

nized by many, who say—'There goes honest old Charley Witherell.' I am persuaded there is not a particle of affectation in his singularities; they arose perhaps, out of the darling notion of his mind, 'independence,' and have become confirmed by long habit. Many stories are told of the strange way in which he lived in chambers, when it was not his custom to come to court: they say he had a bit of a looking glass fixed into the wall, which answered all the purposes of his toilet, and sometimes, when some one would come in after he had commenced the process of shaving, he would quite forget to complete it, and has been found in the evening with a crust of lather upon his face, which had remained from the morning, without his being conscious of it. Sometimes he will be seen walking along, his mind evidently full of something, which he indistinctly mutters as he goes, when some article in a pawnbroker's shop window will attract his attention, and he will travel from pane to pane, for half an hour, in diligent examination of the miscellaneous collection which such windows present. But it is in the House of Commons that the subject of our sketch is to be seen 'in all his glory.' He there throws off all restraint, and unincumbered by rules of equity or evidence, or the necessity of informing or conciliating a jury, gives way to the full bent of his genius, and knocks right and left, with a richness of whimsicality that none but those who have witnessed it can well imagine. In the House of Commons the key to success may be said to be the power of amusing the house without forfeiting their respect. In this Sir Charles is particularly fortunate, he is armed so strong in honesty, is so well known to be sincere in his enthusiasm, and to possess an almost romantic scorn of all shuffling and subserviency, that there is a feeling of respect even for the least fortunate joke of the independent ex-Attorney General, and a disposition to enjoy his humour whenever he is in the vein. I have no business here with his political opinions, but merely to say, that the vigorous pertinacity with which he clings to them, abandoning every advantage of wealth and professional promotion for their sake, gives him even in the eyes of those who hold his political notions to be antiquated and absurd, a degree of respectability, which they do not award to others who possess more facility of change. It was well known that he was Attorney General when the Tory Government determined to concede the measure of Catholic Emancipation, and his conduct upon that occasion was marked by a fierce opposition to the Government, combined with such a whimsical excitement of temper, as will be long remembered by those who had an opportunity of seeing him at that time. He would not resign his office, but waited to be turned out for his principles, and he strode about the lobbies of the house banging the doors after him, as if he absolutely felt to the points of his fingers, the power and dignity of being 'independent member for Plympton,' while he bearded the Government, whose officer he was, and poured upon them his indignant sarcasm, not caring a jot for the official power and emolument he knew it must cost him.—*New Monthly Magazine.*

FROM MR. JAMES'S NEW WORK OF PHILIP AUGUSTUS:
JUST PUBLISHED

THE RESCUE.

THE chapter preceding that from which we now quote, relates that Sir Guy de Coucy, on his way to Paris, had just been informed by Gallien that the Lady Isadore had been given to William de la Roche Guyon by King John, and from the introductory passages of this we learn that a small cavalcade was traversing the route between Paey and Rollebois—the principal personages of which were a lady and a knight to whose attentions she seemed averse—when the following scene ensued.

"See you no ferry-boat along the river?" cried he. "Look out, Arnoul—look out! We must get across as soon as may be."

"The ferry lies beyond this woody tongue of land, my lord," replied the man. "'Tis not half a mile hence, and there is no town between; so we may pass easily;" and, spurring on, the party entered the pass between the wood which skirted down from the road to the river on the one side, and the high chalky cliffs on the other.

The knight in the gilded armour had received a fresh rebuff from the lady whose favour he seemed so anxious to win; and, having retired to his companions, who, as we have shown, were a few steps behind, was conversing with them in an earnest but under-tone, when from an ambush in the wood, which had escaped even the eyes of the advanced scout, rushed forth a body of horsemen, with such rapid force as to separate entirely the female part of the cavalcade from their escort.

It was done in an instant; but, in truth it needed such rapidity of attack, to render it, in itself, any thing short of madness, for,

when the escort recovered in a degree from their first astonishment, they found that seven men formed the whole force that had thrown them into such confusion. Before, however, this became apparent, the leader of their adversaries shouting, 'A Coucy! a Coucy!' spurred like lightning upon the knight we have before mentioned, and at one blow of his battle-axe dashed him under his horse's feet. A squire behind shared the same fate: a man-at-arms followed; and each of De Coucy's followers, fighting as if inspired by the same daring valour that animated their lord, the escort were driven back along the road, leaving four or five saddles vacant. Then, however, the tide of the battle turned. The knights at the head of the escort saw the handful of men to which they were opposed, and ashamed of yielding a step to so scanty a body, four of them united their efforts to attack Dr Coucy, while another rallied their followers; and the young knight was in turn driven back, now striking at one, now at another, now parrying the blows that were aimed at himself, and now showering them thick upon the head of the opponent that he had singled out for the moment.

Separated from the escort which attended her, the lady we have mentioned, with her women, had in the mean while endeavoured to escape from the scene of strife which had so suddenly arisen, by hurrying on upon the road; but the scout who had turned at the first noise of the affray, caught her bridle, and, notwithstanding her prayers and entreaties, would not suffer her to proceed.

The danger indeed to which she was exposed was not for the moment great, as, by this time, the first impetuous attack of De Coucy and his followers had driven the escort back beyond the turn of the wood; and nothing could be gathered of the progress of the fight but from the trampling of the horses heard sounding this way or that, and the cries and shouts of the combatants approaching or receding as the battle turned.

'Lady Isadore! Lady Isadore!' cried a girl who followed her. 'It is the Sire de Coucy! Hear you not his battle-cry? and I am sure I saw Ernold the page strike down an archer twice as big as himself. God send them the victory!'

'Hush! foolish girl, hush!' cried Isadore of the Mount, leaning her head to listen more intently. 'Hark! they are coming this way!—Free my bridle, soldier! Free my bridle, for the love of Heaven! How dare you, serf, to hold me against my will!—You will repent, whoever wins!'

The soldier however, heeded neither the lady's entreaties nor her threats, though it so happened that it would have proved fortunate to himself had he done so; for, in a moment after, De Coucy, driven back by the superior force to which he was opposed, appeared at a turn of the wood, striking a thundering blow on the crest of one of the knights who pressed closely on him, while the three others spurred after at about three horse length's distance.

No sooner had the blow descended, than the knight's quick glance fell upon Isadore. 'Fly, Isadore! fly!' cried he. 'You have been deceived into the power of traitors!—Fly! up the path to the right—to the castle on the hill!—But as he spoke, he suddenly perceived the soldier holding her reign, and forcing her horse up a bank somewhat out of the current of the fight. Like lightning, De Coucy wheeled his charger, and, disappointed, by the turn he took, a blow that one of his adversaries was discharging at his head, he swung his battle-axe round in the air, and hurled it with sure and unerring aim at the unhappy scout. It needed a firm heart and well-practised hand to dismiss such a fatal missile in a direction so near the person of one deeply beloved. But De Coucy had both, and rushing within two feet of Isadore of the Mount, the head of the ponderous axe struck the soldier full on the neck and jaw bone, and dashed him from his horse, a ghastly and disfigured corpse.

'Fly, Isadore! fly!' repeated De Coucy, at the same moment drawing his sword and spurring his charger furiously against the first of his opponents. Fly up to the right! The castle on the hill!—the castle on the hill!

Isadore required no second injunction, but darted like an arrow from the scene of the battle, when De Coucy made almost more than mortal efforts to drive back the enemy.

Though he thus gave her time to escape, his valour and skill were of course in vain, opposed to numbers not inferior to himself in personal courage, and clothed in arms equal to those by which he was defended. All he could do was, to give his scattered followers time again to collect about him; and then, satisfied with having delivered Isadore, to keep up a defensive fight along the road.

Even this, however, was difficult to conduct successfully in the face of a body of men so much superior to his own in number, eager to avenge themselves upon him, and hurried on by the knowledge that, being upon adverse ground, they must win their revenge quickly, or not at all. The four knights pressed on him on all sides, striving to bear him down to the earth, his armour was hacked and splintered in many parts; his shield was nearly cleft in two with the blow of a battle-axe; several of the bars of his vizor were dashed to pieces, so as to leave his face nearly uncovered; but still he retreated slowly, with his face to his enemies, shouting from time to time his battle-cry, to cheer the spirits of his men; and striking terrible sweeping blows with his long sword, whenever his opponents made a general rush upon him.

One of these united attacks, however, had nearly proved fatal to the gallant young knight; for, in suddenly backing his horse to avoid it, the animal's feet struck against a felled tree, and he went down at once upon his haunches. 'Coucy! a Coucy!' cried the knight, striving to spur him up, but all four of his antagonists pressed upon him at once, beating him down with repeated blows when suddenly two new combatants were added to the fight,—Philip Augustus and the Count d'Auvergne.

Both, though we have seen them in a preceding chapter opposed hand to hand, suddenly ceased their mutual conflict, and rushed forward to strike upon the side of De Coucy. The Count d'Auvergne, warned by his friend's well-known battle-cry, rushed, bare-headed as he was, into the midst of the struggle, and, striking with all the energy of insanity, dashed at once the foremost of the young knight's opponents to the earth. The king recognizing instantly, by the Norman fashion of their harness, the followers of his enemy King John, sprang on his horse; and, with the same chivalrous spirit that induced him in former days to attack King Richard's whole army near Courcelles with scarce two hundred knights in his own train, he cast himself in the foremost of the battle, and plied his weapon with a hand that seldom struck in vain.

The struggle, by its greater equality, now became more despa-

rate; but it was soon rendered no longer doubtful, by the sight of a body of horse coming down at full speed on the road from the castle. The Normans, who had followed Guillaume de la Roche Guyon, now hastened to effect their retreat, well knowing that whatever fresh troops arrived on the spot, must necessarily swell the party of their adversaries. They made an effort, however, in the first place, to deliver their companion who had been struck down by the Count d'Auvergne; but finding it impossible, they turned their horses, and retreated along the line of road over which they had advanced, only pausing for an instant at the spot where the contest had first begun, to aid William de la Roche himself, who had, as we have shown, been cast from his horse by a blow of De Coucy's battle-axe, and now sat by the road side, somewhat stunted and dizzied by his fall, and completely plundered of his fine armour.

'Haw! haw!' shouted some one from the top of one of the leafless trees hard by, as they re-mounted the discomfited cavalier. 'Haw, haw, haw!' and in a moment, Gallien the Fool cast down one of the gay gauntlets on the head of its former owner, laughing till the whole cliffs rang, to see it strike him on the forehead, and deluge his fair effeminate face with blood. The Normans had not time to seek vengeance; for De Coucy's party, reinforced by the troop from the castle, hung upon their rear, and gave them neither pause nor respite till the early night following a day in February closed in upon the world; and, fatigued with so long a strife, the pursuers drew the reign, and left them to escape as they might.

So fierce and eager had been the pursuit, that scarce a word had passed between De Coucy's party and their new companions, till, by common accord, they checked their horses' speed.

It was then that the two brothers in arms turned towards each other, each suddenly grasping his friend's hand, with all the warmth of affection. 'D'Auvergne!' cried De Coucy, gazing on his friend's face, down which the blood was streaming from a wound in his temple, giving to his worn and ashy countenance, in the twilight of the evening, an appearance of scarcely human paleness.

'De Coucy!' replied d'Auvergne, fixing his eyes on the broken bars of the young knight's helmet. 'De Coucy!' he repeated, and turning away his head with a look of painful consciousness, he carried his hand to his brow, as if sensible of his infirmity, adding, 'I have been ill, my friend—the hot sun of the desert, and Agnes's cold words when I delivered her father's message—a message I had sworn on my knighthood to deliver!'

'Ha! Then it was not!'—cried Philip eagerly: 'but let us turn to some place of repose!' added he, remembering his disguise, and cutting across a topic which, besides being painful to himself, he loved not to hear canvassed near the ears of strangers. 'Let us turn to some place of repose.—We have to thank you, Sir Knight,' he added, turning to the leader of the horseman, who had joined them from the castle—'we have to thank you for your timely aid.'

'Not so, beau sire,' replied the knight, bowing to his saddle-bow. 'We were warned of the strife by a lady, who claimed refuge in the castle; and we instantly came down to strike for France.'

'You did well!' replied the king. Hark you, Sir Knight, and approaching his horse, he spoke for some moments to him in an under-voice, to which the only reply was, 'You shall be obeyed.'

In the mean while, the men-at-arms and the followers of De Coucy, who had paused to breathe after the first heat of the affray, began to mingle in conversation upon the events that had just taken place, and the causes which had given rise to them,—and very soon all the noise and clamour of explanation, and wonderment, and questioning, and boasting succeeded which usually follows any very active struggle. In the course of this hubbub, De Coucy's name, situation, quality, the news he had heard concerning Guillaume de la Roche Guyon, and the means he had taken to surprise him, and deliver the Lady Isadore, were explained to every body whom it might concern, with that almost childish frankness and simplicity which was one of the chief characteristics of the age of chivalry.

To this the king listened attentively,—and then, turning to De Coucy, he said, 'Sir Guy de Coucy, this adventure which you have just achieved is worthy of your other exploits. I will beg leave to ride with your train to Paris, where doubtless you are going. This good night,' he added, pointing to the leader of the troop from the castle, 'informs me, that the lady your good sword has delivered from that traitor Guillaume de la Roche Guyon, is in safety with the fair Queen Agnes; and he adds, that it is the Queen's will that no men, except the garrison of the castle, shall be admitted within the walls.'

'If such be the case, I must submit of course,' replied De Coucy: 'and yet I would fain speak but a few words to the Lady Isadore to inform her why I attacked her escort; for beyond all doubt, they lured her away from the chateau of Moulineaux upon some fine pretext.'

I will take care that your conduct be rightly stated, beau sire,' replied the officer; 'but as to your speaking with the lady, I fear it cannot be; for the queen will doubtless hold her, both as a liege vassal of the crown and as hostage for her father's faith; and she has vowed, that during her absence from our noble lord the king, no man shall enter her gates, except such persons as the king himself has placed about her. Be assured however, Sir Knight, that the lady shall receive all honourable treatment,—and that your high deeds and noble prowess shall be spoken of in becoming terms.'

De Coucy mused a moment. Well, said he at length, 'what must be, must be! To Paris then! for I bear the king both sad and important news.'

Ha! cried Philip: but then again remembering his disguise he added,—'Are they such as a stranger may hear?'

'They are such, Sir Unknown Knight,' replied De Coucy, 'as will soon be heard of far and wide; but the king's ears must be the first to hear my tale. D'Auvergne, he added, turning to the Count, I pray you let my page bind up that gash upon your temple. If I see rightly by this pale light, the blood is streaming from it still. Let him stanch it for thee I pray!'

Not so! not so, good friend! replied the count, who,