CHAPTER CXLIX.—SIR AYMERY DE PAVIE PLOTS WITH SIR GEOFFREY DE CHARGNY, TO SELL THE TOWN OF CALAIS.

At this time sir Geoffrey de Chargny was stationed at St. Omer, to defend the frontier; and, in every thing touching war, he acted as if he had been king. He bethought himself, that as Lombards are very poor*, and by nature avaricious, he would attempt to recover the town of Calais, by means of Aymery de Pavie the governor: and as, from the terms of the truce, the inhabitants of the towns of St. Omer and Calais might go to each place to sell their different merchandises, sir Geoffrey entered into a secret treaty with sir Aymery, and succeeded so far that he promised to deliver up the town, on receiving twenty thousand crowns. The king of England, however, got intelligence of it, and sent to Aymery the Lombard, orders to cross the sea immediately, and come to him at Westminster. He obeyed; for he could not imagine that the king knew of his treason, it had been so secretly carried on. When the king saw the Lombard, he took him aside, and said; “Thou knowest that I have intrusted to thee what I hold dearest in this world, except my wife and children, I mean the town and castle of Calais, which thou hast sold to the French; and for which thou deservest death.” The Lombard flung himself on his knees, and said; “Ah, gentle king, have mercy on me, for God’s sake. All that you have said is very true; but there is yet time to break the bargain, for hitherto I have not received one penny.” The king had brought up this Lombard from a child, and much loved him; he replied, “Aymery, it is my wish that you continue on this treaty: you will inform me of the day that you are to deliver up Calais; and on these conditions I promise you my pardon.” The Lombard then returned to Calais, and kept everything secret. In the mean time, sir Geoffrey de Chargny thought himself sure of having Calais, and issued out privately his summons for five hundred lances: the greater part were ignorant where he intended to lead them; for it was only known to a few barons. I do not believe he had even informed the king of France of his plan, as he would have dissuaded him from it, on account of the truce. The Lombard had consented to deliver up the town to him, the last night of the year, with which he made the king of England acquainted by means of his brother †.

CHAPTER CLI.—THE BATTLE OF CALAIS, BETWEEN THE KING OF ENGLAND, UNDER THE BANNER OF SIR WALTER MANNY, WITH SIR GEOFFREY DE CHARGNY AND THE FRENCH.

When the king of England was informed of this, and knew that the day was for a certainty fixed, he set out from England with three hundred men at arms and six hundred archers. He embarked at Dover, and came so privately to Calais, that no one knew of his being there. He placed his men in ambush in the rooms and towers of the castle, and said to sir Walter Manny, “Sir Walter, I will that you be chief of this enterprise; and I and my son will fight under your banner.” Sir Geoffrey de Chargny had left St. Omer the latter end of Edward’s confidence: I therefore think, with M. Levesque, that Avesbury’s account is more probable. “Dictas vero genuensis nolens prodere regem Anglorum dominum suum……….. Annum tamen sibi promissum cupiens imbursare, eum eodem domino Galfrido pacifice loquentem, in dolo suis suasionibus callidis adquiesvit.”—Avesbury, p. 180.

* Poverty was not the general characteristic of the Lombards, however justly they may be charged with avarice; Lord Berners and D. Sauvage’s ed. allude only to the latter.—Ed.
† Sir Aymery de Pavie was appointed commander of the galleys by the king, dated Westminster, 24th April 1348.—Sir Aymery does not seem to have forfeited
December, with all the forces he had collected, and arrived near to Calais about midnight, the last day of the month. He halted there for his rear to come up, and sent forward two of his squires, who found sir Aymery waiting for them; they asked, if it were time for sir Geoffry to advance? the Lombard answered; that it was. The two squires upon this returned to sir Geoffry, who marched his men in battle array over the bridge of Nieullet: he then sent forward twelve of his knights, with one hundred men at arms, to take possession of the castle of Calais; for he thought, if he had possession of the castle, he should soon be master of the town, considering what strength he had with him; and, in a few days' time, he could have as much more, should there be occasion. He gave orders for twenty thousand crowns to be delivered to sir Odoart de Renty, who was in this expedition, for him to pay the Lombard; and sir Geoffry remained in the plain in silence, his banner displayed before him, with the rest of his army; for his intention was to enter the town by one of its gates, otherwise he would not enter it at all.

The Lombard had let down the draw-bridge of the castle, and opened one of the gates, through which his detachment entered unmolested; and sir Odoart had given him the twenty thousand crowns in a bag, who said, "he supposed they were all there; for he had not time to count them, as it would be day immediately." He flung the bag of crowns into a room, which he locked, and told the French he would conduct them to the great tower, that they might the sooner be masters of the castle: in saying this, he advanced on, and pushing back the bolt, the door flew open. In this tower was the king of England with two hundred lances, who sallied forth, with swords and battle-axes in their hands, crying out: "Manny! Manny! to the rescue: what, do these Frenchmen think to conquer the castle of Calais with such a handful of men?" The French saw that no defence could save them; so they surrendered themselves prisoners; and scarcely any of them were wounded. They were made to enter this tower, whence the English had sallied, and there shut in. The English quitted the castle, and, forming themselves in array, mounted their horses, for they knew the French were mounted, and made for the gate leading to Boulogne. Sir Geoffry was there with his banner displayed; his arms were three escutcheons argent on a field, gules, and he was very impatient to be the first that should enter Calais. He said to those knights who were near him, that "if this Lombard delayed opening the gate, they should all die with cold." "In God's name," replied sir Pepin de Werre, "these Lombards are a malicious sort of people; perhaps he is examining your florins, lest there should be any false ones, and to see if they be right in number." During this conversation, the king of England and his son advanced, under the banner of sir Walter Manny. There were many other banners also there, such as the earl of Suffolk's, the lord Stafford's, lord John Mountague's, brother to the earl of Salisbury, the lord John Beauchamp's, the lord Berkeley's, the lord de la Waae: all these were barons having banners: and no more than these were in this expedition.

The great gates were soon opened, and they all sallied out: when the French saw this, and heard the cries of "Manny to the rescue!" they found they had been betrayed; and sir Geoffry said to those around them, "Gentlemen, if we fly, we shall lose all: it will be more advantageous for us to fight valiantly, in the hopes that the day may be ours." "By St. George," said some of the English, who were near enough to hear it, "you speak truth: evil befall him who thinks of flying." They then retreated a little, and dismounted, driving their horses away, to avoid being trampled on. When the king of England saw this, he halted the banner under which he was, and said, "I would have the men drawn up here in order of battle; and let a good detachment he sent towards the bridge of Nieullet; for I have heard that there is posted a large body of French, on horseback and on foot." Six banners and three hundred archers left his army, and made for the bridge of Nieullet, where they found the lord Moreau de Fiennes, and the lord of Crequi, who guarded it. There was also posted, between the bridge and Calais, the cross-bowmen from St. Omer and Aire, who had that day sharp work: more than six hundred were slain or drowned; for they were immediately discomfited, and pursued to the river: it was then scarcely day-break. The knights of Picardy maintained this post some time; and many gallant actions were performed; but the English kept increasing from the town, when, on the contrary, the
French fell off, so that when they found they could not longer keep the bridge, those that had horses mounted them, and betook themselves to flight. The English immediately pursued them, and many were overthrown: but those that were well-mounted escaped; among them were the lords de Fiennes, de Crequi, de Sempy, de Lonchinleicht, and the lord of Namur. Many were taken through their own hardiness, who might otherwise have saved themselves. When it was broad day-light, that each could see the other, some knights and squires collected themselves together, and vigorously attacked the English, insomuch that several of the French made good prisoners, that brought them much profit. *

We will now speak of the king of England, who was there incognito, under sir Walter Manny's banner. He advanced with his men on foot, to meet the enemy, who were formed in close order with their pikes, shortened to five feet, planted out before them. The first attack was very sharp and severe. The king singled out sir Eustace de Ribeauumont, who was a strong and hardy knight: he fought a long time marvellously well with the king, so that it was a pleasure to see them; but, by the confusion of the engagement, they were separated; for two large bodies met, where they were fighting, and forced them to break off their combat. On the side of the French, there was excellent fighting by sir Geoffry de Charny, sir John de Landas, sir Hector and sir Gavin Balliuel, and others; but they were all surpassed by sir Eustace de Ribeauumont, who that day struck the king twice down on his knees: at last, however, he was obliged to surrender his sword to the king, saying, "Sir

* Both honour and profit. — Lord Berners.
CHRONICLES OF ENGLAND, FRANCE, &c.

You have heard how Aymery de Pavié had plotted to surrender the town and castle of Calais, for a sum of florins to the French, and how it befell them: that Geoffry de Chalangy and the knights with him were made prisoners, and carried to England, whence they ransomed themselves as soon as they could pay the money, and returned to France. It happened, that, during the time he was at St. Omer by order of the king of France, he heard that Aymery de Pavié was at a castle in the country near Calais, called Fretun, which the king of England had given him. The Italian lived there at his ease with a beautiful English woman whom he had brought thither as his mistress; and he fancied the French had forgotten his courtesy to them; but that was not the case, as you shall hear. As soon as sir Geoffry received this information, he secretly inquired from those of the country who knew this castle, if it could easily be taken; they assured him it might; for that sir Aymery lived there without any suspicion, and without guards or watch, thinking himself as safe as if he were in London or Calais. Sir Geoffry did not let the matter sleep, but, collecting privately a band of men at arms, left St. Omer in an evening, taking with him the cross-bows that were quartered there, and marched all night, when, at day-break, he arrived at the castle of Fretun. They instantly surrounded the castle, as it was not of any size, and having entered the ditch, passed through. The servants, awakened by the noise, ran to their master, who was asleep, and said, "My lord, rise instantly; for the castle is surrounded by a large body of men at arms, who are forcing their way into it." Aymery was much alarmed, and rose as speedily as he could; but notwithstanding his haste, he could not arm himself before his court-yard was filled with soldiers. He was thus made prisoner with his mistress; but nothing was pillaged in the castle, on account of the existing truce between France and England; and besides sir Geoffry only wanted to take Aymery. He was greatly pleased with his success, and carried sir Aymery to St. Omer, where he did not suffer him to languish in prison, but had him put to death, with much cruelty, in the market-place of St. Omer, in the presence of the knights and common people of the country, who had been sent for thither. Thus died sir Aymery de Pavié; but his mistress escaped, for his death freed her, and she afterwards attached herself to a squire of France.