

"Close shields ! Hold fast !" shouted his king's voice.

Before him were the steeds of Bruse and Grantmesnil. At his breast, their spears ; Haco held over the breast the shield. Swinging aloft with both hands his axe, the spear of Grantmesnil is shattered in twain by the King's stroke. Cloven to the skull rolls the steed of Bruse, Knight and steed roll on the bloody sward.

But a blow from the sword of DeLacy has broken down the guardian shield of Haco. The son of Sweyn is stricken to his knee.

With lifted blades and swirling maces the Norman knights charge through the breach.

"Look up, look up, and guard thy head," cries the fatal voice of Haco to the King.

At that cry the King raises his flashing eyes. Why halts his stride ? Why drops the axe from his hand ? As he raised his head, down came the hissing death-shaft. It smote the lifted face ; it crushed into the dauntless eyeball. He reeled, he staggered, he fell back several yards, at the foot of his gorgeous standard.

With desperate hand he broke the head of the shaft, and left the barb, quivering in the anguish.

Gurth knelt over him.

"Fight on," gasped the King, "conceal my death ! Holy Crosse ! England to the rescue ! woe ! woe !"