

RALPH HARDELLOT'S MEDIATION

BY WILLIAM MINTO.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The scene enacted on the morning of Friday was one of the most striking in English history...

Nevertheless the act proceeded at first with marvellous smoothness. The hill opposite the Tower was early astir...

Presently, amid the appalling din, two heralds in tabards of white and red appeared on the leads of the western gate...

Those near enough to hear ran back with the news, and then the drawbridge was lowered, and the heralds rode out...

Soon after nine the drawbridge was lowered—not to be raised this time—and the royal party issued forth...

Arrived at Mile End, where he was received with loud, hilarious welcome from the ranks of the assembled peasants...

He listened with grave dignity while Tyler in the name of his fellows spoke briefly of the hardships suffered by serfs...

A king and his people reconciled. The galling abuses that had bred mischief between them swept away with a word...

In the city things wore a less smiling aspect. The great mass of the insurgents were steady, laborious men...

Richard answered with gracious condescension. "Sir, your request is reasonable, and we grant it freely."

Then Tyler turned again to the king, and, in as courteous phrase as his untrained speech could find, intimated that they must have letters executed...

For this also the king was prepared, thanks to the previous communications through Ralph. He beckoned to a clerk to come forward...

The council had offered no opposition to this comprehensive emancipation. There was no harm in making as thorough as possible what could be revoked as easily as it had been granted...

And this was indeed its effect. The simple peasants were enraptured with this formal document of freedom. The sacred parchment was carried from point to point and read aloud...

exchange of meaning looks among great men who knew better the value of the parchment.

While matters were in this amicable frame, the charter making its round like some adored idol, the king chatted with the counsellors near him...

As he ran his eyes along in compliance with this request his attention was suddenly arrested by the appearance of a knight in armor...

Several knights and other gentlemen had been impressed with the insurgents in the course of their gathering. Some, like the gallant Robert de la Salle...

The princess signifying a desire to speak to the Earl of Arundel, Ralph moved round to the other side of the carriage...

"That face is known to me," he whispered, "but I cannot remember where I saw it."

"Do you not remember?" she answered. "I shall never forget it."

Then, as he still looked puzzled, she added, "The dungeon at Sturmers."

The missing link was found. He remembered now. It was Jannequin Carter, the savage tatterdemalion whom he had with such difficulty prevented from taking immediate vengeance...

But they had little time to observe him or to speculate upon his appearance in such curious proximity to the knight. The draft charter had made its round...

This gracious information was proclaimed in louder tones and greeted with happy acclamation.

A king and his people reconciled. The galling abuses that had bred mischief between them swept away with a word...

In the city things wore a less smiling aspect. The great mass of the insurgents were steady, laborious men, who had risen against the law...

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Little was thought of it in the hurry of the moment. A crowd is always ready for such freaks. But the freak assumed a more serious aspect when the last man-at-arms was out and the order

was given to raise the bridge.

The drawbridge could not be raised. The rowdies had thrust the porter aside and were in possession of the machinery...

Conspicuous in the Tower Hill crowd from early morning had been a burly ruffian in the glaring costume of the Herod of the Mystery Plays...

When this noisy ruffian saw the crowd rushing through the gates, he dashed forward to join the stream, doubling the ferocity of his cries...

His cries were taken up by the mob, and what was uttered at first in coarse sport was soon repeated in savage earnest. The devilish suggestion quickly matured itself in heated brains...

The officers of the garrison were taken by surprise. No one dared to take responsibility. The cry was raised by the rioters that they came in the king's name...

Within the square central keep—the four-towered White Tower—quickly surrounded by the howling mob, Sudbury heard the fierce uproar...

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What did you give your horse for the bottle? "Turpentine." "Good mornin'!" "Good mornin'!"

They again encountered each other a few days later, with this result: "Mornin', Jim!" "Mornin', Zach!"

It Depends. "What is a captain of industry?" asked the boy, who is going to be very wise some day.

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