



Project Gutenberg's Jaufrý the Knight and the Fair Brunissende, by Mary Lafon

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A Tale of the Times of King Arthur

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Translator: Alfred Elwes

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JAUFREY THE KNIGHT
AND THE FAIR BRUNISSENDE
A TALE OF THE TIMES OF KING ARTHUR

By Mary Lafon

Translated From The French Version by Alfred Elwes.

Illustrated With Twenty Engravings By GUSTAVE DORE

Addey And Co.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The description given by one of the authors of *Jauvfrý* about the origin of the romance, and the evidence afforded by the French adapter concerning the Mss. wherein it is contained, make it unnecessary for me to dwell upon these particulars.

The veneration in which King Arthur's name is held by all lovers of the early romantic history of Britain will give the tale a strong recommendation in such eyes; while the personages with which it deals render the appearance of its characters in an English dress the more pleasing and appropriate.

As answerable for the fashion and material of the costume, I may be permitted to say a few words concerning the rule which has guided me in producing it. Keeping in view that the original romance is a poem in form and composition, I have endeavoured, in my translation, still to preserve the poetic character; and though compelled to base my work upon a prose version, I have tried, within certain limits, rather to restore its original shape, than allow it, by the second ordeal to which it is thus subjected, to lose it altogether. Whether such attempt, however honestly conceived, has been properly carried out, must be determined by my readers.

A.E.

King's Arms,
Moorgate Street, London.



PREFACE TO THE FRENCH VERSION.

The literary world of France scarce knows the extent of its own riches. In the catacombs of its libraries and archives there is a heap of unknown jewels which would give a new and brighter lustre to its poetic wreath. The “great age” did not even suspect their existence; the eighteenth century passed over without bestowing on them, a glance; and if, in our days, a few of our learned brethren have conceived the idea of drawing them to light, the rumour of their labours, which moreover were both superficial and incomplete, never got beyond the doors of the Institute.

There still remains, then, more especially as regards the south, to open up the lode of this mine of gold,—a virgin mine as yet, inasmuch as Sainte-Palaye, Rochegude, Raynouard, and Fauriel, have but scraped Upon its surface,—and reanimate, in a poetic point of view, the middle ages, too easily sacrificed at the period of the *renaissance*, too severely proscribed by the University. Fed, in truth, from our entry into college with the literature of Greece and Rome, which, however admirable in form, is but sober in invention, we can have no conception of those works wherein the imagination of France, youthful, vigorous, and gay, blossomed in full freshness like a rose in spring. Some judgment may be formed of the value of the poems rhymed by the troubadours in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by the romance which is now presented to the public. Dragged from the dust beneath which it has lain buried for six hundred years, the romance of *Jaufry* is translated for the first time; and when we consider the merit of the story, we may add, without fear of contradiction, that it deserved such honour long ago.

Let the reader call up in his mind a pavilion of Smyrna or Granada, with columns of white marble light and graceful as those of the Alhambra, with elegant trellis-work, glass of varied hues, and filled with a pervading tone of warmth,—the warmth of a May sun,—and he will have some notion of the romance of *Jaufry and the fair Brunissende*:—few things being more piquant, more fresh, more fanciful, or which better reflect the charming caprices of a southern imagination in the middle ages. Feudal society revives therein entire, with all its fairy doings, its knightly fictions, its manners, and its grand lance-thrusts; and such is the interest of the tale, that we allow ourselves to be carried away by it with as much pleasure as our ancestors must have felt, when it was

told to the sounds of the minstrels viol in the great castle-hall, or beneath the shadow of the tent.

Two peculiarities, which are not matter of indifference to history, enhance the value of this poetic gem: one is, the influence of Arabic ideas, of which it has a distant savour like the balmy oases of the East; and the other, the inspiration which it evidently lent to Cervantes. If, for instance, we discover therein the roc, the wishes, and the tent of the Fairy Paribanou, as traces of the *Arabian Nights*, we behold, on the other hand, that this romance of *Jaufry* has furnished the one-handed genius of Alcalá with the first idea of the adventure of the galley-slaves (*desdichados galeotes*), the cavalier in green (*cavallero del verde gavan*), the braying of the regidors (*rebuzno de los dos regidores*), the Princess Micomicona, and the enchanted head. And in this respect we may be permitted to remark, that the romance of *Jaufry* offers matter of a piquant comparison with the work of Miguel Cervantes. Is it not strange, after the ingenious *Don Quixote*, to find ourselves reading with pleasure the adventures of a knight-errant?

We should still have much to say concerning this poem and our system of translating it; but as we are averse to useless dissertations, we will confine our further remarks within short space. This romance, which is written in the *Provençal* tongue of the twelfth century, is composed of eleven thousand one hundred and sixty verses of eight syllables. * It was begun by a troubadour, who heard the tale related at the court of the king of Aragon, and finished by a poet whose modesty caused him to conceal his own name and that of his colleague. In order to render the reading of their work more pleasant, while using our efforts to retain the southern character and genuine tone of colour, we have pared away some of the verbosity and tautologies which at times encumber while they retard the progress of the action. May this flower of the genius of our fathers retain in our modern tongue a part of that freshness and perfume which were its attributes in former days!

* The Imperial Library possesses two manuscript copies: one in small folio, written in a minute round Italian hand, with double columns of forty-five verses,—124 pages, classed under No. 291, 2d French supplement; the other, a small quarto, which will be found under No. 7988.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

Now of a tale of chivalry, of proper fashion, great allurements, full of-wise and courteous instances, and wherein abound acts of great prowess, strange adventures, assaults, encounters, and dread battles, you may list the telling. An it amuse you, I will relate thereof all that I do know, or that it please you to give ear unto. Let me know only that which ye desire, and if ye be inclined to listen in good sooth. When the minstrel doth indeed recite, neither should hearers buy nor sell, nor in low voice hold council; for thus the recital is lost to him who speaketh, and they methinks who listen cannot find therein great pleasure.

I come, then, to recount to you tidings of the court of good King Arthur; he who was so worthy, so valiant, and so wise, that his name shall never die, but whereof shall eternally be spoken the mighty things he did; and the good knights, all for their prowess known, whom he did gather at his famed Round Table. In that court, the fairest and most loyal that ever shone beneath the stars, all men did find that counsel and that aid of which they stood in need. There triumphed right, and there were wrongs redressed.

There dames and damsels, widows and orphans attacked unjustly, or disinherited by force, ne'er failed to meet with champions. The oppressed of all conditions there did find a refuge, and none e'er sought protection there in vain. Give, then, sweet welcome to a poem the fruit of such good place, and deign to listen unto it in peace.

The troubadour who rhymed it never knew King Arthur; but he heard the entire story told at the court of the king of Aragon, the best of monarchs in this world. *

* Don Pedro III., killed in 1213 at the battle of Muret.

A worthy father and a famous son, lord of goodly fortunes, humble in heart, and frank in nature as in mind, the king of Aragon loveth God and feareth Him; he maintaineth faith and loyalty, peace and justice: thus God protecteth him, giveth him the victory when he raiseth his banner against the infidel, and placeth him above all those who are alike worthy and bold. Where shall we seek youthful brows wearing a crown which emitteth rays of greater splendour?

He giveth good gifts to minstrels and to knights, and his court is the resort of all those who are esteemed brave and courteous. It was before him the troubadour heard related, by a stranger-knight of kin to Arthur and Sir Gawain,

the song he here hath rhymed; and whereof the first adventure occurred while the king of the Round Table held his court at Carlisle on the day of Pentecost.



CHAPTER I. THE ADVENTURE OF THE FOREST.

'Twas on the day of Pentecost, a feast which to Carlisle had drawn a host of knights, that Arthur, King of Briton's isle, his crown placed on his brows, and to the old monastic church proceeded to hear mass. And with him went a brilliant train, the Knights of the Round Table. There were Sir Gawain, Lancelot du Lac, Tristrem, and Ivan bold, Eric frank of heart, and Quex the seneschal, Percival and Calogrant, Cliges the worthy, Coedis the handsome knight, and Caravis short i' the arm; the whole of his bright court, indeed, was there, and many more whose names I have forgot.

When mass was done, they to the palace home returned 'mid laughter and loud noise, the thoughts of each on pleasure only bent. Each on arrival gave his humour play. Some spoke of love, and some of chivalry; and some of ventures they were going to seek. Quex at this moment came into the hall, holding a branch of apple in his hand. All made room for him; for there were few who did not fear his tongue and the hard words which it was wont to utter. This baron bold held nothing in respect. E'en of the best he ever said the worst. But this apart, he was a brave stout knight, in council sage, a valiant man of war, and lord of lineage high; but this, his humour and his biting words took from him much that was of right his due.

He, going straightway to the king, thus said:

“Sire, an it please you, it is time to dine.”

“Quex,” replied Arthur, in an angry tone, “sure thou wast born but to awake my wrath, and out of season ever to discourse. Have I not told thee, ay, a thousand times, naught should induce me to partake of food, when thus my court had met, till some adventure had turned up, some knight were vanquished, or some maid set free. Go sit thee down at bottom of the hall.”

Quex went without a word among that joyous throng, where men of all conditions, knights and lords, minstrels and mountebanks, ceased not their tricks, their gay discourse, their laughter, till the hour of noon. At noon, King Arthur called Sir Gawain, and thus spoke:

“Fair nephew, cause our chargers to be brought; for since adventure cometh not to us, we must fain seek it in the open field; for should we longer stay, our knights, indeed, would have a right to think that it were time to dine.”

“Your will, my lord,” Sir Gawain said, “shall be obeyed.”

And at the instant he the squires bade to saddle horses and their armour bring. Soon were the steeds prepared, the nobles armed. The king then girded on his famous sword, and at the head of his bold barons placed, set out for Bressiland, a gloomy wood. Having along its deep and shady paths awhile proceeded, the good king drew rein, and 'mid the greatest silence bent his ear. A distant voice was then distinctly heard, calling at intervals for human help, and turn by turn invoking God and saints!

“I will ride yonder,” bold King Arthur cried; “but with no company save my good sword.”

“An it please you, my lord,” Sir Gawain said, “I fain would ride with you.”

“Not so, fair nephew,” the king made reply; “I need no company.”

“Since such your wish,” said Gawain, “have your will.”

Arthur called quickly for his shield and lance, and spurred right eagerly towards the spot whence came the plaintive voice. As he drew near, the cries the sharper grew. The king pricked on with greater speed, and stopped before a stream by which a mill was placed. Just at the door he saw a woman stand, who wept, and screamed, and wrung her trembling hands, while she her tresses tore in deep despair. The good king, moved to pity, asked her why she grieved.

“My lord,” she weepingly replied, “oh! help me, in God's name! a dreadful beast, come down from yonder mount, is there within devouring all my corn!”

Arthur approached, and saw the savage beast, which truly was most frightful to behold.

Larger than largest bull, it had a coat of long and russet fur, a whitish neck and head, which bristled with a pile of horns. Its eyes were large and round, its teeth of monstrous size; its jaws were shapeless, legs of massive build; its feet were broad and square. A giant elk were not of greater bulk. Arthur observed it for a certain time with wonder in his mind; crossing himself, he then got off his horse, drew forth his sword, and, covered with his shield, went straight into the mill. The beast, however, far from being scared, did not so much as even raise its head, but from the hopper still devoured the corn. Seeing it motionless, the king believed the beast was lack of spirit, and, to excite it, struck it on the back: but still the creature moved not. He then advanced, and standing right in front, lunged at the beast as though to run it through. It did not even seem to note the act. Arthur then cautiously laid down his shield, replaced his sword, and, being stout and strong, he seized it by the horns, and shook it with great force; nathless he could not make it leave the grain. In rage, he was about to raise his

fist, so as to deal it on the head a blow; but lo! he could not then remove his hands,—they were as riveted unto its horns.

Soon as the beast perceived its foe was caught, it raised its head; and issued from the mill, bearing, pendant from its horns, the king, aghast, distracted, and yet wild with rage. It then regained the wood at easy pace; when Gawain, who, by good fortune, happed to ride before his Mends, beheld it thus his uncle carrying off,—a sight which half-deprived him of his wits.

“Knights!” he exclaimed aloud, “hie hither! help to our good lord! and may the laggard never sit at his Round Table more! We should indeed deserve dishonoured names were the king lost for want of timely aid.” As thus he spoke, he flew towards the beast, not waiting for the rest, and couched his lance as though to strike at it.

But the king, fearing harm would come to him, addressed him thus:

“Fair nephew, thanks; but e'en for my sake halt. If thou do touch it, I am surely lost; and if thou spare it, saved. I might have slain it, and yet did not so; something now tells me I held not my hand in vain. Let it, then, go its course; and keep my men from coming on too near.”

“My lord,” Sir Gawain answered him with tears, “must I, then, let you perish without help?”

“The best of help,” the king rejoined, “will be to do my bidding.”

Sir Gawain was at this so much incensed, he cast down lance and shield, he tore his cloak and handfuls from his hair.

Just at this time Ivan and Tristrem came, with lances lowered, and at top of speed; Gawain threw up his hands, and loudly cried:

“Strike not, my lords, for his, King Arthur's sake; he's a dead man if you but touch the beast.”

“What, then, are we to do?” inquired they.

“We'll follow it,” quoth Gawain: “if the king be hurt, the beast shall die.”

The monster still kept on its even way, not seeming to remark the knights, until a rock it reached, lofty and round and high. It scaled it, as a swallow, rapidly; and Gawain and his friends, who at a distance followed, sad and full of thought, saw it, when thus the summit was attained, crawl straight towards a peak which overhung. There, stretching out its head, it held the king suspended o'er the abyss. Judge the alarm of Gawain and his friends, who each beside was almost wild with rage! Hearing their cries, they who remained behind came up full spur, and reached the lofty rock, where, at the summit, they beheld the king

hanging thus helpless from the monster's horns. They then gave loose to the most doleful cries that ever had been heard. I cannot picture to you their despair. Brave knights and pages then you might have seen tearing their hair and rending their attire, that wood reviling and the strange adventure which they had come to seek. And Quex exclaimed, by way of final stroke:

“Alas! fair chivalry, how hard thy lot! this day to cause the death of our good king, and lose thy valour when 'twas needed most!”

Saying these words he sank upon the ground. The king, however, still remained suspended in mid air, the beast meanwhile not offering to stir. The monarch feared to drop in that abyss; and in low voice he prayed the saints and God to save him from this pass. Then Gawain, Tristrem, and I know not who beside, took counsel how they might heap up their robes, so as to break the brave King Arthur's fall. Gawain had scarce proposed it to the crowd than each one doffed his garments speedily.

In haste they brought their cloaks and mantles gay; stripped off with eagerness their doublets, hose; and in an instant every knight was bare: such was the heap of garments 'neath that rock, the king had fallen without deadly risk. When this the beast beheld, it stirred as though it would draw back, and slightly shook its head. The crowd below, alarmed, at once upraised a cry; and on their bended knees prayed Heaven to guard the king, and bear him safe and sound. The beast with mighty spring then leaped below; and setting Arthur free, itself it changed into a handsome knight, in scarlet richly clad from head to heel. This noble bent his knee before the king, and smiling said:

“My liege, command your men their garments to resume; they now may dine in peace; though somewhat late, the adventure has been found.”

Arthur amazed, nay, half-distraught at this adventure strange, now recognised the knight,—a courtly guest, esteemed among the brave, the courteous, and the sage.

Adroit in arms, gay, graceful, and beloved; among the first in strife, yet kind and modest too,—this lord was master of the seven arts, and in all spells was versed. For some time past between him and the king a compact stood, whereby it was agreed, if he himself transformed when all the court was met, he should as guerdon three good gifts receive—a cup of gold, a charger of great price, and from the fairest damsel a sweet kiss.

Gawain at once ran up, fearing his uncle in his fell was crushed; and you may safely judge of his surprise—finding him thus, in high good humour, stand loud laughing with the beast.

“In faith, fair friend,” quoth he, “you can indeed enchant poor folks, and force even barons to throw off their clothes.”

“You may resume them, good my lord,” said the enchanter in the same gay tone; “for lo! the king no longer needs their use.”

They did indeed soon put them on again, nor stayed to pick or choose; the court at once returned to fair Carlisle, the monarch and Sir Gawain riding on ahead. The palace-walls soon echoed with their joy. The pages brought them wherewithal to wash, and soon the knights were placed about the board. Grand was that court, and rich and brave and good; many a puissant name, full many a king, and many a duke and count, were seated there. Gawain the valiant knight and Ivan the well-bred, each holding the queen's arm, then led her in, where, at the table, sat she 'neath the king. Gawain then placed himself the other side, and Ivan by the queen: at once with laughter they began to tell of the enchanter's skill; and when Queen Guenever, and they, the knights who were not in the wood, had learned the doings there, they were indeed surprised; and soon loud laughed and chatted with the rest. Meanwhile Sir Quex before the king and fair Queen Ghieneyer the golden dishes placed; he then sat down to eat his own good meal, for he did boast a famous appetite, while ready pages served the other knights. Nothing was wanting at that banquet high: the roebuck, kid, and succulent wild-boar; the crane, the bustard, capons, swans, wild-geese; peacocks, and fine fat hens and partridges; white bread and purest wine,—of all good things the best was there beheld. Served by a host of graceful youths beside, the guests did honour to the feast.

Eating and drinking then engaged each thought; when straight there entered, mounting a fleet horse, with spotted robe, a youthful squire, tall and of noble mien. Never, do I believe, was man more finely-shaped. His shoulders were at least two cubits broad, his features regular, his eyes were sparkling, full of love and mirth; his hair was shining as the brightest gold, his arms were large and square, his teeth as ivory white. His frame, which tapered at the waist, was well developed, and displayed his strength. His legs were long and straight, and feet high-arched.

His violet and well-cut robe rested in graceful folds on hose of the same hue. A garland of fresh flowers crowned his brows, to which the sun had given a deeper tint, heightening the colour of his ruddy cheeks.

Entering the hall, he alighted from his horse, and came with quick and joyous step to kneel at the good monarch's feet. He then his purpose opened with these words:

“May He who made this world and all it holds; He who no suzerain hath,—now save the king, and all that 's his!”

“Friend,” replied Arthur, “thank thee for those words; if thou dost seek a boon, it shall be thine.”

“My liege, I am a squire, come from far unto your court, because I knew so doing I should meet the best of kings; and I conjure you for St. Mary's sake, if you so please, to arm me now a knight.”

“Friend,” said the king, “arise, and take thy seat; it shall be done thee even as thou wilt.”

“Never, my liege, if you permit, will I uprise from hence till you have granted me the boon I ask.”

“It is conceded,” then exclaimed the king.

The squire arose as these fair words were said, and went to take his place at that rich board. But scarcely was this done, than lo! the guests beheld a knight, well armed, and on a charger fleet, come riding in. Crossing the hall, he with his lance did strike a lord upon the breast, and stretched him dying just before the queen. He then rode out, exclaiming as he went:

“This have I done to shame thee, wicked king. If it do grieve thee, and thy boasted knights should care to follow, I am Taulat Lord of Rugimon; and each passing year, on this same day, will I return to do thee the like scorn.”

Good Arthur drooped his head, enraged, yet sad; but then the squire rose, and knelt before the king:

“Sire,” he said, “now give me knightly arms, that I may follow up that haughty lord who casts dishonour on this royal court.”

“Friend,” exclaimed Quex at this, “your courage will be higher when you're drunk. Sit yourself down again, and drink another bout; the heart will be the merrier, and you can better floor a knight with wine than with a sharp-edged sword, however stout!”

The squire to this responded not a word, out of his duty for the worthy king; but for such cause, Quex had for his speech paid dear. Arthur, however, gave his anger vent, and thus exclaimed:

“Wilt thou, then, Quex, ne'er hold that biting tongue until I've driven thee from out my court? What has emboldened thee to speak thus vilely, and to a stranger who a suit prefers? Canst thou not keep within thee all the spite, the envy, wicked words, and slanderous thoughts with which thou art swelling o'er?”

“My lord,” the squire said, “pray let him have his say; little heed I the flings of

his forked tongue, for which I will a noble vengeance seek. Vile word ne'er sullieth honour. Let me rather have a suit of arms, to follow him who now has issued hence; for I do feel I shall not eat at ease till he and I have met in deadly fight."

The monarch courteously replied:

"My friend, I willingly will give thee steed, good arms, and knightly spurs; for thou dost ask these gifts as squire of gentle birth. But thou art all too young to fight with him who now has left this hall. Not four among the knights of my Hound Table can dare to meet his blows, or touch him in the field. Leave, then, this care to others; I should grieve to lose at once so stout and brave a squire."

"Since, sire, you think me stout, and call me brave, 'tis wrongfully or but to jeer you wish to stay my fighting; but in that you'll not succeed save you refuse to grant the boon erewhile you promised me;—and should a king forget his promise made, gone are his lustre and his courtesy."

The monarch answered:

"Friend, I yield me to thy ardent wish; thou shalt be armed a knight."

He then commanded two attendant squires at once go seek his armour, lance, a fine and tempered shield, the casque, the sharp-edged sword, the spurs, and horse of price in full caparison; then, when they brought the arms and horse, he caused the squire to put the hauberk on, he buckled his right spur, girded his sword upon the youth's left flank, and having kissed him gently on the mouth, he asked of him his name.

"Sire, in the land where I was born my name is Jaufry, son of Dovon."

The king, on hearing him speak thus, sighed heavily, and said, while tears were in his eye:

"Ah! what a knight and lord of mark was this same Dovon! He was of my table and my court. A brave knight and a learned: never had he superior in arms. None were held stouter or more dread in fight. May God, if He so will it, grant him grace; since for my sake he died! An archer pierced his heart with a steel bolt, while he a keep held out on my domain in Normandy."

Meanwhile a squire brought Jaufry a bay steed. The young knight placed his hand upon the bow, and leaped upon the horse, all armed as he then stood, without the use of stirrup; then called he for his shield and lance, consigned the king to God, and having taken leave of all the rest, he galloped from that hall.



CHAPTER II. ESTOUT DE VERFEIL.

The charger, which was fleet and fair to view, started off like an arrow from its bow. So that, as Jaufry left the castle-gates, he hoped he yet should overtake the knight; and therefore cried aloud to two men on the way:

“Good fellows, if you can, tell me the road just taken by the lord who left the castle yonder even now. If naught prevent you, point me out the way.”

One of those men replied:

“Speak you of him whose armour was so bright?”

“The same,” quoth Jaufry.

“He is on before; you start too late, sir knight, to catch him up.”

“By Heaven!” murmured Jaufry, much aggrieved, “he cannot flee so far, or sink so deep, but I will reach him. I’ll seek him the world through, where land and sea are found, and will discover his retreat even beneath the earth!”

This said, he held his course; and spurring, came to a broad causeway where fresh prints of horses’ hoofs appeared upon the dust.

“Methinks,” said Jaufry, “that a knight ere-while hath passed this way: so I will follow up this selfsame road while thus the trail is seen.”

Putting his horse into an ambling pace, he rode on all that day without a town or castle being met. At eventide he still continued on, when a loud cry, followed by din of arms and clash of steel on helm, suddenly rose from out the heavy shade.

Jaufry spurred readily towards the spot, and cried:

“Who are ye, lords, who at this hour do fight? Reply, since eyes of man cannot behold you.”

But no one replied; and when, as fits a bold and venturous man, he reached the place whence came the clashing noise, the fight was over and the din had ceased. Whilst then he listened, seeing naught, and at the silence wondering, there rose from out the shade deep sighs and moans; when, stooping forward, he made out a knight so sadly hurt the soil was bathed in blood.

“Knight,” cried Jaufry to the corpse, “it grieves me not to know thy slayer, or whether thou wert wrong or whether right: thou art now dead; but if I can, I even will learn why, and by whose hand.

“Knight,” he exclaimed, “speak, and inform me for what, and by whom, thou hast been so sorely used.” The wounded man could not e'en stir his lips or move a limb; his arms grew stiff; and, with two fearful groans, he yielded up the ghost.

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“Knight,” then cried Jaufry to the corpse, “it grieves me not to know thy slayer, or whether thou wert wrong or whether right: thou now art dead; but if I can, I even will learn why and by whose hand.” He then departed, and resumed his way, now on the trot and now at ambling pace, stopping at intervals to bend his ear and give a look around. For some time nothing met his ear or eye; but, after having ridden for a space, a noise of battle once again assailed him. Steel, wood, and iron met with such dread force, it seemed as though the thunder vexed the air, and that this din proclaimed the bursting storm. At once, then, to the side from whence it came Sir Jaufry turned his horse; and, with his shield about his neck, his lance in rest prepared, he spurred with ardour on, for, in his mood, it seemed as though he ne'er should learn who slew the knight and who were they that fought. On, then, to that affray he hotly came; but to behold, stretched stiff upon the ground, a knight all armed, whose casque and head beside had by a single blow been cloven to the teeth, while his steel hauberk was all red with gore. Jaufry his visor raised, and touched him with his lance; but, seeing no life was there, exclaimed with grief:

“Heaven! shall I, then, never know whose hand hath slain these knights?”

Full of impatience he resumed his course; and when he far had ridden, lit upon another knight, whose body was so shattered with his hurts that blood and life were oozing fast away. Moved deeply at his cries and sad laments, Jaufry drew near, and kindly asked what hand had dealt such measure to himself and the two others slain, and which side was moreover in the wrong?

“Alas!” the wounded man made answer with a sigh, “I will explain to you the simple truth. It is Estout, the master of Verfeil, who has reduced us to the state you see, to feed his pride. This knight is known so quarrelsome and fierce, that without mercy and without a cause he doth assault all comers far and near.”

“Tell me,” said Jaufry, “was he wrong in this?”

“I will, my lord, with Heaven's help, and that without e'en lying by a word. I and my friends were going to our rest, when Estout to my castle-gates, hard by, rode up, and bade us high defiance. Had it been day, we should have tarried long ere venturing forth; for we did know him master of such skill, that few as yet could e'er make head against him,—so merciless beside, as never in his lifetime ever known to grant his foeman grace: seeing him not, the bridge was lowered, and at once was passed. He, having drawn us far upon the road,—the better for the treacherous ends he had,—suddenly stopped, and turning, with lance couched on him who pressed him nearest, stretched him dead upon the earth.

“By this time we had recognised Estout, and turned our horses' heads; but he with threatening words pursued us close, and reaching my companion, slew him with a blow. He then his rage concentrated on me, and with such fierceness, thinking my end come, I missed my aim, the lance just glancing from his shield; but he with one stroke bore me from my horse, and three times struck me as I helpless lay, so that, good faith, he little life hath left. This, my good lord, is how the thing hath happened.”

“Know you,” asked Jaufray, full of thought, “the road he took, and where he may be met?”

“My lord, I cannot tell; but little do I doubt that you will find him earlier than you wish. Haste, then, to fly such presence; for believe, you cannot gain thereby aught else but iron: an you take my advice, you'll change your route.”

“Change my route, say ye?” quoth Sir Jaufray; “no, by my troth; nay more, I will but follow him the closer up; and, should I catch this lord, we part not, he may rest assured, without a struggle; and without learning, too, which of us twain doth bear the stouter heart, the stronger arm, or wield the better sword.”

He took his leave, with these words, of the knight; the latter prayed him to pass by his keep and send him aid from thence.

“I will not fail,” said Jaufray.

Towards the manor of the dying man he took his way, and after some brief space he saw high towers and two squires well armed, who mounted guard before a raised drawbridge.

“Friends,” he exclaimed to them, “God save you both!”

“And you, my lord, from every harm,” they said.

“I have sad message for you,” added Jaufray, “and bad news. Your lord is lying yonder sorely hurt; and his two comrades are both slain. Estout de Verfeil has misused them thus. So hasten to your lord, who wants your help.”

He then commended them to God, and parted in all haste. Jaufray resumed his way, now trotting hard and now at ambling pace, until he reached a valley deep and dark. There he beheld the blaze of a great fire, round which were met a numerous company. Trusting he might get tidings there of Estout and of Taulat,—for truly counted he on fighting both,—he straightway rode to where the fire was, and found there figures that awaked surprise. Lords in rich vestments roasted a wild-boar; meanwhile, by dwarfs, stunted and out of shape, the spit was turned.

“Good sirs,” said Jaufray civilly, “could I but learn from some of you where I may meet a lord I have followed this night through?”

“Friend,” exclaimed one in answer, “it may be we can tell you when we know his name.”

“I seek,” said Jaufray, “Estout de Verfeil, and Taulat called the Lord of Rugimon.”

“Friend,” said the knight with courtesy, “from hence depart, and that with greatest speed; for should Estout but chance to meet you here thus armed, I would not give a denier for your life. He is so valiant and so stout of limb, that never yet hath he encountered foe who could make head against him. All these you see around are knights of proof, and can meet sturdy blows; natheless he hath subdued us all, and we are forced to follow him on foot wherever choice or venture leads him on. We're now engaged preparing him his food; so I advise you to depart at once.”

“Not so, indeed,” said Jaufray; “I came not here to flee. Before I turn my face, my shield shall be destroyed, my hauberk riven, and my arm so bruised it cannot wield a blade.”

Whilst thus they held discourse, behold Estout arrived full spur, and, at the sight of Jaufray, cried aloud: “Who art thou, vassal, who thus dar'st to come and meddle with my men?”

“And who are you,” said Jaufray in reply, “who use such pleasant words?”

“Thou shalt know that anon.”

“Are you Estout?”

“I am, indeed.”

“Full long have I been seeking you throughout this weary night, without e'er stopping in my course or closing eye.”

“And for what end hast thou thus sought me out?”

“For that I wish to know why thou hast slain the three knights on the road;

which act I take to be a sin and wrong.”

“And is it for this that thou art hither come? Thou wouldst have better done to stay behind, for to thy ruin do I meet thee here; thou shalt this instant lose that head of thine, or follow me on foot like yonder knights who patter humbly at my horse's heels. Deliver, therefore, up to me thy shield, thy breastplate, and thy sword, and the bay horse that brought thy body here.”

“My care shall be to guard them with my life,” quoth Jaufrý. “’Twas the good king bestowed this courser on me when he armed me knight. As to the shield, thou shalt not have it whole; nor e'en the hauberk, without rent or stain. Thou tak'st me for a child, whom thy poor threats can frighten: the shield, the hauberk, and the horse, are not yet thine; but if they please thee, try a bout to win them. As to thy threats, I scorn them: 'threats,' saith the proverb, 'often cover fear.'”

Estout drew off his horse at these bold words, and Jaufrý nerved him to sustain the shock; then ran they at each other with their utmost speed. Estout struck Jaufrý on the shield's bright boss, and with such mighty strength, that through the riven metal went the lance, breaking the mail which guarded his broad chest, and grazing e'en the skin. Jaufrý meanwhile had struck his foe in turn, and with so just an aim, he lost at once his stirrups and his seat, and rolled halfstunned upon the ground.

He rose again full quickly, pale with rage, and came with upraised sword towards Jaufrý. The latter, wishing his good horse to spare, at once leapt on the sod and raised his shield. 'Twas just in time: Estout, in his fierce rage, brandished his sword with both his hands, and made it thunder down with such effect the shield was cloven to the arm.

“St. Peter!” murmured Jaufrý, “thou dost covet this poor shield; still, if naught stay me, it shall cost thee dear.”

Suiting to such words the act, upon Estout's bright casque he then let fly so fierce a downward stroke, that fire issued therefrom. But the good helm of proof was not a whit the worse. With gathering fury Estout came again, and with one stroke pared from Sir Jaufrý's shield the double rim, full half a palm of mail, and the left spur, which was cut through as the blade reached the ground.

Wondering at the vigour of his dreadful foe, Jaufrý, on his side, struck a second time his burnished helm; and with such force, his sword in twain was broken, yet left it not upon the trusty steel even the slightest dent.

“Heaven!” thought Jaufrý, “what doth this portend? confounded be the hand that helmet wrought, whereon my blade hath spent itself in vain!”

Then Estout, uttering a fearful cry as he beheld Sir Jaufrý's sword in two, flew

straight towards him, and in his turn struck the son of Dovon on the helm, smashing the visor as the blow came down. Had he not raised in time the remnant of his shield, which that fell stroke for aye destroyed, the combat had been done.



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“Knight,” said Sir Jaufray, “thou dost press me sore; and I, good sooth, must be indeed bewitched; strike as I will upon that helm of thine, I cannot crack its shell.”

As thus he spoke, he launched a desperate blow with what was left him of his blade; which, falling on the casque of his stout foe like hammer on an anvil, for the time deprived him both of sight and sound. With dizzy eye and tottering step, Estout, thinking to strike at Jaufray, whom he would have cloven to the heel had he received the blow, let fall his sword with such unbounded rage, it struck into the ground, and buried half its blade. Before he could withdraw it, the young knight, casting aside the battered shield and broken sword, seized with both arms Estout about the waist, and that with such good-will, his very ribs were heard to crack within. To cast him to the ground, undo his helm, and seize his sword to strike off his foe's head, were but an instant's work.

Estout, who moved not, cried with feeble voice:

“Mercy, good knight! O, slay me not, but take of me such ransom as thou wilt; I own that thou hast vanquished me.”

“Thou shalt have mercy,” Jaufray then replied, “an thou do'st that which I shall now command.”

“It shall be done most willingly, my lord; thou canst not ask a thing I will not do.”

“In the first place,” said Jaufray, “thou shalt go and yield thyself a captive to King Arthur, with all these knights, to whom thou must restore what thou hast ta'en from them; and thou shalt then relate to that good king how I have thus o'ercome thee in the fight.”

“I will do so full willingly, by Heaven!” Estout replied.

“And now,” said Jaufray, “give to me thine arms; for mine have been all hacked and hewed by thee.”

“Agreed, my lord. Give me your hand: the bargain shall be kept; and well can I aver, without a lie, that ne'er did knight boast armour such as mine. Many's the blow may fall upon this helm, yet never pass it through; no lance can dim this shield or pierce this mail; and for this sword, so hard is it of temper, iron nor bronze nor steel resists its edge.”

Jaufry then donned these valuable arms; and whilst he buckled on the shining helm and burnished shield and girded the good sword, the captives of Estout came up to do him homage. They were two score in number, all of price and lofty lineage, who addressed him, 'mid warm smiles of joy:

“Fair lord, what answer will ye that we make when good King Arthur asks the name of him who sets us free?”

“You will reply that Jaufry is his name,—Jaufry the son of Dovon.”

This said, he ordered that his horse be led; for still he burned to overtake Taulat. And though Estout and all the knights pressed him awhile to tarry, yet he stayed neither to eat nor take the least repose: from squires' hands receiving shield and lance, he took his leave, and wandered on his way.

The day came on both clear and beautiful; a bright sun rose on fields humect with dew; charmed with the spring-tide and the matin hour, the birds sang merrily beneath the verdant shade and conned their latin notes. * Jaufry, natheless, went straight upon his road, still bent on finding Taulat; for to him nor peace nor rest nor pleasure can e'er come till that proud lord be met.

* E l'jom e clars e bel gentz
E l'solelz leva respondents
Lo matin que span la rosada,
E l's auzels per la matinada
E per lo temps qn'es en dousor,
Chantan desobre la verdor
E s'alegron en or latin....



CHAPTER III. THE DWARF AND THE LANCE.

After Sir Jaufray had rode on his way, Estout his promise kept, and to each knight restored both horse and arms. That evening he set out for Arthur's court, which he resolved to reach before the jousts and games and banquetings were o'er. Eight days had they been holden in those halls when he arrived there with his company. 'Twas after dinner, as the king was seated with his lords, lending an ear to minstrels' tales and the discourse of knights, who told of acts of lofty prowess done, that Estout came with that armed troop of knights. Having alighted at the palace-gates, they soon were led before the worthy king; when, kneeling at his feet, Estout expressed himself in terms like these:

"Sure, may that high King who made and fashioned all things, He, the Lord of every sovereign, who hath nor peer nor mate, now save us in your company!"

"Friend," the king replied, "God save you, and your friends beside! Who are ye, and what come ye here to seek?"

"My lord, I will recount you the whole truth: from Jaufray, son of Dovon, come we, to proclaim ourselves your captives, and submit to your just law. Sir Jaufray hath delivered all these knights, whom I had captured one by one, and who were bound to follow me on foot,—for they had mercy only on such terms; now he hath conquered me by force of arms."

"And when thou last beheldst him," asked the king, "by that true faith thou ow'st to gracious Heaven, say, was he well in health?"

"Yea, sire, by the troth I owe to you, believe, that eight days since, arise to-morrow's sun, I left him sound, robust, and full of fire. He would not even tarry to break bread; for he declared no food should pass his lips, no joy, no pleasure, no repose be his, until the knight named Taulat he had found. He now is on his track; and I engage, that if he meet him, and a chance do get to measure sword with sword, it will be strange an he not force him to cry grace; for I do not believe the world doth own a braver knight, or one more strong in arms. I speak from proof, who dearly know his force."

"O Heaven, in which I trust," cried Arthur, as he clasped his hands, "grant me my prayer, that Jaufray fry safe and sound may back return! Already is he known a doughty knight, and noble are the gifts he hither sends."

Leave we now bold Estout to tell his tale, and turn we to our knight. I have

related how Sir Jaufray still went on seeking his foe by valley and by mount; yet neither spied nor heard he living man to give him tidings. He rode on thus, nor met he man or beast till the high noon was passed. The sun had now become intensely hot, and hardly could he bear its burning ray; still, neither sun, nor hunger, thirst, nor aught beside, could cow his spirit. Determined not to stop upon his road till he had Taulat met, he still progressed, though ne'er a soul was seen.

As he pressed hotly on, some hours' riding found the youthful knight close by a gentle hill shaded by one of nature's finest trees. Pendent there hung from an outstretching bough a fair white lance of ash with point of burnished steel. Thinking a knight perchance was resting near, Jaufray in that direction turned his horse, and galloped towards the spot. When he had reached the bottom of the hill, he nimbly leapt him down, and walked to the high tree; but, to his great surprise, no soul was there, naught save the lance suspended to the bough. With wonder then—asking of himself why arm so stout and good, the point of which like virgin silver shone, should there be placed—he took it down, and his own resting gainst the mossy trunk, handled and brandished this new dainty lance, which he discovered to be good as fair.

“Good faith,” quoth he, “I will e'en keep this arm, and leave mine own behind.”

Whilst making this exchange, a dwarf of frightful shape suddenly rushed from out a neighbouring grove. Stunted and broad and fat, he had a monstrous head, from which straight hair streamed down and crossed his back; long eyebrows hid his eyes; his nose was large and shapeless; nostrils so immense they would have held your fists; and thick and bluish lips rested on large and crooked fangs; a stiff moustache surrounded this huge mouth; and to his very girdle flowed his beard; he measured scarce a foot from waist to heel; his head was sunken in his shoulders high; and his arms seemed so short, that useless would have been the attempt to bind them at his back. As to his hands, they were like paws of toads, so broad and webbed.

“Knight,” cried this monster, “woe befalls the man who meddles with that lance! Thou wilt receive thy dues, and dangle on our tree; come, then, give up thy shield.”

Sir Jaufray eyed the dwarf, and angrily replied:

“What mean you by such tale, misshapen wretch?” At this the dwarf set up so loud a cry that all the vale resounded; and at once a knight well armed, mounted upon a steed in iron cased, came, with high threats upon his lips exclaiming:

“Woe to the man who hath dared touch the lance!”

Having the hill attained, he Jaufry saw; and thereupon he said:

“By Heaven, sir knight! to do what thou hast done is proof thou carest little for thy life.”

“And why so, lord?” Sir Jaufry calmly asked.

“Thou shalt soon learn. No man doth touch that lance and get him hence without a fight with me. If I unhorse the knight so bold as dare to touch it, and conquer him by arms, no ransom saves his life,—I hang him by the neck; and on my gallows which thou seest from here full three-and-thirty dangle in mid air.”

“Tell me now faithfully,” Sir Jaufry said,—“can he who sues for mercy gain it at thy hands?”

“Yea, but on one condition I have firmly fixed; which is, that never in his life he cross a horse; ne'er cut his hair or pare his nails; ne'er eat of wheaten bread, or taste of wine; and never on his back wear other dress than what his hands have woven. Should he such terms accept before the fight, he may perchance find grace; but naught can save the man who once hath fought.”

“And if he know not how to weave such dress?” asked Jaufry.

“The art to weave, to shape the doth, and sew, must then be learned,” the knight replied. “Say, then, if thou consent; or if thou choose this hour to be thy last.”

“I'll not do so,” quoth Jaufry; “for too hard the labour seems.”

“Thou'lt do it well before five years are fled; for thou art tall and strong.”

“No, by my troth, I'd rather chance the fight, since 'twould appear I've no alternative.”

“Take my defiance, then!” cried out the knight; “and bear in mind, the combat 's to the death.”

“So be it!” said Sir Jaufry; “I'll defend myself.”

They drew apart some space with such-like words, each thinking on his side a victim soon would fall. Then the knight came and thundered at his foe. In shivers flew the lance; but Jaufry bore the shock unmoved. Not so the knight; for Jaufry, his weapon planting at his shield, broke it right through; the hauberk too beside, and wood and iron, for a cubit's length, pierced through the shoulder.



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He fell: Jaufry with naked blade was by his side; but as he saw him thus, so poorly sped,—

“Knight,” he exclaimed, “methinks thy hanging-trade is done.”

“Lord,” cried the wounded man, “unhappily 'tis true. Thou hast too well performed thy work for safety henceforth to be banished hence.”

“I will not trust to that,” quoth Jaufry; “or at least, it shan't prevent my hanging thee.”

“In Heaven's name, my lord, I crave thy grace!”

“And by what claim canst thou obtain it, thou who never yet hast granted it to man? Thou shalt find pity, such as those yonder found who once begged grace of thee.”

“If, good my lord, my head have erred, my heart been black and habits villanous, guard thee from following in my steps. I ask for mercy—that should I receive. Wilt thou, a man of lofty virtue, choose that ever the reproach should come to thee of hanging up a brave and courteous knight, such as I once did bear the title of?”

“Thou liest in thy throat,” Sir Jaufry said; “never couldst thou be prized a proper knight, but rather, I believe, an arrant knave. Who doth a villain's act doth forfeit rank and chivalry alike. In vain thy suit; no pardon shalt thou find.”

Undoing his steel helmet as he spoke, he seized a rope and placed it round his neck; then, dragging him beneath the dismal tree, he well and fairly hung him up thereto.

“Good friend,” he then apostrophised the knight, “the passage now may be considered safe, and travellers need fear little more from thee.”

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Leaving him hanging upon such adieu, he rode towards the dwarf, as with

intent to kill. But when the latter saw him thus return, crossing his arms full quickly on his breast,—

“Fair sir,” he cried, “I yield to you and Heaven; but grant me, pray, your pity. Of myself no evil have I done; since, had I disobeyed the knight, I should have lost my life. Maugre myself, for fourteen years I’ve watched this lance, which twice a-day I burnished. Woe had betided me if I had bilked such task, or failed by signal to advise my lord when it was touched by knight. This, fair my lord, hath been my only crime.”

“Thou mayst have mercy,” Jaufry said, “an thou dost that which I shall now command.”

“Speak, good my lord; and God confound me if I lose a word!”

“Rise, then, and hie thee to King Arthur's court. Tell to that king the son of Dovon sends thee, and presents this lance which he hath won, the fairest weapon eye hath e'er beheld. Recount to him beside thy lord's ill-deeds, how that so many worthy knights he'd hung, and how in his turn like meed was given unto him.”

“My lord,” exclaimed the dwarf, “all this I promise you.”

And Jaufry made reply, “Well then, begone!”

It was one Monday eve that this fell out, just at the setting sun. The night came shortly on serene and fair, and the full moon shone out as bright as day. Jaufry pursued his road,—for naught could change his purpose,—and the dwarf prepared to execute his trust. At peep of morn he started for Carlisle, where, after certain time, he safely came. The king was breaking up his court, which for two weeks he there had held, and knights and barons all were going their way content and glad, bearing rich guerdons from their noble lord, when curiosity their steps detained at sight of a strange dwarf, who in his hand a handsome lance did hold. This dwarf pushed forward to the palace-hall, where each with eager eye observed his shape; for never till that day had they beheld such wondrous man; but he, passing the gaping crowd without remark, straight to the monarch's throne his steps pursued; and there he said:

“May God, most noble sire, grant you weal! Albeit my form is strange, yet, please you, hear, for I do come a messenger from far.”

“Dwarf,” said the king, “God save thee too! for thou methinks art honest. Speak without fear, and do thy message featly.”

The dwarf preluded with a sigh, and thus began:

“Sire, from Dovon's son I bear to you this lance, which has been cause of

mourning dire and great. Proud of his valour and his strength, a knight had hung it to a tree upon a hill, where I have watched it, burnished it beside twice every day, for fourteen weary years. If a knight touched it, I by my cry aroused my lord, who then, all armed, would rush upon the stranger; being vanquished, he was quickly seized and by the neck incontinently hung. 'Twas thus that three-and-thirty met their fate; when that the knight, whose messenger I am, conquered this lord and won the lance, hanging in turn its owner for his deeds. This is the lance that now he sends to you; and here am I, your vassal and your slave."

"'Tis well," the king replied; "but, dwarf, now give me, on thy faith, some news of brave Sir Jaufray: without a lie, say when thou saw'st him last."

"'Twas Monday evening, please you, my good lord; I left him when the fray was o'er and he had finished hanging up the knight."

"And was his health then good?"

"Yea, sire, with God's help, and well disposed and gay."

"Good Lord divine and full of glory," cried the king with clasped hands, "grant of your grace that I behold him safe; for scant my pleasure and my joys will be till I have held him in these arms again!"



CHAPTER IV. THE YEOMAN.

We now return to Jaufrý, who still wanders on, resolving not to stay for food or sleep before he meets with Taulat; for in his ears incessantly do ring the biting words of Quex: "*Your courage will be higher when you're drunk,*"—and he yet trusts to prove that lord did lie by beating Taulat fasting. Onward he therefore pricked till midnight hour, when he attained a narrow and dark gorge shut in on either side by mountains high. No other passage was there but this one. Sir Jaufrý gave his horse the spur; when, at the very mouth of the defile, before him stood a yeoman, active, of stout build and large of limb, who held within his grasp three pointed darts that were as razors sharp. A large knife pended from his girdle, which enclosed an outer garment of good form and fashion.

"Halt, knight," he cried; "I'll have a word with thee."

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Jaufrý drew rein, and said:

"And what's thy quest, good friend?"

"Thou must give up thy horse and knightly arms; for upon such condition only mayst thou pass."

"Indeed," quoth Jaufrý; "dost thou mean to say an armed and mounted knight must not pass through this strait?"

"He might do so, but for the toll I've levied."

"To the foul fiend such toll! Never will I give up my horse or arms, till strength's denied me to defend them both."

"An that thou yield'st them not with gentle grace," the yeoman said, "I must use force to take them."

"And wherefore so? what harm have I e'er wrought thee?"

"Dost thou not wish to pass this gorge, and bilk the toll that's due save I use

force to get it?"

"And what's the force thou'lt use?"

"That thou shalt briefly see; meantime I bid thee 'ware my hand!"

"I will do so," quoth Jaufray.

The yeoman now prepared himself for fight, and seized his dart as though in act to strike; but Jaufray, fearing for his horse, awaited not the blow, but gal-loped off amain. As o'er the road he sped, the man let fly the missile with just aim; it hit the shield, and that with force so great, red fire and flame forth issued at the stroke, which did not pierce it through. The sharpened point curled upwards on the steel, and the wood flew in shivers.

Sir Jaufray turned his steed at once and bore down on his foe, counting full surely that the fight was done; but, lo, at that instant he had leapt aside, and in the act discharged a second dart, which lighted on his helm; so fierce the stroke, the casque seemed all on fire; yet it resisted, though its lord was stunned.

The yeoman, seeing his second blow had failed, was as a man possessed; so dread his rage as neither to have hurt the knight or broken his bright arms. Jaufray, whose senses had now back returned, thought only of his horse, which he rode here and there to guard it from the blow of the third dart. Not this, however, was his foe's intent, for he still thought to take the beast alive; like lightning swift he came, and whirling round the dart, launched the fell weapon with these haughty words:

"By Heaven, slave, thou now shalt leave the horse, nor shall thy hauberk, helm, or shield protect thyself!" Jaufray wheeled round his horse at this stem threat; and as the dart came hissing to its prey, he deftly bowed him down; it harmed him not, but striking on his mail, tore from the goodly arms a palm away, then bounded out of view.

"And now," cried Jaufray, the third dart being flung, "my lance's point shall give me my revenge." With lowered lance he flew towards the man, trusting this time to pierce him through and through; but he was nimble as a roe or deer, and leapt from place to place to such effect, that Jaufray missed his aim; and as he passed, the yeoman seized a rock and hurled it at the knight, who, but for his shield, must fain have bit the ground. The mass in atoms flew; but such the force with which the blow was struck, it battered-in the shield. Jaufray, enraged at following such a foe, now doubly maddened at this fresh attack, in wrath exclaimed:

"God, thou all-glorious King! how shall I meet this fiend? The world I'll hold not at a denier's price till he doth sue for grace!"

Then wielding his long lance,—

“This time,” he loudly to the yeoman cried, “or thou or I shall fall.”

The yeoman from his girdle plucked his knife, and made reply:

“Ere that thou leave this spot thou'lt pay the toll!”

“Ay, that will I,” quoth Jaufray, “take my promise on't; before we part, thou shalt have toll enough!”

He once again renewed a brisk attack, but still the other dodged; and ere that Jaufray could draw-in the rein, with mighty spring upon the horse he leapt and round Sir Jaufray's body twined his arms.

“Stir not, sir knight,” he cried, “unless thou wish for death.”

When Jaufray felt himself thus rudely seized, his mind was in a maze, and for a time incapable of thought. The yeoman held him with such strait embrace he could not stir a limb, while in his ear he hissed his future fate: how that a prison should his body hold, where tortures, griefs, unheard-of pains, should vex him evermore. Till break of day his arms were round him clasped; but when the stars were gone, then Jaufray communed with himself and said:

“Better to die for God, who made this earth, than let my body be a dungeon's prey. We'll see what can be done.”

Reflecting thus, he let his lance drop down, and as the yeoman's right arm pressed him most with energy he clutched it in his grasp; so vigorous the attack, so nerved his strength, he forced the hand to loose the gleaming knife: then, when he saw the arm was paralysed and drooped inertly down, he fixed with both hands on the yeoman's left, which he then twisted till he caused such pain, its owner reeled in groaning to the ground. Dismounting from his horse, Jaufray drew near his foe, who lay quite motionless crying for mercy in his agony.

“By Heaven! which I adore,” quoth Jaufray, “ne'er will I pity show to wretch like thee.”

And at the words he cut off both his feet.

“I prithee, now,” he said, “run not, nor leap, nor battle more with knights. Take to another trade; for far too long hath this one been thy choice.”

He gathered up his lance and shield, and, mounting on his horse, prepared him quietly to go his way.

'Twas on a Tuesday, early in the morn, that Jaufray held this speech; but as he turned him from his footless foe,—

“I have not yet inquired,” he observed, “if thou perchance hold'st knights

within thy walls?"

"My lord," the man replied, "full five-and-twenty are there held in chains beyond the mount where stands my dwelling-place."

"O, O!" said Jaufry, "these I must set free; it likes me not that thou shouldst guard such prize." Without delay he hied him to the house, whose massive portals were thrown open wide; and to a dwarf who stood before the gates he cried:

"Where lie the imprison'd knights?"

Replied the dwarf:

"Methinks you're all too rash to venture here. 'Tis more indeed than rashness, —downright folly. You wake my pity; therefore take advice, and get you gone before my lord returns, save that you covet an inglorious death, or torments even worse."

Jaufry with smiles replied:

"Nay, friend, I want the knights; quickly lead on, that I may break their chains."

"An I mistake not, you will join their ranks ere you deliver them; and I must hold you as a fool distraught, not to have hied you hence; for should my lord chance meet you by the way, deeply you'll grieve that e'er you ventured here."

"Thy lord will ne'er return; I have deprived him of his nimble feet, and near his end he lies. The knights shall now be free, and thou, my prisoner, their place shalt take, save that thou goest where my bidding sends; then peradventure brief shall be thy thrall."

"Sir knight," the dwarf replied, "since, then, my lord is thus so poorly sped, I, by my faith, will follow your commands, and from great pain will draw those suffering knights, whose language is but moans; this featly will I do, who by constraint and fear was here detained. Truly, to God and you we should give thanks, and joyfully obey what you ordain."

"First, then," said Jaufry, "lead me to the knights."

The dwarf most gladly acted as his guide; and pacing on before, conveyed him to a hall where five-and-twenty knights were rudely chained, as each by turns had been the yeoman's prey. Jaufry on entering made them a salute, to which not one replied; nay, they began to weep, and mutter in their teeth:

"Accurs'd the day that yeoman was e'er born, who thus hath overcome so good a knight!"

But Jaufry, as he gaily drew him nigh:

“Why weep, fair knights?” he said, with courtesy. “Go, madman, go,” did one of them reply; “for sure thy senses must have left thee quite, to ask us why we weep, when walls like these rise up on ev'ry side. There is not one of us who doth not grieve to see the yeoman's prisoner in thee. Unhappy was the day that saw thy birth. In person thou art tall and fair to view, yet soon like ours will torments be thy lot.” Quoth Jaufry, “Great is God; easy to Him can your deliverance be. Through Him my sword hath 'venged you on your foe, and now the yeoman lies deprived of feet. If, then, you see me in this weary spot, 'tis but to break your chains.”

Scarce had the words escaped from out his mouth, when loudly did they call:

“Happy the day which dawned upon thy birth; for thou hast saved us all, and swept our pain and martyrdom away!”

Then Jaufry bade the dwarf set free the knights; the manikin obeyed, and with a hammer broke in bits their chains. They all arose, and bowed their heads in token of submission, whilst they said:

“Lord, we are thy serfs; do with us as thou please, be it for good or evil, as is fit.”

“Good knights,” Sir Jaufry said, “whate'er of evil may henceforth betide you, none shall come from me. All that I ask of you is simply this, that ye betake you to King Arthur's court, and tell him all you know.”

“My lord,” they all exclaimed, “full willingly shall thy behest be done; but to the service rendered, add one more by telling us thy name.”

“Barons,” said Jaufry then, “tell him the son of Dovon burst your chains. Now quickly set ye out; and, mark, my friendship ne'er shall be bestowed, if that ye fail to tell the king each word.”

The dwarf meanwhile had gone to seek the arms and fetch the steeds to furnish forth the knights. Each donned his hauberk, mounted his good horse, and then with Jaufry parted from that spot. He led them to the great highway, and in their company rode full a league. In passing by, he pointed to the place where, cold and motionless, the yeoman lay: they stayed an instant to observe their foe, then went upon their road. A little further Jaufry got him down, and tightened more his goodly charger's girths; then, his impatience to fall in with Taulat reviving in full force:

“God speed you, sirs,” he said; “I can delay no more; already have I wasted too much time.”

“My lord,” replied the knights, as they presented him his shield and lance,

“accept again our thanks: where'er we be, the service thou hast done in this great fight shall widely be proclaimed.”

When that the band had watched him out of sight, they went their way until they reached Carlisle. They found King Arthur in his flowery mead with five-and-twenty of his primest knights. There, kneeling at his feet, one of the troop was spokesman for the rest; and thus he fearlessly and sagely said:

“Sire, so please it the true God, who knoweth all that every creature doth, give you good luck, and guard from pain and ill the greatest king this world doth now contain!”

“Friend,” the good king replied, “God and St. Mary keep thee and thy mates! Speak without fear, and tell me what thou wilt.”

“Sire, we come to yield ourselves to thee, from Jaufray, Dovon's son; he hath delivered us from durance vile.”

“Good sir, give me at once your tidings. Is't long since you and he have parted company?”

“We left him, sire, on Tuesday morning last, both safe and sound, ardent and full of strength, tracking a lord with whom he seeks to fight, and to avenge thy cause.”

“O Lord, thou glorious Sire,” said the king, with joined hands, “grant I may Jaufray see unchecked, unscathed; for, an I hold him not within six months, I'll prize my fortunes as of nothing worth!”

Whilst that the dwarf in turn begins his speech, to tell the king how this adventure happed, we will go back to follow Jaufray's steps, who still, unwearied, presses stoutly on.



CHAPTER V. THE CASTLE OF THE LEPER.

The knight had rode for great part of the day beneath the rays of a most burning sun, and horse and rider both alike fatigued, when he beheld a young and handsome squire running towards him at his greatest speed. Rent was his garment even to his waist; and on he came, with madness in his looks, tearing by handfuls his fair curling hair.

Scarce did he make out Jaufry from afar when he exclaimed:

“Fly, fly, brave knight, fly quickly from this spot, an that thou choosest not to lose thy life!”

“And wherefore so, fair friend?” asked Dovon's son.

“Fly, for the love of God, say I; nor lose thou further time.”

“Art thou, then, shorn of sense,” exclaimed the knight, “such counsel to propose, when I behold no foe?”

“Ah!” cried the squire then, “he comes; he's there; nor think I in a year to cure the fright that he hath caused me! He hath slain my lord,—a knight of price, who was conducting to his castle-home his lady-wife, a Norman count's most noble daughter. This wretch hath seized the bride; and to myself has caused such dire fear, that ev'ry limb still trembles at the shock.”

“And is't because *thou* fearest,” asked Sir Jaufry, red with rage, “thou counsell'st flight to *me*? By holy faith, I hold thee fool, and worse.”

As he spoke thus, a leper came in sight, who sped along, a child within his arms. Its wretched mother, with dishevelled hair, followed with piercing cries. When she beheld the knight, she knelt down at his feet, and in a tone of agony exclaimed:

“Mercy, my lord; O, mercy! For the love of Heaven, grant me help, and get me back the child yon leper bears.”

“Woman,” responded Jaufry, “wherefore takes he it?”

“My lord, because it is his wicked will.”

“Had he no other cause?”

“No, by your glorious sire!”

“Since it is thus,” quoth Jaufry, “he is wrong; and I will try to win it back for you.”

He spurred at once his horse, she following; and cried aloud, with all the strength he had:

“Halt, leprous, wicked wretch! and bring thou back the child!”

The leper turned his head and raised his hand, making the mark of scorn; which so enraged the knight, he swore the insult deeply to avenge. The hideous leper answered with a laugh; for he had reached the threshold of his door. He darted in for refuge, followed full speed by Jaufry; who, dismounting from his horse, which with his lance he left to the poor dame, dashed through the castle-gate with sword in hand and shield upon his arm.

As he was traversing the castle through, which he found vast and sumptuous to the view, he came into a hall where a huge leper, frightful to behold, had cast upon a couch a damsel in first youth, whose beauty in that age could scarce be matched. Her cheek was fresher than an opening rose at break of day, and her torn vesture half-betrayed a bosom snowy white. Her eyes were bathed in tears; her words, despair, and sobs, moved Jaufry's soul: but when the leper rose and seized his club, such feelings changed to horror and surprise.

He was in height more tall than knightly lance, and at the shoulders was two fathoms broad: his arms and hands were huge, his fingers crookt and full of knots, his cheeks were spread with pustules and with scales; a broken pupil, eyes without lids but with vermilion edged, blue lips, and yellow teeth, made up the portrait of this monster dread. Fiercer than living coal he flew on Jaufry, bidding him straight to yield.

“No, certes,” the knight replied.

“Say, who in evil hour sent thee here?”

“No one.”

“And pray what seekest thou?”

“A child, that from its mother hath been torn by lep'rous hands, which must give up their prey.”

“Vain fool, 'tis *I* forbid,—I, by whose mace thy fate shall now be sealed; better for thee thou hadst not risen the morn, since thou shalt now for ever lay thee down.”

His club he raised in uttering these words, and on the shield of Jaufry then let fall so fierce a blow, the knight went reeling to the ground. Again that club was raised; but Jaufry rose and fled. Certes he had cause to flee the stroke he saw impending; for that huge mass of iron as it fell made the vast hall to tremble. Then Jaufry, with a bound, before the leper stood, and with firm hand dealt him

in turn a blow which took a palm from off his raiment and the flesh behind. Seeing his blood, which fast began to stream, the giant uttered first a fearful cry, then ran at Jaufrý, raising his knotted club with both his hands.

Scarce could the youthful knight evade the stroke and leap behind a column; the monster struck it with such dire strength, the massive iron crushed the marble plinth, and all the castle groaned.

Meanwhile the damsel fervently prayed Heaven, as humbly on the blood-stained stones she knelt:

“O, mighty Lord, who in Thy image didst great Adam make; Thou who hast done so much to save us all,—now save me from this wretch, and let yon knight withdraw me from his hands!”

Her orison scarce o'er, Jaufrý stepped out, and ere the giant could again his heavy club let fall, he with his trenchant blade had severed his right arm. Being thus lopped, the monster in his wrath and agony so loudly groaned, the palace trembled to its very base and shook the outer air. In vain did Jaufrý dodge his falling mace, it struck him to the ground; so that from nostrils, eyes, and mouth, the purple stream burst forth. The mace, in falling on the marble flags, now brake in twain, which Jaufrý seeing, he uprose in haste, and newly struck the leper; at the knee-joint he aimed; the monster reeled, then fell like some great tree.

Prone as the leper lay, Jaufrý ran up, his sword in air, and said:

“Methinks that peace will soon be made 'twixt you and me.”

Then letting fall his sword with both his hands, he clove the monster's head e'en to the teeth. In the convulsions of his agony still fiercely strove the wretch, and with his foot hurled him so madly 'gainst the distant wall, Sir Jaufrý fell deprived of sound and sight. His trembling hand no longer clutched his sword; like ruby wine, from nostrils and from mouth burst forth his blood, and motion made he none.*

* E l'mezel a si repennat,
Que tal cop l'a del pe donat,

For an instant's space the damsel thought her champion was gone. In grief she hastened to undo the straps which bound his polished casque. The freshness drawing from his breast a sigh, she ran for water, and his face she bathed. His senses half-re-turned, he staggered up, and thinking still to hold his trusty blade, he struck the damsel,—deeming her the foe,—to such effect that both rolled on the ground. Like madman then he sped around the hall, and ran behind a column, where he crouched and trembled 'neath his shield.

'Twas there the damsel came; and in a voice of dulcet tone, she said:

“Brave knight, come, ope again those manly eyes, and see who 'tis that speaks. Forget ye what is due to chivalry, of which you are a lord? your courage and your fame? Recall yourself, and lower that bright shield; behold, the leper's dead!”

C'a ana part, lo fas anar
E si ab la paret urtar
Que l'auzer li tolç e l'vezer
Et anet à terra cazer
E l'sanc tot yin clar e vermeil
I eis per lo nas e la bocha.....

Ms. fol. 28 verso, verse 2461.

Jaufry recovered at this heart'ning speech, and finding his head bare,—

“Damsel,” he asked, “who hath removed my casque, and taken my good sword?”

“Myself, good lord, whilst you were in a swoon.”

“The giant, what doth he?”

“Bathed in his blood and at your feet he lies.” Jaufry looked up, and when the corpse he saw thus shattered and quite still, he slowly rose, and sat him on a bench until his senses were again restored; then, when the dizziness had fled his brain, he thought upon the mother and the child, and straightway ran from hall to hall to search the infant out. But though he sought and ran and called aloud, neither the leper nor the child appeared.

“I will yet search and search,” he then exclaimed; “or here or out the door they must be found; for I'll not hold me at a denier's worth till to the mother her poor child's restored, and I've had vengeance for that leper's scorn.”

With such resolve, he strode towards the door; but though the portal was thrown open wide, he could not pass it through. Spite of his will, his efforts, and his strength, his feet seemed stopped before an unseen bar.

“Good Heaven,” he said, “what! am I then entranced?”

He drew him back, and gathering for a spring, with wond'rous force he bounded to the door. Still all was vain, he could not cross the sill. Again and yet again he tried, till deep discouragement iced o'er his heart. Then tears broke from his eyes, and murmuring:

“Alas, good Lord,” he said, “Thou gav'st me strength to kill yon wicked wretch; what boots it, if I here must captive be?”

'Twas as he thus bemoaned his adverse fate, there broke upon his ear from some nigh place a sound of infant tongues, which sadly cried:

“Save us, O, save us, mighty lord!”

Swift at the sound he roused his spirit up, and running, found at one end of a hall a close-shut door fast bolted from within. Jaufray called out, and struck it with great noise; yet answer none was made: enraged at this, he burst it in with force, and with his naked blade entered a gloomy vault. There was the leper found, with knife in hand, who seven infants had just put to death. Some thirty more there still remained alive, whose bitter cries went through the softened soul.

Touched at the frightful sight, Jaufray struck down the wretch, who called his master's help; and then in wrath exclaimed:

“Thy master, villain, can no answer make; his soul this earth hath fled: and thou, for erstwhile making mock of me, shalt now thy meed receive.”

Raising meanwhile his arm, the leper's hand he severed at a blow. The wretch upon the blood-stained pavement rolled; then crawling to his feet, he humbly cried:

“Mercy, good knight; in God's name, pity me, and take not quite my life! 'Twas by constraint and force I killed these babes. My lord, who sought to cure his leprosy, bade me, with awful threats, each day prepare a bath of human blood.”

“Thy life I'll grant,” quoth Jaufray to him then, “an that thou give me means to leave this place.”

“I can,” the leper said; “but had you now deprived me of my life, not knowing of the spell, a hundred thousand years had rolled their course, and yet not seen you free.”

“Haste thee, then, now,” quoth Jaufray, eagerly. “Sir knight,” the man with shining face replied, “you still have much to bear. Such is the fashion of this castle's spell, my lord alone could power grant to such as hither came to cross the threshold; but never did they pass it in return save dead or maimed.”

“How, then, wilt thou succeed?” said Jaufray.

“Spy you, on top of yonder casement high, a marble head?”

“Yea, by my faith! And then?”

“Lo, reach it down; and break it fair in twain; you'll thus destroy the charm: but first your armour carefully put on; for when the spell is o'er, these castle-walls will crumble into dust.”

Trusting not wholly to the lep'rous wretch, Jaufray then bound him by the feet and arms, and to the damsel thus confided him:

“If he hath lied,” said he, “spare not his life.” Then he resumed his helm, took down the marble head, whose shape was fair and cunningly devised, and setting it near him on a wooden bench, discharged on't with his sword so great a blow, he clove it dean in twain. Sudden it shrieked, it moaned, it bounded up, hissing and growling as a thunderbolt; whilst the vexed elements at once unchained, and beam and stone at war with frightful din came crushing over Jaufray. Vainly his shield was raised to guard his head; Heaven's face was darkened o'er; an awful storm, where wind and lightning strove, bursting with ruin, 'mid the ambient air had borne the knight away, but for his orison to heaven's King. Huge clouds of dust rose upwards to the skies; while a fierce wind, in passing, swept away the last memorial of the magic work: of castle naught remained.



Original Size -- *Medium-Size*

Bowed down, and scarce himself, did Jaufry move his limbs. Bowed down and bruised and tottering, dragged he some steps, then fell. The maid, the slave, and mother with her child, who had sought refuge 'neath a huge rock's vault, found him at length outstretched upon the turf, his strength exhausted and quite motionless.

“Say, then, good knight,” the damsel smiling spoke, “how fares it with you now?”

“I have no bruise that's perilous, nor mortal wound,” replied the knight; “but such this latter strife, I find, indeed, I sadly lack repose.”

The damsel then embraced him with her arms, and pressed her lips upon his eyes and mouth. When Jaufry saw the mother,—

“Woman,” he said, “hast thou regained thy child?”

“I have, my lord; thanks, be it told, to you.”

“An it be so, proceed then to Carlisle, with this fair damsel, babes, and leper,—all. There I must beg you go, King Arthur thank, from Jaufry, Dovon's son, and tell him of this fight.”

Thus speaking, he uprose; drew to his fancy his good horse's girths; and having consigned his friends to Heaven's care, resumed his quest of Taulat: albeit 'twas now with measured steps and slow; for this dread battle had worn out his strength.

Having obtained her mantle and her horse, the maid set out from thence at the like hour, and with her went the leper and the rest; nor stayed she on the way, but only stopped when she had reached fair Carlisle's lofty towers.

There all regarded her with wonderment.

“Whence can proceed,” they said, “this strange cortège? whence come these people? and what want they here?” The curious crowd followed that damsel fair up to the castle-gates, and there the knights, who noble escort made, led her with all her troop before the king.

There bended she her knee, and as a dame of gentle breeding spoke:

“May He, the Lord of all and of all things, who in His hands doth justly hold the keys of good and ill, increase your fame, and keep in glory the knights of your Round Table!”

“And,” said the worthy king, “may Heaven save you, sweet damsel, who are fair and good as courteous and well-bred!”

“Sire, from Jaufry, Dovon's son, I come, to thank you for my life; which to his mighty valour do I owe. I am the daughter of the Count Passant, whose name perchance hath reached your royal ear. A knight of high esteem, who sought adventure to display his worth, brought me from Normandy to these fair shores. For seven long months, by valley and by hill we wandered on, full many a snare escaping, and without check full many a weary fight. This land did hold, alas, a giant dread, of hideous aspect, and of awful strength, eaten with leprosy and fearful sores, whose thought doth make my very soul to heave. Before us suddenly this wretch appeared; and taking from his neck a monstrous club, struck at my lord with force so terrible, he stunned him with the blow. Like as a child then, clutching at his arm, against a rock he fractured every bone; whilst me he seized from off my palfrey's back, and to his magic castle quickly bore. There I had lost my life, yea, more than life, but that high Heaven, whose justice I implored, in mercy sent Sir Jaufry to my aid. This doughty knight at length the monster slew; but ne'er can I with greater truth aver, such battle never did these eyes behold, or blows so great e'er given and received.”

The mother and the handless leper told their tale in turn. But whilst they thus their message each relates, we will to Jaufry go, who onward still his course doth slowly take, without he yet a single soul descried who could give tidings of the man he sought.



CHAPTER VI. THE ORCHARD OF BRUNISSENDE.

Harassed, fatigued, and sore with many a bruise, Jaufry was sinking too for food and drink; and yet the want of sleep,—of all our wants the most imperious,—so weighed him down, he scarce could keep his seat. Still he went on a quarter of the night with limbs benumbed and eyelids partly closed, taking such course his charger pleased to lead.

Serene and lovely was the atmosphere, and by the light the stars in shining gave he by adventure a large orchard saw, shut in with marble walls and skirt with trees of umbrage such as earth scarce saw before. Flowers and fragrant herbs abounded there; and with each puff of wind there issued out a sweet and balmy breath like paradise. 'Twas thus that, as night fell, the birds for leagues around did hither flock, and perching on the leafy boughs, warbled their dulcet notes till matin prime.

This orchard appertained to a great dame known as fair Brunissende. Within the castle of Montbrun she lived; and father, mother, husband, had she none; fine was her court and rich, of breeding high; and knights and burghers, minstrels, jugglers from all countries, hither trooping came. The palace, built of hewn and massive stone whereon the sculptor had employed his art, was flanked with towers blackened o'er by time. 'Twas in the centre Brunissende was lodged; and to it seven gates a passage gave, whereof the keepers could each one lead forth a thousand men.

Five hundred damsels waited her commands; but though 'twere rare to see such beauty met, yet Brunissende held empire over all in loveliness and grace: one might have sought throughout the realms of earth, and yet not found such high and gentle dame, or one so fine in form. Her eyes and her sweet face swept

from the mind of those who gazed on her all thought of former charms. She was more fresh, more fair, more purely white than snow that lies upon the frosted dew, and rose that opens on a lily's breast. *

* Car plus es fresca e bella e blanca
Que neus gelada sus en branca
Ni que rosas ab flor de lis....
Que cant hom auria cercat,
Totas cellas que son nascudas.....
Non auria hom una trobada
Tan bella ni tan gen formada;
Que sos oueils e sa bella cara
Fai oblidar qui ben l'esgara
Totas cellas que vistas a.

Ms. fol. 36, w. 3062 and 3159.

But, ah, felicity did not attend her charms. Yielding to some deep grief, four times a day she sadly wept and mourned; and thrice she rose at night to mourn again. Her sole delight was listening to the notes of those sweet birds which filled her orchard near; which, when she had heard, she got some brief repose,—soon to awake again to weep and mourn; and all her vassals, of each age and sex, little and great, at that same hour of woe uttered the self-same moans, and shed like tears.

Arrived, as we already said, before her orchard fair, Jaufrý got down; and seeing an open gate, he ventured in, removed the bridle from his charger's mouth, so that he grazed at ease, and his shield placing 'neath his weary head, his limbs outstretching on the flowery turf, he soon most soundly slept. Just then did Brunissende her footsteps take towards her chamber, followed by her maids. Surprised the birds no longer tuned their notes, she straightway bade the seneschal appear, to whom she said with wrath:

“Some creature surely must have passed the gates, and scared my gentle birds. Go, quickly find it out; and if perchance a man it prove to be, he must be hither brought, alive or dead.”

“Lady,” the seneschal at once replied, “I go with speed.”

Two squires preceding him, each with a lighted torch, his horse he mounted, and rode down in haste, and in the orchard found the weary knight, wrapt in profoundest sleep. He called him frequently, then shook him hard; but for a time in vain. His eyes at length with effort he unclosed, when, raising up his head,—

“Fair knight,” quoth he most courteously, “by thine attainments and thy gentle birth, I do entreat thee, in God's name, to let me here abide and sleep my fill.”

“Sleep must you now no more,” replied the chief, “but come before my lady; she'll not rest until avenged on him who scares her birds.”

Quoth Jaufry:

“God permit, thou shalt not take me off without a fight!”

The seneschal, on hearing such resolve, called to his squire to bring him out his arms. Meanwhile the son of Dovon slept again; so that the seneschal, when fall equipped, was forced a second time to wake him up, and roughly as at first.

“Knight,” exclaimed Jaufry, as he then arose, “’tis a great sin to trouble my repose, for I am wearied out; but since thou hast chosen to accept the fight, wilt thou allow me to sleep on in peace if I do thee unhorse?”

“By Heaven's faith, I swear't!” laughing, the other said.

Jaufry then hastened to his horse's side; replaced the bit, and tightly drew the girths. Mounted, he galloped at the seneschal; who, having drawn him back a space, on rushing drove his lance at Jaufry's shield, but never harmed the knight. He, on the contrary, with happy stroke unhorsed the seneschal; who, full of shame, with head bowed down, and slow and thoughtful step, regained the castle and his lady's room.

“What is't,” asked Brunissende, “that there doth lurk?”

“A knight all armed, whose peer the world not holds, sleeping so soundly he would scarce awake.”

“Why broughtst thou him not here? I wish him hither led; for, with God's help, no food shall pass these lips till that bold knight be hanged.”

“Lady,” replied the seneschal, “he would not come; nor could I wake him up.”

“Indeed,” quoth she; “then bid the tocsin sound, and rouse me up my knights.”

The seneschal obeyed; the sound was heard, and straightway flocking came five hundred knights. The hall they entered, where their lady stood with spite and anger pale.

“Barons,” she said, “a bold and wicked knight my grounds hath passed, and will not quit the walls; now if his head pay not this insolence, I never will hold land or honour more.”

“Lady,” replied a tall and proper knight of great renown,—Simon the Red by name,—“I will go seek him out, if such your wish; and trust, alive or dead, to bring him here.”

“So be it,” said Brunissende.

Added the seneschal:

“My troth, good friend, I bid thee shield thyself. He can most sturdily defend his sconce; and brave indeed I'll hold the happy knight who takes it off by

force.”

Simon, without a word, went on his way, and Jaufry found still sleeping; rudely he cried:

“Up, up, sir knight; arouse!”

Jaufry, who moved not more than any rock, received from Simon then so strong a kick, it woke him up in haste.

“Nathless, thou promisedst to let me sleep,” he then exclaimed; “and 'tis a villain's act to break thy faith, when thus I'm overcome.”

“Come, speak then to my lady,” Simon said; “or I by force must take thee to the hall.”

“We first will see who's strongest,—thou or I,” said Jaufry in low tone; when, springing on his horse, he ran at Simon, who like haste displayed.

Bold Simon's lance was split on Jaufry's shield; but he was borne by that of his brave foe so swift to earth, it nearly cost his life. Jaufry ran up, as though to make it sure, when loud he called for grace.

“Wilt thou annoy me further in my sleep, if I do grant it?”

“No, lord, I promise thee.”

“Go, then,” said Jaufry, who again lay down, and quick reclosed his eyes.

Simon the Red, with flush upon his face and shame at heart, slowly retraced his steps. Certes, did he make but half the noise he made on setting out; so that the seneschal, who watched him come, could not withhold his smiles.

“Lady,” he said, “behold your champion; but with him comes no knight. I'd wage my spurs, like me, he has taken oath.”

“Maugre this pleasantry,” the dame replied, “ere I have rest, this naughty knight shall hang.”

Hearing the words, one of the keepers of the seven gates descended to the orchard; but soon his troop returned, bearing him faint and bleeding on his shield. At such a spectacle, fair Brunissende could scarce contain her rage,—

“What! have I round me naught but coward folk,” she loudly cried, “and knights without a heart? Go fifty; if it need, go thrice that number still; but bring this vassal, or no more return!”

At this reproach, the knights rushed off in troop, and to the garden hied with dash and din. When there, they Jaufray seized,—some by the arm, and others by the leg; while some his shoulders held, and some his head, and brought him thus into that lordly hall without his being able to stir limb. On seeing them arrive, the dame impatient came with hasty step and bade them set him free. They loosed their hold, and Jaufray stood upright; nor could he think, as round his glance was thrown, 'twas sport that brought him 'mong such iron folk. Tall and well-shaped, his natural manly grace, set off with hauberk rich and burnished casque, struck Brunissende, who eyed him curiously.

“’Tis you,” at length she said, “who all this ill have wrought.”

“Fair lady,” he replied, “so far am I from doing what you say, or causing you annoy, I would defend you with my utmost strength 'gainst all of mother born.”

“In that you say not truth; for you erewhile have so misused my knight, that he may chance to die.”

“I own it, lady fair, but he was in the wrong; having by oath engaged to let me sleep, he thrice returned to wake me up, and struck me with his lance. Still, had I known him feoffee to you, never on him had risen this knightly hand, e'en for a greater cause.”

“No matter! I can see,” replied the dame, “we 'll find in you,—and that ere morning sun,—a proper subject for the cord, or worse.”

Whilst thus she spoke, Jaufray regarded her; and ne'er had tired admiring her brow, her neck, her fair and sweet fresh face, her rosy mouth, and blue and loving eyes.

“Lady,” quoth he, love gliding o'er his soul, “do with me what you will; for with no other arms than that rich robe, you would have vanquished me with greater ease than ten knights clad in mail. If, 'gainst my knowledge, I have caused you pain, wreak now your own revenge; and never 'gainst you shall uprise my sword, or lance or shield be used.”

Hearing him reason thus so courteously, the dame forgets her wrath. Love with his golden shaft hath pierced her heart, and now she pardons all. Those lips still bear a menace to the ear; but those sweet eyes belie't.

Grown bold, the knight, who still did on her gaze, begged her to grant a boon.

“Let me,” he said, “but slumber at my ease; then do what justice bids. Fear not

that I shall hence seek means to fly; for, Heaven preserve me, you have somehow gained such power o'er my soul, that you alone are better guard than are ten hundred of your men with arms in hand."

Fair Brunissende retired with a sigh, leaving for sole adieu a look so sweet, that, spite of his dull sense, it filled his heart with joy. Meantime the seneschal, whose care it was, bade the attendants then prepare a couch in middle of the hall: he there conducted Jaufray, and then asked his name and country.

"I'm of King Arthur's court," quoth Dovon's son; "now prithee ask no more, but, in God's name, let me in quiet rest."

Full armed as he then was, he laid him down, and sleep his eyelids closed. Not so fair Brunissende. Love in her chamber had renewed the assault, and banished sleep away; and thus she mused, until the city-watch gave forth the accustomed sound. At that trumpet's call, each in the castle and the city rose; and all at once gave loose to tears and groans. High dames and damsels, Brunissende in chief, clasping their hands in sign of deepest woe, beat their fair breasts and face; while the knights who guarded Jaufray made such dreadful din, it woke him up, and made him ask the cause.

All at the word rushed forward to the couch, and struck with lance and sword and iron mace. Well 'twas for him his hauberk was of proof; for the blows came just like to a storm of hail. Nor did they cease, thinking the knight was dead, until the doleful cries had died away. Then each resumed his post, and silence fell o'er all. Again, at mid of night, those cries uprose; but Jaufray, whom no sleep again had blessed, and whose cleared thoughts were fixed on Brunissende, took careful note to guard his curious tongue; holding his breath, he said within himself:

"Certes are these men no folk of flesh and blood, but demons hither sent to pester earth. With Heaven's help, to-morrow's blessed sun shan't light upon me here."

Persuaded he was dead after that storm of blows, the knights relaxed their watch, and slumbered at their posts; Jaufray then seized the chance, and noiselessly uprose. With shield and lance in hand, he left the castle-halls on tip of toe; by good luck found his horse, and mounting quick, at fullest speed set out. Had he but dreamt the love fair Brunissende conceived, not all her men-at-arms would from Montbrun have chased him but with slaughter. Little deemed he, as hill and dale he crossed with breathless speed, she at that hour was in her fancy musing how she might make him hers.

Who shall depict, as rose the sun next mom, fair Brunissende's dismay, when,

of the first who to the hall came down, she heard of Jaufrý's flight? As one deprived of sense, those hundred knights she loudly did accuse of treason to their faith; their negligence she banned; and to the seneschal in wrath exclaimed, that, if he found not Jaufrý, he should by fire or cord full surely die, even if torments yet unheard were hers.

Whilst that this scene was passing at Montbrun, Jaufrý already was well on his road. And shortly after rising of the sun, he met a neatherd, driving of a car laden with bread and wine and other things. This man invited him, by holy charity, to eat with him; and used such kindly words, that Jaufrý yielded to his hearty wish, frankly avowing that for three whole days he had not tasted food. The neatherd therefore took his shield and lance, drew from his car good wheaten bread and wine, two roasted capons, three grilled partridges, and part of a wild-boar; then, spreading on the turf beneath a leafy tree a fair white cloth, a brook just bubbling by, he served the knight, and paid him great respect.

When they had eat their fill, and in their thirst emptied two bowls of wine, Jaufrý prepared to go, thanking the neatherd for his welcome meal. This man was vassal to fair Brunissende, the lady of high worth; and as the knight was turning to depart, he drew the charger's rein and gently said:

“Good friend, one thing I fain would ask of you, which I had half-forgot: why do the people of this fair domain so weep and loudly moan?”

“Ah, rascal, wretch, thou traitor, and thou fool!” exclaimed the neatherd, bursting forth with rage, “thy wretched life shall answer for those words.”

With all his strength he then at Jaufrý cast the pond'rous axe he bore, which struck his shield and brought out fire and flame. The knight spurred on his horse and got clear off; but mid a storm of stones. The neatherd then, enraged at missing him, shivered his car to bits, and with his axe struck both his oxen dead.

*

* Cervantes has wittily parodied this adventure by that of the braying of the ass, which sets two villages of La Mancha at strife with each other (*Aventura del rebuzno*, parte ii. lib. vi. cap. xxv.).

In ignorance of the cause of all this rage, Jaufrý at length relaxed his horse's speed; still as he went exclaiming, that he'd hold as naught all that he yet had done till he had met a creature who could tell the reason of that wailing. Busied with such-like thoughts and the remembrance of fair Brunissende, he rode the live-long day, spite of fatigue and heat. When daylight waned, two youths well-horsed, with falcon on the fist, and hounds and terriers running at their feet, came up to him; and after slight discourse, invited him to share their evening meal,—and that so courteously, he could not make denial. The three young men

then gaily went along, talking of love and battle's iron strife; when, as 'twas sunset, rose again that cry, at which the youths like madmen howled and wept.

“Good youths,” quoth Jaufry, with astonishment, “what means this grief? What heard you, sirs, I pray; and why such noise?”

“Why? ask'st thou, foolish, treacherous serf? that word shall cost thy life!”

And as one cast at him his startled bird, the other plucked his cap from off his head and threw it madly 'gainst bold Jaufry's shield. Their fury and hard words finished as ceased that cry; when, quickly following the wond'ring knight, with honeyed phrase they charmed away his wrath, and to their habitation led the way.

This was a châtelet of graceful form, girded by lofty walls and outer fosse, through which a living stream for ever ran. Beside the bridge there sat an aged knight, listing a minstrel's song,—*The Lay of the Two Lovers*. * It was the father of the two young men: beholding Jaufry, he in haste arose, and came to give him welcome; saying, with joyful tone: **

* Of Marie of France.

** This knight in Cervantes' hands is the nobleman clad in green (Cavaliere vestido en gavan de pano fino verde, parte ii. lib. v. cap. xvi.).

“I am beholden, lord, to those who've brought you: seven long years have flown since stranger-guest hath this my threshold crossed whose aspect pleased me so: God save you, sir!”

Thus speaking, by the arm the knight escorted Jaufry to the hall, where the two youths removed his armour bright. Soon there came in a damsel fair, of fresh and smiling look, who brought him a rich mantle, which when he had put on, she, on a cushion placed beside him, sat. Then they discoursed on various pleasant things until 'twas time for water to be brought. A well-bred page did pour it o'er his hands, while the fair damsel held the ready bowl; at which Sir Jaufry said:

“Maiden, I'll not this kindly act refuse; for should you e'er need service at my hands, whate'er the hour or place, you may full surely call me to your aid.”

They then at table sat; and when the meal was o'er, the cloth removed, the damsel went the couches to prepare, and left her father and the knight alone. The old man asked his name, and wept for joy to learn the son of Dovon was his guest,—his ancient friend in arms. He would have fain a month detained him there; but Jaufry cleverly excuses made, and at the point of day he in his saddle found himself again. The maid had given him his shield and lance, and he his leave was then about to take, when it occurred to him to ask his host about that

wailing cry. Scarcely, however, was the question put when the old man and his two sons alike assailed him with hard names: they called him knave and wretch and villain's son; they hair in that unseemly rage.

Jaufry by dint of spur escaped their wrath; and wond'ring saw them on each other turn their fitful ire, and tear their clothes to rags. Their fury spent, they called him back again; and Jaufry, wishing to have news of Taulat, consented to return. As it fell out, no man could give him more. The aged knight well knew that champion fierce, and in these terms did tell him what he sought:

“Follow,” he said, “all day this very road; it leads across a tract of desert space, where ne'er are found or house or town, or bread or wine, or man of mother born. If you should wish in passing to repose, naught but the turf can be your host or tent. Go onward thus until to-morrow's sun. Before the noon you will have reached a plain, wherein is set a high and rugged mount. There, at its foot, a castle you'll behold, pleasant and finely built; and round its moats a crowd of tents and huts, where harbour knights and lords of high descent. Pass stoutly on, nor speak a word to man; go to the castle without stop or stay, whatever tried to strike at him with sturdy dubs, and tore their may befall, and enter boldly in, leaving without your lance, and eke your shield. There will you find two dames, —one old, one young,—who watch a wounded knight. Go to the ancient dame, and to her say, that Augier de Cliart sends you there, that she may tell you why the people groan, and give you news of Taulat.”



CHAPTER VII. THE BLACK KNIGHT.

Well pleased at Augier's words, which seemed to raise his heart by full a span, Jaufry spurred bravely on, and by the morrow safely reached the spot his host had named. While he was passing through the scattered tents, the knights, who stared at him, exclaimed aloud:

“Behold a man who has ridden the night long, and hastens forward, but to seek his loss.”

Seeming as though he never heard the words, he to the noble castle straightway hied; which seemed most rich, and sculptured with fine art. Seeing a portal set with marble leaves and tinged of various hues, he there got down, secured his horse, and near him placing both his lance and shield, he passed within the door. At first his eyes no other forms beheld than those which omed the walls; but as he wandered on from room to room, he came at length where lay the wounded knight, and at his couch two dames in robes of woe, and tears upon their cheeks. As he was counselled by good Augier, then he to the elder went, and prayed her courteously, in Heaven's name, to tell him where was Taulat, and why the people of that land he left did day and night so weep.

Charmed with his breeding and his knightly words, the lady then explained that Taulat, whose brutality and pride exceeded bounds, would in eight days return.

“He comes,” she said, “to glut his cruelty upon the wretched man who yonder lies. Seven years ago he with his lance did wound him cruelly; and when that wound is healed, each year, upon the feast-day of St. John, he has him fastened to a stake hard by, and beaten with a scourge until the wounds are opened once again. For this the vassals of the neighbouring land of Brunissende,—whereof this knight is lord,—weep and lament, and e'en do put to death those who would spy into their cause of grief.”

“Lady,” Sir Jaufry said, “pride slays its lord; and by that pride, I trust, will Taulat fall. In eight days' time to seek him I will come; and I can truly say that term will seem a year.”

Commending her to Heaven, he left those halls, mounted again his horse, and took his way towards a neighbouring wood, where he did trust some man to meet to lodge him in his hut. The wood was gloomy, intricate, and dense; and at the first cross-road before him, he beheld, squatted beneath a pine, a hag, whose

aspect struck him with surprise.

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Original Size -- *Medium-Size*

Her head was larger than a portal's arch; her eyes were small as deniers, bleared besides and blue, misshapen, and deep-sunk beneath projecting brows. Her lips were black; teeth red as orpiment, which jutted out unseemly from her jaw. Her arms were sinewy, and her hands all knots; her face was colourless and wrinkled o'er; her body puffed; her shoulders round and high; her legs were skinny and of brownish hue; her knees were pointed; her toe-nails so long, no shoe could ever have enclosed her feet. A verdant wreath encircled her white hair, which stiffly stood on end. Her under-garment was of linen fine; her robe of ruddy silk; and over all a scarlet mantle fell, with ermine lined.

Jaufry saluted her; meanwhile with awe he gazed upon her figure strange, and ugly face. She turned her head, and without moving from her darksome seat, exclaimed:

“Retrace thy steps, sir knight, and that at once.”

“Not so, indeed,” quoth Jaufry, “till I learn why thou dost tell me thus to flee away.”

“Thou wilt repent it, then,” the hag replied; “and death or dungeon shalt thou surely find.”

“And wherefore so?”

“Go on, and thou wilt learn.”

“Tell me at least with whom I'll have to strive.”

“Those thou shalt meet will say.”

“And thou, too; what art thou?”

“What thou beholdst!” the hag exclaimed, as, rising, she unfolded her huge length, tall as a knightly lance.

“Heaven!” Sir Jaufry cried, “in thee I trust; what figure have we here?”

[Original Size](#) -- [Medium-Size](#)

“Dare to pass onwards,” growled the wretched hag, “and thou shalt meet with worse.”

“Nathless they stay not me: as to thy threats,” he said, “I hold them as the wind, or nothingness.” Pricking his charger as he spoke the words, he passed along the path.

The hag, however, had but told the truth. For as he reached a chapel small, a holy hermit served, a knight of sable hue, mounting a sable horse, with sable arms, assailed him with such strength and unawares, that horse and knight were on the turf o'er-thrown. Jaufry, all red with shame, at once upsprang, and, sword in hand, wished to avenge his fall; but, lo, no foe was there. He looked about, above, around, below, but horse and knight had vanished quite away. Again he mounted on his charger's back, when, at the instant, his strange foe returned, with lowered lance to strike at him again. Jaufry, prepared, now flew at him in turn; they midway met with shock so terrible, each rolled upon the earth. Half-wild with anger then, quick as the lightning Jaufry was afoot, with shield on guard and ready for the fight; but ne'er a foe was there.

[Original Size](#) -- [Medium-Size](#)

“I will yet find him out,” Sir Jaufry said, as in his saddle he again did leap. But scarce was foot in stirrup firmly set when back returned the sable knight, hissing and growling as the thunder doth when tempests vex the air, and for the third time bore him to the ground. Jaufry, on his side, had so aimed his lance, it pierced his foe right through, and cast him on the turf. But when he wished to give the *coup-de-grace*, in vain he sought the knight, he neither saw nor heard.

“Good Heaven!” Jaufry cried, “where hath this recreant, this demon, fled? I drive my lance a fathom through his breast, I hurl him to the ground; and yet he flies, and doth escape my wrath! O gracious Lord, in Thee I put my trust!”

Again he mounted as he spoke these words; when the invisible once more

appeared, unhorsing him anew. Why re-describe the scene? While daylight lasted, still this game went on. When off his horse, no creature did he see; but as he sat him on his charger's back the sable knight appeared to strike and hew. Weary of fight, Sir Jaufray then resolved to go on foot into the chapel-gate; but as he took his way, the spectre then his onward footsteps barred, so that the battle did again commence, and in the darkness without pause went on.

For half that night their swords and lances clashed, so that bright sparks of fire upward flew; fatigued at length to hear such din of arms, the hermit rose, and with his stole and cross and holy water, chanting a psalm, forth issued from his cell. The sable knight did not attend his coming; shrieking aloud, at once he disappeared, albeit behind him leaving such a storm as suffered no allay, until the chapel-bell rang out the matin hour.

Sheltered by this good man, Sir Jaufray asked, and thus obtained from him, the secret of the knight with whom he had fought so long.

“Friend, what thou ask'st I'll tell thee in few words: this knight in sable armour is a fiend, evoked from realms of darkness by a hag, whom thou perchance hast met upon thy way. This hideous wretch once boasted as her spouse a monstrous giant, whose most wicked acts for twenty leagues around had spoiled the earth. As mortal, all-ferocious though he be, is ne'er without his peer, it happed this giant did return one night so grievously ill-used, that, at the end of three short days, he died. The hag, then, fearing for her own sad life and that of her two sons, called by her magic from the lower world that evil spirit who, for thirty years, these lands hath vexed. Meantime her sons have waxed in years and strength, and closely followed in their father's steps. Grown leprous, one, he dwelt within a house, built by his mother by the force of spells, whither his brother hath set out in haste, enraged and tost,—for that the rumour saith a knight of Arthur's court the wretch hath slain. An it be true, may Heaven, all powerful, defend that knight!”

“He will endeavour to defend himself,” quoth Jaufray smiling; “and the raged giant, if he held the wish, need not have gone so far to find him out: I am the man who did his brother slay, and by whose hand the wicked spell was burst.”

Eight days being fled, the hermit chanted mass, and at the altar prayed the holy saints to guide Sir Jaufray, and protect his life against the monster's wrath. Having devoutly joined him in the prayer, the son of Dovon, like a valiant knight, did joyously set out; and scarce had ridden for an hour's space when he beheld the giant swiftly come, bearing beneath his arm,—with the same ease as he had done a child,—a damsel, who did utter doleful cries. Her voice was hoarse from screaming out for help; her yellow hair, which sparkled in the sun,

upon her shoulders all dishevelled fell like molten gold; her robe was tom, her eyes were swollen with tears; scarce, by Saint Mary! had she strength remaining to implore help of Jaufry.

The knight, with pity touched, heard not in vain the prayer. His shield advanced, his lance within the rest, he at the giant rode, and called aloud that he should loose the maid.

Letting her truly for an instant go, the giant ran towards the nearest tree, and pulling at the trunk, unearthed it, roots and all. Before, however, he had done so quite, Jaufry had plunged his lance into his side. Checked by the stroke, and trembling in the hand, the giant's blow lost half of its effect, yet ne'er the less it bore to mother earth both Jaufry and his steed. The knight full quickly leapt upon his feet; and with his ready sword struck at the monster with such vigorous hand, he sliced from off his flank a palm of flesh; and through the gaping wound one might behold his beating heart, whilst streams of blood poured through. Exhausted, tottering, still the giant overthrew the knight by striking with his fist upon his helm; but though his sword escaped from Jaufry's grasp, it was too late for harm,—the giant fainting fell. On this, the knight hewed off his monstrous feet; when, in all gentleness, the maid he raised, for she had kneeled at her preserver's side, and thus did say:

“Accept, my lord, a thousand grateful thanks; for more than life have you preserved for me, in saving me from him!”

“Damsel,” Sir Jaufry answered, “God for ever aid you! But explain how is't I find you here?”

“My lord, 'tis easy to relate the tale: but yesterday I in an orchard strayed, to which my mother had conducted me; it was our usual walk; when, as we left the gates, behold, yon giant suddenly appeared, seized me at once, and to his castle now was bearing me away, when you, sir knight, so happily stepped in.”

“I thank great Heaven, it was just in time! But where, I pray you, was your worthy sire, and where your brothers, when this giant came?”

“Hunting within the forest, good my lord: but you surprise me, asking me of them. One fain would say that you did know them all; and yet, methinks, I ne'er have seen yourself.”

“Sweet damsel, yea, and that few days ago. 'Twas at your father's, Augier's good house, where I, at need, so courteously was served by you and all of yours.”

“Blest be the hour, gentle lord and knight, you harboured 'neath our roof; and we, how happy to have you for guest!”

“By this you see, my fair and courteous maid, how meet it is that we should service do, even to those unknown. One knows not who shall go or who shall come, they who do hold or they who hold them not, or what the future keeps for us in store. Well it becomes us, then, to render help where help we can; welcome with courtesy, and honour guests with shelter and with food, whom chance may send us as they onward go.”

“And where, Sir Jaufry,” then inquired the maid, “if I may ask, do you direct your steps?”

“I will explain as we do ride along. But I must haste: time presses; and e'en now I greatly fear me I shall come too late.”

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[Original Size](#) -- [Medium-Size](#)

Remounting quickly as these words were said, he then good Augier's daughter lifted up and placed upon his horse; for he resolved she should not quit his sight until he put her in her father's arms: this done he rode apace towards the spot where lay the wounded knight.

CHAPTER VIII. TAULAT DE RUGUMON.

Never did help come more in time of need. Returned that very morn, Taulat had bound his prisoner to a stake; and four stout ploughmen, each armed with a strap, already raised their brawny arms to strike and ope the closed wounds. But as Jaufry came, they stayed their hand to gaze awhile at him; nor less surprised than they, Taulat, who on the castle-terrace stood, descended in hot haste and thus accosted Jaufry: "Sir knight, I fain would learn what madness or what pride hath thus conducted thee into my lands. Dismount and doff thine arms, for thou art prisoner henceforth for ay."

"My lord," the knight replied, "methinks you practise an unseemly haste. Give me, I beg, the time to tell my errand. I come to speak in favour of the knight your knaves were going to strike; and I entreat you, for the sake of me, to grant unto him grace."

"May Heaven help me!" Taulat answered him, "but sure thou art distraught: such words deserve the rope,—a peasant's death."

"'Twould be a grievous wrong, my lord, the words being good and wise; again I do repeat them, praying grace for yonder knight, who seven long years hath groaned."

"Go, churl; too long I've listed; go and disarm thyself, if thou wilt live, and to my squires give up the girl with thee."

"If she's dishonoured and I put to shame, this arm, by Heaven, must indeed be weak."

"What! wouldst thou fight with me?"

"E'en unto death, before I suffer shame."

"Vain fool, beware; when on my neck I've put my shield, thoult find but little grace."

"Mine ear," quoth Jaufry, "hath been oft assailed by higher threats than these. I do reply, that, by the faith of Him who built this world, you shall set free yon knight, and to the court of good King Arthur go, to pay the felony you there have done; or you shall fight with me, till you or I be vanquished and slain."

"Know'st thou then not, I've fought and conquered full five hundred knights, all better men than thou?"

"It may be so," quoth Jaufry; "now for proof: go get your arms, and God's

high will be done!”

“No other armour,” proudly Taulat said, “do I require than my good lance and shield: seven of thy strength might then come on, and I'd defy you all.”

“’Tis madness,” did Sir Jaufry make reply, “to enter fight unarmed. But since your pride doth blind your senses so, e'en have it as you will.”

Furious at the words, Taulat addressed a squire: “Go to the castle, quickly as thou canst; bring me my lance and shield, and tell the knights I've conquered one by one to meet me here, that they may witness a base peasant's death, as with a single blow I do intend, through shield and hauberk, to find out his heart. And at the instant should this not be done, may I lose arms and chivalry and lady's love!”

The squire ran quickly to the scattered camp, where lodged the captive knights,—who all were grieving for the wounded man, bound to the stake and waiting for the scourge,—to them he briefly said:

“Barons, my lord attends you there beyond, that you may see him battle with a fool, who comes to seek his death.”

Mounting then speedily the castle-stair,—amid the tears and murmurs of the dames who ceaseless mourned,—he took him down the shield and lance suspended to the rack, and bore them to his lord, who, vaulting on his horse, nor stopping to don breastplate or aught else, cried in a haughty tone:

“Come to thy death, thou churl, whose sight offends me!”

Sir Jaufry, angered at the insult, then dashed at full speed upon the haughty knight, who like a lion came: so fearful was the shock, no saddle, girth, or art, availed Sir Jaufry. Down to the earth he rolled beneath the stroke. But not alone; for Taulat on his side, by blow as vigorous and deftly put, at the same instant fell, his shield pierced through, and Jaufry's lance within his side.

A shout of joy upsprang from those good knights:

“Good Heaven, but this day thou chast'nest Taulat, and dost break that pride which long hath vexed the land!”

Jaufry meanwhile, his sword within his grasp, ran to fierce Rugimon, fast pinned to earth, as though some snake he were; but as he came, Taulat in humble tone exclaimed:

“For God's love, knight, O do not end thy work; for 'tis my folly that hath brought my death.”

“Thy folly, true, was great,” Sir Jaufry said; “but ere we part, I count on curing thee. Too long this pride endured, it now must have an end. Thou deem'st this

morn no knight was in the world who in address and strength could vie with thee. Most brave no doubt thou wast; but thy consuming and most wicked pride exceeded far thy valour, and 'tis a vice God neither loves nor bears. Thou now canst learn that, but for His resolve to chasten thee, this youthful arm,—certes less robust than thine,—would ne'er have cast thee down. 'Tis but the punishment for thy fierce pride, the outrage thou to good King Arthur didst,—that flower of chivalry, whose uprightness God loves. And thus it fares with those who seek his shame: sooner or later will the knights, who sit at his Round Table famed, mete out their punishment, save 'neath the earth they hide. What they can do in fight, thou mayst surmise by me, a novice, scarcely two months armed, and who have sought thee day and night until this hour, when thou dost find the guerdon of thy deeds.”

“All that thou sayst, sir knight, is but too true,” Taulat replied in weak and failing voice; “but mercy grant me, as thy conquered foe, as dying man, and who doth yield to thee.”

“The mercy that thou prayst for, thou shalt have,” Sir Jaufry said; “but upon certain terms: first, thou shalt go to good King Arthur's court, there yield thyself a prisoner; he will take such vengeance on thee as his honour claims.”

“That will I do; but now, for Heaven's sake, permit the leech to bind me up this wound.”

“No leech shall come, nor e'er shalt thou uprise, till, by St. Thomas, thou hast let go free the knight who's bound to yonder cruel stake, and all the captives thou hast ever made.”

“Do as thou wilt, my lord, with them and me.” Jaufry at once did sheathe his own good blade and take the sword of Taulat. Then he allowed the squire to fetch the leech, who probed his master's hurt and washed the wound with water and white wine, when on a couch he had him gently laid, and borne within the gates.

Jaufry meanwhile set free the wounded knight; and having extorted from the captive lords their promise that they'd hasten to Carlisle, and to King Arthur this affair relate, he was about to leave them to God's care, when the wounded knight,—lord paramount of all those gentlemen,—most humbly to him said:

“Good sir, to you I yield, and with my person offer men and lands. Most nobly have you won all this and more, in freeing me from all the pangs I've borne for seven weary years. So great those pangs, so cruel was my lot, better for me had death relieved my woes. Taulat, without a cause of enmity, hath tortured me full long; but now, by God's grace, and, sir knight, by yours, at length his reign is

o'er."

"Good lord," responded Jaufry, "pray retain your having; naught do I wish for your deliverance, save that, with these brave knights, you do proceed to good King Arthur's throne, and there explain you owe your liberty to Dovon's son."

The knight such promise gave; when Jaufry, calling for his horse, which all prepared they brought, while Augier's daughter mounted by his side, he took of all farewell, and then set out for the fair damsel's home; his thoughts, in sooth, turning to Brunissende, towards whom he felt his heart most sweetly drawn.

When he had gone, Taulat returned the knights their steeds and arms, and, by the compact made, departed in their train for fair Carlisle. There they arrived upon the eleventh day. The worthy king gave audience to a dame, who, bathed in tears, her castle was to lose within a week, if she no champion found to meet her foe. When he had listed to her dolorous words, the king aggrieved replied:

"Lady, were Gawain here, most willingly would he defend your cause; but he is not: nor have I Dovon's son, nor Ivan bold, nor any of the braves of my Round Table. If of the knights who here surround my throne, there's standing one who'll venture your defence, great is the honour that shall be his meed."

But no one made reply. In vain the dame, turning to spurred heels, with warmth exclaimed:

"Fore Heaven, brave knights, shall it be said a woman came to seek in this high court for aid, yet found it not?"

Still no one made reply.

'Twas at this moment Taulat's troop appeared; himself upon a gilded litter laid, covered with sumptuous cloth, and gently by two snowy palfries borne. Five hundred knights he had in fight overthrown, armed *cap-à-pie*, followed in his train, each mounted on a charger richly decked. Their lord was at their head, who, as they reached the king, knelt humbly down before that monarch's throne, and thus addressed him:

"Sire, may He who for our weal came down on earth, which eke His blood bedewed, now grant you joy, and double your renown!"

"And you, friend, may He save!" the king replied. "But what, I pray, are these, who seem so stout and good? And what the wounded man that litter holds?"

"My lord, that man is Taulat."

"Taulat de Rugimon?"

"My lord, the same; Jaufry, the son of Dovon, bravely vanquished him, and hither sends him to the queen and you; so that you may, my lord, such vengeance

take as in your wisdom you consider fit, for that same outrage, now two months ago, he did to you.”

“Heaven and earth,” King Arthur then exclaimed, “how well hath Jaufrý served me! Friend, tell me truth: when last you left him, was he safe and sound?”

“Great lord, he was, as doth comport such honoured and brave knight, who hath nor grief nor fear. Naught else but good can harbour with his name; and it were sweet to laud, if that his acts did not upraise him more than words can ever reach. When you shall know from what most cruel fate his valour hath snatched *me*, you will indeed be full of wonderment. But this recital must before the queen and all her dames be made.”

The king at once commanded unto Quex to go and seek the queen; the seneschal obeyed, when meeting her,—

“Lady,” said he, “if it so meet your wish, the king, your lord and mine, bids you to come and list a message brought by valiant knight who heads a great escort.”

The queen at once proceeded to the hall with all her dames and damsels; and when she placed herself beside her spouse, Melyan, the worthy knight, addressed them thus:

“Lady, from brave Sir Jaufrý, Dovon's son, I bring high reparation to yourself and all your train. I bring you Taulat, hight of Rugimon, that you may vengeance take for the affront that he hath done to you, and for the cruelty he's heaped on me. Learn, without motive he my father slew, and me he wounded with such grievous hurt, that ne'er shall I be healed. I was his captive in his castle kept; and when my wound had closed, he to a stake did have me bound, and scourged by cruel hands until the wound again was open laid. Each month did I this martyrdom endure; which caused such dire despair throughout my lands, that, thrice by day and thrice again by night, they gave aloose to tears and doleful cries.”

“By Heaven,” exclaimed the worthy king at this, “what felon act!”

“By all the saints of heaven,” said the queen, “this was the reign of haughty pride run wild!”

“Yea,” from the litter did Taulat respond, “I had, good sooth, most wicked, foolish pride; but I have lost it all. A leech appeared, who in a space most brief did work a cure. I sought in vain a knight who could make head against me, and I've found my match. Never did better joustier wield a lance: modest as brave, and generous as good, spite of my insults,—which did merit death,—Sir Jaufrý gave me grace, and granted pardon. You, noble sire, who are the best of kings,

deign but to imitate his clemency, find pardon give for that most foolish crime I here did madly do.”

The worthy king, alway to good inclined, his pardon freely granted to the knight; nay more, he used such reasons with the queen, that Guenever, as generous, noble dame, her pardon likewise gave. Melyan alone remained inflexible. Rejecting all entreaty, he resolved, as was his right, since his was *corporal shame*, that Taulat should be judged by legal court.

At once they called a hundred legists in, who, when they'd heard the cause, the following sentence did at once proclaim:

“Taulat to Melyan shall be given up; who, month by month, shall bind him to like stake, and by like hands on him inflict like punishment. The court doth grant this power unto Melyan for seven years; with liberty albeit in him to set his prisoner free whene'er he feel inclined to grant him grace.”

At the same hour the legists sentence passed, Sir Jaufry, riding quickly with the maid, before the towers of Augier arrived. Warned of his coming by the vassals' cries, who gave him joyful welcome and warm thanks for having set their lord and suzerain free, Augier mounted quickly on his horse, and with his sons came out to meet the knight. Beside Sir Jaufry he perceived the maid, guiding with sweeter grace than I can tell her gentle palfrey; but he knew her not, for she was veiled. Descending from his horse as he approached the knight, who eke alighted as he saw him come, he seized his hand, and with a trembling voice,—“My lord,” he said, “within my castle come, as you did promise me. We will most gladly there a welcome give, albeit my heart is melting with its woe. Since last we two did meet, a monster hath my daughter carried off, and with her all my joys.”

“You did not guard her with sufficient care,” Sir Jaufry mildly said, “since she is gone. What now remains to do? It was to be. None can avert his fate; so be consoled, and dry at once your tears. Some days ago I won a maid in fight, gentle and lovely as a maid can be; and if you will, to you I'll give her up, that she may take the place of her that's lost.”

“Alas, my lord,” good Augier replied, “where is the damsel or the dame that can compete with her in grace, in gentle manners, gaiety, and love? Her like is still unborn; and for my rest of days this world to me can naught, alas, afford of happiness or ease.”

“And I do still the contrary affirm; and more than that, declare that you this damsel shall her equal find in beauty and in love.”

In speaking thus Sir Jaufry raised her veil; and Augier looking, his sweet

daughter knew. When he had pressed her often in his arms, a thousand grateful thanks bestowed on Jaufry, and listed to the tale of his exploits with Taulat and the giant, he to the castle led the way, the serfs and vassals following in troops.

Great was the honour they there showed the knight: the brothers poured the water for his use, the damsel served him with her own fair hands a roasted peacock nobly bedecked, and Augier fain had kept him there a month; but Jaufry, frankly owning that his heart allured him to Montbrun, set out the morrow mom. Escorted by his host and his two sons he took his way, musing on Brunissende; when, at the hour of noon, he met her seneschal, just then returned from fair Carlisle, where he had Taulat seen and Melyan and the five hundred knights from bondage freed.

He still was seeking by his dame's command brave Dovon's son; but half-despaired success. Scarcely, however, did he learn the truth, that Melyan's saviour and the weary knight who in the orchard slumbered were the same, when, urging his horse, ne'er did he stop until Montbrun was reached, where travel-soiled he came to Brunissende.

"Where is the knight?" asked she before the man could e'en unclothe his lips. "Cometh he on? shall I soon see him here?"

"He follows me, fair lady," he replied; "but such his deeds, whereof the saving of our lord from pain and torment is but one, that I do think 'twere well you met the knight, and with a hundred damsels formed escort."

The thought pleased Brunissende. She orders gave to deck the roads with green, to hang rich stuffs and silk, damask and doth-of-gold, upon the castle-walls; while she herself, mounting her palfrey white, with all her court and knights and damsels fair, went out to meet Sir Jaufry. Arrayed most richly in a silken robe with trimmings of pure gold, she had upon her blondin tresses placed a gorgeous wreath, where peacock's feathers shone; while in her hand she bore the choicest flowers from her garden culled. No wonder, then, if Jaufry were surprised to see her come thus lovely, full of grace, and smiling as the queen of the sweet south. With courteous words they met, and side by side to Montbrun's lordly halls together they returned.



Original Size -- Medium-Size

I leave you to surmise the games and joy which at the castle on that day were seen.

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Jaufry and Brunissende the fair alone nor ate nor oped their lips. The lady glanced at Jaufry with a sigh, and each sweet glance shot through his softened eyes and fell into his heart; while Jaufry, on his side, at every moment blushed, and through the very marrow of his bones by dart invisible did feel that he was pierced. Musing of love, the live-long night they watched till rosy morning came. In her chamber the fair lady, and Jaufry on his gorgeous couch, thought but of the gentle speeches they would make the morrow mom; and, when once the sun had risen, they were up and quickly clad; and when mass at length was over, side by side they sat them down in the great hall of the castle, where they oped their swelling hearts.

"Twas Brunissende who first the silence broke; for, dazzled by her beauty, Jaufry lost in gazing on her face the pretty speeches he had framed o'ernight.

"My lord," she said, in voice of sweetest tone, "your coming brings us joy and happiness; no service could be higher than the one you've rendered us; and bless we good King Arthur in his knight, bless we the land which claims so brave a man, and—bless we too the lady for whose sake such noble acts are done."

"Alas," sighed Jaufry, at this latter phrase, "no lady cares for me."

"You speak in jest," said then fair Brunissende; "your sense and valour raise you up too high for noble lady not to care for you."

"I care perhaps for *her*; not she for me."

"Knows she at least of this your love for her?"

"I cannot say, fair lady, if she guess; but I ne'er told my love."

"No blame can then at least alight on her: if you ne'er seek where lies the

remedy of that same evil whereof you complain, who is in the wrong?"

"'Tis I, sweet lady, I. Her greatness curbs me, fills me with strange fears; I cannot ask her love, for ne'er an emperor who trod this earth but by that love were honoured;—such is the height, above all other dames, to which she's raised by sovereign grace and wealth."

"What you now say is folly, gallant knight; emperors and kings ne'er won in true love's lists a greater prize than brave and courteous man: such love holds not to riches; noble heart and gentle grace have in his court more power than lands and titles. How many, folks there are of high descent whose worth is valued highly at a groat! How many others rolling in bright gold whose value would not buy a coat of mail! Hide, then, no longer in your single heart the thought with which it's filled; your valour and your deeds give you a claim to match upon this earth with the most fair, most high."

180s

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Sir Jaufry heaved a sigh, and thus, much moved, replied:

"Lady, forgive, I pray you, the avowal which you, forsooth, are destined now to hear,—avowal that no torture e'er had drawn, but which is due to those sweet words of yours. You, then, are she for whom my heart doth melt; she whom I love and fear and I implore; she who doth hold the keys of all my joys, my pains, and who can make of me, even at her will, foolish or wise, a coward or a brave."

At length had Brunissende the fair attained the sum of her desire; yet she her joy concealed, and in a tone of playfulness exclaimed:

"Sir Jaufry, you are pleased to banter me; ne'er can I think I have the power you say."

"A thousand times more power, you may believe, than I can ever tell."

"That we shall prove right soon," she made reply. "The age is spoiled by wicked usages: true courtesy is lost, and he who warmly vows that he doth love too oft but utters lies. If you full truly wish to have *my* love, I must be wed as well as wooed, my lord."

Sir Jaufry cared not, you may well believe, such offer to refuse. He had just

vowed by Peter and St.

Paul naught upon earth such joy could give to him, when a knight entered, heating on his shield, to announce the coming of the Lord of Brunissende.

“To horse, good knights, to horse!” the lady cried; when lords and damsels, mounting in hot haste, went out to meet their suzerain.

As thus the cavalcade rode gaily off, headed by Jaufray and fair Brunissende, they saw approach two ladies dressed in black, with eyes all red and swimming with fresh tears. Jaufray saluted them, and then inquired for tidings of Lord Melyan; but one of them in under-tone replied, and with a sigh, that of Lord Melyan nothing did she know; she thought but of her woes. *

* This is the original of Cervantes' Princess Micomicona:

“Es matar a un gigantazo que lo pide es la alta princesa Micomicona, reyna del gran reyno Micomicon” (D. Quijote, parte i. lib. iv. cap. xxix.).

“Tell us,” said Jaufray, “why you shed these tears.”

“Since you do wish to know, my lord, I'll speak the truth. A knight, misshapen, and ill-bred to boot, wishes to force on me his odious love; and I in grief have left King Arthur's court, where I have neither found advice nor aid.”

“You do astonish me,” Sir Jaufray cried; “where was Sir Gawain then? Ivan the courteous, Coedis that brave knight, Tristrem and Calogrant, Lancelot du Lac, Eric and Caravis, and bitter Quex,—pray, where were they?”

“I know it not, by Heaven, good my lord; nor have I any trust but in Sir Jaufray, that most famous knight, whom now I seek, that he may turn my fate, and my good right maintain.”

“I will maintain it, certes,” then Jaufray said; “for I am he, the Jaufray whom you seek; but I must first conclude a matter here which before all things claims my every thought.”

The mourning lady wept and urged her suit, spite of the angry looks of Brunissende. Sir Jaufray would not yield, but to Montbrun with Melyan straight returned. The lady there, giving all cause to think that to her suzerain she bowed her will, was for long time entreated she her hand should give to Dovon's son; then they set out for Carlisle's gallant court, and in their train were twice twelve hundred maids, and full three thousand knights in brilliant arms.

The three first days of travel naught occurred; but on the fourth, having pitched their tents in a green mead, balmy with flowers, and shut in with trees, Jaufray and Melyan suddenly did hear a voice which help implored in piercing tone. The son of Dovon called for horse and arms, and would alone go seek this

cause of wail. He thus arrived upon the borders of a pond of some extent and limpid water, where a damsel stood tearing her hair and robe, and, in her grief, her face.

“My lord,” she cried, as Jaufrý hastened up, “have pity, for St. Mary's sake, upon a dame who in this pond is drowning; she was the best, the wisest of her sex.”

Jaufrý advanced; and there, in truth, he saw, within the waters battling with death, a dame, who now appeared, now slid beneath the wave. He soon alighted, and his efforts used to save her with the butt-end of his lance; but whilst his arm was thus outstretched, and he stood by the brink, the damsel pushed him with such hearty will, at once he toppled in, which she perceiving, leapt in after him.

186s

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Drawn downward by the great weight of his arms, Sir Jaufrý disappeared with those two dames. The neighing and the rage of his good horse, which pawed the ground and madly bit the earth about the pond, announced this dire mischance to Melyan. He hastened there; and finding Jaufrý drowned, he swooned away. 'Twas then the rest, 'mong whom the news had flown, galloped frill speed towards that fatal pond. Force was required to drag Lord Melyan off; for, when restored, he tried to drown himself; and, for fair Brunissende, she by her seneschal was barely saved, since, Jaufrý lost, she would not him survive.

Joining her cries to dames' and damsels' moans and to the lamentations of her lords,—

“O Jaufrý, Jaufrý!” sobbed she wildly out, “frank, generous knight, all-powerful at arms, who then hath ta'en thy life? Some traitor-blow hath struck thee by surprise; for living man could ne'er have fairly won. O Jaufrý! lone on earth, what good am I? Worthless is life, which keeps me far from thee. I pray for death, which comes not at my call. Where shall I seek this truant senseless death, which will not reunite me to my love? There 'neath yon water doth his body lie, which calls me, waits in vain.”

Then suddenly upspringing, lost, and mad with grief, she to the treach'rous water wildly flew; and 'twas by dint of strength they dragg'd her back. Then she

her tresses tore, her lovely face, till in a swoon her woe and sense were numbed.

Good Augier had her carried to her tent, where on her couch the damsels laid her down; then he returned, and with the other knights around the fatal wave did weep and groan. Such were their tears, their mourning, and their cries, that the archbishop learnt the fatal news, and to console that doleful train proceeded to the mead.

With wisdom there he preached, and in his sermon said:

“My friends, the Scripture teacheth us that God is master of all things, and when He pleaseth can again resume those gifts He hath bestowed. If, then, Sir Jaufray hath been ta'en by Him, He, as His work, might freely call him back; and it were sin to find such judgment ill, and felony towards our Sovereign Lord. They among you who held this brave knight dear, should now to heaven pray he may be saved; and should at once give o'er these cries of woe, as vain rebuke towards your Heavenly King.”



CHAPTER X. THE GIANT.

While the archbishop preached beside the pond, Sir Jaufray found himself with those two dames in a delicious land. Valley and plain, water and shady grove, city and castle,—all was charming there.

191s

Original Size -- *Medium-Size*

Before he well recovered his surprise, the lovelier of his two companions said:

“I now, sir knight, do hold you in my power; perchance this time you'll not refuse to do the service which with tears I begged of you some so short days ago.”

“Lady,” Sir Jaufray wondering replied, “methinks I ne'er set eyes on you before.”

“I am that weeping dame who did entreat you to defend her rights 'gainst Felon d'Albaru, a wicked wretch, whom God confound! This monster, who doth not deserve the name of knight, since he doth naught but plan most villain acts and set vile snares, bears on his shoulders more the head of horse or bull than that of living man. His eyes are large as eggs; his features horrible; his lips are thick and black; his fangs project from out his mouth, which is itself huge as a leopard's jaw; and against nature are his frightful shape, distended body, and misshapen legs.

“'Tis not to fright you, good my lord, I draw this portrait of my foe,—your heart ne'er harboured fear: but true it is, he doth all men alarm; so that his aspect, at a distance seen, doth scare away all such as would defend my cause. As yet in fight invincible, he hath despoiled my lands and all the country round; I but my castle now have left to me, and that tomorrow must be given up, if God and you oppose not such decree. But I would rather suffer torture, death, than fall into his power.”

“Is all this true?” asked Jaufray.

“Yea, lord, by the faith!”

“Since yours' the right, I'll battle with this foe; but you have wrong'd me, and fair Brunissende hath certes her thoughts on death.”

“She,” said the lady, “fear not, will not die; and you will me have saved.”

As thus discoursing, they the castle reached; a building strong, surrounded by good walls, with fosses, cut from out the solid rock, filled with a living stream. Jaufray was there most grandly entertained by that fair lady's vassals; and mom come, when he had dressed and armour buckled on, bathed well his face and hands, and prayed to Heaven to give him grace that day and strength to uphold the right of the oppressed, he with humility attended mass, and gave seven marks of silver.

When mass was done, he to the terrace mounted with the dame and with her damsels, and watched for Felon's coming. Short space elapsed during their stopping there, he suffering in his heart for Brunissende's just grief, ere a bright band of knights appeared upon the plain.

“Lady,” he then inquired, “is this our foe?”

“'Tis he, my lord, with all his train. He rides ahead of them.”

“Let him then come, and we will hear his cause.” Felon came gently on, bearing upon his fist a hawk most rare as it was beautiful. It had a slender neck, a large beak sharper than a razor's edge, long wings, a tail a palm at least in length, a sinewy leg, and strong and shapely foot.

Just as he came beneath the castle-walls, Felon perceived some hundred cranes all grouped about the grass of a small verdant close; at once he loosed the hawk, which flying off, began to wheel about the grassy spot, then rose up in the air to such vast height, scarce could the eye detect his presence there. Some time elapsed, then straightway down he shot, and pounced upon the cranes with cry so dread, that, fluttering and hiding in the grass, they let themselves by Felon's men be caught without attempting to escape away.

When they had thus some dozens of them ta'en, Felon recalled the bird, which on his fist again returned to perch.

“By Heaven!” quoth Jaufray, muttering half-aloud, “that man possesseth a right precious bird; never was finer seen or one more stanch; and could I win it, and return above, 'twould be a worthy present for the king.”

“You shall return full soon, my gentle lord,” the lady smiling said, “and shall bear with you, I have little doubt, both Felon's bird and arms.”

During this time the giant had drawn near; and when he stood before the

castle-bridge, with all his strength he cried:

“Come down, all you who there above do stand; and with you bring along that idle jade, whom I will make the servant of my squires.”

“My lord,” said Jaufray calmly in reply, “if you left here the jade whereof you speak, pray you to point her out, and none will strive such person to detain.”

“You know full well the meaning of my words. Give up the dame and castle, as agreed.”

“All covenant is sacred.”

“So give up the dame.”

“But if you please, my lord,” Sir Jaufray said, “where is the right by which you claim such prize?”

“The right of my good pleasure, signor knave; who soon shall dangle on a hempen rope.”

“’Tis an ill answer, savouring great pride. But all injustice doth not win its end. You would abuse your strength against a woman having no defence. Go arm yourself; for Heaven hath sent her one who will maintain her right.”

“An the saints help me,” Felon then replied, “you shall pay dearly for those words of yours.”

Giving his squire the hawk without delay, he donned his hauberk and his armour rich, buckled his helm, and seized his lance and shield; when out he cried:

“Let that pert knave descend who wants to fight: we soon shall see upon this very spot how he doth wield his arms.”

Sir Jaufray went to put his armour on, and as he did so, made to God his prayer; crossed he the drawbridge without noise or vaunt, while the fair lady and her vassals knelt and made this orison:

“Thou, Lord, who didst Thy hands upon the cross permit Thy foes to nail, and let an infidel pierce through Thy side, now grant to Jaufray strength to conquer Felon!”

The champions met within the verdant close where the hawk chased the cranes. And when the giant did Sir Jaufray see, fiercely he cried:

“Hast thou thy senses, fool, to dare meet such as I?—I, who could vanquish full a score like thee?”

“High vaunts like these,” Sir Jaufray calmly said, “I hold as little worth; for idle words are but as empty wind. Now list: if thou wilt render back unto the

dame who owns yon castle even the smallest thing thou hast unjustly filched from her away, thou mayst depart without a scratch or wound."

"Fine bargain, on my faith," the giant said; "thou dost pretend to grant me thy good grace: and I affirm I will not quit this spot till with this hand I've torn thee limb from limb."

"Now I no more can list; pride blinds thy sense. Henceforth, then, beware of me!"

And Jaufray at these words wheeled round his horse to give him a broad field, when at full gallop he did rush at Felon. Seeing him come, the latter grasped his shield, and flew to strike him with such dire shock, both horse and knight were thrown. But in the encounter Jau-fry's steady lance had broken his shield and pierced the arm right through. Like lightning Dovon's son was on his feet, his good sword firmly grasped. Mad with his wound, Felon came running up, and loudly cried:

"Eore Heaven, villain, thy last hour is come, and without mercy shall thy carcass swing!"

It was his thought to pin him to the earth; but Jaufray dealt his horse so true a blow, it clean shaved off his head. So both were now afoot, and front to front with the same arms: now we shall shortly learn which is the better knight.

Felon, all pale, with foam upon his lips, struck with his sword upon Sir Jaufray's helm a blow so strong, it pared the visor off; the latter dealt him in his turn a stroke which made his shield-arm droop. But such the force with which he gained this point his sword escaped his hand. This Felon seeing, he his foot placed on't, so that the knight might not resume the blade; then he again assailed him with such strength, fire flew from out his helm.

"Yield thee, sir knight!" the giant fiercely cried, "since thou art now disarmed."

Sir Jaufray answered not, but raised his shield to ward a blow that seemed intended to conclude the fight; for Felon's sword fell on it with such force, it shivered it in bits, and full two feet the blade struck in the earth.

Quick as the lightning's flash the youthful knight darted to raise his own, which when he held, he turned again on Felon. He, humbled in his pride, exclaimed aloud:

"Mercy, sir knight; O, mercy! pray restrain thine hand, and hold me at a ransom!"

"Since you speak thus," Sir Jaufray made reply, dragging the giant's sword

from out the ground, “render yourself to *her* you have so oppressed. As for myself, no ransom do I wish saving yon hawk which chased erewhile the cranes.”

Felon then called about him all his knights, who bore him to the castle. There, when the leech had bound his gaping wounds, they laid him on a couch borne by two quiet steeds; whilst the fair dames, followed by numerous train, led Jaufry back to where they brought him from.



CHAPTER XI. THE COURT OF CARLISLE.

Lord Melyan and his troop were still encamped upon the borders of the magic pond. Judge their surprise, their shouts, their whirl of joy, when, 'mid a numerous train, Sir Jaufray rose!

As for fair Brunissende, so great the emotion which such change produced, it found no vent in words, but in a swoon she fell into his arms. Jaufray related how the fairy's art had to her country led him through the deep and darksome waters; how he had vanquished her great giant foe, and gained the wondrous hawk for the good king. Then, the recital o'er, they gaily took their way, and at the peep of the next following morn they saw fair Carlisle's towers. Leaving their train a little way behind, Jaufray and Melyan, clad in armour bright, pranced on the glaxis with eight chosen knights. Such a brarado at King Arthur's court could not unnoticed pass. Quex, the high seneschal, soon crossed the bridge, and meeting Jaufray, cried:

“Good sooth, sir knight, thou shalt repent thy coming.”

“Tis thou shalt feel repentance more than I,” responded Jaufray, who divined the man, and meeting him full speed, did with such strength and art assail Sir Quex, he hurled him to the ground.

As he essayed to struggle to his feet, he reeled a pace, then fell, while Jaufray cried:

“Why how now, jolly Quex? what say'st, art drunk?”

Gawain had now appeared upon the field, spurring his horse to join in the affray. Sir Jaufray went to meet the worthy lord, and as he yielded up Sir Quex's horse:

“To you alone, good knight,” he said, “I yield.”

Gawain then knew the voice of Dovon's son, and pressed him in his arms; which, when his squire had learnt, he flew to take the tidings to the king. Good Arthur overjoyed then left his halls, and with a gallant host of knights and lords came forth to honour Taulat's vanquisher. Fair Brunissende he courteously did greet with all her train; then, smiling, said to Jaufray:

“Hath, then, our seneschal on you his horse thus gen'rously bestowed?”

“My lord,” the son of Dovon made reply, “perchance you may remember, on the day I begged you arms to follow Taulat's track, Sir Quex exclaimed, I'd fight

him better drunk. 'Twas then my wish to teach him, good my lord, how I can strike when fasting.”

“He is well struck, methinks,” the king replied; “and may the lesson stead him!”

Saying the words, he led Sir Jaufry in to good Queen Guenever, who, as she tended him her rosy cheek, thanked him with warmth for having 'venged her cause on Taulat. King Arthur on his side did give him thanks for all the precious gifts he there had sent,—the fair white ashen lance, the yeoman's dwarf and e'en the leper's too, Estout de Verfeil and the captive knights, Melyan, and Taulat's numerous prisoners, with Eclon d'Albaru; then was the convent-church most richly decked, to which the king in pomp conducted him with the fair Brunissende.

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More than a score of thousand gallant knights the fair betrothed accompanied. The good archbishop, who had chanted mass, before the altar joined the happy pair; then to the palace back again they came, and the great feast began. At trumpet sound, Lucas the royal steward, with twenty thousand pages clad in vests of scarlet silk, bearing fine snowy cloths, vases of silver and rich cups of gold, flocked to the hall to furnish forth the boards. Already harps had tinkled, minstrels tried to charm their hearers with the gay romance, when straight into the hall a squire rushed, crying aloud:

“To arms! good lords, to arms; defend your lives!”

“What hast thou seen, good Mend?” King Arthur said.

“O sire, I've seen a bird, a wond'rous bird, which never man of mother born described. He hath a beak at least ten palms in length, and a huge head large as a fisher's boat; his eyes like carbuncles or diamonds shine; and then his feet, good sooth, without a lie they are as big—as big as yonder door. I know not how I did escape his maw; but ne'er methinks was I so near my death.”

“Bring me my arms,” exclaimed the gallant king, “that I may learn whether this squire hath lied.”

Gawain, Sir Jaufry, and Lord Melyan, fain would follow him to help; but he

forbade, and thus alone did quit the castle. Scarce had he crossed the bridge, when he beheld this marvellous great bird. He quietly drew nigh, his shield on arm, his sword within his hand. But, spreading its grand wings, the bird escaped a blow full promptly aimed; and by both arms embracing tight the king, rose with its prey full swiftly in the air. Ladies and knights despairingly rushed out, and o'er the country spread with rending cries. The bird still rose; and when in bulk it seemed no bigger than a crane, it then the king let go. The crowd, all breathless, hastened to the spot, where they expected that their king would fall crushed from that dizzy height. Not so! ere that he reached the ground the bird had deftly seized on him again, and to the summit of a lofty tower borne him in ease away. Reposing there a space, with rapid wing it flew towards the wood, wheeled with a graceful flight, then to the palace brought the king again; itself returning to a human shape, that of the fair enchanter, whom Arthur pardoned, as he'd done at Pentecost, the fright his trick had caused. And thus did close the joyous nuptial feast of brave Sir Jaufray and fair Brunissende. The morrow-morn they left the merry court; and all the train, which called Sir Melyan lord, escorted back in triumph to Montbrun that happy pair, meeting upon their way the lady of the pond (she was in fact the fairy of Gibel), who there had come to bless their life and love.

209s

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THE END.

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