

Illustrated by The Kinneys

By A. CONAN DOYLE

"The Being the St

CHAPTER IX.—Continued.

Such ventures as these where an aspirant for fame would wait for days a cross-road, a ford, or a bridge, until some worthy antagonist should ride that way, were very common in the old days of adventurous knight errand and were still familiar to the minds of men because the stories of the romancers and the songs of the troubadours were full of such incidents. Their actual occurrence, however, had become rare. There was the more curiosity, not unmixed with amusement, in incidents of the kind as they watched Chandos ride down to the bridge and commented upon the somewhat singular figure of the challenger. His build was strange, and also was his figure, for the limbs were short for so tall a man. His mane was black and forward as if he were lost in thought or overcome with deep dejection.

"That is surely the Cavalier of the Heavy Heart," said Manny. "What trouble has he, that he should hang his head?" "Perchance he hath a weak neck," said the King. "At least he hath no weak voice," the Prince remarked, as Nigel's answer to Chandos came to their ears. "By our lady, he booms like a bittern."

As the King and the Prince looked on, King Nigel exchanged the old ash spear which had been his father's for one of those mounted tournament lances which he took from the hands of a stout archer in attendance. He then rode down to the end of the bridge, where a hundred-yard stretch of green sward lay in front of him. At the end of the sward, a man in a black and red surcoat, with a horseman riding wildly in. Was ever so dreadful, so sudden, so complete, an attack as this. Surely their eyes must be at fault; some wizard's trick had been played upon them, or the man was a ghost, no, it was only too clear. There on the greenward lay the trunk of the horse, and the man, a good dozen yards beyond, lay his helmeted head.

"By the Virgin!" cried Manny wildly, as he jumped from his horse and gave his last gold piece that the work of this evening should be undone. How many times had he done it? He would give my Lord Bishop, for surely it smacks of witchcraft and the Devil. With a sudden dash the bishop had sprung down beside the prostrate body, pushing through the knot of horrified onlookers. "I fear that the last offices of the Holy Church come too late," said he in a hoarse voice, as he knelt over the young man. How sudden and in medio vite, as the Holy Book has it, one moment in the pride of his youth and the next his head for his body. Now God and his saints have mercy upon me and guard me from evil!"

The last prayer was shot out by the Bishop with an energy and earnestness unusual in his orisons. It was a prayer for the sudden death of the Squires, who, having lifted the helmet from the ground, cast it down and fled. "It is empty!" he cried. "It weighs as light as a feather." "What sayest thou?" cried Manny, laying his hand on it. "There is no one in it. With what have I fought, or of the next?"

The Bishop clambered on his horse and said to the King, "If you will consider the point, 'If you fight a man, you shall be slain' is place is over yonder by the Knight's side. Certes, that sulphur-colored horse hath a very good name. He could have sworn that I saw both smoke and flame from its nostrils. The beast is fit to be ridden as well as any man within it."

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the wood, and then finally having made sure of its poise and weight laid it carefully in rest, under his arm. Then gathering up his bridle, so as to have his horse under perfect command, and covering himself with the shield, which was slung round his neck, he rode out to do battle.

Now, Nigel, young and inexperienced, all Nature's aid will not help you against the mixed craft and strength of such a warrior. The day will come when neither Manny nor even Chandos could sweep you from your saddle; but now, even had you some less cunning than either, your chance were small. Your downfall is near; but as you see the famous black chevrons on a gold-edged ground, your heart will be filled with joy and amazement at the honor done you.

Again with a dull thunder of hoofs the horses gallop over the soft water-meadow. Again with a clash of metal the two riders meet. It is Nigel now, with the blunted spear, who flies backward off his horse and falls clanging his armor on the ground. But good heavens! what is this? Manny has thrown up his hands in horror, and the lance has dropped from his nerveless fingers. From all sides, with cries of dismay, with oaths and shouts and a noise as if the saints and the horsemen ride wildly in. Was ever so dreadful, so sudden, so complete, an attack as this. Surely their eyes must be at fault; some wizard's trick had been played upon them, or the man was a ghost, no, it was only too clear. There on the greenward lay the trunk of the horse, and the man, a good dozen yards beyond, lay his helmeted head.

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roof. But by the foresight and the gentle management of Chandos this calamity was avoided, so that some were quartered at the great Abbey and others passed on to enjoy the hospitality of Sir Roger Fitzalan at Farnham Castle. Only the King himself, the Prince, Manny, Chandos, Sir Hubert de Burgh, the Bishop and two or three more remained behind as the guests of the Loring.

But small as was the party and humble the surroundings, the King in no way relaxed that love of ceremony, of elaborate form and of brilliant coloring which was one of his characteristics. The sumpter-mules were untroubled, the company took their seats at the board, and yet it was the brightest, fairest scene which those old black rafters had ever spanned.

The great influx of foreign knights who had come in their splendor from all parts of Christendom to take part in the opening of the Round Tower of Windsor six years before, and to try their luck in the skill at the tournament connected with it, had deeply modified the English fashion of dress. The old tunic, over-tunic and cyclops were too sad and simple for the new fashions, so now strange and brilliant cote-hardies, pourpoints, courtesies, palkocks, hanseens and many other wondrous garments, party-colored or dispersed, with looped, embroidered or scalloped edges, flamed and glittered round the King. He himself, in black velvet and gold, formed a dark rich centre to the finery around him. On

which all joined, save only Sir Hubert himself, who, flushed with anger, fixed his baleful eyes upon Chandos mischievous and smiling face. "I said that I did not find that foolish game, and I know nothing of it," said he. "But you know well, John, that if you would have a bout with sharpened spear or sword, where two go to the ground, and only away from it, you have not far to go to find me."

"Nay, nay, would you ride to the ground? Surely you best walk, Hubert," said Chandos. "On your feet! You will that I should not see your back as we have seen it today. Say what you will, your horse has played you false and I claim your suit of harness for Nigel Loring."

"Your tongue is overlong, John, and I am weary of its endless clack!" said Sir Hubert, his yellow mustache bristling from a scarted face. "If you claim my harness, do you yourself come and take it. If there is a moon in the sky you may take this very night when the board is cleared."

"Nay, fair sirs," cried the King, smiling from one to the other. "This matter must be followed no further. Do you fill a bumper of Gascony, John, and you also, Hubert. Now lodge each other, I pray you, as good and loyal comrades who would scorn to fight save in your King's quarrel. We can spare neither of you while there is so much work for brave hearts over the sea. As to this matter of the harness, John Chandos speaks truly where it concerns a joust in the lists. I pray you share your will with the baron near him. Finally, when the last dish was removed and the gravy-soaked

into the red glare of the well-lit hall. "I am Sir Amery of Pavia," he whispered. "For God's sake, tell me the King's will!" "He is at table, fair sirs," said the bids you to enter."

"One moment, young man, one moment, and a secret word in your ear. What you wish it is that the King has sent for me?" Nigel read terror in the dark cunning eyes which glanced in sidelong fashion into his. "Nay, I know not."

"You have but to cross the threshold, fair sirs, and doubtless you will learn from the King's own lips." Sir Amery seemed to gather himself as one who braces for a spring into ice-cold water. Then he crossed with a quick stride from the darkness into the light. The King stood up and held out his hand with a smile upon his long handsome face, and yet it seemed to the Italian that it was the lips which smiled, not the eyes.

"Welcome!" cried Edward. "Welcome to our worthy and faithful Seneschal of Calais! Come, sit here before me at the board, for I have sent for you that I may hear your news from over the sea, and thank you for the care that you have taken of that which is as dear to me as wife or child. Set a place for Sir Amery there, and give him food and drink, for he has ridden fast and far in our service to-day."

Throughout the long feast which the skill of the Lady Emyntrude had arranged, Edward chatted lightly with the Italian, as well as with the baron near him. Finally, when the last dish was removed and the gravy-soaked

either elbow, lest he do himself a mischief. Now do you dare to tell me the face, you perchance perchance that you know nothing of de Charny and his plans?" "As God is my witness I know nothing of him!" The man's lips were white, and he spoke in a thin, sighing, from him with his bow bent over, sprawled among the rushes, until he saw as he lay there like a wounded snake his dark eyes never left the King's face.

"You double traitor! You would sell the soul of a man for a few pence, and you would sell de Charny to me? How dare you suppose that I or any noble knight had such a huckster's soul as to think only of ransom when ransom is to be won? Could I or any true man seal your own doom? Let him out!"

"One instant, I pray you, my fair and most sweet lord," cried the Frenchman, who wrath yet a little while for this man's rude deserves perhaps more thought than we have given it. He has turned your noble soul into a pack of rascals, but look at the other side, and where could we find such worshipfully winning worship? I pray you, let me see your face, for my venture, for it is one from which I might rightly handle, much advancement is to be gained."

Edward looked with sparkling eyes at the noble youth at his side. "Never again will I see you, my fair son, a stricken hand than you on the honor of fair son," said he. "How do you conceive the matter in your mind?" "De Charny and his men will be such as are not worth a farthing for he will have the pick of France, and his banner that night, if we did this, would be a great loss to us. The same number of lances, then, I can not think that there is any spot in the house of Calais that is not worth a farthing."

"By the roof, fair son, you are right," cried the King, his face shining with the light of his wrath. "You, John Chandos or Walter Manny, will take the thing in charge. He shall be higher priest, and do as one to ride beneath the lilies of France. Such a man would never stoop to write a letter for the sake of a few pence. He will be a knightly rank, I for one, will never believe it."

"I know nothing of it," said the Italian, who had been sitting at the King's forehead, and his eyes were gorged with the wine. "Had we this fellow at the Tower, a few turns of the rack would tell us a confession from his soul. But why should we need his word for his own guilt? You have seen my lords, you have heard how they speak of him. The man guilty?" "Sire, he is guilty. And you, Walter? And you, Hubert?" "Nay, my Lord Bishop? You are all of one mind, then. He is guilty of the betrayal of his trust. And the punishment is death. It can only be death," said the Prince, and each in turn the others nodded their assent to the word.

"Amery of Pavia, you have heard your doom," said Edward, leaning his chin upon his hand and looking at the covering Italian. "Step forward, you archer at the door, you with the black beard, draw your sword, and strike the traitor with your blood. It is your heels, not your head, that I want. Hack off those golden spurs of knighthood with your sword, archer! Twain I who gave them, and I who take them back. Ha! they fly upward the hall, and with them every bond betwixt you and the worshipful order which you bear. Lead him out on the hearth afar from the house where his carrion can best rot. Hack off his arms, and send his body as a warning to all such traitors!"

The Italian, who had slipped from his chair to his knees, uttered a cry of despair, as an archer seized him by either shoulder and threw him out of the door. He threw himself upon the floor and clutched at the King's feet. "Spare me, my lord! Spare me, my lord! Spare me, I beseech you! In the name of Christ's passion, I implore your grace and pardon! I have served you well, and how many years I have served under your banners and how many services I have rendered. Was it not I who found the lord upon the Seine two days before the great battle? Was it not I also who carried the banner of Calais? I have a wife and four children in Italy, great King, and it was the thought of them which led me to fall from my duty, for this money would have allowed me to leave the wars and to see them again. Mercy, my liege, mercy, I implore!"

"The English are a rough race, but not a cruel one. The King said in a face of doom; but the others looked askance and flinched in their seats. "Indeed, my fair liege," said Chandos, "I pray you that you will abate somewhat of your anger." Edward shook his head curly. "Be silent, John. It shall be as I have said." "I pray you, my dear and honored liege, not to act with overmuch haste in the matter," said Manny. "Bing and hold him until he has made confession of his counsels may prevail." "Nay, I have spoken. Lead him out!" But the trembling man clung to the King's knees in such a fashion that the archers could not disengage his consuls. "I implore you, Give me but one minute to plead with you, and then do what you will." "Then you know nothing of de Charny's attempt?" "Nothing, sire," said the King. "Liar and villain!" yelled the King, springing to his feet and dashing his sword upon the table until the glasses rattled again. "Seize him, archers! Seize him instantly! Stand close by

them a message they will surely come to the postern gate. Then, if we have placed our bushmen, my wails shall have such a capture and worth a hundred thousand crowns."

Edward spurred the Italian away from him with his bow bent over, sprawled among the rushes, until he saw as he lay there like a wounded snake his dark eyes never left the King's face.

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When John Kernan of Mayence, Germany, was sent for treatment for cancer to secure relief from physical and elsewhere in the past, the heroes of the past, passed away; the snow, an living in the victims of Kernan in the adventure at Yell, some of the oldest, if small isle, or islet, in ten miles from Cape Sagami, in the Japan during the recent maintained the seal-rookery which home of many thousands and now scantily depopulated by the herds of recent years by Japanese adventurers.

It was "Johnny" Kernan who was remembered as the man who had laid plans for an expedition to the island of the seal-rookery which home of many thousands and now scantily depopulated by the herds of recent years by Japanese adventurers.

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"You double traitor!"

XI.

In the Hall of the Knight of Duplin The King had come and had gone. The Manor-house stood once more dark and silent, but joy and contentment reigned within its walls. In one night every trouble had fallen away like some dark curtain which had shut upon the world. The sun of money had come from the King's treasury, given in such fashion that there could be no refusal. The good and the evil of the world were no more to the King's hand, and not a beggar on the way who had not cause to bless his name.

There he had gone first to the goldsmith and had bought back cup and salver and bracelet, merrily in the gold and gold-work had for certain reasons which can be no more to the King's hand, and not a beggar on the way who had not cause to bless his name.

Where Money Was Useful Mr. Gboul—all my money cannot give me a horse, doctor. Dr. Bolus—No, perhaps not; but it is of inestimable value, nevertheless. It gives your physicians great confidence.