

"Cover my head while I stoop, Messire Gualtier," he said, "and I will show thee a trick worth the seeing, if my sinews have not grown slack through idlesse."

Even while he spoke, Lanyon leaned forward and grasped the ladder, the topmost rungs of which were just then clear—for the rearmost assailants had been somewhat thrown into confusion by their comrade's fall. Then he braced his knees firmly against either side of the deep crenelle, till his body formed a sort of *arquebouton*, and thrust forward with his whole strength. The strain was so great that one might have seen the brawny muscles start out under the *cuir-bouilli* covering the back of his legs and thighs; but, little by little, ladder began to yield, till one tremendous jerk sent it headlong backward into the moat with all its freight.

A sound betwixt a shriek and groan came up from below, echoed by Lanyon's surly chuckle as he picked himself out of the embrasure, where in that last effort he had fallen prone; and the assault was over, the right-hand storming-party were already wavering in their attack, and the disaster of their fellows turned wavering into instant retreat. All scrambled across the causeway, or struggled out of the moat as quickly as they might, leaving behind their dead and wounded. Even had the trumpets not sounded sharply the recall, it is more than doubtful if Alain de Beaumanoir would have found enough to have followed him in a third essay.