

THE LION OF FLANDERS.

BY HENDRIK CONSCIENCE.

CHAPTER V. CONTINUED.

The French knights had put up their swords again into their scabbards, so soon as they perceived that there was no danger for the king or queen. As regarded the arrest of the Lion, they left that to other hands; it was a kind of work in which a noble could not with propriety take part.

Very different, meanwhile, were the feelings of the king and of the queen on this occasion. Philip was much depressed and deeply lamented the step which he had been drawn. Joanna on the contrary, was full of joy at Robert's resistance, for the offence of wounding the king's servant in the king's presence was so serious, that she felt her schemes of vengeance were greatly advanced thereby.

At last the king could no longer suppress his emotion and resentment, and notwithstanding the resistance of his imperious consort, determined to leave the hall. As he rose from his throne, he said:

"Gentlemen, this scene of violence has greatly troubled us. Much more pleasing would it have been to us could we have shown mercy; unhappily the interests of our crown and realm would not admit of it. Our royal will and pleasure is, that you all use your best endeavours that the peace of our palace be not further disturbed."

The queen now rose also, and was about to descend the steps of the throne along with her husband, when a new incident, at once unexpected and vexatious, prevented her.

Charles de Valois had for some time been standing immersed in thought at the farther end of the hall. The respect which he owed his king, as well as the love he felt for his brother, long struggled in his heart against the indignation which the late act of treachery excited in him. But at last his wrath waxed uncontrollable, and broke loose: now red, now pale, with every sign of the most violent agitation of mind, he stepped forward in front of the queen:

"Madam," he thundered out, "you shall not dishonour me with impunity! Listen, gentlemen; I speak in the presence of God, the judge of us all. It is you, Joanna of Navarre, that exhausts our country's resources by your prodigality; it is you that have ground down the king's subjects by the debasement of the coin, and by extortions and oppressions of every kind; it is you that bring disgrace upon my noble brother; it is you that are the blot and shame of France. Henceforth I serve you not! Henceforth I renounce you as a false traitress!"

With those words he drew his sword from the scabbard, snapped the blade in two across his knee, and dashed the pieces with such violence against the ground, that they rebounded to the very steps of the throne.

Joanna was beside herself with shame and fury; her features were distorted with the expression of the most devilish passions, and seemed no longer to have anything womanly about them. Convinced that she was being deceived, she exclaimed:

"Ho, guard! seize him! seize him!" The bodyguards, who were still in the hall, prepared to execute the queen's command, and their captain was already drawing near to the Count de Valois; but this was too much for the king, who was sincerely and deeply attached to his brother:

"Whoever lays a finger upon Messire de Valois shall die this very day!" he exclaimed.

This threat checked the advance of the guards; and De Valois left the hall without hindrance, in spite of the queen's command.

Thus ended these scenes of treachery and violence. Count Guy was forthwith imprisoned at Compiègne; his son Robert was conveyed to Bourges in Berri, and William to Rouen in Normandy. The rest of the Flemish nobles were also kept in close custody, each at a different place; and were thus deprived of the consolation they might have derived from friendly companionship in misfortune.

Of all the company, Diederik die Vos was the only one that got back to Flanders, thanks to his palmer's coat, by means of which he escaped unrecognised.

Charles de Valois, with the aid of his friends, immediately left the kingdom, and retired to Italy; nor did he return thence, until after the death of Philip the Fair, when Louis Hutin had succeeded to the throne.

CHAPTER VI.

At the time of which we are writing there existed in Flanders two political parties violently opposed to each other, and who spared no pains to inflict on one another every possible injury. The great majority of the nobles and those in power had declared in favor of the government as established by France, and thence had obtained with the people the appellation of Loyalists, from the well-known bearings of the royal arms. Why it was that they thus took part with their country's enemies, will presently appear.

For some years past, what with extravagant expenditure upon tournaments, what with internal wars and distant crusades, the Flemish nobility had very generally fallen into pecuniary embarrassment, and had thus been compelled to raise money, by granting extensive privileges and immunities to the inhabitants of their lordships, and especially to those of the towns, for which they received very considerable sums. Dearly as the citizens had to pay for these franchises, the sacrifice was soon made good with ample interest. The commonalty, which had formerly belonged with life and goods to the nobles, felt that the sweat of their brows no longer flowed in vain; they elected burghermasters and councillors, and constituted municipal governments, with which their former lords had no power of interference whatever. The different guilds co-operated for the common interest, each under the direction of its dean, who was its principal officer.

Freedom and security bore their usual fruits; from all the winds of heaven strangers made their way to Flanders, and commerce flourished with a vitality that would have been impossible under the government of the feudal lords. Industry prospered, the people grew rich, and in the pride of independence and power rose up more than once in arms against their former masters. The nobles, seeing their revenues diminished and their supremacy in danger, strove by all means, fair and foul, to check the rising importance of the commons, but with very indifferent success; for the wealth of the towns enabled them to take the field on at least an equal footing, in order to maintain the liberties they had won, and to hand them down unimpaired. In France things were far otherwise; Philip the Fair, indeed, had once, in his distress for money, summoned the deputies of the third estate, that is to say, of the towns, to the States General; but any gain to the people from this step was but temporary, and the feudal lords speedily recovered what-ever ground they had lost.

What remained of the Flemish nobility had thus entirely lost their supremacy, and had nothing left but the ordinary rights of proprietorship over their estates. Lamenting their bygone power, they saw no other way of recovering it but by the overthrow of the privileges and prosperity of the commons. As no ray of freedom had yet beamed upon France, where a despotic feudalism still exclusively reigned, they hoped that Philip the Fair would totally change the state of things in Flanders, and that they should be re-instated in all their former power. To this end they favored the cause of France against Flanders, and thus obtained the name of Loyalists, as a term of reproach. These were especially numerous at Bruges, which then divided with Venice the palm of wealth and commerce, and where even the burghermasters and other magistrates, through corrupt influence brought to bear upon the elections, all belonged to that faction.

The arrest of the old Count, and those nobles who had remained true to him, was joyful news for this party. Flanders was now delivered up into the hands of Philip the Fair; and they hoped that by this means they should succeed in cancelling all the rights and privileges of the commons.

But the people at large heard of what had taken place with the deepest dismay, the affection which they had always borne to their native prince was now enhanced by compassion, and there arose a universal outcry against the treachery that had been committed. But the numerous French garrisons, which occupied the length and breadth of the land, with the want of unanimity among the citizens themselves, paralyzed the citizens (such was the name given to the patriotic party from the threatening claws of the Flemish lion); so that for the present, with all their excitement of feeling, they had no spirit for action, and Philip remained in quiet possession of the inheritance of the Count of Flanders.

On the first receipt of the evil tidings Adolf of Nieuwland's sister, Maria, had proceeded with a numerous retinue of servants and a litter to Wynandael, and brought back her wounded brother to their paternal house at Bruges. The young Matilda, so painfully severed from all of her own blood, was glad to accept the invitation and escort of this new-found friend, and to escape from Wynandael, now occupied by a French garrison.

The house of the Nieuwlands lay in the Spanish street at Bruges. At either angle of its gable front rose a round tower, crowned with a weather-cock, and commanding all the neighboring buildings; the roof of the door rested on two pillars of heavy stone of Grecian architecture, and over it stood the shield of the Nieuwlands, with their motto, "Pulchrum pro patria mori," having for supporters two angels with palm branches in their hands.

In a chamber away from the street, and quite out of reach of the sound of its unceasing bustle, lay the wounded Adolf on a magnificent bed. Ghastly pale and worn to a skeleton by the pain and fever of his wounds, he was hardly to be recognized. At the head of his bed stood a small table, and on it a flask and drinking cup of silver; against the wall hung the breastplate that had failed before St. Pol's lance, and so been the cause of his wound; beside it was a harp, with its strings loose. All about him were still as death. The windows curtains were half drawn, so that the light in the room was but a doubtful gleaming, and no sound was heard except the painful breathing of the wounded man, and the occasional rustle of a silk dress.

In one corner of the room sat Matilda silent, and with her eyes fixed upon the ground. Her falcon was perched on the back of her chair, and seemed to participate in its mistress's sorrow; for its head was buried in its feathers, and it showed not the slightest movement.

The young girl, formerly so light-hearted and joyous that no grief could touch her, was now totally changed. The imprisonment at one stroke of all that were dear to her had given a shock to her feelings, which caused everything to appear dark before her eyes. For her the heavens were no longer blue, the fields no longer green, her dreams were no longer interwoven with threads of gold and silver. Sorrow and brooding despair had found the way into her heart; nothing could console her under the torturing image of her beloved father confined in prison and in a foreign land.

"[A]fter she had thus sat for some time motionless, she slowly rose from her seat, and took her hawk upon her hand. With eyes full of tears she looked upon the bird, and thus spoke in a low voice, while from time to time she wiped away a tear from her pale cheeks:

"Mourna not so, my faithful bird; our lord my father will soon come back. This wicked queen shall do him no mischief; for I have prayed so fervently

for him, and God is ever just: mourn no more, my darling bird."

Warm tears trickled down the maiden's cheeks; for though her words seemed full of hope and comfort, yet her heart was all the while oppressed with the deepest sorrow. In a mournful voice she continued:

"My poor hawk, now we can no longer follow our sport in the valleys about my father's castle; for the stranger has his abode in the fair Wynandael. They have cast my unhappy father into prison, and bound him with heavy chains. Now he sits and sighs miserably in the dark cell; and who knows whether the fell Joanna may not even take his life, my darling bird? These we too will die of grief! The thought, the frightful thought alone deprives me of all strength. There now, sit down; for my trembling hand can no longer bear you."

And then, in agony of despair, the poor child sank back upon her chair; but her cheek grew no paler than before, for long since had its roses faded, and only her eyelids were red with constant weeping. The charm of her features was gone, and her eyes had lost all their life and fire.

Long time she sat, sunk in sorrow, and passing in review the long array of gloomy images which her despair had conjured up before her. She saw her unhappy father confined in a damp and wholesome prison,—she heard the clanking of his chains, and the echoes of his sighs of wretchedness in the gloomy vault. The fear of poison too, then so common, or thought to be so, in the mysteries of French statecraft, ever occupied her imagination, and all our other griefs followed one another before her eyes. Thus was the poor maiden incessantly tortured, and filled with the most terrible apprehensions.

And now a faint sigh was heard from the bed. Hastily Matilda dried the tears from her cheeks, and hurried to his bedside with frightened anxiety. She noticed some one's hands as they fast into the cup, raised Adolf's head a little with her right hand, and brought the cup to his mouth.

The knight's eyes opened wide, and fixed themselves with a peculiar expression upon the maiden. An intense feeling of gratitude spoke in his languid glance, and an indelible stamp passed over his pale countenance.

Since he had received his wound, the knight had not yet spoken intelligibly, nor did he even seem to comprehend the words that were addressed to him. The latter, however, was not the case. When, in the first days of his illness, Matilda had whispered over him in her gentlest voice, "Get well, my poor Adolf! my dear brother! I will pray for you, for your death would make me still more unhappy than now," and other like words, when, unconscious of the being heard, she murmured to herself behind her couch,—Adolf had heard and understood all, though totally unable to reply.

Meanwhile, during the bygone night there had taken place a marked change for the better in the wounded knight's condition. Nature, after a long struggle, had thrown him into a deep sleep, from which he awoke refreshed and with new life and vigour; the sigh which broke from him at the moment of awakening was louder and longer than any breath which he had yet drawn since he received his wound.

And now, to Matilda's no little astonishment, as soon as she had taken the cup from his lips, he thus addressed her, in a distinct, though feeble, voice:

"O noble lady!—my guardian angel I thank my merciful God for the comfort which, through you, He has given me! Am I worthy, lady, that your illustrious hand should thus kindly have smoothed my pillow? A thousand blessings on you, for your tender care of a poor knight!"

For a moment the maiden's surprise and pleasure were too much for words; but soon recovering herself, and remarking how much progress he had so suddenly made, in a transport of delight she clasped her hands together, while she gave vent to her feelings in loud cries of joy.

"Hail, now, indeed, you will get well, Sir Adolf!" she exclaimed; "now I need no longer be all sadness in your case; all such events have a brother to comfort me!"

Then, as it on the instant recalling something which for a moment she had forgotten, she checked herself suddenly, her countenance assumed a grave expression, and she threw herself upon her knees before the crucifix at the head of the bed. There with joined hands she poured forth a long thanksgiving to the Lord, who had brought back her friend and brother Adolf from the shadow of death.

Then rising, she once more fixed her eyes on the knight, and in a glad voice said to him:

"Keep still, Sir Adolf, and move not; that is what Master Roger strictly enjoins you."

"What have you not done for me, illustrious daughter of my lord?" replied Adolf. "How constantly have your prayers sounded in my ears! I have often had your voice of comfort cheered my heart! Yes; in my half-consciousness it seemed to me as though one of God's angels was standing by my bedside, and warding off death from it; an angel that propped my head, that quenched my burning thirst with cooling drinks, that constantly assured me that death should not yet have dominion over me! God grant me health and strength again, that I may one day be able to pour out my blood for you!"

"Sir Adolf," answered the maiden, "you have risked your life for my father; you love him as I love him; does it not, then, become me to care for you as for a brother? The angel you saw was, without doubt, St. Michael, to whom I have constantly prayed in your behalf. Now I will hasten and call your good sister Maria, that we may rejoice together over your better health."

She then left the knight, but in a few moments returned, accompanied by his sister. Joy at this sudden improve-

ment in Adolf's condition was visible, not only upon her countenance, but in her whole air and bearing. Her movements were quicker and lighter, her tears no longer flowed, and now she could find cheerful words for her favourite. Immediately on her return to the room with Maria, she took her hawk from the back of the chair upon her hand, and as drew near to Adolf's bed.

"My good brother!" cried Maria, kissing his pale cheek, "you are better! Now I shall be rid of those frightful dreams! O, how glad I am! How often have I wept by your bedside with bitter pain of heart! How often have I thought that death could surely not be far from you! But now my heart is lighter. Will you drink, my brother?"

"No, my good Maria," answered Adolf. "I have never had to suffer thirst, so anxiously has my generous Lady Matilda cared for me. As soon as I am strong enough to reach St. Cross, (a village near Bruges, formerly a noted place of pilgrimage,) I will go and pray to God for blessings upon her head, and that sorrow may ever be far from her."

Matilda meanwhile was busily employed in whispering the good news to her bird, which now, seeing its mistress in recovered spirits, was dressing and pluming itself, and seemed to be making ready for the chase. "Look, my faithful friend," she said, turning the creature's head towards Adolf; "look, now is Sir A off in the way of recovery, after we have so long seen him lying helpless there. Now we may speak together again, and not be sitting always in the dark. Our fear for him is all gone; and so methinks all our other griefs pass away from us, now that God has shown us His mercy and favour. Yes, my beautiful bird, so shall we have an end of our captivity of—"

But here Matilda felt that she was about to say what the sick knight had better not be made aware of; but as she broke off, the word "captivity" was heard by the creature's ear. The tears, too, which on awakening he had perceived on the maiden's cheek, filled him now with anxious foreboding.

"What say you, Matilda?" he exclaimed. "You weep! Heavens! What, then, has happened? of whose imprisonment did you speak?"

Matilda dared not answer; but Maria, more self-possessed, stooped down and whispered in his ear: "Of her poor aunt Philippa's. But let us drop the subject; for she is always weeping about it. Now you are better, I shall, as soon as Master Roger allows it, have to talk to you of things of weight, but which are not for Matilda's ear; besides, I am at this moment expecting Master Roger. Be still awhile, and I will take her away into another chamber."

The knight laid his head upon the pillow, and feigned to sleep; upon which Maria turned upon Matilda, and said:

"I think, Lady Matilda we had better now leave my brother alone, that he may sleep and not be tempted to speak too much; which the desire of expressing his gratitude to you, might, I fear, lead him to do."

The two damsels left the room together, and presently afterwards the surgeon presented himself at the door, and was conducted by Maria to her brother.

"Well, Sir Adolf!" said Roger cheerfully, "how goes it with you? Better, I see. Now all the danger is over, and you are safe for this time. There is no need of my dressing your wound again at present: only drink copiously of this beverage, keep as quiet as you can, and in less than a month you and I will take a walk together. That is my prognosis, if no unforeseen accident retard your recovery. Meanwhile, as your mind is in

better case than your body, I have no objection to Lady Maria informing you of the sad events that have happened while you have been confined to your bed; but I pray you, do not lose your self command, and keep yourself calm."

Maria now drew forward two chairs, upon which she and Master Roger took their places at the head of the bed; while Adolf regarded them with the greatest curiosity, and with an evident expression of anxiety upon his countenance.

"Let me finish what I have to say," began Maria, "without interrupting me, and bear yourself like a man, my brother. In that evening which was so unlucky for you, our Count called his faithful vassals together, and declared to them that he had resolved to set out for France, and cast himself at king Philip's feet. So it was determined, and Guy of Flanders journeyed with his nobles to Compiègne; but no sooner had they arrived than they were all arrested and cast into prison, and now our land is under French rule. Raul and Neale govern Flanders."

The effect which this short narration produced upon the knight was not so violent as might have been expected. He made no answer, and seemed deeply sunk in thought.

"What a calamity! Is it not?" added Maria at last.

"O God!" exclaimed Adolf, "what felicity had thou then in store for Guy of Flanders, that he must reach it through such miseries and humiliations? But tell me, Maria, is our Lion also a prisoner?"

"Yes, my brother, Lord Robert de Bethune is in prison at Bourges, and Lord William at Rouen. Of all the nobles that were with the Count, only one has escaped this unhappy lot—the cunning Diederik."

"Now I understand the unfinished sentence and the constant tears of the unhappy Matilda. Without father, without family, the daughter of the Count of Flanders has to seek shelter with strangers."

And as he spoke, his eyes lighted up, and a glow of indignation passed over his countenance. After a short pause, he went on:

"The precious child of my prince and master has watched over me as a guardian angel! She is deserted—unhappy—and exposed to persecution; but I will remember what I owe to the Lion, and watch over her as the apple of mine eye. O, what a great and glorious mission is it which has fallen to my lot! How proud am I to be the hand which I can devote to her service!"

Then, after a short moment of deep meditation a cloud suddenly passed over his countenance; he cast a look of supplication on his physician, and said:

"O heavens, how grievous are my wounds to me now! How intolerable this confinement! My worthy friend, Master Roger, do, for the love of God, hasten my recovery all you can, that I may be able to do something for her who has so lovingly tended me on my bed of pain. Spare no expense,—what ever drugs are costliest, procure them, if only I may the sooner rise from my bed; for now I feel as if I could rest no longer."

"But, Sir Adolf," answered Roger, "there is no possibility of hastening your recovery from such a wound; the nature must have time to unite the severed parts. Patience and rest will do more for you than all the drugs in the world. But this is not all that we had to say to you. You must know that the French are masters throughout the land, and are strengthening themselves in it every day. Hitherto we have succeeded in concealing our young Lady Matilda from them; but we dread every day lest she should be discovered; and then she too might fall into the hands of the wicked Queen of France."

"Truly you are right, Master Roger," exclaimed Adolf; "they would have no

plty upon her. But what shall we do? O, what a misery, to lie stretched out here, when all the strength I have, all the help I can give, is so much wanted!"

"I know a place," observed Roger, "where Matilda would be safe enough." "Your words relieve me. But where, then, is this place? Quick, tell me!"

"Think you not, Sir Adolf, that she would be safe and in peace with her cousin William, in the country of Juliers?"

The knight was evidently not a little dismayed at this question. Must he let Matilda depart for a foreign land? Shall he render it impossible for himself to aid and defend her? To that he could by no means bring his mind; for he had already in his heart charged himself with the task of restoring Matilda to her father, and preserving her from every wrong and insult.

He strained, therefore, all his powers of invention to devise some other plan which would not remove her so far from him; and thinking he had hit upon such a one, he answered with an expression of joy lighting up his countenance:

"Certainly, Master Roger, there could not be a safer retreat for her; but, according to what I hear from you, there are bodies of French troops throughout the different garrisons, which seems to me to render Juliers, which seems to me to render Juliers, a dangerous one for her. It would be impossible to furnish her with a proper escort, for that would only make the matter worse; and I cannot possibly allow Robert de Bethune's daughter to set out alone, accompanied only by a few servants. No! I must watch over her as over my soul's salvation, that I may not be ashamed to appear before my Lord Count Robert when he demands his daughter at my hands."

"But, Sir Adolf, bethink you! you expose her to still greater danger by keeping her in Flanders. Who is there to protect her here? Not you, for you have not the power. The city magistrates will not; they are all body and soul given up to France. The French may easily get scent of her; and what would become of the poor girl then?"

"I have bethought me of a protector for her," answered Adolf. "Maria, send a servant to the Dean of the Clothworkers, and pray of him to come and see me here. Master Roger, what think you if we place our young lady under the protection of the commons? Is not that a happy thought?"

"Well enough, indeed, if only it were practicable; but the people are to the last degree embittered against all that calls itself noble, and will have nothing to do with any such. And in good truth, Sir Adolf, one cannot blame them for it; for most part of the nobles hold with the enemy, and think of nothing but how most effectually to destroy the rights and liberties of the commons."

"I shall not allow such considerations to turn me from my purpose; of that assure yourself, Master Roger. My father was ever the good friend to the city of Bruges; it is to his intervention that they owe many of their privileges, and I do not think that the Dean of the Clothworkers and his company have forgotten it. And, after all if I fall here, we can but look about for an opportunity of sending away our young lady quietly to Juliers."

After a space of some half an hour, which they spent in discussing their project, Master Peter Deonick, Dean or chief of the guild of Clothworkers at Bruges, arrived, and was immediately introduced into Adolf's chamber.

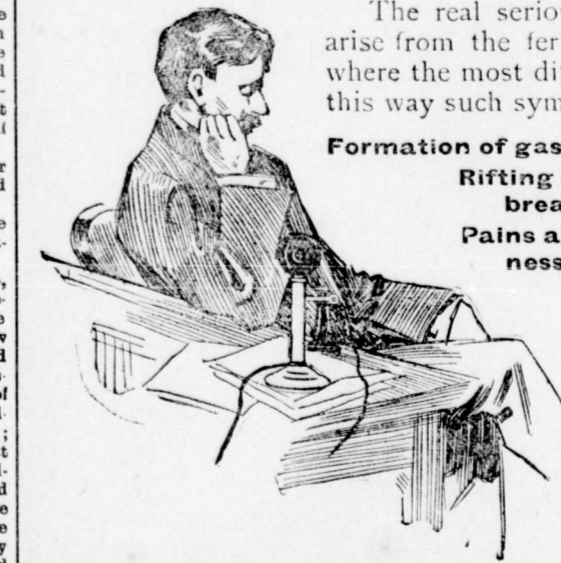
A long gown or overcoat of brown woollen stuff covered him from neck to feet; and being totally without any

THE DESPAIR OF THE DYSPEPTIC

Who Has Sought in Vain for Cure From Mere Stomach Treatments and Neglected the Liver and Bowels.

The sufferer from indigestion and liver troubles "feels blue" all the time. Office cares easily ruffle the irritable temper which the dyspeptic always has, and as a result the surroundings are made unpleasant for all.

The real serious forms of indigestion and dyspepsia arise from the fermentation of the food in the intestines, where the most difficult part of digestion takes place. In this way such symptoms as the following commence:



Formation of gas causing pain. Rifting of wind and choking sensations in the breast. Pains about the heart, with feelings of heaviness and drowsiness. Irritability of temper and despondency.

DR. CHASE'S KIDNEY-LIVER PILLS

show their remarkable control over the organs of digestion and excretion, and cure where mere digestive tablets and stomach treatments fail.

The flow of bile resulting from their quickening influence on the liver hastens the course of the food along the alimentary canal, prevents fermentation and ensures good digestion and assimilation. Indigestion, biliousness and constipation are speedily and thoroughly cured and vigor and health are fully restored.