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joy, which gave him sudden warning of his danger.

He shook her off and sprang to one side, but only just in time to avoid a crashing blow from a great club in the hands of a man even taller and stronger than himself. He had one quick vision of great white teeth clenched in grim ferocity, a wild flying beard and blazing wild-beast eyes. The next instant he had closed, ducking his head beneath another swing of that murderous cudgel.

With his arms round the robber's burly body and his face buried in his bushy beard, Aylward gasped and strained and heaved. Back and forward in the dusty road the two men stamped and staggered, a grim wrestling-match, with life for the prize. Twice the great strength of the outlaw had Aylward nearly down, and twice with his greater youth and skill the archer restored his grip and his balance. Then at last his turn came. He slipped his leg behind the other's knee, and, giving a mighty wrench, tore him across it. With a hoarse shout the outlaw toppled backward and had hardly reached the ground before Aylward had his knee upon his chest and his short sword deep in his beard and pointed to his throat.

"By these ten finger-bones!" he gasped, "one more struggle and it is your last!" The man lay still enough, for he was half-stunned by the crashing fall. Aylward looked round him, but the woman had disappeared. At the first blow struck she had vanished into the forest. He began to have fears for his master, thinking that he perhaps had been lured into some death-trap; but his forebodings were soon at rest, for Nigel himself came hastening down the road, which he had struck some distance from the spot where he left it.

"By Saint Paul!" he cried, "who is this man on whom you are perched, and where is the lady who has honored us so far as to crave our help? Alas, that I have been unable to find her father!" "As well for you, fair sir," said Aylward, "for I am of opinion that her father was the Devil. This woman is, as I believe, the wife of the 'Wild Man of Puttenham,' and this is the 'Wild Man' himself who set upon me and tried to brain me with his club."

The outlaw, who had opened his eyes, looked with a scowl from his captor to the new-comer. "You are in luck, archer," said he, "for I have come to grips with many a man, but I cannot call to mind any who have had the better of me."

"You have indeed the grip of a bear," said Aylward; "but it was a coward deed that your wife should hold me while you dashed out my brains with a stick. It is also a most villainous thing to lay a snare for wayfarers by asking for their pity and assistance, so that it was our own soft hearts which brought us into such danger. The next who hath real need of our help may suffer for your sins."

"When the hand of the whole world is against you," said the outlaw in a surly voice, "you must fight as best you can."

"You will deserve to be hanged, if only because you have brought this woman, who is fair and gentle-spoken, to such a life," said Nigel. "Let us tie him by the wrist to my stirrup leather, Aylward, and we will lead him into Guildford."

The archer drew a spare bowstring from his case and had bound the prisoner as directed, when Nigel gave a sudden start and cry of alarm.

"Holy Mary!" he cried. "Where is the saddle-bag?"

It had been cut away by a sharp knife. Only the two ends of strap remained. Aylward and Nigel stared at each other in blank dismay. Then the young Squire shook his clenched hands and pulled at his yellow curls in his despair.

"The Lady Ermytrude's bracelet! My grandfather's cup!" he cried. "I would have died ere I lost them! What can I say to her? I dare not return until

I have found them. Oh, Aylward, Aylward! how came you to let them be taken?"

The honest archer had pushed back his steel cap and was scratching his tangled head. "Nay, I know nothing of it. You never said that there was aught of price in the bag, else had I kept a better eye upon it. Certes! it was not this fellow who took it, since I have never had my hands from him. It can only be the woman who fled with it while we fought." Nigel stamped about the road in his perplexity. "I would follow her to the world's end if I knew where I could find her, but to search these woods for her is to look for a mouse in a wheat-field. Good Saint George, thou who didst overcome the Dragon, I pray you by that most honorable and knightly achievement that you will be with me now! And you also, great Saint Julian, patron of all wayfarers in distress! Two candles shall burn before your shrine at Godalming, if you will but bring me back my saddle-bag. What would I not give to have it back?"

"Will you give me my life?" asked the outlaw. "Promise that I go free, and you shall have it back, if it be indeed true that my wife has taken it."

"Nay, I cannot do that," said Nigel. "My honor would surely be concerned, since my loss is a private one; but it would be to the public scathe that you should go free. By Saint Paul! it would be an ungentle deed if in order to save my own I let you loose upon the gear of a hundred others."

"I will not ask you to let me loose," said the "Wild Man." "If you will promise that my life be spared I will restore your bag."

"I cannot give such a promise, for it will lie with the Sheriff and reeves of Guildford."

"Shall I have your word in my favor?"

"That I could promise you, if you will give back the bag, though I know not how far my word may avail. But your words are vain, for you cannot think that we will be so fond as to let you go in the hope that you return?"

"I would not ask it," said the "Wild Man," "for I can get your bag and yet never stir from the spot where I stand. Have I your promise upon your honor and all that you hold dear that you will ask for grace?"

"You have."

"And that my wife shall be unharmed?"

"I promise it."

The outlaw laid back his head and uttered a long shrill cry like the howl of a wolf. There was a silent pause, and then, clear and shrill, there rose the same cry no great distance away in the forest. Again the "Wild Man" called, and again his mate replied. A third time he summoned, as the deer bells to the doe in the greenwood. Then with a rustle of brushwood and snapping of twigs the woman was before them once more, tall, pale, graceful, wonderful. She glanced neither at Aylward nor Nigel, but ran to the side of her husband.

"Dear and sweet lord," she cried, "I trust they have done you no hurt. I waited by the old ash, and my heart sank when you came not."

"I have been taken at last, wife."

"Oh, cursed, cursed day! Let him go, kind, gentle sirs, do not take him from me!"

"They will speak for me at Guildford," said the "Wild Man." "They have sworn it. But hand them first the bag that you have taken."

She drew it out from under her loose cloak. "Here it is, gentle sir. Indeed it went to my heart to take it, for you had mercy upon me in my trouble. But now I am, as you see, in real and very sore distress. Will you not have mercy now? Take ruth on us, fair sir! On my knees I beg it of you, most gentle and kindly Squire!"

Nigel had clutched his bag, and right glad he was to feel that the treasures

were all safe within it. "My promise is given," said he. "I will say what I can; but the issue rests with others. I pray you to stand up, for indeed I cannot promise more."

"Then I must be content," said she, rising, with a composed face. "I have prayed you to take ruth, and indeed I can do no more; but ere I go back to the forest I would rede you to be on your guard lest you lose your bag once more. Wot you how I took it, archer? Nay, it was simple enough, and may happen again, so I make it clear to you. I had this knife in my sleeve, and though it is small it is very sharp. I slipped it down like this. Then when I seemed to weep with my face against the saddle, I cut down like this—"

In an instant she had shorn through the stirrup leather which bound her man, and he, diving under the belly of the horse, had slipped like a snake into the brushwood. In passing he had struck Pommers from beneath, and the great horse, enraged and insulted, was rearing high, with two men hanging to his bridle. When at last he had calmed there was no sign left of the "Wild Man" or of his wife. In vain did Aylward, an arrow on his string, run here and there among the great trees and peer down the shadowy glades. When he returned he and his master cast a shamefaced glance at each other.

"I trust that we are better soldiers than jailers," said Aylward, as he climbed on his pony.

But Nigel's frown relaxed into a smile. "At least we have gained back what we lost," said he. "Here I place it on the pommel of my saddle, and I shall not take my eyes from it until we are safe in Guildford town."

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To be continued next Sunday

Synopsis of Preceding Chapters

SIR NIGEL is a romantic tale of the loves and adventures of Nigel Loring, a young Englishman of heroic ancestry, who took up the sword to mend the fallen fortunes of his noble house the year after the great plague devastated England in the fourteenth century.

The story opens with a brief word-picture of England during the plague, and outlines the downfall of the feudal system and other changes which that fearful "black death" brought about. The house of Loring has been all but wrecked by the machinations and encroachments of clerics. Nigel and his grandmother are the sole survivors of the family, and the Cistercian monks of Waverley Abbey are still engaged in preying upon their meager possessions. Young Nigel openly opposes them.

The monks, in satisfaction of a claim, have taken possession of a fiery untamed yellow horse of noted lineage, and several of their number have been viciously attacked and nearly killed by the animal. Believing the horse to be possessed of a devil, the monks are about to have him killed when Nigel interposes. The horse is given to him, partly in the hope that it will kill him and rid their community of its most rebellious, troublesome and dangerous opponent. But Nigel at once takes the horse, and in the presence of the astonished monks speedily reduces him to submission. He names the animal Pommers.

While Nigel and his grandmother, the venerable Dame Ermytrude, are spending the evening together not long afterward they are rudely interrupted by the lay summoner and scabster of Waverley, accompanied by a band of archers, who set upon the young Squire, bind him and take him prisoner to the Abbey to be tried because he had thrown the summoner into a morass and destroyed some legal papers that were being served.

The trial takes place with exaggerated pomp the next day, and Nigel is sentenced to bread and water for six weeks, with a daily exhortation from the chaplain. The indignant Squire springs to a window recess and defies the guards. Just as he is about to be shot down he is joined in his retreat by Samkin Aylward a bowman. As the conflict is about to begin, Sir John Chandos, one of the most valiant knights of King Edward, arrives in search of Nigel, announcing that his majesty is coming to spend the night at Nigel's house.

FOR AND AGAINST DEATH

A CHICAGO lawyer, retained as counsel for the defense in a murder trial, tells of the difficulties in impaneling a jury in connection therewith.

"Council were endeavoring," says this lawyer, "to elicit from the various prospective jurors their views concerning the death penalty."

"One man to whom the question was put, 'Are you against the infliction of the death penalty?' replied: 'No, sir.'—'What is your business?' he was then asked. 'I am a butcher,' he responded.

"When the same question was put to the next man, he answered that he was against the death penalty.

"What is your business?"

"I am in life insurance," said he."

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