

back at the Monastery of St. John, where they were pausing to taste a cup of the abbot's wine, and there we left them. But some few roods from hence, we encountered the follower of yon De Valence, whom thou hast slain, riding at full speed, and compelled him to pause, and deliver up his tidings, if he bore any of consequence. And so we learned from him that his master, being in haste to reach the city, had parted from his company a league back, spurring on to Evreux, when he met a knight of Navarre, whom he challenged, and beneath whose sword he had just fallen, desperately wounded, or slain. The fellow begged us not to detain him, as he was in a strait to bring to the aid of his lord a leech of skill, who rode in the train of the Lord of Beaujeu; and so we did not, even to learn the names of the combatants. We had, therefore, best be gone before they come upon us, for, with all thy valour, and mine to back it, they would be a fearful odds against us, and not spare thee, I'll be bound, if once in their power, till they had their revenge on thee for spilling the heart's blood of yon lawless spoiler."

"Let us on, then," said the knight. "These men of France shall owe me yet deeper despite for the ill I will work them, before, if it be so doomed, I fall beneath their hues."

"Come, then, I see thou art one after my own heart, and I would parley with thee at leisure, touching matters of interest. Daughter mine, ride thou apart with thine attendants; we may speak of things that would jar harshly on thy dainty ears, and thou may'st chatter as thou wilt with thy maid, Bertha; we shall never heed thee. But ere we ride on, sir knight, despatch one of my fellows to thy Castle of Bruniquil, with what message pleaseth thee; should thine fall into unfriendly hands, and be recognized, it might fare ill with him."

Sir Enguerrard, accordingly gave a brief message, explaining the cause of his detention, to one of Master Philip's followers, and then, turning his steed towards the city, rode on side by side with the merchant, till they reached the gates of Evreux.

CHAPTER II.

Then listen, listen, noble knight,

For by the rood I swear,

Ask what thou wilt it shall be thine,

If thou this deed wilt dare.

'Twill win thee fame and acres broad,

And gold, an ample store,

And the fairest maiden in the land—

What can'st thou covet more?

The train entered the city without further adventure, and trotted at a brisk pace through the

narrow streets, and into the spacious courtyard of Master Philip. Sir Enguerrard was the first to spring from his saddle, anxious to assist the fair Gabrielle in dismounting, who, as she gave him her hand, silently and by a graceful inclination of her head, expressed her thanks for his gallantry, and then, with her waiting damsel, hastily passed into the house.

The knight waited only for the merchant to precede him, when he quickly followed, but the maiden had already disappeared; and, great was his disappointment, when, on entering a large old fashioned hall, to which his host led the way, no trace of her was visible within it. Philip de Rosay did not appear to notice the shade of chagrin which stole over his face, as he cast a look of enquiry round the apartment, but immediately conducted his guest to a comfortable chamber, where he found a refreshing bath awaiting him, and such appliances for his toilet, as even the wants of a more luxurious age need not have despised. Sir Enguerrard wasted not many minutes on the adornment of his person, but, cleansed from the soil of his recent encounter, soon returned to the hall, secretly admitting, that after the plain hint given him by the merchant of his daughter's seclusion in her tower, he had no right to be disappointed at her absence.

It was a cool evening, and the ample fireplace was filled with blazing logs, whose crackling flame roared up the wide chimney with a cheerful sound, and diffused a genial warmth and a ruddy glow throughout the apartment. Nothing within it spoke of luxury, but yet it lacked not an air of home comfort and enjoyment. The walls were low and wainscotted with dark wood, and the furniture was heavy and almost black with age. The board was spread for supper, and the plenty that loaded it, held forth an agreeable promise to Sir Enguerrard, whose appetite, for he had fasted many hours, was somewhat of the keenest, and assured him that he was the guest of no niggard host.

Master Philip had already taken his seat at the head of the table, and opposite to him sat a personage, about his own age, whom he called Simon de Vaux, and whose appearance, bespoke him, also, a reputable and wealthy burgher. The seat at the merchant's right-hand was left vacant for the knight, who, as he entered, caught some words which informed him, that in his absence, he had very naturally been the subject of conversation between the two friends. His appearance, however, interrupted it; but when he had got fairly seated at the table, and each had drained a cup of the host's good wine, Master Philip said:

"I have been recounting to my friend Simon,