

FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL



"A silver helmet, did you say? Why, that must be the one you finished on St. John's Eve!"

"The same," assented Alain.

"The same, eh? And don't you remember anything linking me with that helmet?"

"Oh, surely," answered Alain. "You came in as I was at work, and I asked you for a sort of motto or verse to engrave upon the vizor-rim."

"And I gave you such a device, did I not?"

"Indeed did you, sir—an English motto. I have it yet." Alain groped in the recess beneath his bench, and drew forth a scrap of parchment upon which had

LITTLE Alain looked up for a moment from the gorget upon which he was busily at work. The noise of a merry crowd coming down the Street of the Armorer's had attracted his attention.

There was mighty merrymaking in the ancient city of Bruges, and, for that matter, through the length and breadth of Flanders. The highways and byways were filled with people. Gallant chevaliers afoot or in the saddle, sturdy townsmen, rollicking pages, grave priests, and richly clad maids and matrons swelled the eager throng. For was not Charles the Bold, the great Duke of Burgundy and Count of Flanders, about to enter his capital city, at the head of a goodly train, and did it not behoove the people of Bruges to hold high holiday in honor of the young sovereign so lately come to his crown?

Little wonder in view of this great occasion, that the wits of a lad like Alain should sometimes go a-wool-gathering. It was well for the armorer's apprentice, however, that his master, old Jehane, happened to be abroad. Jehane Duplessis, Master Armorer of Bruges, was a veritable tyrant, who ruled Alain hardly, and allowed little time for watching gay crowds or listening to the music of festivals. Just now old Jehane was bound on business so urgent that he had left Alain in sole charge. To be brief, he had gone to the Town Hall, there to enter his name among the host of competitors for the honored post of armorer-in-chief to the new Duke.

Now, each and every person entered for this contest must needs submit for examination, as an evidence of his skill, a helmet of rare design and workmanship. During the afternoon the Duke himself was to choose from all the helmets laid before him the one he liked the best. Old Jehane had carried under his cloak a helmet which he felt almost certain was destined to be the prize-winner. It was assuredly the most beautiful of its kind in all Flanders—of solid silver, exquisitely inlaid, and worth thousands of crowns.

As Jehane placed this treasure among the many less splendid helmets in the crowded Town Hall, his heart felt a glow of exultation.

Instead of exultation, Jehane's heart ought to have known only remorse and shame. For this magnificent, costly silver helmet, had not been fashioned by him at all. In point of fact, the hands which had fashioned it were those of Alain, the Master Armorer's young apprentice. The natural gifts of the lad had long ago outstripped those of his master, and the very finest work in Jehane's shop was the creation of the modest Alain. But Jehane, if not a genius, was crafty, and he kept this fact to himself, and traded upon it. The young fellow was merely his apprentice; and apprentices had reason to dread their masters in those days. Had he not adopted him, a penniless orphan? Had he not taught him his art? "Surely, when all is told," argued Jehane to his twitching conscience, "I own the silver, and so his work belongs of right to me."

So the citizens of Bruges and the Armorer's Guild knew naught of Alain, while they looked upon Master Duplessis as a most skillful artist.

Alain sat somewhat wistfully on a bench in the gloomy workshop, hammering at a broken gorget, and at rare intervals venturing to rest long enough for a look into the noisy street. He felt the appropriation of his helmet bitterly; for he had labored upon it zealously for a whole twelvemonth, and it seemed unjust indeed that Jehane should show such a masterpiece as his own. But Alain realized that he had no redress. Who would believe an apprentice's story against the master's?

Alain was bending over the rivets of his gorget, when there entered a burly, ruddy-faced knight, whom the lad knew as one of his master's best patrons. The newcomer was a foreigner—an Englishman, as, indeed, his speech betrayed; but Alain liked him for his bluff, hearty manner, and had picked up some little of the hard English tongue in occasional conversations with him.

"Holla!" exclaimed the Sire Richard (such being the common style accorded to the Englishman, in view of the rest of his name being difficult of pronunciation). "Weeping, eh? If not, parloos near it. I'll swear I saw tears in your eyes! Surely on the Duke's festival you should not look so glum. Come, let us hear what the trouble is."

At first Alain, cowed by fear of his master, would not unboast himself, but after a great deal of coaxing on the part of the Sire Richard, he finally came out with the whole story of his master's deceit.

"By St. Austin, that's a sin and a shame!" exclaimed the tall knight, when he had heard all about old Jehane's duplicity. He had seen much of Alain's work, and believed the boy's story without difficulty. But for the Master Armorer he had only hard words, which sounded much worse to Alain because they were uttered in English. But soon, quite abruptly, he stopped in his trade against Jehane, and, looking straight at the apprentice, exclaimed:

"There goes the captain of the Duke's foreigners. Marry, but he is a doughty knight!"

One by one the contesting armorers' trophies were inspected by the Duke. After fully an hour's discussion, the chamberlain at length announced, amid a breathless silence, that his Grace was divided in his mind between the golden helmet of Master Anthony Meas of Ghent, and the silver one of Master Jehane Duplessis.

Alain's cheek flushed with joy. The silver helmet—his own beloved silver helmet!—was one of the two from which the choice was to be made. The tall captain of mercenaries gripped him tightly by the arm, however, so that he overcame his emotion and awaited the final result.

Once more the Duke of Burgundy and his lieges examined the two helmets. An eager discussion seemed to divide them into two parties. At last, however, the Duke seemed decided, and whispered some words in his chamberlain's ear. Alain almost ceased to breathe, so tense was his excitement, as the long-robed functionary, with much dignity, stepped forward to speak.

"His Grace," said the chamberlain, "has chosen in favor of the helmet which, while perhaps not so costly as its rival, is, to his mind, of far more beautiful fashion and design. He awards the prize, together with the honorable title of chief armorer, to Master Jehane Duplessis."

A murmur of satisfaction spread through the great hall, for the victory of a citizen of Bruges was popular. Old Jehane bowed low, and was opening his mouth for a speech of thanks, when a tall, red-faced Englishman came pushing his way out of the crowd, dragging behind him a boy in the leathern jerkin of an apprentice. Bending one knee before the Duke, the English knight exclaimed:

"Your Grace, I crave a word on this matter of the helmet."

"Speak, good captain," answered the Duke, albeit greatly astonished at the interruption; "we have given you the right to audience at all times, since we fought side by side at Monthery."

Then up rose the Sire Richard, and in good round phrase denounced Master Jehane Duplessis as a thief and a man of falsehood. He recounted the entire story of the helmet, at the same time leading forward the shrinking Alain, at whom old Jehane darted a scowl of wrath.

But Jehane was not to be robbed of his laurels thus easily. With assumed scorn he replied that the captain of mercenaries had been taken in by this rascal boy, who, indeed, imposed upon many. The story was untrue. He alone had fashioned the helmet. Indeed, how could it be thought that a mere boy could produce such a work of art?

This course of argument had a powerful effect upon the Duke and the audience generally. Murmurs arose, and all looked with doubt toward the Sire Richard. But that staunch warrior smiled grimly, and, stepping forward so as to look Master Jehane full in the face, cried in resonant tones:

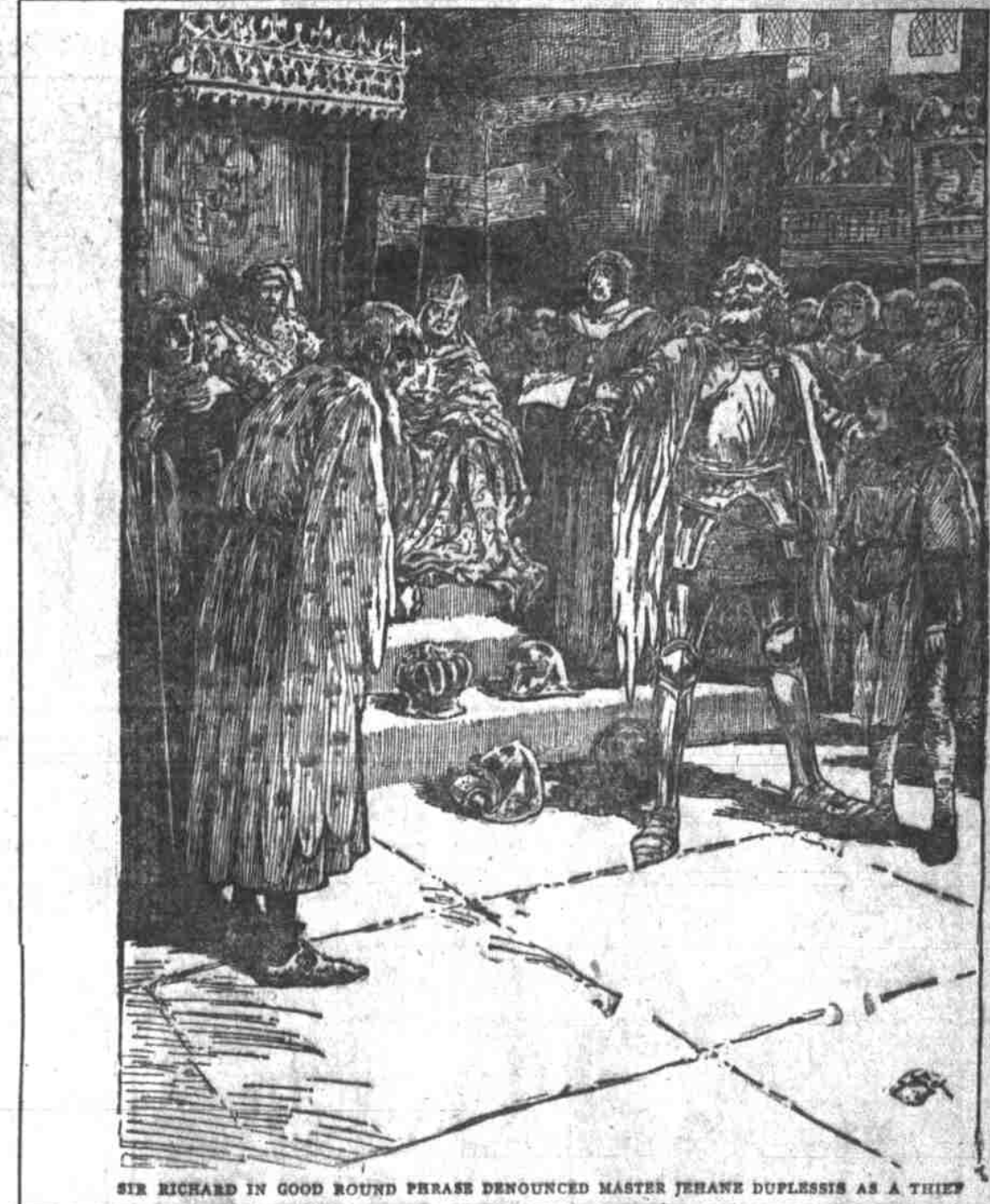
"Varlet and evil-doer, do you mean to tell his Grace

"It is even so," said the Duke, glancing at the grave legend on the silver.

Again the Englishman turned to Jehane. "Master Artificer," he said with a smile, "since you placed the rhymes there, at least you can tell us their meaning in Flemish?"

Jehane saw that he was trapped all round, for he knew not one word of English. After a futile look about him for some method of escape, he fell upon his knees before the Duke, confessed everything, and prayed for pardon.

The close of this curious affair was pleasant enough. The Duke made Alain his chief armorer, and, at once



SIR RICHARD IN GOOD ROUND PHRASE DENOUNCED MASTER JEHAENE DUPLESSIS AS A THIEF

that you, without the slightest assistance, made the silver helmet?"

"Assuredly; no other hand even touched it," answered the false Jehane.

"Then, I pray thee, repeat aloud the motto or device which you engraved on a certain portion of your masterpiece."

A cold sweat broke forth on Jehane's face. The motto? He had observed no motto.

"I forget it," he stammered.

"At least, Master Jehane, you can tell us upon what part of the helmet it is engraved?" asked the Englishman.

The Master Armorer, in speechless agony, shook his head.

The Sire Richard turned to Duke Charles. "Is it likely, your Grace," he cried, "that a man should forget the legend engraved by him on his trophy, or be unable even to locate it?"

Then, addressing Alain, he bade him repeat the verse and indicate its position on the helmet. Without a moment's hesitation the lad explained that the words were on the vizor-rim, and then repeated the rhyme

to punish the disgraced Jehane, and by way of a little comedy, he commanded the aged armorer to serve as apprentice for three long years to the lad whom he had striven to cheat. But Alain proved a kindly master, and eventually took Master Jehane into partnership. To this day you may see their joint workshop in the old town of Bruges. The house can be readily identified by the two carved devices over the door. Without doubt one of these belonged to Master Jehane. The second represents a silver helmet, and upon a scroll beneath the carving you may, with care, decipher the following quaint legend:

Sir Knighte, you oft schal finden me
A goode friende in adversitie;
In bataille or in chevachie,
See you that I well closen be.

Such was the motto and such the trade-mark of Master Alain of Bruges, the Duke's Armorer.



ALAIN FINALLY CAME OUT WITH THE WHOLE STORY

been written, by way of practice, the rhyme:

Sir Knighte, you oft schal finden me
A goode friende in adversitie;
In bataille or in chevachie,
See thou that I well closen be.

These lines were supposed to be the vizor's advice to its wearer, and, in the English of to-day, mean something of this sort:

Sir Knight, you oft shall find in me
A good friend in adversity;
In battle or in foray free
See you that I well closed be.

"Yea, by St. Austin," said the Sire Richard, "those are the lines. A worthy clerk at home made them for me—a Master Geoffrey Chaucer. And you engraved them on the rim of the vizor?"

"Yes, messire. I thought them suitable, when you made their meaning plain."

The English knight clanged the point of his long sword joyously upon the tiles.

"Then come instantly with me to the Town Hall," he cried eagerly. "Lock the door, and make haste."

Alain hesitated; but he knew the Englishman for a good customer, who had influence with his master, so in the end the door was locked, and the boy and his guardian set forth toward the market-place of Bruges, where the judging of helmets had already begun.

In the ancient hall, Charles the Bold, late Count of Charolais, and now the Duke of Burgundy and Lord of Flanders, sat upon a raised dais, surrounded by his nobles. At his feet lay five and thirty helmets, the work of as many cunning artificers; and, each by his helmet, stood the armorers themselves. They were grave, dignified men, hailing from many cities—from Bruges, from Lille, from Ghent, and even from London and Paris. But none of them all looked more consequential than Master Jehane Duplessis, as he bent his gaze now on his splendid silver helmet, and now on his lord the Duke.

A notable gathering filled the hall, and well-nigh impossible it seemed for any one to gain an entry who was not a great lord, or an ecclesiastic of high rank. Thus it seemed surprising that a simple English knight like the Sire Richard should manage to thread his way with ease through the glittering press. Leading his way with the pale and trembling Alain, Sire Richard had only to whisper his name to the surrounding men-at-arms, when a road was cleared for him. As they passed, Alain heard a dame's voice whisper:

The Old Fashioned "S"

By Grace Frazer.

"This book is very odd indeed," said Little Tom to me;

"I think the man who wrote it must have lisped a lot," said he.

(It was a leather-covered book of Seventeen-Naught-Three.)

"Wherever he should put an s he puts an f instead; just listen to this nonsense"; and the learned Thomas read:

"He fauntered off in quest of sport." It's all like that," he said.

"The fairs and parson fat at ease and feasted undimfayed";

"The fage, though usually shrewd, a lack of fenfe displayed";

"And east and west they failed to find the stateman who had frayed."

I took that leather-covered book of Seventeen-Naught-Three;

I said: "Those are long s's, not the f's they seem to be."

"We print books better nowadays," said Little Tom, said he.

Distit Spectacles.

I've wondered why the spectacles that help grandpa to read

Should make things, when I put them on, look very queer indeed.

Good reason why his spectacles for me will never do,

For, don't you see, my eyes are brown, while grand-papa's are blue!



THE GRANDILOQUENT GOAT.

A very grandiloquent
Set down to a gay table d'hôte,
We ate all the corks,
The knives and the forks,
Remarking: "On these things, I dot."

When before his repast he began
While pausing the menu to scan,
He said: "Corn, if you please,
And tomatoes and peas,
Is like to have served in the can."

Caroline Wells.



THE KITTENS' DANCING LESSON