

ORTHON.

# THE LANCES OF LYNWOOD

BY

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Sts. Eustachius & companions

## PREFACE

FOR an explanation of the allusions in the present Tale, scarcely any Notes are necessary, save a reference to the bewitching Chronicle of Froissart; and we cannot but hope that our sketch may serve as an inducement to some young readers to make acquaintance with the delectable old Canon for themselves, undeterred by the size of his tomes.

The story of Orthon is almost verbally copied from him, and bears a curious resemblance to various German legends—such as that of “Heinzelman,” to be found in Keightley’s “Fairy Mythology,” and to “Teague of the Lea,” as related in Croker’s “Irish Fairy Legends.”

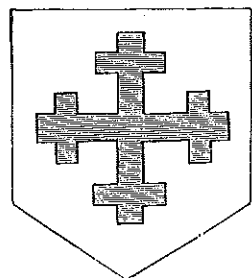
The old French "Vie de Bertrand du Guesclin" has likewise been drawn upon for materials, and would have supplied much more of great interest, such as Enrique of Trastamare's arrival in the disguise of a palmer, to consult with him during his captivity at Bordeaux, and many most curious anecdotes of his early childhood and youth.

To Breton tradition, his excellent wife Epiphanie Ragueneel owes her title of Tiphaine la fée, meaning that she was endowed with magic power, which enabled her to predict what would be lucky or unlucky days for her husband. His disregard of them was thought to have twice cost him the loss of a battle.

We must apologize for having made Henry of Lancaster a year or two older than is warranted by the date of his birth.

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THE  
LANCES OF LYNWOOD

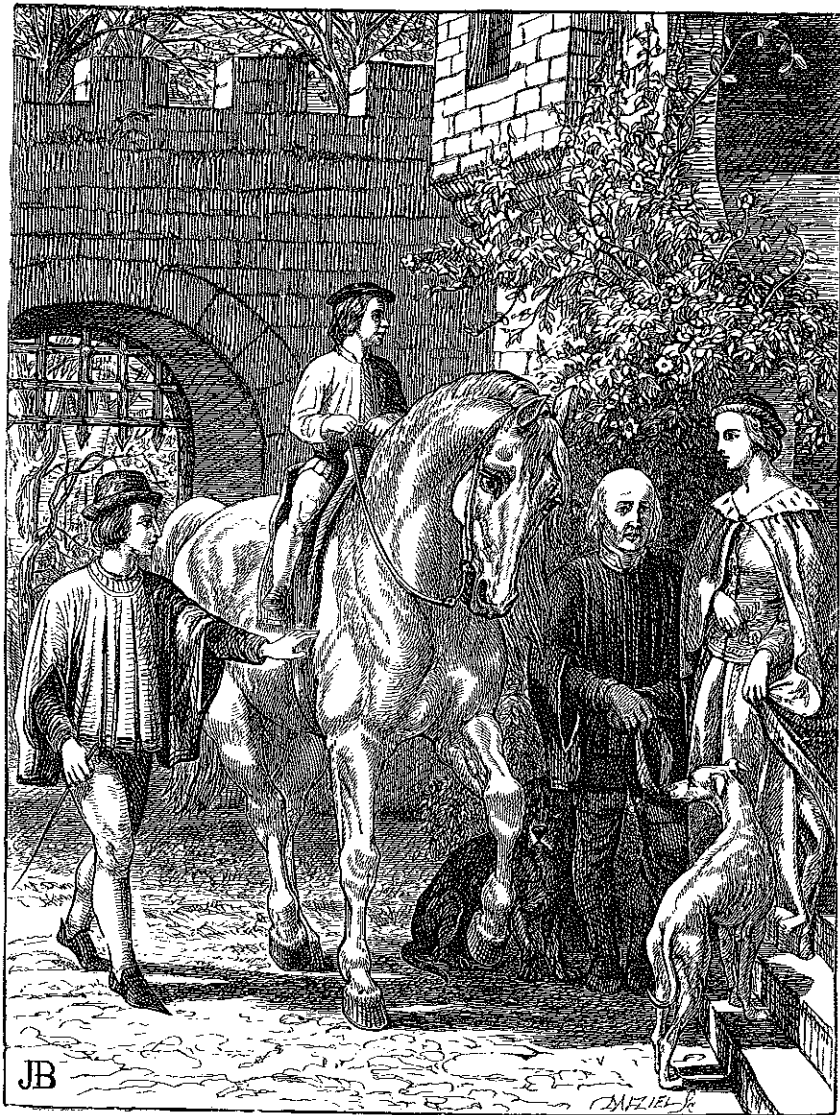
CHAPTER I

SELDOM had the interior of this island presented a more peaceful and prosperous aspect than in the reign of Edward III., when the more turbulent spirits among his subjects had found occupation in his foreign wars, and his wise government had established at home a degree of plenty, tranquillity, and security, such as had probably never before been experienced in England.

Castle and cottage, church and convent, alike showed the prosperity and safety of the inhabitants, at once by the profuseness of embellishment in those newly erected, and by the neglect of the jealous precautions required in former days of confusion and misrule. Thus it was with the village of Lynwood, where, among the cottages and farm-houses occupying a fertile valley in Somersetshire, arose the ancient Keep, built of gray stone,

and strongly fortified ; but the defences were kept up rather as appendages of the owner's rank, than as requisite for his protection ; though the moat was clear of weeds, and full of water, the drawbridge was so well covered with hard-trodden earth, overgrown at the edges with grass, that, in spite of the massive chains connecting it with the gateway, it seemed permanently fixed on the ground. The spikes of the portcullis frowned above in threatening array, but a wreath of ivy was twining up the groove by which it had once descended, and the archway, which by day stood hospitably open, was at night only guarded by two large oaken doors, yielding to a slight push. Beneath the southern wall of the castle court were various flower-beds, the pride and delight of the old seneschal, Ralph Penrose, in his own estimation the most important personage of Lynwood Keep, manager of the servants, adviser of the Lady, and instructor of the young gentlemen in the exercises of chivalry.

One fine evening old Ralph stood before the door, his bald forehead and thin iron-gray locks unbonneted, and his dark ruddy-brown face (marked at Halidon Hill with a deep scar) raised with an air of deference, and yet of self-satisfaction, towards the Lady who stood on the steps of the porch. She was small and fragile in figure ; her face, though very lovely, was pale and thin, and her



LYNWOOD KEEP.

smile had in it something pensive and almost melancholy, as she listened to his narration of his dealings with a refractory tenant, and at the same time watched a noble-looking child of seven or eight years old, who, mounted on an old war-horse, was led round the court by a youth, his elder by some ten or eleven years.

"See, mother!" cried the child, "I am holding the reins myself. Uncle Eustace lays not a finger on them!"

"As I was saying, madam," continued Ralph, disregarding the interruption, "I told him that I should not have thought of one exempted from feudal service in the camp, by our noble Knight, being deficient in his dues in his absence. I told him we should see how he liked to be sent packing to Bordeaux with a sheaf of arrows on his back, instead of the sheaf of wheat which ought to be in our granary by this time. But you are too gentle with them, my Lady, and they grow insolent in Sir Reginald's long absence."

"All goes ill in his absence," said the Lady. "It is a weary while since the wounded archer brought tidings of his speedy return."

"Therefore," said the youth, turning round, "it must be the nearer at hand. Come, sweet sister Eleanor, cheer up, for he cannot but come soon."

"So many *soons* have passed away, that my heart

is well-nigh too sick for hope," said Eleanor. "And when he comes it will be but a bright dream to last for a moment. He cannot long be spared from the Prince's side."

"You must go with him, then, sister, and see how I begin my days of chivalry—that is, if he will but believe me fit to bear shield and lance."

"Ah! Master Eustace, if you were but such as I have seen others of your race," said Ralph, shaking his head. "There was Sir Henry—at your age he had made the Scottish thieves look about them, I promise you. And to go no further back than Sir Reginald himself—he stood by the Prince's side at Crecy ere he was yet fifteen!"

"It is not my fault that I have not done as much, Ralph," said Eustace. "It is not for want of the will, as you know full well."

"No. Thanks to me, I trust you have the will and the teaching, at least, to make a good Knight," said Ralph. "And yet, while I think of the goodly height and broad shoulders of those that have gone before you—"

"But hark! hark!" cried Eustace, cutting short a comparison which did not seem likely to be complimentary. "Dost not hear, Ralph? A horn!"

"The Lynwood note! My husband's note! O thanks, thanks to the Saints!" cried the Lady, clasping her hands, whilst Eustace, vaulting into

the saddle behind his little nephew, rode across the drawbridge as fast as the stiffened joints of old Blanc Etoile could be prevailed on to move. Gaining the summit of a rising ground, both at once shouted, "Our own pennon! It is himself!" as they beheld the dark blue crosslet on an argent field floating above a troop of horsemen, whose armour glanced in the setting sun.

"There are the Lances of Lynwood, Arthur," said Eustace, leaping to the ground. "Keep your seat, and meet your father like a brave Knight's son."

He then settled the reins in the child's hand, and walked beside him to meet the new-comers. They were about twenty in number, armed alike with corselets marked with the blue cross, steel head-pieces, and long lances. In front rode two of higher rank. The first was a man of noble mien and lofty stature, his short dark curled hair and beard, and handsome though sunburnt countenance, displayed beneath his small blue velvet cap, his helmet being carried behind him by a man-at-arms, and his attire consisting of a close-fitting dress of chamois leather, a white mantle embroidered with the blue cross thrown over one shoulder, and his sword hanging by his side. His companion, who carried at his saddle-bow a shield blazoned with heraldic devices in scarlet and gold, was of still greater height, and very slight; his large keen eyes, hair and



moustache, black as jet ; and his complexion dark brown, with a well-formed aquiline nose, and a perfect and very white set of teeth.

The instant the first-mentioned horseman perceived Eustace and Arthur, he sprang to the ground, and hurried to meet them with rapid affectionate greetings and inquiries. In another moment Dame Eleanor appeared on the draw-bridge, and, weeping with joy, was clasped in her husband's arms. Behind her stood the venerable chaplain, Father Cyril, and a step or two further off, Ralph Penrose, both of whom in turn received the kindly greetings of Sir Reginald Lynwood, as, with his wife hanging on his arm and his boy holding his hand, he passed under the gateway of his ancestral castle. Turning the next moment, he addressed his tall companion: "Friend Gaston, I bid you welcome! Dame Eleanor, and you, brother Eustace, I present to you my trusty Esquire, Master Gaston d'Aubricour."

Due courtesies passed between the Lady and the Squire, who, after a few words with the Knight, remained to see to the disposal of the men, while Sir Reginald himself entered the hall with his wife, son, and brother. Eustace did not long remain there: he found that Reginald and Eleanor had much to say to each other, and his curiosity and interest were, besides, greatly excited by the novelty

of the scene presented by the castle court, so different from its usual peaceful monotony. The men were unsaddling their horses, rubbing them down, walking them about, or removing the stains of dust and mud from their own armour, while others were exchanging greetings with the villagers, who were gathering in joyous parties round such of the newly arrived as were natives of the place.

In the midst stood the strange Squire, superintending a horse-boy who was rubbing down the Knight's tall war-horse, and at the same time ordering, giving directions, answering inquiries, or granting permission to the men to return home with their relations. Ralph Penrose was near, his countenance, as Eustace could plainly perceive, expressing little satisfaction at finding another authority in the court of Lynwood Keep; the references to himself short, brief, and rapid, and only made when ignorance of the locality compelled the stranger to apply for information. The French accent and the occasional French phrases with which the Squire spoke, made him contract his brow more and more, and at last, just as Eustace came up, he walked slowly away, grumbling to himself, "Well, have it e'en your own way, I am too old for your gay French fashions. It was not so in Humfrey Harwood's time, when— But the world has gone after the French now! Sir

Reginald has brought home as many Gascon thieves as kindly Englishmen!"

Eustace listened for a moment to his mutterings, but without answering them, and coming within a few steps of the stranger, stood waiting to offer him any courtesy in his power, though at the same time he felt abashed by the consciousness of his inferiority in accomplishments and experience.

It was the Squire who was the first to speak. "So this is Sir Reginald's old Keep! A fine old fortalice—would stand at least a fortnight's siege. Ha! Is not yonder a weak point? I would undertake to scale that tower, so the battering-rams made a diversion on the other side."

"I trust it will never be tried," said Eustace.

"It would be as fair a feat of arms as ever you beheld! But I crave your pardon," added he, displaying his white teeth with a merry laugh; "the state of my own land has taught me to look on every castle with eyes for attack and defence, and your brother tells me I am not behind my countrymen in what you English call gasconades."

"You have seen many sieges and passages of arms?" asked Eustace, looking up in his face with an expression at once puzzled and respectful.

"Since our castle of Albricorte was sacked and burnt by the Count de Béarn, I have seen little

else—three stricken fields—two towns stormed—castles more than I can remember."

"Alas!" said Eustace, "I have seen nothing but the muster of arms at Taunton!"

D'Aubricour laughed. "Look not downcast on it," said he; "you have time before you, and one year at Bordeaux is worth four elsewhere. But I forget, you are the young clerk; and yet that scarcely accords with that bright eye of yours, and the weapon at your side."

"They spoke once of making me a clerk," said Eustace; "but I hope to show my brother that I am fit for his own way of life. Sir Squire, do but tell me, do you think I look unfit to sustain the honour of my name?"

"Mere strength is little," said the Squire, "else were that comely giant, John Ingram, the best warrior in the army. Nor does height reckon for much; Du Guesclin himself is of the shortest. Nor do you look like the boy over whose weakly timid nature I have heard Sir Reginald lament," he proceeded, surveying him with a critical eye.

Eustace had, in fact, hardly reached the middle height, and was very slender; his limbs were, however, well proportioned, his step firm, and every movement full of activity and grace. His face, shaded with bright chestnut hair, was of a delicate complexion, the features finely moulded, and the

usual cast of expression slightly thoughtful ; but there was frequently, and especially at this moment, a bright kindling light in the dark blue eyes, which changed the whole countenance from the grave and refined look of the young scholar to the bold ardent glance of the warrior.

“A cavalier, every inch of you !” cried d’Aubricour, striking Eustace on the shoulder as he concluded his inspection. “I’ll have the training of you, my *gentil damoiseau*, and see if I do not make you as *preux a chevalier* as the most burly giant of them all. Here, know you this trick ?”

He caught up one of the lances which the men had laid aside ; Eustace followed his example, and acquitted himself to his satisfaction in one or two chivalrous manœuvres, till a summons to supper put an end to the sport.

## CHAPTER II

THE house of Lynwood had long been famed for loyalty, which had often cost them dear, since their neighbours, the Lords of Clarenham, never failed to take advantage of the ascendancy of the popular party, and make encroachments on their privileges and possessions.

Thus when Sir Hugo Lynwood, the old Crusader, was made prisoner by Simon de Montfort’s party at Lewes, he was treated with great severity, in order to obtain from him a recognition of the feudal superiority of the Clarenhams ; and though the success of the royal party at Evesham occasioned his liberation, his possessions were greatly diminished. Nor had the turmoils of the reign of Edward II. failed to leave their traces on the fortunes of the Lynwoods. Sir Henry, father of the present Knight, was a staunch adherent of the unfortunate monarch, and even joined the hapless Edmund, Earl of Kent, in the rising in which that Prince was entrapped after the murder of his brother. On this occasion,