

up yonder track, steep and rough as it is, I think that you might gain the valley beyond. Then on to the prince, and tell him how we fare."

"But, my fair lord, how can we hope to reach the horses?" asked Norbury.

"You cannot go round to them, for they would be upon you ere you could come to them. Think you that ye have heart enough to clamber down this cliff?"

"Had we but a rope."

"There is one here. It is but one hundred feet long, and for the rest ye must trust to God and to your fingers. Can you try it, Alleyne?"

"With all my heart, my dear lord, but how can I leave you in such a strait?"

"Nay, it is to serve me that ye go. And you, Norbury?"

The silent squire said nothing, but he took up the rope and, having examined it, he tied one end firmly round a projecting rock. Then he cast off his broadsword, his pike, and his spear, and, while Alleyne followed his example.

"Tell Chandox, or Calverley, or Knolles, should the rocks and the ground go forward," cried Sir Nigel. "Nay, they will not go forward for ye, for ye are brave and worthy men."

It was, indeed, a task which might make the heart of the bravest sink within him. The thin cord hanging down the face of the brown rock stretched over a ledge, and beyond stretched the rugged rock, wet and shining, with a green lichen here and there thrusting out from it, but little sign of ridge or foothold. Far below the jagged point of the boulder, nestled up, dark and menacing, Norbury, together with all his strength upon the cord, and then lowered himself over the edge, while a hundred anxious faces peered over at him as he slowly descended towards the end of the rope. He had stretched out his foot, and twice he failed to reach the point at which he aimed, but even as he swung himself for a third effort a stone from a sling hurled like a wasp from amid the rocks struck him full upon the side of his head. His grip loosened, his feet slipped, and in an instant he was a crushed and mangled corpse upon the sharp ridges beneath him.

"If I have no better fortune," said Alleyne, leaning Sir Nigel aside, "I pray you, my dear lord, that you will give me humble service to the Lady Maude, and say to her that I was ever her true servant and most unworthy vassal."

The old knight said no word, but he put a hand on the shoulder of the young squire, with the tears shining in his eyes. Alleyne sprang to the rope, and sliding swiftly down, soon found himself at its extremity. From above it seemed as though ropes and cables were stretched taut, but now, when swinging a hundred feet long, the squire found that he could scarce reach the face of the rock with his foot, and that it was as smooth as glass, with no resting-place where a mouse could stand. Reaching the foot of the cliff, he lay on his back, and he saw that he had reached the end of the cliff. Another stone struck him on the side, and he heard a sound like a breaking stick, with a keen sharp pain that ran through his chest. Yet it was no time now to think of pain or ache. There was his lord and his eight-score comrades, and they must be plucked from the jaws of death. On he clambered, with his hand shuffling down the long shooting crack, some feet above all his weight upon his arms, at others finding some small shelf or tuft on which to rest his foot. Would he never pass over that fifty feet? He dared not look down, and could he guess slowly on how his feet scraped and feeling for a support. Every vein and crack and notching of that face of rock remained forever stamped upon his memory. At last, however, his foot came upon a ledge, and he ventured to cast a glance downwards. Thank God! he had reached the highest of those fatal pinnacles upon which his comrades had fallen. Quickly now he sprang from round, and he had his hand stretched out for the horse's rein, when a sling-stone struck him on the head, and he dropped senseless upon the ground.

An evil blow it was for Alleyne, but a worse one still for him who struck it. The Spanish slinger, a youth with the skin and judgment of his dress that he was no common man, rushed forward to plunder him, knowing well that the bowmen above him had expended their last shaft. He was still three paces, however, from his victim's side when John, upon the cliff above plucked up a huge boulder, and, posing it for an instant, dropped it with fatal aim upon the slinger beneath him. It struck upon his shoulder, and hurled him, crashing and screaming, to the ground, while Alleyne, recalling to his senses by these shrill cries in his very ear, staggered on to his feet, and gazed wildly about him. His eyes fell upon the horses, grazing upon the scanty pasture, and in an instant all had come back to him—his mission, his comrades, the need for haste. He was dizzy, sick, faint, but he must not die, and he must not tarry. For his life meant many lives that day. In an instant he was in his saddle and springing down the valley. Lurching and reef, while the fire flew from the stroke of iron, and the loose stones showered on behind him. But his head was whirling round, the blood was gushing from his temples, and his vision grew dim. He knew his danger, but he was so dizzy and so weak that he could not see the danger. He was so dizzy and so weak that he could not see the danger. He was so dizzy and so weak that he could not see the danger.

royal house of Castile. Up the long slope rushed ranks and ranks of men—exultant, shouting, with waving pennons and brandished arms. Over the whole summit were dense throngs of knights, with no enemy that could be seen to face them, save only that at one corner of the plateau an eddy and swirl amid the crowded mass seemed to show that all resistance was not yet at an end. At the sight a deep groan of rage and of despair went up from the baffled soldiers, and, springing on their horses, they clattered down the long and winding path which led to the valley beneath.

But they were too late to avenge, as they had been too late to save. Long ere they could gain the level ground, the Spaniards, seeing them riding swiftly amid the rocks, and being ignorant of their numbers, drew off from the captured sword, and having secured their few prisoners, rode slowly in a long column, with drum-beating and cymbal-clashing, out of the valley. Their rear ranks were already passing out of sight ere the newcomers were urging their panting, foaming horses up the slope which had been the scene of that long-drawn and bloody fight.

And a fearsome sight it was that met their eyes! Across the lower end lay the dense heap of men and horses where the first arrows and the first stones, the bodies of the dead and the dying—French, Spanish, and Aragonese—lay thick and thicker, until they covered the cold ground two and three deep in one dreadful angle of slaughter. Above them lay the Englishmen in their lines, even as they had stood, and higher yet upon the plateau a wild medley of the dead of all nations, where the last deathly grapple had left them. In the further corner, under the shadow of a great rock, there crouched seven bowmen, with great John in the centre of them—all wounded, weary, and in sorry case, but still unconquered, with their blood-stained weapons waving and their voices ringing a welcome to their countrymen. Alleyne rode across to John, while Sir Hugh Calverley followed close behind him.

"By Saint George!" cried Sir Hugh, "I have never seen signs of so stern a fight, and I am right glad that we have been in time to save you."

"You have saved more than us," said John, pointing to the banner which leaned against the rock behind him.

"You have done nobly," cried the old free companion, raising with a soldier's admiration at the huge form and bold face of the archer. "But why is it, my good fellow, that you sit up in this manner?"

"By the road! I had for you," John answered, rising and dragging from under him no less a person than the Spanish Caballero, Don Diego Alvarez. "This man, my fair lord, means to me a new house, ten cows, one bull—if it be but a little one—a grindstone, and I know not what besides, so that I thought it well to sit upon him, lest he should take a fancy to leave me."

"Tell me, John," cried Alleyne faintly, "where is my dear lord, Sir Nigel Loring?"

"He is dead, I fear. I saw them throw his body across a horse and ride away with it, but I fear the life had gone from him."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was a bright morning four months after that fatal fight in the Spanish baranca. The sun was yet low in the heavens, and the red cows stood in the long shadow of the elms, chewing the cud and gazing with great vacant eyes at the white road which dipped and curved away back to where the towers and pinnacles beneath the flat-topped hill marked the old town of Winchester.

Of the riders, one was young, graceful and fair, clad in plain doublet and hose of blue Brussels cloth, which served to show his active and well-knit figure. He rode with lips compressed and anxious face, as one who has much care upon his mind. Young as he was, and peaceful as was his dress, the dainty golden spurs which twinkled upon his heels proclaimed his knighthood, while a long seam upon his brow and a scar upon his temple gave a manly grace to his refined and delicate countenance. His comrade was a large, red-headed man upon a great black horse, with a huge canvas bag slung from his saddle-bow. His broad, brown face was lighted by a continual smile, and he looked slightly from side to side with eyes which twinkled and shone with delight. Well might John rejoice, for was he not back in his native Hampshire, had he not Don Diego's five thousand crowns rasping against his knee, and above all was he not himself squire now to Sir Alleyne Erickson, the young Scoundrel of Minstead, lately knighted by the sword of the whole army as one of the most fighting of the soldiers of England.

For the last stand of the Company had been told throughout Christendom wherever a brave deed of arms was loved, and honors had dived in upon the few who had survived it. For two months Alleyne had wavered betwixt death and life, with

a broken rib and a shattered head; yet youth and strength and a cleanly life were all upon his side, and he awoke from his long delirium to find that the war was over, that the Spaniards and their allies had been crushed at Navarrete, and that the prince had himself heard the tale of his ride for succor and had come in person to his bedside to touch his shoulder with his sword and to assure that so brave and true a man should die. If he could not live within the order of chivalry, the instant that he could set foot to ground Alleyne had started in search of his lord, but no word could he hear of him, dead or alive, and he had come home dead-hearted, in the hope of raising money upon his estates and so starting upon his quest once more. Landing at London, he had hurried on with a mind full of care, for he had heard no word from Hampshire since the short note which had announced his brother's death.

"By the road!" cried John, looking around him excitedly, "where have we been since we left such noble cows, such fleecy sheep, grass so green, or a man so drunk as yonder rogue who lies in the gap of the hedge?"

"Ah, John," Alleyne answered wearily, "it is well for you, but I never thought that my home-coming would be so sad a one. My heart is heavy for my dear lord and for Aylward, and I know not how I may break the news to the Lady Maude and to the Lady Maude, if they have not yet had tidings of it."

John gave a groan which made the horses shudder. "It is indeed a black business," said he. "But he not sad, for I shall give half these crowns to my old mother, and half will I add to the money which you may have, and so we shall buy that yellow cow wherein we sailed to Bordeaux, and in it we shall go forth and seek Sir Nigel."

Alleyne smiled, but shook his head. "Were he alive we should have had word of him ere now," said he. "But what is this town before you?"

"Why, it is Romsey," cried John. "See! the tower of the old gray church, and the long stretch of the manure."

Ere Alleyne could answer there swung round the curve of the road a lady's carriage drawn by three horses abreast with position upon the outer ones. Within there sat a stout and elderly lady in a pink cotehardie, leaning back among a pile of cushions. None could seem more safe and secure and at her ease than this lady, and yet here also was a symbol of human life, for in an instant, even as Alleyne reined aside to let the carriage pass, a wheel flew out from among his fellows, and over it toppled with the horses plunging, the postilion shouting, and the lady screaming from within. In an instant Alleyne and John were on foot, and had lifted her forth all

and lady superior had had their will, it was but fitting that some pomp and show should mark the glad occasion.

But alas! for plots and plans when love and youth and nature, and above all, fortune, are a tragedy against them. Who is this travel-stained youth who dares to ride so madly through the lines of staring burglers? Why does he fling himself from his horse and stare so strangely about him? See how he has rushed toward with his arms around her dropping body and her wet cheeks upon his breast. A sorry sight this for the stout abbot, an ill lesson too for the stainless two-and-twenty who have ever been taught that the way of nature is the way of sin. But Alayne cared little for that. A dash, cold air comes out from the black arch before them. Without, the sun shines bright and the birds are singing amid the ivy on the drooping beeches. A low shot from Pitt's Deep there was an inn a little back from the road, very large and wide-spaced, with a great green bush hung upon a pole from one of the upper windows. At this window, he marked, as he rode up, that a man was seated who appeared to be craning his neck in his direction. Alleyne was still looking up to him, when a woman came rushing from the open door of the inn, and made though she would climb the tree, she came back the while with a laughing face. Wondering what these things might mean, Alleyne tied his horse and was walking amid the trees toward the inn, when there shot from the entrance a second woman who made also for the trees. Close at her heels came a burly, brown-faced man, who leaned against the door post and laughed loudly, with his hand to his side. "Ah, my belles!" he cried, "and is it thus you treat me? Ah, my pettes! I swear by those fingers that I would not hurt a hair of your pretty heads; but I have been among the black pinks, and by my hit! it does me good to look at your English cheeks. Come, drink a drop of muscadine with me, mes enges, for my heart is warm to be among ye again."

At the sight of the man, Alleyne had stood staring, but at the sound of his voice such a thrill of joy thrilled up in his heart that he had to bite his lips to keep himself from shouting outright. But a deeper pleasure yet was in store. Even as he looked, the window above was pushed outward, and the voice of the man whom he had seen there came out from it. "Aylward," cried the voice, "I have seen just now a very worthy person come down the road, though my eyes could scarce discern whether he carried coat armor. I pray you to wait upon him, and tell him that a very humble knight of England abides here, so that if he be in need of advancement, or have any small vow upon his soul, or desire to exalt his lady, I may help him to accomplish it."

"Aylward!" the order came forward amid the trees, and in an instant the two men were clinging in each other's arms, laughing and shouting and patting each other in their delight; while Sir Nigel came running with his sword under the impression that some bickering had broken out, only to embrace and be embraced himself, until all three were hoarse with their questions and outcries and congratulations.

On their journey home through the woods Alleyne learnt their wondrous story: how, when Sir Nigel came to his senses, he with his fellow-captive had been hurried to the coast, and conveyed by sea to their captors' castle; how upon the way they had been taken by a Barbary rover, and how they exchanged their light captivity for a seat on a galley bench and hard labor at the pirate's oars; how, in the port at Barbary, Sir Nigel had slain the Moorish captain, and had swum to Aylward in a small coaster which they had taken, and so made their way to England with a rich cargo to reward them for their toils. All this Alleyne listened to, until the dark keep of Tynham towered above them in the glories of the dawn, and they saw the red sun lying athwart the rippling Avon. No need to speak of the glad hearts at Tynham Castle that night, nor of the rich offerings from out that Moorish cargo which found their way to the chapel of Father Christopher.

Sir Nigel Loring lived for many years, full of honor and laden with every blessing. He rode no more to the wars, but he found his way to every jousting within thirty miles; and the Hampshire youth treasured it as the highest honor when a word of praise fell from him as to their management of their horses, or their breaking of their lances. So he lived and so he died, the most revered and the happiest man in all his native shire.

For Sir Alleyne Erickson and for his beautiful bride the future had also naught but what a good. Twice he fought in France, and came back each time laden with honors. A high place at court was given to him, and he spent many years at Windsor under the second Richard and the fourth Henry—where he received the honor of the Garter, and won the name of being a brave soldier, a true-hearted gentleman, and a great lover and patron of every art and science which refines or ennobles life.

As to John, he took unto himself a village maid and settled in Lyndhurst, where his five thousand crowns made him the richest franklin for many miles round. For many years he drank his ale every night at the "Pied Morlin," which was now kept by his friend Aylward, who had wedded the good widow to whom he had committed his plunder. The strong men and the women of the country round used to drop in there of an evening to wrestle fairly with John, and about a round with Aylward, but, though a silver shilling was to be the prize of the victory, it has never been reported that any man earned much money in that fashion. So they lived, these men, in the own, busy, cheerful and rough, but honest, kindly and true. Let us thank God if we have outgrown their vices. Let us pray to God that we may ever hold their virtues.

THE END.

COOL GARMENTS FOR COMFORT.

The Shirtwaist the Leader—White the Coolest Color.

Bertha Browning.

The month of August means a good many warm days and those who stay at home as well as the more fortunate individuals who enjoy the coolness of some resort need cool apparel. It has always been true everywhere that white proved much less warm beneath a scorching sun than a darker tone and the American woman has adopted it as her summer wardrobe this year. Everything which can be of white will be found much cooler and pleasanter to look upon than other colors and this means every article of dress. It is a scientific fact that white is the coolest, as black is the warmest color. The fashion makers have supplied womankind with real summer dress this year. No more hot collars and fitted waists for summer wear but instead, neck wear of sheerest lace or material and loose comfortable-looking blouses suitable for all ages. The shirt waist is the real monarch of the field for general wear and this takes a very wide variety of forms. From the dressy and fussy waist elaborately embroidered and inset with lace to the real negligee shirt with its low collar and half-sleeves. The latter is a new comer this season and is favored by the girl who enjoys any sort of out-of-door sport. It is made of madras, linen, lawn and silk and prettily trimmed with flat collar, cuffs and tie of the same or a contrasting color.

Beside these shirts, there are very attractive little white flannel suits which may be worn on any outing, for tennis, or driving which consist of shirt waist and skirt in simple design. White appears in everything with black as a smart contrast. Black is promised a great prominence in the early fall but it seems to have anticipated its popularity to such an extent that it is gracing all smart costumes. When a suit is of white the hat and gloves are of black as well as the foot-gear. Numerous black and white malinette ruches and boas are being worn and look especially well on women, not too young.

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