JOHN BOURCHIER, 2ND BARON BERNERS (c. 1467-1533), SOLDIER, DIPLOMAT AND TRANSLATOR. Born into a wealthy and influential aristocratic family, Berners may have been educated at Balliol College, Oxford University. Knighted in 1478, he served Henry VIII as both a soldier and a diplomat throughout the 1520s. He assumed a number of important court positions, including deputy of Calais. However, his financial situation deteriorated and by the time of his death he was heavily indebted. Although he had a full and active public life, he was also a serious scholar and prolific writer, most famous for his accomplished translations of French and Spanish texts, among them a number of chivalric romances, as well as the histories of Froissart, called the Chronicles (1522-1525), the latter of which was encouraged and sponsored by Henry VIII himself. Late in life, he turned to classical philosophy with his translation of the Stoic treatise The Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius (now known as Meditations) [1532]. The earliest surviving copy of Berner’s translation of the French chivalric romance Huon de Bourdeaux is dated 1600, although the first edition may have been printed as early as 1515. The second edition (1570) indicates that the translation was taken up at the request of the earl of Huntingdon, Lord Hastings.

Huon of Bourdeaux (publ. in French, 1513; written in French, early- to mid-13th century). A romance of the Charlemagne cycle, Huon de Bourdeaux is preserved in three manuscript versions. It tells the story of three generations of the family of Huon, son of Seguin, duke of Bourdeaux. While the original shows the anonymous poet’s familiarity with French epic and romance, it also incorporates aspects of folktale, especially in its treatment of the supernatural (Oberon, the Fairy Prince is a significant character). This romance was enormously popular in the Middle Ages, and it was translated into a number of European languages, including English.

Huon of Bourdeaux (1515?; 1570; 1600)

[...]

Chapter 164

_How Queen Clariet was brought to bed of a daughter, at which deliverance the Queen died and how when the young damsel came to the age of fifteen years, the King her father would have had her in marriage, wherewith all his Lords were sore troubled._

When King Florence was advertised¹ that his queen was delivered of a daughter, he thanked God. The child was borne to the christening into the chief church, and was named Ide. The joy of the coming of this child cost dearly to the Queen, her mother, for by reason of the pain that she

¹ advertised advised, made aware [of the fact].
endured, she departed out of this life, and so died.

The child was brought to King Florence, and when he saw her, he was joyful and demanded how her mother did, and they thought that the matter could not be hidden nor kept secret. They said, "Sir, your queen is departed to God."

When the King heard that, he fell down in a swound\(^2\) so that every man feared he had been dead, and when he came to himself he said, "Ah my right dear love, in an ill hour were you born! For your sake I had forgotten all pain, and thought to have lived in rest with you; methinks you be ravished and stolen away from me. Ah false death! Thou art hardy\(^3\) to take from me that thing which I loved best, the most fairest, truest, and sweetest creature living."

Then his lords came and comforted him; the cries, complaints, and weepings rose throughout the city. All ladies, damsels, burgesses,\(^4\) and maidens, and all the commons\(^5\) made great lamentations. That night the Queen was watched,\(^6\) and the next morning, with great cries and weepings the Queen was brought into the chief church, her obsequy was done notably, and so laid in a rich sepulchre. The sorrow that the King made was never none such seen. The King was visited by the lords of his realm, but they could not cause him to take any solace, but alone\(^7\) now and then to go to see his dear daughter, the Lady Ide, and ever when he saw her, his sorrow renewed.

And she was well-nourished\(^8\) and brought up, and when she came to the age of fifteen years, she was beautiful, wise, and sage,\(^9\) for she was brought up with four noble ladies, and ordered\(^10\) as it appertained to a king’s child, and her father, King Florence, loved her so well that he could never be satisfied with looking upon her: oftentimes he kissed her, holding her in his arms. He would never marry again for the love of her. So much grew and increased this noble Ide that she came to the age of fifteen years complete;\(^11\) the fresh beauty and bounty that was in her, if I should describe it, it would be overlong to rehearse, but I dare well say that in beauty as then she passed all other women of the world, for God and Nature had employed all their study to form her.

There was never any man that saw her but loved her, and so did her father, so that on a day the King had his lords about him, and Sorbarre was among them, whom the King loved dearly; and the King, seeing his daughter Ide grow and increase in all virtues, he said to his lords, "Sirs, it were good that there were some wife found out for me, whom I will marry, if any such can be found in all conditions like to her that I had before."

When his lords heard him, they were joyful in that the King would marry again. Alas, they knew not the King’s inward intention, but shortly after the King knew it, whereby much ill and mischief came afterward, and many a man slain, and many a church burnt, as ye shall hear

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\(^2\) *swound* swoon, faint.

\(^3\) *hardy* bold, hardy, daring.

\(^4\) *damsels* young, unmarried women, originally those of noble or aristocratic birth. *burgesses* citizens.

\(^5\) *commons* the common people.

\(^6\) *watched* the ancient practice of watching over the body, praying and lamenting.

\(^7\) *alone* by himself, unaccompanied.

\(^8\) *well-nourished* well cared for.

\(^9\) *sage* dignified.

\(^10\) *ordered* i.e., everything was arranged in keeping with her rank.

\(^11\) *reached ... complete* i.e., when she reached the age of 15, she had all the virtues and qualities possible in a young woman.
hereafter.

Then the King wrote and sent to all his lords and knights of his realm, to come to his court at a day assigned. And when they were all come to the palace, there they found the King, who humbly received them, and made them great feasting, and had them to dinner with him. When the dinner was done, the King and all his lords went into a garden, whereas the King would keep his council; and when they were all there, and the King sat in his seat, he said, “Sirs, you know well I have no more children but a daughter, who hath been desired in marriage by divers kings and princes, but I would not consent to marry her, nor I thought not to marry myself, for the love of her mother whom I so dearly loved, but now I am minded to marry and to take a wife so that she be semblable\(^\text{12}\) to her that is departed. And therefore I have sent for you to show you my will and pleasure.”

When his lords heard him, they were joyful, and said, “Sir, know for truth, there is no woman living in Christendom but if you will have her you shall, if she be never so fair or so high of lineage. And therefore, sir, think in yourself whether you will that we shall go to get you a wife.”

“Sirs,” quoth\(^\text{13}\) the King, “in this matter you shall not need to take any pains, for the wife that I will have is not far from hence. It lieth in me to have her if I list.”\(^\text{14}\)

“Sir,” quoth the lords, “will it please you to name her that shall be so happy?”

“Sirs,” quoth the King, “it is my daughter Ide whom I will take to my wife for the great love that I had to her mother.”

When the lords heard that, they beheld\(^\text{15}\) each other, blessing themselves at the horrible and detestable words of the King, and looked on him marvelously.\(^\text{16}\) Then Sorbarre, (who was of the King’s Privy Council) began to speak, and said, “Ah sir, God forbid that such a shame should come to you, for it is worse than heathen to him that will pollute his own proper daughter by himself engendered! You should not be worthy to sit in a royal chair, and you ought to be the mirror and example to other men how they should live. Will you then break the law that God hath given us? Put from you that cruelty; you shall find no man that will praise you in so doing or thinking.”

When the King heard Sorbarre, he beheld him angrily and said, “Sorbarre, know for truth but that I hold myself much bound unto you, I would strike off your head, and there is no man that speaketh to the contrary but I shall put him to death.”

Then all the lords together said to the King, “Sir, do as you please. Sorbarre hath said as a noble man ought to do, for if you do otherwise, you are not worthy to bear a crown,” and so held their peace; they durst speak no more for fear of him, and also because they thought surely that the Devil was within him to motion any such matter.

When the King heard the will of his lords, he sent for his daughter hastily, who came with a smiling countenance, not knowing of the unreasonable will of the King, her father; and when she came before him she kneeled down, the King took her up and set her between his arms, and kissed her more than twenty times. The lady knew nothing of her father’s intention, none

\(^{12}\) semblable  like, similar to.

\(^{13}\) quoth  said.

\(^{14}\) lieth in me  is within the sphere of my authority.  list  wish.

\(^{15}\) beheld  looked at.

\(^{16}\) marvelously  not in a positive sense: in stunned amazement.
otherwise but that she thought he did it but as a father ought to do with his child. Then the lords said softly one to another, “O unhappy King! His thoughts be far unlike to his daughter’s, for if she were here alone he would dishonour\textsuperscript{17} her although she be his own daughter.”

The King, seeing his daughter Ide so excellent fair, he said to himself that without\textsuperscript{18} he had his daughter in marriage, he should die with rage,\textsuperscript{19} and the King beheld her, and made her to sit down by him, and said, “My dear daughter, you are as an orpheling\textsuperscript{20} on the mother’s side, wherefore I have great pity of you that you have lost her, and you resemble so much your mother that I think when I see you in the face that I see her before me, and therefore I love you the better, and for this cause it is my will to take you to my wife, for I will have none other in marriage.”

\textbf{CHAPTER 165}

\textit{Of the great sorrow that the Damsel Ide made when she heard her father, how he would have her in marriage; and how by the means of a noble lady and Sorbarre, she departed at midnight, and went at\textsuperscript{21} the adventure that God would send her.}

When the damsel heard her father, her fresh red colour became pale and wan, and she cast down her looks to the earth, and said, “Ah my right dear father, take heed what you say, for if you be heard of them that be here present, you shall be greatly blamed.”

Then the damsel would have risen up to have gone from her father, but the King took her by the hand and said, “My daughter, make no danger\textsuperscript{22} nor refuse to follow my will, for you slay me for the love that I bear you.”

Then all the lords kneeled down before the King, and held up their hands, and desired the King for his own wealth and honour, that he would have pity of himself and of his daughter, and that he would never think to do such a deed, for if he did, he should never be set by\textsuperscript{23} after.

When the King heard his lords, and how they reasoned with him to have turned his mind, he answered as a man full of villainy\textsuperscript{24} and ire, and said that in despite of them all, and whether they would or not, he would have her to his wife, and that if there were any so hardy as to speak to him to the contrary, he would cause them to die a shameful death, and he sore\textsuperscript{25} rebuked them.

When the damsel heard her father to speak unto the lords and knights, then she saw well the inordinate love of her father, and she began to weep, and said, “O good God, I shall be shamed and lost for ever if he take me to his wife, for both of us cannot escape without damnation.” Then she thought within herself that if she could in any wise\textsuperscript{26} escape, she would fly away so far off that there should never any tidings be heard of her.

Then the King sent her into her chamber with her maidens, who were sorrowful and

\begin{footnotes}
\item[17] dishonour rape.
\item[18] without unless.
\item[19] rage passion (the sense may be that he will be driven mad with unrequited desire).
\item[20] orpheling orphan.
\item[21] at i.e., on.
\item[22] danger difficulty.
\item[23] set by i.e., esteemed or regarded highly.
\item[24] villainy extreme wickedness, evil. ire wrath, anger.
\item[25] sore severely.
\item[26] wise way.
\end{footnotes}
discomforted when they heard of that matter, for the King had commanded them to keep her well, and to ordain a rich bed for her, because the next day he would marry her. When the damsel Ide was in her chamber, she called to her an ancient lady, who had been her mistress, and then she avoided all others out of her chamber, and made semblance to sleep. And when she saw that all others were gone, she kneeled down, and held up both her hands before the lady and, all weeping, said, “Ah my right dear lady and mistress, I come to you as a poor orpheling without father or mother. My mother is dead as you know well, but he that should be my father would be my husband, the which is a thing that the earth ought not to bear, nor sustain them that would live in such manner. And therefore, dear mistress, counsel and aid this poor discomforted orpheling, and help me that I may be out of the sight of him that ought to be my father, for I had rather go into some far country and there to live in poverty than to end my days with him in doing of such a deed, and at the end to be damned and lost.”

When the old lady (who was right noble and sage) heard the pitiful complaint of the damsel Ide, whom she had nourished and brought up, she answered, and said, “My right dear daughter, for the great love that I bear you, I shall aid and counsel you, and bring you out of this doubt, as sometime did my brother Peter of Aragon to the Lady Clarlet, your mother: he rescued her out of the hands of the Saracens when she was in jeopardy of her life. For all your father, I shall not let to aid you.”

When the damsel Ide heard the good will of the lady, how she would aid her, all weeping she kissed her, and said, “Ah my right dear mother, the goodness that you do to me God reward you for it, for it lieth not in me.”

Then the old lady issued out of her chamber, and left the Lady Ide very pensive, and went into Sorbarre’s chamber, who was as then in the palace, for he was one of the King’s Privy Council; and when he came to his chamber and found the lady there, he demanded what adventure had brought her thither. The lady drew him apart, and showed him the request and prayer of the damsel Ide, whereof Sorbarre (for the great pity he had of her) began to weep, and avoided his chamber the better to speak with the lady at his ease; and they devised together of divers things, and at last they concluded, for the safeguard of the damsel’s body, that this ancient lady should bear to her the apparel of a man, and that at the hour of midnight she should array her therewith, and then show her and let her go out of the palace, and come to the stable, “Whereas she shall find me ready, with the best horse that her father hath, ready for her to leap upon.”

When the ancient lady understood Sorbarre, she was right joyful, and thought his counsel good, and then she departed, and made ready all the apparel belonging to a man. Then she came to the damsel Ide’s chamber, and showed her the conclusion that was taken between her and

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27 **mistress** i.e., she was the noble lady appointed to guide Ide during her minority; this lady would have supervised Ide’s education.
28 **avoided** had removed, ordered to leave.
29 **made semblance** pretended.
30 **Saracens** Muslim warriors.
31 **For ... you** i.e., even given all the might of your father, I shall not be prevented from helping you.
32 **adventure** event.
33 **divers** many, different.
Sorbarre. When the damsel heard that, she had great joy at her heart, and she clipped\textsuperscript{34} and kissed her.

The lady was glad when she saw her somewhat comforted, and said, “Fair lady, the King, your father, hath ordained a bath for you. Therefore, go thither and bathe with [the] other damsels to the intent that the King do not suspect anything; and when you have bathed you a certain space, let your bed be made ready, and when you are in your chamber go to your bed; and then command me and all the damsels to go and bathe us, and I shall keep them there so long a space that they shall have good list\textsuperscript{35} to sleep; and I shall leave here by your bedside all your man’s apparel; and array you therein, and then gird this sword about you, and put on your spurs; and when you are out of the palace, go to the stables, where you shall find a horse ready for you.”

Then they went into the bathing chamber, and she in her smock\textsuperscript{36} ready to go into the bath, and all the other damsels were joyful when they saw her come thither, for they thought she had been gone to sleep because of the displeasure that she had at her heart. Then they said one to another, “It seemeth that our lady is well appeased of her sorrow. Methinks tomorrow she shall be lady and queen, and she shall be wife and daughter to the King, her father, the which is a thing unreasonable.”\textsuperscript{37} Then they came to her and bathed her, and feasted her as much as they might.

When the Lady Ide thought that it was time to depart, she said to her mistress and to the other damsels, how she had bathed her enough, and that she would go into her chamber to sleep, and bad\textsuperscript{38} all the others to go and bathe them, and that there should no more go with her but two of them to have her to bed; and she said to her mistress that she should go and bring her with the damsels, the which thing they did joyfully. The damsel departed and went into her chamber, wrapped in a mantle of scarlet. When the two damsels had brought her to bed, they took leave of her and departed, and closed the door after them, and then they went and bathed them with others. And when the damsel Ide felt herself all dry, she rose and arrayed her in the man’s apparel as well as she could, and took the sword and girt it about her, and put on her spurs, and then she went to a great low window on the garden-side, and there she leapt out into the garden as privily\textsuperscript{39} as she could, and so went along by the wall-side until she came to the postern;\textsuperscript{40} then she went out towards the stable, and when she came there, she found a horse ready in Sorbarre’s hand, and at the pommel of the saddle, a bag full of bread and flesh,\textsuperscript{41} and two bottles of good wine.

Then the damsel took the horse, and without any word speaking, she leapt up quickly. Then Sorbarre all weeping said, “My dear daughter, God be thy guide and bring thee to safeguard! Go thy way, and keep the way upon thy left hand, and follow the seaside.”

“Sir,” quoth she, “for the goodness you have showed me God reward you, into whose safeguard I commend you.”

Thus departed this noble Lady Ide, to eschew and fly from the ill and dishonourable will

\textsuperscript{34} clipped embraced.
\textsuperscript{35} list wish, inclination.
\textsuperscript{36} smock undergarment.
\textsuperscript{37} unreasonable irrational; unjustifiable; unfitting.
\textsuperscript{38} bad ordered.
\textsuperscript{39} privily secretly.
\textsuperscript{40} postern side or back gate.
\textsuperscript{41} flesh meat.
of her father, and she entered into the forest keeping no highway, and so she rode three days along the wood, until she thought well that she was far from her country. Now let us leave speaking of her, until we have occasion to return to her again; and let us speak of King Florence, her father.

CHAPTER 166

*How King Florence was sorrowful when he was advertised of his daughter’s departing, who was appareled like a man; and how she came into Almaine; and how she found certain thieves in a forest, and how she came to Rome to the Emperor like a squire.*

Ye have heard here before in this history, how King Florence of Aragon would have his own daughter the damsel Ide in marriage, against the will of all his lords and people, after that he had spoken with her, and commanded the bath to be ordered for her, to the intent that the next day to have her in marriage. The night approached, and after supper the King went to his bed, and the next morning betimes tidings was brought to the King, how the King of Navarre was come to see him. The King went to meet him, and made him great cheer, and so came together to the palace; and then incontinent it was showed the King how his daughter was fled away, whereof the King was so sorrowful and angry, that no man durst speak a word to him, and he went into his daughter’s chamber, and there he found the ladies and damsels that had the keeping of her. The King would have run upon them if the King of Navarre had not been [present], who letted him and blamed him much when he knew the cause of her departing, and what the King would have done. Then came the horse-keeper to the King, and said how his good horse was stolen away the same night. Then the King, as a man desperate, commanded on all sides men to ride after her, and whosoever could bring his daughter again or else sure tidings of her he promised to give him a thousand florins of gold. There were many that for love of that money rode forth, to the number of three hundred. They rode divers ways, but there was none of them that could bring any tidings of her, and so returned to the King, who was sorrowful when he could hear nothing of her. Great lamentations there was made in the city for the going away of the damsel, because of the fear that she had of her father. And [she] rode upon the good horse; in the daytime she would rest her in the woods, and in the night she would ride forth.

Thus she passed all the provinces of Aragon, and she passed into Lombardy. Of her journeys and adventures I will make no mention, because she found nothing in the way to let.

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42 advertised advised, made aware of.
43 Almaine part of present-day Germany.
44 betimes early.
45 incontinent hastily, immediately.
46 run upon them attack them with deadly intent.
47 letted prevented.
48 florents florins.
49 divers many; different.
50 Aragon as the text has already indicated, Aragon is the kingdom Ide’s father; it is roughly equivalent to present-day Aragon in Spain. Lombardy roughly equivalent to present-day Lombardy, Northern Italy.
51 let hinder.
her. She rode so long, that she approached to the country of Almaine, and when she came there her money failed her, whereby she was constrained to sell her horse for money to live withal, and so went afoot, and at the last came to the city of Basel,\(^52\) and there she tarried a season, and there spent her money. So long she lay there that she heard the Emperor of Rome sent for men all about to aid and succour him against the King of Castile,\(^53\) who made him great war.\(^54\) When she heard that many noble men were going to Rome to succour the Emperor, she was joyful, and said to her host that if she had horse and armour, she would go with other[s] into the wars, and thought within herself that she would gladly be acquainted with the Emperor of Rome, who was named Othon, and she thought if she might she would take counsel of him, and she did so much that she fell in acquaintance with some of the Almaines, so that they were glad to see her, she seemed to them to be so fair and a young squire.

Then an Almaine that was there said unto her, “Friend, come hither to me, and show me what thou art.”

“Sir,” quoth she, “I am to him that my service may please, for I desire nothing but to serve some noble man; but of late I was in Aragon, and there I served a lord that is dead, wherefore I am come hither for the displeasure\(^55\) that I have of his death, and I can well serve a gentleman, and keep his horse, and if need be to drive his sumpter-horse,\(^56\) and if I come in battle or in skirmish with my master, I think he shall have a worse than I am in his company.”

The Almaine, hearing her so to speak, said, “Fair son, that\(^57\) thou sayst proceedeth of a good courage; therefore, good must come to thee. Yet I pray thee, show me thy name.”

“Sir,” quoth she, “I am called Ide.”

“Brother,” quoth the Almaine, “I entertain thee into my service. Take heed of my horse.”

“Sir,” quoth she, “I am ready to do you the best service that I can,” so the Almaine had her to his lodging.

Thus she then served that was wont\(^58\) to be served, for she feared if it should be perceived that she were a woman, it would be to her trouble; therefore, she kept herself close and secret, and she continued three days with her master after the other company were gone towards Rome, but her master might not depart so soon as the others did, for his business was not ready. And then three days after they departed to go to Rome, and she was armed after the custom of the country, she served her master so well, that he praised her. So long they rode that they came and approached near to the country of Rome, so that on a day they entered into a great dark forest, wherein lay in ambushment about seven-score\(^59\) Spaniards, lying there to abide their adventure\(^60\) (they lay in a dark valley). And when they saw the Almaines, they despised them to the death and ran upon them. Then Ide (who rode before her master) couched her spear\(^61\) and struck a Spaniard

\(^{52}\) Basel city in present-day Switzerland.

\(^{53}\) the Emperor of Rome i.e., the Holy Roman Emperor, a monarch who controlled the Holy Roman Empire, and who until the 15th century was crowned by the Pope. Castile a kingdom comprising part of present-day Spain.

\(^{54}\) who made him great war i.e., who waged a terrible war against him [the Emperor of Rome].

\(^{55}\) displeasure unhappiness, grief, sorrow.

\(^{56}\) sumpter-horse pack-horse (one meant to carry luggage or baggage).

\(^{57}\) that i.e., that which.

\(^{58}\) wont accustomed.

\(^{59}\) seven-score 140.

\(^{60}\) abide their adventure await their fortune or chance.

\(^{61}\) couched her spear lowered her spear to the position assumed for attack or charging.
therewith clean through the body, and with the drawing out of her spear, the Spaniard fell down dead, of the which course her master praised her.

Then the Spaniards ran in among the Almaines, who right valiantly defended themselves, but their defence could not avail them, for at the end they were all slain, so that none escaped alive, but only Ide, who did bear herself so valiantly that she slew four of the Spaniards; but when she saw that her master and all his company were slain, with her sword in her hand all bloody, she fled away, and rode out of the way, and took a little path, the which brought her to a rock, and there she alighted and tarried in the wood all that night until the next morning. She had so great hunger and thirst that she was near-hand\(^\text{62}\) famished, for she had ridden all the day without meat or drink.

And in the morning she looked all about her, and saw in an arbour about thirty thieves, sitting at a table eating and drinking at their pleasure, and when the damsel saw them, for the great rage of hunger that she suffered constrained her in such wise that she forgot all fear and went unto them.

When the thieves saw her, one of them said to his fellows, “I see yonder coming a squire mounted upon a good horse, the which shall be ours.”

And when Ide approached to them, she humbly saluted the company and said, “Sirs, if it may please you to let me eat and drink with you, I will pay for my shot.”\(^\text{63}\)

“Friend,” quoth one of them, “is there any man that hath been your guide in this forest?”

“Sirs,” quoth Ide, “God hath been my conduct and none other.”

Then one of the thieves stepped forth, and took her horse by the bridle, and said to his company, “Sirs, lay on, strike him down! He shall never eat nor drink more! His horse shall not escape me!”

When the damsel saw that she was taken, she was in great fear, and she durst make no countenance to defend herself, there were so many thieves upon her, and she thought to humble herself which should be more profit, and said, “Sirs, why make you that haste to slay me? Little shall ye win thereby nor lose. Hold here my sword. I yield myself into your hands, and I pray you (in the honour of Jesus Christ) to give me some meat and drink, for I am so hungry that I am almost famished.”

Then the master-thief said, “Squire, have no fear to be stricken. Thou shalt have no more hurt than myself; but thou shalt have all that thou lackest. Go thy way and sit down, and eat and drink at thy pleasure.”

“Sir,” quoth Ide, “I thank you.”

Then the damsel sat down with them, and did eat and drink at their pleasure. And when they had all eaten and were risen up, the thieves began to strive among themselves, saying to their chief-master, how he had done ill that he would not suffer them to slay the squire; then another answered, and said how there should be no hurt done unto him, because he was so fair a young man and so courteous, and said that it should be great damage\(^\text{64}\) to slay him, and that it were better to keep him still with them, and to learn him to steal and to murder men, and if he will not so do, then it were good reason to slay him.

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\(^{62}\) near-hand close to [being], almost.

\(^{63}\) shot i.e., my share of the meal.

\(^{64}\) damage pity, misfortune.
When Ide understood the thieves, she was in great fear, and called upon our Lord God, praying him humbly in her great need to aid and succour her. Then the chief-master demanded what was her name; then she answered, in great fear to be slain, and said, “Sir, my name is Ide, and I am of the realm of France, and we were in company when we departed out of our country about forty gentlemen. We were going to have served the Emperor of Rome, who hath now war with the King of Spain, and we found in our way about seven-score Spaniards in ambushment, lying in a valley, so they set upon us, and slew all my company; none escaped but myself. And therefore, sirs, I pray you let me have again my horse and my sword, and show me the way to Rome. It would be a great alms-deed to show me that courtesy.”

“Nay,” quoth the master-thief, “that we will not do, but thou shalt tarry with us and learn to be a thief and a murderer, and if thou wilt not thus do, with my sword I shall strike off thy head.”

“Sirs,” quoth Ide, “you would have me to do a thing that I was never accustomed to do, nor none of my lineage, nor I have no intention to do any such works. Therefore, I pray you, let me have my horse and my sword; then you do me great courtesy, and when I am mounted upon my horse, if one of you will defy me, and if I defend not myself from him, then strike off my head. I have bought my meat and drink very dear, if I should lose my horse.”

Then the master-thief said, “Because I see that thou art so hardy, I will wrestle with thee upon this covenant: that if thou cast me, thou shalt be one of our company, and if thou be cast to the earth, then I will have thy horse and thy sword and spoil thee of all thy clothes.”

Then Ide said, “I am content thus to do, so that you withdraw your men from me, and set my horse by me, and my sword tied to my saddlebow, for it is a common proverb that ‘a man is taken for a fool that putteth his trust in a thief’.”

When the thieves heard that, they could not forbear laughing, and they had great desire to see this wrestling betwixt them. Then they withdrew back, and set his horse there by him. Then the noble damsel Ide quickly took the thief, who thought to have borne her to the earth, but she drew him so sore to her, that he could scarce have any breath, and therewith she cast him so rudely to the earth against a stone that he was therewith in a swound, and with the fall his teeth burst in his mouth.

When Ide saw the thief in that danger, she went quickly to her horse and mounted up. Then she drew out her sword and said, “Ah, ye vile thieves, your treason shall not avail you, for ye have all thought violence and treason against me! Go and help your master who lieth yonder. I think he shall ever remember this wrestling between us, and I have now no doubt of you all, though you were a hundred more, for if I can I shall make you all be hanged and strangled.”

Then the quickest and the lightest thief among them stepped forth and took him by the bridle of his horse. And when she saw that, she lifted up her sword, and struck the thief upon the hand, so that the hand flew from his body and hanged still upon her bridle. Then he ran away,
thinking to die with the pain of his hand. And then she dashed in among the thieves, for they had no weapons about them to defend themselves withal, but they were there to their folly, nor they had no fear of that which fell, nor they believed not that such a young squire should have had such hardness and force. Then she fought fiercely among them, and cut off arms and shoulders, and clave\textsuperscript{72} some to the brains. She did so much that she slew five of the thieves before she departed, and when she saw time to depart, she spurred her horse, for by that time the residue of the thieves had gotten weapons, and they followed her to have slain her or her horse. Then she departed with the spurs,\textsuperscript{73} her horse was good, therefore anon\textsuperscript{74} she was far from them. Then the thieves saw they lost but their labours to follow any further. Therefore, they let her go.

When Ide saw that she was escaped their hands, she humbly thanked our Lord God, desiring him to aid and conduct her into some safeguard, and she rode so long that she issued out of the great forest. Of her journeys and lodging I will make no mention, but she sped so\textsuperscript{75} in her journey, that she arrived at the noble city of Rome, and she took up her lodging near to the palace, whereas\textsuperscript{76} the Emperor was devising with his lords of the feats of war. Then Ide went thither, and kneeled down and saluted the Emperor and all his lords. When the Emperor and the Romans that were there saw the goodly young man, who so humbly saluted them, they regarded him much for the beauty that they saw in him.

Then the Emperor said unto him, “Fair son, show me what you be, and from whence you come, that thus cometh hither to me.”

“Sir,” quoth Ide, “I am a squire that came now straight from Almaine, whereas I have served a certain time, and little there I have won, whereof I am sorry; and but lately I was in place where divers Spaniards and others were in company, and they had great desire to make war, and they went to the King of Spain your enemy, but before they had gone far, they that were in my company met with them, and there we fought together and slew the most part of them, and there I was a little hurt. And now, sir, I am come to you to serve your Grace, if my small service may please you, and in the best wise that I can, I shall serve you truly.”

CHAPTER 167

_How the damsel Ide was entertained with\textsuperscript{77} the Emperor of Rome, and how the Lady Olive his daughter was enamoured of Ide, weening\textsuperscript{78} she had been a man; and how the King of Spain came before the city of Rome; and how the noble damsel Ide took the King of Spain in battle, and discomfited\textsuperscript{79} him._

When the Emperor heard Ide speak, he beheld her well, and saw how she was big and great, and thought that in all his life he never saw so fair a young man. And as the Emperor was talking

\textsuperscript{72} clave cleaved.
\textsuperscript{73} with the spurs by spurring her horse.
\textsuperscript{74} anon soon, presently.
\textsuperscript{75} sped so was so successful.
\textsuperscript{76} whereas where.
\textsuperscript{77} entertained with i.e., taken into service by.
\textsuperscript{78} weening believing.
\textsuperscript{79} discomfited defeated in battle; routed, vanquished.
with Ide, there came to them Olive, the Emperor’s daughter. Then all the lords rose up at her coming, and she sat down by her father, and greatly beheld the young squire, and much she praised him in her courage, because of the marvelous great beauty that was in her, weening that she had been a man. This Olive was so fair, so sweet, and so meek, that (for her bounty and humility) she was beloved of every man. Then the Emperor demanded of Ide what her name was, and from whence she came.

“Sir,” quoth she, “my name is Ide, and I was born at Terrascon, and I am kin to Duke Naimes of Bauier, and to Aymerie of Narbonne, and to Gillerme the Scot. But by the kinsmen of Ganelon, I was chased and banished out of my country, and since I have endured much pain and poverty.”

Then the Emperor said, “Friend, thou art of a good kindred. I entertain thee into my court for the bounty that I think to be in thee and also for thy good lineage.”

“Sir,” quoth Ide, “God give me grace that I may do you such service that it may be to your pleasure.”

“Daughter Olive,” quoth the Emperor, “for the love of you, I have entertained this squire to serve you.”

“Father,” quoth Olive, “I thank you, for it seemeth that he is come of a good stock, and I had no servant a great season that better contented me.”

Then the Emperor said unto Ide, “My friend, serve me well. Behold here my daughter, whom I love entirely and to whom I deliver you to serve her. I have no more children but she, and therefore serve her truly, as a man ought to do that is come of such a lineage as you are. If you serve her well and truly, you had never in all your life so good adventure.”

“Sir,” quoth Ide, “I shall do so much that, by the grace of God, you and she shall be well content, and, sir, there is nothing lightly but I can do it to serve a nobleman, and in the war I shall defend myself I trust as well as another, and also I can serve at a table before a king or queen.”

“Friend,” quoth the Emperor, “if you can do thus as you say, you are welcome hither, and you shall fare the better, and I am joyful of your coming to serve me. You shall never have need to go out of my service.”

When Ide heard the Emperor, she humbly thanked him, and thus was Ide entertained with the Emperor, whereas she did so much by her good service that the Emperor and his daughter, and all they of the court, loved and praised her; and the damsel Olive oftentimes gladly regarded Ide, and began in her heart sore to love her, and Ide (who perceived her) prayed our Lord God

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80 Terrascon perhaps, Tarascon (on the Rhone River).
81 Duke Naimes of Bauier Duke Naimon of Bavaria, who features in a number of medieval romances; an advisor to the emperor Charlemagne.
82 Aymerie of Narbonne another figure in medieval romance, inspired by the historical Aymeri I and Aymeri II of Narbonne (a kingdom in what is now southern France).
83 Gillerme the Scot Guillaume (William) of Scotland.
84 Ganelon a family headed by Ganelon, who in the Song of Roland, is a baron of the Franks, and betrays Roland and Charlemagne.
85 a great season i.e., for a long time.
86 adventure fortune.
87 there is nothing lightly but I can do it to serve a nobleman i.e., there is nothing, no not even the smallest thing, that I would not do to serve a nobleman.
88 sore very much.
that he would so deal that she be not accused neither of man nor woman. She gave alms oftentimes to poor men, and she visited gladly the holy church. She demeaned herself in such wise that of every man she was beloved and praised. Oftentimes she prayed to God for King Florence, her father; although she was chased and fled out of her country by his occasion and cause, yet she always prayed to God that she might be agreed with him.

Thus this damsel Ide was in this danger, serving the Emperor and his daughter Olive the space of two months. And on a day she was in the palace with the Emperor, and thither came in great haste a messenger, and came and saluted the Emperor, and said, “Sir, know for truth, that the King of Spain with great puissance is entered into your empire of Rome, and wasteth all before him with fire and sword, and many a Roman he hath slain; and he hath sworn by his law that before a month be passed he will be within your city of Rome with all his puissance; and he sayeth that he will have his pleasure of your daughter, and to make you to die a shameful death, because you have refused to give him your daughter in marriage. Sir, it had been better for you that he had married your daughter than so many men should have been slain, and so many towns burnt and destroyed, and castles beaten down. Sir, go quickly against him, and defend your country, or else you shall see him shortly pitch up his tents and pavilions before this city.”

When the Emperor heard the messenger, he studied a great season, and looked upon Ide, and said, “Friend, counsel me, for I thought full little that these men of war would have come upon me, and now they waste and destroy my land.”

“Sir,” quoth Ide, “trouble not yourself for it. Comfort yourself, and rejoice your lords and servants, and let me have men to fight with them, and I will look upon them before they come any nearer, and by the grace of God I shall cause them to buy dearly the destruction that they have made in your country, if God save my life and my sword hold.”

When the Emperor heard the valiant courage of Ide, he praised her much in his heart, and said, “Friend, your reason pleaseth me well, and therefore I shall do you that honour as to make you a knight, whereby your prowess and hardness shall increase.”

“Sir,” quoth Ide, “of the honour that you will do to me, I am right joyful, and I thank you thereof.”

Then the Emperor came unto Ide, and girt about him a good sword and a rich; it was so good that there was none like it in goodness, neither sharper nor harder; and then the Emperor gave her the neckstroke of knighthood, and said, “Ide, remember this order the which you have received this day, and I pray God that it may be to the increase of your honour, and ever beware that your thoughts be not light nor wavering, but rather sage, discreet, and temperate, and be hardy in battle, and cast away from you all fear, and when you have won any goods or riches,
keep them not locked in your coffers, but distribute them to poor knights, the which shall increase and exalt your honour, and always love the Holy Church. If you do thus, you cannot fail to come to great honour, and ever show your virtue against your enemies.”

“Sir,” quoth Ide, “by the grace of God I shall so do, and there is no Spaniard but that shall wish himself to be on the other side of the sea.”

Then every man arrayed them in the palace and in the city, and then trumpets, drums, and horns began to sound in the city, so that all the chivalry and commonality of the city were ready armed. Then they came all before the palace, and presented themselves to the Emperor, who did command them that day to follow and obey the commandment of Ide, whom he committed that day to do and be as chief captain, and said, “Sirs, look that you do as much for him as you would do for me, and ye know well that I am old and feeble and can bear armour no longer, nor I am not able to ride as I might have done before this time; wherefore I desire you, and also command you all on pain of your lives, to do everything as he commandeth in stead of me, as well as though I did command you in mine own person, for he that doth the contrary, he shall lose his head without any other redemption.”

Then they all said they would so do, since it was his pleasure.

Then the noble Emperor caused Ide to be richly armed, and then delivered him his own horse, who was so good that his like could not be found in any country. Then Ide mounted up quickly with helmet, shield, and a good spear. And Ide took leave of the Emperor and of the Lady Olive, and so rode through the city of Rome with all his host, and when they were without the city, Ide ordained three battles: the two first battles were led by two great lords, and the third Ide did guide. And thus with banners displayed, they advanced forth towards their enemies. The Spaniards thought surely that all had been theirs, because they saw of all the way that they had come no manner of defence made against them. But it is an old saying that ‘Many things remaineth of foolish thoughts,’ as it did with the Spaniards, for they thought surely that the city of Rome was won, but if God aid and succour the damsel Ide and her chivalry, she should take from them ere it were night their hope to have any victory. She rode by her battles and encouraged her men, and moved them to do valiantly, and thus they approached towards their enemies.

Great joy and noise there was when the battles encountered together. The shot flew so thick on both parts that it seemed to be snow and hail. Ide encountered with a knight, nephew to the King of Spain: he received such a stroke that, for all his armour, Ide’s spear went clean through his body, so that the knight fell to the earth with his feet upward, and so died miserably among the horse feet.

Then Ide said, “Of God be thou cursed! In an ill hour thou camest hither to receive such an offering! I challenge from you all the empire of Rome.” Then she said to herself, ‘Good Lord God, I require thee humbly this day to aid and succour me, a poor fugitive.’ Therewith she

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98 virtue the obvious meaning, but also ‘virtu’ (Latin, warrior strength)
99 in stead of in the place of, as standing for.
100 without ... redemption i.e., with no other possible release from punishment; no other expiation or atonement being possible [other than the beheading the Emperor mentions above].
101 battles battle formations; divisions of the army.
102 of during; along.
103 ere before.
spurred her horse, and with the same spear she slew another great baron of Spain, and so slew with the same spear divers others. And when the spear was broken, she drew out her sword, the which the Emperor had given her. Then she came to a notable duke of Spain, uncle to the King, to whom she gave such a stroke with her good sword, that she clave his head to the teeth, and so fell down dead. Then she dashed into the thickest press, and ever did choose out the greatest personages, and slew many of them, for she thought the more that were slain of the great men the more should her enemies be afraid; therefore, she chose out such, one after another. And also the Romans fought valiantly, so that by the high prowess of Ide, and of the good chivalry of the Romans that were with her, they made the Spaniards abashed and caused them to fly away, and had never returned again if the duke of Aragon, with 3,000 knights in his company had not been [present], who made them that fled to return again. Then there began again a fierce battle, and many a man slain. The Romans did valiantly by the aid and comfort of Ide, their captain. She rode into the thickest of the press, and bore down the Spaniards on all sides, that it was pity to see: great was the noise; piteously cried out the hurt men lying among the horse feet, which were beaten down to the earth.

Then the King of Spain came into the battle with his sword in his hand, and encountered with a great lord of Rome, which was cousin to the Emperor. The King gave him such a stroke upon the helmet that he clave his head into the brains; and then the King slew another.

Then Ide (who saw that) was sorrowful, and said, “I ought little to be praised without I revenge the death of these two lords slain by the King of Spain!”

Then she rode to the King, and gave him such a stroke upon the helmet that all the circles with stones and pearls flew down to the earth, and stroke away part of his coif, hair, and skin, and if the King had not turned his head, it had been cloven to the teeth. And the sword glanced and lighted upon his horse’s neck, and struck it clean asunder, and so the horse fell down dead and the King to the earth, whereof the Spaniards were sore abashed, thinking their King had been slain, so they fled away, and left him there lying on the earth in a trance, in such sort that he could neither see, hear, nor speak one word.

Then the damsel Ide took him, and delivered him to two noble lords of the Emperor’s court, and when he revived he was made to swear and promise to be a true prisoner. Those two lords went with the King of Spain into the city of Rome, and presented him unto the Emperor from Ide, whereof the Emperor thanked God that he had sent Ide thither to serve him. Then the King was set in a strong tower, and Ide was without still doing marvels in arms, so that every man was abashed thereof, and the Spaniards made her way. Finally, by the high prowess of the damsel Ide, the King of Spain was taken and all his men discomfited. Happy was he that might escape to save his life; the chase endured long, wherein many were slain and taken.

Then Ide and her company returned to their tents and pavilions, and there they found great riches, the which was brought out of Spain, and was given and distributed to them that had deserved it. Great joy was made in the noble city of Rome, for the battle was well seen over the walls, and especially the Lady Olive had well regarded the high prowess of Ide, whereby she

104 press throng.
105 sore abashed terribly ashamed.
106 without unless.
107 coif scalp.
108 without outside [the walls of the city].
loved her so in her heart that she smiled with joy, and said to herself, ‘To yonder young knight I do give my love, the which I never granted before to any man living, but it is good right and reason that I grant my love to Ide.’ Such like words Olive said to herself.

CHAPTER 168

*How the Emperor of Rome highly received the noble damsel Ide, and of the honour that was made unto her; and how the Emperor made her constable of his empire; and how the King of Spain was delivered out of prison, and made homage unto the Emperor.*

After that the battle was done and finished, and the booty distributed, Ide with great triumph, accompanied with lords and knights, entered into the city of Rome. And the Emperor was informed of the coming of Ide and of her valiant deeds, by whom the victory was obtained, and how that none could endure against her; whereof the Emperor had such joy at his heart that he wist not what to do, and he thanked our Lord God that the matter went so to his honour and glory.

Therewith Ide came to the palace, whereas she was received with great joy with all the colleges of the city, and when the Emperor saw her, he arose and embraced her, and said, “My true friend Ide, of your coming I am right joyful, for this day you have done such honour to our empire that you ought to be honoured forever. And because you have done us such service, we will that you shall be the mirror for all other knights to encourage them to do well. We therefore make you our first chamberlain and high constable of all our Roman Empire, and all my lands and seignories I abandon to be at your commandment in all things that you think reasonable to be done, for I will and command that all my lords do obey you.”

“Sir,” quoth Ide, “of this honour I thank you. God give me grace that I may always persevere to do that thing which shall be to you agreeable and profitable to your countries and seignories.”

Then the Emperor sent for the King of Spain out of prison, and when he was come, he kneeled down and said, “Sir, I require you to have pity of me.”

The Emperor answered fiercely, and said, “King of Spain, for what cause are you come out of your country of Spain, and thus to destroy and waste mine empire? You have slain many of my lords and knights, who never did you any displeasure, and besides that you have burnt many of my towns and beaten down my castles, whereof I am sorry seeing that I nor none of mine did you never any displeasure. And because that all evil ought to be punished, and all good deeds rewarded, before ever I drink any wine, I shall cause your head to be stricken off; for any man’s speaking to the contrary, I shall not fail to do it.”

When the King heard that, he was in great fear, and humbly prayed him to have pity [on]

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109 *constable* the chief officer of the Emperor’s military forces.
110 *wist* knew.
111 *colleges* very generally, perhaps, the various collective bodies that make up the city of Rome (both secular and religious).
112 *seignories* feudal domains, and the authority to possess and govern them.
113 *require* ask, request.
him, and said how he was ready to make amends for all his trespasses, and to repair again all the ill damages done by him, or caused to be done within the empire, and therewith to do homage and fealty unto him, and to hold the realm of Spain of him; promising also, if any war were made against the Emperor, he would come and succour him with 20,000 men at his own proper costs and charges, and to be with him against all men that would trouble him.

Then the Emperor said, “King of Spain, know for truth that for all your promise and words, I will do but little for it, for you shall not escape from me.”

Then the damsel Ide stepped forth, and said to the Emperor, “Sir, I have oftentimes heard say that he that humbleth himself and cryeth for mercy, then reason requireth that he should have mercy granted him. And therefore, sir, I require you to receive this [illegible]ing to your Grace, and pardon his trespass, seeing the offers that he hath offered to do, that he will become your liegeman, and hold his land of you, and amend the damages that you have suffered. He that reason offereth ought to have reason, and you ought to thank God, since such a man as he is putteth himself into your hands.”

When the Emperor understood Ide, he said, “Friend Ide, your wit and courtesy is to be allowed and because I know that the counsel that you give me is reasonable, I will do as you will have me. Take you him, and by you he shall be delivered.”

“Sir,” quoth Ide, “I thank you.”

When the King of Spain saw that he should have grace, and that with amends-making he should be delivered, he thanked God, and did homage to the Emperor, and delivered sufficient pledges to make restitution as he had promised. Then the Emperor gave him a safe conduct until he came into his own country, and all the other prisoners were delivered, such as were taken in the battle by the Romans. Then the King of Spain was joyful, and oftentimes thanked the damsel Ide, by whose means this bounty and courtesy was showed him. Then he took his leave of the Emperor and of Ide, and of all other lords and knights that were there present, and so he returned into his country of Spain, whereas he was received with sore weepings for the great loss that he had received. Now we shall leave speaking of him, and return to our matter.

CHAPTER 169

How the Emperor gave his daughter Olive in marriage to the damsel Ide, knowing none other but that she had been a man, and how she was appeached by a varlet that heard their devises while they were in bed together, whereby the Emperor would have burnt the damsel Ide.

After that the King of Spain was departed from Rome, the Emperor honoured and praised much Ide for the good service that she had done, who ever better and better persevered in good service

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114 to hold ... him i.e., the King of Spain promises to subordinate his crown to the Emperor’s and publicly acknowledge that he has been granted his sovereignty over Spain by the Emperor.

115 request, beseech, beg.

116 liegeman a vassal or subordinate sworn to the service of a superior lord.

117 accused (of a crime); informed against.

118 attendant, servant.

119 plans, discussions.
doing, for she did so much by her wit that all discords and debates that were in the empire between lords or neighbours, she set them in peace and accord, wherefore the Emperor loved her in such wise that without her he did nothing. And the Emperor’s daughter Olive loved her in such wise that she could not live one day without the sight of her, she was so taken with love, thinking that she never saw so goodly a young man.

And so on a day, the Emperor assembled his lords and his Privy Council, to whom he showed, and said, that he had but one daughter, the which as then was of lawful age, wherefore he would that she should be married, to the intent that she might have heirs to enjoy his lands after his decease, and said, “Sirs, I think if all the world should be searched, there could not be found a man so worthy to have my daughter Olive in marriage as our well-beloved constable, the valiant Ide, by whom so noble service hath been done unto us and to our whole empire; for I would before I die that she should be married, and I think I cannot better bestow her, for in all the world there is not a more valiant knight than Ide is, nor that is more worthy to govern an empire or a great realm.”

When the lords understood the Emperor, they all allowed his mind, and counselled him to do the same. Then the good Emperor called to him Ide, and said, “My dear friend, for the great service that you have done, I will reward you as by reason I am bound to do, and I cannot give you a more richer thing nor that I love better than Olive, my dear daughter, whom I will give you in marriage, and I will that you take her to your wife, to the intent that after my days you may govern mine empire; for now I feel myself aged and feeble, wherefore I shall be content, that from hence forth you have the governing thereof, and now I deliver to you my land in keeping, to govern it as your own.”

“Ah sir,” quoth Ide, “what is that you say? You know well that I am but a poor gentleman, banished out of my country, and I am worth nothing. Great damage it should be to so noble a damsel to be assigned to such a poor man as I am. Sir, I cry you mercy, humbly requiring you to take advice, that your daughter (who is so fair) may be married to some high prince and puissant, to the intent that if you should have any business, that he might be of power to aid and succour you, for I am poor, and ought always to travail and to take pains to get honour for me, and to increase my lineage.”

“What,” quoth the Emperor, “are you so hardy as to refuse my daughter, by whom great wealth and goodness may come to you?”

“Sir,” quoth Ide, “since it is so, that it pleaseth you to show me this honour, I will not refuse it; but, sir, I say it to this intent that you should take good advice therein, and seeing you are content that I shall thus do, and that it is your pleasure, I am content, and I humbly thank your Grace of the honour that you bear me.”

Then the Emperor sent for his daughter, who came unto him with a glad heart for she had been advertised of the matter why her father sent for her. And then the Emperor said, “Daughter, you must promise me to do as I shall show you.”

“Dear father,” quoth she, “it is not in me, nor I will not refuse anything that is your pleasure.”

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120 *allowed his mind* approved or sanctioned his idea.
121 *travail* labour, work.
122 *hardy* presumptuously bold or rash.
123 *advertised of* made aware of, informed of.
“Daughter,” quoth the Emperor, “you do well so to answer me, and because I have no more but you that ought to have my realm after me, therefore I will that you take a husband to the intent that your lands and signories may be defended by him, and therefore, I will that you take to your husband our captain, the valiant Ide, whom I love entirely. This is my pleasure and agreement of all my lords. If it be your pleasure to have him, he shall be king and you queen after my decease.”

“Sir,” quoth the lady, “I am ready to fulfill your pleasure and to obey your commandments, and I thank God of this fair adventure that is fallen to me this day, for I shall have him that I love best. I have not now lost my time, when I shall have at my will him whom I love best in all the world.”

Then she kneeled down before her father, and thanked him of his gift. And then she rose and kissed her father, and said, “Right dear father, I require you to hasten that this may be done. Let us go to the church to be wedded, for methinks we ought so to do.”

When the lords heard the lady, they laughed at her haste. And then the Emperor said, “Daughter, come forth and fiancé your husband, and you, Ide, approach near. And now after my death I give you all mine empire, and I give you my dear daughter in recompense of the good service that you have done me.”

When Ide understood the Emperor, all her blood changed, and she wist not what to do. All her body trembled for fear, and she called upon our Lord God right piteously to herself, and prayed him to have pity of her, and to counsel her what was best for her to do, for she saw that perforce the Emperor would marry her to his daughter, and said, ‘Ah, my father Florence, by you and by your disordinate rage I am now brought to this case, when you made me to depart because you would have had me to your wife, but before I would have consented thereto, I had rather to have been burnt. Therefore, I fled away to eschew that shame, whereby I have been since in many perils, from the which by the will of God I have escaped, whereof I ought to thank him; and I thought to keep myself within Rome secret, and that no man should know that I am a woman. But I shall be accused by the Emperor’s daughter, whose love is so much set on me that I have no power to escape without I steal away privily from them all. And if I show them what I am, I may then have some villainy and be accused, and sent unto the King my father, or else to send him word where I am, and then in great haste he will send for me, or else if I will escape, I must fly away over the sea. Howbeit, I speak but like a fool: seeing this fortune is fallen unto me, to have the Emperor’s daughter in marriage and his empire, I will wed her, and do as God will give me grace to do.’ All this the damsel Ide spoke to herself.

Then she said to the Emperor, “Sir, since it is your pleasure to give me your daughter in marriage, I am ready to take her.”

Then they were led to the minster-church, and there they were fianced, whereof great joy was made in Rome. Then the day of marriage came, and the fair Olive was led to the church between two kings, and Ide went afore very sadly, and so came to the church, and there they

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124 fiancé  be betrothed to.
125 wist    knew.
126 perforce by force or compulsion.
127 have some villainy experience some degrading or shameful treatment/punishment.
128 minster-church the cathedral.
129 sadly   soberly, gravely, seriously.
were wedded. Then great was the triumph and joy in the city of Rome; many a rich garment of
gold and silk was worn that day, and every man ran to see the new brides. Then they went to
the palace and so to dinner. Of the feasts, sports, and rich meats that were there that day, if I
should show it, the time would be over-long to rehearse it, but since Rome was first founded, it
was not known that there had been such a feast as this wedding, for nobody thought but that Ide
had been a man.

And after supper, when it was time to go to rest, the brides were brought into their
chamber. Then the Lady Olive went to her bed; then came Ide, and the chamber avoided, and
she locked fast the door to the intent that none should hear them.

Then she came to bed, and laid her down on the bedside, and said to Olive, “My right
sweet love, God give you good night, for as for me I can give you no good, because I feel such a
disease, the which grieveth me sore.”

And therewith she kissed Olive, who answered and said, “My sweet lover, you are the
thing in the world that I most desire, for the bounty and sweetnes that I know in you.
Then do with me as it shall please you, and to the intent that you shall not think that I have so great desire
that you should do the thing which of right ought to be done between man and wife, I am content
to forebear it fifteen days; and because that divers folks are here about to hear us, I am content to
give you truce, for we shall have time enough hereafter to sport us, and I know such nobleness
in you that I am sure you will take none other wife, nor touch none other, but that you will keep
your faith and truth to me, for I am chaste and so shall you find me. It sufficeth me to kiss you,
and as for the privy love I am content for this time (since it is your pleasure) to forebear it.”

Then Ide answered, “Fair lady, I will not refuse your will.”

Thus they passed that night with clipping and kissing. Then in the morning they arose
and made them ready, and came into the palace. The Emperor beheld Olive his daughter, to see if
she were anything changed, and said, “Daughter, how is it with your new husband?”

“Sir,” quoth she, “even as I desire, for I love Ide my husband better than I love you,
although you are my father.” At that word the Emperor and all his lords laughed.

So great joy and feasting was there made that it endured eight days. Then every man took
leave and went whither as they listed, and after the fifteen days were expired that Ide had lain
with Olive, Ide touched her not but with kissing, whereof Olive was sorrowful, and said to
herself, “O good Lord, I was engendered in an evil hour! When I have married with the goodliest
person of the world, and the most worthy and hardy that ever was girt with a sword, or rode on
horse, he maketh no semblance to do that thing which I have so sore desired.”

Then she drew near to Ide and touched her, and Ide (who knew well what her desire was)
turned toward her, and would hide himself no longer from her, but all weeping cried her mercy,
and showed her from the beginning to the ending the manner of all her adventure, and how that she was a woman, and was fled away because her father would have married her himself.

And when Olive understood Ide, she was right sorrowful, howbeit she comforted Ide, and said, “My right sweet lover, discomfort not yourself, for you shall not be accused by me neither to no man nor woman living. We are wedded together, and I will be good and true to you, since you have kept yourself so truly. With you I will use my time and pass my destiny since it is thus, for I see well that it is the pleasure of our Lord God.”

Thus as Olive and Ide were devising together of their secrets, a page—being in a chamber that joined close to their chamber—heard well all their secret words and communication, what each of them had said to the other. Then he in all haste went to the Emperor, and showed him all that he had heard between the two lovers.

When the Emperor heard that, he was right sorrowful, and said, “Fellow, beware what thou sayest! Look that thy report be true, for if I find it contrary, thou shalt die an ill death.”

“Sir, if it be not as I have said, and that Ide be not a woman whom you take for a man, strike off my head.”

Then the Emperor made him to be taken and kept, to the intent to prove the truth, for he thought that matter strange to believe. Then he called to him the lords of his Privy Council, and he showed them the matter, whereof they had much marvel, seeing the great virtue and high prowess that was in Ide, and they greatly complained of the matter and were sorrowful.

Then the Emperor (who was right pensive) swore and made promise that if he found the matter in that case, he would cause both his daughter and Ide to be burnt, because of hiding of that strange case, and said, “If Ide had discovered the matter to me betimes, 139 my daughter should never have married her; and the matter now kept close from me, I shall never have joy at my heart until I know the truth.”

Then he commanded a bath to be made ready in his own chamber, wherein he would have Ide to be bathed, to the intent that he might know the truth before she escaped away, for he said that he would not suffer no such falsehood to be used. The bathing was made ready, and Ide was sent for, who knew nothing of that matter.

Then the Emperor said to her, “Ide, doff140 your clothes, for you shall bathe you with me.”

When Ide heard the Emperor, she was sore abashed, and said, “Sir, I pray you to forbear it for this time, because I have not been accustomed to be bathed.”

Then the Emperor said, “I will not forbear it, because I will see you naked. For if I find that true which hath been showed me, both you and my daughter shall be burnt.”

When Ide heard that, she saw that she was betrayed and lost. Then she kneeled down before the Emperor and cried him mercy, and required him to have pity of her, and the Emperor in great haste sent for his lords, who were in the hall talking together, and were sorrowful for Ide whom they loved entirely. So they came to the Emperor, and found Ide before him on her knees sore weeping, in such sort that for pity of her they wept all. Then the Emperor showed them all the deed, “Wherefore ye must needs see justice to be done upon Ide,” who then by the peers and lords of Rome was judged to be burnt.

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139 betimes earlier.
140 doff take off, remove.
Then it was commanded, the fire to be made ready to burn her, the which was done, and Ide, before the Emperor abiding her judgement, with her hands joined lifted up towards Heaven, making pitiful prayers to our Lord God, and to the Holy Ghost, praying them to have pity of her soul, and to receive it into the holy paradise, for she saw well that the end of her life was come.

CHAPTER 170

How our Lord God made great miracles for Ide, for God made her to change from the nature of a woman and to become a perfect man, whereof the Emperor and his daughter Olive had great joy; and so Ide and Olive lay together and engendered a fair son named after Croissant; and of the death of the Emperor.

The same hour that Ide was in her prayers, there appeared suddenly in the chamber a great clear light, and therewith a marvellous sweet odour that it seemed all the chamber to be full of essence and spices aromatic. Then presently after, they heard an angel-like voice sent from our Lord God, and [it] said, “Thou Emperor of Rome, our Lord God commandeth thee by me that thou be not so hardy as to touch Ide, to do her any hurt, for our Lord God hath given her the grace for the goodness that is in her. He doth consent and will by his divine puissance that she be changed in nature and to become a perfect man, as all other be without any difference. And also God commandeth that the page whom thou hast in prison, that thou setteth him at liberty, for the which he showed thee was of truth: this morning Ide was a woman, but now she is a man. Also God commandeth thee to make thyself ready, for thou shalt live here in the world but eight days longer. Therefore, from hence forth let Ide and Olive thy daughter have the governing of thy empire, who before this year be passed shall have between them a son, who shall be named Croissant, who shall do marvels when he cometh to age. Many adventures and poverties he shall suffer in his youth, but afterward he shall have joy and wealth enough.” And with those words the angel vanished away, and left the Emperor and his Lords and all the people of Rome in great joy, for the evident miracle that our Lord God had sent by the prayer of Ide, who with Olive his wife had great joy, and thanked our Lord God.

Then the feast and triumph began again at Rome, that day passed and the night came, and Ide and Olive went to bed together, and took their sport in such wise that the same night was gotten and engendered the fair Croissant, whereby the joy doubled in the city of Rome, and the next day Ide came to the palace with other lords. And the Emperor was in his chamber making of his testament, for he had not forgotten the words of the angel, so he lived eight days longer, and on the ninth day he died, and he was borne into the great Church of Saint Peter, where his obsequy was done solemnly, and laid in his tomb, the which was ordained for him as it appertained. His son-in-law and his daughter mourned, according to the custom then used, and then after eight days were passed, all the noble lords of the country came to the court, and

141 Holy Ghost the third person of the Trinity, along with God the Father, and God the Son (Jesus Christ).
142 essence incense.
143 hardy foolhardy, stupidly rash.
144 puissance power.
145 testament will.
crowned Ide emperor and Olive his wife empress. Great joy and feasting was made at their coronation.

And when Olive the empress approached her time, she was delivered of a fair son, and when he was christened, he was named Croissant, that is to say ‘growing,’ because the moon the same time was increasing. Of the cheer that Ide and his lords made at the birth of his child need not to be rehearsed, for you may well think it was as great as ever was any before. Then the time came that the Empress was churched, whereof great joy was made. This child was well nourished, and two notable ladies had the keeping of him until he was seven years of age. Then a noble knight and an ancient was set about him, and a wise and a great clerk to teach him cunning, for commonly it is said that ‘a king without learning or cunning is compared to an ass crowned.’ Oftentimes the father and the mother would visit their child. He was kept to school until he was fifteen years of age, and he was so good a clerk, that there was none in the city of Rome, but that he could well dispute with him and assoil his questions. Of his beauty, greatness, force, humility, and good virtues wherewith he was endued, if I should describe them, it would be over-long to rehearse, whereof Ide and his mother Olive had such joy that they wist not what to do, but only to thank God of his grace; for their child grew so in bigness and strength that every man was thereof abashed, in such wise, that at that time there could not be found in the city of Rome of his age none so great, nor so high of stature, whereof his father, and his mother, and all the noble lords, and knights were right joyful.

CHAPTER 171

*How King Florence sent two knights to Rome to the Emperor, his son, desiring him to come and see him, and leave the empire of Rome to his son, Croissant, and to set noble men about him to guide him; and also to bring with him the Empress, the fair Olive.*

The Emperor and the Empress seeing their son to grow and amend every day in all good works, they thanked God, praying him to give him the grace from better to better to persevere. So it fell that upon a Whitsunday the Emperor and the Empress held estate royal at their palace for the solemnity of that day, and there was many kings, dukes, earls, barons, duchesses, and ladies.

And while they were in the midst of their dinners, there arrived two notable, ancient

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146 *churched* the ceremony of purification and thanksgiving after childbirth.
147 *until he was seven years of age* the age at which a boy in Renaissance England would be ‘breeched’ (i.e., he would be dressed in male clothing, including a pair of breeches), signaling his entry into male adulthood; he would often be removed from the care of his mother and her women, and sent to school at this age.
148 *a noble knight and an ancient* a noble and elderly knight (one very experienced).
149 *clerk* scholar.
150 Proverbial, Tilley K69.
151 *assoil* answer.
152 *wist* knew.
153 *that every man was thereof abashed* i.e., in comparison with the boy’s perfections, every man felt embarrassed by his own relative shortcomings.
154 *Whitsunday* i.e., Whit Sunday or Pentecost, the seventh Sunday after Easter, a feast to celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles.
knights; and when they were entered into the palace, they came before the Emperor, and kneeled down, and said, “God that created us, save and keep the noble King Florence of Aragon, and of Navarre, and Duke of Bourdeaux! And the same God save the right noble and excellent Emperor of Rome, his dear son, and his fair daughter, the Empress Olive!”

When the Emperor Ide heard speaking of his father, he was fearful in his heart, because of the shameful thing not faileable,\(^\text{155}\) the which he would have done against him. Right intentively\(^\text{156}\) he beheld the two knights, and demanded how the King his father did ever since he departed from him.

Then one of the knights answered, and said, “Right dear sir, if the dolour, displeasure, and the great rage wherein your father was for your departing, if I should show it, too long it would be to rehearse. But shortly I shall show you the substance of the matter. The same morning after your departing, tidings was brought to the King, your father, how that the King of Navarre, your uncle, was come to see him. Then your father went and met him, and brought him into the city of Courtois with great joy and mirth, and they alighted at the palace, and there tidings was brought to the King, your father, how you were fled away, whereby such sorrow, dolour, and displeasure took him at the heart that there was none that durst look him in the face, for he looked like a spirit, because of the foolish love that he had on you. And he ran about in the palace like a desperate man, so that for fear of him there was neither lady nor damsel that durst abide him, for the great fury and displeasure that he was in. So that by reason of his great ire, he fell into a grievous malady, wherein he thought that he shoul have died, and so was confessed\(^\text{157}\) and made ready to receive the Holy Ghost. Then the King of Navarre, and Sorbarre, and divers other princes came to visit him, and desired him to put the folly out of his mind, and to cry to God for mercy. Many notable doctors\(^\text{158}\) were there, and they showed him many good reasons and examples, and said, without\(^\text{159}\) he would leave and forsake his folly, he should be condemned body and soul.

“When the King, your father, saw himself in that doubt,\(^\text{160}\) and knowing that he had done ill to cause you to fly away, and that no tidings could be heard of you, such a contrition and repentance took him that great abundance of drops fell from his eyes, in such sort that all his face was wet; and he had such dolour\(^\text{161}\) and grief in himself that every man that saw him wept for pity; and the King of Navarre had so great pity of him, that he was so sorrowful that a grievous sickness took him, so that the fourth day he died, whereof the King, your father, was right sorrowful. At last his sickness determined,\(^\text{162}\) and he was recovered, and in good health a certain space, but by reason of the dolour that he had for you, could not be ceased, but he fell again sore sick, and so he continueth, and hath no power to aid and relieve himself, but he eateth and drinketh enough.

“And after now of late it hath been showed him all your life, and how by the grace of God

\(^{155}\) faileable not in OED.

\(^{156}\) intentively attentively, intensely.

\(^{157}\) confessed he received the Catholic sacrament of confession, to prepare his soul to meet God.

\(^{158}\) doctors i.e., doctors of divinity; theologians; ministers.

\(^{159}\) without unless.

\(^{160}\) doubt precarious situation.

\(^{161}\) dolour mental suffering, distress.

\(^{162}\) determined ended.
it is fallen to you, whereby such joy is come to his heart, that there was never so much joy in no man’s heart, and yet he sayeth that he shall never have perfect joy at his heart until he may see you. And therefore he hath sent us hither to you, and he desireth and commandeth, as much as the father can command his child, that both you and the Empress your wife, should leave this your country in the guiding of your son, and to leave notable persons about him to keep and conduct him, for it shall be to you more profitable and better to use your life in peace in the realms of Aragon and Navarre, with the duchy of Bourdeaux the which to you appertaineth by just inheritance; and he hath given us in charge not to depart from hence until you have showed us your will, to the intent that we may bring him some good news."

CHAPTER 172

How the Emperor Ide and the Empress Olive gave good instructions to their son, when they departed from Rome and how they arrived at Courtois, and came to Florence, who with great joy received them as his children.

When the Emperor Ide had heard this knight report these news of the King, his father, the water fell from his eyes for pity and joy that he had, and answered, and said, “Sirs, I will that ye know well that of your coming and good news I am right joyful, but I am sorry for the great sickness that my father is in, wherefore to recomfort him and to make him joyful, I will that you return to him and say how that I humbly recommend me to his good Grace, and that at midsummer next I and my wife will be with him.”

The messengers hearing that answer were right joyful. Then after dinner they took their leave of the Emperor and of the Empress, who gave them many rich gifts for the honour of King Florence, their father, and so the messengers departed. When the Empress Olive understood the will of her lord, she was right sorrowful for to leave her country, whereas she was born and nourished, and especially to leave her son Croissant whom she loved. But since it was the pleasure of her lord so to do, she contented herself, for she loved her husband so well that she would in no wise say against his pleasure, nor let163 him to do his will. Right sorrowful were the princes and lords of that country, and all the people of Rome, but in the best wise that they could comfort themselves, because of the young Prince Croissant, who should tarry and abide with them, and whom the Emperor delivered unto them to be kept.

And then he spoke to his son, and showed him many notable examples and reasons: he commanded him to be gentle and courteous to his lords and people, and that he should not be light of credence,164 and that in any wise165 he should not listen with his ears to hear flatterers, nor the filth that cometh from them that will lie and flatter to please him withal, to the intent to come to their intention, whereby many a prince hath been destroyed and brought to Hell, and whereby they and their lords also for believing of them have been damned perpetually.

“Son, look thou be served with gentlemen, such as are come of them that have been of good renown. Love the Holy Church; give alms to the poor for the love of Jesus Christ; let thy

\[163\] _let_ hinder, prevent.
\[164\] _light of credence_ easily convinced [of something].
\[165\] _in any wise_ in any case or circumstance.
chest be open to thy good knights; beware thou be no niggard, and beware thou be not overcome with wine; lead an honest life; haunt and keep company with the ancient noblemen, and praise them if they be worthy; fly flatterers and mockers, and beware thereof thyself, for thou canst not do worse, because it will abate thine honour.” Thus the Emperor Ide said to his son Croissant, and showed him many notable sayings and fair instructions.

Then he called his lords, and said, “Sirs, the most part of you know my will, the which is that I and my wife will go into Aragon to the King, my father. Therefore, I desire you all and command you that ye will have my son as recommended to you. I have left him great treasure to the intent that if any war or any other business fall to him, that he shall have riches sufficient to withstand them that would do him or his country any damage, and also the realm of Aragon is not so far from hence but that anon I may have news from him.”

When the lords understood the Emperor, and how he had taken on him this voyage, they knew well they could not let nor stop him of his pleasure. Then they all answered in general, and said that ‘as near as they could, they would accomplish his commandment, and to serve truly his son Croissant, and to aid, keep, and defend his country against all men that would annoy him.’

“Sirs,” quoth the Emperor, “I thank you.”

Thus after the Emperor had spoken with his son and with his lords, and showed them his will and pleasure, he made ready for his journey, and took with him a certain number of knights to accompany him and the Empress, his wife, and he furnished two great ships, and caused them to be charged with victual and artillery, as it appertained for the defence of their bodies and lives, and took with him great riches, apparel, and jewels. Then he took his leave of the Pope, of all his lords, and of all them of the city, who made great sorrow for their departing. Then they entered into the river of Tiber, accompanied with about five hundred knights; at their departing they took leave of their son Croissant, and kissed him oftentimes. When the Empress saw her son, whom she must depart from, she began to weep, but the Emperor comforted her as much as he could. Then they took their ships and so departed, and so long sailed in the river of Tiber, that they came into the high sea, whereas they sailed night and day with good wind, that without danger they arrived at the city of Courtois, whereas they were received with great joy, and so they came to the palace, whereas they found King Florence lying on a couch, who when he was advertised of their coming, he had great joy. Then the Emperor and the Empress entered into the palace, and came whereas the King lay; then they both kneeled down before him.

And when the King saw them, he had such joy that he could speak no word, but made a token that they should approach near to him, and so they did, and he embraced and kissed them oftentimes, and when he might speak, he said, “My right dear children, of your coming I am right joyful, and of the grace that God hath sent to you.” Then again oftentimes he kissed the Empress Olive, and said, how she was welcome into the realm of Aragon.

Of the great joy, feasting, gifts, and presents that were given and done at their welcoming, if I should show it at length, it would be over-long to rehearse, and therefore I pass it over. Now let us leave speaking of the King, and of the Emperor and the Empress his wife, who took such pleasure to abide with King Florence that never after they returned to Rome, but they reigned

166 niggard miser, penny-pincher.
167 annoy trouble, harm.
168 advertised notified, made aware.
together all their lives in good peace and love, and they had no child but Croissant, whom they had left at Rome, and of whom we shall speak now hereafter.