WHITE COMPANY

A. CONAN DOYLE

Juthor of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," "A Study in Scarlet," "The Hound of "Beyond The City." Etc. The Baskervilles,"

CHAPTER VII.

the Three Comrades Journeys at early dawn the country inn was II alive, for it was rare indeed that

hour of daylight would be wasted time when lighting was so scarce dear. Indeed, early as it was en Dame Eliza began to stir, d that others could be earlier III, for the door was ajar, and the d student of Cambridge had aken himself off, with a mind which as too intent upon the high things c antiquity to stoop to consider the board. It was the shrill outcry of the landlady when she found her nd the clucking of the hens, hich had streamed in through the door, that first broke in upon the pers of the tired wayfarers. Once afoot, it was not long before

company began to disperse. A mule with red trappings was ght round from some neighboring of for the physician, and he amed away with much dignity upon road to Southampton .The er and the gleeman called for a of small ale apiece, and started together for Ringwood fair, the d jongleur looking very yellow in a sye and swollen in the face after e evernight potations. The archer, any man in the room, was as merry and having kissed the maand chased the maid up the ladler once more, he went out to the k, and came back with the water dripping from his face and hair. Hola! my man of peace," ed to Alleyne,

To Minstead," quoth he. "My brother Simon Edriscon is socman while. I prythee, let me have my day when the wars are over score, good dame."
"Score, indeed!" cried she, stand-

of the panel on which had worked the night before. "Say, rather what it is that I owe to thee, good youth. Aye, this is indeed a pled merlin, and with a leveret under claws, as I am a living woman. By the rood of Waltham! but touch is deft and dainty."

"And see the red eye of it!" the maid. Aye, and the open beak." "And the ruffled wing," added Hor-

"By my hilt!" cried the archer, "it is the very bird itself."

young clerk flushed with pleasure at this chorus of praise, rude and discriminate indeed, and yet so much heartier and less grudging than which he had ever heard from critical brother Jerome, or the short-spoken Abbot. There was, it as great wickedness in this world, of with the guardsmen, grooms, and out for their breakfast.

eyne's tranchoir of bread, "that you ingless, and the bowman, like most are so ready with your brushes and

thers of Beautieu if I could not," been their clerk this ten years back." The bowman looked at him with rest respect. "Think of that:" said "And you with not a hair to your ce, and a skin like a girl. I can not three hundred and fifty paces with my little popper there, and four war-bow; yet I can make nothing of me. In the whole Company there was inly one man who could read, and he fell down a well at the taking of Ventadour, which proves that the thing is not suited to a soldier, though

I can make some show at it," said big John; "though I was scarce long ough among the monks to catch the whole trick of it."

most needful to a clerk."

"Here, then, is something to try ealed at either end with a large red seal, John pored long and earnestly our the inscription, with his brows ent as one who bears up against great mental strain.

Not having read much of late," he said, "I am loth to say too much about what this may be. Some might say one thing and some another, just as one bowman loves the yew, and a second will not shoot save with the To me, by the length and the look of it, I should judge this to be a verse from one of the Psalms."

The bowman shook his head, "It scarce likely," he said, "that Sir Claude Latour should send me all the way across seas with nought more weighty than a psalm-verse. You have clean overshot the butts this time, mon camarade. Give it to the little I will wager my feather-bed that

he makes more sense of it." Why, it is written in the French said Alleyne, "and in a right clerky hand. This is how it runs: 'A le moult puissant et moult honorable chevaller, Bir Nigel Loring de Christchurch, de son tres fidele amis dr Cinude Latour, captaine de la apaguie blanche, chatelain de Bisear, grand seigneur de Montchaton. Comte de Foix, tenant les droits la haute justice, de la mileu, et Which signifies in our ch: 'To the very powerful and honorable knight, Sir Nigel Lorof Christchurch, from his hful friend Sir Claude Latour. piain of the White Company, tatelain of Biscar, grand lord of lacar, grand lord of Montchateau vassal of the renowned Gaston, t of Foix, who holds the rights high justice, the middle and

Look at that now!" cried the bow-

may torture him and the high that you may slay him. That is about knightly deed. By these ten linger-the truth of it. But this is the letter which I am to take; and since the platter is clean it is time that we trussed up and were afoot. You come with me, mon gros Jean; and as to more, we had at least filled the false you little one where did you say knight. Sir Judas, so full of English little ope, where did you say "To Minstead."

"Ah, yes. I know this forest country well, though I was born myself in the Hundred of Easebourne, in the Rape of Chichester, hard by the vil-lage of Midhurst. Yet I have not a word to say against the Hampton men, for there are no better comrades or truer archers in the whole Company than some who learned to the strings in these very parts. We shall travel round with you to Minstead, lad, seeing that it is little out "I am ready," said Alleyne, right

pleased at the thought of such company upon the road. "So am not L I must store my dunder at this inn, since the hostess an honest woman. Hola! ma cherie, wish to leave with you my goldwork, my velvet, my silk, my feather bed, my incense boat, my ewer, my naping linen, and all the rest of it. I take only the money in a linen bag, and the box of rose-colored sugar which is a gift from my captain to the Lady Loring. Wilt guard my treasure

"It shall be put in the safest loft good archer. Come when you may, you shall find it ready for you."
"Now, there is a true friend!"

he cried the bowman, taking her hand. There is a bonne amie! English land and English women, say I, and French wine and plunder. I shall be back anon, mon ange. I am a lonely man, e, and I go to bide with him for my sweeting, and I must settle some done. Mayhap you and I----Ah. mechante, mechante! There is la peing with upraised hands in front tite peeping from behind the door.

of the panel on which Alleyne Now, John, the sun is over the trees; you must be brisker than this when bugleman blows 'Bows Bille. "I have been waiting this time

back," said Hordle John gruffly. "Then we must be off. Adleu, ma vie! The two livres shall settle the score and buy some ribbons against the next kermesse. Do not forget Sam Aylward, for his heart shall ever be thine alone—and thine, ma petite! So, marchons, and may St. Julian grant us as good quarters elsewhere!" The sun had risen over Ashurst and Denny woods, and was shining brightly, though the eastern wind had a sharp flavor to it, and leaves were flickering thickly from the trees. In the High Street of Lyndhurst the wayfarers had to pick their would seem, great kindness as well way, for the little town was crowded ed. His hostess would hear noth- to the King's hunt. The King himself by of his paying for bed or for was staying at Castle Malwood, but while the archer and Hordle several of his suite had been compellplaced a hand upon either ed to seek such quarters as der and led him off to the board. might find in the wooden or wattlewhere some smoking fish, a dish of and-daub cottages of the village. Here ch, and a jug of milk were laid and there a small escutcheon, peeping from a glassless window, mark-I should not be surprised to learn, ed the night's lodging of knight or camarade," said the soldier, as baron. These coats-of-arms could be heaped a slice of fish upon Al- read, where a scroll would be mean-

ould read written things, since you men of his age, was well versed in the common symbols of heraldry. "There is the Saracen's head of Sir "It would be a shame to the good Bernard Brocas," quoth he. "I saw him last at the ruffle at Poictiers some he answered. "seeing that I have ten years back, when he bore him-been their clerk this ten years back." self like a man. He is the master of lovial stave, though in that he cannot come night to Sir John Chandos, who is first at the board or in the saddle. Three martlets on a field. azure, that must be one of the Lutadred and twenty with the great trells. By the crescent upon it, it rebow; yet I can make nothing of should be the second son of old Sir this, nor read my own name if you Hugh, who had a bolt through his song, to set 'Sam Aylward' up against ankle at the intaking of Romorantin, in the whole Company there was he having rushed into the fray ere his squire had time to clasp his leret to his greave. There too is the hackle which is the old device of the De Brays. I have served under Sir Thomas De Bray, who was as folly as a pie, and a lusty swordsman until

the stamping horses, the busy grooms quoth the archer, pulling a and the knots of pages and squires parchment from the inside of who disputed over the merits of their square parchment from the inside of who disputed over the merits of their John or to Alleyne Edricson; but the his tunic. It was tied securely with a master's horses and deerhounds. As archer treated it lightly, as a combroad band of purple silk, and firmly they passed the old church, which mon matter enough. upon a mound at the left-hand side of the village street the door was flung open, and a stream of worshippers wound down the sleping path, coming from the morning mass, all hattering like a cloud of jays. leyne bent knee and doffed hat at the sight of the open door; but ere he had finished an ave his comrades Italy and Bohemia. En avant, camwere out of sight round the curve of the path, and he had to run to overtake them."

he got too fat for his harness."

"My friend," said Hordle John, "I sufferer formed a sort of dismal cho-have prayed so much during the last rus. It was in old French, and ran two months, not only during the day, but at matins, lauds and the like, when I could scarce keep my head upon my shoulders for nodding, that I feel that I have somewhat over-

prayed myself." "How can a man have too much religion?" cried Alleyne earnestly. It is the one thing that availeth. A man is but a beast as he lives from day to day, eating and drinking, breathing and sleeping. It is only when he raises himself, and concerns himself with the immortal spirit witha man. Bethink ye how sad a thing it would be that the blood of the Redeemer should be spilled to no pur-

"Bless the lad, if he doth not blush like any girl, and yet preach like the whole College of Cardinals," cried the archer.

pose."

"In truth I blush that one so weak and so unworthy as I should try to teach another that which he finds it so passing hard to follow himself." triumph. "That is just what d have said."

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knight, Sir Judas, so full of English arrows that he would curse the day

The young clerk smiled at his companion's earnestness. "Had He wished help," he said, "He could have summoned legions of archangels from heaven, so what need had He of your poor bow and arrow Besides, be-think you of His own words— that those who live by the sword shall perish by the sword."

"And how could a man die better?" asked the archer. "If I had my wish, it would be to fall so—not, mark you, in any mere skirmish of the company, but in a stricken field, with the great ilon banner waving over us and the red oriflamme in front, amid the shouting of my fellows and the twanging of the strings. But let it be sword, lance, or bolt that strikes me down; for I should think it a shame to die from an iron ball from the firecrake or bombard or any such un-soldiery weapon, which is only fitted to scare babes with its foolish noise and smoke." "I have heard much even in the

quiet cloisters of these new and dreadful engines," quoth Alleyne, "It is said, though I can scarce bring myself to believe it, that they will send a ball twice as far as a bowman can shoot his shaft, and with such force as to break through armor of proof." "True enough, my lad. But while the armorer is thrusting in his devil's-dust and dropping his ball, and lighting his flambeau, I can very easily loose six shafts, or eight maybe, so he hath no great vantage after all. Yet I will not deny that at the intaking of a town it is well to have good store of bom-bards. I am told that at Calais they

made dints in the wall that a man might put his head into. But surely, comrades, some one who is grievously hurt hath passed along this road be-All along the woodland track there did indeed run a scattered straggling trail of blood-marks, sometimes in sin-gle drops, and in other places in proad, ruddy gouts, smudged over the

flint stones. "It must be a stricken deer," said "Nay, I am woodman enough to see that no deer hath passed this way this

dead leaves or crimsoning the white

morning; and yet the blood is fresh. But hark to the sound! They stood listening all three with sidelong heads. Through the silence of the great forest there came a swishing, whistling sound, mingled with the most dolorous groans, and the voice of a man raised in a high quavefing kind of song. The comrades hurried onother side the source from which these strange noises arose.

A tall man, much stooped in the was walking slowly with centre of the path. He was dressed from head to foot in a long white linen cloth, and a high white cap with a red cross printed upon it. His gown was turned back from the shoulders, and the flesh there was a sight to make a man wince, for it was all beaten to a pulp, and the blood was soaking into his gown and trickling upon the ground. Behind him walked a smaller man, with his hair touched with gray, who was clad in the same white garb. He intoned a long whining rhyme in the French tongue, and at the end of every line he raised a thick cord, all jagged with pellets of lead, and smote his companion across the shoulders until the blood spurted again. Even as the three wayfarers stared, however, was a sudden change, for

smaller man, having finished his song, loosened his own gown and handed the scourge to other, who took up the stave once more and lashed his companion with all the strength of his bare and sinewy arm. So, alternately beating it is as well, for the company were in and beaten, they made their dolorous need of it about that time."
way through the beautiful woods and The pious Alleyne was deeply under the amber arches of the fad-ing beech trees, where the calm So the archer gossiped as the three strength and majesty of Nature might swayfarers threaded their way among serve to rebuke the foelish energies and misspent strivings of mankind.

Such a spectacle was new to Hordle

"These are the Beating Friars, otherwise called the Flagellants," quoth he. "I marvel that ye should have come upon none of them before, for across the water they are as common as gallybaggers. I have heard that there are no English among them, but that they are from France, arades! that we may have speech with them."

"What!" he said, "not one would be prayer before God's own open house? Which the beater was chanting, but the dark cloud of each line, while the groans of the from his spirit. somewhat in this way:

> Or avant, entre nous tous freres Battons nos charognes bien fort En remembrant la grant misère De Dieu et sa piteuse mort, Oui fut pris en la gent amère Et vendus et trais a tort vendus et trais a tort bastu sa chair, viege et dere nom de ce battons plus fert.

Then at the end of the verse changed hands and chanting began anew. "Truly, holy fathers," said archer in French as they abreast of them, "you have enough for to-day. The road is all spotted like a shambles at Martin-

mas. Why should ye mishaudie your-selves thus?" "C'est pour vos peches—pour vos peches," they droned, looking at the travelers with sad lack-lustre eyes, and then bent to their bloody work once more without heed to the prayers and persuasions which were a to them. Finding all remon-useless, the three comrades I on their way, leaving these strange travelers to their dreary "Mort Dien!" cried the bowman,
"there is a bucketful or more of my
blood over in France, but it was
all spilled in hot fight, and I should
think twice before I drew it drop by
drop as these friars are doing. By my
hilt! our young one here is as white
as a Picardy cheese. What is amiss
then mon cher?"
"It is nothing," Alleyne answered,
John.

"My life has been too quiet, I am not used to such sighta."
"Ma foi!" the other cried, "I have never yet seen a man who was so stout of speech and yet so weak of

heart."
"Not so, friend," quoth big John;
"Not so, friend," quoth big John; "It is not weakness of heart, for I know the lad well. His heart is as good as thine or mine, but he hath more in his pate than ever you will carry under that tin pot of thine, and as a consequence he can see farther into things, so that they weigh upon him more."

"Surely to any man it is a sad sight," said Alleyne, "to see these ho'y men, who have done no sin themselves, suffering so for the sins of others, Saints are they, if in this age any may merit so high a name."
"I count them not a fly," cried Hordle John; "for who is the better for all their whipping and yowling? They are like other friars, I trow, when all is done. Let them leave their backs alone, and beat the pride out of their hearts"

"By the three kings! there is sooth what you say," remarked the arch-"Besides, methinks if I were le bon Dieu, it would bring me little joy to see a poor devil cutting the flesh off his bones; and I should think that he had but a small opinion of me, that he should hope to please provost-marshal work. No, by my hilt! I should look with a more loving eye upon a jolly archer who never harmed a fallen foe and never feared a hale one."

"Doubtless you mean no sin," Alleyne. "If your words are wild, it is not for me to judge them. Can you not see that there are other foes in this world besides Frenchmen, and as much glory to be gained in con-quering them? Would it not be a proud day for knight or squire if he could overthrow seven adversaries lists of life, and there come the seven champions against Pride, Sir Covetousness, Sir Lust, Sir Anger, Sir Gluttony, Sir Envy and Sir Sloth. Let a man lay those seven low, and he shall have the prize of the day, from the hands of the fairest queen of beauty, even from the Virgin Mother herself. It is for this that these men mortify their flesh, and to set us an example, who would pamourselves overmuch. I say again hat they are God's own saints, and

bow my head to them. "And so you shall, mon petit," re-bowman. "And hark ye, mes en-Later, I served under the Warden of plied the archer. "I have not heard a fants, take an old soldier's rede and Berwick, that very John Copeland of man speak better since old Dom Bertrand died, who was at one time chaplain to the White Company, He a very valiant man, but at the battle of Brignais he was spitted through the body by a Hainault manat-arms. For this we had an excommunication read against the man, name, and knew nothing of him, save that he rode a dapple gray rousely scathe unless your shaft followed that he rode a dapple gray rousely he had heard so little that was youmen prickers who were attached wards eagerly, and topping the brow that he rode a dapple gray roussin, I straight upon him from the clouds. His hostess would hear noth to the King's hunt. The King himself of a small rising they saw upon the have feared sometimes that the I have not drawn string for two weeks, blight may have settled upon the wrong man."

"Your company has been, then, to bow knee before our holy father, bended head and clasped hands in the the Pope Urban, the prop and centre of Christendom?" asked Alleyne, much interested. "Perchance you have yourself set eyes upon his august face "
"Twice I saw him," said the arch-

er. "He was a lean little rat of a man, with a scab on his chin. The first time we had five thousand crowns out of him, though he made ado about it. The second time we asked ten thousand, but it was three days before we could come to terms, and I am of opinion myself that w might have done better by plundering the palace. His chamberlain and ardinals came forth, as I remember, to sak whether we would take seven thousand crowns with his blessing and a plenary absolution, or the ter thousand with his solemn ban by bell. book and candle. We were all of one mind that it was best to have the ten thousand with the curse: but in some way they prevailed upon Sir John, so that we were blest shriven against our will. Perchance

shocked by this reminiscence. Involuntarily he glanced up and around to see if there were any trace of those opportune levin-flashes and thunderbolts which, in the "Acta Sanctorum." were wont so often to cut short the loose talk of the scoffer. The autumn sun streamed down as brightly as ever, and the peaceful red path still wound in front of them through through the scattered huts of Emery the rustling, yellow-tinted forest. Nature seemed to be too busy with her own concerns to heed the dignity of in heather, where droves of the halfan outraged pontiff. Yet he felt a wild black forest pigs were rooting every manner of cursed tallage, that sense of weight and reproach within his breast, as though he had sinned himself in giving ear to such words The teachings of twenty years cried out against such license. until he had thrown himself down beleyne could hear the doleful dirge and had prayed from his heart both peaty soil, and a queenly doe who ing down his heavy which the beavy whi the dark cloud rolled back

CHAPTER VIII. The Three Friends.

His companions had passed whilst he was at his orisons; but his young blood and the fresh morning this France, or even Guienne, air both invited him to a scamper. His staff in one hand and his scrip in the other, with springy step and floating locks, he raced along the forest path, as active and as graceful as a young deer. He had not far to go, however; for, on turning a corner, he came on a roadside cottage with a wooden fence work around it, where stood big John and Alyward the bowman, staring at something within. As he came up with them, he saw that two little lads, the one about nine years of age and the other some what older, were standing on the plo in front of the cottage, each holding out a round stick in their left hands, with their arms stiff and straight from the shoulder, as stient and still

together.

"By the beard of my father! but ye are whelps of the true breed. Why so keen, then, to be soldiers?"

"That we may fight the Scots," they answered. "Daddy will send us to fight the Scots."

to fight the Scots."

"And why the Scots, my preity lads? We have seen French and Spanish galleys no further away than Southampton, but I doubt that it will be some time before the Scots find their way to these parts."

"Our business is with the Scots," quoth the elder; "for it was the Scots who cut off daddy's string fingers and his thumbs."

and his thumbs." "Aye, lads, it was that," said a deep voice from behind Alleyne's shoulder, Looking round, the wayfarers saw a gaunt, big-boned man with sunken cheeks and a sallow sallow face, who had come up behind them He held up his two hands as she spoke, and showed that the thumbs and two first fingers had been torn away from each of them. "Ma fol, camarade!" cried Ayl-ward. "Who hath served thee in so shameful a fashion?"

"It is easy to see, friend, that you were born far from the marches of Scotland," quoth the stranger, with a bitter smile. "North of Humber there is no man who would not know the handiwork of Devil Douglas, the black Lord James." "And how fell you into his hands?" asked John.

"I am a man of the north country, from the town of Beverly and the wapentake of Holderness," he answered. "There was a day when, from Trent to Tweed, there was no better marksman sthan Heathcot. Yet, as you see, he hath left me, as he hath left many another poor border archer, with no grop for bill or bow. Yet the king hath given me a living here in the south lands, and please God these two lads of mine will pay off a debt that hath been owing overlong. What is the price of daddy's thumbs, boys?" "Twenty Scottish lives,"

swered together. 'And for the fingers "

"Half a score." "When they can bend my warbow, and bring down a squirrel at a hundred paces, I send them to take gue in the face of so decided an opinservice under Johnny Copeland, the ion on the part of a high dignitary Lord of the Marches and Governor of the Church. "You have borne arms of Carlisle. By my soul! I would give the rest of my fingers to see Douglas within arrow-flight them.

"May you live to see it," quoth the with a dropping shaft; for though a and to shoot straight and fast, yet it is wise,' more often that he has to do with a town-guard behind a wall, or an but I may be able to show ye how such shots should be made." He loosened his long bow, blung his quiver round to the front, and then canced keenly round for a fitting mark. There was a yellow and withered stump someway off, seen under the drooping branches of a lofty oak. The archer measured the distance with his eye; and then, drawing three shafts, he shot them with such speed that the first had not reached the mark ere the last was on the string Each arrow passed high over the oak: and, of the three, two stuck fair into the stump; while the third, caught in some wandering puff of wind, was driven a foot or two to one side. "Good," cried the north country-

man. master bowman. Your dad says amen to every word he says." my hilt!" said Aylward, "It time for my sermon. We have marks- man of action have for the recluse. men in the company who will knotch "The French are also very worthy with a shaft every crevice and joint of men. We have had great good fortune a man-at-arm's harness, from the in France, and it hath led to much clasp of his bassinet to the hinge of bobance and camp-fire talk, but I his greave. But, with your favor, have ever noticed that those who friend. I must gather my arrows know the most have the least to say again, for while a shaft costs a pen-about it. I have seen Frenchmen ny a poor man can scarce leave them fight both in open field, in the in-

even at such a quarry as you speak his brood, the wayfarers struck would hold the lists with sharpened Down, and out on to the broad roll- army of England. On the other hand, ing heath covered deep in ferns and about amongst the hillocks. The woods about this point fall away to It was not keenly over the swelling uplands The broad strips of bracken glewed grazed among them turned her white front and her great question-ing eyes towards the wayfarers. Al-"But they must be sorry folk to bow down to the rich in such a fashion," said big John. "I am but leyne gazed in admiration at the ple beauty of the creature; but the archer's fingers played with his quiver, and his eyes glistened with the fell instinct which urges a man to slaughter.
"Tete Dieu!" he growled," "were

should have a fresh haunch for our none-mest. Law or no law, I have mind to lose a bolt at her. "I would break your stave across my knee first, cried John, laying his great hand upon the bow. man, I am forest-born, and I know what comes of it. In our own township of Hordle two have lost their eyes and one his skin for this very thing. On my troth, I feit no great love when I first saw you, but since then I have conceived over much regard for you to wish to see the verderer's flayer at work upon you."
"It is my trade to risk my skin, growled the archer; but none the less he thrust his quiver over his again and turned his face for

rades these task two small statues. They were prettask ty, blue-eyed, yellow-haired lads, well made and sturdy, with bronzed skins, which spoke of a woodland life.

"Here are young chips from an old bow stave!" cried the soldier in great delight. "This is tha, proper way to raise children. By my hil! I could not have trained them better had I the ordering of it myself."

"What is it then!" asked Hordle side, or the gray and pensive heron, swollen with trout and dignity, stood

cloudless sky. To Aleyne, whose days had been spent in the low lying consistent, the eager upland air and the wide free country-side gave a sense of life and of the joy of llying which made his young blood tingle in his veins. Even the heavy John was not unmoved by the beauty of their road, while the bowman whisted lustily or sang snatches of French love songs in a voice which might have scared the most stout-hearted maidscared the most stout-hearted maid-en that ever hearkened to serenade. "I have a liking for that north

countryman," he remarked present-ly. "He hath good power of hatred. France," Couldst see by his cheek and eye "Nay," said Alleyne, that he is as bitter as verjuice. I come with ye to France or where varm to a man who hath some gall ye will, just to list to your talk,

it not be better if he had some love in his heart?"

"I would not say nay to that. By my hit! I shall never be said to be a traitor to the little king. Let a man love the sex. Pasques Dieu! they are made to be loved, les petites, from whimple down to shoe siring! I am right glad, mon garcon, to see that the good monks have trained thee so wisely and so well."

"Nay, I meant not worldly love, but rather that this heart should soften."

"That comes from fool's talk," cried the archer; "for being a man of no

towards those who have wronged

ture that an English-born should love a Scot or a Frenchman, Ma foi! you have not seen a drove of Nithsdale raiders on their Galloway nags, or you would not speak of lov zebub himself to my arms. I fear, mon gar., that they have taught thee but badly at Beaulieu, for surely a bishop knows more of what is right and what is fill than an abbot can were built of old by giant men who came from the south. Can I not see by do, and I myself with these very eyes saw the bishop of Lincoln hew into a Scottish hobeler with a battle-axe, which was a passing strange way of showing him that he loved him." Alleyne scarce saw his way to ar-

against the Scots, then?" he asked. "Why, man, I first loosed string in battle when I was but a lad, younger by two years than you, at Neville's Cross, under the Lord Mowbray. lay your bodies to the bow, drawing whom our friend spake, the same from hip and thigh as much as from who held the King of Scots to ran-arm. Learn also, I pray you, to shoot som. Ma foil it is rough soldiering, a good school for one bowman may at times be called upon would learn to be hardy and war-

"I have heard that the Scots are "For axemen and for spearmen I need of you." have not seen their match," the "Besides," said John, "the Socman archer answered. "They can travel, of Minstead is a by-word through the slung to their sword-belt, so that it is ill to follow them. There are scant ing, perilous churl, as you may find crops and few beeves in the border-land, where a man must reap his grain with sickle in one fist brown bill in the other. On the other hand, they are the sorriest archers that I have ever seen, and cannot so much as aim with the arba-lest, to say nought of the long-bow. Again, they are mostly poor even the nobles among them, so that there are few who can buy as good a brigandine of chain-mail as that which I am wearing, and that is ill for them to stand up against our own knights, who carry the price of five Scotch farms upon their chest and shoulders. Man for man, with equal weapons, they are as worthy and "Hearken to him, lads! He is a valiant men as could be found in the whole of Christendom

"And the French?' asked Alleyne am to preach on bowmanship, the to whom the archer's light gossip had whole long day would scarce give me all the relish that the words of the ny a poor man can scarce leave them fight both in open field, in the insticking in wayside stumps. We taking and the defending of towns must, then, on our road again, and I or castlewicks, in escalados, caminope from my heart that you may train these two young goshawks lies, outfalls, and knightly spear-here until they are ready for a cast runnings. Their knights and squires, lad, are every whit as good as ours, and I could pick out a score of those Leaving the thumbless archer and who ride behind Du Guesclin who lances against the best men in the their common folk are so crushed down with gabelle, and poll-tax, and them like sheep and sheep they will remain. If the nobles had not conquered the poor folk it is like enough that we should not have conquered the nobles."

> a peor commoner of England my-self, and yet I know something of charters, liberties, franchises, usages, privileges, customs and the like. If these be broken, then all men know that it is time to buy arrow-heads." "Aye, but the men of the law are strong in France as well as the men of war. By my hilt! I hold that a man has more to fear there from the inkpot of the one than from the iron of the other. There is ever some cursed sheepskin in their strong boxes to prove that the rich man should be richer and the paor man poorer. It would scarce pass in England, but they are quiet folk over the water."
>
> "And what other nations have you seen in your travels, good ar?" maked Alleyne Edricson. His young mind hungared for plain facts of life, after the long course of speculation and of mysticism on which he had been trained. "Aye, but the men of the law are

rained.

"I have seen the low countryman in arms, and I have nought to say against him. Heavy and slow is he by nature, and is not to be brought into battle for the sake of a lady's eyelash or the twang of a minstrel's string, like the hotter blood of the south. But ma foil lay hand on his wool bales, or trine with his velvet of Brages, and out buzzes every stout burgher, like bees from the tee-hole, ready to lay on as though it were his one business in life. By our lady!

at his mark. You with me at yonder hoste you will, save only the colored sugar which I Lady Loring, and you s

"Ah me!" sighed Alleyne. "Would that I have in the whole wide outside of the cloister; but, inde

rather that this heart should soften the archer; "for being a man of no learning myself, my tongue turns to blades and targets, even as my hand does. Know then that for every parch-The archer shook his head. "A does Know then that for every parchman should love those of his own breed," said he, "But it is not nabreed," said he, "But it is not na-France. For every statue, cut gem, shrine, carven screen, or what else might please the eye of a learned clerk, there are a good hundred to our one. At the spoiling of Carsosonne I have seen chambers stored with writing, though not one man in our company could read them. Again, in Arils and Nimes, and other towns that I could name, there are the great arches your brightened eye how you would love to look upon these things? Come then with me, and, by these ten fin-gers! there is not one of them which you shall not see."

"I should indeed love to look upon them," Alleyne answered; "but I have come from Beaulieu for a purpose and I must be true to my service, even as thou art true to bhine."

"Bethink you again, mon ami," quoth Aylward, "that you might do much good yonder, since there are three hundred men in the company, and none who has ever a word of grace for them, and yet the Virgin knows that there was never a set of men who were in more need of it. Sickerly the one duty may balance the other. Your brother hath done without you this many a year, and, as I gather, he hath never walked as far as Beaulieu to see you during all that good men of war," said Hordle John. time, so he cannot be in any great

esley Walk. He is a drunken, brawito your cost."

"The more reason that I should strive to mend him," quoth Alleyne. There is no need to urge me, friends, for my own wishes would draw me to France, and it would be a joy to me if I could go with you. But indeed and indeed it cannot be, so here I take my leave of you, for yonder square tow-er amongst the trees upon the right must surely be the church stead, and I may reach it by this path through the woods."
"Well, God be with thee, lad!" the archer, pressing Alleyne to his heart. "I am quick to love, and quick

"Would it not be well," said John, that we should wait here, and see what manner of greeting you have from your brother. You may prove veyor to the village dame."

to hate, and fore God I am loth to

as welcome as the king's pur-'Nay, nay," he answered; "ye must not bide for me, for where I go I

"Yet it may be as well that you should know whither we go," said the archer. "We shall now journey south through the woods until we come out upon the Christchurch road, and so onwards, hoping tonight to reach the eastle of Sir Wil-liam Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, of which Sir Nigel Loring is constable. There we shall bide, and it is like enough that for a month or more you may find us there, ere we are ready for our viage back to France."
If was hard indeed for Alleyne to break away from these two new but hearty friends, and so strong was the combat between his conscience and his inclinations that he dered not wild black forest pigs were rooting every manner of cursed tange, that about amongst the hillocks. The the spirit has passed right out of slip away from him. It was not until woods about this point fall away to them. It is a fool's plan to teach a he was deep among the tree trunks the left and the right, while the road man to be a cur in peace, and think that he cast a glance backwards, the left and the wind sweeps that he will be a lion in war. Fleece when he found that he could still see them through the branches on the road above him. The archer was standing with folded arms, his bow standing with folded arms, his bow jutting from over his shoulder, and the sun gleaming brightly upon his head-piece and the links of his chainmail. Beside him stood his giant recruit, still clad in the home-spun and ill-fitting garments of the fuller of Lymington, with arms and legs shooting out of his scanty garb. Even as Alleyne watched them they turned upon their heels and plodded off together upon their way.

(To Be Continued.)

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