

allowed us. "I more than doubt if there are the four thousand lives."

"My poor friends, there are scarcely four hundred!" exclaimed Master Bouchard.

The adventurers contemplated the money contemptuously; then they regarded each other with some concern, but immolately afterwards, with an air of carelessness, resumed their goblets.

"And to-day we were obliged to empty the purses of more than one brother-in-arms; a bad look-out," said Richard.

"Four hundred livres," resumed George, "but even that is not to be despised. It is exactly the price of the ransom of one of us, so that there will be only nine hung—there's some consolation in that."

"Yes, for the tenth," observed Master Richard.

"Follow my advice," said the host, "eat and drink till you fall asleep; then forget to go to Seville to be hung."

"Do you know, Master Host, what our Captain Duguesclin would do to us, if we forfeited our honour?" asked Richard.

"Duguesclin!" exclaimed Angevin, lastly, "what! do you belong to the company of the generous, the intrepid Duguesclin? Not only am I indebted to him for not being as poor as Job, but he once saved my life. About two years ago, I set out on a pilgrimage; near Auray I was taken, after no very brave resistance, I allow, by a band of gypsies, who employed themselves in the healing of cattle by day, and stealing them by night. After having seized my mule, in whose collar I had secreted the little inheritance my father, the rope-maker, had left me, they were disposed to strangle me by way of pastime. They had dragged me into a coppice, and I hallooed most vociferously, when a traveller on the road heard me. He was a short, stout man, not very good looking, and without arms. I thought, on first seeing him run towards us, that he came to join my murderers, but I was soon undeceived. He broke a strong branch from an oak, and with it fell upon the scoundrels with such hearty good-will, that, notwithstanding their large knives, their cries of rage, and their ferocious eyes, they disappeared in a few seconds. My valiant champion replaced me in my saddle, permitted me to accompany him as far as Auray, where I learnt his name, and since then I have never missed a day praying for Bertrand Duguesclin. It was with the money he prevented me losing that I bought this inn after the death of our saintly Queen Blanche, to whom I had come to deliver a message in Spain on the part of Mounseigneur, of Bourbon. So I was very glad when I heard that Duguesclin had entered Castile at the head of a great company, for I said to myself, probably fortune may one day put it in my power to be useful to him in my turn."

"You will soon see him," said Richard, "for he reckons on entering Seville in less than three days."

"May you speak truly, for I am so anxious to see him that yesterday I was about going to the camp, but I feared being taken for one of Don Pedro's spies, and so getting hoisted to the top of a tree to scare away the birds. Instead of which, it strikes me I cannot better acknowledge the service he rendered me than by assisting those he loves; and since you serve under his banners, I will redeem you for his sake."

"Ah, my master," said Richard, "gratitude blinds you; do you forget that it is yet three thousand six hundred lives that are deficient?"

"I never speak hastily," said the host, gravely. "Know that before the siege I had ten mules in my stables, five hundred sheep, eighty pigs, and sixty measures of sixty gallons each in my cellar—all thanks to Providence and Duguesclin. Well, I have sold the whole at a very good price to the Commissioners for provisioning the city, and how can I employ that money better than for the welfare of Duguesclin's brave Bretons?"

"Come I begin to believe you a real Angevin, Master Bouchard," said George, affectionately squeezing the hand of his host. "Inter-course with Jews and Moors has not corrupted your heart. I accept your offer."

"But only as a loan," observed Richard.

"Yes, yes," repeated all the others, astonished at the generosity of their host.

"I will fetch the money," said the latter, entering a room adjoining that in which the Bretons were. He quickly returned, bringing in his hand a small box bound with iron, which contained the three thousand six hundred livres, to which he added the four hundred that were in the purse. "While you go and settle your accounts at Seville," said he, "I will arrange everything to justify my boast of being a good cook."

The adventurers thanked their host and took leave. They followed a road that led towards the Carmona Gate, until they saw, coming from afar, a knight, whom by his gigantic stature they recognized as the formidable Tom Burdett, Captain of the Freebooters. The Englishman, as he travelled along, was reflecting on his late ill-luck. Having sold the gold table to save his life, he dared not return to the camp of Don Enrique deprived of all resources; and not having even a horse at his disposal, it was impossible for him to get either to France or England. He was considering then by what means he could improve the state of his affairs, when he met the ten Bretons, with Master Richard at their head, who carried the box under his arm. When they came near the Late Comer, they respect-

fully saluted him. Burdett was passing them, after carelessly returning their salutation, when a certain metallic sound struck his ears. "Here is money that Heaven sends me, *appropos*," said he to himself. Then, approaching Richard, while he cast sharp looks of covetousness on the box, he said, "Where are you going, vagabonds?"

"We are honest Breton soldiers, and not vagabonds, sir," replied Richard, "and being prisoners, we are going to Seville to pay our ransom, having met with a fellow-countryman, who, finding that we belonged to Duguesclin's troop, voluntarily furnished us with the money."

"A pretty story, truly—doubtless he has palmed bad money off on you; come, come, let me see," said Burdett, and taking the box he examined it, and then added, "No, no; this is all right; but I still suspect your statement, and shall take care of this box; you will find it safe in my tent," and so saying, he hurried off, leaving the poor men in the utmost astonishment.

The Bretons, however, were not long undecided, but determined to reach the camp as soon as possible, and immediately started off in its direction. In their hurry, they did not notice two horsemen who were leisurely riding along the road, until they were startled by hearing a rough voice exclaim, "By St. Ives! is the cavalry of King Mahomed galloping at your heels?"

At the well-known voice the Bretons stopped and saluted with loud acclamations the person who addressed them. It was Bertrand Duguesclin, followed by a squire.

Richard familiarly accosting the captain, told him all that had happened to them since the previous day, dwelling principally on their adventure with the host, and their unfortunate encounter with the Late Comer, Burdett, pointing out the road the latter had taken with their cash.

"Do not trouble yourselves to run any farther, my lads," said the good knight; "yesterday Tom Burdett had all he possessed at the camp conveyed away; he has left only his squire, Garwin, whose wages are in arrears, and whom he did not order to accompany his baggage, so that your four thousand livres will enable Master Burdett to lead a jovial life, until he raises a new company. Nevertheless, it is very disgraceful to lay hands on ransom money, which should be held sacred; and, by St. Ives! he who does not respect it is a dastardly rogue."

"Long live Messire Bertrand!" exclaimed the adventurers, well pleased at hearing the valiant Duguesclin designate in such forcible terms the odious conduct of Burdett.

"Pardon," said the Breton, dismounting, and throwing the bridle of his horse into the hands of his squire, "I have no further need of you. I will let them know that all Captains of White Companions are not robbers; therefore you will go to my treasurer, and ask him for four thousand livres for these brave men, and four thousand more for mine host, Bouchard. It was in my name that this honest man advanced the money, and it is I who must reimburse him. As to you," continued he, addressing the other adventurers, "wait here for your comrade."

The men heard these words with astonishment, but when they were about to testify to him their gratitude, the worthy knight began to laugh good-naturedly, saying, "My friends, I only ask in return that you will permit me to continue my route, for I do not like losing time, particularly to listen to thanks for so natural an action. My money belongs to my soldiers; it is by them, and with them, I win it, and for them I keep it." So saying, he set off down a narrow by-road, and disappeared from sight.

After riding a long while, he stopped, and pushing the thickets aside, seemed to seek eagerly for the traces of an ancient Roman aqueduct, at that time hidden beneath the sandy soil, of the existence of which he had been informed, but all his endeavours to find the entrance were in vain. The sun was so scorching that the valiant Breton was obliged to lie down under the shade of a gigantic prickly-pear tree to rest himself. After a few minutes he began to doze, but hearing a noise, he opened his eyes, and perceived the branches of a fig-tree opposite gently agitated. Presently he saw a man, dressed like a miller, bending under the weight of an enormous sack, and casting uneasy glances around him. This man descended into a hollow way, at the end of which four Spanish soldiers awaited him.

Thanks to the underwood which grew thickly around, the knight could advance without being observed, and he distinctly recognized the four foster brothers of the king. These young men soon removed a heavy stone, covered with moss, from the entrance of the aqueduct, and placed on the back of one of the mules that were in the subterranean passage, the sack of flour that the miller had just brought.

"Oh, the deuce!" said Bertrand to himself, "it seems that while we are blockading the city on one side, these cunning foxes are re-victualing it on the other."

Creeping on his hands and knees, he managed, notwithstanding the weight of his armour, to approach near enough to hear the words these men interchanged. In order to avoid being surprised, and to be able to defend himself in case of need, he seated himself on a bank, with his feet in a ditch, and his back resting against a lofty palm-tree, keeping his hand on the hilt of his sword; but, unfortunately, just at that moment the rays of the sun fell upon

his helmet, betraying him by its glittering to the foster-brothers, who, by their significant gestures, sufficiently indicated their knowledge of his presence. The knight, seeing them approach, feigned to be sleeping. No sooner had the brothers recognised Duguesclin than they debated upon the best means of securing him alive, and at length resolved upon covering a deep pit which lay near, so as to entrap him into it, if possible. They instantly set to work to collect sufficient branches for the purpose, and with the aid of the miller, speedily arranged them so as to cover the pit, and not to be distinguished from the surrounding ground; then they proceeded to awaken Duguesclin, who, however, having overheard all their plans, arose and advanced towards them, ordering them to surrender and give him an account of what they were doing with the sack of flour.

"Surrender thyself, thou bulldog of Brittany," shouted the brothers.

The four young men left no time for further parley, but instantly attacked him, and in the contest the knight's sword was broken; another blow struck the crest from his helmet, and in a moment he found himself being dragged towards the very verge of the pit; it was now that the invincible courage and *souffroid* of Bertrand shone most conspicuously; exerting all his efforts, he shook off two of his assailants, who, falling on to the branches they had collected, rolled to the bottom of the pit.

"Surrender, villains!" cried Duguesclin to the other two, who, however, only attacked him the more vigorously; and hard pressed, the knight retreated behind the mule, in order to defend himself more easily. Suddenly, springing forward, he seized one of his assailants, and with Herculean force hurled him into the pit, which was some paces distant; then closing with the other, who was but a child in his grasp, he lifted him from the earth, and was about to dash him into the hole with his companions, when he fortunately perceived a bunch of keys hanging at his girdle. Suspecting that these might belong to the gates of the secret passage, he secured them, and then spurning his enraged enemy from him, suffered him to fall into the prison of his own contrivance.

In the meantime, the miller had taken advantage of the fray to escape, but running, half-blinded with fear, he unhappily rushed into the midst of Bertrand's ten soldiers, who were returning to Seville with their ransom.

"Ha, fellow!" cried one of them, "where the deuce are you running to?"

"Away from Duguesclin, who is attacked by some soldiers!"

"Duguesclin attacked," shouted the men. "Quick, quick, turn back with us, and show us where," and they forced the miller to retrace his steps to the aqueduct, where they arrived just as Bertrand had overcome his last adversary. The arrival of the ten adventurers greatly pleased him.

"Here we are, captain!" exclaimed Richard, as soon as he had got into the aqueduct.

"Ah, is it you, my brave fellows?" said Bertrand.

"We bring you a prisoner," said George, when only a few paces from the knight.

"Ah, the intrepid miller," said he, laughing; "well, we must procure some companions for him. In that pit there are four determined fellows, who had nearly rendered my beloved and blessed Tiphania a widow. Take them out of that hole, where they are growling like wild cats. They are prisoners whom I will give you, and for whom you may get a large ransom, for they are the foster-brothers of the King, Don Pedro. And now undress this honest miller, and help me off with my armour. I wish to make an exchange with him, and by way of punishing him for having furnished provisions to the besieged city, he shall march to the camp in this hot sun in my armour."

In the twinkling of an eye the miller was deprived of his dress, which Duguesclin put on, and notwithstanding his groans, he was, in the midst of the general hilarity, imprisoned in the heavy armour of the robust Breton, and then the Spaniards were taken out of the pit.

"Now," resumed the knight, "take these five men with you to Seville."

The adventurers immediately marched off with the prisoners that their captain had so generously given up to them.

#### CHAPTER XVII.—The Morisca Proposes and the Breton Disposes.

Duguesclin had formed the bold project of using the discovery of that secret entry to the aqueduct for introducing himself into the city, in order to learn by personal observation, if the besieged could hold out much longer, or probably to determine Don Pedro to surrender, rather than prolong an heroic but useless resistance. He remembered that that unfortunate prince had not hesitated to save his life by preventing him from drinking the poisoned water of the cistern, and at any risk he wished to render him a service by enlightening him on the imminent danger he ran, and by inducing him to treat with Don Enrique.

Bertrand had great ingenuity, and a remarkable knowledge of mankind, under the rough, warlike frankness of his exterior. However rash in battle, all his actions were guided by good sense and an extraordinary power of observation.

The victory he had lately gained filled him with joy, which, although silent, was not the less lively. In fact he believed himself cer-

tain of being now able to penetrate without much difficulty into Seville, and, above all, he hoped that he should prevent the conquered king leaving it. He did not know that the aqueduct had two outlets: one that opened on the lazaretto, and which was confined to the outside of the walls, like all leper houses in the mediæval ages, which were built at the gates of the cities, and another, which opened on the shores of the Guadalquivir, by a half-ruined arch masked by cactuses, alogs, and prickly pears, and which was called the water-gate. Some galleys and vessels of Don Pedro were stationed there under the command of his admiral, the Genoese Bocea Negra, who had remained faithful to him.

However, Duguesclin resolved to disguise himself in the miller's costume, and putting on his broad-brimmed hat, and taking his long stick and torch to light him in the subterranean passage, he began to drive the mules before him as soon as his men departed.

He stopped from time to time, as he thought he could discern indistinct forms flitting lightly before him, and then vanishing in the distance; they seemed to him like Moors covered with their long albomous and tufted turbans; but again he thought it must be an hallucination, an illusion of his eyes, dazzled by the sudden transition from the light of the sun to total darkness.

All at once, when he had ceased to perceive any of those strange forms, and had succeeded in persuading himself of his mistake, he arrived at a sort of cross road, where the vaulted gallery of the aqueduct divided itself into three paths. Here he paused; but after reflecting for a few minutes, he resolved to trust to the instinct of the mules, which had quietly continued their route by the centre gallery, and he was about to join them when he heard a noise behind him like approaching footsteps sounding on the brick pavement, and at the moment he turned a hand rested on his shoulder.

It was a woman dressed in a long white Moorish mantle, who sprang from the gallery abutting on the Guadalquivir.

The Breton Captain looked upon her with surprise, while the young woman exclaimed, "This flour could not escape us, for I also was watching for it, valiant purveyor of Seville."

"Alas, take pity on me, good lady!" replied Bertrand, much surprised at the sudden apparition, and persisting in playing the part he had imposed on himself; "you would not harm a poor miller, who only seeks to earn an honest livelihood."

"You a miller," said the young woman, laughing; "the white coat does not always make the miller. You are Bertrand Duguesclin, and you shall not pass without hearing me."

"Ah, lady of darkness!" exclaimed the Breton, "you must be either a witch or one of the best paid spies of the tyrant, Don Pedro."

"I am not the spy, but the disgraced favorite of the King of Castile," replied the Morisca.

"Are you the daughter of the King of Granada, so celebrated for her surpassing beauty?" said Duguesclin adroitly, and bowing courteously before her.

Aixa could not forbear smiling, as she continued, "Driven from the Alcazar, banished from Seville, I have vowed implacable hatred to Don Pedro, and I will faithfully keep my word; so you see we may speak frankly."

"Well, madam," said Bertrand, "my purpose is simply to enter the besieged city by the help of this disguise; but is it really so inappropriate that I cannot take a step without being recognized?"

"Re-assure yourself, sir," replied she, "my witchcraft is easily explained. I was an eye-witness to the combat with the sons of Palosma. You have surrounded the city for the purpose of stopping supplies, but you had forgotten this aqueduct. Now you have discovered it you will not be content with doing so; you can easily enter Seville by this subterranean passage—this is what you will do. Now, you will ask me why, being the enemy of Don Pedro, I have not revealed this outlet? It is, Sir Bertrand, that my vengeance is not so easily satisfied as that of Don Enrique. He has only ambition—I have hatred. I desire that Don Pedro, who has despised me—that the Jewess, who has humiliated me—that the inhabitants of Seville, who have insulted me—should be tortured by me. I have sworn to starve this city, which is hateful to me; and I have succeeded. My emissaries are scattered all over the country, and all the grain that has escaped the search of the purveyors of your army, and which the foster-brothers of Don Pedro meant to buy with their gold, I have succeeded in monopolising. All these provisions are buried in the recesses of the ruined arches of the aqueduct, at the edge of the Guadalquivir, and these recesses I can inundate, in case of need."

"By St. Ives!" exclaimed Duguesclin, "I should not like to insult you, madam; I should fear more for my life than if I had to do with the whole army of Sir John Chandos. But how comes it that the miller, whose clothes I wear, should have been proof against the liberal offers of your agents?"

"Because he was afraid of the five foster-brothers, who woke him at night, and swore they would set fire to his mill and transport his sacks into the aqueduct if he refused to follow them. But I watched in the passage," added she, with a malicious smile.

"Don Enrique will owe you a royal recompense, madam," said the Breton, astonished at so much resolution in a young and handsome

woman. "So no one has yet entered the city by this passage?"

"Nor by the lazaretto, either, Sir Captain," answered Aixa.

"The lazaretto!" repeated Duguesclin, with a gesture of disgust.

"It abuts on the aqueduct, and communicates with it by a subterranean staircase," resumed the Morisca; "and in that impure enclosure I have a devoted friend, who would inform me of every attempt the purveyors of the Alcazar should dare to make to cross with their convoy of provisions that ground which the feet of lepers only have a right to tread."

"You have singular friends, madam," observed the captain.

"Oh, it is a renegade Jew, named Esau Manassus, who is indebted to the clemency of Don Pedro for having been cast into the lazaretto," replied Aixa; "that is why I call him my friend."

"Esau, the renegade! I know the man," said Bertrand, endeavouring to refresh his memory.

"Esau, the leper, will not seek to annoy the most formidable enemy of Don Pedro," replied the Morisca. "As to the flour these mules are laden with, is it your pleasure, good and loyal knight, that I have them also put into the recesses?"

"No, madam," said Bertrand, hastily; "for it is by favor of this convoy that I hope to enter the city, and even the Alcazar, as I have already told you. I want to convince myself whether the inhabitants are at all discouraged."

"The inhabitants!" exclaimed Aixa, with a loud shout of laughter, "why, they are dying of hunger; the famine that grinds them and dries them like skeletons, reigns even in the Alcazar, the gates of which they besiege, demanding bread. These last few days the people have eaten horses and mules; they feed to-day on rats and unclean animals, tomorrow they will be reduced to eat the leather of their belts and shoes."

"Are the poor creatures really reduced to such distress?" demanded Duguesclin, who began to pity the fate of the besieged.

"Two days more of this frightful torture, and Seville is yours. You will therefore perceive how important it is not to let these provisions enter."

"Undoubtedly," said Bertrand, "yet I must absolutely have that pretext for reconnoitering the city."

"If you want a pretext," said Aixa, hesitating, notwithstanding her boldness, "to introduce the flour into the Alcazar, have it distributed among the defenders of the king, but poison it first."

"Infamous!" exclaimed Duguesclin, advancing to the Morisca indignantly and menacingly, then stopping all at once, he slowly lowered the stick which he had raised against Aixa. "God grant you a good and long life, madam," he said, "since He is the God of peace and mercy; but if this proposition had been made to me by a man, I would have strangled him immediately without hesitation."

The vindictive daughter of Mohamad shrugged her shoulders. She then said, "In short, Sir Knight, you persist in wishing to enter with this convoy."

"Yes, madam, I do most decidedly."

"You have then this time mistaken your power, Sir Knight, for you shall not pass," replied the Morisca, imperiously.

"You are surely joking," said Duguesclin, gently removing Aixa aside with his large hand, she having placed herself so as to prevent his advance.

"Guards!" she exclaimed, at seeing the obstinacy of the Breton. At the same instant Duguesclin, whose eyes had begun to get accustomed to the obscurity, thought he perceived the walls of the aqueduct contracting on both sides, and drawing closer to him as if to stifle him. Thinking he was the dupe of some spell, he instinctively put his hand forward; he then perceived that he was not deceived, for he was enclosed by a human wall. Fifty Moorish guards formed a triple circle around the pretended miller; their white cloaks, large turbans, and tawny countenances, badly illuminated by the light of the torches, gave them a fantastic though formidable appearance.

Twenty arms seized Duguesclin immediately and carried him off without his designing to oppose the least resistance. They took his stick from him, and having tied his wrists with ropes, made him follow Aixa, who went a long way into the gallery which terminated at the water-gate. They soon reached the iron gate that enclosed the recesses in which the wheat was amassed that Aixa had just spoken of.

"Well, Sir Knight," said the Morisca, with a jesting air, "fortune has treated you rather harshly this time."

"True, madam, at this moment I am your prisoner."

"Come, I am glad to see that you take your ill-luck so coolly," said the Morisca, with an air of raillery. "But hold, I am going to prove to you the confidence I have in you, and to show you all my riches."

She then conducted the Breton warrior into the subterranean passage, and showed him the deep excavations in which were buried mountains of sacks filled with flour and grain.

(To be continued.)

"Mamma," said a little boy who had been sent to dry a towel before the fire, "is it done when its brown?"