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THE KNIGHT OF NAVARRE:

A TALE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

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CHAPTER I.

Warrior! whose image on thy tomb,
With shield and crested head,
Sleeps proudly in the purple gloom,
By the stained window shed.
The records of thy name and race
Have faded from the stone,
Yet through a cloud of years I trace
What thou hast been and done.

MRS. HEWANS.

THE city and castle of Evreux, in the kingdom of Navarre, had, about the year 1357, been wrested from their sovereign, Charles le Mauvais, as his enemies termed him, by the arms of John, the reigning monarch of France. He had also, contrary to his oath, and after promising him a full pardon for certain offences, seized the person of the King of Navarre, and cast him into the strong fortress of Crevecoeur, in Cambresis, where, secretly suspicious of his designs, he kept him rigidly imprisoned.

This injustice aroused the vengeance of the Navarrais, and though no open war existed between themselves and their powerful neighbours, with whom, unaided, they were too feeble to compete, they entered into an alliance with the English, whose armies were daily extending their conquests in France, and banding together in small parties, under different leaders, overran the country, particularly Normandy, which they kept in a constant state of alarm. Engaged in perpetual skirmishes and assaults, they not unfrequently won back the strong holds which they had lost, and waited only for the liberation of their king, to declare themselves in open revolt against France.

The issue of the battle of Poitiers, in which King John was made a prisoner by the Prince of Wales, renowned in history, as Edward the Black Prince, from the colour of his armour, and who on that important day led in person the forces of England, was hailed by the Navarrais

with triumph. And, in truth, if the misfortunes of their enemy were to be productive of good to them; they had ample cause for rejoicing, for a large proportion of the French chivalry had either shared the fate of their monarch, or were slain on the field of their defeat; and the whole realm, in consequence of this eventful battle, was filled with trouble and disorder.

The regency had devolved upon the Duke of Normandy, the heir to the crown, but as yet a youth in years and experience; in consideration whereof, the three estates, as they were termed, consisting of thirty-six persons, chosen twelve from each of the three bodies of the nobles, the clergy, and the citizens, assumed the direction of all affairs, till such time as the king should be restored to his realm. This body, being friendly to the King of Navarre, and having much confidence in his valour and sound judgment, would willingly have released him from his prison, believing, that if good faith were kept with him, he, as a vassal of France, would cheerfully and valiantly assist in defending it against its enemies.

But the young Duke of Normandy refused to lend his sanction to this purpose. "His royal father," he said, "had cast the King of Navarre into confinement—wherefore he knew not—but doubtless with good and just cause—and he was bound to keep him there, till he, whose prisoner he was, returned to set him at liberty." This decision sadly disappointed the hopes of the Navarrais, and rendered still more inveterate their hatred to the French, whose constant encroachments upon their territory galled them to the very quick; and wherever they abode passively beneath their sway, it was through compulsion, or policy, that they might the better take note of their movements, and improve every opportunity to work them ill and mischief. Thus, in the city of Evreux, the humbler classes were