, received a polite compliment, and replying with a bow, turned to the youth with the ready courtesy of one

willing to relieve the shyness of an awkward stranger. "We were but now discussing the merit between damasked steel and chain mail, what opinion do you bring to aid us?" A renewed stare, an inarticulate muttering, and Master Leonard turned away and almost hid his face in the mane of his horse, whilst his father attempted to make up for his incivility by a whole torrent of opinions, to which Gaston listened with the outward submission due from a Squire, but with frequent glances, accompanied by a tendency to elevate shoulder or eyebrow, which Eustace understood full well to convey that the old gentleman knew nothing whatever on the subject.

This concluded, Sir Philip went to pay his respects to the Lady of Lynwood, and then, as the hour of noon had arrived, all partook of the meal, which was served in the hall, the Squires waiting on the Knights and the Lady before themselves sitting down to table.

It was the influence of dinner that first unchained the silent tongue of Leonard Ashton, when he found himself seated next to his old acquaintance, Eustace Lynwood, out of hearing of those whose presence inspired him with shyness, and the clatter of knives and trenchers drowning his voice.

"So your brother has let you bear sword after all. How like you the trade? Better than poring over crabbed parchments, I trow. But guess you why we are here to-day? My father says that I must take service with some honourable Knight, and see somewhat of the world. He spoke long of the Lord de Clarenham, because his

favour would be well in the county; but at last he has fixed on your brother, because he may do somewhat for me with the Prince."

"Then you are going with us to Bordeaux?" exclaimed Eustace, eagerly.

"Ay, truly."

"Nay, but that is a right joyful hearing!" said Eustace. "Old friends should be brethren in arms."

"But, Eustace," said young Ashton, lowering his voice to a confidential whisper, "I like not that outlandish Squire, so tall and black. Men say he is a Moor—a worshipper of Mahound."

Eustace laughed heartily at this report, and assured his friend that, though he had heard his brother often give his Squire in jest his *nom de guerre* of *Gaston le Maure*, yet d'Aubricour was a gallant gentleman of Gascony. But still Leonard was not satisfied. "Had ever man born in Christian land such flashing black eyes and white teeth? And is not he horribly fierce and strict?"

"Never was man of kinder heart and blither temper."

"Then you think that he will not be sharp with us? 'More straight in your saddle!' 'lance lower!' 'head higher;' that is what has been ringing in my ears from morning till night of late, sometimes enforced by a sharp blow on the shoulders. Is it not so with you?"

"Oh, old Penrose took all that trouble off their hands long ago. Gaston is the gentlest of tutors compared with him."

"I hope so!" sighed Leonard; "my very bones ache with the

tutoring I get from my father at home. And, Eustace, resolve me this—"

"Hush, do not you see that Father Cyril is about to pronounce the Grace—. There—now must I go and serve your father with the grace-cup, but I will be with you anon."

Leonard put his elbow on the table, mumbling to himself, "And these of Eustace's be the courtly manners my father would have me learn; they cost a great deal too much trouble!"

The meal over, Eustace took Leonard into the court to visit the horses and inspect the new armour. They were joined by Gaston, who took upon himself to reply to the question which Leonard wished to have resolved, namely, what they were to do in Castile, by persuading him to believe that Enrique of Trastamare was a giant twenty feet high, who rode a griffin of proportionate dimensions, and led an army whose heads grew under their shoulders.

In the meantime, Sir Philip Ashton was, with many polite speeches, entering upon the business of his visit, which was to request Sir Reginald to admit his son into his train as an Esquire. The Knight of Lynwood, though not very desirous of this addition to his followers, could not well refuse him, in consideration of the alliance which had long subsisted between the two houses; but he mentioned his own purpose of quitting the Prince's court as soon as the present expedition should be concluded.

"That," said Sir Philip, softly, "will scarce be likely. Such

Knights as Sir Reginald Lynwood are not so easily allowed to hide themselves in obscurity. The Prince of Wales knows too well the value of his right-hand counsellor."

"Nay, Sir Philip," said Sir Reginald, laughing, "that is rather too fine a term for a rough soldier, who never was called into counsel at all, except for the arraying a battle. It would take far sharper wits than mine, or, indeed, I suspect, than any that we have at Bordeaux, to meet the wiles of Charles of France. No, unless the Royal Banner be abroad in the field, you may look to see me here before another year is out."

"I shall hope it may be otherwise, for my boy's sake," said Sir Philip. "But be that as it may, his fame will be secured by his going forth for the first time with such a leader as yourself. The example and friendship of your brother will also be of the utmost service. Your chief Squire too—so perfect in all chivalrous training, and a foreigner—who better could be found to train a poor Somersetshire clown for the Prince's Gascon court?"

"Why, for that matter," interrupted Sir Reginald, whose patience would seldom serve his to the end of one of his neighbour's harangues, "it may be honest to tell you that though Gaston is a kindly-tempered fellow, and of right knightly bearing, his life has been none of the most steady. I took up with him a couple of years since, when poor old Humfrey Harwood was slain at Auray, and I knew not where to turn for a Squire. Save for a few wild freaks now and then, he has done right well,

though I sometimes marvelled at his choosing to endure my strict household. He obeys my orders, and has made himself well liked by the men, and I willingly trust Eustace with him, since the boy is of a grave clerkly sort of turn, and under my own eye; but it is for you to do as you will with your son."

"Is he of honourable birth?" asked Sir Philip.

"At least he bears coat armour," answered Reginald. "His shield is *gules*, a wolf *passant*, *or*, and I have heard strange tales of his father, Beranger d'Aubricour, the Black Wolf of the Pyrenees, as he was called, one of the robber noblesse of the Navarrese border; but I have little time for such matters, and they do not dwell in my mind. If I find a man does his duty in my service, I care not whence he comes, nor what his forefathers may have been. I listen to no such idle tales; but I thought it best to warn you that I answer not for all the comrades your son may find in my troop."

"Many thanks, noble Sir Reginald; under such care as yours he cannot fail to prosper; I am secure of his welfare in your hands. One word more, Sir Reginald, I pray you. You are all-powerful with Prince Edward. My poor boy's advancement is in your hand. One word in his favour to the Prince—a hint of the following I could send his pennon—"

"Sir Philip," said Reginald, "you overrate my influence, and underrate the Prince's judgment, if you imagine aught save personal merit would weigh with him. Your son shall have every opportunity of deserving his notice, but whether it be favourable

or not must depend on himself. If you desire more, you must not seek it of me."

Sir Philip protested that this was all he wished, and after reiterating his thanks, took his leave, promising that Leonard should be at Lynwood Keep on the next Monday, the day fixed for Sir Reginald's departure.

CHAPTER III

The morning of departure arrived. The men-at-arms were drawn up in the court like so many statues of steel; Leonard Ashton sat on horseback, his eyes fixed on the door; Gaston d'Aubricour, wrapped in his gay mantle, stood caressing his Arab steed Brigliador, and telling him they should soon exchange the chilly fogs of England for the bright sun of Gascony; Ralph Penrose held his master's horse, and a black powerful charger was prepared for Eustace, but still the brothers tarried.

"My Eleanor, this should not be!" said Reginald as his wife clung to him weeping. "Keep a good heart. 'Tis not for long. Take heed of your dealings with cousin Fulk. She knows not what I say. Father Cyril, keep guard over her and my boy, in case I should meet with any mishap."

"I will, assuredly, my son," said the Chaplain, "but it is little that a poor Priest like me can do. I would that grant to the Clarenhams were repealed."

"That were soon done," said Reginald, "but it is no time for a loyal vassal to complain of grievances when his liege lord has summoned him to the field. That were to make the King's need be his law. No! no! Watch over her, good father, she is weak and tender. Look up, sweet heart, give me one cheerful wish to speed me on my journey. No? She has swooned. Eleanor! my wife—"

"Begone, begone, my son," said Father Cyril, "it will be the

better for her."

"It may be," said Reginald, "yet to leave her thus— Here, nurse, support her, tend her well. Give her my tenderest greetings. Arthur, be duteous to her; talk to her of our return; farewell, my boy, and blessings on you. Eustace, mount."

Sir Reginald, sighing heavily, swung himself into the saddle; Eustace waited a moment longer. "Good Father, this was to have been in poor Eleanor's charge. It is the token, you know for whom."

"It shall reach her, my son."

"You will send me a letter whenever you can?"

"Truly, I will; and I would have you read and write, especially in Latin, when you have the chance—good gifts should not be buried. Bethink you, too, that you will not have the same excuse for sin as the rude ignorant men you will meet."

"Eustace!" hastily called Reginald, and with a hurried farewell to all around, the young Squire sprang on horseback, and the troop rode across the drawbridge. They halted on the mound beyond; Sir Reginald shook his pennon, till the long white swallow tails streamed on the wind, then placed it in the hands of Eustace, and saying, "On, Lances of Lynwood! In the name of God, St. George, and King Edward, do your devoir;" he spurred his horse forward, as if only desirous to be out of sight of his own turrets, and forget the parting, the pain of which still heaved his breast and dimmed his eye.

A few days brought the troop to Southampton, where John of

Gaunt was collecting his armament, and with it they embarked, crossed to St. Malo, and thence proceeded to Bordeaux, but there found that the Prince of Wales had already set forth, and was waiting for his brother at Dax.

Advancing immediately, at the end of three days they came in sight of the forces encamped around that town. Glorious was the scene before them, the green plain covered in every direction with white tents, surmounted with the banners or pennons of their masters, the broad red Cross of St. George waving proudly in the midst, and beside it the royal Lions and Castles of the two Spanish monarchies. To the south, the snowy peaks of the Pyrenees began to gleam white like clouds against the sky, and the gray sea-line to the west closed the horizon. Eustace drew his rein, and gazed in silent admiration, and Gaston, riding by his side, pointed out the several bearings and devices which, to the warrior of that day, spoke as plainly (often more so) as written words. "See yonder, the tent of my brave countryman, the Captal de Buch, close to that of the Prince, as is ever his wont. No doubt he is willing to wipe away the memory of his capture at Auray. There, to the left, *gules* and *argent*, per *pale*, is the pennon of the stout old Englishman, Chandos. Ha! I see the old Free Companions are here with Sir Hugh Calverly! Why, 'twas but the other day they were starting to set this very Don Enrique on the throne as blithely as they now go to drive him from his."

While Gaston spoke, the sound of horses' feet approached rapidly from another quarter, and a small party came in sight, the

foremost of whom checked his bridle, as, at Reginald's signal, his Lances halted and drew respectfully aside. He was a man about thirty-six years of age, and looking even younger, from the remarkable fairness and delicacy of his complexion. The perfect regularity of his noble features, together with the commanding, yet gentle expression of his clear light blue eyes, would, even without the white ostrich feather in his black velvet cap, have enabled Eustace to recognize in him the flower of chivalry, Edward, Prince of Wales.

"Welcome, my trusty Reginald!" exclaimed he. "I knew that the Lances of Lynwood would not be absent where knightly work is to be done. Is my brother John arrived?"

"Yes, my Lord," replied Reginald; "I parted from him but now as he rode to the castle, while I came to seek where to bestow my knaves."

"I know you of old for a prudent man," said the Prince, smiling; "the Provost Marshal hath no acquaintance with that gallant little band. Methinks I see there a fair face like enough to yours to belong to another loyal Lynwood."

"I could wish it were a little browner and more manly, my Lord," said Reginald. "It is my brother Eustace, who has been suffered (I take shame to myself for it) to tarry at home as my Lady's page, till he looks as white as my Lady herself."

"We will soon find a cure for that in the sun of Castile," said Edward. "You are well provided with Squires. The men of Somerset know where good training is to be found for their sons."

"This, my Lord, is the son of Sir Philip Ashton, a loyal Knight of our country."

"He is welcome," said the Prince. "We have work for all. Let me see you this evening at supper in my tent."

"Well, Eustace, what sayest thou?" said Gaston, as the Prince rode on.

"A Prince to dream of, a Prince for whom to give a thousand lives!" said Eustace.

"And that was the Prince of Wales!" said Leonard. "Why, he spoke just like any other man."

The two tents of the Lances of Lynwood having been erected, and all arrangements made, the Knights and Squires set out for the Prince's pavilion, the white curtains of which were conspicuous in the centre of the camp. Within, it was completely lined with silk, embroidered with the various devices of the Prince: the lions of England—the lilies of France—the Bohemian ostrich-plume, with its humble motto, the white rose, not yet an emblem of discord—the blue garter and the red cross, all in gorgeous combination—a fitting background, as it were, on which to display the chivalrous groups seen in relief against it.

At the upper end was placed a long table for the Prince and his guests, and here Sir Reginald took his seat, with many a hearty welcome from his friends and companions in arms, while Gaston led his comrades to the lower end, where Squires and pages were waiting for the provisions brought in by the servants, which they were to carry to their Knights. Gaston was soon

engaged in conversation with his acquaintance, to some of whom he introduced Eustace and Leonard, but the former found far more interesting occupation in gazing on the company seated at the upper table.

The Black Prince himself occupied the centre, his brother John at his left hand, and at his right, a person whom both this post of honour and the blazonry of his surcoat marked out as the dethroned King of Castile. Pedro the Cruel had not, however, the forbidding countenance which imagination would ascribe to him; his features were of the fair and noble type of the old royal Gothic race of Spain; he had a profusion of flaxen hair, and large blue eyes, rather too prominent, and but for his receding forehead, and the expression of his lips, he would have been a handsome man of princely mien. Something, too, there was of fear, something of a scowl; he seemed to shrink from the open and manly demeanour of Edward, and to turn with greater ease to converse with John, who, less lofty in character than his brother, better suited his nature.

There, too, Eustace beheld the stalwart form and rugged features of Sir John Chandos; the slender figure and dark sparkling southern face of the Captal de Buch; the rough joyous boon-companion visage of Sir Hugh Calverly, the free-booting warrior; the youthful form of the young step-son of the Prince, Lord Thomas Holland; the rude features of the Breton Knight, Sir Oliver de Clisson, soon to be the bitterest foe of the standard beneath which he was now fighting. Many were there whose

renown had charmed the ears of the young Squire of Lynwood Keep, and he looked on the scene with the eagerness with which he would have watched some favourite romance suddenly done into life and action.

"Eustace! What, Eustace, in a trance?" said d'Aubricour. "Waken, and carry this trencher of beef to your brother. Best that you should do it," he added in a low voice, taking up a flask of wine, "and save our comrade from at once making himself a laughing-stock."

The discontented glance with which Leonard's eyes followed his fellow Squires, did not pass unobserved by a person with whom d'Aubricour had exchanged a few words, a squarely-made, dark-visaged man, with a thick black beard, and a huge scar which had obliterated one eye; his equipment was that of a Squire, but instead of, like others of the same degree, attending on the guests at the upper table, he sat carelessly sideways on the bench, with one elbow on the board.

"You gaze after that trencher as if you wished your turn was come," said he, in a patois of English and French, which Leonard could easily understand, although he had always turned a deaf ear to Gaston's attempts to instruct him in the latter language. However, a grunt was his only reply.

"Or," pursued the Squire, "have you any fancy for carrying it yourself? I, for my part, think we are well quit of the trouble."

"Why, ay," said Leonard, "but I trow I have as much right to serve at the Prince's table as dainty Master Eustace. My father

had never put me under Sir Reginald's charge, had he deemed I should be kept here among the serving-men."

"Sir Reginald? Which Sir Reginald has the honour of your service?" asked the Squire, to whom Leonard's broad Somersetshire dialect seemed to present few difficulties.

"Sir Reginald Lynwood, he with the curled brown locks, next to that stern-looking old fellow with the gray hair."

"Ay, I know him of old. Him whom the Duke of Lancaster is pledging—a proud, strict Englishman—as rigid a service as any in the camp."

"I should think so!" said Leonard. "Up in the morn hours before the sun, to mass like a choir of novices, to clean our own arms and the Knight's, like so many horse-boys, and if there be but a speck of rust, or a sword-belt half a finger's length awry—"

"Ay, ay, I once had a fortnight's service with a Knight of that stamp, but a fortnight was enough for me, I promise you. And yet Gaston le Maure chooses to stay with him rather than lead a merry life with Sir Perduccas d'Albret, with all to gain, and nought to lose! A different life from the days he and I spent together of old."

"Gaston d'Aubricour is as sharp as the Knight himself," said Leonard, "and gibes me without ceasing; but yet I could bear it all, were it not for seeing Eustace, the clerk, preferred to me, as if I were not heir to more acres than he can ever count crowns."

"What may then be your name, fair youth, and your inheritance?" demanded the one-eyed Squire, "for your coat of

arms is new in the camp."

"My name is Leonard Ashton; my father—" but Leonard's speech was cut short by a Squire who stumbled over his outstretched foot. Both parties burst into angry exclamations, Leonard's new acquaintance taking his part. Men looked up, and serious consequences might have ensued, had not Gaston hastened to the spot. "Shame on you, young malapert," said he to his hopeful pupil. "Cannot I leave you one moment unwatched, but you must be brawling in the Prince's own presence? Here, bear this bread to Sir Reginald instantly, and leave me to make your peace. Master Clifford," added he, as Leonard shuffled away, "'tis an uncouth slip whom Sir Reginald Lynwood has undertaken to mould into form, and if he is visited as he deserves for each piece of discourtesy, his life will not be long enough for amendment, so I must e'en beg you to take my apology."

"Most readily, Master d'Aubricour," replied Clifford; "there would not have been the least offence had the youth only possessed a civil tongue."

"Is not he the son of one of your wealthy Englishmen?" asked the one-eyed Squire, carelessly.

"Ha! Why should you think so?" said Gaston, turning sharply; "because he shows so much good nurture?"

"Because his brains are grown fat with devouring his father's beeves, fare on which you seem to thrive, le Maure," said the one-eyed, "though you were not wont to like English beef and English discipline better than Gascon wine and Gascon freedom.

I begin to think that the cub of the Black Wolf of the Pyrenees is settling down into a tame English house-dog."

"He has teeth and claws at your service," replied Gaston.

"Ay?" said the Squire interrogatively; then, changing his tone, "But tell me honestly, Gaston, repent you not of having taken service with gallant Sir Perduccas?"

"Why, you have left him yourself."

"Yes, because we had sharp words on the spoil of a Navarrese village. My present leader, Sir William Felton, is as free and easy as d'Albret, or Aymerigot Marcel himself. And is not yon ungainly varlet the hope of some rich English house?"

"I must see their hopes meet with no downfall," said Gaston, walking away, and muttering to himself. "A plague upon it! To train two boys is more than I bargained for, and over and above to hinder this wiseacre Ashton from ruining himself, or being ruined by *le Borgne Basque*! What brought him here? I thought he was safe in Castile with the Free Companions. I would let the oaf take his course, for a wilful wrong-headed fool, but that it would scarce be doing good service to Sir Reginald."

The Knights had nearly finished their meal, and the Squires having served them with wine, returned to their own table, now freshly supplied with meat, which the yeomen in their turn carved for them. Gaston kept Leonard under his own eye till the party broke up.

On the way to the tent, he began to take him to task. "A proper commencement! Did you take the Prince's pavilion for one of

your own island hostels, where men may freely brawl and use their fists without fear of aught save the parish constable?"

"What business had he to tread on my foot?" growled Leonard.

"What business had your foot there? Was not your office, as I told you, to stand ready to hand me whatever I might call for?"

"I was speaking a few words to another gentleman."

"The fewer words you speak to *le Borgne Basque* the better, unless you think it is Sir Reginald's pleasure that you should be instructed in all the dicing and drinking in this camp, and unless you wish that the crowns with which your father stored your pouch should jingle in his pockets. It is well for you the Knight marked you not."

"You held long enough parley with him yourself," said the refractory pupil.

"Look you, Master Leonard Ashton, I do not presume to offer myself as an example to you save, perhaps, in the matter of sitting a steed, or handing a wine-cup. I have no purse to lose, and I have wit to keep it if I had, or at least," as a recollection crossed him, "if I lost it, it should be to please myself, and not *le Borgne Basque*; above all, my name and fame are made, and yours—"

"What would you say of mine?" said Leonard, with sulky indignation. "The heir of Ashton is not to be evened to a wandering landless foreigner."

"It is not in sight of these mountain peaks," said Gaston, contemptuously, "that I am to be called a foreigner; and as to

being landless, if I chose to take my stand on the old tower of Albricorte, and call myself Lord of the whole hill-side, I should like to see who would gainsay me. For name, I suspect you will find that many a man has trembled at the sound of Beranger d'Albricorte, to whom Ashton would be but that of an English clown. Moreover, in this camp I would have you to know that the question is, not who has the broadest lands, but who has the strongest arm. And, sir Squire, if you are not above listening to a piece of friendly counsel, to brag of those acres of yours is the surest way to attract spoilers. I had rather a dozen times trust Eustace in such company than you, not only because he has more wit, but because he has less coin."

"Who is this man? What is his name?" asked Eustace.

"*Le Borgne Basque*, I know no other," said Gaston. "We reckon little of names here, especially when it may be convenient to have them forgotten. He is a Free Companion, a *routier*, brave enough, but more ready at the sack than the assault, and loving best to plunder, waste, and plunder again, or else to fleece such sheep as our friend here."

"How could such a man gain entrance to the Prince's pavilion?"

"Stout hearts and strong arms find entrance in most places," said Gaston; "but, as you saw, he durst not appear at the upper table."

The next morning the army began their march to the Pyrenees. They halted for some days at the foot of the hills, whilst

negotiations were passing between the Black Prince and Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, who might easily have prevented their entrance into the Peninsula by refusing a passage through his mountain fastnesses.

When the permission was granted, they advanced with considerable danger and difficulty. The rugged paths were covered with snow and ice, which made them doubly perilous for the horses, and but for Gaston's familiarity with his native hills, Sir Reginald declared that he could never have brought his little troop across them in safety.

At length they emerged through the celebrated Pass of Roncesvalles, where Eustace in imagination listened to the echoes of the dying blast of Roland. On the following evening he had the delight of reading his history in the veritable pages of Archbishop Turpin, which precious work he found in the possession of Brother Waleran, a lay-friar, in the employment of Sir John Froissart the chronicler, who had sent him with the army as a reporter of the events of the campaign. This new acquaintance gave very little satisfaction to Sir Reginald, who was almost ready to despair of Eustace's courage and manhood when he found he had "gone back to his books," and manifested, if not so much serious displeasure, yet even more annoyance, on this occasion, than when, shortly after, he found that Leonard Ashton spent every moment at his own disposal in the company of *le Borgne Basque*. That worthy, meeting the young gentleman, had easily persuaded him that Gaston's

cautions only proceeded from fears of stories that might with too much truth be told against himself, and by skilful flatteries of the young Englishman's self-importance, and sympathy with his impatience of the strict rule of the Knight of Lynwood, succeeded in establishing over him great influence.

So fared it with the two young Squires, whilst the army began to enter the dominions of the King of Castile. Here a want of provisions was severely felt, for such was the hatred borne to Pedro the Cruel, that every inhabitant of the country fled at his approach, carrying off, or destroying, all that could be used as food. It was the intention of Bertrand du Guesclin, the ally of Enrique of Trastamare, to remain quietly in his camp of Navaretta, and allow hunger to do its work with the invading force, but this prudent plan was prevented by the folly of Don Tello, brother of Enrique, who, accusing Bertrand of cowardice, so stung his fiery spirit that he resolved on instant combat, though knowing how little dependence could be placed on his Spanish allies.

The challenge of the Prince of Wales was therefore accepted; and never were tidings more welcome than these to the half-famished army, encamped upon the banks of the Ebro, on the same ground on which, in after years, English valour was once more to turn to flight a usurping King of Spain.

CHAPTER IV

The moon was at her height, and shone full into the half-opened tent of Sir Reginald Lynwood. At the further end, quite in darkness, the Knight, bare-headed, and rosary in hand, knelt before the dark-robed figure of a confessor, while at a short distance lay, on a couch of deer-skins, the sleeping Leonard Ashton. Before the looped-up curtain that formed the door was Gaston d'Aubricour, on one knee, close to a huge torch of pine-wood fixed in the earth, examining by its flaring smoky light into the state of his master's armour, proving every joint with a small hammer. Near him, Eustace, with the help of John Ingram, the stalwart yeoman, was fastening his charge, the pennon, to a mighty lance of the toughest ash-wood, and often looking forth on the white tents on which the moonbeams shed their pale, tranquil light. There was much to impress a mind like his, in the scene before him: the unearthly moonlight, the few glimmering stars, the sky—whose southern clearness and brightness were, to his unaccustomed eye, doubly wonderful—the constant though subdued sounds in the camp, the murmur of the river, and, far away in the dark expanse of night, the sparkling of a multitude of lights, which marked the encampment of the enemy. There was a strange calm awe upon his spirit. He spoke in a low voice, and Gaston's careless light-hearted tones fell on his ear as something uncongenial; but his eye glanced brightly, his step was free and

bold, as he felt that this was the day that must silence every irritating doubt of his possessing a warrior-spirit.

The first red streak of dawn was beginning to glow in the eastern sky, when the note of a bugle rang out from the Prince's tent and was responded to by hundreds of other horns. That instant the quiet slumbering camp awoke, the space in front of every tent was filled with busy men, arming themselves, or saddling their horses. Gaston and Eustace, already fully equipped, assisted Sir Reginald to arm; Leonard was roused, and began to fasten on his armour; the men-at-arms came forth from their tent, and the horses were saddled and bridled; "And now," called Sir Reginald, "bring our last loaf, John Ingram. Keep none back. By this day's eve we shall have abundance, or else no further need."

The hard dry barley-bread was shared in scanty, but equal measure, and scarcely had it been devoured, before a second bugle blast, pealing through the camp, caused each mail-clad warrior to close his visor, and spring into the open plain, where, according to previous orders, they arrayed themselves in two divisions, the first commanded by the Duke of Lancaster and Sir John Chandos, the second by Prince Edward and Don Pedro.

After a pause, employed in marshalling the different bands, the host advanced at an even pace, the rising sun glancing on their armour, and revealing the multitude of waving crests, and streamers fluttering from the points of the lances, like the wings of gorgeous insects. Presently a wall of glittering armour was

seen advancing to meet them, with the same brilliant display. It might have seemed some mighty tournament that was there arrayed, as the two armies stood confronting each other, rather than a stern battle for the possession of a kingdom; and well might old Froissart declare, "It was a pleasure to see such hosts."

But it would be presumptuous to attempt to embellish a tale after Froissart has once touched it. To him, then, I leave it to tell how the rank of banneret was conferred on the gallant old Chandos, how the Prince prayed aloud for a blessing on his arms, how he gave the signal for the advance, and how the boaster, Tello, fled in the first encounter. The Lances of Lynwood, in the division of the Duke of Lancaster, well and gallantly did their part in the hard struggle with the brave band of French, whose resistance was not overcome till the Black Prince himself brought his reserved troops to the aid of his brother.

With the loss of only one man-at-arms, the Lances of Lynwood had taken several prisoners. It was high noon, and the field was well-nigh cleared of the enemy, when Sir Reginald drew his rein at the top of a steep bank clothed with brushwood, sloping towards the stream of the Zadorra, threw up his visor, wiped his heated brow, and, patting his horse's neck, turned to his brother, saying, "You have seen sharp work in this your first battle-day, Eustace."

"It is a glorious day!" said Eustace. "See how they hurry to the water." And he pointed over the low shrubs to a level space on the bank of the river, where several fugitives, on foot and horseback,

were crowding together, and pressing hastily forward.

"Ha!" cried Sir Reginald, "the golden circlet! Henry of Trastamare himself!" and at the same instant he sprang to the ground. "You," said he, "speed round the bushes, meet me at the ford they are making for." This was directed to Gaston, and ere the last words were spoken, both Sir Reginald and Eustace were already beginning to hurry down the bank. Gaston rose to his full height in his stirrups, and, looking over the wood, exclaimed, "The Eagle crest! I must be there. On, Ashton—Ingram, this way—speed, speed, speed!" and with these words threw himself from his horse, and dashed after the two brothers, as they went crashing, in their heavy armour, downwards through the boughs. In less than a minute they were on the level ground, and Sir Reginald rushed forward to intercept Don Enrique, who was almost close to the river. "Yield, yield, Sir King!" he shouted; but at the same moment another Knight on foot threw himself between, raising a huge battle-axe, and crying, "Away, away, Sir; leave me to deal with him!" Enrique turned, entered the river, and safely swam his horse to the other side, whilst his champion was engaged in desperate conflict.

The Knight of Lynwood caught the first blow on his shield, and returned it, but without the slightest effect on his antagonist, who, though short in stature, and clumsily made, seemed to possess gigantic strength. A few moments more, and Reginald had fallen at full length on the grass, while his enemy was pressing on, to secure him as a prisoner, or to seize the pennon

which Eustace held. The two Squires stood with lifted swords before their fallen master, but it cost only another of those irresistible strokes to stretch Gaston beside Sir Reginald, and Eustace was left alone to maintain the struggle. A few moments more, and the Lances would come up—but how impossible to hold out! The first blow cleft his shield in two, and though it did not pierce his armour, the shock brought him to his knee, and without the support of the staff of the pennon he would have been on the ground. Still, however, he kept up his defence, using sometimes his sword, and sometimes the staff, to parry the strokes of his assailant; but the strife was too unequal, and faint with violent exertion, as well as dizzied by a stroke which the temper of his helmet had resisted, he felt that all would be over with him in another second, when his sinking energies were revived by the cry of "St. George," close at hand. His enemy relaxing his attack, he sprang to his feet, and that instant found himself enclosed, almost swept away, by a crowd of combatants of inferior degree, as well as his own comrades as Free Lances, all of whose weapons were turned upon his opponent. A sword was lifted over the enemy's head from behind, and would the next moment have descended, but that Eustace sprang up, dashed it aside, cried "Shame!" and grasping the arm of the threatened Knight, exclaimed, "Yield, yield! it is your only hope!"

"Yield? and to thee?" said the Knight; "yet it is well meant. The sword of Arthur himself would be of no avail. Tiphaine was right! It is the fated day. Thou art of gentle birth? I yield me

then, rescue or no rescue, the rather that I see thou art a gallant youth. Hark you, fellows, I am a prisoner, so get off with you. Your name, bold youth?"

"Eustace Lynwood, brother to this Knight," said Eustace, raising his visor, and panting for breath.

"You need but a few years to nerve your arm. But rest a while, you are almost spent," said the prisoner, in a kind tone of patronage, as he looked at the youthful face of his captor, which in a second had varied from deep crimson to deadly paleness.

"My brother! my brother!" was all Eustace's answer, as he threw himself on the grass beside Gaston, who, though bleeding fast, had raised his master's head, and freed him from his helmet; but his eyes were still closed, and the wound ghastly, for such had been the force of the blow, that the shoulder was well-nigh severed from the collarbone. "Reginald! O brother, look up!" cried Eustace. "O Gaston, does he live?"

"I have crossed swords with him before," said the prisoner. "I grieve for the mishap." Then, as the soldiers crowded round, he waved them off with a gesture of command, which they instinctively obeyed. "Back, clowns, give him air. And here—one of you—bring some water from the river. There, he shows signs of life."

As he spoke, the clattering of horses' feet was heard—all made way, and there rode along the bank of the river a band of Spaniards, headed by Pedro himself, his sword, from hilt to point, streaming with blood, and his countenance ferocious as

that of a tiger. "Where is he?" was his cry; "where is the traitor Enrique? I will send him to join the rest of the brood. Where has he hidden himself?"

The prisoner, who had been assisting to life the wounded man out of the path of the trampling horses, turned round, and replied, with marked emphasis, "King Henry of Castile is, thanks to our Lady, safe on the other side of the Zadorra, to recover his throne another day."

"Du Guesclin himself! Ah, dog!" cried Pedro, his eyes glaring with the malignity of a demon, and raising his bloody weapon to hew down Bertrand du Guesclin, for no other was the prisoner, who stood with folded arms, his dark eyes fixed in calm scorn on the King's face, and his sword and axe lying at his feet.

Eustace was instantly at his side, calling out, "My Lord King, he is my prisoner!"

"Thine!" said Pedro, with an incredulous look. "Leave him to my vengeance, and thou shalt have gold—half my treasury—all thy utmost wishes can reach—"

"I give him up to none but my Lord the Prince of Wales," returned the young Squire, undauntedly.

"Fool and caitiff! out of my path! or learn what it is to oppose the wrath of Kings!" cried Pedro.

Eustace grasped his sword. "Sir King, you must win your way to him through my body."

At this moment one of the attendants whispered, "*El Principe, Senor Rey*," and, in a few seconds more, the Black Prince, with

a few followers, rode towards the spot.

Hastily dismounting, Pedro threw himself on his knees to thank him for the victory; but Edward, leaping from his horse, raised him, saying, "It is not to me, but to the Giver of victories, that you should return thanks;" and Eustace almost shuddered to see him embrace the blood-thirsty monster, who, still intent on his prey, began the next moment, "Here, Senor Prince, is the chief enemy—here is the disturber of kingdoms—Du Guesclin himself—and there stands a traitorous boy of your country, who resolutely refuses to yield him to my just vengeance."

As Pedro spoke, the Prince exchanged with Sir Bertrand the courteous salutation of honourable enemies, and then said, in a quiet, grave tone, "It is not our English custom to take vengeance on prisoners of war."

"My Lord," said Eustace, stepping forward, as the Prince looked towards him, "I deliver the prisoner into your princely hands."

"You have our best thanks, Sir Squire," said the Prince. "You are the young Lynwood, if I remember right. Where is your brother?"

"Alas! my Lord, here he lies, sorely hurt," said Eustace, only anxious to be rid of prisoner and Prince, and to return to Reginald, who by this time had, by the care of Gaston, been recalled to consciousness.

"Is it so? I grieve to hear it!" said Edward, with a face of deep concern, advancing to the wounded Knight, bending over him,

and taking his hand, "How fares it with you, my brave Reginald?"

"Poorly enough, my Lord," said the Knight, faintly; "I would I could have taken King Henry—"

"Lament not for that," said the Prince, "but receive my thanks for the prize of scarcely less worth, which I owe to your arms."

"What mean you, my Lord? Not Sir Bertrand du Guesclin; I got nothing from him but my death-blow."

"How is this then?" said Edward; "it was from your young brother that I received him."

"Speak, Eustace!" said Sir Reginald, eagerly, and half raising himself; "Sir Bertrand your prisoner? Fairly and honourably? Is it possible?"

"Fairly and honourably, to that I testify," said Du Guesclin. "He knelt before you, and defended your pennon longer than I ever thought to see one of his years resist that curtal-axe of mine. The *routier* villains burst on us, and were closing upon me, when he turned back the weapon that was over my head, and summoned me to yield, which I did the more willingly that so gallant a youth should have such honour as may be acquired by my capture."

"He has it, noble Bertrand," said Edward. "Kneel down, young Squire. Thy name is Eustace? In the name of God, St. Michael, and St. George, I dub thee Knight. Be faithful, brave and fortunate, as on this day. Arise, Sir Eustace Lynwood."

"Thanks, thanks, my gracious Prince," said Reginald, a light glancing in his fading eyes. "I should die content to see my

brother's spurs so well earned."

"Die! Say not so, my faithful Reginald. Speed, Denis, and send hither our own leech! I trust you will live to see your son win his spurs as gallantly!"

"No, my good Lord, I am past the power of leech or surgeon, I feel that this is my death-wound. I am glad it was in your cause. All I desire is your protection for my wife—my boy—my brother —"

"Your brother has earned it already," said Edward. "Your child shall be as my own. But, oh! can nought be done? Hasten the surgeon hither! Cheer thee, Reginald!—look up! O! would that Du Guesclin were free, the battle unfought, so that thou wert but safe, mine own dear brother-in-arms!"

"Where is the Prince?" called a voice from behind. "My Lord, my Lord, if you come not speedily, there will be foul slaughter made among the prisoners by your Spanish butcher—King I would say."

"I come, I come, Chandos," answered Edward. "Fare thee well, my brave Reginald; and you, my new-made Knight, send tidings to my tent how it is with him."

He pressed Reginald's hand, and sighing deeply, mounted his horse, and rode off with Sir John Chandos, leaving the wounded Knight to the care of his own followers.

The stream of blood was flowing fast, life was ebbing away, and Sir Reginald's breath was failing, as Eustace, relieving Gaston from his weight, laid his head on his breast, and laved

his brow with water from the river. "You have done gallantly, my brave brother; I did wrong to doubt your spirit. Thanks be to God that I can die in peace, sure that Arthur has in you a true and loving guardian. You are young, Eustace, but my trust in you is firm. You will train him in all Christian and godly ways—"

"It shall be the most sacred charge of my life," said Eustace, scarcely able to speak.

"I know it," said Reginald, and making an effort to raise his voice, he continued, "Bear witness, all of you, that I leave my son in the wardship of the King, and of my brother, Sir Eustace Lynwood. And," added he, earnestly, "beware of Fulk Clarenham. Commend me to my sweet Eleanor; tell her she is the last, as the first in my thoughts." Then, after a pause, "Is Gaston here?"

"Yes, Sir Reginald," said Gaston, leaning over him, and pressing the hand which he feebly raised.

"Gaston, farewell, and thanks to you for your true and loving service. Eustace will find wherewith to recompense you in some sort, in my chest at Bordeaux, and my brave Lances likewise. And, Gaston, go not back to the courses and comrades whence I took you. On the word of a dying man, it will be better for you when you are in this case. Leonard, strive to be a true and brave man, though I may not fulfil your father's trust. Eustace—my eyes grow dim—is this you supporting my head—are these your tears? Weep not for me, brother. Save for my poor Eleanor, I would not have it otherwise. Mercy is sure! Hold up the blessed

rood—the sign of grace—you are half a clerk, repeat me some holy psalm or prayer."

Eustace raised the cross hilt of his sword, and with a broken voice, commenced the *Miserere*. Sir Reginald at first followed it with his lips, but soon they ceased to move, his head sank back, his hand fell powerless, and with one long gasping breath his faithful and noble spirit departed. For several moments Eustace silently continued to hold the lifeless form in his arms, then raising the face, he imprinted an earnest kiss on the pale lips, laid the head reverently on the ground, hung over it for a short space, and at last, with an effort, passed his hand over his face, and turned away.

His first look was towards d'Aubricour, who sat resting his head on his hand, his elbow supported on his knee, while with the other hand he dashed away his tears. His countenance was deathly pale, and drops of blood were fast falling from the deep gash in his side. "O Gaston!" exclaimed Eustace, with a feeling of self-reproach at having forgotten him, "I fear you are badly wounded!"

"You would think little of it, had you seen more stricken fields, young Knight," said Gaston, attempting to smile; "I am only spent with loss of blood. Bring me a draught of water, and I can ride back to the tent. But look to your prisoner, Sir Eustace."

Eustace turned to see what had become of his illustrious captive, and saw him at a little distance, speaking to a Knight on horseback. "Sir Eustace," said Bertrand, stepping towards him,

"here is Sir William Beauchamp, sent by the Prince to inquire for your gallant brother, and to summon me to his tent. I leave you the more willingly that I think you have no mind for guests this evening. Farewell. I hope to be better acquainted."

Eustace had little heart to answer, but he took up Du Guesclin's sword, as if to return it to him. "Keep it, Sir Knight," said Bertrand, "you know how to wield it. I am in some sort your godfather in chivalry, and I owe you a gift. Let me have yours, that my side may not be without its wonted companion. Farewell."

"And, Sir Eustace Lynwood," said Sir William Beauchamp, riding up, "you will advance to Navaretta, where we take up our quarters in the French camp. I grieve for the loss which has befallen us this day; but I trust our chivalry has gained an equally worthy member."

Eustace bowed and, whilst Messire Bertrand mounted a horse that had been brought for his use, turned back to his own melancholy duties. The body of Sir Reginald was raised from the ground, and placed on the levelled lances of four of his men, and Eustace then assisted Gaston to rise. He tottered, leant heavily against the young Knight, and was obliged to submit to be lifted to the saddle; but neither pain, grief, nor faintness could check his flow of talk.

"Well, Eustace,—Sir Eustace, I would say,—you have seen somewhat of the chances of war."

"The mischances you mean, Gaston."

"I tell you, many a man in this host would have given his whole kindred for such luck as has befallen you. To cross swords with Du Guesclin is honour enough. This cut will be a matter of boasting to my dying day; but, to take him prisoner—"

"Nay, that was no merit of mine. Had not the rest come up, my wars had soon been over, and I had been spared this grief."

"I know what most youths would have done in your place, and been esteemed never the worse. Dropped the pennon at that first round blow that brought you to your knee, and called for quarter. Poor pennon, I deemed it gone, and would have come to your aid, but before I could recover my feet, the fight was over, and I am glad the glory is wholly yours. Knighted under a banner in a stricken field! It is a chance which befalls not one man in five hundred, and you in your first battle! But he heeds me not. He thinks only of his brother! Look up, Sir Eustace, 'tis but the chance of war. Better die under sword and shield, than like a bed-ridden old woman; better die honoured and lamented, than worn out and forgotten. Still he has not a word! Yea, and I could weep too for company, for never lived better Knight, nor one whom Squire had better cause to love!"

CHAPTER V

A battle in the days of chivalry was far less destructive than those of modern times. The loss in both armies at Navaretta did not amount to six hundred; and on Pedro's side but four Knights had fallen, of whom Sir Reginald Lynwood was the only Englishman.

On the following day all the four were buried in solemn state, at the church of the village of Navaretta, Sir Eustace following his brother's bier, at the head of all the men-at-arms.

On returning to his tent, Eustace found Gaston sitting on his couch, directing Guy, and old Poitevin, who had the blue crossletted pennon spread on the ground before him. Eustace expressed his wonder. "What," exclaimed Gaston, "would I see my Knight Banneret, the youngest Knight in the army, with paltry pennon! A banneret are you, dubbed in the open field, entitled to take precedence of all Knight Bachelors. Here, Leonard, bring that pennon to me, that I may see if it can be cut square."

"Poor Eleanor's pennon!" said Eustace, sadly.

"Nay, what greater honour can it have than in becoming a banner? I only grieve that this bloodstain, the noblest mark a banner can bear, is upon the swallow-tail. But what do I see? You, a belted Knight, in your plain Esquire's helmet, and the blood-stained surcoat! Ay, and not even the gilded spurs!" he exclaimed indignantly. "Would that I had seen you depart! But it

was Leonard's fault. Why, man, knew you not your duty?"

"I am no Squire of Eustace Lynwood," said Ashton.

"Every Squire is bound to serve the Knight in whose company he finds himself," said d'Aubricour. "Know you not thus much of the laws of chivalry? Come, bestir yourself, that he may be better provided in future. You must present yourself to the Prince to-morrow, Sir Eustace."

"One of his Squires bade me to his presence," said the young Knight, "but I must now write these heavy tidings to my poor sister, and I am going to Father Waleran's tent to seek parchment and ink."

"And how send you the letter?"

"By the bearer of the Prince's letters to the King. Sir Richard Ferrars knows him, and will give them into his charge. So farewell, Gaston, keep quiet, and weary not yourself with my equipment."

With these words he left the tent, and Gaston, shaking his head, and throwing himself back on his deer-skins, exclaimed, "Tender and true, brave and loving! I know not what to make of Eustace Lynwood. His spirit is high as a Paladin's of old, of that I never doubted, yet is his hand as deft at writing as a clerk's, and his heart as soft as a woman's. How he sighed and wept the livelong night, when he thought none could hear him! Well, Sir Reginald was a noble Knight, and is worthily mourned, but where is the youth who would not have been more uplifted at his own honours, than downcast at his loss; and what new-made Knight

ever neglected his accoutrements to write sad tidings to his sister-in-law? But," he continued, rising again, "Guy, bring me here the gilded spurs you will find yonder. The best were, I know, buried with Sir Reginald, and methought there was something amiss with one rowel of the other. So it is. Speed to Maitre Ferry, the armourer, and bid him come promptly."

"And lie you still on your couch meanwhile, Master d'Aubricour," said Guy, "or there will soon be another Squire missing among the Lances of Lynwood."

"I marvel at you, d'Aubricour," said Leonard, looking up from a pasty, which he was devouring with double relish, to make up for past privations, "I marvel that you should thus weary yourself, with your fresh wound, and all for nought."

"Call you our brave young banneret nought? Shame on thee! All England should be proud of him, much more his friend and companion."

"I wish Eustace Lynwood well with all my heart," said Leonard, "but I see not why he is to be honoured above all others. Yourself, Gaston, so much older, so perfect in all exercises, you who fought with this Frenchman too, of whom they make so much, the Prince might as well have knighted you, as Eustace, who would have been down in another moment had not I made in to the rescue. Methinks if I had been the Prince, I would have inquired upon whom knighthood would sit the best."

"And the choice would have been the same," said Gaston. "Not only was Sir Eustace the captor of Messire Bertrand,

whereas my luck was quite otherwise; but what would knighthood have availed the wandering landless foreigner, as you courteously term me, save to fit me for the leadership of a band of *routiers*, and unfit me for the office of an Esquire, which I do, as you say, understand indifferently well."

"Is it not the same with him?" cried Leonard. "He does not own a palm's breadth of land, and for gold, all he will ever possess is on those broken spurs of his brother's."

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