

Ivanhoe

by Walter Scott

(Adapted book. Intermediate level)

In that beautiful part of England where flows the river Don there was in ancient times a large forest, where lived famous bandits. Their adventures have been described in many English ballads.

This is our scene. The date of our story refers to a period towards the end of the reign of Richard I, who was still in prison in a foreign country, while his subjects were oppressed in every possible way. The nobles had become powerful, and each one of them wanted to have a castle and an army.

Four generations since the Conquest by Duke William of Normandy had not been enough to make one people out of the victors Normans and the defeated Anglo-Saxons. After the battle of Hastings the power had been completely placed in the hands of the Norman nobility, and almost all of Saxon princes and nobles had been destroyed.

Two men were walking slowly in the forest with a herd of pigs before them. The swineherd was grim and silent. His thick hair had a rusty dark-red colour and around his neck he had a brass ring like a dog's collar. On this necklace there was the following inscription - "Gurth, the son of Beowulph, is a born slave of Cedric of Rotherwood." His companion was a jester named Wamba. They both belonged to one man and were on their way home. "Listen," said Gurth, "a terrible storm is raging within a few miles of us, don't you hear the thunder? Let's get home before it gets here."

A group of horsemen overtook them on the road. There were ten men; the two who rode the first seemed to be important persons. One of them was obviously a member of the church of a high rank - he was a monk, but his clothes were very expensive. He was accompanied by two other monks and two servants.

The companion of the monk was a man past forty, thin, strong, tall, and muscular. His face was tanned because of the tropical sun. His piercing dark eyes told in every glance that he had seen much danger. He wore a long monastic cloak and armour underneath it. On his right shoulder there was a white cross. On one side of the saddle there was a short battle-axe, on the other - the rider's helmet with a long sword. His squires held his lance and a small triangular shield. These squires were followed by two servants, dark-skinned, with white turbans and Eastern dress. They had silver collars round their throats, and bracelets of the same metal upon their arms and legs. The knight and his followers looked wild and foreign.

Gurth knew the monk. It was the Prior of Jorvaulx Abbey, well known for many miles around as a lover of hunting and banquet. He was from a distinguished Norman family and was friends both with the younger and older aristocrats. He knew little, but it was enough to make an impression, and the high tone which he used in promoting the authority of the church made people believe he was a saint. He was generous and spent the money of his Abbey not only on himself but also on poor peasants. The Saxons bowed.

“My children,” said the Prior, “is there in this neighbourhood any good man, who, for the love of God, and devotion to Mother Church, will give two of her servants a night’s hospitality?”

The armed rider added: “Tell us, if you can, the road to - how did you call your Franklin, Prior Aymer?”

“Cedric,” answered the Prior; “Cedric the Saxon. - Tell me, good fellow, are we near his mansion, and can you show us the road?”

“The road will be uneasy to find,” answered Gurth, “and the family of Cedric go to bed early.”

“Hush,” said the Abbot, “do not speak with this reverend brother like that. He has spent his life fighting the Saracens to recover the Holy Sepulchre; he is of the order of Knights Templars. He is half a monk, half a soldier.”

“Well, then,” answered Wamba, “you should go on this road until you come to a cross, then take the road to the left and I believe you will have shelter before the storm comes on.”

The cavalcade rode on, and Gurth said to his companion, “If they follow your wise direction, the reverend fathers will hardly reach Rotherwood this night.”

“No,” said the Jester, smiling, “but they may reach Sheffield if they have good luck, and that is a good place for them.”

“You are right,” said Gurth; “it would be bad if that Aymer saw the Lady Rowena; and it would be worse for Cedric to have a quarrel, as he most likely would, with this military monk.”

In the meanwhile the riders talked on their way.

Prior Aymer said: “Remember what I told you: this wealthy Franklin is proud, fierce, jealous, and easy to irritate, he can stand against the nobles, even his neighbours, Reginald Front-de-Boeuf and Philip Malvoisin, who are no babies to fight with. He stands up so proudly for the privileges of his people that he is universally called Cedric the Saxon.”

“Then I expect much beauty in this famous Rowena to reward me for being polite with such a man as her father Cedric,” said the Templar.

“Cedric is not her father,” replied the Prior, “he is a distant relative: she is descended from higher blood than even he pretends to. He is only her guardian, but his ward is as dear to him as if she were his own child. Of her beauty you shall soon be judge; but, brother, take my advice, and be polite. Cedric the Saxon is a man who would clear his house of us, if he thinks that we offended him. And be careful how you look on Rowena. It is said he banished his only son from his family for falling in love with this beauty. But here is the clown’s sunken cross, and the night is so dark that we can hardly see which of the roads we should follow. He told us to turn to the left, I think.”

“To the right,” said Brian, “as far as I can remember.”

“To the left, certainly, the left.”

They went on quarrelling for some time, when the Templar noticed a sleeping man near the cross and touched him with the back of his lance. The man stood up, exclaiming in good French, “Whoever you may be, it is bad of you to disturb me.”

“We only want to ask you,” said the Prior, “the road to Rotherwood, the house of Cedric the Saxon.”

“I am going there myself,” replied the stranger; “and if I had a horse, I would be your guide.”

“You will have both thanks and reward, my friend,” said the Prior, “if you bring us to Cedric’s in safety.”

They gave the stranger a horse and he led them in the opposite direction from that which Wamba had recommended. The road was dangerous because of the marshes it sometimes crossed, but the stranger seemed to know the best way through them. He brought his followers safely to Rotherwood.

Aymer, who felt safe now, became curious and asked the guide who he was.

“A Palmer, just returned from the Holy Land,” was the answer.

The Prior said that he was surprised, that their guide, after such long absence, was so perfectly acquainted with the roads of the forest.

“I was born here,” answered the Palmer.

The mansion of Cedric was a big low irregular building, containing several court-yards, and which was not at all like the tall castles of the Norman nobility.

Rotherwood was not, however, without defenses, it was surrounded by a moat filled with water. There was a gate and a drawbridge.

Before this entrance the Templar blew his horn loudly - it was beginning to rain.

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The dinner was ready on a long oaken table in the wide hall of Rotherwood. There were two great chimneys at the two ends of the hall. The table was in a form of letter T with the shorter part reserved for the host and his guests. In the centre of this part stood two high chairs. On one of them sat Cedric the Saxon, a strong and frank man, though proud, hasty and jealous. He was almost sixty.

Cedric was not in a good mood. The Lady Rowena had just returned from church and was changing her clothes, and he had to wait for her. There were no news of Gurth and his herd (pigs were an important part of the Saxon’s wealth). He also wanted to see Wamba - his favourite jester - who was absent. And finally he hadn’t eaten anything since noon.

“What keeps Gurth so long? Our Norman neighbours are only waiting to steal our herds. Gurth is probably dead already! And Wamba - was he carried away to amuse some Norman lord?”

He thought about his banished son Wilfred, and irritation gave way to sadness. His thoughts were disturbed by a loud sound of horn.

His servants ran to the gates and returned with the news that “the Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx, and the good knight Brian de Bois-Guilbert, commander of the order of Knights Templars, asked for hospitality and lodging for the night”.

“Aymer, the Prior Aymer? Brian de Bois-Guilbert?” muttered Cedric; “They are both Normans... But Norman or Saxon, the hospitality of Rotherwood is unbreakable, they are welcome. Go, Hundebert, take six servants, and show the

guests to their rooms. Give them fire, and water to wash, and wine and ale; and ask the cooks to add what they can to our evening meal.

The servants went out.

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Cedric rose to receive his guests.

There was a lot of food on the table: different kinds of meat and fish together with huge loaves of bread and desserts made of fruits and honey.

When everybody was ready to eat, a servant announced the arrival of the Lady Rowena. A side-door opened, and Rowena, followed by four female servants, entered the apartment. Cedric conducted her with ceremony to the second high seat. All stood up to receive her.

The Prior whispered to the Templar: "Do not look at the Lady Rowena like that, the Saxon sees you." But Brian de Bois-Guilbert did only what he wanted to do. So he kept his eyes fixed on the Saxon beauty.

Rowena was tall, yet not too much. Her clear blue eyes beneath graceful brown eyebrows seemed capable to command as well as to beg. It was clear that she was accustomed to be respected by everyone. When Rowena noticed the Knight's eyes fixed on her, she drew the veil around her face - to show that she did not like his behaviour. Cedric noticed it. "Sir Templar," said he, "the cheeks of our Saxon maidens have seen too little of the sun to bear the fixed glance of a crusader."

"If I have offended," replied Sir Brian, "I beg the Lady Rowena's pardon."

"The Lady Rowena," said the Prior, "has punished us all. Let me hope she will be less cruel to the guests who will come to the tournament."

"Our going there," said Cedric, "is uncertain".

"Sir Knight," said Rowena with dignity, and without unveiling herself, "can I ask you to tell us the latest news from Palestine?"

"I have little to say, lady," answered Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, "except for confirmed news of truce with Saladin."

Conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who announced that there was a stranger at the gate asking to let him in.

"Do it," said Cedric, "whoever he is."

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The servant returned and whispered into the ear of his master, "It is a Jew, who calls himself Isaac of York; should I lead him into the hall?"

"St Mary," said the Abbot, crossing himself, "an unbelieving Jew, and accepted into our company!"

"But my worthy guests," said Cedric; "my hospitality must not be bounded by your dislikes. If Heaven let the whole nation of stubborn unbelievers exist for so many years, we can tolerate the presence of one Jew for a few hours."

A tall thin old man entered bowing. He had an aquiline nose, piercing black eyes and long grey hair and beard.

He was not received well. Cedric only coldly nodded to him, and nobody made room for him at the table.

While Isaac stood looking in vain for welcome or resting place, the Palmer who sat by the chimney pitied him, and stood up saying, "Old man, my clothes are dried and I have eaten, you are both wet and hungry." He took some food from the long table, put it upon the small table at which he had himself sat, and went to the other side of the hall, without waiting for the Jew's thanks.

In the meanwhile the conversation continued.

"Were there any knights in the English army," said the Lady Rowena, "who fought as bravely as the knights of the Temple, and of St John?"

"Forgive me, lady," replied De Bois-Guilbert; "the English monarch indeed brought to Palestine an army of brave knights, second only to those who were constant defenders of that blessed land."

"Second to none," said the Palmer, who had stood near enough to hear. Everybody turned in his direction.

"I say," repeated the Palmer in a firm voice, "that the English knights were second to none. I say that I saw how King Richard and five of his knights fought and defeated three knights each at a tournament in the Holy Land. I add that seven of these defeated knights were knights of the Temple - and Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert knows it is true."

It is impossible to describe the rage of the Templar. He even put his hand on the handle of his sword.

Cedric didn't notice the reaction of his guest, he asked the Palmer to name the English champions. The Palmer named five, starting with King Richard. After a moment he said that he didn't remember the sixth knight.

"Sir Palmer," said Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, "I do not believe you have forgotten his name. But I will myself name the knight, before whose lance I fell due to bad luck and a problem with my horse. It was the Knight of Ivanhoe. And I say this loudly: if he comes to England and repeats his challenge in the next tournament I will fight with him."

"He is not here," replied the Palmer, "so you'll have no answer. But if he ever returns from Palestine, I'll make sure that he meets you."

The dinner ended and the guests went to their rooms.

"Unbelieving dog," said the Templar to Isaac the Jew, when he passed him in the crowd, "are you going to the tournament?"

"I am," replied Isaac, bowing in all humility.

"Yes," said the Knight, "to make even more money - I believe there is a lot of coins in your bag."

"Not one coin, I swear!" said the Jew, "I go there only to ask the help of my brothers. I am poor!"

The Templar said, "You are a liar!" and went forward to talk to his Muslim slaves in a language unknown to anybody around.

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When the Palmer was following a servant down the corridor they met a servant of Rowena, who said in a tone of authority that her mistress wanted to speak with the

Palmer. She led him to a big and richly decorated room, where Rowena was preparing for sleep. The Palmer bowed.

“Rise, Palmer,” said Rowena graciously. “The defender of the absent has a right to favourable reception from all who value truth. Can you tell me anything about the knight of Ivanhoe?”

“I know little about this knight,” answered the Palmer. “I believe he is going to return to England soon, where you, lady, must know better than I, what is his chance of happiness.” The Lady Rowena sighed deeply.

“I wish,” said the Lady Rowena, “he were here and able to take part in the approaching tournament. If Athelstane of Coningsburgh wins the prize, Ivanhoe will hear bad news when he arrives in England. Thanks, good Palmer, for your information about the companion of my childhood”.

The Palmer bowed again, and went out of the apartment.

In the corridor he found the servant, who conducted him to that part of the building, where there was a number of small apartments for servants and travellers of lower status.

“Where does the Jew sleep?” asked the Palmer.

“In the room on your left,” answered the servant.

“And where does Gurth the swineherd sleep?” asked the stranger.

“Gurth,” replied the servant, “sleeps in the room on your right.”

The Palmer took the torch from the domestic’s hand, thanked him, and wished him good-night.

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The Palmer woke up with sunrise, said his prayers, left his room and entered the room of Isaac the Jew. The Jew was sleeping with a worried face. His hands and arms were moving convulsively, as if struggling with the nightmare.

The Palmer touched him with his staff. The old man woke up, his grey hair standing almost erect upon his head.

“Don’t fear me, Isaac,” said the Palmer, “I come as your friend.”

“May the God of Israel bless you,” said the Jew, greatly relieved. Then, collecting himself, he added in his usual tone, “And what do you want at so early an hour with the poor Jew?”

“I want to tell you,” said the Palmer, “that if you don’t leave this mansion at once, your journey may become dangerous. When the Templar crossed the hall yesterday night, he spoke to his Muslim slaves in the Saracen language, which I understand, and told them to catch the Jew on the road and bring him to the castle of Reginald Front-de-Boeuf.”

It is impossible to describe the terror which seized upon the Jew at this information.

“Holy God of Abraham!” cried he, raising his wrinkled hands, “Oh, holy Moses! Oh, blessed Aaron! They are going to torture me!”

“Isaac, listen to me,” said the Palmer, who watched the old man’s distress with compassion, “you have a reason to be afraid, but calm down, and I will show you how to escape. Leave this mansion right now, while everybody is asleep. I will guide

you by the secret roads of the forest and I will not leave you until you are safe. Or, if you don't trust me, you can remain here - Cedric the Saxon will protect you."

"Oh, he will not let me go with him!" said the Jew, "Saxon or Norman will be equally ashamed of the poor Israelite, and I cannot travel alone - Good man, I will go with you! Let us hurry!"

"We will go now," said the Palmer, "but I must find us a way out, follow me."

He went to the small room next door, which was occupied by Gurth the swineherd. - "Wake up, Gurth," said the Palmer, "wake up now. Open the small gate, and let out the Jew and me."

Gurth was offended at the familiar and commanding tone in which the Palmer spoke.

"Both Jew and yourself must wait until the big gate is open - we don't let our visitors out in secret."

"Still," said the Palmer, "you will do it for me."

So saying, the Palmer leaned and whispered something in swineherd's ear in Saxon. Gurth jumped up as if electrified. The Palmer raised his finger and added, "Gurth, be careful. I say, open the small gate and give us two mules - you will know more soon."

Gurth hurried to obey him.

"I wish I knew," said Wamba, who was watching this scene, when his friend left, "what you Palmers learn in the Holy Land."

"To say our prayers, fool," answered the Palmer.

"Something more powerful than that," answered the Jester; "for when did a prayer make Gurth do something?"

At this moment Gurth came back with two mules and let the travellers out. When the travellers were mounting the mules, the Palmer reached his hand to Gurth, who kissed it.

The swineherd stood gazing after the travellers until they were lost in the forest.

"You know," said Wamba, "my good friend Gurth, that you are strangely polite on this summer morning? I wish I were a monk - I would get much more from you than a kiss of the hand."

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Meanwhile the travellers went through the forest in a great hurry. After some time they paused at the top of a hill, and the Palmer said, pointing to the town which lay beneath them, "This is the town of Sheffield, where you can easily find many of your people who will accept you. Here we part."

"Not until you have the poor Jew's thanks," said Isaac.

"I don't want any reward," answered the Palmer.

"Stay, stay," said the Jew, "the Jew is poor - yes, Isaac is the beggar of his tribe - but forgive me if I guess what you need most at this moment. You wish even now for a horse and armour."

The Palmer stopped, and turned suddenly towards the Jew. - "How did you guess?" said he, hastily.

“Well,” said the Jew, smiling, “I’ve heard it in your voice and I have seen a knight’s chain hidden under the dress of the Palmer. I know what you want and I can supply it.” Isaac wrote a note and gave it to the Palmer, saying, “In the town of Leicester all men know the rich Jew Kirjath Jairam of Lombardy, give him this scroll and he will give you a horse and the armour you need. After the tournament you will return them safely - unless you have the money to pay for them.”

“Thank you,” said the Palmer, and they parted and took different roads for the town of Sheffield.

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Near the town of Ashby there was a large field which was a perfect place for the tournament. A long space surrounded by a wooden palisade formed the lists. There were two entrances: at the southern and at the northern ends of the enclosed space.

On a platform beyond the southern entrance there were five big tents of the five knights-challengers. Before each tent lay the shield of the knight by whom it was occupied. The central tent, as the place of honour, had been assigned to Brian be Bois-Guilbert, who was the leader of the challengers.

The northern entrance to the lists was prepared for those knights who wanted to enter the lists with the challengers.

Around the lists there were temporary galleries for those ladies and nobles who were expected to come to the tournament. Other spectators occupied the narrow space between these galleries and the lists or sat on the elevated ground behind the galleries.

One gallery in the centre of the eastern side of the lists was higher than the others, more richly decorated, and had a sort of throne in it. This place of honour was prepared for Prince John and his followers. Opposite to this royal gallery was another, with a throne decorated in pink and green. That was the seat of the Queen of Beauty and of Love.

When spectators of every sort came to take places, there were many quarrels. Two heralds and some guards were responsible for maintaining the order. Gradually the galleries were filled with knights and nobles. The lower and interior space was soon filled by yeomen. Even Isaac the Jew, who came to the tournament in his most expensive clothes, tried to find a better place for himself and his beautiful daughter Rebecca. He was not afraid to do so, because on such public occasions Jews were under the protection of the King and his laws, so Isaac even tried to move some Normans from their places, but he had little success.

At that moment Prince John entered the lists accompanied by his followers. Among them were the Prior of Jorvaulx and the leaders of his mercenaries together with several Knights Templars and Knights of St John. The Prince noticed the ambitious movement of Isaac towards the higher places. The quick eye of Prince John instantly recognized the Jew, but was much more attracted by his beautiful daughter.

Rebecca was indeed very beautiful. Her turban of yellow silk suited well with her dark face. The brilliancy of her eyes, the arch of her eyebrows, her elegant

aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearls, and her black hair - all these made her look lovely.

“Who is she, Isaac? Your wife or your daughter?” asked Prince John.

“My daughter Rebecca, your Grace,” answered Isaac, with a low bow.

“Daughter or wife, she should be given place according to her beauty and your wealth. Who sits above there?” he continued, looking at the gallery. “Saxon fools! Let them sit close, and make room for my prince of usurers and his lovely daughter.”

The Saxons who occupied the gallery were the family of Cedric the Saxon with his friend Athelstane of Coningsburgh, who was very much respected by all the Saxons of the north of England due to his descent from the last Saxon monarchs of England. But his royal blood brought to Athelstane many defects of his ancestors. He was strong and good-looking, but inactive and so slow in making decisions, that he was generally called Athelstane the Unready.

It was this person that the Prince commanded to make place for Isaac and Rebecca. Athelstane was offended and was not going to obey, but he didn't know how to react to this command, so he just sat there, staring at the Prince with an astonishment which was even funny. But Prince John didn't think it was so.

“The Saxon is either asleep or doesn't pay attention to me. Wake him up with your lance, De Bracy,” he said to a knight who rode near him, the leader of a band of mercenaries. Even the followers of Prince John did not think it was a good idea, but De Bracy extended his long lance over the space which separated the gallery from the lists. The Athelstane was not ready for this, but Cedric quickly took out his short sword and cut off the head of the lance with one blow. The Prince was very angry, but he was stopped from threatening Cedric by his own followers, who gathered around him asking him to be patient. The crowd answered in loud applause to the bold action of Cedric.

The Prince was looking for a safe and easy victim for his anger, when he noticed some archer who continued to clasp hands even when he saw the frowning face of the Prince. John asked why he was clasping.

“I always clasp,” said the yeoman, “when I see a good shot or an elegant blow.”

“Then you can hit the mark yourself, I hope,” said the Prince.

“An archer's mark, and at archer's distance, I can hit,” answered the yeoman.

“We will try your skill!”

“I will not run from the trial,” said the yeoman calmly.

“Now, stand up, you Saxons,” said the angry Prince, “because, since I have said it, the Jew will have his seat among you!”

“By no means, your Grace! - it is not fit for us to sit with the rulers of the land,” said the Jew.

“Go up, dog, when I command you,” said Prince John, “or I will have your skin taken off and used for decoration.”

After this command the Jew began to climb the stairs which led up to the gallery.

“Let me see who will stop him”, said the Prince fixing his eye on Cedric, who seemed ready to throw the Jew down head first.

The catastrophe was prevented by the clown Wamba. He stood up between his master and Isaac and put before the face of the Jew a piece of salted pork which he was keeping beneath his cloak in case the tournament was too long. When the Jew saw pork right before his nose, he took a step back, stumbled, and rolled down the steps, - to the amusement of everybody around, including Prince John and his followers.

“Give me some prize, Prince,” said Wamba, “I have defeated my enemy in fair fight with my sword,” he added, showing the piece of pork.

“Who are you, noble champion?” said Prince John, still laughing.

“A fool by right of descent,” answered the Jester, “I am Wamba, the son of Witless.”

“Make room for the Jew in the lower row,” said Prince John, “it is not right to place the defeated next to the victor. Here, Isaac, lend me some money.”

Since the Jew was slow to obey his command, the Prince took his purse, threw to Wamba a couple of the gold coins which it contained, and continued his career round the lists, leaving the Jew to the laughter of those around him, and himself receiving as much applause from the spectators as if he had done something honest and honourable.

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Soon the tournament began. The barriers were opened, and five knights rode slowly into the lists. All five were splendidly armed. The champions rode through the lists to the other end. As the procession entered the lists, the sound of a wild Barbaric music was heard from behind the tents of the challengers, where the performers were concealed. The music was of Eastern origin and seemed at once to bid welcome and to pronounce challenge to the knights as they advanced. The five knights came to the tents of the challengers, and there each touched slightly, and with the reverse of his lance, the shield of the antagonist whom he wished to oppose. This showed that they didn't want to fight to the death.

The challengers mounted their horses, and, headed by Brian de Bois-Guilbert rode into the lists and opposed themselves individually to the knights who had touched their shields.

At the sound of trumpets, they started out against each other at full gallop, and such was the superior skill or good fortune of the challengers, that those opposed to Bois-Guilbert, Malvoisin, and Front-de-Boeuf rolled on the ground. Only one knight maintained the honour of his party, and parted equally with the Knight of St John, both breaking their lances without advantage on either side.

The shouts of the crowd announced the triumph of the challengers.

A second and a third party of knights took the field, but still the challengers won. Not one of them lost his seat or missed his target. After the fourth party there was a long pause. The spectators were not very satisfied, because Malvoisin and Front-de-Boeuf were unpopular for their characters.

Prince John began to talk to his followers about making ready the banquet and giving the prize to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had, with a single spear, overthrown two knights, and defeated a third.

After some time, when the Eastern music of the challengers sounded again, it was answered by a solitary trumpet. All eyes turned to see the new champion which these sounds announced. On his shield there was a young oak-tree pulled up by the roots, with the word Disinherited. He rode a good black horse, and as he passed through the lists he gracefully saluted the Prince and the ladies by lowering his lance. The skill with which he managed his horse, and something of youthful grace which he showed in his manner, won him the favour of the spectators, which some of the simple people expressed by calling out, "Touch the Hospitaller's shield, he is the weakest."

The champion however rode straight to the central tent and struck with the sharp end of his spear the shield of Brian de Bois-Guilbert. All stood astonished at his bravery, but none more than Bois-Guilbert himself, who did not expect challenge to mortal combat and was standing carelessly at the entrance of his tent.

"Have you been to church this morning, brother," said the Templar, "and have you gone to confession, that you put your life in such danger?"

"I am fitter to meet death than you are," answered the Disinherited Knight.

"Then take your place in the lists," said Bois-Guilbert, "and look for the last time upon the sun. This night you will sleep in paradise."

"Thank you for your advice," replied the Disinherited Knight, "and to answer it, I advise you to take a fresh horse and a new lance, for by my honour you will need both."

After this he rode to the northern end of the lists, where he stood still, in expectation of his antagonist.

This piece of advice made Brian de Bois-Guilbert very angry, however he did not ignore it. He changed his horse for a fresh one of great strength. He chose a new and a tough spear. He also laid aside his shield, which had received some little damage, and took another from his squires.

The two champions stood opposite each other at the two ends of the lists. The trumpets gave the signal and the champions vanished from their posts with the speed of lightning, and clashed in the centre of the lists with the sound of thunderbolt. The lances burst into pieces, and it seemed for a moment that both knights would fall. However they managed their horses and returned to their positions, where each received a fresh lance from his squire.

A loud shout announced the interest of the spectators, but when the knights returned to their positions there was a silence, so deep and so dead, that it seemed the people were afraid even to breathe. After a short pause the champions again met in the centre of the lists, with the same speed, the same skill, the same violence, but not the same result as before.

The Templar aimed at the centre of his antagonist's shield, and struck it so hard that the Disinherited Knight was shaken in his saddle. On the other hand, that champion had, at first, directed the point of his lance towards Bois-Guilbert's shield,

but, changing his aim almost in the moment of the clash, he pointed it to the helmet, a more difficult aim which also made the shock more irresistible. He hit the Norman hard on the helmet. The Templar was a very good rider, but when the straps of his saddle burst, he fell on the ground together with his horse.

In a moment he was on his feet, mad with fury and ready to fight with his sword. The Disinherited Knight jumped from his horse and also took out his sword. The marshals of the field, however, separated them because the laws of the tournament did not on this day permit this kind of fighting.

“We will meet again,” said the Templar, “and where there are none to separate us.”

“If we do not,” said the Disinherited Knight, “the fault will not be mine.”

With these words the Disinherited Knight returned to his first station.

He then commanded a herald to announce to the challengers, that he was ready to meet them in the order in which they chose to advance against him.

The gigantic Front-de-Boeuf in black armour was the first who took the field. On his white shield there was a black bull’s head and the words, “Beware, I’m here”. This champion lost a stirrup in the fight and the judges decided that the Disinherited knight was the victor.

In the stranger’s third fight with Sir Philip Malvoisin, he was equally successful; striking that baron so hard on the helmet, that its laces broke, and the helmet fell off, and Malvoisin was declared defeated like his companions.

In his fourth combat with De Grantmesnil, the Disinherited Knight showed as much courtesy as he had showed courage and skill in the previous fights. De Grantmesnil’s horse, which was young, ran from its course and the rider couldn’t aim, but the stranger did not use this situation, he raised his lance and passed his antagonist without touching him. Then he sent a herald to invite his antagonist to meet for the second time. This De Grantmesnil declined, saying he was defeated by the courtesy of his opponent.

Ralph de Vipont summed up the list of the stranger’s triumphs, when he fell to the ground with such force, that the blood ran from his nose and his mouth, and he was carried away senseless.

The acclamations of thousands applauded the unanimous award of the Prince and marshals, announcing that day’s victor to be the Disinherited Knight.

* * *

The marshals of the field were the first to offer their congratulations to the victor. They asked him, at the same time, to remove his helmet before they conducted him to receive the prize of the day’s tourney from the hands of Prince John. The Disinherited Knight refused politely to do so, saying that he could not at this time allow his face to be seen. The marshals were perfectly satisfied by this reply, because it was then usual for knights to swear to remain incognito for a certain time or until some particular adventure was achieved. So the marshals announced to Prince John the winner’s desire to remain unknown.

John was both curious and displeased with the result of the tournament, in which the challengers whom he supported had been defeated by one knight.

“What do you think, my lords,” he said, turning round to his followers, “who can this proud knight be?”

“I cannot guess,” answered De Bracy.

“The victor,” said the marshals, “is still waiting the pleasure of Your Highness.”

“It is our pleasure,” answered John, “that he will wait until we can guess who he is.”

“Your Grace,” said Waldemar Fitzurse, “you cannot make the victor wait until we tell Your Highness something that we cannot know. At least I can’t guess who he can be, unless he is one of the knights who went with King Richard to Palestine.”

A whisper arose among the Prince’s followers, “It might be the King - it might be Richard the Lionheart himself!”

“God forbid!” said Prince John, turning at the same time as pale as death; “Waldemar! - De Bracy! Brave knights and gentlemen, remember your promises, and stand truly by me!”

“There is no danger,” said Waldemar Fitzurse, “Are you so little acquainted with the gigantic body of your father’s son, as to think that it can fit inside this armour? - Marshals, you will best serve the Prince by bringing the victor to the throne. - Look at him more closely,” he continued, “Your Highness will see that he is much shorter and smaller than King Richard.”

The marshals brought forward the Disinherited Knight to the foot of wooden stairs, which led to Prince John’s throne. There he received the war-horse which was the prize of that day. Then the knight rode round the lists to show the Prince’s present to the public.

In the meanwhile, Prior of Jorvaulx had reminded Prince John, that the victor must now show his good judgment by selecting from among the beauties who were present a lady who would fill the throne of the Queen of Beauty and of Love and deliver the prize of the tournament on the following day. The Prince made a sign for the knight, who turned towards the throne and remained motionless, expecting John’s commands.

“Sir Disinherited Knight,” said Prince John, “since that is the only title by which we can address you, it is now your duty, as well as privilege, to name the beautiful lady, who, as Queen of Honour and of Love, is to be a Sovereign on the next day’s festival. - Raise your lance.”

The Knight obeyed; and Prince John placed upon its point a crown of green satin with gold.

The knight went around the lists again, this time slowly - to examine the beautiful faces. At last the champion paused beneath the balcony in which the Lady Rowena was placed.

Whether from indecision, or some other motive of hesitation, the champion of the day remained stationary for more than a minute, while the eyes of the silent audience were fixed upon his motions, and then, gradually and gracefully sinking the point of his lance, he put the crown which it supported at Rowena’s feet. The

trumpets sounded and the heralds proclaimed the Lady Rowena the Queen of Beauty and of Love for the following day.

This was the end of the first day of the tournament.

* * *

The Disinherited Knight had only one squire. This man helped his master to take off his armour, and placed food and wine on the table before him.

The Knight had not finished eating, when his servant told him that five men wanted to speak with him. The Disinherited Knight pulled the hood of his cloak over his head to hide his face and went out of his tent. The five men were squires of the challengers, each holding his master's horse loaded with the armour in which he had fought that day.

"According to the laws of knights," said the first of these men, "I, Baldwin de Oyley, a squire of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, offer you the horse and armour used by Brian de Bois-Guilbert in this day's tournament, leaving it with your nobleness to keep it or to take the same sum in money."

The other squires repeated the same formula, and then stood waiting for the decision of the Disinherited Knight.

"To you four, sirs," replied the Knight, addressing those who had last spoken, "and to your honourable and brave masters, I have one common reply. Send my compliments to your masters and tell them that I ask them to pay for their horses and armour."

"We offer you, each of us," answered the squire of Reginald Front-de-Boeuf, "a hundred golden coins in ransom of these horses and suits of armour."

"It is enough," said the Disinherited Knight. "Half the sum I need to accept, and from the remaining half, distribute one part among yourselves, my squires, and divide the other half between the heralds and the servants."

The squires bowed and thanked the knight for his generosity. The Disinherited Knight then addressed Baldwin, the squire of Brian de Bois-Guilbert. "From your master," said he, "I will accept neither arms nor ransom. Say to him in my name, that our fighting is not ended - no, not till we have fought with swords as well as with lances - on foot as well as on horseback. To this mortal quarrel he has himself challenged me, and I will not forget the challenge."

"My master," answered Baldwin, "will never use this horse or this armour again."

"Don't leave them here, take them for your own use then, they are yours."

Baldwin bowed and left with his companions, and the Disinherited Knight entered the tent.

"Thus far, Gurth," he said to his servant, "the reputation of English knights has not suffered in my hands."

"And I," said Gurth, "for a Saxon swineherd, have well played the role of a Norman squire."

"Take this bag of gold to Ashby," said his master, "and find Isaac the Jew of York. Pay him for the horse and arms with which his credit supplied me. And here are ten coins for yourself."

Gurth thanked his master and left him to his thoughts.

When Gurth came to Isaac's house in Ashby, a servant let him in. Isaac and his daughter were sitting in a room decorated in the Eastern fashion.

The door opened, and Gurth entered.

"Are you Isaac the Jew of York?" said Gurth, in Saxon.

"I am," replied Isaac, in the same language, - "and who are you?"

"It doesn't matter," answered Gurth, "I bring money from the Disinherited Knight." It is the price of the armour Kirjath Jairam of Leicester supplied to him on your recommendation. The horse is returned to your stable. I want to know the amount of money which I am to pay for the armour."

"I said he was a good man!" exclaimed Isaac joyfully. "A cup of wine will do you no harm," he added, filling and handing to the swineherd a cup of very expensive wine. "And how much money," continued Isaac, "have you brought with you?"

"A small sum."

"Well, then" - said Isaac, hesitating between his love of money and a new desire to be generous, "if I should say that I would take eighty golden coins for the good horse and the rich armour, do you have enough money to pay me?"

"Barely," said Gurth, though the sum demanded was more reasonable than he had expected, "and it will leave my master almost without money. Nevertheless, if this is your demand, I must be content."

"Fill yourself another cup of wine," said the Jew.

Gurth put eighty coins upon the table. The Jew's hand trembled with joy when he counted his eighty pieces of gold.

"I believe you have more coins in that bag," he added.

Gurth smiled when he replied, "About the same amount that I have paid you." He then drank a third goblet of wine without invitation and left the apartment.

When Isaac turned to speak to his daughter, he saw that she had left the apartment.

In the meanwhile, Gurth had reached the hall but was not sure where the door was. At this moment a figure in white with a small silver lamp in her hand asked him to come to another room. Gurth hesitated, then followed his guide to another room where he found to his surprise and relief that it was the daughter of the Jew.

She asked him how much he paid Isaac. He answered.

"My father, good fellow," said Rebecca, "owes your master for his kindness much more than these armour and horse could pay. In this purse you will find a hundred golden coins. Give to your master eighty and take the rest for yourself. Go now, be careful on the road at night."

"By St Dunstan," said Gurth, as he stumbled in the dark, "this is not a Jewish maiden, she is an angel from heaven! Ten golden coins from my brave young master - twenty from this pearl of Zion - Oh, a happy day! - One more day like this and I will buy my freedom."

* * *

The adventures of Gurth did not end. When he left the village, he found himself on a dark road. The trees on both sides caught the light of the harvest moon.

Gurth began to walk faster but it didn't save him. Four men suddenly jumped on him, two from each side of the road, and seized him so fast, that he wasn't able to resist. "Surrender," said one of them, "we are your saviors, we will save you from your money."

Gurth was dragged through the forest and then to an open space which was lighted by the moon. Here the robbers were joined by two other persons, apparently belonging to the band. Each had a short sword and a staff, and Gurth could now observe that all the six wore masks.

"What money do you have?" said one of the thieves.

"Thirty coins of my own property," answered Gurth.

"He should lose it!" shouted the robbers; "a Saxon has thirty coins, and returns from a village without getting drunk! He should lose all he has."

"I kept it to buy my freedom," said Gurth.

"You are a fool," replied one of the thieves "three cups of ale would make you as free as your master."

"A sad truth," replied Gurth, "but if these same thirty coins can buy my freedom from you, let me go and I will pay them to you."

"Hold," said one who seemed to be the leader, "this bag which you have, as I can feel through your cloak, contains more coin than you have told us."

"It is my master's," answered Gurth, "about which I would not have spoken a word, had you been satisfied with taking my own money."

"You are an honest fellow," replied the robber, "and your thirty coins may yet escape, if you don't lie to us." So saying, he took from Gurth's breast the large leathern bag, in which was the rest of the money, and then continued his interrogation. - "Who is your master?"

"The Disinherited Knight," said Gurth.

"Whose good lance," replied the robber, "won the prize in today's tournament? What is his name and lineage?"

"He wants," answered Gurth, "to keep them in secret."

"How did your master gain this gold?"

"By his good lance," answered Gurth, "These bags contain the ransom of four good horses, and four good suits of armour."

"How much is there?" demanded the robber.

"Two hundred coins."

"Name those who paid the gold."

Gurth did so.

"The armour and horse of the Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert, at what ransom were they held? - You see you cannot deceive me."

"My master," replied Gurth, "will take nothing from the Templar except for his life."

"And what were you doing at Ashby with such a sum of money?"

"I went there to return to Isaac the Jew of York," replied Gurth, "the price of a suit of armour with which he fitted my master for this tournament."

“And how much did you pay to Isaac?” - “I paid to Isaac,” said the Saxon, “eighty coins, and he restored me a hundred.”

“What?!” exclaimed all the robbers at once, “You are lying!”

“What I tell you,” said Gurth, “is as true as the moon is in heaven. You will find the money in a silken purse separate from the rest of the gold.”

The Captain said, “You are talking about a Jew - as unable to return gold, as the dry sand of the desert is to return water.”

“It is, however, as I say,” said Gurth.

“Strike a light,” said the Captain, “I will examine this miracle.”

Somebody made a light, and the robber examined the purse. The others crowded around him, and even the two who were holding Gurth relaxed while they stretched their necks to see. By a sudden effort Gurth shook himself free of their hold, and might have escaped, but he didn't want to leave his master's property. He took a staff, struck down the Captain and almost succeeded in taking back the money. The thieves, however, were too strong for him, and again secured both the bag and himself.

“Knavel!” said the Captain, getting up, “you have broken my head, and other men of our sort would have killed you. I'll tell you what I'm going to do, only stand still. - Friends!” he then said, addressing his band, “this purse has words in Hebrew on it, and I well believe the yeoman's story is true. We will not take his master's money. He is too like ourselves for us to rob him.”

“Like us?” answered one of the band, “I would like to hear why.”

“You fool,” answered the Captain, “is he not poor and disinherited as we are? - Doesn't he win his food with his sword as we do? - Has he not beaten Front-de-Boeuf and Malvoisin, as we would beat them if we could?”

The man replied: “And this man, - he too will leave unharmed?”

“Not if you can harm him,” replied the Captain. “Here, fellow,” he said to Gurth, “can you use the staff?”

“I think,” said Gurth, “you can answer that question.”

“True,” replied the Captain, “do the same for this fellow, and you will pass freely. - Take your staff, Miller,” he added, “and keep your head, and give the fellow a staff - there is enough light to fight.”

The two champions stepped forward into the centre of the open space. For a long time they fought equally, until the Miller began to lose temper because his opponent was strong and his companions started to laugh at him. This gave Gurth the opportunity to win which he used immediately.

The Miller pressed furiously forward, using both ends of his weapon, while Gurth defended himself against the attack, covering himself by shifting his weapon with great speed. When the Miller was out of breath, Gurth pretended to attack him with one side of his staff and suddenly struck him on the left side of the head with the other end of the weapon. The Miller fell to the ground.

“Well done!” shouted the robbers, “Old England forever! The Saxon has saved both his purse and his head, and the Miller has met his match.”

“You can go, my friend,” said the Captain, “and I will give you two men to guide you to your master’s tent. Only remember that you have refused to tell his name - don’t ask about ours, and don’t try to discover who we are.”

Gurth thanked the Captain, and promised to follow his recommendation. Two of the bandits took him to the open place from which he could see the lists and the tents. Here the thieves stopped.

“Good night to you, kind sirs,” said Gurth and he went to the tent of his master, where he told the knight about his adventures.

The Disinherited Knight was filled with astonishment, no less at the generosity of Rebecca, than that of the robbers.

* * *

Next morning was dedicated to the general tournament. The Disinherited Knight was the leader of one group of knights and Brian de Bois-Guilbert was the first champion of the other band. Many knights who were not prepared to challenge a single opponent of high reputation wanted to show themselves in the general combat. On the present occasion, there were about fifty knights on each side.

Simple people and nobles all came to watch the fight, including Cedric the Saxon with the Lady Rowena. Athelstane, however, put on his armour and, to Cedric’s surprise, joined the part of the Templar. His only reason for doing so was to punish the champion of the preceding day for choosing Rowena (whom Athelstane considered to be his bride) as the Queen of Love and Beauty.

As soon as Prince John saw that the Queen of the day had arrived upon the field, he rode forward to meet her, dismounted and helped the Lady Rowena to get down from her horse.

“This is,” said Prince John, “how we set the example of loyalty to the Queen of Love and Beauty.” Then the Prince led Rowena to the seat of honour opposite his own.

The knights, entering at either end of the lists in long procession, arranged themselves in two lines on each side. The leader of each party took the place in the centre of the first line.

The trumpets sounded, the knights lowered their spears, and the first line of each party rushed forward. They met in the middle of the lists with a terrible noise. The second line of each party advanced more slowly to replace the defeated.

The results of the clash were not immediately seen, because of the dust raised by so many horses. When the fight became visible, half the knights on each side were dismounted. Some had already jumped to their feet and were attacking those of their antagonists who were in the same situation. The mounted knights, whose lances had been almost all broken, were now closely engaged with their swords, shouting their war-cries.

The leaders of each party tried to find each other on the field, but again and again had to fight some brave knight from the opposite band. When many knights were defeated, the Templar and the Disinherited Knight met hand to hand. Their strokes were so furious, that the spectators all began to shout in admiration.

But at this moment the party of the Disinherited Knight was in a dangerous situation. The gigantic arm of Front-de-Boeuf on the one side, and the enormous strength of Athelstane on the other defeated many brave opponents. When they were free from antagonists, they decided to help the Templar. Turning their horses at the same moment, the Norman rushed against the Disinherited Knight on the one side, and the Saxon on the other.

“Beware! Sir Disinherited!” was shouted so universally, that the knight became aware of his danger. He made his horse step back so that Athelstane and Front-de-Boeuf rushed between him and the Templar unable to stop. However, some minutes later they joined their leader in his attack.

Nothing could have saved their antagonist, except for the remarkable strength and activity of the noble horse which he had won on the preceding day. The horse of Bois-Guilbert was wounded, and those of Front-de-Boeuf and Athelstane were both tired with the weight of their gigantic masters in complete armour. The skill of the Disinherited Knight and the activity of his noble animal enabled him for a few minutes to keep at sword’s point his three antagonists, although it was clear that he must soon be defeated.

There was among the followers of the Disinherited Knight a tall champion in black armour, mounted on a black horse. This knight had showed so little interest in the fight, that the spectators called him the Lazy Knight. But when this knight discovered the leader of his party in such hard circumstances, he came to his assistance immediately. He struck Front-de-Boeuf on his head, and Front-de-Boeuf rolled on the ground. The Lazy Knight then turned his horse towards Athelstane, took from the hand of the clumsy Saxon the battle-axe, and gave him such a blow that Athelstane also lay senseless on the field. After this the knight seemed to resume the laziness of his character and returned calmly to the northern end of the lists, leaving his leader to cope with Brian de Bois-Guilbert. This was no longer difficult. The Templar’s horse had lost much blood, and gave way under the shock of the Disinherited Knight’s attack. Brian de Bois-Guilbert rolled on the field, caught by the stirrup, from which he was unable to draw his foot. His antagonist jumped from his horse, waved his sword over the head of his adversary, and commanded him to surrender, when Prince John saved the Templar from confessing himself defeated by throwing down his sceptre and putting an end to the conflict.

The squires, who had found it dangerous and difficult to help their masters during the fight, now ran to the wounded.

In this way ended the tournament of Ashby-de-la-Zouche. Four knights died in the lists and more than thirty were desperately wounded, and the rest carried the marks of the conflict to the grave.

Prince John had to name the knight who had done best, and he declared that the honour of the day remained with the knight who was called the ‘Lazy Knight’. It was pointed out to the Prince, that the victory had been in fact won by the Disinherited Knight, but Prince John said that the Disinherited Knight and his party only won due to the powerful assistance of the Knight in the Black Armour.

To everybody's surprise, however, this knight could not be found. He had left the lists and had been observed by some spectators to move in the direction of the forest. It became necessary to name another knight to receive the honours. Prince John had now no further excuse for resisting the claim of the Disinherited Knight, whom, therefore, he named the champion of the day.

Through a field slippery with blood the marshals of the lists again conducted the victor to the foot of Prince John's throne.

"Disinherited Knight," said Prince John, "we announce to you your right to claim and receive from the hands of the Queen of Love and Beauty the Crown of Honour, which you have justly deserved." The Knight bowed low and gracefully, but returned no answer.

The marshals conducted the Disinherited Knight across the lists to the foot of that throne of honour which was occupied by the Lady Rowena.

On the lower step of this throne the champion was made to kneel down. Rowena, descending from her station with a graceful and dignified step, was about to place the crown which she held in her hand upon the helmet of the champion, when the marshals exclaimed with one voice, "His head must be bare." The knight muttered faintly a few words, which showed his reluctance. From love of form or from curiosity the marshals paid no attention to this and took off the victor's helmet, and everybody saw a well-formed face of a young man of twenty-five. This was Wilfred of Ivanhoe. His face was very pale.

When Rowena saw it, she gave a weak cry, but then, controlling emotion and making herself proceed, she placed upon the head of the victor his splendid prize.

The knight kissed the hand of the lovely Sovereign and then fainted at her feet.

Cedric, who had been struck mute by the sudden appearance of his banished son, now rushed forward to separate him from Rowena. But the marshals of the field, guessing the cause of Ivanhoe's fall, took off his armour, and found that he was severely wounded.

* * *

The name of Ivanhoe flew from mouth to mouth and it soon reached the circle of the Prince.

"Front-de-Boeuf must prepare to give back the mansion and lands of Ivanhoe," said De Bracy.

"Front-de-Boeuf," replied John, "is a man more ready to swallow three mansions such as Ivanhoe, than to give one of them back".

Waldemar Fitzurse, who went to see Ivanhoe, now returned. "The knight," said he, "is likely to make little problem for your Highness and to leave Front-de-Boeuf in the quiet possession of his gains - he is severely wounded. And I was touched to see the grief of the Queen of Love and Beauty. This Lady Rowena suppressed her sorrow with such dignity, that it could only be discovered by her folded hands, and her tearless eye, which trembled when she looked at the body before her."

"Who is this Lady Rowena," said Prince John, "of whom we have heard so much?"

“A Saxon heiress of large possessions,” replied the Prior Aymer; “a rose of loveliness and a pearl of wealth.”

“We will make her happy again,” said Prince John, “by marrying her to a Norman. What do you say, De Bracy? Do you want a wife?”

“If I like her lands, my lord,” answered De Bracy, “it will be hard to disappoint me with the bride, and I will be deeply grateful to Your Highness.”

“We will not forget it,” said Prince John.

Prince John was going to give the signal for retiring from the lists, when a small scroll was put into his hand.

“Where from?” said Prince John, looking at the messenger.

“A Frenchman brought it here, who said, that he had ridden night and day to put it into the hands of Your Highness,” replied he.

The Prince looked at the inscription and the seal, and then read the note. It said: “Take care of yourself, the Devil is free!”

The Prince turned as pale as death. When he recovered from the shock, he showed the note to Waldemar Fitzurse and De Bracy. “It means,” he added, “that my brother Richard has obtained his freedom.”

“It is time, then,” said Fitzurse, “to collect our party at York. Let the archers shoot a few rounds at the target, and give them a prize. This will be enough for the Saxons, and tomorrow we will go on our way.”

“I thank you, Waldemar,” said the Prince, “you have reminded me, that I have a debt to pay to that peasant who yesterday insulted our person.”

The prize for the best archer was a horn decorated with silver. Eight yeomen presented themselves as competitors.

Prince John saw that his yeoman stood apart. “Fellow,” said Prince John, “I guessed that you were not a good archer, and now I see that you do not participate in the competition.”

“I do not want to upset your Grace in case a third prize is won by someone you dislike.”

Prince John asked, “What is your name, yeoman?”

“Locksley,” answered the yeoman.

“Then, Locksley,” said Prince John, “you will shoot in your turn, when these yeomen have showed their skill. If you win the prize, I will add twenty coins to it, but if you lose it, you will be put to shame and punished.”

“This is not fair, proud Prince,” said the yeoman, “but I will obey your command.”

A target was placed at one end of the southern avenue which led to the lists. One by one the archers, stepping forward, shot their arrows. Only ten out of twenty-four hit the target. Of the ten which hit the target, two within the inner ring were shot by Hubert, a forester in the service of Malvoisin who was called a winner.

“Now, Locksley,” said Prince John to the bold yeoman, with a bitter smile, “will you try to compete with Hubert?”

Locksley agreed.

Hubert, who, as the victor in the first trial of skill, had the right to shoot first, took his aim with great care. At length he made his shot. The arrow hit the inner ring of the target, but not exactly in the centre.

“Do not forget about the wind, Hubert,” said Locksley, bending his bow.

So saying, and without stopping to aim, Locksley shot his arrow. The arrow hit the target two inches nearer to the white spot which marked the centre than that of Hubert.

“A man can only do his best,” said Hubert; “but my grandfather bent a good long bow at Hastings, and I will not dishonour his memory.”

He then resumed his place, and paid attention to a very light wind, which had just arisen, and shot so successfully that his arrow hit the very centre of the target.

“You cannot be better, Locksley,” said the Prince.

“I will hit his arrow, however,” replied Locksley and sent his arrow with a little more precaution than before. It hit the arrow of Hubert and split it to pieces. The people who stood around were so astonished, that they could not even shout. “This must be the devil, and no man of flesh and blood,” whispered the yeomen to each other.

Locksley won. He said, “These twenty coins I leave to Hubert, who has this day bent as good a bow as his grandfather did at Hastings.”

Then he mixed with the crowd and disappeared.

* * *

Waldemar Fitzurse worked hard to reunite the members of Prince John’s Party, who were frightened by the rumours of Richard’s freedom.

“If Richard returns,” Fitzurse said to them, “he returns to enrich his needy and impoverished crusaders at the expense of those who did not follow him to the Holy Land. He returns to punish as a rebel every follower of his brother Prince John. Are you afraid of his power? We know that he is a strong and brave knight, but he is alone”.

A meeting was appointed at York to make general preparations for placing the crown upon the head of Prince John.

It was late at night, when Fitzurse returned to the Castle of Ashby tired but satisfied. In the hall he met with De Bracy, who wore a short green cloak and had a short sword, a horn, a long bow and a bundle of arrows with him. He looked exactly like an English yeoman.

“What is this, De Bracy?” Fitzurse said angrily, “is this time the for Christmas games? What on Earth are you going to do dressed like that?”

“To get me a wife,” answered De Bracy, “I will attack the Saxons who have this night left the castle and carry off from them the lovely Rowena.”

“Are you mad, De Bracy?” said Fitzurse. “This is no time for crazy adventures.”

“Everybody will think that the Yorkshire robbers are responsible for that. Don’t I look like a yeoman?”

“If I cannot stop you,” said Fitzurse, “at least waste as little time as possible.”

“I’m telling you,” answered De Bracy, “all will be done in a few hours, and I will be back at York - ready to support you in anything. - Farewell. - I go, like a true knight, to win the smiles of beauty.”

“Like a true knight?” repeated Fitzurse, looking after him; “like a child, I would say, who leaves the most serious business to run after a butterfly. - But it is with such tools that I have to work.”

* * *

Black Knight, who had left the tournament without receiving his reward, was travelling to the North. But when he went into the big forest, he lost his way and decided to find some place to stay for the night. He soon came to a hermit’s hut at the bottom of a big rock with a rude wooden cross near the door. Not far from this hut there was a fountain of pure water which was the beginning of a small forest river.

The knight jumped from his horse and knocked on the door. At first the monk didn’t want to open it, but the knight insisted that he would go no further that night, and the monk let him in.

The hermit was a big and strong man in a hood which covered his face. There was little furniture inside the hut: a bed of leaves, a rude oaken cross, a prayer-book, a table and two stools.

The hermit refreshed the fire with some dry wood.

They sat down and looked at each other, each thinking that he had seldom seen a stronger or a more athletic figure than that which was placed opposite to him.

Then the monk put on the table a plate with some fried peas and a jug of water and set example to his guest by modestly putting into a very large mouth three or four peas.

The knight took off his helmet and most of his armour and showed to the hermit a head with yellow hair, blue eyes, remarkably bright and sparkling, and mustache darker than his hair. This was a face of a bold and energetic man.

The hermit, as if wishing to answer to the confidence of his guest, threw back his hood, and showed a face which was not like a face of an ascetic. His cheeks were as round and red as those of a trumpeter. Together with his massive figure, this showed that the monk ate something else in addition to peas, and his guest noticed it.

“It seems to me, father,” said the knight, “that this poor food makes miracles with you. Holy father, can I ask your name?”

“You can call me,” answered the hermit, “the Monk of Copmanhurst, that’s how I am called in these parts - They add the word ‘holy’, but I don’t insist on that. - And now, brave knight, what is your name?”

“Holy Monk of Copmanhurst”, said the knight, “men call me in these parts the Black Knight, - many, sir, add to it the word ‘Lazy’, but I do not insist on that at all.”

The hermit smiled.

“I see,” said he, “Sir Lazy Knight, that you are a clever man - and a man accustomed to the rich food that people eat in the cities. I think that I have some food for my guests that I completely forgot about.”

“I was convinced that there was better food in your house, Holy Monk, since the moment you threw away your hood,” - said the knight.

The hermit hesitated for a second and then went to the further side of the hut, where he opened a small door which was concealed with great care. Out of a dark closet he brought a large pie. He placed this dish before his guest, and the knight cut it with his knife and started eating.

The hermit looked miserable, he had to watch his guest eat his pie and had no pretext to join him.

“I have been in Palestine, Sir Monk,” said the knight, stopping suddenly, “and in Palestine the host should eat together with the guest to show that the food is good. Please follow this Eastern custom.”

“To make you comfortable, Sir Knight, I will break my rule once,” replied the hermit. And he joined his guest.

The ice of ceremony was broken, and the guest and the host started a competition for a better appetite. It was clear that the hermit won.

“Holy Clerk,” said the knight, “I am sure you have some wine for your guests which you have completely forgotten about.”

The hermit only smiled and took out of the same hidden cupboard a very big bottle and two large drinking cups. He filled both cups and saying, “Your health, Sir Lazy Knight!” he emptied his one.

“Your health, Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst!” answered the knight and emptied his. “Holy Clerk,” he went on, “I am surprised that such a strong man lives alone in this wild forest. In my judgment, you should be a commander of a castle, not live here upon peas and water, or even upon the food for your guests. At least, if I were you, I would hunt some of the King’s deer.”

“Sir Lazy Knight,” replied the Clerk, “these are dangerous words. The deer belongs to the King, and I do not break laws.”

“Still, if I were you,” said the knight, “I would go hunting at night, when foresters and keepers are in bed. Tell me, Holy Clerk, have you ever tried this?”

“My lazy friend,” answered the hermit, “believe me, it is better to enjoy the good which God sends you, than to be too curious about where it comes from. Fill your cup, and do not make me by more impolite questions show you that I can fight you.”

“You make me more curious than ever!” said the knight, “And do not threaten me, holy man, because my profession is to find danger wherever it can be found.”

“Sir Lazy Knight, I drink to you,” said the hermit, “respecting your courage but believing you to be unwise. I can oppose you with any arms. What do you say about these, good friend?”

He opened another hidden door, and took out a couple of swords and small shields. The knight, who watched his host, noticed that inside this second hidden cupboard there were two or three good long-bows, a cross-bow, many arrows and a harp.

“I promise you, brother Monk,” said he, “I will ask you no more questions. The contents of that cupboard are an answer to all of them. And I see a weapon there” (he took out the harp) “on which I would more gladly prove my skill, than at the sword and shield.”

“Sit down then, Sir Knight,” said the hermit, “and fill your cup, let us drink, sing, and be merry. If you know a good song, you will be welcome at Copmanhurst as long as I live. Friend, I drink to your successful performance.”

So saying, he drank his cup with much ceremony.

The knight in the meantime had brought the strings into some order, and after a short prelude asked what he should sing.

“A ballad, a ballad,” said the hermit, “only English ballads should be sung in this house.”

“I will try, then,” said the knight, “a ballad composed by a Saxon minstrel, whom I knew in Holy Land.”

It was soon clear, that if the knight was not a complete master of the minstrel art, he at least had good teachers. When the song was ended, the monk declared it a good one, and well sung.

The monk then reached the harp, and entertained his guest with a funny song called ‘The Barefooted Friar’. Their party was becoming more and more wild and cheerful, when it was interrupted by a loud knock at the door.

* * *

When Cedric the Saxon saw his son drop down senseless in the lists at Ashby, his first impulse was to order his servants to go and carry the wounded knight to a safe place. But he could not acknowledge in public the son whom he had banished and disinherited. Cedric’s dream was to unite all Saxons in the country, and for that he needed a leader of royal blood. Both Athelstane and Rowena had famous Saxon kings among their ancestors, so Cedric thought that their marriage was the key to Saxon unity. When Rowena fell in love with Cedric’s son, he didn’t hesitate to banish Wilfred from his house. Cedric hoped that, during Wilfred’s absence, Rowena will forget him, but he was disappointed. Rowena declared that she would rather go to a monastery, than share a throne with Athelstane. Cedric, who respected his ward, didn’t know how to use his authority of a guardian.

Although Cedric considered the sudden and romantic appearance of his son in the lists at Ashby to be a death’s blow to his hopes, he still ordered his servant Oswald to keep an eye upon Wilfred and to carry him to Ashby in secret as soon as the crowd had dispersed. Oswald, however, came too late to do this. The crowd dispersed, indeed, but the knight was nowhere to be seen.

Instead Oswald found Gurth who was looking for his young master and forgot to hide his face. Oswald decided that it was his duty to hold Gurth and brought him to Cedric. The only thing that Oswald learned about the fate of the young knight was that the knight had been raised with care by some servants, and placed in a litter belonging to a lady among the spectators, which had immediately transported him out of the crowd. Oswald decided to return to his master for new instructions.

The Saxon worried for his son, but as soon as he was informed that Ivanhoe was in friendly hands, he again started to think about Ivanhoe’s disobedience. When Cedric saw the deserter Gurth, he ordered to tie him. Gurth did not protest, he only said, “This is how you reward loving your flesh and blood better than my own.”

Cedric, Athelstane and Rowena went back to Rotherwood. Wamba and Gurth rode side by side for some time, during which Gurth maintained a moody silence.

* * *

The travellers had now reached the wooded country which was considered dangerous at that time because of the number of robbers. There they heard repeated cries for assistance. When they came closer, they saw a litter left on the ground, an old Jew and a young woman. It was Isaac of York with his daughter. They had hired six guards at Ashby, together with mules for carrying the litter of a sick friend. This party had promised to escort them. They had come to this place in safety, but when their guards heard from a wood-cutter that there was a strong band of robbers in the woods before them, Isaac's mercenaries had ran away and had taken with them the horses which bore the litter.

"If you allow us to come with you," added Isaac, in a tone of deep humiliation, "we will be very grateful."

Athelstane remembered the Jew from Ashby and didn't want to take him, but Cedric said, "We should leave them two of our servants and two horses to bring them back to the next village".

At this moment Rebecca suddenly ran to Rowena's horse, knelt down, and kissed Rowena's dress. Then she begged her in the great name of the God whom they both worshipped, that she would have compassion upon them, and let them go forward under their protection. "It is not for myself that I ask this," said Rebecca, "but for the sake of our sick friend."

"The man is old and weak," said Rowena to her guardian, "the maiden young and beautiful, their friend sick - even though they are Jews, we cannot as Christians leave them here. We should give them two mules to transport the litter and two horses for themselves." Cedric agreed to this.

This was the reason Gurth had to get down from his horse, and when Wamba untied him for that reason, he ran into the forest and disappeared.

The road now became very narrow, so that only two riders could ride together, and crossed a small river with swampy banks. Cedric and Athelstane, who were at the head of their party, saw the risk of being attacked at this place and they decided to cross the river quickly. They had just crossed it with a part of their followers, when they were attacked from all sides at once so quickly that they could not defend themselves. Both Saxon nobles were made prisoners at the same moment. The servants, the Lady Rowena, and the Jew and his daughter in the rear all fell into the hands of the attackers.

Nobody escaped except for Wamba, who showed in that situation much more courage than those who pretended to be wise. He took a sword from one of the servants, drove back several who approached him, and made a brave though ineffectual attempt to rescue his master. When he saw that he couldn't do it, he jumped from his horse and ran into the forest.

"I have heard men talk about the blessings of freedom," he said to himself, "but I wish any wise man would teach me how to use it now when I have it."

He pronounced these words aloud, and a voice very near him called out in a low and cautious tone, "Wamba!"

"Gurth!" answered Wamba, with the same caution, and the swineherd immediately stood before him.

"What is the matter?" said he, "what do these cries mean?"

"They are prisoners to green cloaks and black masks," said Wamba.

At this moment a third person suddenly appeared and commanded them both to stop. Wamba recognised Locksley the yeoman, who had been victorious in the contest for the prize of archery.

"Who attacks travellers in this forest?" said he.

"You can go and check whether they are your men or not," said Wamba, "because they look exactly like you."

"I will check it right now," answered Locksley; "and you must not move from this place until I return. Obey me, and it will be better for you and your masters." He returned in a few minutes.

"Friend Gurth," he said, "I have seen these men. We cannot attack them right now, but I think I can collect such a force that will be enough to defeat them. You are both servants and, I think, faithful servants of Cedric the Saxon, the friend of the rights of Englishmen. There will be enough English hands to help him in these circumstances. Come then with me, until I collect more force."

* * *

After a long walk the servants of Cedric with their guide came to a small glade in the centre of which grew an enormous oak-tree. Beneath this tree four or five yeomen lay on the ground. Their guide was welcomed with every sign of respect.

"Where is the Miller?" was his first question.

"On the road towards Rotherham with six men.

"And where is Allan-a-Dale?" said Locksley, who seemed to be the leader of these people.

"Went to the big road to watch for the Prior of Jorvaulx."

"That is well," replied the Captain, "and where is the Friar?"

"In his house."

"That's where I will go," said Locksley. "Go and look for your companions. Collect as many as you can. Meet me here in the morning."

The men went to do what he asked, and their leader with his two companions went to the monk's hut. When they came close, they heard the sounds of music. "That is well sung," said Wamba, "but who would ever expect to hear such a cheerful prayer come out from a hermit's house at midnight?"

In fact at that moment the hermit and his guest were performing an old drinking song as loudly as they could. After some time Locksley's loud and repeated knocks disturbed them.

"I swear," said the hermit, stopping his song, "here come more guests. I don't want them to see what we were doing. All men have their enemies, Sir Knight."

"Holy Clerk, it is true that all have their enemies," replied the knight, "so I will put on my helmet."

“Mad priest,” said the voice from without, “open to Locksley!”

“All’s safe - all’s right, it is a friend,” said the hermit to his companion. He opened the door, and let in Locksley with his two companions.

“Why, hermit,” was the yeoman’s first question as soon as he saw the knight, “what cheerful companion do you have here?”

“A brother of our order,” replied the Friar, “we have been praying all night.”

“Friar, you must lay down your prayer-book,” answered Locksley; “and take up the staff; we will need every one of our men”.

The monk took off his clothes, and put on a yeoman’s dress with a green cloak.

Locksley led the knight apart and said to him: “Don’t deny it, Sir Knight - you are the one who helped the English party win on the second day of the tournament at Ashby.”

“And what if you guess right, good yeoman?” replied the knight.

“I will in that case think,” replied the yeoman, “that you are a friend to the weaker side.”

“Such is the duty of any true knight,” replied the Black Champion.

“A band of villains,” said the woodsman, “in the disguise of better men than themselves, have captured a noble Englishman, called Cedric the Saxon together with the Lady Rowena and his friend Athelstane of Coningsburgh and have transported them to a castle in this forest, called Torquilstone. I ask you as a good knight, will you help us rescue them?”

“I will,” replied the knight.

* * *

When the party which captured Cedric and Rowena stood before the gates of the castle, De Bracy blew his horn three times, and the archers let them in. Cedric and Athelstane were led to a large room apart from their followers.

The Lady Rowena was next separated from her servants, and conducted politely to a distant apartment. The same happened to Rebecca. Her father was dragged off in a different direction. The servants were put in another part of the castle.

Cedric paced the apartment in which the Saxon chiefs were confined, while the apathy of his companion served, instead of patience and philosophy, to defend him against everything except for insufficient food.

“Who would have thought,” said Cedric, “that you, noble Athelstane - that you, descended of Harold’s blood, and that I, whose father was not the worst defender of the Saxon crown, should be prisoners to a Norman, in the castle in which our ancestors held their festivals?”

“It is sad enough,” replied Athelstane; “but I believe they will accept a moderate ransom from us.”

The door of their prison opened, and some servants brought in a table covered with dishes.

“Tell your master,” said Cedric, “that we know no reason he can have for making us his prisoners, except for getting money. Let him name the ransom, and it will be paid.” The chief servant bowed his head.

“And tell Sir Reginald Front-de-Boeuf,” said Athelstane, “that I challenge him to fight with me, on foot or on horse, at any secure place, within eight days after our liberation.”

“I will deliver to the knight your challenge,” answered the servant, “meanwhile I leave you to your food.”

The captives had not long enjoyed their refreshment, however, before they were disturbed even from this most serious occupation by the sound of a horn blown before the gate. The Saxons jumped from the table, and ran to the window, but their curiosity was disappointed - they could only see the court of the castle.

* * *

Isaac of York had been thrown into a cold and wet dungeon. The only light came through a very high and small window. Rusty chains hung from the walls of the prison.

The life of Jews was dangerous and it was not the first time that Isaac was placed in such circumstances. He was prepared for passive resistance. The poor Jew had to wait for three hours before the door of the dungeon opened, and Reginald Front-de-Boeuf, followed by the two Saracen slaves of the Templar, entered the prison.

The baron locked the door. The unhappy Isaac was too weak with fear to rise and bow. Front-de-Boeuf said, “Jewish dog, you will pay me a hundred thousand silver coins.”

“Holy Abraham!” answered the Jew, “it is impossible! - In the whole city of York you will not find such a sum.”

Front-de-Boeuf made a signal for the slaves to approach, and spoke to them in their own language. The Saracens took out from their baskets some coal and made a fire in a large fireplace in the other end of the dungeon.

“Do you see, Isaac,” said Front-de-Boeuf, “these iron bars above the glowing coal? On that warm bed you will lie and roast, if you don’t pay me the money I ask.

“But it is impossible!” exclaimed the miserable Jew.

“Take him, slaves,” said the knight, “and let the fathers of his people help him if they can.”

The Jew looked at the glowing furnace, and he gave up.

“I will pay,” he said, “the money you demand. When and where must it be delivered?”

“Here,” replied Front-de-Boeuf, “here it must be delivered. - You think I will let you go before your ransom is secure?”

“Let my daughter Rebecca go to York,” answered Isaac, “with your safe conduct, noble knight, and as soon as man and horse can return, the treasure will be brought here.”

“Your daughter?” said Front-de-Boeuf, “I gave her to Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert.”

The yell which Isaac raised when he heard this news made walls ring, and astonished the two Saracens so much that they let the Jew go. He threw himself on the floor at the feet of Front-de-Boeuf.

“Take all that you have asked,” said he, “Sir Knight - take ten times more, burn me on this fire, but save my daughter! - She is the image of my Rachel.”

“I cannot help what has happened, or what will happen after that, I have given my word to my friend.”

“Robber and villain!” said the Jew, “I will pay you nothing - not one silver coin, unless my daughter is delivered to me in safety and honour! I don’t care if you roast me! My daughter is a thousand times dearer to me than my body and my life.”

“We will check this,” said Front-de-Boeuf, “Strip him, slaves, and chain him down upon the bars.”

The Saracens had already torn from the Jew his clothes, when they heard the sound of a horn blown from outside the castle, and immediately after loud voices called for Sir Reginald Front-de-Boeuf. The savage Baron gave the slaves a signal to stop and they left the Jew to thank God.

* * *

Unlike other prisoners, Rowena was placed in a decorated apartment.

Sometime after midday entered De Bracy, who had changed his robber’s disguise for elegant clothes, combed his long hair and shaved his beard. He offered her to sit down with an elegant gesture, but Rowena didn’t move and said, “If I am in the presence of my jailor, Sir Knight - his prisoner should remain standing until she learns her fate.”

“Oh, beautiful Rowena,” answered De Bracy, “I am not your jailor, you are mine, and from you I must hear my sentence.”

“I don’t know you, sir,” said the lady, “and the language of a troubadour is no excuse for the violence of a robber.”

“That you don’t know me,” said De Bracy, “is my misfortune; yet let me hope that you have heard De Bracy’s name when some herald was talking about brave knights.”

“To heralds and to minstrels, then, leave your fame, Sir Knight,” replied Rowena, “more suiting for their mouths than for your own.”

“Proud maiden,” said irritated De Bracy, - “you will be as proudly treated. Know then, that you will never leave this castle or you will leave it as Maurice de Bracy’s wife. You are proud, Rowena, and you can be a good wife for me. How else can you rise to high honour except for marrying me? How else will you escape from that country farm which is the Saxon’s house?”

“Sir Knight,” replied Rowena, “this farm has been my home since I was little, and, trust me, when I leave it, I will do it with a man who has not learned to despise the house and manners of people dear to me.”

“I understand your hint, lady,” said De Bracy, “but don’t dream that Richard will ever be King again or that Wilfred of Ivanhoe, his knight, will ever be your groom. Know, lady, that this man is in my power, and I can tell Front-de-Boeuf that he is in this castle. Didn’t you know that Wilfred of Ivanhoe travelled in the litter of the Jew?”

“And if he is here,” said Rowena, trying to look calm, “what has he to fear beyond a short imprisonment, and an honourable ransom?”

“Rowena,” said De Bracy, “he stands between Front-de-Boeuf and the land of the barony of Ivanhoe, and one blow of a knife or one mistake of a doctor can remove this obstacle from Front-de-Boeuf’s road. But smile to me, lady, and the wounded champion will be safe.”

“Save him!” said Rowena in terror.

“I can - I will - it is my purpose,” said De Bracy, “but your love must buy his protection.”

“I don’t believe,” answered Rowena, “that you are so wicked.”

“Calm yourself, then, with that belief,” said De Bracy, “until time shall prove it false. Your lover lies wounded in this castle. Cedric also -”

“And Cedric also,” said Rowena, repeating his words; “my noble - my generous guardian!”

“Cedric’s fate also depends on your decision,” said De Bracy.

Rowena couldn’t control herself and burst into tears. De Bracy was embarrassed and touched. He had gone too far to step back, and still he couldn’t look on such a beautiful face in tears. He tried to comfort her, but at that moment he was interrupted by the sound of horn, which at the same time alarmed the other inhabitants of the castle.

* * *

Rebecca was waiting for her fate in a distant and lonely tower. Two soldiers brought her there, and left her in the presence of an old and ugly woman they called Urfried.

“What devil’s deed do they have in mind?” said the old woman, muttering to herself looking at Rebecca, “but it is easy to guess - Bright eyes, black hair, and skin like paper. Owls will be your neighbours, and no one will hear your screams. What country are you from? - Why don’t you answer?”

“Be not angry, good mother,” said Rebecca, “tell me what I should expect. Are they going to kill me for my religion? I will die cheerfully.”

“Kill you, girl?” answered the hag; “Why would they want to kill you? - Trust me, your life is in no danger. Look at me - I was as young and twice as beautiful as you, when Front-de-Boeuf, the father of this baron, stormed this castle. My father and his seven sons died defending it - and before their bodies were cold, I belonged to the conqueror!”

“Is there no help? - Are there no means of escape?” said Rebecca.

“Don’t think about it,” said the hag; “there is no escape except through the gates of death”.

She left the room as she spoke.

Rebecca was now expecting a fate more terrible than that of Rowena, but she was better prepared by habits of thought, and by natural strength of mind, to face the dangers to which she was exposed.

First she inspected the apartment, but the only door didn’t have a bar and the only window opened upon an isolated balcony.

Rebecca trembled, when she heard steps on the stair. The door of the turret-chamber slowly opened, and a tall man entered and shut the door behind him.

“Do not lose good money,” said Rebecca; “take ransom, and have mercy! - My father will give as much gold as you ask; and if you use it wisely, you can buy yourself a normal life - not that of a robber.”

“It is well spoken,” replied the man, “but know, bright flower of Palestine, that your father is already in the hands of someone who can get gold out of him without your help. The ransom must be paid by love and beauty.”

“You are not a robber,” said Rebecca, “you are a Norman noble - o, be noble in your actions! What can you take from me, if not my money? I am Jewish, you cannot marry me”.

“Marry you? No!” replied the Templar, laughing, “I cannot marry anyone, I am a Templar. But my mistakes will be forgiven by my Order. I have won you with my bow and spear, you belong to me.”

“Stand back,” said Rebecca. She threw open the window which led to the balcony, and in an instant she stood on the parapet, one step from falling down. Unprepared for such a desperate effort, Bois-Guilbert didn't have time to stop her. She exclaimed, “Stay where you are, proud Templar, one foot nearer, and I die!”

The Templar hesitated, he admired her courage. “Come down,” he said, “I swear I will do nothing against you, and I have never broken my word.”

“I will then trust you thus far,” said Rebecca and came down from the parapet but remained standing close to it.

The thought that she had her fate in her hands, and could escape from dishonour to death, gave colour to her cheeks and fire to her eyes. Bois-Guilbert, who was a proud man himself, thought he had never seen such beauty.

“Rebecca!” he exclaimed, “she who could prefer death to dishonour, must have a proud and powerful soul. You must be mine! You must be mine when you want to be mine. You must share with me my hopes! Listen to me - the Templar loses his social rights, his freedom of action, but he becomes a member and a part of a powerful body, before which thrones tremble. And I am already one of the Chief Commanders and one day I will be the Grand Master. The Order will take power from the hands of kings! Share my adventure, I have found a proud soul in you. Think about it! That sound of horn announces something which may require my presence. I will soon return.”

The Templar left. Rebecca re-entered the room and gave thanks to the God of Jacob for His protection. She also prayed for the safety of her father and the wounded Christian, who was in the hands of his enemies.

* * *

The Templar met De Bracy in the hall of the castle. “You too,” said De Bracy, “have been disturbed, I suppose, by this sound. But you have come later and more reluctantly, and therefore I presume your interview was more pleasant than mine.”

“Have you been unsuccessful?” said the Templar.

“The Lady Rowena must have heard that I cannot endure the sight of women's tears,” - answered De Bracy.

“And I have never met a woman more proud than this Jewish girl. But where is Front-de-Boeuf? That horn gets louder and louder.”

Soon Front-de-Boeuf joined them.

“Let us see the reason for this noise,” said Front-de-Boeuf, “here is a letter, and, if I am right, it is in Saxon.”

He looked at it, turning it round and round, and then handed it to De Bracy.

“It may be magic spells, I don’t know,” said De Bracy, who couldn’t read as well.

“Give it to me,” said the Templar. “We are half-priests and have some knowledge in addition to bravery. This is a formal letter of challenge, but it is extraordinary if it’s not a joke!”

“A joke!” said Front-de-Boeuf, “I want to know who jokes with me! - Read it, Sir Brian.”

The Templar read the following letter - “I, Wamba, the son of Witless, Jester to a noble man, Cedric of Rotherwood, called the Saxon, - And I, Gurth, the son of Beowulph, the swineherd of the same person, with the help of our allies and confederates the Black Knight and the stout yeoman Robert Locksley demand that you, Reginald Front de-Boeuf, give freedom to Cedric of Rotherwood, lady Rowena, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, their servants, Isaac the Jew and his daughter. If you do not do so, we will treat you as a robber and fight you to your destruction.”

The knights heard this strange document read from end to end, and then gazed upon each other in silent amazement. De Bracy was the first to break silence by an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

“Stop laughing, sir,” said Front-de-Boeuf, “There are at least two hundred men assembled in the woods.”

“Shame on you, Sir Knight!” said the Templar. “Let us call our people, and attack them. One knight is enough for twenty peasants.”

“Not in the forest,” answered Front-de-Boeuf. “Attack? We don’t even have enough men to defend the castle. The best of mine are at York; and there is all your band, De Bracy. We don’t have more than thirty.”

“Send to your neighbours,” said the Templar.

“They are all at York,” answered the baron.

“Then send to York,” said De Bracy.

“And who will bear such a message?” said Front-de-Boeuf; “these robbers will catch the messenger and kill him. But I have an idea: Sir Templar, write an answer to this letter. Tell them that we are going to kill our prisoners and ask to send us a priest who can receive their last confession.”

This answer was delivered to Wamba and Gurth, with their allies the Black Knight and Locksley, and the hermit, who were waiting under the old oak. More than two hundred yeomen had already assembled near that place, and others were coming. A group of the Saxon servants of Cedric had arrived to assist in his rescue.

The monk did not understand French, so the letter was given to the Black Knight. He first read it to himself, and then explained the meaning in Saxon to his confederates.

“I think,” said the Black Knight, “that if they require a confessor, this holy monk can get into the castle and get us some information of what happens inside.”

“I am not a monk, when I am in my green cloak,” said the hermit.

“I fear,” said the Black Knight, “that there is no one here who can pretend to be a priest.”

“I see,” said Wamba, after a short pause, “that the fool must be still a fool, and put his neck in the adventure which wise men stay away from. I will put on a monastic cloak and go to my master Cedric.”

“Do it then,” said the Knight, “and let your master send us a message of their situation within the castle.”

“And, in the meantime,” said Locksley, “we will surround the castle so that even a fly will not be able to carry news from there.”

“Pax vobiscum,” said Wamba, putting on his religious disguise.

He went on his mission, imitating the ceremonial manners of a monk.

* * *

When the Jester, who was dressed like a hermit, stood before the gates of the castle of Front-de-Boeuf, the soldiers asked who he was.

“Pax vobiscum,” answered the Jester, “I am a poor brother of the Order of St Francis, who came here to visit the unhappy prisoners of this castle.” The gates opened.

Wamba was brave, but his bravery almost left him in the presence of a man so dreadful as Reginald Front-de-Boeuf, and he pronounced his “pax vobiscum” with fear and hesitation. But Front-de-Boeuf was accustomed to see men tremble in his presence, so the timidity of the supposed father did not give him any cause of suspicion.

“Who are you, priest?” he said.

“Pax vobiscum,” answered the Jester, “I am a poor servant of St Francis. I was travelling and some robbers caught me and sent me to this castle in order to confess two persons condemned by your honourable justice.”

“Yes, right,” answered Front-de-Boeuf; “and can you tell me, holy father, how many robbers there are?”

“Sir,” answered the Jester, “there are at least five hundred men.”

The Templar, who came into the hall that moment, took Front-de-Boeuf aside: “Do you know the priest?”

“He is not from these lands,” said Front-de-Boeuf; “I don’t know him.”

“Then don’t trust him with your message,” answered the Templar. “Let him carry a written order to De Bracy’s company of Free Companions. In the meantime permit him to go freely to these Saxons, so that he won’t suspect anything.”

“Let it be so,” said Front-de-Boeuf. And he sent a servant to show Wamba the way to the apartment where Cedric and Athelstane were kept.

“Pax vobiscum,” said the Jester, entering the apartment; “the blessing of St Dunstan, St Dennis, St Duthoc, and all other saints be upon you.”

“Enter freely,” answered Cedric to the supposed friar; “what do you want with us?”

“To ask you to prepare yourselves for death,” answered the Jester.

“It is impossible!” replied Cedric, “They will not dare to kill us!”

“They will,” said the Jester, “so think, noble Cedric and Athelstane, what crimes you have committed during your life, because today you will be called to answer at a higher tribunal.”

“I am ready,” said Athelstane, “and will walk to my death as calmly as to my dinner.”

“Let us begin then, father,” said Cedric.

“Wait a moment, good uncle,” said the Jester, in his natural tone; “you should look long before you leap in the dark.”

“I know that voice!” said Cedric.

“It belongs to your slave and jester,” answered Wamba, taking off his hood. “Take this cloak and walk quietly out of the castle, leaving me your clothes.”

“But they will kill you!” said Cedric.

“Let them do so,” said Wamba.

“Wamba,” answered Cedric, “you should save Lord Athelstane instead of me.”

“No, by St Dunstan,” answered Wamba; “my good master, either go yourself, or let me leave as free as I entered.”

“Go, father Cedric,” said Athelstane, “I would rather remain in this hall a week without food than escape instead of you.”

“Is there any chance of rescue?” asked Cedric.

“Chance? Five hundred men are outside this castle and they are ready to attack. So farewell, my master, and good luck. Remember your faithful fool.”

The tears stood in Cedric’s eyes.

“You will never be forgotten,” he said, “but I hope I will save you all. Wait, I don’t know Latin, how will I pretend to be a monk?”

“You need only two words,” replied Wamba, “‘Pax vobiscum’. These words will open every door.”

On his way to the hall of the castle, Cedric was interrupted by a female form.

“Come this way, father,” - said the harsh voice of Urfried, “you are a stranger in this castle, and need a guide. Come here, I want to speak with you.”

* * *

Urfried led Cedric into a small apartment and shut the door. Then she took a bottle of wine and two cups from a cupboard and put them on the table. “You are Saxon, father - Don’t deny it,” she said, “I love to hear the sounds of my native language.”

“Do not Saxon priests visit this castle, then?” replied Cedric.

“They don’t come,” answered Urfried, “but you are a Saxon priest, and I have one question to ask of you.”

“I am a Saxon,” answered Cedric, “but unworthy, surely, of the name of priest. Let me go - I swear I will return, or send one of our fathers more worthy to hear your confession.”

“Stay,” said Urfried; “I will soon be dead, but I don’t want to die without confession. Wine must give me strength to tell my horrible story.” She poured wine in the two cups. “Drink it, father, if you want to hear my story without falling to the

floor.” Cedric didn’t want to drink, but the woman seemed impatient and he decided to do what she asked. Then she began her story.

“I was born free, father,” she said, “I was happy, was honoured, loved, and was beloved. I am now a miserable slave. Is it strange, father, that I hate people? Can the old hag before you forget she was once the daughter of the noble lord of Torquilstone?”

“You are Ulrica, the daughter of Torquil Wolfganger!” said Cedric; “you - the daughter of that noble Saxon, my father’s friend and ally!”

“Your father’s friend!” echoed Ulrica; “then Cedric called the Saxon stands before me, because noble Hereward of Rotherwood had only one son. But if you are Cedric of Rotherwood, why this religious dress?”

“It matters not who I am,” said Cedric; “go on, unhappy woman, with your story of horror and guilt.”

“There is,” answered the poor woman, “deep, black, heavy guilt. - Yes, in these halls, where my father and brothers died, I lived as a mistress of their killer! I lived with him, but I didn’t love him. No, with that at least I cannot reproach myself - I hated Front-de-Boeuf. And I have had my vengeance - because of me the wild son killed his tyrant father in a drunken quarrel!”

“And what happened to you, creature of guilt and misery,” said Cedric, “when that tyrant was dead?”

“Don’t ask me. - Here I lived and grew old before my time.”

“Ulrica,” said Cedric, “I am no priest, but I tell you: repent. Pray and repent, and may be your prayers will be accepted! But I cannot, I will not, stay here any longer.”

“Stay a little!” said Ulrica; “remember, I can call Front-de-Boeuf if I am too upset by your words.”

“Do it,” said Cedric; “and let him tear me apart, before I say one word which my heart does not believe. I will die a Saxon - true in word, open in deed. - The sight of Front-de-Boeuf himself is less odious to me than you, degraded and degenerate as you are.”

“Be it so,” said Ulrica, no longer interrupting him; “go your way, you have destroyed the last tie which seemed to unite me to mankind. But your words have awakened a new soul within me. Well have you said, all is possible for those who dare to die! There is a force outside this accursed castle - lead them to the attack, and press the Normans hard, they will then have enough to do within. Go, follow your own fate, and leave me to mine.”

At this moment they heard the voice of Front-de-Boeuf saying, “Where is this priest?” Ulrica left through another door, and Reginald Front-de-Boeuf entered the apartment. Cedric made himself bow to him.

“I have a task for you,” said the baron.

“Speak your commands,” said Cedric.

“Follow me, then.”

As they went, Front-de-Boeuf told pseudo monk to make the attacking forces stay near the castle and in the meanwhile to go to the castle of Philip de Malvoisin, give him a letter from the baron and ask him to send a man with it to York.

They passed the moat and reached a small barbican. "Go now," said the baron and opened the gate.

When Front-de-Boeuf returned, he ordered to bring him Cedric of Rotherwood and his companion. His servants brought the two Saxon captives. They could not see Wamba's face from under his cap and there was little light in the room, so they didn't know about Cedric's escape.

"Nobles of England," said Front-de-Boeuf, "if you don't pay me a lot of money, I will hang you up by the feet from these windows, until you die! - Tell me how much you will pay for your lives? - What do you say, you of Rotherwood?"

"Not a coin," answered Wamba - "and they say my brain has always been upside down, so if you hang me by my feet you may by chance fix it."

"Saint Genevieve!" said Front-de-Boeuf, "what have we got here?"

He struck Cedric's cap from the head of the Jester, and discovered the silver collar round his neck.

"I think I can tell you," said De Bracy, who just entered the apartment. "This is Cedric's clown. But that means that Cedric escaped in the monk's cloak!"

"And I showed him the way out myself!" exclaimed Front-de-Boeuf, "Then destruction is near to us, and we have no way of communication with our friends."

He looked out from the window, saw the enemy and commanded his men to their posts on the walls.

* * *

When Ivanhoe fainted, and seemed to be abandoned by all the world, it was Rebecca who persuaded her father to have the young knight transported from the lists to their house in Ashby. It was not difficult, because he was naturally kind and grateful.

"Holy Abraham!" he exclaimed, "he is a good man, and must not bleed to death. Let Seth and Reuben bear him to Ashby."

"No, let them place him in my litter," said Rebecca; "I will ride one of the horses."

"Everybody will see you," whispered Isaac, but Rebecca was already busy with her task.

Isaac's fears however were not without reason, and the generous behavior of his daughter exposed her, on her return to Ashby, to the eyes of Brian de Bois-Guilbert.

The Jews were famous as doctors in that age, and the monarchs and powerful barons often needed their services. Beautiful Rebecca had studied medicine under an old Jewish woman called Miriam, the daughter of one of their best doctors, who loved Rebecca as her own child. Miriam had become a victim of the Christian fanatics, but her secrets had survived in her pupil. Rebecca was universally respected and admired by her own people. Even her father was often guided by her opinion.

When Ivanhoe was brought to Isaac's house, he was still unconscious because of the loss of blood. Rebecca examined the wound and informed her father that if fever could be avoided, there was no reason to fear for his guest's life, and that he might with safety travel to York with them on the next day. Isaac was going to leave the knight at Ashby. To this, however, Rebecca opposed many reasons, two of which persuaded Isaac. One was that she would not give the precious balsam into the hands of another doctor even of her own tribe, the other - that this wounded knight, Wilfred of Ivanhoe, was a favourite of Richard, and that, in case the monarch returns, Isaac, who had supplied his brother John with money, would need a powerful protector before Richard's face.

Ivanhoe woke up only in the evening. To his great surprise he found himself in a room decorated in the Eastern fashion. Then an Eastern lady appeared who made a sign showing that he should be silent and examined his wound. She performed her task with a graceful and dignified simplicity and modesty.

"Gentle maiden," began Ivanhoe in the Arabian tongue, which he thought most likely to be understood by the lady in a turban.

But he was interrupted by his beautiful doctor, who could not suppress a smile in spite of her usual melancholy. "I am from England, Sir Knight, and speak the English language, although my dress and my ancestors belong to another climate."

"Noble lady," again the Knight of Ivanhoe began; and again Rebecca interrupted him.

"Don't call me noble, Sir Knight," she said, "You should know that I am Jewish. I am the daughter of that Isaac of York, to whom you were lately a good and kind lord. It well becomes him, and those of his household, to take care of your wound."

She informed him of the necessity they were under of removing to York, and of her father's resolution to transport him there, and tend him in his own house until his health should be restored. Ivanhoe shared the prejudices against the Jews and didn't want to stay in a Jewish house. Rebecca had an answer to that.

"Sir Knight, if you want me to be your doctor, you cannot change your lodging. No Christian doctor could let you fight again within a month."

"And how soon will you enable me to wear my armour?" said Ivanhoe, impatiently.

"Within eight days, if you are patient and obey my directions," replied Rebecca.

"It is no time for me or any true knight," said Wilfred, "to be sick and in bed."

"You will put on your armour on the eighth day," said Rebecca, "if you give me one reward."

"If it is within my power," replied Ivanhoe, "I will give it thankfully."

"I will only ask you," answered Rebecca, "to believe that a Jew can do good service to a Christian without any other reward than the blessing of the Great Father who made us all."

When the Jew, with his daughter and her wounded patient were captured by the Norman party, De Bracy looked into the litter and discovered to his surprise that the litter contained a wounded man, who called himself to be Wilfred of Ivanhoe.

The ideas of chivalrous honour, which never completely abandoned De Bracy, prohibited him from doing the knight any injury in his defenceless condition or betraying him to Front-de-Boeuf. So De Bracy commanded two of his own squires to take care of the litter and to carry Ivanhoe under the name of a wounded comrade to a distant apartment in the castle. When Front-de-Boeuf saw them, he ordered them to go to the walls and told Urfried to look after the wounded man. The old woman was easily persuaded to trust Rebecca with the care of her patient.

* * *

When Rebecca came to his room she told him the news: the castle was attacked. Soon after they heard the noise of the defensive preparations. Ivanhoe was like a war-horse, impatient at his inactivity. "If I could only drag myself," he said, "to that window to watch the fight!"

"You will injure yourself if you try, noble knight," replied Rebecca. When she saw how anxious he was, she added, "I myself will stand at the window, and describe to you as I can what happens there."

"You must not!" exclaimed Ivanhoe, "The archers will aim at every window, and some random arrow -"

"It will be welcome!" muttered Rebecca.

"Rebecca, dear Rebecca!" exclaimed Ivanhoe, "at least, cover yourself with that old shield."

After Rebecca followed this direction of Ivanhoe, she could with some security watch part of what was happening outside the castle, and report to Ivanhoe the preparations which the attackers were making for the storm.

"Do they have a flag?" asked Ivanhoe.

"No, they don't," answered Rebecca.

"This is strange! And do you see who can be their leaders?"

"I see a knight in black armour," said Rebecca; "He alone is armed from head to heel, and seems to direct everybody around him."

"Any other leaders?" asked the wounded knight.

"I cannot see any, but they can be on the other side of the castle," said Rebecca; "They are preparing to attack. They raise their bows!"

Her description was here suddenly interrupted by the signal for attack, which was answered by the sound of the Norman trumpets from the walls.

The battle began. The archers shot so many arrows, that every window was hit, and immediately two or three of the garrison were killed and several others wounded. But the followers of Front-de-Boeuf and his allies showed as much obstinacy in defence as the attackers fury in attack and replied with the discharge of their large cross-bows, and, as the assailants were less protected, did considerably more damage.

"Look for the Black Knight," asked Ivanhoe.

"I can see him now, he leads a body of men close under the outer barrier of the barbican," said Rebecca, "They pull down the palisade with axes. - They have made a

breach in the barriers - they rush in - they are driven back! - Front-de-Boeuf leads the defenders, I see him in the crowd. They attack again. God of Jacob! It is like the conflict of two oceans moved by different winds!"

She turned her head from the window.

"Look again, Rebecca," said Ivanhoe.

Rebecca looked out again, and almost immediately exclaimed, "Holy prophets of the law! Front-de-Boeuf and the Black Knight fight hand to hand on the breach, their followers watch and shout!" Then she exclaimed, "He is down! - he is down!"

"Who is down?" cried Ivanhoe; "for our dear Lady's sake, tell me which has fallen?"

"The Black Knight," answered Rebecca, faintly; then instantly again shouted joyfully - "But no -but no! - the name of the Lord of Hosts be blessed! - he is on foot again, and fights. - His sword is broken - he takes an axe from a yeoman - he presses Front-de-Boeuf with one blow after another - The giant falls - he falls!"

"Front-de-Boeuf?" exclaimed Ivanhoe.

"Front-de-Boeuf!" answered the Rebecca; "his men run to rescue him, led by the Templar - together they stop the Black Knight. They drag Front-de-Boeuf within the walls."

"They attack the wall of the barbican, and some put up ladders, but the ladders are thrown down," said Rebecca, shuddering; "the soldiers lie under them like crushed reptiles - The besieged have the better. The Black Knight approaches the small gate with his huge axe - the small gate shakes, it crashes - it is splintered by his blows - they rush in - the outwork is won - Oh, God! - they throw the defenders from the walls - Oh men, if you are still men, don't kill those who can resist no longer!"

"The bridge - the bridge which communicates with the castle - have they taken it?" exclaimed Ivanhoe.

"No," replied Rebecca, "The Templar has destroyed the plank on which they crossed - few of the defenders escaped with him into the castle - the cries which you hear tell the fate of the others - I see it is still more difficult to look upon victory than upon battle".

"Now it is over for the time," she continued; "our friends strengthen themselves within the outwork which they have conquered".

* * *

During the quiet interval which followed the first success of the attackers the Templar and De Bracy met in the hall of the castle.

"Where is Front-de-Boeuf?" said De Bracy, who fought on the other side of the castle, "men say he has been killed."

"He lives," said the Templar, coolly, "but in a few hours he will be with his fathers. Let us think how we can defend the castle. We have lost the barbican."

"That is unfortunate," said De Bracy; "Our numbers are too few for the defence of every point. But let us return to the walls," he continued carelessly; "that man never breathed, who valued life as little as I do. But you, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, will see today Maurice de Bracy fight as a man of noble blood."

“To the walls!” answered the Templar; and they both ascended the battlements to do all that skill could dictate, and manhood accomplish, in defence of the place. They agreed that De Bracy should command the defence at the small gate, and the Templar would keep with him ten men as a body of reserve, ready to hurry to any other point which might be suddenly threatened.

In the meanwhile, the lord of the castle lay dying. The fever of his body aided the agony of his mind, and when the savage Baron thought about the approaching death he felt new sort of fear.

“Where are these dog-priests now?” growled the Baron, “I have heard old men talk of prayer - prayer with their own words - But I-I dare not!”

“Lives Reginald Front-de-Boeuf,” said a broken and shrill voice close by his bedside, “to say there is that which he dares not!”

The evil conscience and the shaken nerves of Front-de-Boeuf heard the voice of one of those demons, who, as the people then believed, come to the beds of dying men to distract them from their prayers. He shuddered and exclaimed, “Who is there? - What are you? - Come before my eyes that I may see you.”

“I am your evil angel, Reginald Front-de-Boeuf,” replied the voice, “Think of your sins, of rebellion, of robbery, of murder!”

“Let me die in peace,” replied Front-de-Boeuf, “if you are a demon, your time has not come yet.”

“In peace you will not die,” said the voice; “before your death you will think of your murders! Think of your father! - think of his death! - think of his banquet-room flooded with his blood!”

“Go, leave me, demon! Seek the Saxon witch Ulrica who took part in this murder, let her taste of the tortures which come before hell!” answered the Baron.

“She already tastes them,” said Ulrica, stepping before Front-de-Boeuf, “Don’t shake your fist, Front-de-Boeuf - the hand which, like that of your renowned ancestor who gained your name, could have broken with one stroke the skull of a mountain-bull, is now powerless as my own!”

“Vile hag!” replied Front-de-Boeuf; “it is you?”

“Yes, Reginald Front-de-Boeuf,” answered she, “it is Ulrica! - it is the daughter of the murdered Torquil Wolfgang! - it is the sister of his slaughtered sons!”

“My servants!” exclaimed Front-de-Boeuf, “Where are you? Take this witch, and throw her down from the walls!”

“Call them again, Baron,” said the hag, with a terrible smile, “But know, mighty chief, you will not have answer or help. - Listen to the sounds of battle. The Saxons attack your walls!”

“Gods and fiends!” exclaimed the wounded knight; “O, for one moment’s strength, to drag myself there and die in battle!”

“You will not die like a knight,” replied Ulrica, “Don’t you notice the smoke? - Do you remember the fuel that is stored beneath these apartments?”

“Woman!” he exclaimed with fury, “have you set fire to it? - The castle is in flames!”

“They are fast rising,” said Ulrica, “and a signal will soon show the attackers that they should press hard upon the defenders. - Farewell, Front-de-Boeuf! - But know, if it gives you comfort to know it, that Ulrica will die with you to be the companion of your punishment as she was the companion of your guilt. - And now farewell for ever!”

So saying, she left the apartment; and Front-de-Boeuf could hear the sound of the ponderous key as she locked the door.

* * *

When the barbican was taken, the Black Knight used the interval to order his men to construct some sort of a long raft to cross the moat. This work took some time.

When the raft was completed, the Black Knight addressed his followers - “We should attack now. I will have to leave you tomorrow and an army can come from York. Follow me. Those of you who are not ready to attack will help us with your arrows. Now open the door.”

The temporary bridge was then thrown into the moat and created an unstable passage for two men at a time to cross the water. The Black Knight and Cedric ran across the bridge. There they were protected from stones and arrows by the ruins of the old bridge which still hung over the gate. The knight began to crush with his axe the gate of the castle. But their situation was now very dangerous in spite of the support of the archers.

De Bracy was going to push down a huge stone detail of the castle, which could kill both Cedric and the knight, when he heard the voice of the Templar:

“All is lost, De Bracy, the castle burns. Listen to me, lead your men down, open the gate, there are only two men on the float, throw them into the moat, and attack the barbican. I will attack from the main gate, and come to the barbican from the outside. If we can win that post, I am sure we will defend ourselves until we are rescued. Hurry!”

De Bracy collected his men together, and ran down to the small gate. But the moment the gate was open, the Black Knight pushed inside in spite of De Bracy and his followers. Two of them fell and the rest gave way.

“Dogs!” said De Bracy, “will you let two men win our only pass for safety?”

“He is the devil!” said a veteran man-at-arms.

“Let me come forward!” replied De Bracy, “I will fight this champion myself.”

And on that day De Bracy well proved that he was worthy of his fame. The vaulted passage, in which he was fighting with the Black Knight hand to hand, rung with the furious blows which they gave and received, De Bracy with his sword, the Black Knight with his huge axe. After some time the Norman received such a blow, that he fell on the paved floor.

“Surrender, Maurice De Bracy,” said the Black Champion, “or you will die.”

“I will not surrender,” replied De Bracy, “to an unknown knight. Tell me your name, or kill me - it will never be said that Maurice de Bracy was prisoner to a nameless bandit.”

The Black Knight whispered something in his ear.

“I surrender to be a true prisoner,” answered the Norman.

“Go to the barbican,” said the victor, “and there wait for my further orders.”

“Yet first, let me tell you something important,” said De Bracy, “Wilfred of Ivanhoe is wounded and a prisoner, and will die in the burning castle without help.”

“Wilfred of Ivanhoe!” exclaimed the Black Knight. - ”Show me his chamber!”

“That stair leads to his apartment,” said De Bracy.

During this fight and brief conversation Cedric, the Friar and their friends attacked and drove back the despairing followers of De Bracy.

When Ivanhoe woke up, he noticed the smoke in the room.

“The castle burns,” said Rebecca; “it burns! - What can we do to save ourselves?”

“Run, Rebecca, and save your life,” said Ivanhoe, “you cannot help me.”

“I will not run,” answered Rebecca; “we will be saved or die together.”

At this moment the door of the apartment opened, and the Templar came in, - a ghastly figure, because his armour was broken and bloody, and the plume was partly cut away, partly burnt from his helmet. “I have found you,” said he to Rebecca; “There is only one way to safety, I have cut my way through fifty dangers to point it to you - up, and instantly follow me!”

“Go alone,” answered Rebecca, “I will not follow you. Save my aged father - save this wounded knight!”

“A knight,” answered the Templar, with his characteristic calmness, “a knight, Rebecca, must meet with his fate - and who cares about the Jew?”

So saying, he seized the terrified maiden and carried her out of the room in his arms in spite of her cries.

A few seconds later the Black Knight entered the same room and carried Ivanhoe away with as much ease as the Templar had carried off Rebecca. He brought him to the barbican and ran back to save the other prisoners.

When their guards ran away, Wamba and Athelstane went into the court of the castle, which was now the last scene of battle. Here the Templar on his horse and the remaining soldiers of the garrison fought very bravely. Rebecca, placed on the horse of one of the Templar’s Saracen slaves, was in the middle of the little party; and Bois-Guilbert showed every attention to her safety.

Athelstane, who was slow, but not a coward, saw a woman whom the Templar was protecting and decided that it was Rowena, whom the knight was going to carry off. Athelstan took an axe from the floor and ran to attack the Templar. But Bois-Guilbert rose in his stirrups and hit so hard with his sword, that he cut the wooden part of the axe in two and Athelstane fell on the floor. The Templar then pushed across the drawbridge with his Saracens and five or six soldiers on horses.

During that final stage of battle Ulrica appeared on a turret, her long grey hair flew back from her uncovered head and amid that scene of fire and of slaughter she began to sing a barbarous hymn. The fire rose to the evening skies. Tower after tower crashed down, and Ulrica disappeared in the flames.

In the morning the attackers met in the forest to divide the treasure they took from the castle. Locksley sat on his throne made of earth under the huge oak. He asked the Black Knight to sit at his right hand, and Cedric at his left.

“Forgive my freedom, noble sirs,” said Locksley, “but in this forest I am the King.”

“Noble Cedric,” he continued; “half of this treasure belongs to you and your people.”

“Good yeoman,” said Cedric, “I am rich enough to reward them myself and I waited until now only to give my thanks to you and to your bold yeomen.”

“And to you,” said Cedric, turning about and hugging his Jester, “How can I reward you?”

“I ask you,” said the Jester, “to forgive my friend Gurth, who stole a week from your service only to serve your son.”

“Forgive him?” exclaimed Cedric; “I will both forgive and reward him. - Kneel down, Gurth. You are now a free man, not a slave, and I will give you a piece of land.”

No longer a slave, but a freeman and a landowner, Gurth stood on his feet, and twice jumped aloft to almost his own height from the ground.

“I only have to say,” said Cedric, “that, during the funeral rites of the noble Athelstane, I will stay in his castle of Coningsburgh and it will be open to all who choose to come.”

“Brave knight,” said Locksley to the Black Champion, “what will you take from the treasure?”

“I ask permission,” said the Knight, “to deal with Sir Maurice de Bracy the way I like.”

“He is yours,” said Locksley, “and it is well for him!”

“De Bracy,” said the Knight, “you are free - leave. But beware in the future, Maurice de Bracy, beware!”

De Bracy bowed low in silence, caught a horse and disappeared in the forest.

Then Locksley took from his neck the rich horn and baldric which he had recently won at the tournament and said, “Noble knight, keep this horn as a memorial and if at some point you need help somewhere in this forests, you will only need to blow it three times.”

Locksley then distributed the treasure. A tenth part of the whole was set apart for the church; a portion was put in a sort of public treasury; a part was given to the widows and children of those who had died in battle. The rest was divided among the bandits. The Black Knight was surprised to find that men who lived without law had such good order among them.

The portion given to the church still lay there.

At this moment the Friar appeared.

“Make room, my merry-men!” he exclaimed; “room for your godly father and his prisoner, ”-And making his way through the ring, amid the laughter of all around, he appeared in majestic triumph, his huge partisan in one hand, and in the other a

rope, one end of which was fastened to the neck of the unfortunate Isaac of York. The priest shouted, "Where is Allan-a-Dale, to chronicle me in a ballad?"

"For the love of God!" cried the poor Jew, "will no one save me from this mad - I mean this holy man?"

"Think about your ransom, Jew" said the Captain, "while I examine a prisoner of another sort. Here he comes." At that moment two bandits brought before their captain Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx.

* * *

The Abbot's face showed a curious mixture of offended pride and terror.

"Are you Christians," said the Prior, "and treat a churchman in this way?"

"Unfortunately, reverend father," said Locksley, "I know only one way in which you can escape our company. Pay us a ransom."

"What ransom should I pay for walking on the road without fifty men behind my back?"

"Wouldn't it be good," said one of the bandits, "if the Prior named the Jew's ransom, and the Jew named the Prior's?"

"This is a brilliant idea!" said the Captain, "Here, Jew, step forward, look at that holy Father Aymer, Prior of the rich Abbey of Jorvaulx, and tell us what ransom we should demand from him? - I believe you know the income of his monastery."

"O, yes," said Isaac. "I have bought many things from the good fathers of Jorvaulx. It is a rich abbey."

"Dog of a Jew!" exclaimed the Prior, "no one knows better than you, that our holy house of God is in debt for the finishing of our altar-"

"And for buying many bottles of Gascon wine," interrupted the Jew; "but that - that is all small."

"Isaac," said the leader, "pronounce what he can pay."

"Six hundred crowns," said Isaac, "the good Prior can well pay to you."

"Six hundred crowns," said the leader, gravely; "you have well spoken, Isaac - six hundred crowns. - It is a sentence, Sir Prior."

"A sentence! - a sentence!" exclaimed the band.

"We will keep you here," said the Captain, "and send your followers to bring your ransom."

"Or, if you like this," said Isaac, "I can send to York for the six hundred crowns, if the most reverend Prior gives me a document that he will pay me back."

"He will write whatever you say, Isaac," said the Captain, "and you will pay for yourself and for Prior Aymer."

"For myself!" said the Jew, "I am a broken and impoverished man."

"The Prior will be your judge," replied the Captain. "What do you say, Father Aymer? Can the Jew afford a good ransom?"

"Can he afford a ransom?" answered the Prior. "Is he not Isaac of York? I tell you openly that he should pay one thousand crowns."

"A sentence! - a sentence!" exclaimed the robbers.

“The God of my fathers help me!” said the Jew; “will you make me a beggar? - Is it not enough that I have lost my child today? O Rebecca! If each leaf on that tree were a coin, all that money I would give to know that you are alive!”

“Was not your daughter dark-haired and in an Eastern dress?” said one of the robbers.

“She was!” said the old man, trembling. “What can you tell me about her?”

“She was carried off by the proud Templar, when he broke through our band yesterday,” said the yeoman.

“Friends,” said the Chief, looking round, “the old man is a Jew, but his grief touches me. - Tell us the truth, Isaac - will paying this ransom of a thousand crowns leave you without money?”

The Jew grew pale but could not deny there might be some small sum left.

“Well, we will not take too much from you,” said Locksley, “Without money you cannot hope to buy the freedom of your child. - We will take the same ransom from you as from Prior Aymer, or rather at one hundred crowns lower, which hundred crowns shall be mine own peculiar loss, and you will have six hundred crowns remaining. Templars love the glitter of silver shekels as well as the sparkle of black eyes. Did I say well, my friends?”

The yeomen expressed their support for their leader’s decision.

“Prior Aymer,” said the Captain, “come apart with me under this tree. I have heard, that you love expensive good wines and hunting. So perhaps you need money. This Jew Isaac will give you a hundred silver coins, if your communication with your friend the Templar shall avail to procure the freedom of his daughter. What say you to this, Prior Aymer?”

“When Isaac returns successful through your mediation,” continued the Outlaw, “I swear I will see that he pays you the money in good silver.”

The Prior agreed and wrote a letter to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, saying, “This can help you, if you add some money.”

It remained that the Jew should produce some security for the ransom which he was to pay on the Prior’s account, as well as upon his own. He wrote a letter to a brother of his tribe at York, requiring him to pay to the sum of a thousand crowns.

Then the Jew hurried in the direction of Templestowe.

Prince John had invited the members of his party to the Castle of York and entertained them with feasts. But open declaration of his intentions was delayed by the absence of three important members of his party.

It was on the morning after the fall of Torquilstone, that De Bracy came to his Prince. His armour carried all the signs of battle, it was broken and stained with blood in many places. He took off his helmet and stood for a moment as if to collect himself before he told his news.

“De Bracy,” said Prince John, “what does this mean? - Are the Saxons in rebellion?”

“Speak, De Bracy,” said Waldemar Fitzurse, “Where is the Templar? - where is Front-de-Boeuf?”

“The Templar has run,” said De Bracy; “and Front-de-Boeuf is dead. But the worst news is not yet said, - Richard is in England - I have seen him and spoken with him.”

Prince John turned pale, tottered, and caught at the back of an oaken bench to support himself.

“You have gone mad, De Bracy,” said Fitzurse, “it cannot be true.”

“It is as true as the truth itself,” said De Bracy; “I was his prisoner, and spoke with him.”

“And you were his prisoner?” said Waldemar; “he is then at the head of an army?”

“No - only a few yeomen were around him, and to these his person is unknown. I heard him say he was about to depart from them. He joined them only to assist at the storming of Torquilstone.”

“Yes,” said Fitzurse, “such is the fashion of Richard. What do you propose to do, De Bracy?”

“I? - I offered Richard the service of my Free Lances, and he refused them - I will lead them to Hull, find some ships, and sail to Flanders. A man of action will always find employment in these times.”

Prince John had gradually awakened from the stupor into which he had been thrown by the unexpected information. “They are deserting me,” he said to himself.

“My good lords, I thought you were wise men, yet you throw away money, honour, pleasure at the moment when our game can be won with one stroke!”

“I don’t understand you,” said De Bracy. “As soon as Richard’s return is declared, he will be at the head of an army and our game will be lost.”

“There is only one way to win,” said the Prince, “this object of our terror travels alone. He must be met on his way.”

“Not by me,” said De Bracy hastily, “I was his prisoner, and he showed me mercy. I will not harm a feather on his helmet.”

“Who spoke of harming him?” said Prince John, with a hardened laugh, “you will say next that I meant he should kill him! - No, a prison would be better. Our uncle Robert lived and died in the castle of Cardiffe.”

“Prison or tomb,” said De Bracy, “I wash my hands of the whole matter. He gave me my life. I will not lift hand against him. I will serve you as a knight, but this highway task is not for me.”

“I will take on me,” said Waldemar Fitzurse; “this dangerous task.” He left the apartment. “He goes to make my brother prisoner,” said Prince John to De Bracy. “I believe he will follow our orders, and pay respect to our dear Richard.”

* * *

The Preceptory of the Templars was a castle. Isaac paused at the gate, to consider how he might enter the Preceptory.

In the meantime the Grand Master of the Order Lucas Beaumanoir was walking in a small garden within the walls of the Preceptory and held a sad and confidential talk with a brother of his Order, who had come in his company from

Palestine. The Grand Master was an old man with a long grey beard. He was a soldier and an ascetic, and you could see it from his face.

“Conrade,” said the Grand Master, “dear companion of my battles, only you I can tell how much sorrow the degradation of our Order gives me.”

“It is true,” answered Conrade Mont-Fitchet, “that the irregularities of our brethren in England are even worse than those in France.”

“Because they are more wealthy,” answered the Grand Master. “I swear to you that except for yourself and some few knights that still keep the ancient severity of our Order I see not one true brother Templar. They wear fur, they hunt, they read what they are prohibited to read, they eat delicacies and to drink like a Templar has become a proverb! - They are prohibited to offer even to their sisters and their mothers the kiss of affection, and I am ashamed to speak - ashamed to think - how they break that rule. The souls of our pure founders are disturbed even in paradise itself. I have seen them, Conrade, in my dreams. Beaumanoir, they say, you sleep - awake! My actions must be sharp and sudden - the Order is in a crisis. We must cast away these riches, which are a temptation to princes. Or - mark my words- the Order of the Temple will be utterly demolished.”

“Now may God stop this!” said the Preceptor.

“Amen,” said the Grand Master, with solemnity, “but we must deserve His aid.”

At this moment a squire entered the garden, and, bowing profoundly before the Grand Master, stood silent, waiting for his permission to tell his news.

“Speak, Damian, we permit you,” said the Grand Master.

“A Jew stands outside the gate, noble and reverend father,” said the Squire, “who wants to speak with brother Brian de Bois-Guilbert.”

“You are right to tell me first. It is important for us to know about this Bois-Guilbert and his actions,” said the Grand-Master, turning to his companion.

“People say he is very brave,” said Conrade.

“It is true,” said the Grand Master; “in our courage only we are not degenerated from the heroes of the Cross. But brother Brian has become an active agitator and a leader for those who criticize our authority. - Damian,” he continued, “lead the Jew to our presence.”

The squire left and in a few minutes returned with Isaac of York. When the Jew had approached within the distance of three yards, Beaumanoir made a sign that he should come no farther. The Jew kneeled down on the earth which he kissed in token of reverence; then rising, stood before the Templars, his hands folded on his bosom, his head bowed on his breast.

“Damian,” said the Grand Master, “leave and do not let anyone enter this garden until we leave it.” - The squire bowed and retreated. - “Jew,” continued the haughty old man, “look at me. Be brief in your answers to my questions and don’t lie.”

The Jew was about to reply, but the Grand Master went on.

“Silence, unbeliever! - you can only answer our questions. - What is your business with our brother Brian de Bois-Guilbert?”

Isaac gasped with terror and uncertainty. He could not tell the truth, but unless he told it, what hope could he have of achieving his daughter's deliverance? At last he said in a trembling voice, "I bring a letter to that good knight from Prior Aymer of the Abbey of Jorvaulx."

"These are evil times, Conrade," said the Master. "A Cistercian Prior sends a letter to a soldier of the Temple, and cannot find a better messenger than an unbelieving Jew. - Give me the letter."

"Reverend father," said Conrade, "will you break the seal?"

"Shouldn't I?" said Beaumanoir, with a frown. "Is it not written in our rules that a Templar has to show every letter he receives to the Grand Master, and read it in his presence? Read it aloud, Conrade."

Conrade read the letter, which was in these words: "Aymer, by divine grace, Prior of the Cistercian house of Saint Mary's of Jorvaulx, to Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, a Knight of the holy Order of the Temple, wisheth health, with the bounties of King Bacchus and of my Lady Venus. Touching our present condition, dear Brother, we are in the hands of certain robbers, who put us to ransom. We learned from them about Front-de-Boeuf's misfortune, and that you have escaped with that fair Jewish sorceress, whose black eyes have bewitched you. We are happy that you are safe, but you should be on your guard, because we are privately assured that your Great Master comes from Normandy. And the wealthy Jew her father, Isaac of York, asked me to write a letter for him, so I advise you to ask from him a ransom and return his daughter."

"What do you say to this, Conrade?" said the Grand Master - "And what does he mean by this 'Jewish sorceress'?" Conrade was better acquainted with the slang used by the nobles of the period and he explained that this was a metaphor for a beloved woman. But the explanation did not satisfy Beaumanoir.

"There is more in it than you guess, Conrade. This Rebecca of York was a pupil of that Miriam you know about." Then turning to Isaac, he said aloud, "Your daughter, then, is a prisoner of Brian de Bois-Guilbert?"

"Yes, reverend sir," said poor Isaac, "and whatsoever ransom a poor man can pay for her safety -"

"Silence!" said the Grand Master. "Has your daughter practiced the art of healing?"

"Yes, sir," answered the Jew.

Beaumanoir continued, "Your daughter cures people, I am sure, by words and sighs, and other cabalistical mysteries."

"No, reverend and brave Knight," answered Isaac, "but in chief measure by a balsam of marvellous virtue."

"Where has she taken that secret?" said Beaumanoir.

"It was delivered to her," answered Isaac, reluctantly, "by Miriam, a sage matron of our tribe."

"Ah, false Jew! Was it not from that witch Miriam, whose body was burnt and whose ashes were thrown to the four winds?" exclaimed the Grand Master, crossing himself. "I will do the same to her pupil! I will teach her to bewitch the soldiers of the

blessed Temple. - There, Damian, throw this Jew from the gate - shoot him dead if he tries to come back.”

Poor Isaac was hurried off and sent away from the Preceptory. He could only return to the house of the Rabbi, and try to learn the fate of his daughter. Before that he had feared for her honour, he was now to tremble for her life. In the meanwhile, the Grand Master ordered the Preceptor of Templestowe to come to him.

* * *

“Is there in this place, dedicated to the purposes of the holy Order of the Temple,” said the Grand Master, “a Jewish woman, brought here by a brother of the Order, by your consent, Sir Preceptor?”

Albert Malvoisin read in the eyes of Beaumanoir ruin to Bois-Guilbert and to himself, unless he could change the situation.

“Why are you mute?” continued the Grand Master.

“Is it permitted to me to reply?” answered the Preceptor, in a tone of the deepest humility.

“Speak, you are permitted,” said the Grand Master - “speak, and say, how comes it that you let a brother bring a woman, and that woman a Jewish sorceress, into this holy place?”

“A Jewish sorceress!” echoed Albert Malvoisin; “good angels guard us!”

“Yes, brother, a Jewish sorceress!” said the Grand Master, sternly. “I have said it.”

“Your wisdom, reverend father,” answered the Preceptor, “has rolled away the darkness from my understanding. I was very much surprised that such a good knight as Brian de Bois-Guilbert became mad because of some woman. I received her into this house only to create a barrier between them.”

“Has nothing, then, happened between them?” demanded the Grand Master.

“What! under this roof?” said the Preceptor, crossing himself, “No! If I have sinned in receiving her here, it was to break off our brother’s devotion to this Jewish woman, which seemed to me so wild and unnatural. But if she is a sorceress, then the situation is clear.”

“It is!” said Beaumanoir. “It may be that our brother Bois-Guilbert deserves in this matter pity and not punishment. The witch will die. Prepare the Castle-hall for the trial of the sorceress.”

Albert Malvoisin bowed and retired, - not to give directions for preparing the hall, but to look for Brian de Bois-Guilbert. He found him irritated by new rejection from the side of Rebecca. “The ungrateful,” he said, “to reject him who risked his life to save hers!”

“Old Lucas Beaumanoir,” said the Preceptor, “knows about her, I couldn’t help it. But I have turned the matter to our benefit. You are safe if you leave Rebecca. You are pitied - the victim of magical delusion. She is a sorceress, and must die.”

“She will not, by Heaven!” said Bois-Guilbert.

“By Heaven, she must and will!” said Malvoisin. “Nobody can save her. Think, Bois-Guilbert, your present rank, your future - everything depends on your place in the Order. And Beaumanoir will use any pretext to expel you.”

“Malvoisin,” said Bois-Guilbert, “you are a cold-blooded -”

“Friend,” said the Preceptor, “and therefore more fit to give you advice.”

“You are right. I will not give him a chance to expel me. Rebecca doesn’t appreciate my love, then I will leave her to her fate. Unless...”

At noon several knights came for Rebecca and led her to the great hall of the Preceptory. This huge apartment was filled with squires and yeomen who came to watch the trial. When Rebecca was walking to her place, somebody put a piece of paper into her hand, which she received almost unconsciously.

* * *

On an elevated seat, directly before the accused, sat the Grand Master of the Temple. At his feet was placed a table, occupied by two scribes.

The Grand Master raised his voice, and addressed the assembly.

“Knights, Preceptors, and Companions of this Holy Order, my brothers and my children! - you also, Christian brothers, of every degree! - We have brought here a Jewish woman, by name Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York - a woman famous for sorcery, which she used to drive mad a Preceptor of our Order, our brother, Brian de Bois-Guilbert.

We cannot believe that a man who has such a high position in our order suddenly decided to forget about our rules and his promises and live with a Jewish woman and was so mad as to bring her to one of our own Preceptories. We say that some demon or spell made the noble knight behave in this way. The punishment for what this knight has done is very hard, but if he was influenced by magic, then we shouldn’t punish him, but the witch instead. We ask the witnesses come forward.”

Several witnesses described how Bois-Guilbert risked his own life to save Rebecca and the manner in which Bois-Guilbert and Rebecca arrived at the Preceptory.

“Let us now hear somebody talk about the life of this woman, brothers,” said the Grand Master.

There was in the crowd a man who really was cured by Rebecca. He told that some time ago he suddenly fell ill, while he was working for Isaac of York. He couldn’t move his arms or his leg, until Rebecca’s treatment helped him. He was not perfectly cured, but he could work. Rebecca even gave him a pot of her warming and spicy-smelling balsam and some money to return to the house of his father.

“Stupid peasant, who plays with magic, do you have this balsam with you?” asked the Grand Master.

The peasant took out a small box. The Grand Master asked if there was a doctor who could tell him the ingredients of this mystic balsam. Two doctors, as they called themselves, the one a monk, the other a barber, appeared, and swore they knew nothing of the materials, except that they smelled like Eastern herbs. But with the true professional hatred to a successful competitor, they said that, since the medicine was beyond their own knowledge, it was magical. When this medical research was ended, the Saxon peasant asked humbly to have back his medicine, but the Grand Master frowned and said, “What is your name, fellow?”

“Higg, the son of Snell,” answered the peasant.

“Then Higg, son of Snell,” said the Grand Master, “I tell you it is better to be paralyzed than to accept the help of unbelievers’ medicine.”

At this period of the trial, the Grand Master commanded Rebecca to unveil herself. “I will obey you,” she replied, with an expression of patient sorrow in her voice, which had almost melted the heart of Beaumanoir himself; “at your command I will show the face of an unfortunate maiden.”

Higg, the son of Snell, cried:

“Let me go! I cannot look at her and think that I have helped to kill her!”

“Poor man,” said Rebecca, when she heard his exclamation; “you have done me no harm by speaking the truth - you cannot help me by your complaints, go home and save yourself.”

Higg calmed down and was allowed to stay.

Then the Grand Master listened to two soldiers, who were bribed by Albert Malvoisin to make sure Rebecca dies and Bois-Guilbert is free to follow the road of ambition. Their evidence was this: Rebecca was heard to mutter to herself in an unknown language; one of them had seen her cure a wounded man in the castle of Torquillstone by making signs upon the wound and repeating mysterious words, after which the iron head of an arrow came out of the wound, the wound was closed, and the dying man was ready to fight again. To show that his story was true, he took out of his bag the head of an arrow, which, according to his story, had come out of the wound. The second soldier had been a witness to the scene between Rebecca and Bois-Guilbert, when she was standing on the parapet threatening to throw herself down. Not to be behind his companion, this fellow said that he saw Rebecca turn into a swan, flying around the tower three times and then turning into a woman again. This was enough to prove Rebecca guilty. The Grand Master asked what she could say in reply.

“To ask for pity,” said the lovely Jewish woman, with a voice trembling a little with emotion, “would, I know, be useless. To say that to help the sick and wounded of another religion cannot be bad in the eyes of God wouldn’t help either. But I will ask Brian de Bois-Guilbert himself, are not these accusations as false as they are deadly?”

There was a pause, all eyes turned to Brian de Bois-Guilbert. He was silent.

“Answer her, brother,” said the Grand Master, “if the enemy with whom you are fighting gives you power.”

Bois-Guilbert seemed agitated by opposite passions, which almost convulsed his features. He said in a strange tone, looking at Rebecca, - “The scroll! - the scroll!”

“Yes,” said Beaumanoir, “this is indeed evidence! The victim of her magic can only tell us about the fatal scroll, the spell written on which is, doubtless, the cause of his silence.”

But Rebecca understood the knight correctly and quickly read the small scroll in her hand. The scroll said: “Demand a Champion!”

“Rebecca, the evidence of this knight doesn’t help you. Do you have anything else to say?”

“There is one chance of life left to me,” said Rebecca, “by your laws, I maintain my innocence, and I declare the falsehood of this accusation - I demand the privilege of trial by combat, and will appear by my champion.”

“And who, Rebecca,” replied the Grand Master, “will fight for a Jewish maiden?”

“God will give me a champion,” said Rebecca.

* * *

Even Lucas Beaumanoir himself was impressed by Rebecca’s defense.

After some time he spoke: “Maiden, I feel pity for you. Repent, my daughter, confess your sins, accept our true faith and live. What has the law of Moses done for you that you will die for it?”

“It was the law of my fathers,” said Rebecca, “it was given upon the mountain of Sinai in cloud and in fire. I am just a woman and I am not prepared to defend my religion, but I can die for it, if it is God’s will.”

“Do you refuse to confess your guilt and insist on your bold challenge?”

“I do, noble sir,” answered Rebecca.

“So be it then, in the name of Heaven,” said the Grand Master, “and may God show the right!”

“Amen,” replied the Preceptors around him.

“Brothers,” said Beaumanoir, “Who should be our champion in the field?”

“Brian de Bois-Guilbert,” said one of the Preceptors.

“So be it!” exclaimed the Grand Master, “Rebecca, we give you three days to find a champion. And if you can’t find one, or your champion is defeated, you will die the death of a witch.”

“God’s will be done!” said Rebecca, “I only need someone to carry my message to my father.”

There was another pause, then Higg, the son of Snell, replied, “I am still a sick man, but I can I will carry your message.”

“Find Isaac of York,” said Rebecca, “here is money for the road - let him have this scroll. Farewell! Life and death are in your haste.”

The peasant took the scroll, which contained only a few lines in Hebrew and left.

Higg didn’t have to go to York, however, because not far from the gate of the Preceptory he met with two riders. And when he approached them he discovered that one of them was his old employer, Isaac of York.

When Isaac read the scroll, he fell from his mule like a dying man.

“Child of my sorrow,” cried the poor Jew, “I cannot live without you! Child of my love! - child of my old age! - oh, Rebecca, daughter of Rachel!”

“Pull yourself together,” said his friend, “go and look for a champion. Find Wilfred, the son of Cedric. It may be he will help you with advice or will fight himself.”

“I will find him,” said Isaac, “because he is a good man, and has compassion for the Jews. And brother, Heaven be praised that gave me a friend in my misery!”

They hugged and went in different directions, leaving the crippled peasant alone.

* * *

When the Black Knight left the generous bandit, he went to the monastery where the wounded Ivanhoe had been removed from the castle. On the next morning the Black Knight was ready to continue his journey accompanied by the jester Wamba, who was his guide. Ivanhoe watched his departure from the monastery.

But some hours later he requested to see the Prior. The old man came in haste, and asked anxiously about the state of his health.

"It is better," he said, "than I could have supposed. I feel already that I can put on my armour."

"Now, the saints forbid," said the Prior, "that the son of the Saxon Cedric should leave our convent before his wounds are healed!"

"Venerable father," said Ivanhoe, "I feel ready to travel and it is necessary for me to travel. I have a feeling the knight who left me here is in danger, and I ask you to give me a horse with a soft step."

"You will have my own horse," said the worthy churchman.

"Thank you, reverend father. And now, farewell!"

Ivanhoe jumped on the horse and commanded Gurth to keep close by his side. They followed the track of the Black Knight into the forest.

In the meantime, the Black Champion and his guide were pacing at their leisure through the recesses of the forest.

"There are," said Wamba, coming close up to the Knight's side, "companions who are far more dangerous for travellers to meet than the bandits we have just left."

"And who may they be?" said the Knight.

"I mean Malvoisin's soldiers," said Wamba; "and let me tell you, that, in time of civil war, six of these are worth a band of wolves at any time. They are now reinforced with the soldiers that escaped from Torquilstone. So that, should we meet with a band of them, we are like to pay for our feats of arms. - Now, I pray you, Sir Knight, what would you do if we met two of them?"

"Attack them with my lance, Wamba, if they offered us any impediment."

"But what if there were four of them?"

"They would drink of the same cup," answered the Knight.

"What if six," continued Wamba, "and we as we now are, barely two - would you not remember Locksley's horn?"

"What! Call for help," exclaimed the Knight, "against six of these bandits?"

"Then," said Wamba, "I will ask you to have a look at that horn."

The Knight took off the horn and gave it to the Jester, who immediately hung it round his own neck.

"What are you doing, knave?" said the Knight, "Give it back."

"Don't worry, Sir Knight, it is safe. When a knight and a fool travel together, the fool should bear the horn, because he can blow the best. And now let the knight prepare for battle, because if I am not mistaken, there are company in these trees that

is on the look-out for us. I have twice noticed the glance of a motion from amongst the green leaves. These trees are ideal for an ambush.”

At that moment three arrows shot from the suspected trees, but they could not penetrate the knight’s armour.

“Wamba,” said the Knight, “let us attack them,” - and he rode straight to the trees. He was met by six or seven soldiers, who rode against him with their lances at full career. Three of the weapons struck against him, and splintered with as little effect as if they had been driven against a tower of steel. The Black Knight’s eyes seemed to flash fire even through the aperture of his visor. He raised himself in his stirrups with an air of inexpressible dignity, and exclaimed, “What means this, my masters!”. The men made no other reply than by drawing their swords and attacking him on every side, crying, “Die, tyrant!”

“Ha! Saint Edward! Ha! Saint George!” said the Black Knight, striking down a man with every exclamation; “do we have traitors here?”

His opponents, desperate as they were, bore back from an arm which carried death in every blow, and it seemed as if the terror of his single strength was about to gain the battle against such odds, when a knight, in blue armour, who had until this time kept himself behind the other assailants, spurred forward with his lance, and taking aim, not at the rider but at the steed, wounded the noble animal mortally.

“That was a felon stroke!” exclaimed the Black Knight, as the steed fell to the earth, bearing his rider along with him.

And at this moment Wamba blew the horn. The sudden sound made the attackers stop for a second and Wamba did not hesitate to run and help the Black Knight to rise.

“Shame on you, cowards!” exclaimed the knight in blue armour, who seemed to lead the attackers, “do you fly from the empty blast of a horn blown by a Jester?”

Animated by his words, they again attacked the Black Knight, who now stood with his back against an oak and defended himself with his sword. The leader of the attackers galloped against the Black Knight hoping to kill him with his lance, but Wamba suddenly attacked his horse with a sword. Both horse and man fell to the ground, but the situation of the Black Knight continued to be very dangerous, because he began to feel tired from defending himself against several well armed men. At that moment a band of yeomen came out of the forest, headed by Locksley and the Friar, who soon killed all the attackers. The Black Knight thanked his deliverers with dignity.

“It is important to know,” he said, “who have been my unprovoked enemies. - Take off the helmet of that Blue Knight, Wamba.”

The Jester quickly came to the leader of the attackers, who lay under his wounded horse unable to run or to fight, and took off his helmet.

“Waldemar Fitzurse!” said the Black Knight in astonishment; “what could make you take part in a murder? Who sent you?”

“Your father’s son,” answered Waldemar.

“You do not ask for your life, Waldemar,” said the King.

“He that is in the lion’s clutch,” answered Fitzurse, “knows it were needless.”

“Take it, then, unasked,” said Richard. - “Take your life, but with this condition, that in three days you will leave England and never will you mention that it was my brother who sent you to kill me. Let this knight have a steed, Locksley, I see your yeomen have caught those which were running loose, and let him depart unharmed.”

“But that I judge I listen to a voice whose commands must not be disputed,” answered the yeoman.

“You guessed right, Locksley,” said the Black Knight, “I am Richard of England!”

At these words the yeomen at once kneeled down before him, and at the same time tendered their allegiance, and implored pardon for their offences.

“Rise, my friends,” said Richard, in a gracious tone. Your sins are forgiven, you have rescued your sovereign today. And you, brave Locksley -”

“Don’t call me Locksley, my King, - I am Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest.”

“King of robbers, and Prince of good fellows!” said the King.

“True says the proverb,” said Wamba, “when the cat is away, the mice will play.”

“What, Wamba, are you here?” said Richard, “I thought you have run.”

“I ran?” said Wamba, “It is true, I stepped back at first, but I gave the signal to attack.”

“And to good purpose, honest Wamba,” replied the King. “Your good service will not be forgotten.”

At the same time, two additional personages appeared on the scene.

* * *

The new comers were Wilfred of Ivanhoe and Gurth. Ivanhoe was astonished, when he saw six or seven dead bodies lying around his King. He hesitated how to address the King. Richard saw his embarrassment.

“Don’t fear, Wilfred,” he said, “to address Richard Plantagenet as himself when you see him in the company of true English hearts, although it may be they have been brought a few steps aside by warm English blood.”

When the King explained to Ivanhoe what had happened, the young knight exclaimed, “Why, oh why, noble Prince, do you make your faithful servants fear for your life as if it were of no more value than that of a mere travelling knight?”

“And Richard Plantagenet,” said the King, “desires no more fame than he can win with a good lance and a sword.”

“But your kingdom,” said Ivanhoe, “your kingdom is threatened with civil war.”

“Ho! ho! my kingdom and my servants?” answered Richard, impatiently; “I tell you, Sir Wilfred, the best of them do the same. For example, my very faithful servant Wilfred of Ivanhoe will not obey my positive commands, and yet reads his King a homily, because he does not walk exactly by his advice. Yet forgive me, my faithful Wilfred. I need to disguise myself to give my friends and faithful nobles time to assemble their forces. Estoteville and Bohun will not be strong enough to move

forward to York for one more day. I must have news of Salisbury from the south. The Chancellor must make sure of London.”

Wilfred only sighed, and Richard went on in conversation with Robin Hood. - “King of Outlaws,” he said, “have you no refreshment to offer to your brother monarch?”

“If your Grace, then,” said Robin, “will again honour with your presence one of Robin Hood’s places of rendezvous, the venison shall not be lacking; and a stoup of ale, and it may be a cup of reasonably good wine.”

Beneath a huge oak-tree the King of England sat surrounded by bandits. As the flagon went round, the rough foresters soon lost their awe for the presence of Majesty. They sang and told jokes, and the King laughed with them.

After some time the King together with Ivanhoe, Gurth and Wamba went to Coningsburgh. They arrived when the sun was yet in the horizon.

* * *

When Richard and Ivanhoe reached Coningsburgh and were led to the castle hall, Wilfred hid his face in his cloak to show it to his father when the King gives him the signal.

In this apartment sat members of the most important Saxon families in this part of the country. They were all old, with grey hair and long beards, and sat in silence. They were looking down on Earth with sorrow.

Cedric, who was sitting with them, seemed to act as chief of the assembly. When Richard entered, he rose and greeted him. Then he led him into a small and dark chapel. Two torches gave enough light to see the naked walls and the rude altar of stone. Before this altar there was a sarcophagus and on each side of it kneeled three priests, who were muttering their prayers. A big sum of money was paid to the convent of Saint Edmund’s by Athelstane’s mother; and to deserve it almost all the monks moved to Coningsburgh, where, while six of them were constantly near the sarcophagus of Athelstane, the others took their share of the food and drinks.

When they were alone in a special room for guests of a high rank Richard said to Cedric: “You have known me only as the Black Knight - Know me now as Richard Plantagenet.”

“Richard of Anjou!” exclaimed Cedric, stepping backward with astonishment.

“No, noble Cedric - Richard of England! - whose deepest interest is to see her sons united with each other. Now I want to remind you, noble Saxon, that when we last parted, you promised to give me a reward for what I’ve done for you.”

“It is given before it is named,” said Cedric.

“Then I demand from you, as a man of your word, to forgive the good knight, Wilfred of Ivanhoe.”

“Then this is Wilfred!” said Cedric.

“My father! - my father!” said Ivanhoe, throwing away his cloak and falling down at Cedric’s feet, “give me your forgiveness!”

“You have it, my son,” said Cedric, raising him up. “You are about to speak,” he added, “and I guess the topic. The Lady Rowena must complete two years’ mourning, as if for her husband before she can get married again. The ghost of

Athelstane himself would come and stand before us to forbid us forget about his honour.”

It seemed that Cedric’s words had raised a ghost, because at this moment the door flew open and Athelstane, dressed in the garments of the grave, stood before them, pale, tired, and like someone arisen from the dead!

The effect of his appearance was very strong. Cedric started back as far as the wall of the apartment would let him and gazed on the figure of his friend with eyes that seemed fixed, and a mouth which he couldn’t shut. Ivanhoe crossed himself, repeating all the prayers in Saxon, Latin, or Norman-French that he could remember, without understanding his own words.

In the meantime, a horrible noise was heard below stairs, some crying, “Hold the monks!” and others, “Throw them into the dungeon!”

“In the name of God!” said Cedric, addressing what seemed the ghost of his dead friend, “if you are a man, speak! - if a spirit, say why you visit us. - Living or dead, noble Athelstane, speak to Cedric!”

“I will,” said the ghost, very calmly, “when I have collected breath, and when you give me time - Alive, you said? - I am as much alive as he can be who has eaten bread and drunk water for three days!”

“Why, noble Athelstane,” said the Black Knight, “I myself saw you struck down by the fierce Templar near the end of the storm at Torquilstone, and I thought, and Wamba reported, that your skull was cut through the teeth.”

“You thought wrong, Sir Knight,” said Athelstane, “My teeth are in good order, and my supper will know that in a moment - the Templar’s sword turned in his hand, so it struck me flat. I fell down, stunned, but unwounded. Others were beaten down and killed above me, so I never recovered my senses until I found myself in a coffin - (an open one, by good luck) - placed before the altar of the church of Saint Edmund’s. I sneezed, groaned and would have climbed out of it, when the Abbot, full of terror, came running at the noise, surprised and in no way happy to find the man alive, whose heir he imagined to be. I asked for wine, he gave me some, but he added something to it, because I fell asleep and didn’t wake up for many hours. When I did, I found that I was in a very dark place with my arms and feet tied. I had strange thoughts of what had happened, when the door of my dungeon opened, and two monks entered. They would have persuaded me I was in purgatory, but I knew too well the voice of the Abbot.”

“Have patience, noble Athelstane,” said the King, “take breath, tell your story. Such a story is as well worth listening to as a romance.”

“Yes, but there was no romance in the matter!” said Athelstane. - “A loaf of bread and a jug of water - that’s all that they gave me, their patron!”

“But, in the name of Our Lady, noble Athelstane,” said Cedric, grasping the hand of his friend, “how did you escape - did they let you go?”

“Let me go!” echoed Athelstane, “No, they left the monastery to eat my funeral feast and sing their psalms. Then the keeper who brought me food drank some wine and forgot to shut the door. My chains were old and rusty, I pulled and they went out of the wall. Then I climbed the stairs, struck the keeper senseless and left him on the

floor. I ate some baked meat, and took a leathern bottle of wine, went to the stable, and found in a private stall my own best horse. Here I came with all the speed, everybody running from me wherever I came, taking me for a ghost.”

“And you have found me,” said Cedric, “ready to start again on our brave projects for saving the noble Saxon people.”

“Don’t talk to me about saving any one,” said Athelstane, “I am happy I am saved myself.”

“Shame on you, noble Athelstane,” said Cedric, “tell this Norman Prince, Richard of Anjou, that you have a right to sit on the throne of England.”

“How!” said Athelstane, “is this the noble King Richard?”

“It is Richard Plantagenet himself,” said Cedric.

“Then,” said Athelstane, “I here proclaim my loyalty to him. My mother, my friend, please, don’t talk about my rights. Bread and water and a dungeon kill unnecessary ambition, and I rise from the tomb a wiser man than I descended into it. This whole idea can only end in the deaths of some thousands of simple people. I tell you, I will be a King in my own lands, and nowhere else.”

“And my ward Rowena,” said Cedric, “will you marry her?”

“Father Cedric,” said Athelstane, “be reasonable. The Lady Rowena doesn’t love me, she loves my cousin Wilfred’s little finger more than my whole person. Don’t blush, Rowena, there is no shame in loving a good knight. Give me your hand for a minute. Here, cousin Wilfred of Ivanhoe, I now give up my claim... Hey! Our cousin Wilfred has disappeared! I saw him stand there a moment ago.”

Everybody looked around and searched for Ivanhoe, but he was not there. Somebody said that a Jew asked to see him and after a short talk, Ivanhoe left the castle.

“My beautiful cousin, Rowena...” said Athelstane, but Rowena was not there either! The situation was terribly embarrassing for her, and while Athelstan was looking for Ivanhoe, she escaped from the room.

“Certainly,” said Athelstane, “these grave-clothes have a spell on them, every one runs from me. To you I turn, noble King Richard...”

But King Richard was gone also! He went to talk to the Jew who had spoken with Ivanhoe, then he demanded a horse and rode away.

“I swear!” said Athelstane, “Every one I speak to disappears as soon as they hear my voice! Come, my friends, let us go and eat before our supper disappears as well!”

* * *

Our scene returns to the exterior of the Preceptory of Templestowe, about the hour when the bloody die was to be cast for the life or death of Rebecca. Many people came to watch the event.

This enclosure was formed on a piece of level ground adjoining to the Preceptory, which had been levelled with care, for the exercise of military and chivalrous sports.

A throne was erected for the Grand Master at the east end, surrounded with seats of distinction for the Preceptors and Knights of the Order.

At the opposite end of the lists a stake was prepared for burning the supposed witch.

The heavy bell of the church of Saint Michael of Templestowe gave the signal for the approaching ceremony.

The unfortunate Rebecca was conducted to the black chair placed near the stake. The Grand Master took his seat, and a herald announced, "Here stands the good Knight, Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, ready to do battle with any knight of free blood, who will be a champion for this Rebecca." The trumpets sounded, and there was a pause for many minutes.

"No champion appears for her," said the Grand Master. "But we will wait until noon."

During this awful pause, Rebecca heard the voice of Bois-Guilbert, who came close by her side.

"Sit on my horse and we will ride far away. I will make you my queen and with my lance and sword I will win you a kingdom."

"Go away," said Rebecca, "you are my enemy, cruel, hard-hearted man!"

At this instant a knight appeared on the plain advancing towards the lists. A hundred voices exclaimed, "A champion! a champion!" But the knight's horse, urged for many miles to its utmost speed, seemed to fall from fatigue, and the rider seemed weak or tired.

The knight said to the herald, "I am Wilfred of Ivanhoe, a good knight and noble, come here to defend with lance and sword the just and lawful maiden Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York; to prove the judgment pronounced against her to be false, and to announce that Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert is a traitor, murderer, and liar; as I will prove in this field with my body against his, by the aid of God. Does the Grand Master allow me the combat?"

"I may not deny what you have challenged," said the Grand Master, "provided the maiden accepts you as her champion."

"Rebecca," said Ivanhoe, "do you accept me as your champion?"

"I do," she said - "I do," fluttered by an emotion which the fear of death had been unable to produce, "I do accept you as the champion whom Heaven has sent me."

Ivanhoe was already at his post, took his lance. Bois-Guilbert did the same; and his squire remarked that his face, which had continued during the whole morning of an ashy paleness, was now become suddenly very much flushed.

The trumpets sounded, and the knights charged each other in full career. The wearied horse of Ivanhoe, and its no less exhausted rider, went down, as all had expected, before the well-aimed lance and vigorous steed of the Templar. This issue of the combat all had foreseen; but although the spear of Ivanhoe did but, in comparison, touch the shield of Bois-Guilbert, that champion, to the astonishment of all who beheld it reeled in his saddle and fell in the lists.

Ivanhoe was soon on foot ready to fight with his sword; but his antagonist lay on the ground. Wilfred, placing his foot on his breast, and the sword's point to his

throat, commanded him to surrender, or die on the spot. Bois-Guilbert returned no answer.

“Don’t kill him, Sir Knight,” cried the Grand Master, “We announce him defeated.”

He descended into the lists, and commanded them to take off the helmet of the fallen champion. His eyes were closed - the dark red flush was still in his face. As they looked on him in astonishment, the eyes opened - but they were fixed and glazed. Untouched by the lance of his enemy, he had died a victim to the violence of his own emotions.

“This is indeed the judgment of God,” said the Grand Master.

* * *

When the first moments of surprise were over, Wilfred of Ivanhoe demanded of the Grand Master, as judge of the field, if he had manfully and rightfully done his duty in the combat? “Manfully and rightfully has it been done,” said the Grand Master. “I pronounce the maiden free and guiltless.”

He was interrupted by the sound of horses’ feet, advancing in such numbers, and so rapidly, as to shake the ground before them. The Black Knight galloped into the lists. He was followed by a group of soldiers and several knights in complete armour.

“I am too late,” he said, looking around him. “I was going to fight Bois-Guilbert myself. - Ivanhoe, was this well, to fight when you are still so weak?”

“Heaven, my King,” answered Ivanhoe, “has killed this proud man, not me.”

“Peace be with him,” said Richard, looking steadfastly on the corpse, “he was a brave knight. But we must waste no time - Bohun, do your duty!”

A knight stepped forward from the King’s followers, and, laying his hand on the shoulder of Albert de Malvoisin, said, “I arrest you for treason.”

The Grand Master exclaimed in astonishment, “Who dares to arrest a knight of the Temple of Zion in his own Preceptory and in the presence of the Grand Master?”

“I make the arrest,” replied the knight - “I, Henry Bohun, Earl of Essex, Lord High Constable of England.”

“And he arrests Malvoisin,” said the King, taking off his helmet, “by the order of Richard Plantagenet, here present. Malvoisin, you will die with your brother Philip. Grand Master, leave, you cannot oppose me.”

“I will write to Rome against you,” said the Grand Master, “Chaplains, sing the Psalm! Knights, squires, and followers of the Holy Temple, prepare to follow me!”

The Grand Master spoke with a dignity which inspired courage into his followers. They gathered around him like the sheep around the watch-dog. The Grand Master gave the signal of departure. Their trumpets sounded a wild march and they moved off as slowly as their horses could step, as if to show that they were not afraid of the King’s knights.

During all this Rebecca saw and heard nothing - she was locked in the arms of her aged father. But one word from Isaac returned her to her feelings.

“Let us go,” he said, “my dear daughter, and throw ourselves at the feet of this good young man.”

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“No,” said Rebecca, “I cannot speak to him now.”

“But, my daughter,” said Isaac, “we cannot be so unthankful.”

“We are the most thankful people on Earth,” said Rebecca - “we will thank him - but not now - for the sake of your beloved Rachel, father, not now!”

“It was well that the King,” said Ivanhoe to the Earl of Essex, “took you with him, noble Earl, and so many of your followers.”

The Earl smiled and shook his head.

“Brave Ivanhoe,” said Essex, “you know our King so well, and yet suspect him of taking so wise a precaution! I was on my way to York, when I met King Richard, like a true travelling knight galloping here. I accompanied him almost against his will.”

The rebellion ended before it started. Maurice de Bracy went to France, Philip de Malvoisin and his brother Albert were executed, Waldemar Fitzurse escaped to his castle, and Prince John was forgiven by his generous brother.

The wedding of Wilfred of Ivanhoe and Rowena was celebrated in the beautiful York Cathedral. The King himself attended, and both Gurth and Wamba were there. On the second morning after the wedding, Rowena was told that a maiden wanted to speak with her alone. A beautiful woman covered with a veil entered and bowed to the ground.

“What does this mean, lady?” said the surprised bride.

“To you, Lady of Ivanhoe,” said Rebecca, rising up, “I can lawfully pay the debt of gratitude which I owe to Wilfred of Ivanhoe. I am the unhappy Jewish woman, for whom your husband fought near Templestowe.”

“Lady,” said Rowena, “Wilfred of Ivanhoe on that day only repaid in part your charity towards him. Tell me, can I do anything for you?”

“Nothing,” said Rebecca, calmly, “unless you will give him my grateful farewell. We are leaving England. But before I go I want to ask you one thing. Your veil covers your features, please raise it and let me see your beautiful face.”

“It is not so beautiful,” said Rowena, “but I will do it, if you do the same.”

They both showed their faces and both blushed.

“Lady,” said Rebecca, “I will remember your face. Farewell.”

* * *

Wilfred of Ivanhoe and Rowena lived happily to the end of their days. They were attached to each other since childhood and all the obstacles they met on the way to their union only made their love stronger.

- THE END -

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