



The Château Gaillard

BY THOMAS A. JANVIER

CHIVALRY being what it then was, and lions being what they still are, it is not too much to say that Richard Cœur de Lion—the builder of the Château Gaillard—was a chivalrous prince whose by-name fitted him to a hair.

On the whole, that is temperate praise. Primitively, chivalrous meant the better manners of a man who could—as compared with those of a man who could not—afford to own a horse. By the middle of the twelfth century, when (1157) Richard was born, the horse-owning class had evolved a code that may be described as ferocity partially restrained by etiquette. It was a great improvement on the unrestrained ferocity that had preceded it; but it still left on the side of humanity—not to mention the side of ordinary decency—a good deal to be desired. Within its not severely defined limits there was room for hate and for passion to have full swing. A chivalrous king could—as one of the kings who lorded it in the Château Gaillard did—have chivalrous gentlemen who had annoyed him skinned alive; and Richard himself, in a truly lion-hearted way, one day threw three inoffensive French prisoners—who had nothing in the world to do with his momentary worry—from off the height on which stands his gaillard castle to be mashed to a jelly on the rocks three hundred feet below. He was not quite within the code when he did that; but, no doubt, it was a relief to his mind.

Consideration of these facts is necessary to a proper understanding of medieval conditions: because chivalry nowadays has nothing to do with horse-owning, and in the course of the past half-dozen centuries a very great deal has been added to the scope of the word—with the result that we now read into the phrase “the age of chivalry” a meaning that Richard Cœur de Lion, and the others who flourished in that age, would have regarded as weakly sentimental and ridiculously overrefined.

“The devil is loose—take care of yourselves!” was the breezily concise announcement and warning sent by the Emperor Henry VI. to King Philip of France and to Prince John of England when Richard, being ransomed, was set free (1194) from his Austrian prison to go upon his swash-buckling way. The characterization—as may be inferred from what I have written above—was accurate. The warning, certainly, was necessary; and Philip especially took it to heart because he very well knew that the loosed devil of a Richard—who sometimes disappointed his friends, but who never disappointed his enemies—presently would be settling with him a long-standing account.

In a small way, that account had begun to run while the two kings were off crusading together; and had snarled and snapped at each other—greatly to the edi-

fication and satisfaction of the Infidels—instead of carrying on unitedly the Holy War. In a large way, it had been increased beyond all endurance by Philip's invasion of Normandy while Duke Leopold of Austria held Richard a prisoner—settling the score of the standard cast into the ditch before Ptolemaïs—in the castle that the picturesque Blondel searched for and found.

It was the Norman matter that gave Philip uneasiness. His invasion of the Duchy had gone smoothly: because the Normans held that no change of kings could make things worse for them, and that there even was an off chance for improvement under French rule—when they would be well rid, at least, of their Angevin overlord, who fleeced them clean with taxes and whose tax-collectors were Brabançon mercenaries commanded by a swaggering Gascon. Regarding the situation thus philosophically, they had put up no fight worth mentioning and Philip had had matters much his own way.

Richard himself was a bit of a philosopher—at least, on occasion, he could reason with philosophic acuteness—and he also was a military genius. He perceived that such loyalty to him as ever had existed in Normandy was dead, and that treason and invasion were ready at any moment to lock hands: whence he concluded that to hold his Duchy—against foes within ready to unite with foes without—he must create a great strategic fortress that at once would dominate and defy.

Acting on this conviction—and it was some such action that Philip had been nervous about—he set himself to the building at the most exposed point on his frontier of his Château Gaillard, his Cheeky Castle: that equally was intended to be a standing threat to his own subjects and a standing defiance to the French king.

Twenty miles or so southeastward of Rouen—almost twice as far by the windings of the river—the Seine makes a great horseshoe curve to the northward that carries deep into the land of Normandy the land of France. Throughout almost the whole of that long curve the high table-land of Le Vexin rises above the right bank: its projecting points, undercut by the river, forming a series of green-bordered white chalk-cliffs—like the chalk-cliffs of the English Channel—which rise from two to three hundred feet above the stream. Between the outstanding points are many chines worn by rivulets from the table-land; and at the centre of the curve is a wide valley, flanked by high promontories, through which the little

river Gambon flows into the Seine. On the left bank, the loop made by the river encloses a great alluvial plain—known as the Peninsula of Bernières—on which are a few villages and many scattered farms. Over that plain an army could march—and has marched—very easily; and an army once across it, and across the narrow river, would be

within easy striking distance of Rouen, the Norman capital.

It was at the deepest inset of the river's curve—where his enemy came closest to him—that Richard built his defiant castle: at the extremity of the narrow promontory of rock, three hundred feet high, outstanding between the valley of the Gambon and the valley of the Seine. The site is an ideal one for a medieval fortress. Westward, at a little distance back from the Seine, the rock rises in an almost sheer cliff. Northward and eastward the angle of ascent is less than forty-five degrees. To the southward, the weak side, the narrow promontory mounts by an easy slope to the table-land—that overtops the keep of the castle at a thousand yards away. From that height, even weak cannon could knock the whole place



SEAL OF RICHARD COEUR DE LION

to pieces—but cannon were an unknown fighting quantity when the Château Gaillard was planned.

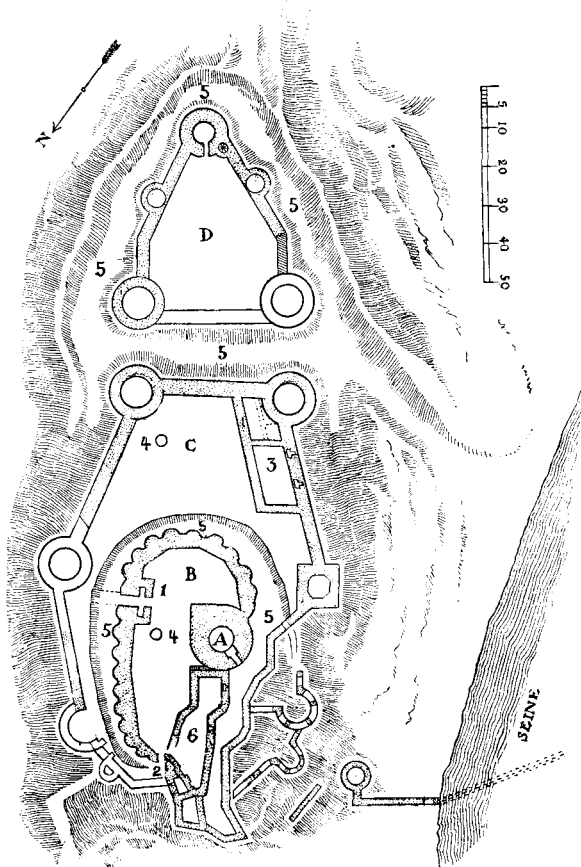
Ethical and practical difficulties stood in the way of Richard's castle building. By the treaty of Issoudun (1195) he was

interdict was in force, and the engineering work was going on in spite of it, there fell a rain of blood that generally was accepted as a visible sign of the wrath of God. But treaty-breaking and interdicts and the wrath of God were all

in the day's work for Richard — who went ahead in his usual whirlwind way: establishing a base by erecting a tough little tower on one of the Seine islands facing the Gambon valley, and by building in the mouth of the valley the walled town of Petit Andely—as it was called to distinguish it from the town of Andely (now Grand Andely) a half-mile or so up the valley in a nook among the hills.

The Archbishop—perceiving, I suppose, that such a devil of a king was not to be trifled with—presently came to terms. A charter was executed by which the land that Richard wanted was conveyed to him; and by the time that he had well started his preliminary building and fortifying and was ready to begin his main work the site that he wanted was his own.

In the planning of his castle Richard was his own engineer; and all the experts, headed by Monsieur Viollet-le-Duc, are agreed that he



PLAN OF THE CHATEAU GAILLARD

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|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|------------|
| A. Donjon | B. Citadel | C. Outer Court | D. Outwork |
| 1. Gate and Drawbridge | 2. Sally-port | 3. Chapel | 4. Well |
| 5. Dry fosse | 6. Governor's Quarters | | |

pledged not to fortify the Gambon valley; and he was expressly forbidden to fortify it by Archbishop Gaultier of Rouen, to whom the territory belonged. Richard was not a person to bother over such details. Philip challenged his treaty-breaking; Gaultier met his trespass with an interdict—that closed the churches and that put a stop to all religious rites (save that of baptism) including the rites of marriage and of burial; and while the

was a very great engineer. His main work, overtopping the precipitous end of the promontory, was in three parts: a donjon, an enclosing citadel rising from a deep and wide dry fosse; an outer court (about 400×225 feet) enclosed by towered ramparts rising from a second deep and wide dry fosse, that cut off the end of the promontory and made it in a way an island. Beyond the second fosse, extending up the slope, was an out-



THE TOWN FROM THE CASTLE

work—a great triangle (about 200 feet from base to apex) of towered ramparts protected by a third fosse which again severed the promontory. The accompanying plan—based upon the plan drawn by Monsieur Deville, and upon the plan drawn (in part conjecturally) by Monsieur Viollet-

le-Duc—shows this system of defences more clearly than it can be described in words. Between the main work and the outwork the communication, seemingly, was by a wooden bridge that could be destroyed quickly if the outwork were carried. There are no traces of a permanent

way. Below the cliff on which the fortress stands are remains of outworks covering a passage to the river—reached from above by a stairway and a tunnel cut in



SALLY-PORT FROM THE CITADEL

SALLY-PORT FROM THE CITADEL

the rock. Across the river, or across a part of it, extended a barring line of piles.

Richard was his own master-workman as well as his own engineer. Guillaume le Breton tells that he was among the laborers constantly—driving them in his

own dashing devil way, and even working with them with his own hands: so fiercely eager was he to hurry to a finish his defiance of his brother king. Actually, he made a record in castle-building that still holds. The Château Gaillard was built (1197-1198) within a twelvemonth; and in his delight over his accomplished stone miracle of haste the King cried out joyfully: "*Qu'elle est belle, ma fille d'un an!*"—"How beautiful is she, my daughter of a year!"

In his own epigrammatic fashion Richard also gave his castle its name. "*C'est un château gaillard!*" he said of it when it was finished—and the phrase fitted so nicely with the facts that it stuck fast. Devil-may-care, impudent, jaunty, gayly defiant, saucy, cheeky, were the characteristics of that castle set upon the edge of Normandy under the nose of the King of France—and all of those meanings, and several more, are in the word *gaillard*. Cheeky Castle, to my mind, comes closest to the spirit of Richard's phrase; but Saucy Castle is the usual rendering—influenced, no doubt, by the fact that sauciness is a not displeasing girlish quality and therefore is in harmony with the King's prettily turned designation of his work as his beautiful daughter of a year.

In Richard's own time, and in the time of John his successor, Château Gaillard was not the name by which the castle was known officially. In the Acts of those kings it is styled "*le nouveau château de la roche*," "*le beau château de la roche*," or simply "*la roche d'Andeli*." Not until the year 1261, when Saint Louis dated an Act "*in castro nostro gaillard*," is there a known record of the serious use of Richard's gay soubriquet. But the contemporary chroniclers—Guillaume le Breton, Gautier de Gisebourne, and the rest—all reflected the popular usage by writing Château Gaillard from the very start. I am very much obliged to them. Had they not fixed in their records Richard's happy christening of his beautiful saucy daughter the delightful name very well might have been lost.

As was only natural, Philip was in a proper rage over the building of this impudently defiant castle. Being himself a king accustomed to carry through his undertakings with a lively energy, and being touched with the braggart customs



THE CASTLE FROM THE TOWN

of his times, he said his say about it shortly. "I would take it," he declared, "were its walls of iron!" To which Richard replied tersely: "I would hold it were its walls of butter." Philip, in a way, won out on his boast. He did take Château Gaillard—but, discreetly, he did not begin his famous siege of it until the body of its builder, in scattered sections, was safely underground.

Only a few months after his gaillard castle was finished, while trying to commit a burglary, Richard Cœur de Lion was shot by a policeman—and so came to an appropriate end. This is a critically and etymologically accurate statement of fact. Britton, who was of Richard's time, defines a "burgessour" as one who "feloniously, in time of peace, breaks into churches or other buildings, or through the walls or gates of our cities or towns"; a policeman, broadly, is a civic guard; and it was while feloniously trying in time of peace to break into a town that Richard was killed by a bowman, a civic guard, on the town wall.

The whole performance was characteristic of Richard and of his time. For the war that he was bent upon waging against Philip he needed money: and the news came to him, opportunely, that a great treasure—the golden effigies of twelve knights seated around a golden table was the story—had been found by the Lord of Chaluz, his vassal, in a subterranean chamber in the fields of the Limousin. Treasure-trove, by the common law, belonged to the King—and Richard went down into the Limousin (1199) with all promptness to claim his vassal's findings. The Lord of Chaluz seems to have taken the civil-law view of the matter. Certainly, he shut fast his gates and refused to recognize his sovereign's claim. Richard pressed the siege and raged like the heathen that he was: swearing that when Chaluz fell he would hang everybody—man and woman, the very child at the breast! Then came the bow-shot from the wall—and that properly styled lion-hearted king ceased to be a dangerous beast of prey. Fate has its equities as well as its ironies. In Richard's ending there was a touch of both.

Following upon the accession of King John came Philip's opportunity to clear

all northern France from English rule; and he accomplished that large contract in statesmanship virtually at a single blow—the mastering blow that he struck against the Château Gaillard.

It was the murder by John of his nephew Arthur of Brittany (1203) that brought things to a crisis. Philip—who could not have been trusted around a corner with a nephew of his own—sentenced John to forfeiture; and followed up his sentence by invading Normandy and laying siege to the castle that he had declared he would take were its walls of iron. What would have happened had Richard been alive to back his boast about the walls of butter can be only guess-work. What did happen—at the end of a great siege, lasting for more than a year, which John vainly tried to break, and during which horrors went on too desperate to be told of here—was the castle's fall; and its fall in so mean a way that its builder well might have risen in furious anger from his several graves.

Richard probably was not a regular church-goer—for the seven years preceding his death he abstained from confession because he desired to hold fast to his hatred of Philip, and he died blasphemously mocking the priests who sought to minister to him—and in building the Château Gaillard he either had omitted a chapel altogether or had been content with one that did not satisfy John's nicer sense of religious propriety. To set the matter right, John built a very large chapel in the southwest angle of the main work; and—most characteristically—placed a substructure beneath it (according to one chronicler) or a smaller building directly beside it (according to another) that was intended for uses as far as possible removed from sacerdotal and that was the least entitled to respect of all the edifices within the château; and he committed the military error—of which Richard, assuredly, never would have been guilty—of piercing an opening, big enough for a foeman to enter by, from that building to the fosse through the castle's outer wall.

As though to complete the indignity of the fall of the strongest fortress in Normandy, the name (presumably the nickname) of the foeman who did enter, to the castle's undoing, by that ignoble passage

Walter Dillman Clark



SUNSET AND MOONRISE



THE DONJON

is given by Guillaume le Breton as "Snubby"!—Bogis, in the French of the time. But Snubby, a Gascon esquire, was a valorous gentleman who accomplished at the imminent risk of his life a very gallant deed. Prowling by night beneath the walls of the castle, he found the opening and perceived its possibilities. Four men as brave as himself joined with him in his adventure. In the darkness, climbing on their shoulders, he made his entry; and with a rope pulled them up after him. Together the five made their way into the crypt of the chapel: where—banging with their sword-hilts on the outer door, and all shouting at the tops of their voices

—they raised such a hubbub as to convince the besieged that an entry in force had been effected. Acting precipitately upon this hastily formed erroneous conjecture, the garrison of the outer court set fire to the buildings and retreated to the citadel: whereupon Bogis and his companions came out through the flames and opened the gate for the entry of the French army. Truly, in spite of its queerness, that was a very splendid feat of arms. Virtually it ended the siege. A little later the surrender came.

Mr. Green has summed the result of that great year of battling, and I prefer—lest I should seem to be lured by my enthusi-

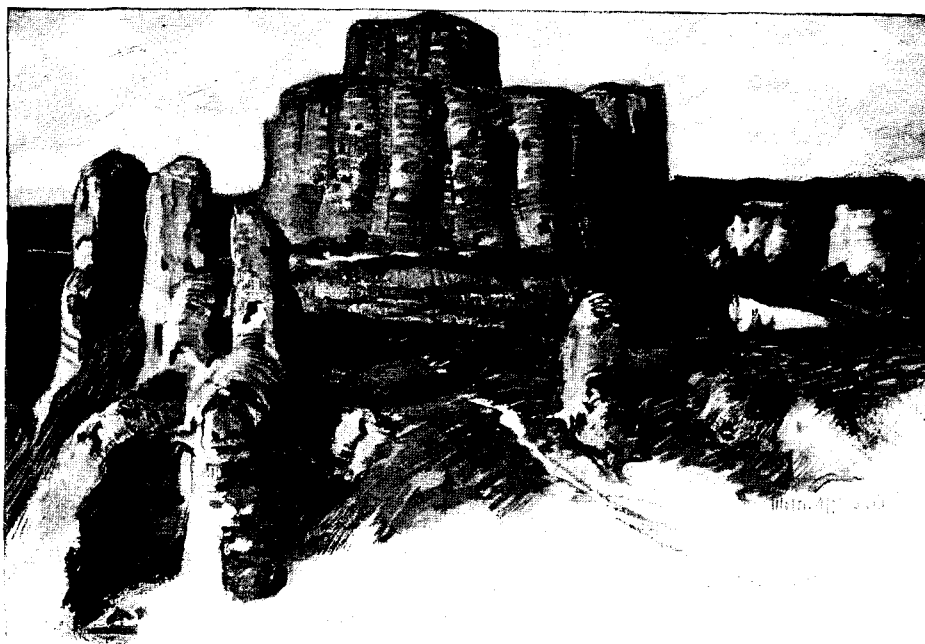
asm into an overestimate of its importance—to quote his authoritative words. The failure of the attempt to relieve the castle was followed, he writes, "by the utter collapse of the military system by which the Angevins held Normandy; John's treasury was exhausted, and his mercenaries passed over to the foe. The King's despairing appeal to the Duchy itself came too late; its nobles were already treating with Philip, and the towns were incapable of resisting the siege-train of the French. It was despair of any aid from Normandy that drove John oversea to seek it as fruitlessly from England; but with the fall of

Château Gaillard after a gallant struggle, the province passed without a struggle into the French king's hands. On its loss hung the destinies of England; and the interest that attaches one to the grand ruin on the heights of Les Andelys is that it represents the ruin of a system as well as of a camp. From its dark donjon and broken walls we see not merely the pleasant vale of Seine, but the sedgy flats of our own Runnymede."

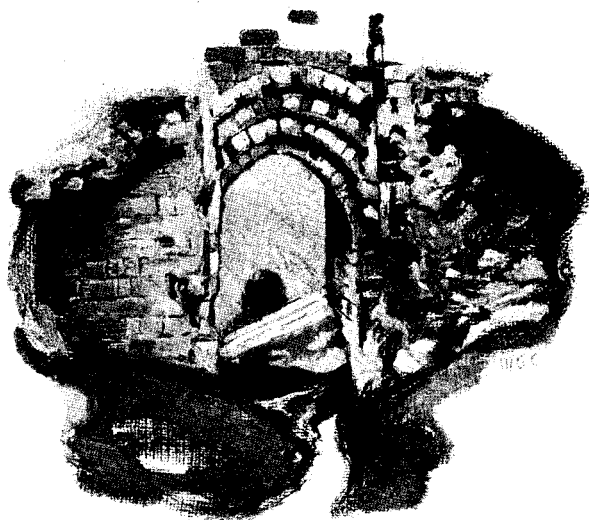
For an American, there is an even farther outlook from the tower of that broken fortress: to the American city in which, in the fulness of the flowing centuries, another Great Charter—directly outgrowing from King John's Great Charter—was signed. Assuredly, the deep main root of our Declaration of Independence may be traced back through Runnymede to the Château Gaillard.

Through the four hundred years that the fighting life of Richard's defiant castle lasted—until its dismantlement was ordered by Henry IV. in the year 1603—the strong romantic note struck at its founding rang clear. There is scarce a placid page in all its history; and some of its pages are as lurid as they well can be.

Quite the most lurid of them all is the one that tells about the murder of Marguerite, wife of Louis le Hutin, by her husband's command. As the result of what the chroniclers—who write, as Monsieur Brossard de Ruville puts it, with "*beaucoup de réserve*" of the matter—term "*scandalous disorders*" in the royal family, Marguerite was cast a prisoner into the Château Gaillard in the year 1314, along with her sister-in-law, Blanche de Burgogne, wife of Charles le Bel. With a courteous consideration, Charles let matters run with Blanche—content with keeping her locked fast—until his accession. Being come to the throne, he compromised the situation by obtaining from the Pope an annulment of his marriage "*on the ground of consanguinity*"—and so gave Blanche the opportunity to die an edifying death, "*en grand pénitence*," some years later in the Abbey of Maubuisson. Louis was both precipitate and brutal. By his order, Marguerite was strangled in her prison on the eve of the Feast of the Ascension in the year 1315—and was strangled, so runs the story, with her own beautiful long hair. The young cavaliers who were associated with this



THE CITADEL



GATEWAY TO THE CITADEL

scandal were the chivalrous gentlemen, already referred to, whom a chivalrous king caused to be skinned alive.

To balance this black tragedy, there was a pretty idyl in my castle only a few years later on: when it was the home for a while of Robert Bruce's son David, a boy of thirteen years, with his girl wife Jane—brought over secretly from Scotland, and hospitably housed in the Château Gaillard by the King's command. Froissart has a delightful chapter about it; and another chronicler, adding a touch of pathos, tells that the castle had a great charm for the little couple because it resembled the "Château de Berwick," and so "*c'était comme un souvenir de la patrie absente.*" Just before the young people got there, probably to make things tidy for them, there seems to have been a general house-cleaning. "*Pour nétoier les mesons du chesrel, dix sous,*" is a charge in the castle accounts for the year 1333.

To tell of all the fights that went on under the walls of my castle would be to write the war history of France and England for four centuries—with some added chapters telling of French internal wars, as that of the League, in the course of which it changed hands. Through those four centuries the Seine valley was a battle-ground, and in the whole length of the valley the Château Gaillard—giving

whoever held it a grip on the river highway—was the chief fighting prize. At one time it came to the English, after a seven months' siege, because—according to the French chroniclers—the well-ropes were worn out with use and the garrison surrendered not to the enemy but to thirst; or—according to the English chroniclers—because "after mature reflection" the garrison concluded that the intention of the besiegers to take the castle was "unshakable" and that they might as well give in. At another time it came to the French, commanded by the brave La Hire, as the result of an "es-

calade made by a Gascon esquire named Perot le Bueu"—who apparently took the fortress single-handed! And so, in one way or another, time and time again it was lost and won.

Some unknown peaceful genius—who must have been a person of consequence, since he had with him the Assembly of the States of Normandy—hit at last upon a radical plan for ending these useless battlings which ended only to be renewed. By the Assembly his plan was formulated, December 2, 1598, in a petition to the King praying that the Château Gaillard should be demolished; and the King—"fearing, perhaps, to see the castle fall into the hands of some powerful rebel lord"—granted the Assembly's prayer. Actually, there was a long delay before the prayer was realized. Not until the year 1603 did the demolition begin, even then in a very small way; and it went on so slowly that a full half-century passed, probably a still longer period, before Richard's gaillard masterpiece effectively was destroyed.

Picturesquely—as my artist's delightful drawings show—it still remains: a magnificent monument, superbly pathetic in its broken majesty, to that lion-hearted savage, its builder, in whom were blended the best and the worst of the instincts of his savage age.

An Exploiter of Souls

BY MARGARET DELAND

"AND the worst of it is, they are all such nice people!" "Why, that's the best of it, it seems to me. Of course, they all mean well."

"In a certain way they all do well, too," Mrs. Strong said, sighing; "really, it is very perplexing. Adèle is the truest friend to him! Why, where would he have been now, without Adèle?"

"In the barn-yard, probably," Henry Austin told her, putting his teacup down on the mantelpiece behind him; "and making, no doubt, an excellent farmer."

"Farmer? Yes! Plodding about in rusty boots (I declare, I smell the barn-yard now whenever he comes in in his pumps!)—plodding about in his potato-fields all day, and falling asleep over his Shakespeare at eight o'clock in the evening! Exciting life."

"Not exciting," her old friend admitted, smiling, "but contented."

"Well, but, my dear Henry!—he's contented now. He's a successful actor; indeed, I think he is a great actor,—and you know I don't say that lightly. He has an angel of a wife; Dora is the best girl I know. And he has a mother-in-law who is the most charming woman in the world! Now, isn't Adèle a charmer?"

"Oh, bless my soul, yes! At least, I suppose she is. She always was. You know I haven't seen her for a dozen years. But she certainly was a charmer then. I bear the scars still," he ended, drolly.

"You don't look like a blighted being," she told him. "Well, she's more charming now than when she broke your heart, if such a thing is possible. Augustine's success has been wine to her; sometimes I think she adores it as much as she does him. Of course he is contented."

"She had just discovered him when I went away," Henry Austin said, thoughtfully; he was standing with his back to the fire, looking down at the plump, anx-

ious little old lady on the yellow damask sofa at the other side of the hearth. "I remember," he went on, frowning reflectively, "that she spoke to me about him. I told her she had a *flair* for genius. She was always discovering people who could do things. She once cherished the belief that I could write."

"Well, she has a *flair* for genius," Mrs. Strong said, emphatically; "she has found lots of them. You remember that it was she who discovered Elise Davis's voice? And she scraped up money from all of us to send that Ernst man to Paris—and did you see what the last *Revue des Beaux-Arts* said about him? And she picked up Rose Harris, a little seamstress at \$1 25 a day, and started her in business; and let me tell you, sir, if you had a wife (as you ought to have), and had to pay Harris's bills, you would understand *her* genius! I can't afford a Harris dress oftener than once in two years. Then came Augustine. I suppose you know how she discovered him?"

Henry Austin shook his head, whimsically. "Hazel rod?"

"My dear, she went to spend the summer on a farm, for economy. Took Dora; Dora was fifteen then. (Mr. Wharton had just died, and we were all thanking Heaven for her release.) And there was this genius, twenty-eight years old; self-educated; refined, too, in a way, though his boots were barn-yardy;—and as beautiful as a god. And good. Yes, he certainly is a good man; I am worried enough over the affair, but I know Augustine Ware is a good man. That's what makes it so puzzling. He is good, and Adèle is good, and Dora is an angel!"

"My dear Jane! Do you want them to be bad?"

"Now, Henry, don't be frivolous. But I tell you one thing: there's a good, honest, human badness, my friend, that isn't nearly so bad as a certain kind of good-