fingers itching at their bowstrings; and the spear-men grasped their weapons and were stern.

But there was delay.

By-and-bye, up rode furiously to King Richard Sir Robert Dymoke, wrath personified, though he gave not vent to anger before His Majesty.

"My Sovereign Lord the King," he cried, "the Earl of Northumberland hath withdrawn his large force to a neutral distance; I fear me he with Stanley hath traitorous intentions toward Your Majesty."

King Richard considered for a moment.

"I shall go forth, with Your Majesty's command," went on the Champion Dymoke, "to challenge bastard Henry; aye, with another traitor Lord or two at his back."

"Nay," said His Majesty; "but await a short time the tardy answer of Stanley."

"Methinks," quoth Dymoke, "that he vascillates already, with a strong inclination to drop toward Henry. Were it not that Your Majesty hath his son, Lord Strange, a hostage, and that he fears our valor may prevail even above such numbers, there would have been no doubt."

King Richard slowly nodded his head, saying:

"Aye; so, so; it is vain to wait"; then, with a vigor and fire in his eyes:

"Let the battle begin!"

Good Lord! How swiftly those soldiers buckled their helms! How rapidly those archers bent their bows and frushed their feathers! How quickly the bill-men shook their bills and proved their staves!

I felt the blood surge within me with eagerness when I saw how ready all were to maul the enemy in front, in spite of the terrible odds against us. Such experiences are memorized eternally, Sire Brains.

For a minute there was a fearful pause; then blared out the trumpets with the order to advance.

With one accord our soldiers shouted:

"On for King Richard! Down with the Rich-