THE WHITE COMPANY

By A. CONAN DOYLE

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CHAPTER III.

HOW HORDLE JOHN COZENED THE FULLER OF LYMINGTON. It is not, however, in the nature of gs that a lad of twenty, with young flowing in his yeins and all the world before him, should spend his first hours of freedom in mourning he had left. Long ere Alleyne out of the sound of the Beaulieu was striding sturdily swinging his staff and whistling as as the birds in the thicket. It was an evening to raise a man's heart. The sun shining siantwise heart. The sun shining stantwise through the trees threw delicate traceross the road, with bars of gold- front of it. en light between. Away in the distance fore and behind, the green boughs, now turning in places to a coppery the track. The still summer air was resinous smell of the among underwood and lost itself again in the and brambles upon the further

restful silence of nature. And yet there was no want of life the whole wide wood was full of t. Now it was a lithe, furtive stoat which shot across the path upon some fell errand of its own; then it was a wild cat which squatted non the outtraveler with a yellow and dublous eye Once 't was a wild sow that scuttled out of the bracken with two young ounders at her heels, and once a lordly red staggard walked daintly among the tree trunks and looked around him with the fearless gaze of one who lived under the King's own high protection. Alleyne gave his staff merry flourish, however, and the red bethought him that the King was

silence everywhere-the

whence he came. from The youth had now journeyed considerably beyond the furthest domains of good dame." the Abbey. He was the more surprised when, on coming around a turn in the path, he perceived a man in the familliar garb of the order, and seated in a clump of heather by oadside. Alleyne had known every brother well, but this was a face that w to him-a face which was very red and puffed, working th's way with that, as though the man was perplexed in mind. Once he shook hands furiously in the air, and thrice he sprang from his seat and hurried down the road. When he rose, however, Alleyne observed that his was much too long and loose for him in every direction, trailing upon the ground and bagging about his ankso that even with trussed-up skirts he could make but little progress. He ran once but the long gown clogged him so that he slowed down into a hambling walk, and finally plumped in

the heather once more.
"Young friend," said he when Alleyne was abreast of him, "I fear from thy garb that though canst know little of the Abbey of Bezulleu?"

Then you are in error, friend," all my life within its walls. 'Hast so indeed?" cried he. "Then

perhaps canst tell me the name of a great loathy lump of a brother face an a hand like a spade. His eyes were black and his hair was red an his voice like the parish bull. I trow there cannot be 4500 alike in the same cloisters." That can be no other than brother

John." said Alleyne. I trust he has done you no wrong.

that you should be we hat against thief hath cozened me out of my

"Wrong, quotha" cried the other, jumping out of the heather. "Wrong! gown." why he hath stolen every pack of clothand hath left me here in this sorry frock of white falding, so that I have ne to go back to my wife, lest she think that I have stonned her old kirtle have met him'

"But how came this," said the young clerk, who could scarce keep from laughter at the sight of the lest man so swathed in the white frock.

"It came in this way." he said sitting down once more: 'I was passing this hoping to reach Lymington ere when I came on this redheaded knave seated where we are sitting now. I uncovered and louted as I passed, thinking that he night be a holy man at his orisons, but he called to me and asked me if I had heard speak of the new indulgence in favor of the Cistercians 'Not I,' I answered. Then the worse for thy soul' said he; and with that he broke into a long tale on account of the virtues of the Abbot Berghersh it had been decreed by the Pope that whoever should went the habit of a new at of Beaulieu for as long as he might say the seven psalms of David should be accurred at the Kingdom of God. When I heard this I prayed him a, my knees that he would give me the use of his gown. on the busing blin three let him have the wearing of my good leather jerkin and hose, for as he said, It was chilling to the blood and unwhilst I made my orisons. He had scarce got them on, and it was a sore labor, seeing that my inches will starce. match my girth he had scarce got ney, them on, I sav. and I not yet at the end of the second psaim, when he bade me do honor to my dress, and with that set off down the road as fast as feet could carry him. For myself, I could no more run than if I had been sown in a sack; so here I sit and I am like to sit, before I set eyes upon my clothes again."

"Nay, friend, take it not so sadly," said Alleyne clapping the discussolate friend near at hand."

"That have 1." he answered, "and this plight, for his wife hath a gibngue, and will spread the tale ill I could not show my face in any rket from Fordingbridge to Southupton. But if you, fair sir, out of ur kind charity would be pleased a matter of two bow-shots out way, you would do me such a as I could scarce repay."

b all my heart," said Alleyne take this pathway on the left, thee, and then the deer-track passes to the right. You will be under a great beech tree the a charcoal burner. Give him my of a charcoal burner. Give hou my a, good sir, the name of Peter fuller, of Lymington, and ask him a change of raiment, that I may longer without delay,

a bundle. While she busled herlooking in at her with much interest and some distrust, for he had never been so nigh to a woman before. She had round arms, a dress of some sober woolen stuff, and a brass brooch the size of a cheese-cake stuck in the

"Peter the fuller!" she kept repeat ing. "Marry come up! if I were Peter the fuller's wife I would teach him better than to give his clothes to the first knave who asks for them. But he was always a poor, fond, silly creagreat forest. Here and there a tawny ture, was Peter, though we are beholden to him for helping to bury our second son Wat, who was a 'prentice to him at Lymington in the year of . Save the dull piping of insects the Black Death. But who are you, the sough of the leaves, there young sir?"

'I am a clerk on my road Beaulieu to Minstead. 'Aye, indeed! Hast been brought up at the Abbey then. I could read it from thy reddened cheek and down-Hast learned from the wouldst a lazar-house. Out upon

own mothers by such teaching.

pretty world it would be with all the women out of it." "Heaven forfend that such a thing should come to pass!" said Alleyne. "Amen and amen! But thou art a pretty lad, and the prettier for thy modest ways. It is easy to see from thy cheek that thou hast not spent the days in the rain and the heat and the as my poor Wat hath been

forced to do. have indeed seen little of life,

are the clothes, and Peter can leave doublet! It were easy to see that there to their heads once is no woman to tend to thee. So!— heels in derision, that is better. Now buss me, boy."

"Hast never seen to

Alleyne stooped and kissed her, for the kiss was the common salutation of remarked, more used in England than in any other country. Yet it sent the Evil One? the blood to his temples again, and he wondered, as he turned away, what the so afeard, my sweet cinnamon?" ex-Abbot Berghersh would have answer- claimed the other, a loose-jointed ed to so frank an invitation. He was youth tingling from this new experience when he came out upon the high road and saw a sight which drove all oth- saw your four legs above the bush er thoughts from his mind.

Some way down from where he had left him the unfortunate Peter was stamping and raving tenfold worse clothes on at all, save a short woolen shirt and a pair of leather shoes. Far clerk answered, "for I have spent | was running, with a bundle under one arm and the other hand to his side, like a man who laughs until he is gore.

"See him!" yelled Peter, "Look to You shall be my shall see Winchester juli for this. See where he goes with my cloak under his arm!'

"Who then?" cried Alleyne "Who but that cursed brother John. He bath not left me clothes enough to make a gallybagger. The double

"Stay though, my friend, it was his objected Alleyne. "It boots not. He hath them allgown, jerkin, hosen and all. Gramercy to him that he left me the shirt and the shoon. I doubt not that he will be back for them anon."

gown.

"But how came this?" asked Al. Harrow and alas that I ever should icyne, open eved with astonishment. "Are those the clothes? For dear charity's sake give them to me. Not the Pope shall have these from me, though he sent the whole college of ardinals to ask it. How came it? Why, you had scarce gone ere loathy John came running back again ed. proach him, he asked me whether it wandered as far as the Holy Land, was indeed likely that a man of prayer would leave his own godly raiment have never seen a more noble or graorder to take a layman's jerkin. He had, he said, but gone for a while that I might be the freer for my devotions. On this I plucked off gown, and he with much show of rected with two great bundles on haste did begin to undo his points; either side of him which contained but when I threw his frock down he the strollers' dresses -- doublets of clipped it up and ran off all untrussed, flame-colored silk and girdles leaving me in this sorry plight. He leather, spangled with brass and tin-laughed so the while, like a great The jugglers were on their heads once croaking frog, that I might have more, bounding about with rigid

which after my come clons he at last the pursy red-faced man and the digmarks toward the regulding of image ter came so thick upon him that he of Laurence the martist. Having strip-shad to lean up against a tree-trunk. ed his robe. I had no choice but to The fuller looked gravely and sadiy at to the ground they hopped about fasthim; but finding that he still laughed, er and faster, ever shouting to him he bowed with much mock politeness to play more briskly, until at last and stalked onward in his borrowed for clothes. Alleyne watched him until he stop. was small in the distance, and then wiping the tears from his eyes, he set the younger. "Hast a rare touch on off briskley once more upon his jour-

CHAPTER IV.

HOW THE BAILIFF OF SOUTH-AMPTON SLEW THE TWO MAS-TERLESS MEN.

The road along which he traveled was scarce as populous as most roads in the kingdom, and far less so than these which lie between the larger one upon the shoulder. "Canst change towns. Yet from time to time Alleyne they robe for a jerkin once more at the met other wayfarers, and more than g, urdess perchance you have a opce was overtaken by strings of pack per every night."

In the strings of pack per every night.

The strings of pack per every night. That have I." he answered, "and same direction as himself. Once a beg-e; but I care not to go nigh him in ging friar came limping along in a of Gascon wine on Sabbaths." brown habit imploring in a most dolorous voice to give him a single groat work to do. I have tarried with you to buy bread wherewith to save him- over long.", edoth Alleyne, and resoself from impending death. Alleyne over long", edoth Alleyne, and reso-self from impending death. Alleyne lutely set forth upon his journey once passed him swiftly by for he had learn-ed from the monks to have no love for the way, offering him first fourpense the wandering friars, and besides there and then sixpence a day, but he only was a great haif-gnawed mutton bone smiled and shook his head, until at was a great half-gnawed mutton bone sticking out of his pouch to prove him a liar. Swiftly as he went, however, he could not escape the curse of the four blessed evangelists which the mendicant howled behind him. So dreadful were his execrations that the frightened lad thrust his fingers into his ear-holes, and ran until the fellow was but a brown smirch on the yellow read.

Further on, at the edge of the wood had gone no great distance land be caree upon and he

There are reasons why he would be had put his pack down as a table, and Alleyne started off along the path great pasty, and washing it down with indicated, and soon found the log-hat some drink from a stone is. The faggot cutting in the forest, but his and the woman called shrilly to Alleyne bronzed with the fading ferns. On the to come and foin them, on which the left the woods were still thick, but man, turning, suddenly from mirth to the road edged away from them and the road edged away from the road edged away from them and the road edged away from the road edged away from them and the road edged away from the road edged awa self in finding and folding them, Alcudgel. Alleyne hastened on lest he leyne Edricson stood by the open door make more mischief, and his heart was heavy as lead within him. Look where whence it threw a mild, chastening he would he seemed to see nothing light over the wild moorland and

and longed for the sweet peace of the black depths behind them. the Abbey, he came on an open space the seeing eye decay is as dotted with holly bushes, where dotted with holly bushes, where was growth. and death as life. The the strangest sight that he had yet chanced upon. Near to the pathway he looked upon the autumnal countlay a long clump of greenery, and from behind this there stuck up again into behind this there stuck straight up into the air four human legs clad in partiyellow and colored hosen black. Strangest of all was when a brisk tune struck up and the four legs began to kick and twitter in time to the music. Walking on tiptoe around the bushes he stood in amazement to see two mer bounding about on their heads, while a thirdetaol sh aodil taol aoi taol ao while they played, the one a viol and the other a pipe, as merrily and as truly as though they were seated in a choir. Alleyne crossed himself as he monks, I trow, to fear a woman as gazed at this unnatural sight and could scarce hold his ground with a steady them! that they should dishonor their face, when the two dancers, catching sight of him, came bouncing in his direction. A spear's length from him. they each drew swordetaol taol aol etao they each threw a somersault into the air, and came down upon their feet with smirking faces and their hands over their hearts.

"A guerdon-a guerdon, my knight of the staring eyes!" cried one. my prince!" shouted "A gift. other. Any trifle will serve-a purse of

gold, or even a jewelled goblet." Alleyne thought of what he had demoniac possession-the read "Will find nothing in it to pay for jumpings, the twitchings, the wild the loss of thy own freshness, Here talk. It was in his mind to repeat over the exorcism proper to such them when next be comes this way. tacks; but the two burst out a-laugh-Holy Virgin! see the dust upon thy ing at his scared face, and turning on more,

"Hast never seen tumblers before? asked the elder, a black-browed, swarthy man, as brown and supple as the age, as Erasmus long afterwards a hazel twig. "Why shrink from us, then, as though we were the spawn of "Why shrink, my honey-bird? Why

> with a dancing, rougish "Truly, sirs, it is a new sight to me," the clerk answered. "When I could scarce credit my own eyes. Why is it that you do this thing?

"A dry question to answer."

the younger, coming back on to his than before. Now, however, instead of feet, "A most husky question, my the great white cloak, he had no fair bird! But how? A flask, a flask! -by all that is wonderful!" out his hand as he spoke, and pluckdown the road a longlegged figure ing Alleyne's bottle out of his scrip, he deftly knocked the neck off, and poured the half down his throat. The drank the wine, and then, to the clerk's increasing amazement, made He a show of swallowing the bottle, with such skill that Alleyne seemed to see it vanish down his throat. A moment later, however, he flung it over his head, and caught it bottom downwards upon the calf of his left leg. We thank you for the wine, kind sir," said he, "and for the ready

courtesy wherewith you offered it.

Touching your question, we may tell

you that we are much you that we are strollers and jugglers, who, having performed with much applause at Winchester fair, with are now on our way to the great Michaelmas at Ringwood. As our art is a very fine and delicate one, however, we cannot let a day go by without exercising ourselves in which end we choose some quiet and sheltered spot where we may break our journey. Here you find us; and it? we cannot wonder that you, who are this new to tumbling, should be astoundsince many great barons, earls, when I opened mouth to re- marshals and knights, who have are of one mind in saying that they clous performance, If you will

will continue our exercise. Alleyne sat down willingly as diof rected with two great bundles on as short as his legs were long." necks, playing the white in perfect time and tune. It chanced that out The young man listened to this tale of one of the bundles there stuck the of wrong with all the seriousness that end of what the clerk saw to be a he could maintain; but at the sight of cittern, so, drawing it forth, he tuned it up and twanged a harmony to the mily with which he bore him, the laugh- merry lilt which the dancers play-On that they dropped their own ed. instruments, and putting their hands for very weariness all three had to

"Well played, sweet poppet!" cried

"How knew you the tune?" asked the other. "I knew ft not. I did but follow

the notes I heard. Both opened their eyes at this, and stared at Alleyne with as much amazement as he had shown at them.

"You have a fine trick of ear then," said one. "We have long wished to meet such a man, Will join us and to meet such a man, Will join us and jog on to Ringwood? ties shall be light, and thou shall have

"Nay, it may not be. I have other

low read.

Further on, at the edge of the wood-land he came upon a chapman and his wife, who gat upon a fallen tree. He

changing play of the lights and shadows of life was strangely start-ling and interesting. A guit seemed to divide this brisk uncertain exist-sace from the old steady round of work and of prayer which he bad left behind him. The few hours that had passed gince he saw the Abbey fower stretched out in his memory until they outgrew whole months of the stagnant life of the cloister. As he walked and munched the sott bread from his scrip, it seemed to fall her, and she could scarcely prop herself up with her staff.

"You are weak, mother," said he. "Hast journeyed far, I wot."

"From Wiltshire, friend," said she, in a quivering voice, "three days have

bry, and found the great barren heath of Blackdown stretching in front of wound over the open. The sun lay low in the west upon a purple cloud, but injustice and violence and the glittered on the fringe of forest, harshness of man to man. But even as he brooded sliently over flakes of dead gold, the brighter for To he looked upon the autumnal counttry side and marvelled at its beauty

He had little time to dwell upon it however, for there were still six good miles between him and the nearest inn. He sat down by the roadside to partake of his bread and cheese, and then with a lighter scrip he hastened upon his way. There appeared to be more way-

farers on the down than in the forest. First he passed two Dominicans in their long black dresses, swept by him with downcast looks man over their shoulders. They sang some lip and shining teeth. Even as

which they had caught upon the way. moor, and they offered it to Alleyne flerce blue eyes, they were uneasy dame ly moor.

Yet it is not always the

ple who came hobbling down the path, so weak and so old to all apin fear of him. Yet when Alleyne had passed him, of a sudden, out of pure devilment, he screamed out a curse at him, and sent a jagged flint stone hurtling past his ear. So horrid was the causeless rage of the crooked creature, that the clerk came over a cold thrill, and took to his heels until was out of shot from stone or and the speed of his own foot. In the challenge.

hollow, with a peat-colored stream running swiftly down the centre of it. To the right of this stood, and stands to this day, an ancient barrow, or burying mound, covered deeply in a bristle of heather and bracken. Alleyne was plodding down the slope upon one side, when he saw an old dame, eming towards him upon the other, limping with weariness leaning heavily upon a stick. When pleased to sit upon that stump, we she reached the edge of the stream stood helpless, looking to right and to left for some ford. Where the path ran down a great stone had been fixed in the centre of the brook, but aged and uncertain feet. Twice she of purple velvet and driving a big black as of Redbridge and hew me his head thrust forward at it, and twice she drew back, untk at last, giving up in leaned well over its neck as he rode, brink and wrang her hands wearily. at every bound as though he were lift-There she sat when Alleyne reached ing the steed instead of it carrying him. the crossing.

warm from the ovens of Beaulieu. in a quivering voice: "three days have When he passed Penerley, where I been on the road I go to my son, were three cottages and a barn, he who is one of the King's regarders reached the edge of the tree countat Brockenhurst. He has ever said that he would care for me in mine o'd age

"And rightly, too, mother, since you cared for him in his youth. But when have you broken fast

"At Lyndenhurst; but alss! money is at an end, and I could get a dish of bran-porridge from the nunnery. Yet I trust that I may able to reach Brockenhurst to-night. where I may have all that heart can desire; for oh! sir, but my son is a fine man, with a kindly heart of his own, and it is good as food to me to think that he should have a doublet of Lincoln green to his back and be the King's own paid man.' "It is a long road yet to Brockenhurst," said Alleyne; "but here such bread and cheese as I have left, and here too, is a penny which may help you to supper. May God be

"May God be with you. young man!' she cried. "May He make your heart as glad as you have made mine!" She turned away, still mumbling blessings, and Alleyne saw her short figure and her long shadow who stumbling slowly up the slope.

He was moving away himself, when and pattering lips, without so much his eyes lit upon a strange sight, and as a glance at him. Then there came one which sent a tingling through his a gray friar, or minorite, with a good skin. Out of the tangled scrub on the paunch upon him, wakking slowly and old overgrown barrow two human ooking about him with the air of faces were looking out at him; the who was at peace with himself sinking sun glimmered full and with all men. He stopped Al- them, showing up every line and fealeyne to ask him whether it was not ture. The one was an oldish man with true that there was a hostel some- a thin beard, a crooked nose, and a where in those parts which was es- broad red smudge from a birthecially famous for the stewing of mark over his temple; the other was eels. The clerk having made answer a negro, a thing rarely met in Engthat he had neard the eels of Slawly land at that day, and rarer still in the spoken of, the friar sucked in quiet southland parts. Alleyne had his lips and hurried forward. Close read of such folk, but had never seen at his heels came three laborers walk- one before, and could scarce take his ing abreast, with spade and mattock eyes from the fellow's broad pouting rude chorus right tunefully as they gazed, however, the two came writhwalked, but their English was so ing out from among the heather, and coarse and rough that to the ears of came down towards him with such a cloister-bred man it sounded like guilty, slinking carriage, that the a foreign and barbarous tongue. One clerk felt that there was no good in of them carried a young bittern them, and hastened onward upon his

He had not gained the crown of for a silver groat. Very glad he was the slope, when he heard a sudden to get safely past them, for, with scuffle behind him and a feeble voice. their bristling red beards and their Looking round, there was the old down upon the roadway, bargain with upon a lone- with her red whimple flying on breeze, while the two rogues, waster, riever draw-latch or murtherthe burliest black and white, and the wi'dest who are the most to her, wrestling away from her the penbe dreaded. The workers looked hun- ny and other poor trifles as were I grily at him, and then jogged on- worth the taking. At the sight of arrow on strink, and I shall show you upon their was in a slow, lum- her thin limbs struggling in weak re- such sport as only the King can give. bering Saxon style. A worse man to sistance, such a glow of fierce anger deal with was a wooden-legged crip- passed over Alleyne as set his head Redbridge upon the right. So! Beat in a whiri. Dropping his scrip, he high and low among the heather and bounded over the stream once more, pearance that a child need not stand and made for the two villains, with his staff whirled over his shoulder and his gray eyes blazing with fury. robbers, however, were not dis-

posed to leave their victim until they had worked their wicked will upon red gear upon his head. As he raised her. The black man, with the wo- himself to look over the bracken at man's crimson scarf tled round his his enemies, the staring eye of the swarthy head, stood farward in the bailiff, who broke into a long screechcentre of the path, with a long, dull ing whoop and spurred forward sword colored knife in his hand, while the in hand. Seeing himself discovered word. It seemed to him that in this other, waving a ragged cudgel, country of England there was no protection for a man save that which on. His blood was fairly aflame, on. His blood was fairly lay in the strength of his own arm however, and he feeded no such Dashing at the man, he cloisters he had heard vague talk of smote at him with such good will that the law-the mighty law which was the other let his knife tinkle in the higher than prelate or baron, yet no sign could he see of it. What was the safer distance. The second rogue, benefit of a law written fair upon however, made of sterner stuff, rushed parchment, he wondered, if there in upon the clerk, and clipped him were no officers to enforce it, As it round the waist with a grip like a fell out, he had that very evening, bear, shouting the while to his comere the sun had set, a chance of see- rade to come round and stab him in ing how stern was the grip of the the back. At this the negro took the English law when it did happen to heart of grace, and picking up his seize the offender.

A mile or so out upon the moor the prowling step and murderous eye. dagger again he came stealing with road takes a very sudden dip into a while the two swayed backward and forwards, staggering this way and that. In the very midst of the scuffle however, whilst Allyne himself to feel the cold blade between his shoulders, there came a sudden scurry of hoofs, and the black man yelled with terror and ran for his life is said," quoth the balliff of South-through heather. The man with the ampton, as they made for the road yelled with terror and ran for his life birth-mark, too, struggled away, and Alleyn heard his teeth chatter and felt his limbs grow limp to his hand. At this sign of coming aid the clerk held on the tighter, and at last was able to pin his man down and glanced behind him to see where all the noise was coming from. Down the slanting road there was rld- over yonder, but we have scarce lelsure it was too far from the bank for her ing a big, burly man, clad in a tunic to make for them. Draw sword Thom-

horse as hard as it could gallop. He from his shoulders." despair, she sat herself down by the and made a heaving with his shoulders the condemned man.

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had white doeskin gloves, a curling white feather in his velvet cap, and a broad gold-embroidered baldric over his bosom. Behind him rode six others his bosom. Behind him rode six others two and two, clad in sober brown jerkins, with the long yellow staves of their bows thrusting through from 'behind their right shoulders. Down the hill their right shoulders. Down the hill they thundered, over the brook and up to the scene of the contest.

"Here is one," said the leader, spring-white to the lips at these bloody things.

they thundered, over the blook
to the scene of the contest.

"Here is one," said the leader, springing down from his recking horse, and
seizing the white rogue by the edge
of his jerkin. "This is one of them. I
know him by that devil's touch upon
his brow. Where are your cords, Peterkin? So!—bind him hand and foot.
His last hour has come And you young
His last hour has come And you young
Touch not that which is no concern of thine. But what is this boon, Beaulieu.

Oxenford or from Cambridge? Hast thou a letter fom the chancellor of thy college giving thee a permit to beg? Let me see thy letter." He had a square face, with bushy side whiskers and a very questioning eye. "I am from Beaulien Abbey and have no need to beg," said Alleyne, who was

all of a tremble now that the ruffle was over "The better for thee," the other answered. "Dost know who I am?"
"No Sir, I do not."

"I am the law!"-nodding his head "I am the law of England and the mouthpiece of his most graclous and royal majesty. Edward the Third."

Allevne lowted low to the King's renresenative. "Truly you came in good time, honored sir," said he. "A moment later and they would have slain

"But there should be another cried the man in the purple coat. There should be a black man. A shioman with St. Anthony's fire, and a black "The black man fled over to that side," said Alleyne, pointing toward the barrow. "He could not have gone far, sir

halliff." cried one of the archers, un-"He is in slinging his bow. somewhere, for he knew well, black paynim as he is. that our horses' four egs could outstrip his two.' "Then we shall have him," said the other.

I am balliff of Southampton, that any

er came scathless from me and my

"It shall never be said, whilst

posse. Leave that rogue lying. stretch out in line my merry ones, with You on the left, Howett and Thomas of a pot of wine to the lucky marksman." As it chanced, however, the searchers had not far to seek. The negro had burrowed down into his hiding place upon the barrow, where he might have lain snug enough, had it not been for the himself to look over the bracken at the man rushed out from his hiding place, and bounded at the top of his speed down the line of archers, keeping a good hundred paces to the front of them. The two who were on either side of Alleyne bent their bows as calmly as though they were shooting at the popinjay at the village fair. "Seven yards windage, Hal." said one

whose hair was streaked with gray. "Five," replied the other, letting loose his string. Alleyne gave a gulp in his throat, for the yellow streak seemed to pass through the man; but he still ran forward. "Seven. you jack-fool," growled the

first speaker, and his bow twanged like a harp-string. The black man sprang high into the air and shot out both his arms and legs, coming down all a sprawl among he heather. "Right under the blade bone!" quoth the archer. sauntering forward for his arrow. "The old hound is the best when

way. "That means a quart of the best Malmsey in Southampton this very night, Mathew Atwood. Art sure that

"Dead as Pontius Pilate, worshipful sir."

"It is well. Now as to the other knave. There are trees and to spare "A boon, gracious sir, a boon!"

"I will confess to my crime, It was In a rapid glance Alleyne saw that he indeed I and the black cook, both from

"What then?" asked the bailiff.

ampton, who did set upon the Flanders merchant and rob him of his splear; and his mercery for which, as well know, you hold a warrant against us." "There is a little merit in this con-

"I am a clerk, sir, traveling from rogue, that you would crave?"
"I have in my shoe, most worship"A clerk!" cried the other, "Art from ful sir, a strip of wood which belonged once to the bark wherein the blessed Paul was dashed up against the Island of Melits. I bought it for two rose nobles from a shipman who came from the Levant. The boon I crave is that will place it in my me die still grasping it. har man. ner, not only shall inv salvation be secured, but the I shall never cease to introde for

At the command of the bailiff they plucked off the fellow's shoe, and there sure enough at the side of the instep wrapped in a piece of fine sendall, lay a long, dark splinter of wood archers doffed their hats at the sight of it, and the bailiff crossed himself devoutely as he handed it to the rob-

"If it should chance," he said, "that through the surpassing merits of the blessed Paul your sin-stained soul should gain a way into paradise, I trust that you will not forget that intercession which you have promised, Bear in mind, too, that it is Herward man who had served time as cook— the bailiff for whom you pray and not those are the pair we are in chase of." Herward the sheriff, who is my uncle's son. Now, Thomas, I pray you dispatch, for we have a long ride before us and sun has already set." Alleyne gazed upon the scene-the

portly velvet-clad official, the knot of hard-faced archers with their hands to the bridles of their horses, the thief with his arms trussed back and his doublet turned down upon his ers. By the side of the track the old dame was standing, fastening her red whimple once more round her head, Even as he looks one of the archers drew his sword with a sharp whirr of stept up to the lost man. The clerk hurried away in horror; but ere he had gone many paces, he heard sudden, sullen thump, with a choking, whistling sound at the end of it. A minute later the bailiff and four of his men rode past him on their journey back to Southampton, the other two having been chosen as grave-diggers, As they passed, Alleyne saw that one of the men was wiping his sword-blade upon the mane of his horse. sickness came over him at the sight. and sitting down by the waysids he burst out weeping, with his nerves all in a jangle. It was a terrible world, thought he, and it was hard to know which were the most to be dreaded, the knaves or the men o

(To be Continued.)

Will Provide Separate Quarters for Whites and Blacks.

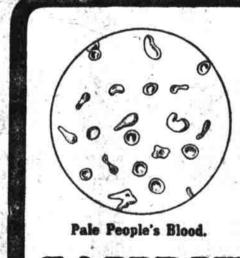
Correspondence of The Observer. Durham, Jan. 5 .- Durham county will provide separate quarters for the white and colored road prisoners. It was stated to-night that separate quarters would be ready by Monday. Heretofore all prisoners have been quartered in the same house, 70 feet in length, but in different parts of the building.

Lord Roberts opened at Woolwich. on December 21, a theatre, toward the erection of which the British War Office, following the example of the Adm thy, has contributed. It is to be ca..ed the Royal Artillery Theatre. It holds 1,200 soldjers and can be converted into a baliroom.

Generally a girl isn't Interested id she Half the fun of being married is in telling what a lot of fun you really had when you were a bachelor.

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