



Come, listen, gentles all, and I will sing.

HENNEBONT AND THE FLEET

(A. D. 1342)

A BALLAD FROM FROISSART

By E. Sutton

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRANK CRAIG

COME, listen, gentles all, and I will sing
Of fealty swerveless to the utterance,
When Bretagne lay to-torn between the King
English, and him of France.

Low drooped the cause of Jean de Montfort; he,
Rightful heir-male to all the Armoric land,
Lay far in Paris and captivity,
While with a mailed hand,

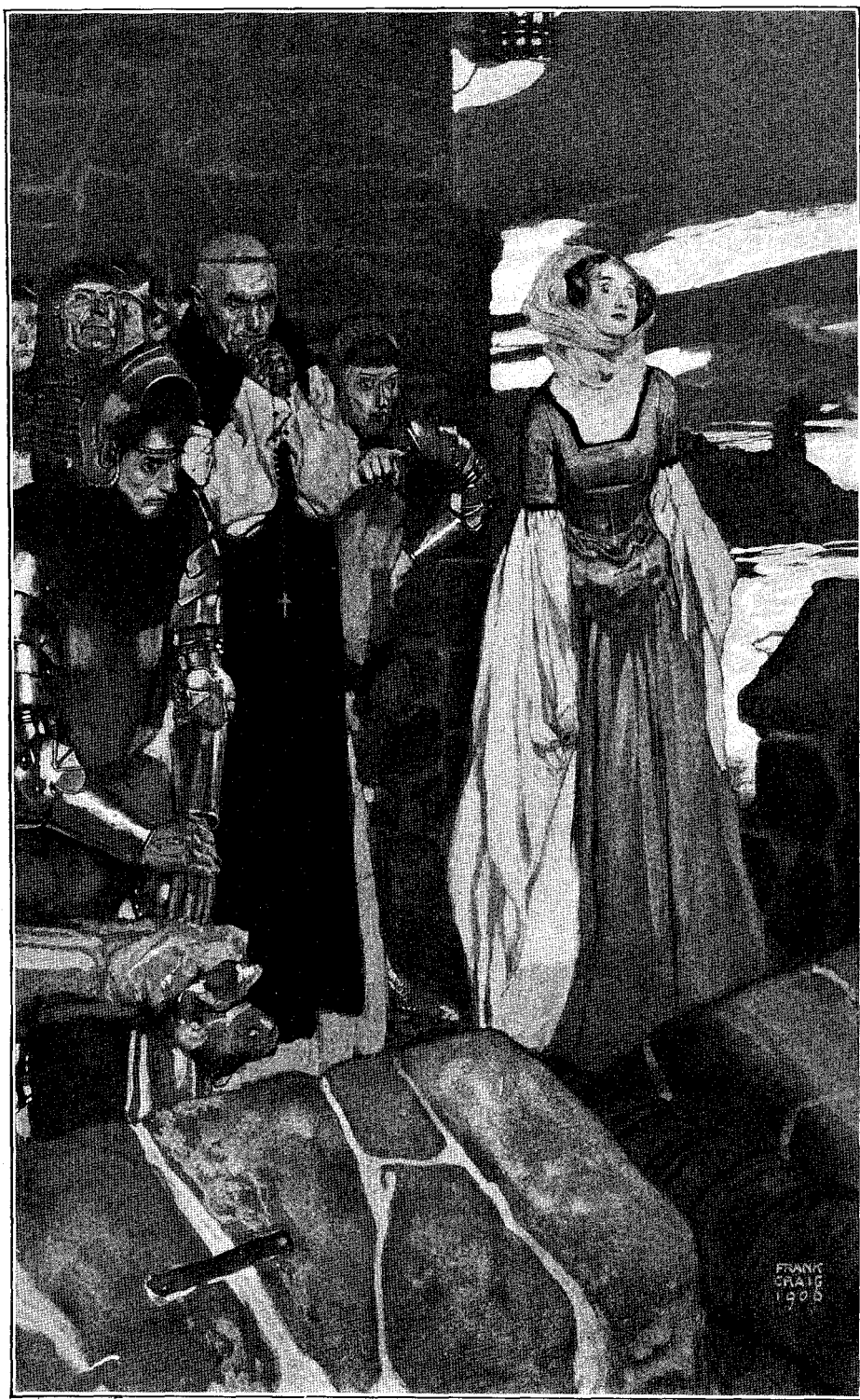
Filled with French gold, and France's strength
to aid,
Genoese cross-bows and Burgundian spears,
His rival, Charles de Blois, wide conquest made;
And now the hopes and fears

Ran wild in desperate Hennebont, girdled in
With hedges of grim steel—the strongest town
In all Bretagne, which could the Frenchman win
Ensured the ducal crown.

Throughout her council-hall, oak-raftered, vast,
Sombre with bannered duskiness, that the flame
Of the rich casements hardly pierced, there passed
A voice of scorn and blame.

For 'neath the ermined baldaquin's broad span
Contended fiercely for her infant's right
De Montfort's lady, lion-hearted Jeanne,
Who Jannedik Flamm* was hight.

*"Jeanne the Fleming." She was the sister of the Count
of Flanders.



Drawn by Frank Craig.

And a flash answered whiteily far away.—Page 670.

Right royal was her port; like any lance
 She stood, a woman for a king's desire;
 Thick gold her braided tresses, and her glance
 Of azure and of fire

"What! would ye yield—now that they dare not
 storm,
 But lie in sullen leaguer? Dread ye so
 Their twelve great engines? Need ye lie so warm
 That if a roof should go

"Your hearts take cold? I cry you shame, my
 lords!
 (God and the holy saints, of ye I ask,
 Who have no woman's heart, a woman's words
 To sting them to their task!)

"Have I not armed in steel my mother-breast
 And led ye?—aye, the foremost—Treguidy,
 Cadoudal!—ye know how with lance in rest
 The length of lances three

"I led into the *mêlée*! Have I ceased
 Honor, love, fortune, with my life to gage
 As were I but a man-at-arms—the least
 That draws a monthly wage?

"What would ye more? That on my knees I
 pray
 Ye for that faith whereof I am beguiled?
 Ye that wear knightly spurs and would betray
 Your lady and a child!

"Hear my last word! Seeing I may not lean
 Upon your feeble courage, since delays
 England so long the narrow shores between,
 I ask ye but three days!

"Only three days! Surely I shall receive
 Such guerdon for my deeds, if but one spark
 Ye keep of honor more than some who weave
 Their treason in the dark

"With yon false priest, and to their plot do call
 Hervé de Léon, Judas-like who sold
 Our Nantes—our chiefest town—and there withal
 His lord and mine for gold!"

She ceased, and none that heard but straightway
 blenched
 And turned away his head in sullen wise,
 For tears of woman at no moment quenched
 The war-flame in her eyes

That read their wordless answer. Then in scorn
 She spake again: "I thank the saintly Powers
 Mine is no greater shame! O nobly born,
 Ye had denied three hours!

"Climb with me to the tower—if indeed
 For task so great my bidding still avails!
 Perchance—who knows?—ye might wax stiffer-
 kneed
 Could we sight English sails."

Like beaten hounds they followed to a height
 Of cold gray sky and bitter salt sea-blast,
 And a great noise of engines, day or night
 That never ceased to cast.

Crocket and pinnacle, gable and gray spire,
 Strove upward from below; street, market, lane,
 Crawled with small atomies; here they quenched
 a fire,
 There worked with might and main

To build a shattered barbican, or haul
 Stones to the mangonels where need was most.
 Landward, beyond the spear-points on the wall,
 Lay the besieging host.

Windward—ah, windward, 'neath a weight of
 cloud
 That bore upon the waters, wan and gray,
 Wrinkled and folded like an empty shroud,
 Misty and void, there lay

In savage loneliness the Celtic sea.
 And cried on high the duchess in despair,
 "Our Lady, I have striven! Pity me!"
 Then, lance-like through the air

From underneath the cloud-pall, one long ray
 Shot from the sun, slow-sinking, red and dim.
 And a flash answered whitely far away
 Upon the ocean rim.

"'Tis but some fisher," muttered they, but she
 Staring, neck stretched above the dizzy verge,
 Saw as it were a veil thin suddenly
 Along the writhing surge.

And then her eyes rained down with joyful tears,
 Burst from the walls a shouting and a hail,
 For lo! the sea edge like a front of spears
 Serried with countless sail!

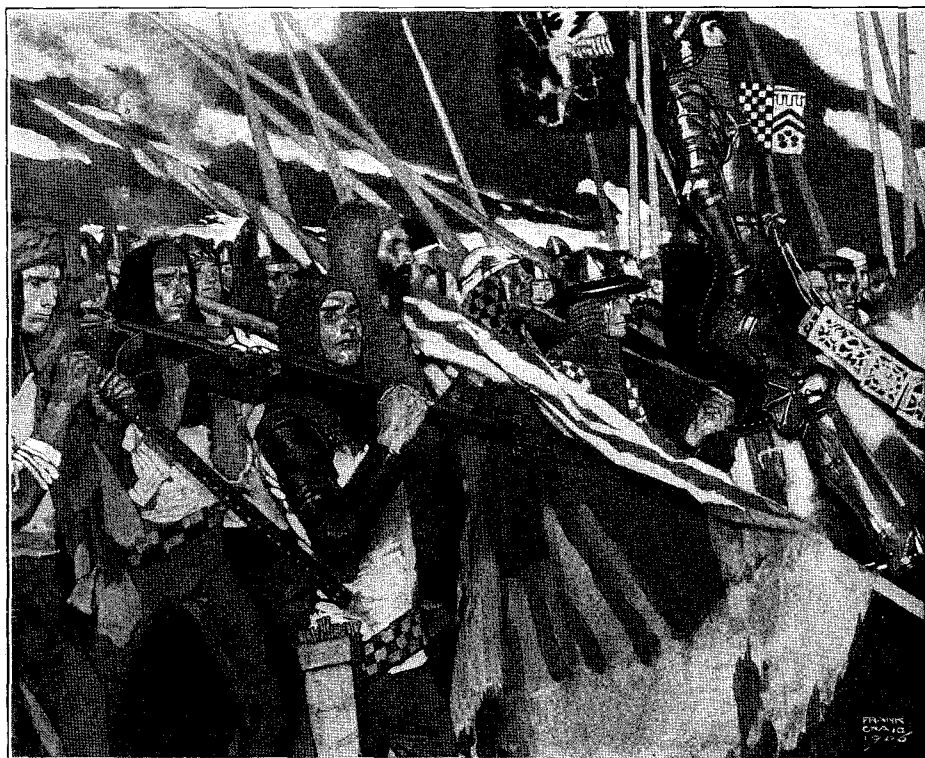
"Look, look!" she sobbed; "they come at even-
 song,
 The wings of morning! Oh, my God, to win
 On the thin edge of loss!" The little throng
 Shame-stricken, drew within

And left her there a space. The moments sped
 Into an hour, and still she stood alone,
 Bowed on a battlement, her queenly head
 Sunk down upon the stone.

Now with hoarse horn-blasts and clear trumpet
 cries,
 Naker and cymbal, clang of steel on steel
 Clamorously commingling 'neath the lowering
 skies,
 Drew near each eager keel,

Freighted by that fierce warrior isle that still
 Reaps as her chiefest harvest through the years
 The stubborn crop of Cadmus, bow and bill,
 Sword-blades, and sheaves of spears.

Cog and broad carrack deep with bowmen drave
 Slow under sail toward the shouting shores,
 And hundred-footed galleys walked the wave
 With thunderous tread of oars.



His rival, Charles de Blois, wide conquest made.—Page 668.

The beaten waters twisted, white with wrath,
Back 'twixt the crowding hulls, that surged and
rolled
With every sullen heave. Down that broad path
Backed by the sunset-gold

That limned in light the thronging masts, and
glowed
Redly through myriad blazonries, there came
The flower of England's might, who coming,
sowed
Blavet* with seeds of flame

From burnished mail—and ah! right jollily
All that canorous clangor made to dance
Ancients and pennoncel of the strong and free
Who curbed the pride of France!

Swinford and Levedale, knightly Oxendon,
Dagworth and De la Warre and Hastings bore
With Cobham bascinet and habergeon.
Mowbray and many more

There 'neath the lilies and the leopards met,
And Manny admiral stood, the chief of these
Rough gems that from the crown Plantagenet
Glance down the centuries.

*The river on whose estuary Hennebont stands.

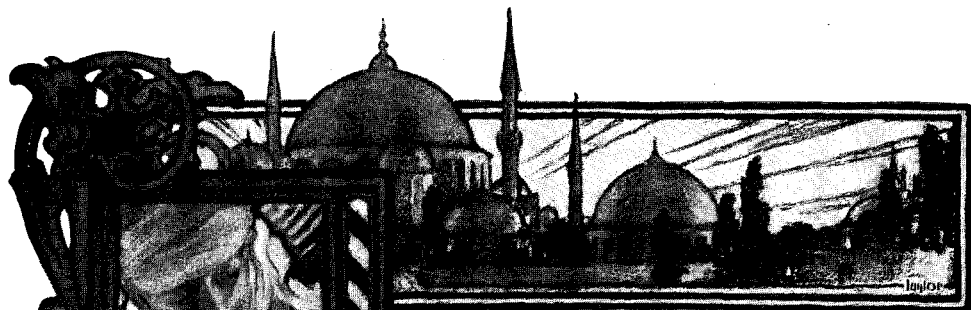
"See what St. George hath sent us there below!"
Cried the fair duchess. "If from heaven he
Came with a troop of angels, could they show
A goodlier company?"

Abashed before her knelt her Bretons then:
"Lady and liege, royal ye be indeed,
And worthy of the ermines! Ne'er again
Shall any fail at need!"

Sweetly she laughed. "Arise, messieurs!" she said;
"Lo, I forgive ye! Sure ye be but men,
And loyalty is woman's! Now our dread
Is lost and gone, why, then,

"Lift high my banner, call my ladies here!
Forth with such pomp as fits the state and
name
Of Bretagne let us go, and give good cheer
To those who bring the same!"

So bide thou here, my Ship of Song, in staithe.
God rest her soul who lumineth my rhymel
Flower of womanhood, and flame of faith
That flasheth to all time!



The Veiled Lady of Stamboul

by

F. Hopkinson Smith

ILLUSTRATIONS BY F. WALTER TAYLOR

JOE HORNSTOG told me this story—the first part of it; the last part of it came to me in a way which proves how small the world is.

Joe belongs to that conglomerate mass of heterogeneous nationalities found around the Golden Horn, whose ancestry is as difficult to trace as a gypsy's. He says he is a "Jew gentleman from Germany," but he can't prove it, and he knows he can't.

There is no question about his being part Jew, and there is a strong probability of his being part German, and, strange to say, there is not the slightest doubt of his being part gentleman—in his own estimation; and I must say in mine, when I look back over an acquaintance covering many years and remember how completely my bank account was at his disposal and how little of its contents he appropriated.

And yet, were I required to hold up my hand in open court, I would have to affirm that Joe, whatever his other strains might be, was, after all, ninety-nine per cent. Levantine—which is another way of saying that he is part of every nationality about him.

As to his honesty and loyalty, is he not the chosen dragoman of kings and princes when

they journey into far distant lands (he speaks seven languages and many tribal dialects), and is he not to-day wearing in his buttonhole the ribbon of the order of the Mejdieh, bestowed upon him by his Imperial Highness the Sultan, in reward for his ability and faithfulness?

I must admit that I myself have been his debtor—not once, but many times. It was this same quick-sighted, quick-witted Levantine who lifted me from my sketching stool and stood me on my feet in the plaza of the Hippodrome one morning just in time to prevent my being trodden underfoot by six Turks carrying the body of their friend to the cemetery—in time, too, to save me from the unforgivable sin among Orientals, of want of reverence for their dead. I had heard the tramp of the pall-bearers, and supposing it to be that of the Turkish patrol, had kept at work. They were prowling everywhere, day and night, and during those days they passed every ten minutes—nine soldiers in charge of an officer of police—all owing to the fact that some five thousand Armenians, anxious to establish a new form of government, had been wiped out of existence only the week before.

Once on my feet (Joe accomplished his purpose with the help of my suspenders) and the situation clear, I had sense enough left to uncover my head and stand in an attitude of profound reverence until the procession had passed. I can see them now—the coffin wrapped in a camel's-hair shawl, the dead man's fez and turban resting on top.