

been some two inches lower in stature, but his breadth of shoulder and depth of chest were marvelous, and even on that unsteady footing (for every stone was slippery now with blood) his brawny limbs bore him up like a tower. Save during the brief parley from the barbican those two had never met, and the vizors of both were closely locked now; nevertheless through instinct, or that freemasonry which exists only among men of their peculiar stamp, each guessed at once to whom he was opposed and made himself ready accordingly.

Sir Olivier de Clisson carried only his great *épée d'armes*. Seeing this, the Free Companion cast down beside him his dripping mace, and bared his own blade.

The Breton bowed his head, as if acknowledging a courtesy, then "*à nous deux*," he said between his teeth, and the duel began.

There was no fear of foul play from the followers of either champion; for the rules of chivalry were so well understood and so rigidly enforced in those days, that the meanest who rode under knight's pennon knew better than to infringe them. The strength and skill of the combatants were so evenly poised, and both were such rare masters of their weapon, that for awhile no great damage was done. Blows that seemed as if they must needs have been deadly were either warded altogether or so turned that they fell slantwise; but as the fierce delight of battle overmastered them, they grew less careful to guard, and more eager to strike. Red drops oozed through two or three gaps in De Clisson's armor of proof, and his blade had bitten deep more than once through the joints of the other's