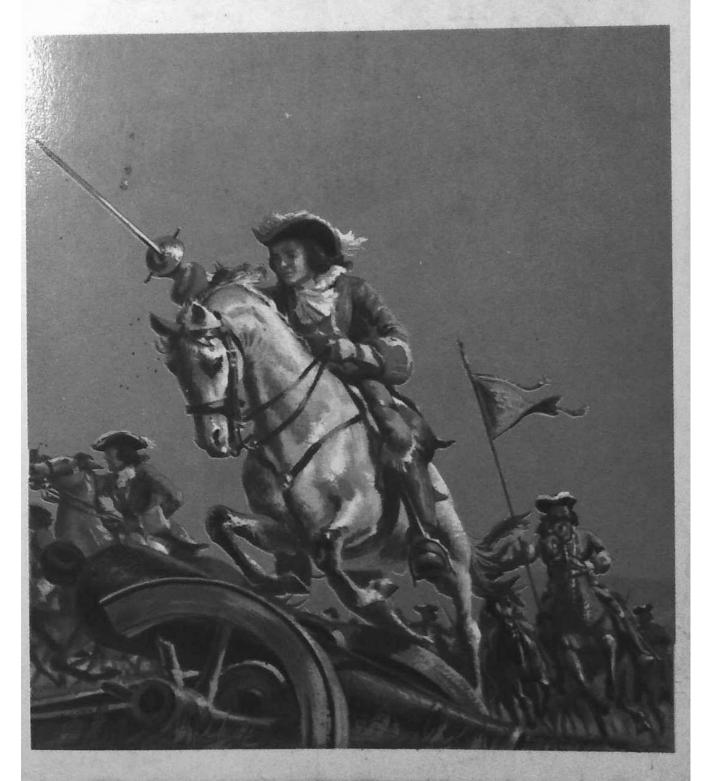
In the Irish Brigade

G. A. Henty





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IN THE IRISH BRIGADE

An abridged edition

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BRIGADE
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Fresh From Ireland

Desmond knew what he had to do. He had to go to a certain street in Cork - this street he was in now. He had to go to a house and knock on a door - the door that was opposite him at that moment.

When it was opened he had to give the password - he had to say, "The sea is calm and the sky is bright." And then? Then they would help him on his way. He would be smuggled out of Ireland and passed from agent to agent until he joined the

Irish Brigade now fighting for King Louis of France.

Desmond took a step across the street. His heart was pounding. He was sixteen and this was a big step to take. All his life he had lived in his beloved Ireland. Now he was going to leave it, to become a soldier of fortune in the wars across the sea. Incidentally he would be fighting at times against the English who had conquered Ireland and were responsible for so much of its misery.

Desmond suddenly straightened, resolution returning. He was big for his age - a man in size for all his years - strongwilled and determined. Now he walked the few yards to the

door, and with a firm hand knocked on it.

It was all as it was planned. After a moment the door slowly opened - opened with caution, Desmond felt. A tall man stood in the shadows, silently regarding him. Desmond spoke the words, softly so that no one else but the man would hear.

"The sea is calm and the sky is bright."

The man spoke, just two words. "Come in." But it was a good Irish accent that accompanied them, and suddenly Desmond felt assured. He stepped inside. The door closed behind him. The man led the way into a back room.

"Sit down," said the man, and smiled at him. The room was poorly furnished, and Desmond perched on a chair that was old and swayed uncertainly under his weight. "Now, what

do you want?"

The man must know, of course, but he was making Des-

mond speak.

"I want to go to France and join the Irish Brigade. I am told you are looking for recruits and will get me across the water."

"Who told you that?" the man parried.

"Your agent in Kilkargan."

At that the man relaxed. "Tell me your name and why you

want to fight for France."

"I'm Desmond Kennedy of Kilkargan. I want to join the Irish Brigade because there is nothing for me here in Ireland."

And that was true. In those times oppression was great on the followers of his religion. First Cromwell and then William of Orange had implanted their rule upon an unwilling people. Those who were of another religion — Catholics — had been made to suffer and would continue to suffer while the English held them as a conquered people.

The Catholics had lost their lands and possessions to the Protestant invader, and always there was discrimination against them for their religion. No Catholic could hold a civil appointment of any kind. He could not serve in the army as an officer or even as a private. He was subject to imprisonment and even death on the most trivial of charges, at the

mercy of any bigot who wished to denounce him.

Life was hard for Catholics in the early eighteenth century in Ireland. Desmond, whose family had had their land taken away from them, knew there was no future for him in his homeland and had taken the decision, as so many others had, to seek his fortune overseas.

"Your parents?" asked the man.

"Dead," Desmond answered shortly. His father had had to fly from Ireland after an uprising against the English designed to put the Stuart James – whom some called King James the Third – on the English throne. He had joined the Irish Brigade in France and had fallen at the battle of Breda. His mother had died about the same time, and an uncle, whom Desmond cared little for, had brought him up until now.

"You have been educated," the man remarked.

"I have had a good education," Desmond answered. That

he could give his uncle credit for.

"Then you should go forward and get a commission," the agent told him, satisfied by the answers. "I will arrange pas-

sage for you to France."

The days passed swiftly in Cork until the time of sailing. Though English cruisers kept a close watch around the coast, it was not very difficult for men to be smuggled out of Ireland. One day Desmond was given abrupt instructions and presented himself at a ship in harbour. There were other passengers—thirty young Irish peasants bound for Paris, driven by sheer starvation to seek work in another land. Desmond joined them

in the lugger, and together they stood at the rail and saw Ireland fade slowly behind them over the horizon.

The voyage was rough but otherwise uneventful. They landed at St. Malo where Desmond reported to another agent, this time a Frenchman. But Desmond's knowledge of French was good and he had no difficulty in handling the situation.

He was instructed to go by diligence to Paris and there report to the Marquis de Noailles. The Marquis received him kindly and here Desmond had a stroke of luck. The Marquis

had known his father.

"He was a fine man," the Marquis told him. "A brave soldier who died in the cause of France. His son must not suffer on that account." And he immediately set about getting

a commission for the young Irishman.

So it came about that Desmond received a cornetcy and was appointed ensign in the Irish Brigade. Uniforms were made for him, a good horse provided, and he set off to join his new regiment. It had all happened so swiftly that at times Desmond felt bewildered. He was the youngest lieutenant in the Irish Brigade in which his father had fought.

The officers of the Irish Brigade gave their latest recruit a warm and cordial reception. To Desmond, hearing those familiar Irish voices, it was like finding a piece of home here in this foreign land, and from the moment he joined he was a happy boy.

So many Irishmen had left their country that now there were three regiments of Irish exiles in France, pledged to support the French king, who in turn was pledged to put the Scottish James back on the throne of England. Until plans for invading England were completed, the Irish Brigade formed part of the French army and campaigned with it against King Louis' enemies.

All Europe was ringing with praise of the Irish Brigade's valour in battle. To wear the Irish uniform was to be greeted everywhere with respect. Wherever the fighting was thickest, there the Irish Brigade would be thrown in, and the courage and ferocity of the Irishmen had turned many an anxious moment in battle. Desmond was proud to be an Irishman, and

proud to join this élite corps of soldiers.

Demond joined O'Brien's Regiment of Foot, part of the Brigade, and perhaps that part which had brought more renown to the exiles than any other regiment. Colonel O'Brien himself introduced him to the officer's mess. Desmond liked his commanding officer from the start, and it was obvious that O'Brien had taken a liking for the young lieutenant, too.

Desmond quickly made friends. These were two gay young Irish lieutenants named O'Neil and O'Sullivan. Soon the three became inseparable, and for months life was a happy, light-hearted existence. Not that Desmond did not work hard. He was determined to become a good officer, and he took his studies and training far more seriously than his companions. Ensign Kennedy was young and enthusiastic and he poured all his enthusiasm into his training. Soon it was obvious that the young man would go far, and in spite of his age was treated with respect in the officers' mess.

Colonel O'Brien was especially pleased with him and frequently singled him out for compliments. One day he called for Desmond, saying, "I want a serious conversation with you,

Mr. Kennedy.

There were several other senior officers gathered round and Desmond felt that they had been discussing him before the colonel's summons.

Colonel O'Brien began by saying, "You know why we are

here, Mr. Kennedy?"

"To put James back on the throne - a Catholic king who

will put an end to the injustice and oppression in Ireland."
"Very good," said O'Brien. "Nicely expressed. And until there is a change of rule in England and Ireland we can never

return to our native country."

Desmond knew it was true and his heart sank a little, thinking of it. He loved Ireland and some day at all costs was determined to return there. Joining the Irish Brigade had really meant burning his boats, for in English eyes they were traitors for conspiring against the English Crown and would be hanged as such if captured. There would be no going back to Ireland while Queen Anne was on the throne of England.

"We want you to meet King James," said O'Brien unexpectedly. In the mess James was always referred to as the rightful king of England and given that title. "He is young and sur-

rounded by flatterers who do him no good."

The colonel did not speak of his own disappointment with the young James. Sometimes it was all he could do to bottle up his wrath at the languid young Stuart. For here they were, fighting in his cause, yet James was lazy, indolent, avoiding making decisions, and heedless of the good advice his generals gave him. He wanted to be King of England, but he grew petulant at the discomfort attendant on attaining that position. As a leader he was a disappointment to his fighting men, and O'Brien said so.

"We want you to become his close companion," O'Brien went on. "We want you to try to stiffen his resolution, to make him come to decisions and stick to them. You are young and full of enthusiasm for his cause - perhaps some of it will rub off on the king."

It was a great honour to be entrusted with this mission, but from the beginning Desmond was doubtful about his own capabilities. "I will try, sir," he said, "but I am not very diplomatic and I am afraid I might say things which will cause

offence."

How right Desmond was! He was introduced to young James, who took a fancy to him and frequently invited him to his palace at St. Germain. Desmond tried hard to be the good courtier, but the character of James put a great strain on him.

Desmond was all that James was not. James was bored, had no enthusiasm for anything, was petulant over anything which brought him discomfort. He was very trying as a companion for Desmond, and in time that young man's patience grew very thin. At times he asked himself, "Is this the man we are risking our lives for? Is this man worthy to be king of a great people?" He did not like to answer his own questions because he felt this would be disloyal to the cause of the Brigade, yet James' conduct rankled with him and one day it

James was being more tiresome than usual. Desmond had been speaking of the day when James would occupy the throne of England, but that young man showed no enthusiasm. He said, "It is a pity it cannot be managed without fuss and trouble. I hate trouble."

"Nothing can be done without trouble, Your Majesty," said

Desmond abruptly.

"What do you mean?" demanded James, recognizing the

Desmond spoke bluntly, having had enough of the king in the past weeks. "You have devoted followers who will suffer hardship and danger for you, and many of us will even die for you. We expect our king to put up with some fuss and trouble."

That was all the young undiplomatic Irishman said. It was enough. No longer was he invited to the Palace of St. Germain. Which pleased young Kennedy, anyway. He was a soldier, not a fawning courtier, and now he had more time for fencing

"So you have failed," Colonel O'Brien said, when the

change in the king's manner became obvious.

"I'm afraid so," said Desmond. "I think I lack the patience

to play the courtier, sir."

O'Brien said nothing more. There was, however, a little smile about his lips, as if he did not lay blame on Ensign Kennedy for the situation.

When he told his friends about his conversation with James, they greeted it with hilarity. "Talking like that to a king," laughed Phelim O'Sullivan. "Why, if it had been any other monarch he'd have cut off your head."

He and O'Neil roared with laughter, but Desmond was not depressed. It was plain that his friends had rather a lukewarm opinion of the man they served, and were delighted that

Desmond should have been so outspoken.

During this time Desmond had acquired a soldier servant, a trooper named Mike Callaghan. Mike was twenty-eight years old, strong and bony. He was the typical Irishman even to red hair and freckles, blue eyes and pug nose. He was a cheerful man, good-humoured and with any amount of shrewdness. In time Desmond grew to rely on his servant's sagacity and would often consult him on matters normally outside a servant's sphere of operation.

After three months' intensive work Desmond was dismissed from drill as being now proficient with the rapier. With more time on his hands he decided to explore Paris, for until now he

had had little time for pleasure.

But O'Neil and O'Sullivan were full of warnings for him. "Don't go round Paris alone," they told him. "If you must go, take your servant, Callaghan. Even in daytime it isn't safe for a well-dressed man -"

"Even an officer in uniform?" asked Desmond, surprised. They smiled at him in superior fashion. "Not even an officer. Paris is full of desperate men. They will cut your throat for your purse any day, or knock you on your head just for your boots. Be always on your guard wherever you walk in Paris."

They then began to tell him of dastardly attacks on good citizens, of murders and outrages, and how even the City Guard would not venture into some streets after ill-doers un-

less in great force and equipped for battle.

Desmond laughed, not in any way deterred. "I'll take the risk," he said. "But I will also take your advice and Mike will

go with me."

O'Neil solemnly shook his head. "We may be looking at you for the last time," he said. "If you're not killed you may 10

be kidnapped and held for ransom like the young lady in the present scandal."

O'Sullivan interposed quickly, "But this is not the work of Paris criminals. This must have originated in high places, and

so far at least there has been no talk of ransom."

Desmond knew what they were referring to. All Paris was talking about the latest piece of court scandal. A girl had disappeared. Her name so far had been kept secret, but it was said that she came of one of France's noble families. It was rumoured that she had set off on some errand in her coach and had simply disappeared. By all accounts it could not, for certain reasons, be a voluntary disappearance, and people were whispering that the affair had been planned by a noble close to the king himself.

With greater leisure on his hands, Desmond began a systematic exploration of Paris. It was a fascinating city, Desmond discovered, the finest in Europe at that day. The weather was good and on an evening he, accompanied by Mike, would stroll along the banks of the Seine or wander through the crowded

streets.

One evening he had gone farther than usual, had passed through the gates and followed the road by the banks of the river. Presently he was passing a lonely house of some size standing back from the road and surrounded by a high wall. Suddenly he heard a scream - a woman's - followed by angry exclamations from two male voices. Then the woman's voice cried out for help.

They halted. Desmond said, quickly, "There is bad work going on, Mike. We must see what it is all about. Go round the wall by the right. I will go round this way. See if there is any

way we can get in.'

They raced away, but met at the back of the house. The wall was unbroken save by the high gate in front. They ran back to the gate and examined it closely. It was not as high as the wall itself but was fully twelve feet, all the same.

"I've got a pistol with me, your honour," Mike said. "I have seen doors blown in by firing a gun through the keyhole."

Desmond shook his head. "I'm not sure we are justified in blowing a hole in the door of a private house. After all, they may be the cries of a mad woman. Let's get over as quietly as possible and see what it is all about."

Mike looked at the gate again. "I'll stand against it," he said. "Get on my shoulders, sir, put your foot on my head

and you will reach the top."

Desmond scrambled up. His fingers closed over the top of the gate. Exerting all his strength he drew himself up. Once on top he braced himself against the wall, lowered his sash, and whispered to Mike to climb up. Mike was an active man and scrambled up beside him.

"Now, drop!" said Desmond and together they dropped

lightly into the grounds of the house.

"What shall we do next?"

"We will unbar the gate and shoot the bolt of the lock. We have no idea how many men there may be in the house. Maybe we shall have to beat a retreat."

The lock was shot without difficulty, but the bolts were still fast, and were not drawn without noise. They pushed back the last of these, and then opened the gate, which creaked noisily

as they did so.

"They can hardly help hearing that," Desmond muttered, and, as he spoke, the door of the house opened suddenly and five men came out, two of them holding torches. A man who seemed to be the leader of the party uttered an exclamation of fury as the light fell upon the figures of the two men at the open gate.

"Cut the villains down!" he shouted.

"Stop!" Desmond cried in a loud voice. "I am an officer of O'Brien's regiment of foot. I heard a scream and a woman's

The man who had drawn his sword paused.

"The cries you heard were those of a mad woman. You had better withdraw at once. I shall report you tomorrow for having forcibly made an entrance into private premises."

"That you are at liberty to do," Desmond replied. "But

I shall not withdraw until I see this lady, and ascertain whether

your story is true.'

"Then your blood be on your own head!" the man said. "At them, men! You know your orders - kill anyone who attempts to interfere with us."

The five men rushed upon the intruders.

"Hold the gate, Mike," Desmond said. "Then they can-

not get behind us.'

They stepped back a pace or two and drew their swords. The position was a favourable one, for the two halves of the gate opened inwards and so protected them from any but an attack in front.

The leader rushed at Desmond, but the latter guarded the sweeping blow he dealt at him, and at the first pass ran him through the body. The other four men, enraged rather than daunted by the fall of their leader, now rushed forward together and one of them, drawing a pistol, fired at Desmond. The latter threw his head on one side as he saw the pistol levelled. The action saved his life, for it was well aimed and the bullet would have struck him full between the eyes. As it was, he felt a sharp sudden pain as it grazed his cheek.

He sprang forward, and before the man could drop the pistol and change his sword from the left hand to the right, Desmond's weapon pierced his throat. At the same moment Mike cut down one of his assailants with his sabre receiving, however, a severe cut on the left shoulder from the other.

Paralysed at the loss of three of their number, the remaining two assailants paused for a moment. It was fatal to one of them, for Mike snatched his pistol from his pocket and shot the man who had wounded him, dead. The other threw down his sword and fell upon his knees crying for mercy.

"Shall I kill him, your honour?"

"No. Fasten his hands behind him with his own belt, and bind his ankles tightly together."

He paused, while Mike adroitly carried out his instructions. "Now we will see what this is all about," Desmond said.

Picking up one of the torches that had fallen from their assailants' hands, and holding it above his head, Desmond entered the house. The sitting-rooms on both sides of the hall were empty, but upon entering the kitchen he found an old woman crouching in a corner.

"Stand up. I am not going to hurt you," Desmond said. "Lead us at once to the chamber of the lady we heard call out."

The old woman rose slowly, took down a key hanging from

a peg, and leading the way upstairs, opened a door.

"Keep a watch upon the crone," Desmond said as he entered. As he did so his eye fell upon a girl of some seventeen years old. She was standing at the window with her hands clasped. She turned as he entered, and as her eye fell upon his uniform she gave a cry of delight.

"Ah, monsieur, you have rescued me! I heard the fight in the garden, and knew that the good God had sent someone to my aid. But you are wounded, sir. Your face is streaming with

"'Tis but the graze of a pistol ball," he said. "I am glad indeed to have been able to render you this service, mademoiselle. It was most providential that I happened to come along the road and heard your screams. What made you call out?"

"I had let myself down from the window by knotting the bed-clothes together. I was trying to draw the bolts of the gate when two of the men suddenly rushed out. It was then that I screamed for help. But where are the men who guarded me?"

"Four of them are dead, mademoiselle, and the other securely bound. Now, if you will tell me who you are and where your friends live, I and my soldier servant will escort

you to them."

"My name is Anne de Pointdexter. I have been kidnapped." "Then I am glad indeed to have been the means of rescuing you. All Paris has been talking of your disappearance for the past ten days. The question is, what would you wish done? It is too far to take you to Versailles tonight, and too late to obtain means of conveyance."

"There is a carriage in the stables behind the house, and

there are some horses.'

"We will see about getting the carriage ready at once."

This was done, and the girl accompanied her rescuers to the back of the house. Here they found a carriage and four horses, two of which stood ready saddled, while the others were evidently carriage horses. These were speedily harnessed and put into the carriage.

"Now, Mike, you had better drive. I will mount one of these saddle-horses and ride alongside. I think, mademoiselle, as the drive will be a long one, it would be as well that we should put the old woman in the carriage with you. Your father may wish

to question her."

The old woman was brought down and made to seat herself facing Mademoiselle Pointdexter. Mike took his seat on the box and Desmond mounted one of the saddle-horses and led the other. They had to make a considerable detour round Paris before they came down upon the Versailles road. The roads were bad, the carriage was heavy, and daylight was already breaking when they entered the town.

Baron Pointdexter had taken up his abode in a large house standing in a walled garden in the lower part of the town. When they reached it Desmond dismounted and rang the bell. After he had done this several times a step was heard in the garden, and a voice asked roughly, "Who is it that rings at this

hour of the morning?"

Mademoiselle Pointdexter, who had alighted as soon as the

carriage stopped, called out, "It is I, Eustace."

There was an exclamation of surprise and joy, bolts were at once drawn and the gate thrown open. An old servitor threw

himself on his knees as the girl entered, and taking the hand she held out to him, put it to his lips.

"Ah, mademoiselle," he said, while the tears streamed down his cheeks, "what a joyful morning it is! We have all suffered,

and monsieur le baron most of all.'

As he spoke, the door of the house opened and the baron hurried out, with the question, "What is it, Eustace?" Then, as his eye fell on his daughter, he gave a hoarse cry, and for a moment swayed as if he would have fallen. His daughter ran up to him and threw her arms round his neck.

"Do you return to me safe and well?" he asked as, after a long embrace, he stepped back and gazed into her face.

"Quite safe and well, father."

"The Lord be praised!" the baron exclaimed.

Desmond saw they were too overcome with joy at their reunion to take much notice of him, so he turned to the servitor and said, "Take hold of this old woman and watch over her. She may be able to give you useful information."

Quietly, so as not to draw attention to himself, he remounted. Mike swung into the saddle of the spare horse, and

they cantered away.

Once clear of the house they rode at top speed for Paris, arriving at the barracks just in time for Desmond to take his place at the early parade.

It had been an adventurous and enjoyable night.

At Versailles

The regiment was on the point of falling in on the parade ground when Desmond Kennedy rode up. Leaping from his horse he threw the reins to his servant.

"Take them both round to the stables and put them in spare stalls, Mike. I will get leave off parade for both of us, and ask the surgeon to dress your wounds properly."

Then he went up to the colonel, who was just entering the

barrack-yard.

"Colonel O'Brien," he said, "I must ask your leave off

parade, for as you see I am scarcely in a condition to take my place with my company."

"So it would seem, Mr. Kennedy. You have been in trouble,

I see. Nothing serious, I hope?"

"Nothing at all, sir, as far as I am concerned. It is merely a graze from a pistol ball."

"Well, I must hear about it afterwards."

"I must also ask leave off parade for Callaghan, my servant, sir. He is hurt a good deal more than I am, though not, I hope, seriously."

The colonel nodded. "I will send the surgeon to your

quarters and he will see to you both."

Desmond went back to his quarters, where Mike joined him a few minutes later. Both now began to feel the effects of a hard night and their injuries, and were glad when the surgeon arrived.

Even so, Desmond made light of his wound. "Attend to my man," he said. "My wound will be all right in a few days, I

The surgeon smiled but insisted on examining him. Then he bandaged the wound and turned to Mike. This was more

"You've got a nasty cut," he said. "Lucky it was not higher. As it is it's not serious, but you will have to keep your arm in a sling for a week or two. You will be excused parades and must not mount a horse until I give you leave."

The cheerful Mike did not seem daunted at the prospect and went off happily to flaunt his sling before his comrades.

Desmond lay down to rest.

After the parade was over, O'Neil and O'Sullivan came up to his quarters, wanting to know what escapade he had been in.

"We give you credit for being a quiet, decent boy," said O'Neil severely, "and here you come home wounded and riding a strange horse. What have you been up to?"

Desmond laughed. He wanted to make light of the whole affair, but clearly some explanation was called for.

"You remember the girl who was kidnapped?"

"Don't tell me you have found her?" O'Sullivan said, and to his astonishment Desmond nodded calmly. "You can't mean it!"

Briefly Desmond told the story of his night's adventures, enjoying the astonishment of his listeners.

When he had finished O'Neil whistled softly. "What a night! 16

What an adventure for our youngest ensign!" Then he became

"You may have made an enemy, Kennedy," he said

shrewdly. Desmond looked at him in surprise.

"Do you realize that you have foiled some man in his plans - undoubtedly a very powerful man? You know what the Court is like - it is full of unscrupulous adventurers, constantly taking the law in their own hands, and if they are favourites with King Louis no harm comes to them. Now you may have

made a powerful enemy by rescuing this poor girl."

Kennedy said, "I hadn't thought of that." He frowned for a moment, then smiled. "But that doesn't worry me. After all,

I have a brigade of Irishmen to protect me."

O'Neil still shook his head. "We are foreigners in this country. You have killed Frenchmen. Their master is going to be terribly angry. Be careful, Kennedy. From now on always be on your guard."

Desmond laughed again, then they departed and he settled

down for some sleep.

Next morning, apart from some stiffness, he felt quite fit for duty again. The colonel summoned him and asked in his kindly way what had happened to him. Again very briefly Desmond recounted the affairs of the night. When he had finished he was surprised to see that the colonel's reaction was the same as O'Neil's.

"You behaved gallantly, my boy," he said. "You are a credit to your regiment. But I'm afraid you may have made yourself a powerful enemy. I'm afraid this is not the end of the

matter."

He gave Desmond leave of absence for the day, and Desmond promptly went round for his horse and rode off towards Versailles. If he had made a powerful enemy, he wanted to know who it was. The only way he could find out was by visiting the Pointdexters. They might know the identity of the kidnapper by now.

On arriving at the house he rang the bell and the same old servitor opened the door to him. To his surprise the old man

said, "The baron is expecting you, monsieur."

Inside the house, Desmond had only to wait a few moments and then the baron came hastening down to meet him. He was a tall, distinguished man of about fifty. He came forward, holding out both hands.

"Monsieur Kennedy," he said, "how can I ever thank you? You saved my daughter, who means more to me than

anything on earth."

Desmond was embarrassed and tried to make light of his part in the proceedings, but the baron merely smiled and shook his head and said, "You are too modest, monsieur. It was a brave and gallant thing you did. Now come and be socially introduced to my daughter."

He led Desmond through into another beautifully furnished salon. The girl rose from a fauteuil when she saw him. The

baron, his eyes shining with pleasure, spoke.

"This, Monsieur Kennedy, is my daughter, Mademoiselle Anne de Pointdexter. It is high time that you were formally presented to each other. This, Anne, is the officer who rendered you such invaluable service."

"We met almost as strangers, mademoiselle," Desmond said, bowing deeply, "for I saw so little of your face the other night, I should hardly have recognized you had I met you

elsewhere."

"I should certainly not have recognized you, Monsieur Kennedy. I did not think you were so young. You had such a masterful way with you. I took you to be much older than you now look.'

"I joined the regiment three months ago," Desmond said,

"and am its youngest ensign."

"Monsieur, I owe to you more than my life, for had it not been for you I should have been forced into marriage with one whom I despise."

"Please say no more about it," Desmond begged. "It was just very fortunate that I was there and able to come to your

assistance.'

The girl smiled and shook her head, and then again the

baron interposed.

"My daughter said you asked her no questions, Monsieur Kennedy. You are therefore in ignorance of the name of her abductor?"

"Altogether."

"It was the Vicomte de Tulle, one who stands very high in the regard of the king, and who is one of the most extravagant and dissipated of the courtiers here. For some time it has been reported that he had nearly ruined himself by his lavish expenditure, and doubtless he thought to re-establish his finances by this bold stroke.

"His plans were well laid: he waited until I had gone to Paris on business that would keep me there for a day or two. A messenger arrived with a letter purporting to be from me,

saying that I wished my daughter to join me at once, and had sent a carriage to take her to me. Anne is young, and suspecting no harm at once entered the carriage. It was broad daylight, and there was nothing to disquiet her until, on approaching the town, the carriage turned off the main road. The carriage stopped, the door was opened, and a man stepped in.

Before she had even time to recognize him he threw a thick cloak over her head. She struggled to free herself, but he held her fast. The journey was resumed and continued for some time. Finally the coach stopped. Then she was lifted out and carried into the house where you found her. The wrapping was removed, and the man who had taken it off, and who by his attire was a gentleman in the service of some noble, said, 'Do not be alarmed, mademoiselle. No harm is intended you. My master is grieved to have to adopt such means, but his passion for you is so great that he has been driven to this step."

"Your master," said Anne, with withering scorn, "is a

contemptible villain."

The man said nothing but led her to a room where she was locked in. It was handsomely furnished, and indeed nothing had been spared to make the prisoner comfortable. Several times a day the old woman brought food for her.

Some days later the old woman entered and announced a

visitor - the Vicomte de Tulle.

The vicomte bowed with respect, and began by apologizing for the steps he had taken to secure her. Anne interrupted him with scorn and anger, but it left the vicomte unmoved.

He stood there, smiling as if amused at her tirade. Finally he said, "I am going now. I shall not pester you with my attentions any further. Here you are and here you will remain until you agree to marry me."

"Then I shall be a prisoner for life," retorted Anne with

spirit.

Again the vicomte smiled. "I will call again in a month's time. Perhaps by then you will have changed your mind."

"However, you upset the vicomte's plans," continued the count, and then his expression changed to seriousness as he went on:

"As soon as I heard her story I went to the palace and asked for a private interview with the king. The king received me graciously enough, and asked, with an appearance of great interest, if I had obtained any news of my daughter.

"'I have more than obtained news, Your Majesty. I have my daughter back again, and I have come to demand justice

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at your hands.'
"'I congratulate you indeed, Baron,' the king said, with an appearance of warmth, but I saw his colour change, and was convinced that he knew something at least of the matter.

"'And where has the damsel been hiding herself?' he went

"'She has not been hiding herself at all, Sire,' I said. 'She has been abducted by one of Your Majesty's courtiers with the intention of forcing her into a marriage. His name, Sire, is the Vicomte de Tulle, and I demand that justice shall be done me, and that he shall receive the punishment due to so gross an outrage.'

"The king was silent for a minute, and then said:

"'He has indeed, if you have been rightly informed, acted most grossly. Still, it is evident that he repented the step that

he took, and so suffered her to return to you."

"'Not so, Your Majesty,' I said. 'I owe her return to no repentance on his part, but to the gallantry of a young officer who heard my daughter's cries for help and went to her aid. In the process he and his soldier servant killed four of the vicomte's supporters.'

"In spite of his efforts to appear indifferent, it was evident that the king was greatly annoyed. However, he only said:

"'You did quite right to come to me, Baron. It is outrageous indeed that a young lady of my court should be thus carried off, and I will see that justice is done. And who is this officer who has rendered your daughter such a service?'

"'His name is Kennedy, Sire. He is an ensign in O'Brien's

Irish regiment.'

"'I will myself send for him,' he said, 'and thank him for having defeated this disgraceful plot of the Vicomte de Tulle.

The king then sent for de Tulle, and in the baron's presence spoke to him very sternly. The vicomte excused his conduct on the ground that he had conceived a great passion for the count's daughter, and sounded very meek and contrite.

The baron thought that the king would at least send the vicomte to the prison of the Bastille, but to his disappointment all he did was to banish him to his country estate, there to remain until the king permitted him to return to court life.

The vicomte bowed and left. The baron was very angry at the villain getting off so lightly and said so, and the king looked very haughtily at him for daring to speak like that in his presence.

Desmond saw that the meeting with the king still rankled with the baron, and could well understand his annoyance. But there was something more to worry the baron.

"My daughter is betrothed to a young landowner of our province. He does not know that Anne has been abducted, but now everyone will know and it will come to his ears. Within a week he will be here, and knowing him he will challenge de Tulle to a duel. The vicomte is an expert swordsman, and I am afraid for Monsieur de la Vallée and my daughter.

"Ah, well," ended the baron suddenly, pulling himself together. "There is one thing I was forgetting. I have the king's order to take you to the palace. Come, let us go at once.

Kings are not meant to be kept waiting."

Bidding good-bye to Anne, they went out to the street. Desmond was alarmed by the thought of meeting the king,

dressed as he was.

"Had I any idea of this," Desmond said, as they walked up the hill towards the palace gate, "I should have put on my full uniform. This undress is scarcely the attire in which one would appear before the King of France, who is, as I have heard, most particular in matters of etiquette."

On ascending the grand staircase the baron gave his name to one of the court chamberlains. They were conducted along a private passage of considerable length. On arriving at a door the chamberlain asked them to wait while he went inside to ascertain whether His Majesty was disengaged.

"His Majesty will see you in a few minutes, Baron," he said when he came out. "The Duc d'Orleans is with him, but

he is taking his leave."

In two or three minutes a hand-bell sounded in the room, and the chamberlain conducted the baron and Desmond into the king's private apartment.

"Allow me to present to Your Majesty," the former said, "Monsieur Desmond Kennedy, an officer in O'Brien's regi-

The king, who was now far advanced in life, looked at the young man with some surprise. "I had expected to see an older man," he said. "So, young sir, you have begun early indeed to play havoc among my liege subjects, for I hear that you and a soldier slew four of them."

"Hardly your liege subjects, Your Majesty, if I may venture to say so, for they were not engaged in lawful proceedings when I came upon them."

A slight smile crossed the king's face. He was accustomed

to adulation, and the simple frankness of this young soldier

surprised and amused him.
"You are right, sir. These fellows do not deserve to be called liege subjects. Now I would hear from your own lips how it was that you thrust yourself into a matter with which you had no concern."

The king listened attentively while Desmond told his story. When he had finished he said, "It was an exploit I should have loved to perform at your age, Monsieur Kennedy. You behaved with gallantry. You are too young yet for me to grant you promotion, but this will be a proof of my appreciation of your conduct.'

Taking a diamond ring from his finger, he handed it to

Desmond, who went on one knee to receive it.

"You will please inform your colonel that when he comes to Versailles I request he will always bring you with him.'

The audience was evidently finished, and the baron and Desmond, bowing deeply, left the king's cabinet. The baron

did not speak till they left the palace.

"Louis has his faults," the baron then said, "but no one could play the part of a great monarch more nobly than he. I have no doubt whatever that de Tulle relied implicity upon obtaining his forgiveness had he succeeded in forcing Anne into marrying him, though doubtless he would have feigned displeasure for a time. He has extricated himself most gracefully. I can quite believe that he did not imagine his favourite intended to adopt so criminal a course, but he could not fail to have his suspicions when he heard of Anne's disappearance. However, we can consider the affair as happily ended. And now sir, the king has expressed his gratitude to you for saving his court from a grave scandal, but how can I express my own at the service you have rendered us?"

Desmond smiled. "For my part I would like to forget the

matter.'

But the baron was not prepared to forget his indebtedness to the young officer. "I am afraid I shall remain your debtor all my life, Monsieur Kennedy. All I can say is that as soon as you can obtain leave you will come and be an honoured guest

at my château in the country.'

"I shall be happy indeed to pay you a visit, Baron, if my military duties permit my absenting myself for a time from Paris. All I know of France is its capital, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to have the opportunity of seeing its country life."

"Our pleasure would be no less than your own, Monsieur Kennedy. There is one thing I must warn you about, and that is you must be careful not to go out after dark. De Tulle has an evil reputation, and is vindictive as well as unscrupulous. Doubtless he has agents here who will have discovered who it was that brought his daring scheme to naught, and probably he will endeavour to be revenged."

"I shall be on my guard," Desmond said quietly.

"You must be careful indeed," the baron said. "Against open violence you can well defend yourself, but against a blow from behind with a dagger, skill and courage are of little avail. When you go out after dark, let your army servant follow closely behind you, and see that his sword is loose in its scabbard.'

Desmond nodded. "Believe me, I will take every precau-

tion."

When Desmond arrived that evening at the barracks he found that the story of the rescue of Mademoiselle de Pointdexter was already known, also that the Vicomte de Tulle had been banished from court.

The whole regiment was delighted with him, and for Desmond the next few days were quite embarrassing. He was glad,

in fact, when the interest began to die down.

Six days later, when Desmond was engaged in the fencingroom, Callaghan came in and told him that a gentleman was at his quarters wishing particularly to see him.

"What is his name?"

"Sure and I don't know, your honour. He did not mention

it, and it was not for the likes of me to ask him."

"Ridiculous, Mike! In future, when anyone comes and wishes to see me, you will say, 'What name shall I tell Mr. Kennedy?'" He put on his uniform coat reluctantly, for he was engaged in an interesting bout with a professor, who was an old friend of the maître d'armes. As he entered his room, a young man who had been staring out of the window, turned. He was a stranger to Desmond.

"I am Desmond Kennedy, sir," the young officer said. "To

what do I owe the honour of this visit?'

"I am Philip de la Vallée," said the good-looking young visitor. Anne's fiancé! "I have come to thank you for what you did the other night."

It was all too embarrassing! Here was someone else pouring

forth words of gratitude. Desmond tried to stop it.

"Please, Monsieur de la Vallée. I am tired of being thanked. Let us only say that I was glad to have been able to help the young lady.'

"You are too modest," the young landowner said. "But I can't forget. Henceforth we must be as brothers. And as a

pledge of friendship, please call me Philip."

"With pleasure," Kennedy replied, and the compact was

sealed with another clasp of the hand.

"And now," said Philip, "let me tell you what is happening at this moment. I came here with the baron -"

"Where is he?" Desmond looked surprised.

Philip smiled. "I suspect he is with your colonel, requesting a month's leave for you so that you can come with us to his château."

"But that's impossible," began Desmond. "Why should I be given a month's leave?"

"I gather you are well in favour with your colonel," said Philip drily. "He seems to think you have brought credit to the Irish Brigade. Besides, you don't know the baron. When he sets his mind on anything, he is very persuasive."

"I would love to go, of course," said Desmond, and the prospect of a month's holiday on a great French estate was

indeed inviting.

"Well, we'll await events and see how your luck runs," said Philip good-humouredly. "Meanwhile, may I ask your advice?"

Desmond nodded.

"My impulse when I heard of de Tulle's dastardly kidnapping was to go to him immediately and challenge him to a duel."

Desmond shook his head. "If you want my advice on that, it would be to keep well out of the vicomte's way. By all accounts he is a proficient swordsman and you are only likely to get killed. Even if you won you would be in great displeasure with the king who has decreed that duelling is now illegal. He would for certain put you in prison."

Philip spoke calmly. "I have thought of that, but it would not deter me. However, my concern is the future safety of my fiancée. The baron and his daughter have a long coach journey

to their estate. I feel sure there will be danger -'

"From the vicomte?"

Philip nodded. "He is a proud man and hates to be thwarted. I feel that he will try once again to kidnap my fiancée and might do so while they are travelling. He will risk the displeasure of the king - who will not be displeased with him for long, anyway, because he is a great favourite at court. That is why I shall not challenge the vicomte to a duel - so that I can ride with them and give them whatever protection my sword provides. It is also another reason why I would like you to travel with us."

"And my advice? What advice can I give you?" "What would you do in these circumstances?"

"I would send for more men to accompany us on our journey," said Desmond promptly. "Even with my servant I feel we would provide weak opposition if the vicomte decided to waylay us.'

At that moment there was a knock on the door and the baron

entered, smiling.

"My dear Monsieur Kennedy, your colonel has been pleased to say that he is pleased to grant the favour I have asked of him. Here is your furlough duly signed. Now it only rests with yourself to accept or refuse my invitation."

"I accept it most gladly, Baron. It will give me the greatest pleasure to accompany you and mademoiselle and Monsieur

de la Vallée, whom I now regard as a friend, to your home."
"That is settled, then," the baron said. "We start early on Thursday morning. It would be well if you were to ride over on Wednesday evening and occupy one of the many spare chambers there are in the house.'

"I will do so willingly, and I shall ask the colonel to allow

my servant to accompany me."

"That is already settled."

"Thank you again, Baron. Mike is a faithful fellow, and a shrewd one. I am so accustomed now to his services that I should miss them and his talk very much."

"Have you heard, Mike," Desmond asked, when his servant came up to his room after the baron and Philip de Vallée had left, "that you are to go with me to stay for a month at Pointdexter?"

"I have, your honour. Sure I was sent for to the colonel's quarters, and there I found a tall gentleman whom I had never seen before as far as I knew. 'This is Mike Callaghan, Mr. Kennedy's servant,' the colonel said, and the baron stepped forward and shook hands with me, for all the world as if I had been a noble like himself, and he said, 'My brave fellow, I have to thank you for the aid you gave your master in rescuing my daughter. Then he gave me a purse, and it fairly staggered me when I found it was full of gold pieces."

"You deserve it," said Desmond, feeling very pleased. "Now let us make arrangements for a month's holiday in the country!"

An Ambuscade

On the morning arranged the cavalcade started from Versailles. Anne had travelled to Paris in the family coach, and she again, with her maid, took her place in it. The baron, M. de la Vallée, and Desmond rode on horseback behind it, two armed retainers rode in front, and two others, with Mike, took their places behind. The old servitor sat on the front seat by the side of the coachman.

"I do not think, Desmond," Philip de la Vallée said, as the baron fell back to talk for a while with his daughter, "that he has the slightest thought of our being attacked by any of the agents of the vicomte. But I have made some inquiries, and from what I have heard I am still convinced that before long he will make an attempt to kidnap Anne. I am told his circumstances are well-nigh desperate. He has mortgaged the income of his estates. He is pressed by creditors who will give him no further grace.

"He is, in fact, a desperate man, and his only hope is in making a wealthy marriage. Therefore, putting aside his pique and anger at having failed, the temptation to again obtain possession of Anne is great. Once married to her he could, even if the king kept him in banishment, well maintain his position

as a country magnate."

"But Mademoiselle de Pointdexter cannot come into the

estates until her father's death."

"Not his estates, but those of her mother, who was also a wealthy heiress, and of which she will enter into possession either on coming of age or on marrying. So you see he can afford to disregard the enmity of her father as well as the displeasure of the king, which probably would soon abate after the marriage took place.

"If I had known when I left home what had happened, I would have brought with me a dozen stout fellows from my estate. As it is, as you advised, I sent off a messenger yesterday with an order to my major-domo to pick out that number of active fellows from among the tenantry, and start with the least possible delay by the route that we shall follow, of which I have given him particulars. He is to ride until he meets us, so that when he joins us we shall be too strong a party for any force that the vicomte is likely to gather to intercept us."

"A very wise precaution, Philip, but we shall be far upon

our way before this reinforcement can come up."

"We shall be some distance, I admit. My messenger will take fully five days in going. He will take another day to gather and arm the tenants, so that they will not start until two days afterwards. However, they will travel at least twice as fast as we, hampered as we are by the carriage."

"You have forgotten one contingency, which would entirely

alter the state of things."

"What is that?" M. de la Vallée asked sharply.
"We give this villain noble credit for resource and enterprise. Suppose he has left a couple of his retainers at Versailles with orders that should any messenger be sent off by a southern road his journey is to be cut short, and any paper or letter found upon him carried with all speed to Tulle? In that case the chances of our being met by a reinforcement are very small."

"Peste! you are right, Desmond. I never gave the matter a thought. Now that you mention it, nothing is more probable. Well, all we can do is to hope that the fellow has not thought of our taking such a precaution, and that my messenger will

arrive unmolested."

Six days passed without anything occurring. Impatient as Philip de la Vallée and Desmond were to get forward, they could not hurry the slow pace at which they travelled. Mademoiselle Pointdexter was now suffering from the reaction after her month of captivity and anxiety. The baron therefore travelled with provoking slowness.

Obtaining as he did relays of horses at each post, they could without difficulty have travelled at almost double the rate at which they actually proceeded, but stoppages were made at all towns at which comfortable accommodation could be obtained.

Indeed in some places the roads were so bad that the carriage could not proceed at a pace beyond a walk without in-

flicting a terrible jolting upon those within it.

"There is one comfort," Philip said, when he had been bewailing the slowness of their pace, "my men should reach us at Nevers at the latest. You may take it as certain that any attempt to interfere with us will take place south of that town. I should guess that it would be somewhere between Moulins and Thiers. If our escort does not come before we reach Moulins I shall begin to think that your suggestion was correct, and that my messenger has indeed been intercepted and slain."

At Nevers, Desmond went round to all the inns in the town to inquire if any body of men had put up at that place, but without success. When he related his failure to Philip, the latter said:

"Well, we must hope we shall meet them before we arrive at Moulins."

The next morning they started very early for Moulins, for the journey would be a longer one than usual, and the road through the forest would probably be so rough that the pace must necessarily be very slow. At two o'clock the men riding ahead noticed that a tree had fallen across the road, and one of them galloped back and informed the baron of it.

"That is strange," the latter said. "There have been no

storms for the past two days."

Philip de la Vallée glanced at Desmond. To both it seemed that this obstacle could scarcely be the result of an accident. "I will see how large the tree is," the baron said. "Whatever its size it is hard if eight men and four horses cannot drag it off the road." So saying, he cantered forward, followed by the retainer, whose comrade also fell in as they passed him.

"Look to your arquebuses," Philip said to the two men on the box, and at the same time called up Mike and the two men from behind. "A tree has fallen across the road," he said. "It is possible this may be an ambush and we may be attacked, so hold yourselves in readiness, look to your pistols, and see that the priming is all right in the pans." Then they went to the door of the carriage.

"It is just possible that we are going to have trouble, Anne," Philip said. "Remember what I told you last night, and on no account move from your seat, whatever may take place."

As he spoke there was a volley of firearms in front, and at the same moment a score of horsemen broke from the trees and rode down upon the carriage. Their leader was masked. As they came up, the coachman and Eustace discharged their arquebuses, emptying two saddles, then, drawing their swords, both leapt to the ground.

In the meantime Philip, Desmond, and the three men dashed at their assailants. Philip made for their leader, who, he doubted not, was the Vicomte de Tulle, but the latter drew a pistol and fired when he was within a horse's length of him. The young man swayed in his saddle and fell heavily to the

ground, while a cry from the carriage rose in the air.

Desmond, after cutting down the first man he encountered, turned his horse and attacked the masked figure, who met him with a fury that showed he was animated by personal animosity.

His skill in fencing, however, gave him but slight advantage in such an encounter, while Desmond's exercise with the sabre in the regimental salle d'armes was now most useful to him. Enraged at the fall of his friend, and seeing that there was but a moment to spare, for already some of the other assailants were coming to the assistance of their chief, he showered his blows with such vehemence and fury that his opponent had enough to do to guard his head without striking a blow in return.

Seeing in a moment that he would be surrounded, Desmond made a last effort. The vicomte's weapon shivered at the stroke, but it somewhat diverted the direction of the blow, and instead of striking him full on the head, the sword shore down his cheek, inflicting a ghastly wound. Then, wheeling his horse, Desmond dashed at two men who were riding at him.

The attack was so sudden that one of their horses swerved, and Desmond, touching his charger's flank with a spur, rode at him and hurled horse and rider to the ground. A backhanded blow struck his other opponent full in the throat, and then he dashed into the wood, shouting to Mike to follow him.

The two servitors had both fallen, and the greater part of the assailants were gathered round the carriage. Mike was engaged in single combat with one of the horsemen, and had just run his opponent through when Desmond shouted to him, so, turning, he galloped after his master. They were not pursued. The fall of their leader had for the moment paralysed the band, and while three or four of them remained by the carriage whose last defender had fallen – the others, dismounting, ran to where the vicomte was lying.

"That was a tough business, your honour," Mike said, as he joined his master. "Sure it has been a bad business altogether. Monsieur Philip is killed, the baron too, I suppose, and all the others, and Miss Anne has fallen into the hands of that

villain again.'

"I do not think that the baron has been hurt, Mike. I expect

the orders were only to take him prisoner."

"Where are we going, your honour?" Mike asked, for they were still galloping at full speed.

"I am going to get into the road again, and try to find help

at Moulins to recover the young lady. There is one thing, she is not likely to be molested by that fellow for some little time."

"Then you did not kill him, your honour?"

"No. I cut through his guard, but it turned my sword. But I laid his face open, and it will be some time before he will be fit to show himself to a lady. If, as I expect, I can get no help at Moulins, I shall ride on to Monsieur de la Vallée's place, gather some men there, and try to cut the party off before they get to Tulle. If I am too late I shall see what I can do to rescue them. From la Vallée I shall go to Pointdexter. I have no doubt that we can get together a force there large enough to besiege de Tulle's castle."

After an hour's ride they arrived at Moulins, and Desmond rode at once to the mairie. Being in uniform he was received with every respect by the mayor, who, however, on hearing his story, said that he did not see how he could interfere in the matter. It seemed to be a private quarrel between two nobles, and even if he were ready to interpose, he had no force available. At the same time he would send out four men with a cart to bring in any they might find with life in them.

"Very well, sir," Desmond said indignantly. "You know your duty, I suppose, and I know mine, and I shall certainly report to the king your refusal to give any assistance to punish

these ill-doers."

So saying, he left the room, and at once rode to some stables. Leaving his horse and Mike's there, he hired others, and then continued his journey south at full speed, and before evening rode into Roanne. Ordering fresh horses to be got ready, he

"Go to all the inns on the left of the main street - I will go to all those on the right - and inquire if a troop of mounted men have come in. I am afraid there is no chance of it, but it is at least worth the trial."

At the first four or five places he visited, the answer was that no such party had arrived. Then seeing one of the civic guards, he asked him if he had seen or heard of a troop of men

passing through the town.

"Such a troop arrived an hour ago, Monsieur l'officier. They stopped as they passed me and asked if Monsieur le Baron Pointdexter had passed through the town. They put up at the Soleil, and I should think they are there now, for they had evidently made a long journey, and their horses were too worn out to go farther."

Delighted at the unexpected news, Desmond hurried to the

inn. It was a second-class establishment, and evidently freequented by market people, as there were large stables attached to it. The landlord was standing at the door. He bowed profoundly, for it was seldom that guests of quality visited the

"What can I do for monsieur?" he inquired.

"You have a party of travellers who arrived an hour ago. I have business with them."

"You will find them in this room, monsieur," the landlord

said, opening a door.

There were some twelve men inside; the remains of a repast were on the table; some of the men were still sitting there, others were already asleep on benches. One, who was evidently their leader, was walking up and down the room impatiently. He looked up in surprise when Desmond entered.

"You are the servant of Monsieur de la Vallée, are you

not?"

"I am, sir," the man said, still more surprised.

"I am a friend of your master. We have been expecting to meet you for the past four or five days. He was travelling south with the Baron de Pointdexter and his daughter. We were attacked this afternoon on the other side of Moulins. The baron and his daughter were, I believe, carried off; the servants all killed. I saw your master fall, but whether mortally

wounded or not I cannot say.'

"This is bad news indeed, sir," the intendant said. "I trust that my master is not killed, for we all loved him. It is not our fault that we are so late. Our master's messenger was attacked near Nevers, and was left for dead on the road. The letter he bore and his purse were taken from him. The night air caused his wounds to stop bleeding, and he managed to crawl to Moulins. Having no money he was unable to hire a horse. He went to an inn frequented by market people, and there succeeded in convincing a peasant who had come in with a cart of faggots that his story was a true one, and promised him large pay on his arrival at la Vallée.

"The pace was, as you may imagine, a slow one, but two days ago he arrived home, and told me the story. I had the alarm-bell at the castle rung at once, and in half an hour the tenants came in, and I chose these twelve, and started an hour later. Fortunately the master had told the messenger what was the purport of his letter, and we have ridden night and day since. I am at your service, monsieur."

"In the first place let your men have a sleep. It is eight

o'clock now. I will give them seven hours. At three in the morning we will mount. Starting in the morning so early we shall have no difficulty in cutting him off long before he arrives at Tulle. He will probably cross the Alier at the ferry at St. Pierre le Moutier."

Desmond now went back to the hotel where he had put up his horse. He found Mike awaiting him there, and the latter was delighted when he heard the news of the arrival of the party from la Vallée. Desmond's purse was but lightly furnished and as he saw that the expenses might be heavy he went

"I want to borrow fifty louis," he said, "on this ring. It is, I imagine, worth a good deal more, since it was a present to me from the king."

The jeweller examined the ring carefully. "It is a valuable one indeed, sir," he said, "and I would willingly lend you double as much upon it.

"Well, we will say seventy-five then," Desmond said. "I

think that will be ample for my purpose."

Having received the money, he returned to the inn, accompanied by Mike, and went round to the various stables in the town, where he hired fifteen horses. These were to be taken to the Soleil at three in the morning, and the men who brought them were to take back the tired horses as security. At that hour the party started, and after a ride of some thirty-five miles reach Clermont, where they stabled the horses for six hours. Late that evening they arrived at Aubusson, having accomplished a journey of some seventy miles.

One of the men had been left at Pont Gibaut with orders to take a fresh horse and ride on to Aubusson, if the party they were in search of passed through the town. At Aubusson Desmond took a fresh horse and rode back to Pont Gibaut, inquiring at all the villages along the road whether a party of twenty men had been seen to cross the road at any point. Then he took four hours' sleep, and at daybreak started back again, making fresh inquiries till he arrived at Aubusson. He was convinced that the band had not at that time crossed the road on its way

At ten o'clock he started out with his party, followed the road by the side of the Crorrere river - here a mere streamlet and halted in a wood about five miles from Felletin. At six o'clock in the afternoon a horseman was seen coming along, and was recognized as the man who had been left at Pont Gibaut. Desmond went out to meet him.

He reported that at twelve o'clock a party of horsemen had come down on to the road a mile to the west of the town. He had followed at a distance, and they had turned off by the track leading to Croc. They had with them a carriage and a horselitter and were travelling slowly.

Desmond and his men at once shifted their position, and took up a post on the track between Croc and Felletin. An hour later the party of horsemen were seen approaching the wood in which they were hidden. Desmond drew up the men, all of whom were armed with pistols as well as swords, in line among the trees. He waited until the carriage was abreast of them, then gave a shout and the men at once dashed upon the escort.

Taken completely by surprise, these made but a poor fight of it. Several were shot down at once. The vicomte, whose head was enveloped in bandages, leapt into the saddle of a horse whose rider had been shot, and drawing his sword, rode at Des-

mond, who was making for the door of the carriage.

Expecting no such attack, he would have been taken by surprise had not Mike, who saw his danger, shouted a warning, and at the same moment discharged his pistol.

The ball struck de Tulle in the forehead, and he fell back

dead. His fall at once put an end to the conflict.

The robbers, who had lost some eight of their number, at once turned their horses' heads and rode off at full gallop. As Desmond drew bridle by the carriage, the door opened and

the baron leapt out.

"By what miracle have you effected our rescue, my dear Monsieur Kennedy?" he exclaimed. "My daughter told me she saw you and your servant break your way through these brigands and ride off. She has been suffering an agony of grief for Philip, whom she saw shot. Have you any news of him?

"None, sir. I, too, saw him fall, but whether he was killed or only wounded I am unable to say. I have sent two men to bring him into Moulins, and I trust they will find that he is only

wounded."

"My daughter saw you cut down that villain with a terrible blow. We have not seen him since, but we know that he was

carried on a horse-litter behind the carriage."

"At any rate, he will trouble you no more, Baron. My man shot him through the head as he was riding to attack me from behind."

"Thank God we are saved from further persecutions! And

now tell me how you came to be here."

Desmond quickly related the events of the past few hours.

In Paris Again

"You have indeed done well, Monsieur Kennedy," the baron said, when Desmond finished his story. "Now let us see to my daughter. Her maid is attending her. She fainted when the fight began. She is not of a fainting sort, but the trials of the last few weeks, and her belief that de la Vallée was killed have very much upset her."

"No wonder," Desmond said. "It must have been terrible indeed to lose her lover, and to know that she was again in the power of that villain."

By this time Mademoiselle de Pointdexter had recovered from her faint. She held out her hand to Desmond as he stood bare-headed beside the door.

"You have rescued me again, Monsieur Kennedy," she said. "I thank you with all my heart."

The party now separated. The baron mounted one of the horses left behind by the brigands, and with the men from la Vallée started for Pointdexter, while Desmond, with Mike Callaghan, rode back to Aubusson. There they slept for a few hours, and then obtained fresh horses and started for Moulins, where they arrived late in the evening. They alighted at the Soleil, where Desmond had ordered the two men who had gone on from Roanne to bring the body of Monsieur de la Vallée.

"The gentleman is not here, sir," the landlord said as he came to the door. "He was brought into the town by the men sent out by the mayor."

"Was he alive?"

"Yes, sir, but, as I hear, the surgeons are unable to decide yet whether he will live."

"Thank God he is alive!" Desmond exclaimed. "I have news for him that will do more than the surgeons can to restore him." Leaving Mike to see the horses stabled, he hurried away to the other hotel. He sent up his name, and one of the surgeons came down.

"Monsieur de la Vallée is very ill," he said, "although his wound is not necessarily mortal. This morning we succeeded in extracting the ball, but he is in a terribly weak state. He is unable to speak above a whisper, and does not seem to care

to make any effort. It would appear that he even does not wish to live."

"I have news that will put fresh life into him."

"Then by all means go in and see him, sir. I will go in and give him a strong restorative, and tell him you are here."

In three or four minutes he came to the door of the chamber

and beckoned to Desmond to enter.

Desmond went up to the bedside and took the hand which lay on the coverlet. The pressure was slightly returned, and Philip's lips moved, but he spoke so faintly that Desmond had to lean over him to hear the words. "I am glad, indeed, that you are safe and sound. I shall die all the easier for knowing you have escaped."

"I escaped for a good purpose, Philip. I have good news for you. Monsieur le Baron and mademoiselle are on their way to

Pointdexter, under the guard of your men."

"Is it possible, Desmond, or are you only saying it to rouse

"Not at all, Philip. I would not hold out false hopes to you or tell an untruth on a matter so vital to your happiness."

Philip's eyes closed, but his lips moved, and Desmond knew that he was returning thanks to God for this unlooked-for news.

"How did it happen?" Philip said, after a silence of some minutes. His voice was much stronger than before, and there was a faint touch of colour in his cheeks. The surgeon nodded approvingly to Desmond, and murmured, "I think he will live."

Very quickly Desmond told his story. By the time he had finished Philip's eyes were shining with joy. He reached out and silently clasped Desmond's hand again.

Then the surgeon interposed, worried in case the exciting

news was too much for Philip.

"You had better go," he whispered, and Desmond rose im-

mediately.

"I will go and have supper," Desmond said, "for I have ridden fifty miles since I last ate, and then it was but a piece of bread with a draught of wine. After that I will, with your permission, return and will take my place by his bedside till morning."

Desmond returned to the Soleil, where he had left Mike. The latter, who had just finished his supper, was delighted to hear that de la Vallée was likely to recover. After satisfying his own hunger Desmond returned to the Couronne. He went upstairs, and, taking off his riding-boots, stole to the door of his

friend's chamber. It stood a little ajar, and, pushing it open noiselessly, he entered. The surgeon who was sitting at the bed-side rose at once.

"He is asleep already," he whispered, "and is breathing quietly. I think he will not stir until tomorrow morning. I shall be here at six. If he wakes and there is any change, send for me at once"

After he had left the room Desmond took his place on the fauteuil by the bedside. For a time he thought over the chain of adventures he had gone through. Gradually, in spite of his efforts, his eyelids drooped. De la Vallée had not moved, and, being dead tired by the exertions of the past four days, he fell into a deep sleep, from which he did not awake until daylight streamed into the room.

Shocked at having thus given way, he looked anxiously at de la Vallée, and was relieved to find that he was lying exactly in the same position and had evidently slept without once waking. Half an hour later Philip opened his eyes, looked wonderingly at him, and then said:

"So it was not all a good dream, Desmond? You are really

here and your news is true?"

"Certainly it is true, Philip. By this time Mademoiselle de Pointdexter and her father are far on the way home."

The surgeons now arrived, and were delighted at the change that had taken place in their patient.

"And when shall I be fit to travel, doctor?"

"Ah, well, we will talk of that in another fortnight's time. You have had a very narrow escape, and you are fortunate indeed to have got off with only a trifling detention."

"But I might be carried in a horse-litter?"

"Certainly not at present," the surgeon said decidedly. "Possibly in ten days you might without danger be carried, providing they take you in short stages and with easy-paced horses."

"You don't think that I should be able to ride, doctor?"

"Certainly not in less than a month, probably not in six weeks"

"Then I must be carried," Philip said. "I should work myself into the fever you talk of if I were to be kept here. What are your plans, Desmond?"

"I have not thought of them yet. At any rate I shall stay with you till you are well enough to start."

"I could not think of that, Desmond."

"You have no say in the matter, Philip. In the first place,

you will get on all the faster for my being with you; in the next place, ten days of my leave are already expired, and were we to go on straight to Pointdexter I should only have a few days there before starting back for Paris, and I must therefore postpone my visit to some future time. I can stay here ten days, accompany you some four days on your journey, and then turn back again."

"A nice way of spending a month's holiday!" Philip

grumbled.

Half an hour later a messenger started, carrying a note with a few words from Philip to Anne, and a longer letter from Desmond to the baron. Four days later answers were received. The messenger had arrived at Pointdexter two hours before the travellers reached home, and Anne's joy at the news that Philip was alive was great indeed. The baron wrote to Desmond as well as to Philip, again expressing the deep gratitude of himself and his daughter. With the letter the messenger brought a bag of money, concerning which he wrote:

You have, I know, dear Monsieur Kennedy, expended a considerable sum of money in hiring relays of horses for yourself and M. de la Vallée's men, and this, of course, is a debt you cannot object to my repaying. Without knowing the exact sum, I have roughly calculated the probable amount, and forward it to you by the messenger who will bring you this letter.

Desmond had no hesitation in accepting the money. The baron had evidently taken considerable pains to calculate the sums that he must have laid out, in order not to hurt his feelings by sending a larger sum than he had spent, for the amount contained in the bag was but a few louis over his disbursements. He at once rode over to Roanne and redeemed his ring, which had proved of more value to him than he had ever anticipated.

At the end of the ten days Philip was strong enough to walk across the room, and the surgeon gave permission for him to start if instead of being carried all the way he would be taken to Lyons, which was but twenty miles distant, and there take

boat down the Rhone to Viviers.

Desmond went with him to Lyons, and saw him comfortably bestowed on board a craft going down the river, and there left him in charge of his own retainers. Then, accompanied by Mike, whose wound was now well healed, he rode back to Paris by comparatively easy stages, arriving there on the day before his leave was up. He reported himself to the colonel.

"So you have not been to Pointdexter after all! I received

a long letter a week ago from the baron, sent by special messenger, giving me a full account of your doings, which reads like a chapter of romance. He mentioned that he had also written to the king denouncing the conduct of the Vicomte de Tulle, and stating that in the fight between his own rescuers and the vicomte's band the latter was killed, and doing full justice to the part you played in the affair. I had a message from His Majesty yesterday, ordering that you should, as soon as you returned, go at once to Versailles, in order that he might question you further on the affair.

"I have another piece of news for you. We have received

orders to march in three days' time."

"Had I better start at once for Versailles, sir?"

"I think so. The king is not pleased at being kept waiting. He is sure to ask you when you arrived. You had better take one of my horses. I will order it to be brought round, and it will be at your quarters by the time you have put on your full uniform."

The king had just returned from hunting when Desmond arrived at the palace and gave his name to one of the ushers. Five minutes later he was conducted to the king's dressing-

"This is a serious business, young sir, in which you have been engaged," the king said shortly to Desmond as he entered.

"I am aware of that, Sire, and yet I am well assured that every officer in Your Majesty's service would have acted as I did under similar circumstances."

"The Baron de Pointdexter has written to us fully on the matter," the king said, "but we wish to hear the account from your own lips. When did you return to Paris?"

"But two hours since, Sire."

"Then you have lost no time in presenting yourself here. Now tell us the whole matter, omitting no detail."

Desmond told the story fully.

The king asked no questions until Desmond finished his story. "You did well, sir," he then said, "and the conduct of the Vicomte de Tulle was outrageous. We should have visited him with our heaviest displeasure had he not already received his deserts. It is intolerable that a noble gentleman with his daughter cannot travel along the high-roads of our kingdom without being thus assaulted. We thank you, sir, for having thwarted so daring and villainous a scheme. You have begun your career well indeed, young sir. Your regiment is about to

start for the frontier; we shall direct your colonel to report to us from time to time as to your conduct, and shall see that your promotion is in accordance with your actions, and shall request him to offer you any opportunity that may occur for distinguishing yourself."

Desmond rode back to Paris well satisfied with the result of the interview. He had not been slow in noticing that although the king's approval of his actions had been warmly expressed in words, there was a certain coldness in the tone in which they were spoken. It showed that although the king's sense of justice constrained him to praise, he was at heart sore at the death of one who had been a favoured companion in his sports and amusements. On his return he found his two friends waiting for him at his quarters. They gave him a hearty greeting.

"You are a perfect paladin, Kennedy," O'Neil said, "and though we are all proud of you we cannot help feeling a little envious that such adventures have all fallen to the lot of our junior ensign. It is evident that if you were not born with a silver spoon in your mouth, fortune determined to make up in other ways by giving you such chances as do not fall to the lot of anyone else."

"Yes, I think I have every right to consider myself exceptionally fortunate."

"You may have been fortunate, Kennedy," O'Sullivan remarked, "the thing is, that you took advantage of the opportunities."

"You are a curious fellow, Kennedy," O'Neil said with a smile, "and I should be very much puzzled if I were called upon to predict what your fate is likely to be. It seems to me that you have an equal chance of becoming a French marshal or being broken on the wheel.

"Here you are, not yet seventeen. You have, as I doubt not, somewhat interfered with the king's plans, and caused him the loss of one of his personal friends. You have twice rescued a noble lady from the hands of her abductors. You have brought disgrace and death upon a member of one of the most powerful families in France. You have earned the gratitude and friendship of one of the leading nobles of Southern France, that of the fiancé of his daughter, and of the daughter herself.

"As soon as this affair spreads abroad you will be the object of everyone's attention. You have rendered the regiment to which you belong proud of you, its junior ensign, and made Paris emphatically too hot to hold you. If all this is done before you are seventeen, what may we expect when another ten years

have passed over your head?"

"You had better wait for the ten years to pass, O'Neil," Desmond laughed. "By which time perhaps you and O'Sullivan will both have learned wisdom, and will see that because a man happens to have gone through a very exciting adventure without discredit, it by no means proves him to be anything in the smallest degree out of the way.

To Scotland

Two days later the regiment was paraded, but no order had been received for their start, and their destination was still uncertain. The officers stood in a group awaiting the arrival of the colonel, who entered, accompanied by Colonel Wauchop and several other Irish officers.

As there had been no notice of an official inspection there was a general feeling of surprise at the appearance of the visi-

tors. The colonel rode up to the group of officers.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I must ask you all to accompany me to the common room. I have news of importance to give you.'

He and those with him dismounted, and followed by the wondering officers of the regiment went into the large room

where they gathered in the evening.

"The news that I am about to give you is of an important and happy nature. His Most Gracious Majesty has decided to send an expedition to Scotland, where the whole country is ready to rise in favour of our lawful king."

A cheer broke from his hearers.

"Many Scottish and Irish gentlemen," the colonel went on, "have been selected to accompany it. Among them is my friend Colonel Wauchop and the officers with him. The expedition will consist of six thousand French troops. I regret to say that no Irish regiments will accompany it.'

A groan of disappointment followed this announcement.
"We must hope," the colonel said, "that Irish troops are not employed only because it is intended that another expedition will sail to Ireland, in which case we may be sure some of us will have an opportunity of fighting again on our own side of the water.

"Moreover, between France and Scotland there has long been a close connection and friendship, and the employment of French troops would therefore better suit the Scots than would Irishmen. Another reason perhaps is, the King of France does not like to spare his best troops when he has sore need of them in Flanders and Spain.

"However, a number of Irish officers will accompany the expedition for the purpose of drilling and commanding the new levies, for which work they will be far better suited by their knowledge of English than French officers would be. Therefore the various Irish regiments are all to furnish a certain number

of lieutenants.

"The secret of the expedition has been well kept, but I have known it for a fortnight, and have prepared a list of the fifteen officers who are to go. I may say that, in order to avoid partiality I have, with one exception, selected them by lot. Those who are to go will doubtless consider themselves fortunate; those who are to stay are still more lucky, if, as I hope, the regiment will form part of a similar expedition sent to Ireland."

He then read out the list of the officers chosen. O'Sullivan and O'Neil were both among them, and the name of Desmond

Kennedy was the last read out.

"You will, gentlemen, start in an hour's time, taking the northern road through Montvidier and Arras. In each of these towns you will be joined by officers from other regiments. Colonel Wauchop will accompany you. I do not name the port from which you are to sail, and no word must be said by you as to the route you are to travel, but you can no doubt judge for yourselves by the road that you are taking what port is your destination.

"The French troops will already be there, and the fleet is all in readiness. You all have horses. You can each take your soldier servant with you, but those who do so must either hire or purchase a horse for him. All further details you will learn from Colonel Wauchop, and the paymaster will have orders to issue two months' pay to each of you in advance. The distance will be about a hundred and fifty miles, and you will perform it in five days."

Colonel Wauchop then addressed a few words to the officers,

all of whom were under the rank of captain.
"Gentlemen," he said, "you have an honourable task before you. For years we have been waiting for the day when our swords might aid to place our king upon the throne. At last it has come. I need not say that the struggle will be a severe one, and that your courage will be taxed to the utmost, but

you have proved that in a score of desperate fights.

"The task before you will need tact to no ordinary degree. The Scotch are as peppery a race as the Irish are, and it will be necessary in no way to hurt their feelings or to excite among them the smallest degree of discontent at being drilled and led by men who are not of their own race. And now, as we have much to do before starting, I will leave you to make your arrangements. The rendezvous for us all is in your barrack-yard, and at nine o'clock we shall be here."

The colonel now left the room, and the officers eagerly and excitedly talked over the startling news that they had just heard. The greater part of those who had been selected for the service were delighted to go, while the others were equally pleased at the thought that they might shortly be fighting for King James

on the soil of Ireland.

"Sure, your honour, I wish it had been in the ould country instead of Scotland," Mike said when he heard the news.

"I cannot say that I agree with you, Mike. In Ireland we should find tens of thousands of brave hearts ready to join us, but they are unarmed, undrilled, and undisciplined, and would be of comparatively slight assistance to us against the English troops. Defeat would bring down fresh persecutions, fresh confiscations, and greater misery upon the land."

"Sure we would beat them, your honour."

"We might, Mike, but you must remember that we failed to do so even when the people were armed. No doubt we shall take a certain amounts of muskets and ammunition with us, but the power of England is stronger in Ireland now than it was then – the influence of the old Irish families is broken, and even if we armed all who joined us, it would be but an armed rabble and not an army.

"In Scotland it is altogether different. The Scottish clans would join us under their chiefs, to whom they give absolute obedience, and they would turn out armed and ready for action. So I think that, allowing that Ireland is as loyal as Scotland,

the choice has been a wise one."

"Sure, you know best, your honour, but I will warrant that as soon as Scotland rises, Ireland will be in a blaze from one end to the other."

"That may well be, Mike, but there will then be a chance of success, since the English forces will be fully occupied by our descent in the north, which will threaten London, while Ireland can be left to itself until the main question is settled." "It is mighty lucky, your honour, that I should have stuck to the horse we got when we rescued Miss Pointdexter."

"I am very glad too, Mike, for otherwise I should have had to buy one, and it is likely enough that I may want all the money I have before this campaign is over."

O'Neil and O'Sullivan at this moment burst into the room.

"It is glorious that all we three should be going, Kennedy!" the latter exclaimed. "Just your luck! You are the only ensign named, while the regiment will be left with only four lieutenants."

Having seen that all was ready for departure, Desmond went to the colonel's quarters to say good-bye. The colonel smiled his usual pleasant smile, then said, suddenly, "Perhaps you guessed, Kennedy, that you were the one exception I mentioned to the rule I adopted of fixing by lot upon those who were to go."

"No, sir," said Desmond in surprise. "I thought it an ex-

traordinary piece of good fortune."

The colonel shook his head. "In the past forty-eight hours I have heard that friends of de Tulle have made very strong representations to the king. They want you to stand trial for the death of the vicomte."

Desmond looked startled.

"The king, however, received their charges coldly, saying that de Tulle had brought his fate upon himself. I would like to think that is the end of the matter, but I am uneasy. It would not be hard for de Tulle's friends to hire assassins to kill you. Therefore I decided the best thing was to get you out of France for a while. Hence your selection for this expedition."

"I am very much obliged to you," said Desmond grate-

fully. He saluted and left.

At nine o'clock the party started. It numbered some fifty officers, Scotch and Irish. The baggage had started half an hour before; it was to join the carts with the baggage of the other officers outside the northern gates, and was under an escort of dragoons whose officer had powers given him to requisition fresh horses at each town through which he passed, and so to push on to the port with but two halts. Once off, there was no longer any necessity for keeping their destination a secret, and the officers were informed that Dunkirk was the harbour from which they were to sail.

The journey was a pleasant one, and all were in the highest spirits. A short distance behind them marched a body of infantry composed entirely of non-commissioned officers, of whom O'Brien's regiment furnished thirty. All were picked men and, marching each day as far as the party of officers rode, arrived at Dunkirk on the fifth day after starting, and were at

once embarked on the ships of war.

Colonel Wauchop and the officers of O'Brien's regiment were told off to the Salisbury, which was a ship that had been taken from the English and was now loaded with military stores, arms and munitions for the use of those who were expected to join them on landing. After seeing that the officers were all properly accommodated the colonel went ashore, and when he returned it was at once seen by the expression of his

face that something was wrong.

"I have very bad news," he said. "King James, who arrived here two days ago, has been taken suddenly ill, and until he is partially recovered we cannot sail, for it is absolutely necessary that he should be with us. This may mean the delay of a week or ten days and may defeat all our arrangements. The English Government have spies here as well as elsewhere, and their fleet has for the last week been hovering off the coast. They may not have known the purpose of the assembly of troops here, for this has been kept strictly secret, but the arrival of King James of course showed what was the intention, and as soon as the news reaches London you may be sure that the English fleet will be sent to intercept us."

It was indeed ten days before James was sufficiently recovered to be embarked – a delay which probably cost him his kingdom, for there can be no doubt that on landing he would have been joined at once by all the great clans and by no small

proportion of the able-bodied men of the country.

The consequences were so evident to all engaged in the expedition that despondency took the place of the enthusiasm with which they had embarked. The fact that the expedition, after being so carefully and secretly prepared, should at its outset meet with so serious a misfortune was considered an omen of evil.

At last, however, James embarked under a salute by the guns of the ships of war, and as the sails were hoisted and the anchors weighed, the spirits of all again rose. They had sailed but a few miles when it became evident that the Salisbury was the slowest ship in the fleet, for although she had every stitch of canvas set, she lagged behind the rest, and the other vessels were obliged to lower some of their sails in order to allow her to keep up with them.

"I begin to think, Kennedy," O'Neil said, "that the good

fortune that has hitherto attended you has spent itself. O'Sullivan and I both regarded it as a good omen that you should be the one ensign selected to go with us, but this miserable delay at Dunkirk, and the fact that we are on board the slowest tub in the fleet, seems to show that Dame Fortune is no longer going to exercise herself in your favour."

"It looks like it, indeed," Desmond agreed. "Still, I can't

"It looks like it, indeed," Desmond agreed. "Still, I can't hold myself responsible for either the king's illness or for our

being allotted to this heavy-sailing craft."

A constant watch was maintained at the mast-head of the ship, but no signs were seen of the English fleet until on the 23rd of March, six days after sailing, they reached the mouth of the Firth of Forth, and were congratulating themselves that they had brought the voyage to a successful termination.

At daybreak next morning, however, just as they were about to enter the estuary, they beheld the masts of a great fleet coming out to meet them. This was the squadron of Sir George Byng, which had for some days been on the coast, having been dispatched as soon as the news reached London of the gathering of ships and troops at Dunkirk, and of the arrival of the Pretender there.

The French admiral at once signalled to all the ships to put about, and he lay off until the English fleet were near enough to discern its composition, which was far superior in force to his own. Seeing the impossibility of landing the troops and stores, and the slight chances of success in giving battle he hoisted the signal for all to make their way back to Dunkirk, keeping as much as possible together, in order to defend themselves if overtaken or if intercepted by another hostile fleet.

selves if overtaken or if intercepted by another hostile fleet.

In vain James begged that a few boats might be given him with which to land with his chief followers. The French admiral replied that his instructions would not justify him in doing so, and that he had been ordered to specially protect the person of the young king, whose safety was of the highest concern to his sovereign.

It was with the deepest feeling of disappointment and depression that the Scotch and Irish officers heard that it was

determined to sail for Dunkirk again.

Had the troops on board the ships been of their own nationality, they would have ordered them to disobey the admiral's commands, and to insist upon the fleet, if it succeeded in evading the pursuit of the enemy, making another effort to effect a landing. As, however, all the soldiers were French with the exception of the two or three hundred non-commissioned Irish

officers, they were powerless, and were half-mad with rage and

"This looks bad for us," O'Sullivan said to his two friends. "I think that the French ships will outsail the English, but there is little chance that this unwieldy craft will do so. In which case, my friends, it is likely that we shall all see the inside of an English prison, and that probably not a few of us will be executed. The colonel should be safe, for he came over with the Brigade after Limerick, and therefore by that treaty was allowed to enter the service of France; but it is different with the rest of us. We have all joined since those days, and are therefore not covered by the treaty, and so are liable to be tried as traitors."

O'Neil shrugged his shoulders. "Well, we knew that when we joined," he said. "However, I hardly think they are likely to proceed to such an extremity. Very many of our Brigade have been taken prisoners at Blenheim and other places, and they have always had the same treatment as other prisoners of war."

"That may be," O'Sullivan replied, "but this is a different matter. It is not a question of war on foreign soil. We were going to attack the throne of Anne, to promote civil war, and to overthrow the Government. The attempt once made can be made again, and you may be sure that the news of our sailing has created a tremendous scare throughout the country.

"However, we are in for it, and there is no use grumbling against fate. Already, you see, the rest of the fleet are leaving us - faster, I think, than the English fleet are gaining on us and I trust they will get safely away into Dunkirk. The fact that we so nearly succeeded will perhaps act as an inducement to Louis to renew the expedition, and the loss of a colonel, fifteen lieutenants, and thirty non-commissioned officers will not seriously affect anyone except ourselves."

"However," Desmond put in, "I think that, after all, things may not be as bad as you think. In the first place, our execution would have an extremely bad effect in Scotland and Ireland, and would add to the general hostility to the present Government. In the next place, Louis has many English prisoners in his hands, and might threaten reprisals. Lastly, there is always a chance of escape."

"Your first two arguments are good, Kennedy," O'Neil said, "but I cannot say as much for the last. The chances of escape from an English prison must be small indeed.'

"Nevertheless there must always be chances," Desmond

said. "If you will take my advice you will at once go below and conceal your money.'

"Where are we going to conceal it?" O'Sullivan said. "You

may be sure that we shall be searched."

"Well, you took my advice in changing the silver in which you were paid into gold, though you lost pretty heavily by the transaction. We did it to prevent lugging about a heavy bag of silver. Now it has its advantages. You could not hope to conceal silver, but we may at least hide a few pieces of gold. Mike is a handy fellow, and I have no doubt will be able to help us. At any rate let us go below and see what can be done."

Mike was summoned to the cabin. "Now, Mike," Desmond said, "I suppose in a campaign a good many of you carry what money you may have about you, and I dare say some of you hide it so that if you are taken prisoners you may have means

of adding to your prison fare."

"We do, your honour, and by the same token I have a score of crowns in between the soles of my boots. It does not always succeed, for if your boots happen to be good, the chances are that someone takes a fancy to them. Still, on the whole, that is the best place there is, for they are sure to feel all the lining of your clothes."

"Well, we want to hide some gold, Mike. In another hour we shall have the English within shot of us and of course fighting is out of the question. Do you think that you will have time to hide a dozen gold pieces in each of our boots?"

Mike looked doubtful.

"To do the thing properly, your honour, one should take off the lower sole, take some leather out of the upper one, put some money in, and then sew it up again. But it would take more than an hour to do one pair."

He thought for a moment.
"The quickest way would be to get out the inside lining of the sole, then to cut out enough leather for the money to lie in, then to put in the lining again. It would not be soft walking on a twenty-mile march, but I think if I get the lining in tight with a few little nails to keep it from dropping out if anyone takes the trouble to turn the boots upside down, I might manage it."

"Well, let us begin at once then, Mike. We have all got riding-boots, and can put them on before we are taken prisoners. Take the linings out as you say, and then we will help to cut

out some of the leather of the upper sole."

They were quickly at work. Mike cut out enough of the thin

lining to make a hole large enough to hold ten louis in each boot, and he and the two officers then set to work to cut out a sufficient depth of leather for the coins to lie side by side. Half an hour sufficed for this. The coins were put in. Mike had in the meantime obtained a handful of pitch and melted it at the galley fire. This he ran in over the gold, and then replaced the pieces of lining with hot pitch.

"There, your honours," he said, when he had finished. "I call that a neat job, and it would be hard indeed if the spal-

peens find that there is anything amiss."

The three young men went on deck. The leading vessel of the British fleet was not more than a mile astern, while the French fleet was three miles ahead, having gained more than a mile since the chase began. Mike had been given four louis, which he said he could hide in his mouth. Five minutes later there was a puff of smoke from their pursuer's bow. The ball struck the water close to them.

"Shall I hold on, Colonel?" the captain of the ship asked

Colonel Wauchop.

'There is no use in your doing so. That ship will be alongside in an hour, and it might only cause a useless loss of life were we to keep on. If she were alone I should say let her come alongside, and with your crew and our officers and men we might take her by boarding. But with the whole fleet close behind us it would be madness to think of such a thing, as we have but twelve guns, and those of small weight.'

Accordingly the topsails were run down, the courses brailed up, and the ship lay motionless till the English frigate came up. Signals had been exchanged between the English vessels, and as they came along six of them dropped boats, each with some twenty men in it. While these rowed towards the prize, the fleet pressed on under all canvas in pursuit of the French

squadron.

The English officer in command of the boats received the swords of the French officers, and the non-commissioned officers were all sent below into the hold. All sail was at once got on to the vessel again, and she followed in the wake of the fleet. The English lieutenant then took the names of the prisoners.

"You are all Irish," he said seriously. "I am sorry, gentlemen, that this should be so, for I fear that it will go harder with you than if you were French when, of course, you would be

merely prisoners of war.'

"We should be prisoners of war now," Colonel Wauchop said. "We are in the service of the King of France, and were but obeying his orders, along with our French comrades."

"I hope they may see it in that light in London," the officer said courteously, "but I doubt whether at the present moment they will take a calm view of the subject. However, I hope they will do so, especially as no shot has been fired by you, and they cannot charge you with resisting capture. At any rate, gentlemen, I will do my best to make you comfortable while you are under my charge. I must ask a few of you to shift your quarters so as to make room for me and the three officers with me. Beyond that you will continue as before to use the ship as passengers."

When darkness set in, the pursuit was discontinued. The French fleet was fully ten miles ahead, and it was evident that there was no chance whatever of overtaking it, while there was a risk of its doubling back during the night and again making its way north. The greater part of the sails of the men-of-war were therefore furled, while the frigates and corvettes made off on either hand to establish themselves as sentries during the night, and to give warning should the French fleet be seen

returning.

An hour and a half after the pursuit had ceased the Salisbury joined the fleet, and the officer in command went on board the admiral's ship to report the number of prisoners taken and the nature of her cargo. The officers had, at his invitation, dined with him and his officers in the cabin. All political topics had been avoided, and no one who had looked in would have supposed that the majority of those present were the prisoners of

The Irish temperament quickly shakes off a feeling of depression, and the meal was as lively as it had been during the voyage north. The lieutenant, however, omitted no precaution. A dozen men kept guard over the prisoners below, and as many more with loaded muskets were always stationed on deck.

The Irish officers saw that among many of the sailors there was a strong feeling of sympathy with them. The fleet had been largely recruited by impressment, and by the handing over to the naval authorities of numbers of men imprisoned for comparatively slight offences. As was natural, these had but small feeling of kindness towards the government who had so seized them, while many shared in the feeling of loyalty towards the house of Stuart, which was still so prevalent among the population.

At daybreak the cruisers all returned. None had seen any signs of the French squadron, and Sir George Byng, leaving the majority of the fleet to maintain watch, sailed with his

prize for Harwich.

Here the prisoners were handed over to the military authorities, while the admiral started for London in a post-chaise to carry the news of the failure of the French to effect a landing, and of their return to Dunkirk - news that was received with exuberant delight by the supporters of Government and the commercial portion of the population, who had been threatened by ruin. The run upon the banks had been unprecedented, and although the House of Commons had relaxed the regulations of the Bank of England, the panic was so great that it could not have kept its doors open another twelve hours.

The treatment of the prisoners was now very different from what it had been on board ship. Not only were they confined to prison, but to their indignation irons were placed on their legs as if they had been common malefactors. The only mitigation allowed to them was that their servants were permitted to

attend upon them.

Their clothes had been rigorously searched and their boots taken off, but no suspicions had been entertained that coin had been hidden in those of Desmond and his friends. Two days later an order was received from Government, and the officers were marched up to town, ironed as they were, under a strong guard, and were imprisoned at Newgate. Callaghan and the other servants remained in prison at Harwich.

"Things are looking bad, Kennedy," O'Neil said dolefully, for the three officers had, at their own request, been allotted a

cell together.

"They don't look very bright, but we must make allowance for the awful fright that has been caused by the expedition. Possibly when they have got over the shock, things may be

"I will never forgive them for putting irons on us," O'Sullivan said passionately. "If they had shot us at once it was, I suppose, what we had a right to expect, but to be treated like

murderers or ruffians of the worst kind is too bad."

"Well, we were rid of the irons as soon as we got here. No doubt these were only put on to prevent the possibility of any of us escaping. I am sure by their looks that some of our escort would willingly have aided us, only that it was impossible to do SO.25

"I never saw such a fellow as you for finding excuses for people," O'Sullivan said almost angrily. "You look at things as calmly as if they concerned other people, and not ourselves.

Kennedy smiled. "It is best to look at the matter calmly, and to form our plans, whatever they may be, as if they were

intended to be carried out by other people."

O'Sullivan laughed. "My dear fellow, if you had not gone through those adventures I should have said that you had mistaken your vocation, and were cut out for a philosopher rather than a soldier. However, although your luck did not suffice to save the Salisbury from capture, we must still hope that it has not altogether deserted you. Anyhow, I am convinced that if it be possible for anyone to effect an escape from this dismal place, you are the man."

Newgate in those days stood across the street, and constituted one of the entrances to the city. Its predecessor had been burnt in the great fire of 1666, and the new one was at this time less

than forty years old.

Though close and badly ventilated, it had not yet arrived at the stage of dirt and foulness which afterwards brought about the death of numbers of prisoners confined there, and in 1750 occasioned an outbreak of jail-fever which not only swept away a large proportion of the prisoners, but infected the court of the Old Bailey close to it, causing the death of the lord mayor, several aldermen, a judge, many of the counsel and jurymen, and of the public present at the trials. The outward appearance of the building was handsome, but the cells were for the most part small and ill-ventilated.
"This place is disgraceful," O'Neil said. "There is barely

room for our three pallets. The air is close and unwholesome now, but in the heat of summer it must be awful. If their food is as vile as their lodging, the look-out is bad indeed."

"I fancy the cells in the French jails are no better," OSulli-

van said.

"You are learning philosophy from Kennedy," O'Neil said

with a laugh.

"I don't know that I shall feel philosophic if we are served with nothing but bread and water. However, the turnkey told us that until we have been tried and condemned we are at liberty to get our food from outside. It is a comfort that we are to take our meals together, and the money we have in our boots will alleviate our lot for some time. Probably it will last a good deal longer than we are likely to be here."

When they joined their companions in the room in which they were to dine, all were astonished at seeing an excellent

dinner on the table with eight bottles of wine.

"Is this the way they treat prisoners here?" Colonel

Wauchop asked one of the jailers, of whom six remained

The man smiled. "No, indeed, it has been sent in from a tavern outside, and with a message that a like meal will be provided as long as you are here. One of us was sent across to inquire as to the person who had given the order. The landlord said that he was stranger to him, but that he had paid him a night in advance, and would call in and renew the order at the end of that time."

"Well, gentlemen," the colonel said, "before we begin to eat we will drink the health of our unknown benefactor. Not only is the gift a genorous and expensive one, but it cannot be without danger to the donor, for none but a strong adherent of King James would have thought of thus relieving our necessities.

It was plain that the authorities suspected that some message might have been sent in to the prisoners concealed in the viands. The bread had been cut up into small squares, the crust had been lifted from two pasties, and the meat had evidently been carefully searched. The turnkeys placed themselves round the table so that they could narrowly watch every one of the prisoners as they ate, and notice any movement that would seem to indicate that they had come across some pellet of paper or other substance.

Every day the servants at the tavern brought in similar fare, and this continued as long as the prisoners were in the jail. It was of deep regret to all that they were never able to discover the name of the person to whom they were so much indebted.

An Escape From Newgate

After being allowed to remain an hour at the table, the prisoners were again marched off to their cells.

"I wish we had Mike with us," Desmond said, as he and his comrades discussed the possibility of escape. "He is a shrewd fellow, and would probably be allowed greater freedom in moving about the prison than we are. Of course the first question is, are we to try bribery, or to work our way out of this cell?"

"I think it would be dangerous to try bribery," O'Sullivan remarked. "Our turnkey is a sour-faced rascal. I am convinced that if we were to try to bribe him he would denounce us at once."

"I don't blame him," O'Neil said. "He is, as you say, a sour-looking rascal, but I don't think that he is a fool." "Then let us put that idea altogether aside, O'Neil, and give

our whole attention to the manner in which we are to escape."

"The manner in which we to try to make our escape!" O'Neil repeated with a laugh.

"Well, put it that way if you like. Now in the first place there is the window, in the second the door, and lastly the walls and floor.'

"The door would withstand a battering-ram," O'Sullivan said. "I noticed as I went out that it was solid oak some four inches thick, with two bolts as well as the lock and, moreover, if we could get through it we should be no nearer escaping than we are at present. What with the corridors and passages, and the turnkeys and the outer gate, that course seems to me im-

possible. Let us come to the second point, the window.' They looked up at it. The sill was fully six feet from the ground. The window was a little over a foot wide, with a heavy

bar running down the centre, and cross bars.

"The first point is to see where it looks out on," Desmond said. "I will stand against the wall, and as you are the lighter of the two, O'Neil, you can stand on my shoulder and have a good look out and tell us what you see. Give him your hand, O'Sullivan. Put your foot on that, O'Neil, and then step on my shoulder."

O'Neil was soon in his place. "You need not hold me," he said. "The wall is very thick, and there is just room for me to

take a seat on the edge."

He sat looking out for a minute or two before he spoke.

"Well, what can you see?" O'Sullivan asked impatiently. "This room is on the outer side of the prison," he said. noticed as we came in that it was built along on both sides of the gate, and no doubt this side stands on the city wall."

"Then what do you see?"

"I see the ground sloping steeply down to a stream that runs along the bottom of it. There are a good many small houses scattered about on the slope and along by the stream. Over to the left there is a stone bridge across it. Near this is a large building that looks like another prison, and a market-place with stalls in it. Houses stand thickly on either side of the road, and beyond the bridge the opposite side of the slope is covered with them. Among these are some large buildings. If we were once out, there would not be much chance of our being detected if we had something to put over our uniforms.

But of course they would betray us to the first man we met."
"Yes, of course," O'Sullivan said, "but we might possibly obtain plain clothes at one of those small houses you speak of,

though that would be risky.

"But it seems to me that we are beginning at the wrong end of the business. It is of no use discussing what we are to do when we escape till we have settled upon the manner in which we are to get out. Let us talk over that first. Are the bars firmly in, O'Neil?"

O'Neil tried with all his strength to shake them.

"They are as firm as the walls," he said. "There is no getting them out unless we have tools to cut away all the stonework round them."

"I suppose there is no chance of cutting through them?"

O'Sullivan asked.

"There is not," O'Neil said. "We have not got such a thing as a knife about us. If we had, we could never saw through these thick bars. It would take a year of Sundays."

"You are rather a Job's comforter. Now, get down and let Kennedy and myself have a chance of a breath of fresh air, to

say nothing of the view."

A few minutes satisfied O'Sullivan, but Desmond, when he took his place, sat there considerably longer, while the other two, throwing themselves on their pallets, chatted gaily about Paris and their friends there.

"Well, what conclusions do you arrive at?" they asked when

he leapt down from his seat.

"They are not very cheering," he replied, "and I recognize that we cannot possibly make our escape without aid from without."

"That is the same as to say that we cannot make our escape at all."

"Not exactly. We have found one unknown friend who supplied us with our dinners. There is no reason why we should not find one who would supply us with means of escape. There must be a great number of people who sympathize with us, and whose hearts are with King James. I have seen several men come from the market, stand and look up at this prison, and then walk off slowly as if they were filled with pity for us. Now, I propose that one of us shall always be at the window."

"Oh, that is too much!" O'Sullivan said. "That ledge is so narrow that I could hardly sit there even holding on by the bars. As to stopping there half an hour, I would almost as soon be on the rack."

"There will be no occasion for that," Desmond said. "We can easily move one of the pallets under it, pile the other straw beds upon it, and, standing on these, we could look out comfortably, for our shoulders would be well above the ledge."

"I don't see that we should be nearer to it then, Kennedy." "We should have gained this much, that directly we saw any person looking up with a sympathizing air, we could wave our hands and attract his attention. If disposed to help us he might give some sign; if not, no harm would be done. We might, too, tie a handkerchief to the bars, which in itself might be taken for

an indication that there are followers of the Stuarts here." "But supposing all this turned out as you suggest it might, how could even the best-disposed friend do anything to help

us?"

"That is for after-consideration. Let us first find a friend, and we shall find a way to open communication with him. We have no paper, but we could write the message on a piece of linen and drop it down. As far as we can see from here, there is nothing to prevent anyone coming up to the foot of the wall

For the next four days nothing whatever happened. They could see that the white handkerchief at the bars attracted some attention, for people stopped and looked up at it, but continued their way without making any gesture that would seem to show that they interested themselves in any way in the matter.

On the fourth day Desmond, who was at the window, said in a tone of excitement, "There is a man down there who is making his way towards us. I can't make out his face yet, but there is something about him that reminds me of Mike, though how he could be here when we left him in the prison at Harwich is more than I can say."

O'Neil and O'Sullivan in turn looked through the window. Not being so much accustomed as he was to Mike's figure and walk, they could not recognize in the man, in the dress of a country peasant, the well-set-up soldier who attended on Des-

"If it is," Desmond said, "all our difficulties are at an end, and I will wager that we shall be free in three or four days. Now, how are we to communicate with him?"

"I have a piece of paper in my pocket. It is only an old bill," O'Neil said. "But as we have no ink, nor pen, nor charcoal, I don't see how it can benefit us.

He drew the bill from the pocket of his coatee. Desmond

took it, and stood looking at it in silence for a minute. Then an idea occurred to him.

"I have it!" he exclaimed presently. "O'Neal, see if you

can get a piece of this gold wire off my facings."

Somewhat puzzled, O'Neil did as he was requested. Desmond straightened out the fine wire wrapped round the centre thread, doubled, and again doubled it, and finally twisting it together, reduced it to a length of about an inch and the thickness of a pin. The others looked on, wondering what was his intention. He held the paper out before him, and began pricking small holes through it close together. He continued to work for some time, and then held it up to the light. The others understood the nature of his work, and they could now read:

Come ten tonight under window. Bring long thin string. Whistle. We will lower thread. Tie end of string to it. Will give further instructions.

He tore off the portion of the bill on which the message was written, twisted off two of the buttons of his coatee, folded them in the paper, and took his place at the window again. The man who had been watching was standing some sixty feet from the foot of the wall. His back was towards them. Presently he turned, carelessly looked up at the window, and then, as if undecided what to do, took off his cap and scratched his head.

"It is Mike sure enough," Desmond exclaimed. And thrusting his hand through the bars, waved it for a moment. Then taking the little packet, he dropped it. Mike put on his hat again turned round, then looked cautiously to see that no one was noticing him, and strolled in an aimless and leisurely way towards the wall. Desmond could no longer see him, but felt sure that he would find the missive. Presently he came in sight again, walking quietly away. He did not look round, but when nearly at the bottom of the hill turned, lifted one hand, and disappeared behind some houses.

"He can't read," Desmond said, "but I have no doubt he will get someone to do it for him."

A vigilant watch was kept up, but nothing was seen of Mike till late in the afternoon, when he emerged into one of the open spaces. They had now taken the handkerchief down from the window, and directly they saw him Desmond waved it, showing that they were watching him. He threw up his arm, turned, and disappeared again.

"He has made out my message," Desmond said. "We may expect him here at ten o'clock."

While he had been watching, his two comrades had, under his instructions, been unravelling a portion of one of their blankets. When enough thread had been obtained the strands were tied together and doubled, and Desmond had little doubt that it was sufficiently strong to draw up the string Mike would bring with him. He now took another portion of the bill, and pricked upon it the words:

At nine tomorrow night. Bring, if possible, fine steel saw, two files, and small bottle of oil. Fasten these to string we will lower with further instructions.

He then opened his coatee, took out some of the white wool with which it was padded, formed this into a loose ball in the centre of which the note was fastened, and all being in readiness, waited patiently until just as the city clock struck ten they heard a low whistle.

The ball had already been attached to the end of the thread, and Desmond at once lowered it down. Presently they heard another whistle, and hauling at it again they found that the ball had gone, and attached to the end of the thread was a very light silken cord, which they drew in. There was another low whistle, and all was silent.

"So far, so good," Desmond said. "We are fairly on our way to liberty. How long do you suppose it will take us to cut through these bars?"

"It would take us a long while to file through them all," O'Neil said, "but with a fine steel saw I should think that a couple of nights' work should do it."

"Well, there is no particular hurry, for we know that no day has yet been fixed for our trial. So whether it is one night or six, it does not matter much."

On the following evening at nine o'clock the whistle was heard, and another ball lowered down at the end of the string. The instructions this time were:

When we are ready we will show a handkerchief at window. Bring with you at nine that evening rope strong enough to bear us, and have disguises for three ready for us at foot of wall. Herewith are ten louis to purchase three disguises.

The cord brought up a small packet which contained two very fine small steel saws, two files, and the oil. They did not lose a moment in setting to work, and, oiling the saws, one began to cut through the central bar just above the point where the lowest cross bars went through it, as they determined to

leave these to fasten the rope to.

There was not room for two of them to work together, and they agreed to take it by turns, changing every quarter of an hour. To their great satisfaction they found that the saw did its work much more quickly than they had expected, and by the time each had had a turn the bar was cut through. By morning the side bars had also all been cut. They did not attempt to cut the main bar higher up, as, had they done so, it would have been difficult to keep the portion cut out in its place.

When it was light they filled up all the cuts with bread, which they had managed to secrete in the palms of their hands at dinner. This they kneaded into a sort of putty, rolled it in the dust of the floor until black, and then squeezed it into the

"There is no fear of their noticing it," O'Neil said when they had finished. "I cannot see the cuts myself from the floor, though I know where they are, and unless they were to climb up and examine the place very closely they would not see anything wrong."

"Shall we hang out the flag today, Kennedy?"

"I think we had better wait till tomorrow. He will be hardly expecting to see it today, and may not be ready with the rope

and disguises."

The next morning the signal was hung out. They saw nothing of Mike, but as he would be able to make out the handkerchief from a considerable distance they had no doubt whatever that he had observed it but thought it prudent not to

show himself near the prison again.

As soon as it was dark they recommenced work, and had cut through the main bar and cautiously lowered the grating to the ground before the clock struck nine. Then, on hearing Mike's signal, they lowered the cord, and soon brought up a rope which although small, was more than strong enough to support them.

"We had better tie some knots in it," Desmond said. "They

will help us to avoid sliding down too rapidly."
"How close shall we put them, Kennedy?"

"About two feet apart, then we can come down hand over hand, helping our arms by twisting our legs round it. Now," he went on, when they had finished the knots, "who will go down first?"

"You had better go," O'Sullivan said. "You are the lightest of us, and, I fancy, the strongest too."

"Very well. However, here goes. We may as well leave our coatees behind us. They might get us into difficulties if we took them."

So saying, he took off his coat, fastened the end of the rope securely to the bars that had been left for the purpose, and, holding it firmly, made his way through the opening and swung himself over. With his muscles strengthened by military exercises and sword practice, he found it easier work than he had expected. The depth was some sixty feet, and in a couple of minutes his feet touched the ground. Mike had been hanging on to the rope to steady it, and as Desmond descended he seized him by the hand and shook it enthusiastically, murmuring, "My dear master, thank God that you are free!"

"Thanks to you also, my dear fellow. Now, hold on again. My friends O'Neil and O'Sullivan shared my cell with me, and

are following me."

He added his weight to that of Mike, and it was not long before O'Neil came down, but not so quietly as Desmond, for his strength failed him, the rope slipped rapidly through his fingers, and Mike and Desmond narrowly escaped being knocked down by the suddenness with which the descent was made. He stood for a minute wringing his hand, and swearing in an undertone in English, Irish, and French.

"By the powers," he said, "it has taken the skin off the inside of my hands entirely! A red-hot poker could not have done it more nately! Mike, you rascal, what are you laughing at? I have a mind to break your bones before thanking you."

O'Sullivan succeeded better, but was completely exhausted

when he joined his friends.

"Now, Mike, where are the disguises?"

"Here they are, your honour. They are just like my own. Loose coat, rough breeches, white stockings, buckled shoes, and soft hats with wide brims. I thought you would pass better like that than in any other way, for if you were dressed up as citizens your tongues might betray you. Somehow they don't speak English as we do, and whenever I open my mouth they discover I am an Irishman."

Desmond laughed. "There would be no difficulty about that. Now, let us put on our disguises at once and be off. I see you have brought shoes. I forgot to mention them. Our jack-boots

would have attracted attention, so we have left them behind us, after getting our stores of money from their hiding-places."

They were soon dressed.

"What are we supposed to be, Mike?"

"You are sedan-chair men, sir. Most of the chairs are carried by Irishmen, who seem to be stronger in the leg than these London folk. You will have to cut your hair short, and then you will pass without observation."

"Where are you taking us to?" Desmond asked, as they

descended the hill.

"I have got a lodging in a house out in the fields. I said that I was an Irishman who had come to London in search of employment, and that I expected three friends to join me, and that we intended to hire chairs and carry the gentry about, for here they seem too lazy to walk, and every one is carried, though it is small blame to them, for dirtier streets I never saw. They are just full of holes where you go in up to the knee in mud and filth of all kinds. Faith there are parts of Paris which we can't say much for, but the worst of them are better than any here."

"What have you brought these sticks for, Mike?" for he had

handed to each a heavy bludgeon.

"Sure, your honour, 'tis not safe to be in the streets after nightfall. It is like that part of Paris where no dacent man could walk without being assaulted by thieves and cut-throats. Dressed as we are, it is not likely anyone would interfere with us in the hope of finding money on us, but they are not particular at all, at all, and a party of these rascals might try to roll us in the mire just for fun. So it is as well to be prepared."

However, they met with no interruption, passed out through Holborn Bars, and soon arrived at the house where Mike had taken a lodging. They were not sorry, however, that they were armed, for several times they heard outbursts of drunken shout-

ing and the sound of frays.

Mike had hired two rooms. In one of these were three straw beds for the officers, he himself slept on a blanket on the floor of the other room, which served as kitchen and sitting-room. Now for the first time they were able to talk freely,

"Mike, we have not said much to you yet," Desmond began, "but I and these gentlemen are fully conscious that you have saved us from death, for we hear that Government is determined to push matters to the extremity, and have all the officers captured condemned to be hanged."
"Bad cess to them!" Mike exclaimed indignantly. "If I

had two or three of them it's mighty little they would talk of execution after I and me stick had had a few minutes' converse with them. As to the getting you out, I assure you, your honour, there is little I have done except to carry out your orders.'

"When I first saw the prison and the little white flag flying from the window, I said to myself that, barring wings, there was no way of getting to you, and it was only when I got your

first letter that I saw it might be managed.

"Faith, that letter bothered me entirely. I took it to the woman down-stairs and asked her to read it for me, saying that I had picked it up in the street and wondered what it was about. She was no great scholar, but she made out that it was writ in a foreign language, and seemed to her to be a bit of an old bill. When I took it up to my room I looked at it every way. I knew, of course, that it was a message somehow, but devil a bit could I see where it came in.

"I fingered it for an hour, looking at it in every way, and then I saw that there were some small holes pricked. Well, I could not ask the woman what they meant, as I had told her I picked it up, so I went across to an Irishman, whose acquaint-

ance I had made the day before.

"'I have got a message,' I said, 'pricked on a piece of paper. I picked it up, and am curious-like to know what it is about.'

'So he held it up to the light and read out your message. "'I think,' says he, 'it is some colleen who has made an appointment with her lover. Maybe she has been shut up by her father, and thought it the best way to send him a message."

"'That is it, no doubt,' says I; 'and it is plain that it never

came to his hand.'

"The next day I went to him again with the second letter.

"'It's lying you have been to me,' he said. 'It is some plot

you are concerned in.'

"Well,' says I, 'you are not far wrong. I have some friends who have suffered for the Stuarts, and who have been laid by the leg, and it's myself who is trying to get them out of the hands of their persecutors.'

"'In that case I am with you,' he said, for I have suffered for the cause myself, and if you want assistance you can

depend on me.'

"'Thank you kindly,' says I. 'Just at present it is a oneman job, but maybe, if I get them out, you will be able to give us some advice as to how we had best manage.' So that is how it stands, your honour."

"And now tell us how you got away, Mike. You may guess how surprised we were when we first made you out, believing

that you were safe under lock and key at Harwich."

"The matter was easy enough," Mike said. "It took me two or three days to get to understand the position of the place, with water all round it except on one side, and it was plain that if I were to start running it is little chance I should have if I

did not hit upon the right road.

"Luckily they were mounting some cannon the day after you were taken away. We were ordered to go out and lend a hand, so it was not long before I learnt enough to know which road I ought to take. I was always a good runner, your honour, and many a prize have I carried off at fairs in the old country before troubles began. So it seemed to me that if I could have anything of a start I ought to be able to get off.

There was nearly half a mile betwixt the town and the place where the narrow ground at whose end we stood widened out into the country. If I could only hold my own as far as that, I could take to the woods and lanes and save myself.

"A guard of soldiers with muskets and bayonets went out with us, and at the end of the second day I managed to slip off and hide behind a pile of cannon-balls. The rest assembled at a spot about fifty yards away, to be counted before they

marched to prison again.

"As soon as the others had got there, and the guards had gathered round, I went off as hard as I could tear. And a good start I should have got if it hadn't been that a sentry on a fort close by fired his piece at me. Still, I had a good hundred yards start. The guards set to to run after me, and when they got in sight of me fired their guns, but they were flurried, and the bullets flew past without one of them touching me. Then I felt pretty safe. If they stopped to load their muskets. I should get clean away. If, as I expected, they would not stop for that, they would not have a chance with me, carrying their muskets and cartridge-boxes and belts. I had taken off my coatee and boots while I was waiting for the start, and went up the hill like a deer. I did not look round till I got to the top, then I found that I had gained a hundred yards on them. I doubled down a lane at once, and then struck through some orchards, and ran without stopping maybe a couple of miles.

"I never heard any more of the soldiers, and knew that for the present I was safe, though maybe they would send some dragoons to scour the country when the news came in. I went on at a jog-trot till it was quite dark, then I sat down to think what

I should do next. I had got my four louis with me, for they hadn't found them when they searched me.

"The first thing was to get some duds, and I walked along till I saw a light in a cottage, which I entered. There were two women there. I told them at once I wanted clothes, and was ready to pay for them, but that if they would not give them to me for money, I should take them without paying. Though I could see that they doubted the payment, and regarded me as a robber, they brought out the clothes which belonged, one of the women said, to her husband. I took what I wanted.

"'Now,' I said, 'how much shall I pay you for these?'

"They were still terribly frightened, and said that I was welcome. However, I put one of my louis down on the table. This was certainly more than the clothes ever cost, so I said:

"Here is a gold piece, but I want a shilling in change to

buy food with.'

"At first they hardly thought I was in earnest, then at last, when they found that I really intended to give the money they brightened up and not only gave me a shilling in change, but offered me some bread and cheese, which I was glad enough to

"Then I put the clothes on over my own, not wishing to lave anything behind that would show searchers that it was I who had been there. I told the woman that the coin was a French one but that it was worth about the same as an English guinea. I advised them to put it away for the present, and not to try and change it for a few weeks, as inquiries might be made as to how they had obtained it.

"I had no difficulty on my way up to London. I avoided the main road till I got to Colchester, and after that walked boldly on, having money to pay for victuals. When I got to town I changed another of my louis at a money-changer's.

"I then fell across the Irish porter I told you of. He told me whereabouts I could get lodgings, and advised me to apply to one of the men who let out a number of sedan-chairs, to hire one out to me by the week. Well, your honour, once I had taken the lodging, I thought no more of the chair, but went about the business for which I had came to London. I had not been an hour in the town before I made the acquaintance of half a dozen at least of my countrymen, and found out which was the prison in which you were kept. And now, what is your honour going to do next?"
"I don't know, Mike. We must talk it over."

Kidnapping a Minister

In spite of the war between the two countries communications were frequent. Smuggling boats brought over, with their cargo of wine and brandy, Huguenot fugitives, and by the same means secret agents carried back news of events in Paris, to the Government.

Having decided upon making for the coast without delay. Desmond and his friends next discussed the port to which they had best travel and which seemed to offer the fairest opportunities. They agreed that Weymouth seemed to be most advantageous, as it was from there that the communications with Brittany were chiefly maintained.

At the same time it was evident that considerable difficulty would be experienced in discovering the men engaged in such traffic and in making an arrangement with them, and it was allimportant that no time should be lost, for there was no saying

when the trial might come on.

"If only we could but get hold of Godolphin,"* Desmond said next morning, "we might get an order from him to embark

in one of the boats carrying his agents."

The others laughed. "Yes, and if you could get hold of Queen Anne you might persuade her to sign an order for the release of our comrades."

Desmond did not answer, but sat thinking for a few minutes. "It is not so impossible as you seem to imagine," he said at last. "Doubtless, like everyone else, he goes in a sedan-chair to the meeting of the council, and returns in the same manner. There

are two ways in which we could manage the matter.

"Of course he has his own chair, with his chair-men in livery. We might either make these men drunk and assume their dress, or attack them suddenly on the way; then we should of course gag and bind them, and carry him here and force him to give us an order for the boatman to take us across the channel at once. Of course we should have horses in readiness, and ride for the coast. We should have a twelve hours' start, for it would be that time before our landlady came in as usual with our breakfast, when Godolphin would, of course, be released."

The two officers looked at each other astounded at the audacity of the scheme that Desmond had quietly propounded. O'Sullivan was the first to speak. "Are you really in earnest,

'Quite in earnest. I do not see why it should not be done."

"Well, you are certainly the coolest hand I ever came across," O'Neil said. "You are proposing to seize the first minister in England as if it were merely an affair of carrying off a pretty girl quite willing to be captured. The idea seems monstrous, and yet, as you put it, I do not see why it might not

"I hardly think that it could fail," Desmond said quietly. "De Tulle managed to carry off the Baron de Pointdexter's daughter from the court of Versailles, and did so without any hitch or difficulty. Surely three Irishmen could arrange an affair

of this sort as well as a French vicomte."

"If it is to be done," O'Sullivan said, "I think the second plan is best. You might fail in making the chair-men drunk, whereas you could have no difficulty in silencing a couple of chair-men by a sudden attack - a sharp rap on the head with these bludgeons ought to settle that affair."

"Quite so," Desmond agreed, "and while Mike and one of us were so employed, the other two might throw open the doors of the chair and gag Godolphin before he was conscious of what

was happening."

"It all seems simple enough, Kennedy, and if it were a citizen one would think nothing of the undertaking, but it is nothing short of high treason for us thus to make free with the

person of the chief minister of England."

That is a matter that does not concern me at all, O'Neil. If we were captured now, we should be executed for high treason with the others, and if we carried off Anne herself they could not do much more to us. Now, it seems to me that if you are both agreed that we should carry out the plan, the first thing is to arrange for horses, or, better still, for a light cart to carry the four of us. I should think that Mike would, among his acquaintances, be able to hear of a man with a couple of fast horses and such a cart as we require, who would agree to drive us to the coast, arranging a change of horses. on the way. He could offer ten louis, which would be a sum that a man of that kind would be well satisfied with."

"I will see to that, your honour. I have no doubt that I can find such a man without difficulty. When would you want

him?"

"Tonight, certainly, with the arrangement that if we do not come to the appointed spot we shall be there tomorrow night. Recollect ten louis is all we can afford, but if he wants any more he must have it.

"Well, we will leave that to you." Then he went on to the others: "We had better go down to St. James's. Mike can go out and buy us three shock-wigs, with which we can cover our hair and look our parts better. We had better separate when we get there, and watch the entrances to the palace, gazing about like rustics. Then we can get into a conversation with any servant that we see, and try and find out from which door members of the council usually issue, and at about what hour."

"You will have more than the two chair-men to deal with, your honour, for there are sure to be two link-men with the chair."

"Well, it will be as easy to dispose of four men as of two, Mike."

"Every bit, your honour, and the more of them the more divarsion."

An hour later they set out, now so well disguised that no one would have dreamt that the three Irishmen were officers in a French regiment, and before noon Desmond succeeded in obtaining from a scullion employed in the palace the particulars that he required. Desmond then rejoined his companions, and they at once returned to their lodgings, where they found Mike awaiting them.

"I have managed it, your honour, but it will cost twelve louis. He will be ready with his cart at twelve o'clock a hundred yards or so outside the last houses on the south side of the Old Kent Road. I could not tell him which port you would go to, but he said from there he could go to Dover, or turn off so as to make for Southampton or Weymouth. It is to be twelve pounds if it is Dover or Southampton, fifteen pounds if it is to Weymouth."

Dover or Southampton, fifteen pounds if it is to Weymouth."

"That is satisfactory," Desmond said. "Now we have nothing else to do till ten o'clock tonight when, as the boy said, the council generally ends, though we will be there an hour earlier in case they should leave before. Now I think we had better find out where Godolphin's house is, and fix upon the best spot for the attack, and how we shall each station ourselves."

This part of the business offered no difficulties. They found that the minister would probably be carried through St. James's Park, and they fixed upon the spot where they would await his coming.

Mike was to attack the first porter. O'Sullivan was to follow close behind him and at the same moment fell the rearmost man. O'Neil and Desmond, who were to conceal themselves among trees on opposite sides of the path, were to spring out and strike down the link-bearers, and then enter the chair and bind and gag the minister.

Mike was sent out to buy a pot of black paint with which to efface the gildings of the chair, and to reduce its appearance to that ordinarily used by the citizens. He was ordered to get a supply of rope and some wood to make gags for the men they were to stun.

The others were to post themselves at the spot agreed on, while Desmond was to remain at the entrance to the palace by which ministers would issue, to note Lord Godolphin's chair, and when he was fairly on his way to follow it for a short distance to make sure that it was being taken through the park, and then to run and warn the others to be in readiness.

On their return to their lodging they are the dinner that Mike had got in for them, and as they drank their wine, laughed and joked over their enterprise, for now they were fairly embarked upon the scheme the two officers were as eager as Desmond in the matter, and were much more excited over the prospect than he was.

Before nine o'clock they and Mike were posted in the park, and Desmond was at the entrance to the palace. Here seven or eight chairs with their bearers and link-men were assembled. As most of the porters were hired men Desmond readily entered into conversation with them, and expressed his desire to see the great persons and learn which were their chairs, so that he should know them as they entered them.

In half an hour there was a stir, and a servant, coming out, shouted: "His Grace the Duke of Somerset's chair". This was at once brought up to the door. Next came a call for the chair of Mr. Henry Boyle, who was followed by Harcourt, the attorney-general, then the chair of My Lord Godolphin was summoned.

Desmond and three or four others who had gathered to see the members of the council come out had been ordered off by the sentries as soon as the first chair was called, but remained near enough to hear the names. To his satisfaction Godolphin's chair was carried off in the direction they had anticipated, and he at once ran on and joined his companions. Presently the lights carried by the two link-men were seen approaching, and as the chair came abreast of him he shouted, "Now!"

Almost simultaneously the four heavy cudgels alighted on the heads of the four men, levelling them senseless to the ground and O'Neil and Desmond sprang to the chair and wrenched the door open, while O'Sullivan and Mike bound the four men

and thrust the gags into their mouths.

Lord Godolphin had been thrown from his seat by the sudden fall of his bearers, and was seized and bound before he was conscious of what had happened. Then his captors assisted the others in carrying the fallen men to some distance from the path. A couple of minutes sufficed to cover the gilding and armorial bearings upon the chair.

The torches were still burning on the ground. One of these was stamped out; Desmond took the other. Mike and O'Sullivan went between the poles, adjusted the leathern straps over

their shoulders and started.

Emerging from the park at Charing Cross, past the old church of St. Martin's in the Fields, and keeping round the walls to Holborn Bars, they made their way to their lodging, and Godolphin was carried into their room, which was on the ground-floor. Mike and O'Neil then took the chair away and left it in a narrow alley, where it was not likely to attract attention until the morning. Not until they returned was anything said to their prisoner. It had been agreed that O'Neil, as the senior, was to be spokesman of the party.

"Lord Godolphin," he said, "I regret that circumstance have obliged us to use force towards you, but those circumstances compel us to leave the country at once, and it has appeared to us that in no way could we get away so expeditiously as with the aid of your lordship. We will now set you free. I must tell you beforehand that if you attempt to raise your voice and give the alarm we shall be constrained to blow out your brains.

Mike now released him from the bonds and removed the gag from his mouth, but for a time the minister was incapable of speech, being choked by anger at the treatment he had received.

"You will repent this outrage," he burst out at last.
"I think not, sir," O'Neil said quietly. "At any rate we are quite ready to take our chance of that. In order that you may feel at ease with us, I have no hesitation in telling you who we are. We are the three French officers who, as no doubt you have heard, yesterday escaped from Newgate, and we are anxious to get out of the country as soon as possible. It will also be a guarantee to you that we have no designs on either your pockets or your person."

Angry as he still was, it was evident by the expression of the minister's face that the information was a relief to him, for indeed he had supposed that he had been carried off by political enemies and was very uncertain as to what would

"What is it that you require then?" he asked after a pause.

"Merely this, sir, that you will give us an order upon an agent through whom you communicate with France to take us

across the channel immediately."

"Well, gentlemen," Godolphin said more calmly, "I must say your coolness surprises me. Your escape yesterday was of course reported to us, and the manner in which you obtained that rope by which you descended is a mystery that the jail authorities are wholly unable to solve. If you obtain the order you desire, will you give me your word of honour that it shall be used in a manner in no way hostile to the interests of this country, but solely, as you say, for the purpose of conveying you across the channel?"

"That promise we give willingly. We must ask you to pledge your honour as a gentleman that the order you give us will be a genuine one - a matter that we cannot ascertain until we arrive at the address given. We are willing to play fairly with you, sir, but if you do not do the same we shall certainly return to London, though in some different guise, and, if so, I warn

you that no guards will save you from our vengeance."
"You need not threaten, sir," Lord Godolphin said calmly. "I will give you the order to the person to whom such communications are addressed, and it shall be couched in the same words as usual."

Desmond placed a sheet of paper, pen, and ink before him. He, dating it from the Treasury, wrote:

To John Dawkins, Mariner, High Street, Rye. Urgent. On the receipt of this you will at once convey the bearer and three persons with him and land them in some convenient spot

He then added his signature. "Now, gentlemen, what next?"

he said, looking up.

O'Neil looked at his companions, and then they spoke for a moment together. "We are about to start at once, my lord," he said, "and it was our intention to have left you bound and gagged until the morning, when the woman of the house would have assuredly found you and released you. But as you have acceded to our request at once, if you give us your word of honour that you will raise no alarm and say no word of this business until eight o'clock tomorrow morning we will let you

depart at once.'

"Thank you for your courtesy, gentlemen, and for your confidence in my honour. I am, indeed, anxious to return home at once. If I do not, there will be a hue and cry for me, and by the time I return in the morning all London will know that I am missing. Naturally I should not wish this adventure to become a matter of common talk, in the first place because the position in which you have placed me can scarcely be called a pleasant one; and secondly, because the success of your enterprise might lead others to make similar attempts on my person or that of my colleagues. Even now, I fear that my servants, when sufficiently recovered, will go to my house and give the alarm."

"I do not think that that is likely to be the case, my lord," O'Neil said, "as we took the precaution of gagging and binding them, and laid them down some distance from the roadside. If on your return home you find they have not arrived, you have but to send a couple of your servants out to release them."

"Very good, sir," Godolphin said, with a grim smile. "I must really compliment you all on your fertility of resource and invention. And now, is there anything else that I can do

for you?"
"There is one small favour," Desmond said. "Your lordship has doubtless twenty guineas in your possession. You would greatly oblige us if you would give us them for so many louis. These you will have no difficulty in exchanging, whereas the exhibition of French money on our part might excite sus-

Lord Godolphin placed his hand in his pocket, drew out a heavy purse, and, opening it, counted out twenty guineas. O'Neil took these up and handed to him twenty louis pieces.

"One more question, gentlemen. What has become of my

sedan-chair?"

"It is in an alley hard by," O'Neil said, "and as we are ourselves going in your direction we will carry it to your door.'

"You are obliging indeed, sir. If it had been found, the escutcheon on the panels would have shown that it was mine."

"I fear, my lord, that you will have to have it repainted, for before starting with you we took the precaution to put black paint over the gilding and panels. Still, the lining and fittings would show that it belonged to some person of wealth and importance. As you have been so obliging to us we will gladly escort you with it to your door."

"I shall be glad, indeed, gentlemen, for I certainly should not care about travelling alone through these lanes and alleys, which have by no means a good reputation."

"We are ready to start at once, my lord," O'Neil said. "We have a long journey to perform, and although there is now no need for extraordinary speed we shall be glad to be

off." They were ready at once, having settled with their landlady before starting out in the evening. Mike and Desmond fetched the empty chair, and they then started, Godolphin walking with the other officers in front.

"This is the most surprising adventure that ever happened to me," Lord Godolphin said. "It is a pity that officers who possess the wit to plan an escape from Newgate, and to ensure a speedy flight from the country by carrying me off, are not in the service of Her Majesty."

"We may yet be in the British service some day, my lord," O'Sullivan laughed. "But I may tell you that my friend and myself disclaim any credit, that being solely the work of our young comrade, who is at present the youngest ensign in our

regiment."
"Then he must be a shrewd fellow, indeed," Godolphin said, "likely to do service in any position to which he may

They walked sharply. Several times rough men came and peered at them, but Godolphin was wrapped in a cloak, and the appearance of those with him showed that hard knocks rather than booty would be the result of interfering with them. On reaching Lord Godolphin's house they placed the sedanchair on the steps.

"Good night to you, gentlemen, and good fortune!" Lord Godolphin said; "the lesson has not been lost, and I shall take

good care in future to have a strong escort."

They then crossed Westminster Bridge and made rapidly for the spot where the cart was waiting for them. "You are an hour after your time," the man said. "I had begun to think that something had gone wrong with you."

"That is not the case," O'Neil said, "but we have cer-

tainly been detained longer than we anticipated."
"Where are we going to?"

"To Rye."

"That will suit me very well," the man said. "I have friends

along that road, and shall have no trouble about horses."

They started at once at a rattling pace, the animals, though but sorry-looking creatures, being speedy and accustomed to long journeys. It was evident from the man's manner that he believed his passengers were cracksmen who had just successfully carried out an enterprise of importance. He expressed surprise that they had brought no luggage with them. They did not care to undeceive him.

Mike had brought with him a bottle of good brandy, and a drink of this soon removed the vexation the man had felt at

being kept waiting for them.

Twice during the journey they changed horses, each time at small wayside inns, where some password, given by the driver, at once roused the landlord into activity. But a few minutes were spent in the changes, and the fifty miles to Rye were accomplished in seven hours - a very unusual rate of speed along the badly-kept roads of the period. When the cart drew up in the High Street of Rye, the four occupants were scarcely able to stand, so bruised and shaken were they by their rapid passage over the rough road. They handed the twelve pounds agreed upon to the driver, adding another as a token of their satisfaction at the speed at which he had driven them, and then inquired for the house of William Dawkins. It was close by, and upon knocking at the door it was opened by the man him-

"I have a message to deliver to you in private," O'Neil said. The man nodded, and led the way indoors, where the

letter was handed to him.

"That is all right," he said. "My craft is always ready to set sail at an hour's notice, and if the wind holds fair I will land you on the French coast before nightfall. I see that your business is urgent, or you would not have put on disguises before leaving London. I suppose you have brought other clothes to land in?

"We have not," O'Neil said. "We came away in such a hurry that we did not think of it until on the road, and then

we thought we might procure them here."

"There will be no difficulty about that," the sailor said. "I will go out and warn my men that we shall sail in half an hour, and then I can get any garments you desire."

"We should like three suits such as are worn by persons of fair position in France, and one proper for a serving man."

"I cannot get you quite French fashion, sir, but they do not differ much from our own, and with a cloak each. I have no doubt that you would pass without attracting attention that is, of course, if you speak French well."
"As well as English," O'Neil said. "Here are seven pounds

in gold which will, I should think, be sufficient. If not, we are provided with French gold for use after landing there."

In three-quarters of an hour after their arrival at Rye they were dressed in their new disguises and on board the little lugger, which at once started down the river.

"Your boat seems fast," Desmond remarked, as, having

cleared the mouth of the river, she put out to sea.

"She is fast, sir, the fastest thing that sails out of Rye. She needs be, for the gentlemen who come to me are always in a hurry."

"I suppose you have no fear of English cruisers?"

"Not at all. I have the order you brought with you, and have only to show it to any English ship of war that overhauls us for them to let us go on at once. I am careful when I get near the French coast, for although their big craft never venture out far, there are numbers of chasse-marée patrolling the coast. However, even if caught by them it would be but a temporary detention, for I am well known at Etaples, which is always my port, unless specially directed to land my passengers elsewhere."

The wind was fresh and favourable, and at six o'clock in the afternoon they entered the little port. Some gendarmes came

down to the wharf.

"We need have no fear of them," William Dawkins said. "Their lieutenant is paid handsomely for keeping his eyes shut and asking no questions."

"So you are back again," the officer said. "Why, it is not

a week since you were here!"

"No, it is but six days since I sailed." "And you have four passengers?"

"That's the number, sir. The Irish gentlemen are desirous

of entering the service of France."

The officer nodded. "Well, gentlemen, you will find plenty of your countrymen in Paris, and, as everyone knows, there are no better or braver soldiers in His Majesty's service."

The friends had already inquired from William Dawkins

whether there was any passage-money to pay, saying that they

had forgotten to ask before starting.

"Not at all. I am well paid by Government. My boat is always retained at a price that suits me well, and I get so much extra for every voyage I make. No, sir, thank you. I will take nothing for myself, but if you like to give half a guinea to the

crew to drink success to you, I will not say no."

The party made no stay at Etaples, but at once ordered a chaise and post-horses; then, changing at every post-house, and suffering vastly less discomfort than they experienced in the journey to Rye – the roads being better kept in France than they were on the English side of the channel – they arrived in Paris at eleven o'clock next day.

On the Frontier

On entering the barrack-yard they found that the regiment had marched ten days before for the frontier, and that Lord Galmoy's regiment had taken their place. They went at once to his quarters and told him that, having effected their escape, they had travelled with all speed to inform the king of the determination of the English Government to bring the Irish officers to execution, and to implore him to intervene in their favour.

"I will go with you to Versailles at once," Lord Galmoy said. "But as you have no uniforms, and the king is very strict on matters of etiquette, three of my officers will lend you their suits and swords. While they are being fetched, sit down and share my meal, for doubtless you have not waited to eat on the

road."

He then gave the necessary instructions, and half an hour later the three officers, now in uniform, started with him on horseback for Versailles. The king had just returned from hunting, and it was an hour before Lord Galmoy could obtain an audience with him. He had on the road told the others he felt sure that the king, who was well served by his agents in London, had already heard of the intention of the English Government, but as to whether he had sent off a remonstrance he was of course ignorant.

"I shall press the matter strongly upon him, and point out the deep feeling that will be excited throughout his Irish and Scotch troops if nothing is done to save the prisoners. Louis is a politic monarch," he said, "and knowing our worth and that of his Scotch soldiers, I think that he will, on my representations, bestir himself. Wauchop has many times performed brilliant services and deserves well of France. However, we shall

see."

When they were admitted to the audience Lord Galmoy introduced the three soldiers of O'Brien's regiment as coming that morning to Paris, having effected their escape from Newgate. As he repeated their names the king looked sharply at Desmond.

"Ah ah!" he said, "so our young ensign is in the thick of adventures again. These we will hear presently. Well, my lord, why have they come here so hurriedly after their arrival?"

"They came to inform Your Majesty that the English Government have determined to execute Colonel Francis Wauchop and the twelve officers of their regiment who were on board the Salisbury captured on the coast of Scotland."

Desmond, who was watching the king's face closely, saw that this was no news to him, and that he was annoyed by its being now brought to his notice. Doubtless the fate of a colonel and a dozen young officers was a matter that affected him little, and if the matter had not been forced upon him, he would not have troubled about it.

He only said, however, "It is incredible that there can be an intention to execute officers in our service captured upon a

warlike expedition."

"It is but too true, sir. Against Colonel Wauchop they have no ground for severity. By the convention of Limerick he and all other officers were formally permitted to enter Your Majesty's service. But the young lieutenants have, of course, joined after that time and therefore cannot benefit by the terms of the convention, and could be executed as English subjects, traitors serving against their country."

"We are afraid that our remonstrance would have but little

effect with the English Government."

Lord Galmoy smiled slightly, for it was notorious that negotiations had gone on between King James and his councillors and several of the members of the English Ministry, Marlborough himself being more than suspected of having a secret understanding with the little court at St. Germain.

understanding with the little court at St. Germain.

He only said, however, "Your Majesty has in your hands the power of compelling the English Government to alter their

determination in this matter."

"How so, my lord?" the king asked in much surprise.
"You have, sire, many prisoners, Frenchmen of the reformed religion who had entered the service of the Protestant princes – your enemies, who were taken in Dutch and Flemish towns we have captured. These stand in the same relation towards Your Majesty as the Irish officers towards England. You

have, then, but to inform the government there that if they in any way harm the Irish officers and non-commissioned officers in their hands you will execute a similar number of these French Protestant officers, whom you have treated as prisoners of war. Then possibly an exchange might be effected.

"Your Majesty will, I think, pardon me for saying that unless steps are taken to save these officers' lives the matter is likely to have a bad effect on the Irish and Scotch regiments, whose ardour will not be improved by the knowledge that in case of a reverse they will be executed as traitors. Nearly half of the men who are now serving have joined since the formation of the Brigade and are not protected by the terms of the Limerick treaty. They are devoted to Your Majesty's service, and are ready to lay down their lives freely for the cause of France, but it would not be fair that they should also run the risk of execution if they are by misfortune made prisoners."

"There is much in what you say, Lord Galmoy. A messenger shall start in an hour's time with a letter to the English government. It shall be delivered at their headquarters in Flanders by noon tomorrow, with a request that it shall be forwarded by special messenger to the British minister. We will have a proclamation posted in Paris and in the various camps of the army saying we have warned the English Government that unless the officers and men captured off the coast of Scotland are treated as prisoners of war, we shall retaliate by treating all French officers taken in foreign service in the same way. Furthermore that we have offered to exchange an equal number of such officers and men in our hands for those held by the British Government."

"I thank Your Majesty most respectfully and heartily in the name of all the foreign officers in your service. Even should the English Government refuse to pardon or exchange their prisoners, it will be seen that Your Majesty has done all in your power to save them."

Lord Galmoy bowed and retired with the others.
"We have done well," he said, "better than I had hoped.
Now, having succeeded in saving our countrymen's lives, I shall return at once to Paris, for there is an inspection of my regiment this afternoon."

In point of fact the king's threat had the desired effect, and two months later the imprisoned officers and men were ex-

changed for an equal number of Huguenots.

In a quarter of an hour the three officers were again summoned to the king's presence. With him was a tall dark officer of distinguished mien whom O'Neil and O'Sullivan both recognized as the Duke of Berwick, one of the most famous generals of the time.

He had been in command of the French forces in Spain, from which he had been recalled suddenly two days before in order that the king, who had a great confidence in him, might consult him as to the general plan of operations in that country before

dispatching him to join the army in Flanders.

This was commanded by the Duke of Burgundy and the Duke of Vendôme jointly. As both were headstrong and obstinate, the king had determined to send Berwick there in order that he might bring matters to a better state between the two dukes, and arrange with them some definite plan by which the tide of fortune, which had hitherto gone against the French, might be arrested.

The king now appeared to be in a good humour. "And now, young sirs," he said, "I have an hour at leisure, and would fain hear a true account of your adventures. I have no doubt, Monsieur Kennedy, that your ready wit had no small share in

the matter.'

"With your permission, Sire, I will tell the story," O'Neil said, "for Mr. Kennedy is not likely to place his own share of

the work in its due prominence."

The king nodded, and O'Neil gave a detailed account of the manner in which they had made their escape and succeeded in getting themselves conveyed across the channel, explaining that both affairs were due entirely to Desmond's initiative and ingenuity. The king listened with great interest, and even laughed at the story of the capture of Lord Godolphin.

"You have all three behaved extremely well," he said. "You, Monsieur Kennedy, have again shown that you possess unusual shrewdness as well as daring. What think you, Duke of this young subaltern who is, we may tell you, the hero of whom you have doubtless heard, who twice rescued Mademoiselle de Pointdexter from the hands of her abductor?'

"I was told the story yesterday, Sire, and was filled with admiration at the boldness and resource of her rescuer, who was, I heard, an ensign in O'Brien's regiment. But certainly I did not expect to find him so young a man. I should, with Your Majesty's permission, be glad to take these three officers on my own staff. Also, I should be glad if you would promote Mr. Kennedy to the rank of lieutenant."

"We quite approve of both requests," the king said graciously, "and indeed," he added with a smile, "shall not

be altogether sorry to see Lieutenant Kennedy employed outside our kingdom, for after making war on his own account with one of our nobles and kidnapping the first minister of England, there is no saying what enterprise he might next undertake.

"Well, gentlemen, since the Duke of Berwick has appointed you his aides-de-camp, the least we can do is to see that you are properly fitted out for the expedition. You have, of course, lost your uniforms, horses, and money in our service, and it is but just that we should see to your being refitted. If you will wait in the ante-room you shall each receive an order on our treasury for a hundred louis d'ors.'

The three officers bowed deeply in acknowledgement to the king, and bowing also to the Duke of Berwick, returned to the ante-room, where presently one of the royal attendants brought to them the three orders on the treasury, and also begged them, in the name of the Duke of Berwick, to wait until his audience with the king should be over.

They were all highly delighted with the change in their position. The posts of staff-officers were considered to belong almost of right to members of noble families, and it was sel-

dom that officers of the line could aspire to them.

"Did I not tell you, Kennedy, that your luck would bring good fortune to us all? And by the powers it has done so! Faith if anyone had said a month ago that I would by now be on the Duke of Berwick's staff I would have laughed in his face. Now here we are, with money to buy horses and outfit, and with no more drilling recruits and attending parades.'

"But not an end to work, O'Sullivan," Desmond Kennedy said. "You won't find much idle time when you are serving

with the duke."

"No. He has the name of being a strict commander. I have heard that his staff have a very hard time of it. However, I am not afraid of hard work when it is done on horseback, and there are many more chances of promotion on the staff than there are in marching regiments. I don't mind being taken prisoner a dozen times if this is what comes of it, providing always that you are taken with me, Kennedy, and are there to help me out of the scrape."

laughed, "for without his help we should be in Newgate at present."

"I don't believe it. I am sure that even if he hadn't turned up you would have managed somehow."

In a short time the duke came out. "I am likely to be detained here another week before I start for Flanders. That will give you time to procure your outfit. I shall let you know where and when you are to join me. Is there anything else that you would ask me?"

"I would ask, sir, that I might take my servant with me,"

Desmond said.

"Certainly. One man more or less will make no difference

to O'Brien's regiment."

After thanking the duke, the three officers, having drawn their money, left the palace and rode back to Paris. They went first to the barracks, and returned the horses and uniforms, with many thanks, to the officers who had lent them, had an interview with Lord Galmoy, and informed him of their new ap-

pointments.

They then went out, took a lodging together, and then went to a military tailor, who promised them their undress and full dress suits in four days. Then they ordered military saddles, bridles, and equipments. On the next day, after visiting half the stables in Paris, they purchased horses for themselves, and Desmond bought, in addition, a serviceable animal for Mike, with a cavalry saddle and accoutrements, and ordered a uniform for him. Each provided himself with a sword and a brace of pistols. Mike was greatly pleased when Desmond told of his promotion.

"You will look grand, your honour, as a general's aide-decamp, with your handsome uniform and your horses. 'Tis glad I am that we are going to Flanders, for from all I have heard from men who have fought in Spain, little pleasure is to be had in campaigning there. The food is vile, the roads are bad. You are choked with dust and smothered with heat. As to their making you lieutenant, if you had your dues it would be a colonel they should have made you, or at any rate a major."

"There is plenty of time, Mike," Desmond laughed. "A

nice colonel I should look, too, leading a thousand men into battle. If I obtain a majority in another fifteen years I shall

consider myself lucky.'

Desmond did not share Mike's gratification that they were to campaign with the army of the north instead of in Spain. However, as he would be fighting against English troops in either country, he concluded it would not make much difference, especially as, being an aide-de-camp, he would not himself have to enter into actual conflict with them. His friends were heartily glad that their destination was not Spain for all had, like Mike, heard much of the hardships suffered by the troops in that country.

Three days after their preparations were completed, an orderly brought a note from the Duke of Berwick. It was brief and to the point.

The rendezvous is at six o'clock tomorrow morning in front of the Louvre.

(Signed) BERWICK.

All were glad that the summons had come. They had discussed the future from every point of view, and were already growing impatient, short as their stay had been in Paris. Five minutes before the hour they were at the rendezvous. As the clock struck the duke rode up with two officers and an escort of six troopers. He looked at their accountrements and horses and nodded his head approvingly.

"You will do very well," he said. "I can tell you that the gloss of your uniforms will not last long in Flanders."

The other officers were Captain Fromart, who acted as the duke's secretary, and Lieutenant d'Eyncourt. Mike fell in with the escort, behind which also rode the body-servant of the duke and the two cavalry men who were the servants of his officers.

Once beyond the limits of the town, the party broke into a trot. The duke rode on ahead, evidently in deep thought, and the five officers followed in a group.

"I see, messieurs," d'Eyncourt said, "that only one of you

has brought a servant with him."

"We only arrived in Paris a week ago," O'Neil said. "Our own regiment had left, and we did not care to ask for two soldiers from another regiment, as these might have turned out badly."

"I hear you have just returned from England," said d'Eyncourt politely. Desmond liked the young officer and was pleased

to hold conversation with him.

"Yes," he said. "Quite recently."

He would have said no more but d'Eyncourt smiled slightly and said, "I hear you were one of those captured on the Salisbury, but made your escape. How was that managed?"

So Desmond told him the full story, and for the rest of the

day the two rode together, chatting all the time.

D'Eyncourt had campaigned in Spain with the duke, for whom he had a great admiration. Desmond questioned him

about Spain, as there was always a chance that he would end up in that country, fighting in the service of France.

D'Eyncourt explained the situation. Louis of France had helped his grandson, Philip, to gain the throne of Spain. This was not altogether a popular move, and many provinces in Spain were opposed to Philip. Many, indeed, supported the claims of the Archduke Charles of Austria as the rightful heir to the Spanish throne, and in consequence war had raged over the country for many years.

Louis maintained an army of French in Spain to support his grandson, but against them was an allied army drawn from

Austria, England, Holland and Portugal.

"Neither the Dutch nor the Austrians take any great share in the struggle," d'Eyncourt explained. "The Dutch are more concerned in defending their own country against Louis, and the Austrians oppose the French in Italy and the Rhine frontier. It is only the English, really, who are against us, for the Portuguese are poor fighters. The English fight magnificently, and it is fortunate for us that their army in Spain is small."

D'Eyncourt then went on to talk about Spain, the poverty and corruption there. He detested the climate, for in summer

it was too hot and in the winter bitterly cold.

"The roads are villainous. There is nothing to buy. The food is bad, and the Spaniards make promises and never keep

them. I am glad we are going to Flanders."

Two days after leaving Paris the party arrived at Peronne, where a considerable body of troops were collected, of which the duke was to take the command. No movements of importance had taken place in the field, and as the force at Peronne still wanted several regiments to bring it up to the intended strength, some weeks passed before it was set in motion. The four aides-de-camp, however, had a busy time of it.

The main army was stationed in the neighbourhood of Lille, and frequent communications passed between Berwick and Vendôme. The allies were inactive. Eugene had early in April met Marlborough at the Hague, and had concerted with him the plan for the campaign. He had then gone to Vienna to bring up reinforcements, and until these arrived Marlborough hardly felt in a position to take the offensive, as the French armies were considerably stronger than his own, and he had not yet been joined by the troops from Hanover.

Except to receive orders, the aides-de-camp saw little of their commander. He was absorbed in the difficult problems of the war, and was occasionally absent for two or three days at the camp of Vendôme. He always spoke kindly to them when on duty, but at other times dispensed altogether with their at-

tendance, and as a rule took his meals alone.

"He is not at his best now," smiled d'Eyncourt one day.
"He is a different man when he is in the field. You wouldn't believe the change in him. Then he is full of vitality, seeing to every detail himself, caring for the troops, though ready to endure any hardship himself. Don't judge him by his present behaviour. He has a great deal of trouble keeping the peace between Vendôme and Burgundy."

At this moment an orderly entered.

"The duke requires your attendance, Lieutenant Kennedy."

Desmond at once went to the duke's apartments.

"You will start at once for Lille, Mr. Kennedy, and will report yourself to Marshal Vendôme. I have arranged with him that one of my aides-de-camp will accompany the force that is about to advance, and will keep me informed of what is being done. I have selected you because I know you to be active and shrewd.

"The marshal is too much occupied to send me such full reports as I should wish, and I look to you not only to give me facts, but to convey your impressions of what you see passing around you. Do not fear to speak plainly. Your communications will be strictly private, and your views will be of far more use to me than the official expressions of the marshal and his staff.

"You will, of course, take your servant with you, and I have told off three troopers to accompany you for the purpose of bringing your reports to me. There is no probability of a general engagement at present, and until we obtain some idea of Marlborough's plans no extensive operations will be undertaken."

From the manner in which he spoke Desmond had no doubt that Berwick himself was in favour of taking the initiative without delay, but that he had been overruled. It was indeed of importance to the French that before advancing they should secure possession of the towns of west Flanders, so that the

great roads would all be open to them.

Half an hour after leaving the duke, Desmond was in the saddle, and, followed by the four soldiers, rode for Vendôme's camp. According to instructions he halted for the night at Arras, and reached Lille at ten the next morning. He at once presented himself to the marshal, and handed to him the letter from Berwick of which he was the bearer.

The duke glanced through it. "I have been expecting you, Lieutenant Kennedy, and have arranged that you shall mess and ride with the junior officers of my staff. I will order a tent to be erected for you at once. Should any portion of my force move without me, I have arranged that you shall accompany it. You will find many of your compatriots in camp, for we have five battalions of the Irish Brigade with us, among them that of O'Brien, to which the Duke of Berwick informed me you belonged before you were appointed to his staff."

The maréchal-de-camp coming in, Vendôme placed Desmond in his charge, requesting him to introduce him to the various officers of his staff with whom he would have to mess,

and to see that he was well cared for.

He was well received by the young French officers, and Desmond was not long in discovering that they regarded their occupation more as a pleasant and exciting diversion than as a matter of duty, and that the greater portion of their time was devoted to pleasure.

They rode, practised with the pistol and rapier, made excursions into the country, dined, and spent their evenings as if the army were non-existent. A few only, and these were men who had served as officers, took their profession seriously, and divided among themselves what work had to be done, the young nobles gladly relinquishing it to them.

Oudenarde

Desmond did not remain long at the marshal's camp but accompanied expeditions that were sent to Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres. The inhabitants of these towns had for some time been in communication with the marshal. They were hostile to the English, and had a standing feud of many years' duration with the Dutch.

As soon therefore as the French columns approached they opened their gates. The weak garrisons that had been placed there, finding themselves unable to at once control the population and defend the walls, evacuated the town before the French arrived.

Beyond writing confidential reports to Berwick, Desmond had had little to do, and spent most of his time with his own

regiment, by whom he was heartily welcomed, and with the

other Irish battalions encamped near them.

He and the other officers captured in the Salisbury had been given up as lost by their comrades, and the appearance of Desmond in his staff uniform was the first intimation they had received of his escape, of which he had more than once to give a detailed account.

In doing this he made no mention of the seizure of Lord Godolphin. He knew that the minister was anxious that this should not get abroad, and as he had behaved fairly to them Desmond considered that he ought to remain silent on the sub-

"You amaze me more and more, Kennedy," the colonel said. "Six months ago when you joined you seemed to me little more than a boy, and yet you have been through adventures that demanded the brain and courage of a veteran. We missed

you."

It was the end of June before the main army advanced. Desmond had returned to Peronne after the capture of the three Flemish towns, and was warmly praised by Berwick for the manner in which he had carried out the work entrusted to him. On the 6th of July he received orders to accompany the duke.

"There is bad news," Captain Fromart said, entering the room where the four aides-de-camp were together. "You know the marshal had commenced the siege of Oudenarde. We have news now that the enemy has suddenly advanced towards him, and he has been obliged to raise the siege and fall back across the Scheldt.

"The troops are to go forward at once. The duke will ride on with all speed in accordance with Vendôme's urgent request. All four of you are to go on with him. I shall accompany the force here. There is no time to be lost. The duke's horse is to be at the door in a quarter of an hour, and it will not please him to be kept waiting. You had better leave your spare horses for the present. I have already warned the escort.'

It was a short notice, but by the time named the four aidesde-camp were in their saddles, as were their soldier servants, for by this time Desmond's two friends had obtained servants from a dragoon regiment. They were but just in time, for they had scarcely mounted when the duke came out, sprang into his

saddle, and went off at a canter.

The distance was some fifty miles. They stopped once for two hours, to refresh themselves and their horses, and rode into Vendôme's camp soon after nightfall.

A large tent had been already erected for Berwick's use close to that of the marshal, and another close by for the use of the officers who might come with him. A quarter of an hour later a soldier entered the aides-de-camp's tent with a large

"The Duke of Berwick bids me say, gentlemen, that he is supping with the marshal, who has sent these dishes to you

from his own table."

'Please to give our thanks to the Duke of Vendôme for his kindness," Desmond said, but when the soldier had left the tent he went on, "I have no doubt that this is the result of a suggestion on the part of Berwick, and greatly obliged to him we must feel. We had just been saying that we supposed we should get nothing to eat till tomorrow morning, while here is a supper worthy of the marshal, and four flasks of wine, which I doubt not are good."

It was ten o'clock before the duke returned to his tent, when

he at once sent for his aides-de-camp.

"There will be nothing more for you to do tonight, gentlemen. Sleep soundly, for we shall have a hard day's work tomorrow. We are to cross the Scheldt again at daybreak. The enemy are on the other side of the Dender, and the next day

a pitched battle will probably be fought.
"You may be surprised that we do not wait until my forces arrive, but we have heard that Eugene's reinforcements are within two days' march of Marlborough, and as they are more numerous than those I command it has been decided to accept

battle at once. Good night."

"The general is in a good temper," d'Eyncourt said as they re-entered their tent. "I expect his views have been adopted, and there was a warm discussion over them."

This was indeed the case. The Duke of Burgundy, an obstinate man without any knowledge of war, had been in favour of pushing forward, crossing the Lys as well as the Scheldt,

and attacking the allies as soon as they met them.

Vendôme, on the other hand, was of opinion that the army which was now collected near Ghent had better advance against Oudenarde, which might be carried by a coup de main before Marlborough could come to its assistance, in command of a mixed force, composed of Dutch, Danes, Hanoverians, Prussians, and British.

Burgundy then maintained that they should retire and fight near Ypres, where they would be close to the frontier and could

retire upon Lille in case matters went against them.

Berwick, however, at last managed to persuade him to agree to Vendôme's plan, as the capture of Oudenarde was a matter of the utmost importance, and it would be as easy to fall back

to Lille as it would be from Ypres.

This Burgundy had sullenly assented to, and the next morning the army marched to the position fixed upon. This was on steeply rising ground, with the river Norken running at its foot. Beyond this were two other eminences, on each of which stood a windmill. That on the west was called the windmill of Oycke, and that on the adjoining hill the windmill of Royegham, the latter flanking the main position.

Oudenarde being found to be strongly garrisoned, it was decided, in spite of the opposition of Burgundy, to cross the Scheldt at Gavre, and then to give battle to the allies between

that river and the Dender.

Marlborough had, however, been joined by Prince Eugene who had, like Berwick, hurried on in advance of his army, and the two great generals decided, instead of attacking the French by the road from Brussels, to sweep round across the Scheldt at Oudenarde and by other bridges across the river, and so to place themselves between Vendôme and France.

A portion of the French army was already in movement when the news came that the allies were fast coming up. Early the next morning their advance guard, composed of twelve battalions of infantry and the whole of the cavalry, reached the Scheldt, and having thrown bridges over the river, crossed, and soon came in contact with the French advance guard under

Biron.

There was some severe fighting, in which neither party gained any great advantage, the French maintaining possession of the village of Eynes. While this conflict was going on, Marlborough and Eugene, with the main body, had reached the river, and were engaged in crossing it, and Vendôme determined to attack them while carrying out the operation.

He was, as usual, opposed by Burgundy, who wished to continue the march to Ghent. Marshal Vendôme pointed out that, in a country so broken and interspersed with hedges, an army possessing the greatest strength – for the French numbered eighty-five thousand, while Marlborough had but eighty thousand under him – would lose the advantage of that superiority. Upon Berwick strongly siding with the marshal, Burgundy was forced to give way.

The discussion lasted some time, enabling the allies to pass bodies of troops across the river, where they were formed up at a village a few hundred yards north of Oudenarde. Immediately Marlborough felt strong enough to risk an attack, orders were sent to Cadogan, who commanded the advance guard, to drive the enemy out of Eynes. Four English battalions attacked the seven French battalions in the village, while the cavalry crossed higher up and came down on the back of the village.

Three of the French battalions were surrounded and made prisoners, while the other four were dispersed. It was now evident even to Burgundy that an action could not be avoided,

but again an angry dispute took place.

Vendôme would have stood on the defensive, with the river Norken to be crossed before he could be attacked. He was, however, overruled by Burgundy, who had nominally chief command.

Marlborough took advantage of the delay and posted his troops in front of the castle of Bevere, and sent the twelve battalions at Eynes to reinforce his left, against which he saw

the main attack of the French would be directed.

He then lined all the hedges with infantry, and stationed twenty British battalions under Argyle in reserve. Crossing the Norken, the French fell upon the Dutch and Hanoverians, who constituted the left wing and who, though fighting obstinately, were driven back. Marlborough moved from the centre with twenty battalions to reinforce them, and despatched Eugene to command on the right.

A desperate fight now took place. On both flanks the ground was broken by enclosures with deep wet ditches, bridges, woods and small villages, and the cavalry were unable to act on such ground. The infantry on both sides fought with extreme resolution, every hedge, ditch, bridge, and house being defended to

the last

Seldom indeed in modern warfare has so obstinate and terrible a fight taken place. Frequently the combatants were mingled together, and fought with bayonets and the butt-ends of their muskets. Gradually however, the Dutch and the Hanoverian battalions won their way forward, and drove the French back to the village of Diepenbeck, where the latter successfully maintained themselves.

Marlborough then ordered General Overkirk to move round and seize the hill at Oycke, which, although it flanked the

enemy's position, was not held by them.

This he did with twenty Dutch and Danish battalions, who had only just crossed the river. He then pressed on and seized

the mill of Royegham, thus cutting the communication between the French at Diepenbeck and the troops that still remained

on the plateau beyond the Norken.

Eugene then swung round his right, and, pressing forward. surrounded the French on that side, so completely enveloping them that his men and those of Overkirk each believed the other to be French - for darkness had now fallen - and fought for some time before the mistake was discovered.

As in such a country it was impossible to move troops in regular formation in the darkness, Marlborough gave orders for the troops to halt in the positions they held. Had the light lasted two hours longer the whole of the French army would have been slain or captured, but under cover of darkness the greater portion made their way through the intervals of the allied troops.

Many fled to Ghent, while thousands made for the French frontier. Vendôme lost in killed and wounded six thousand men and nine thousand prisoners, and his total loss exceeded twenty thousand, while the allies lost five thousand, of whom the great

majority were Dutch, Danes, and Germans.

The French troops on the plateau withdrew under the direction of Vendôme in good order, and before morning a large number of fugitives had rallied. Marlborough sent forty squadrons of horse in pursuit of them, but the French showed so firm an attitude that the cavalry were unable to seriously interfere with their retreat.

Berwick had remained during the day near the marshal, and had placed his aides-de-camp at his disposal, for the distance from the plateau of the various points at which the troops were engaged rendered communication much slower than it otherwise would have been. Desmond and his companions were fre-

quently sent off with orders.

It was the first time Desmond had been under fire, and the roar of musketry, the whizzing of bullets, and the shouts of the combatants, gave him a much stronger feeling of discomfort than he had expected. The roar of cannon was not added to the other sounds, for the guns of the day were clumsy and difficult to move, and, owing to the rapid marches and counter-marches of both armies, the greater portion of the artillery had been left behind, and only a few guns were on the field. These, in so close and confined a country, were of little use.

Desmond felt now that he would far rather be fighting in the thick of it with O'Brien's regiment than making his way alone along the lanes, impeded constantly by columns advancing to the front, while he was met by a stream of wounded men making their way to the rear.

At first all was exultation among the troops, for as the Hanoverians and Dutch were forced to give way before the assault of the main body of the French, shouts of victory rose. It was confidently believed that they would this day avenge the two great victories Marlborough and Eugene had gained over them.

Having delivered his orders to the officer in command, Desmond rode back. Vendôme and Berwick had both dismounted, and were standing together with a few of their staff at the edge of the plateau examining the field with their telescopes.

"I have delivered your message, sir," he said, riding up and saluting. "The general bade me tell you all was going well, the enemy were falling back and will soon be in full flight.

"Very well, Mr. Kennedy, by this time he will have found

out that he was a little too sanguine."

The fire had indeed for the past few minutes broken out with augmented fury, Marlborough had arrived at the threatened point and had placed himself at the head of the Dutch and Hanoverians and animated by his presence, these had not only ceased to fall back, but were in turn advancing.

"The battle is not won yet, Kennedy," O'Sullivan, who had returned a few minutes before from the front, said, as he joined him. "On our left we are being driven back, for a large force has reinforced the enemy there, and unless our main column defeats the allied left and pushes them into Oudenarde, we shall have night coming on before we have finished. As our cavalry cannot act in these cramped fields, Marlborough will be able to draw off without any great loss."

For an hour there was no change. Then Berwick, looking

round, beckoned to Desmond.
"Mr. Kennedy," he said, "a strong force of the enemy moved half an hour ago towards their left. I have lost sight of them owing to the high hedges and trees, but it does not seem to me that they can have joined in the battle.

"I wish you to ascertain, if possible, what this force is doing and where it is posted. If you ride across to the mill on the eminence behind Diepenbeck you may be able to get sight of

A minute later, Desmond was cantering his horse down the declivity to the Norken. Crossing by the bridge near Mullen he turned to the right and rode up the hill of Royegham. Here a strong brigade, composed of cavalry and infantry, under General Grimaldi, was stationed. Desmond rode up to him.

"The Duke of Berwick has sent me to ascertain the position of a strong body of the enemy's troops whom he observed marching from the river towards our right. May I ask if you have noticed them?"

"We saw them move away after crossing the river, but have not seen them since."

"I will ride on sir," Desmond said. "Certainly a better view can be obtained than from this side."

A canter of a mile took him to the summit of the hill at whose foot Diepenbeck stood. He could see the masses of French troops gathered in front of the village, but beyond that a veil of smoke covered the country and entirely obscured the contending parties, whose position could only be guessed by the incessant rattle of their musketry fire.

Turning again, he rode down the dip that separated the hill from that of Oycke. He had just gained the crest when he saw a large force marching rapidly towards the mill. Seeing at once the serious nature of the movement, he turned and galloped at full speed to the point where the generals were still watching the progress of the fight.

"I could learn nothing of the force you spoke of from General Grimaldi at Royegham, but riding towards Oycke I saw them advancing at full speed towards the windmill, at which they had almost arrived."

An exclamation of anger broke from the duke. "This is what comes," he muttered, "of placing a fool in command of the army."

Turning away, he at once communicated the news to Vendôme, who stamped his foot furiously on the ground.

'Just when victory was in our grasp," he said, and turned his glass towards Oycke, which was some four miles distant. "I can make them out now," he said. "There is a black mass issuing from the village of Oycke and ascending the hill in the direction of Royegham. It is too late to reinforce Grimaldi there. They will be upon him before we can cross the Norken. But at any rate we must send a brigade down to Henhelm where, with Grimaldi's men, they can try to keep open the road from Diepenbeck."

Ten minutes later they could hear by a sudden outburst of fire that Grimaldi was engaged. The sun had already set, but Berwick was able to make out with his glass that the left was giving way before the attack of Eugene, and that the twenty battalions under Argyle, which had hitherto remained inactive,

were advancing by the main road leading through Mullen to the

plateau on which they stood.
"The day is lost," Berwick said bitterly. "The troops at Diepenbeck are completely cut off. Darkness alone can save them from annihilation. And to think that if it had not been for Burgundy we could have maintained ourselves here against double the force of the allies! So long as the system of giving the command of armies to royal incapables continues we cannot

hope for success."

Vendôme lost no time in issuing orders. The troops still on the plateau were brough forward where their fire would command its approaches. Aides-de-camp were sent in all directions to order the generals of divisions to draw off at once and to make their way up to the plateau. Berwick's four aides-decamp were told to make their way, if possible, by different routes to Diepenbeck and give orders for the troops there to maintain themselves at all costs until darkness and then to make their way as best they could to the plateau. If that was impossible, to march for either Ghent or Lille.

"The service is a desperate one, gentlemen," Berwick said, as he turned to give the orders to his officers, "but it is necessary, for if the force remain there until morning they are all irretrievably lost. It is getting dark already, and you may therefore hope to pass unnoticed between the enemy. If you get there safely do not try to return at once but like the rest en-

deavour to make off during the night."

Without waiting for orders Mike followed his master.

Going down they met the remnants of Biron's division flying in disorder. They separated at the bridge of Mullen, and with a word of adieu to his comrades Desmond turned to the right, and rode for Groenvelde. Suddenly a volley of musketry was fired from the hill to the right. Desmond staggered for a moment in the saddle, and the bridle fell from his left hand. Mike was by his side in a moment.

"Where are you hurt, master?"

"In the left wrist, I fancy. By the way the hand hangs down it must have smashed both bones. However, there is no time to wait now. It is a matter of life and death to get to Diepenbeck."

"One moment, your honour. Let me put your hand into the breast of your coatee, then if you keep your elbow tight against

your body it will keep it steady."

Although Mike carried out his suggestion as gently as he could, Desmond almost fainted with pain.

"Take a drop of brandy from your flask, master. It won't take half a minute, and then we will be off."

They continued their journey. The rattle of musketry ahead of them showed that the combat had already commenced. It was already too dark to distinguish the uniforms except at a distance of a few yards. Dashing on he saw a dark mass ahead—three officers rode out.

"Who are you, sir?" they shouted.

"I am carrying a report from the general," he replied in English, and without drawing rein dashed on, passing within twenty yards of the column, and reached Diepenbeck without further interruption. In the centre of the village the French general was sitting on his horse surrounded by his staff. The combat beyond raged as furiously as before. Desmond rode up and saluted.

"I am the bearer of orders from Marshal Vendôme, sir," he said. "He instructed me tell you that a large force of the enemy has crossed the hills of Oycke and Royegham, and is already in your rear, the enemy's right overlapping your left, while the whole British reserve is pressing forward and will ere long effect a junction with both these forces. Your retreat, therefore, is entirely cut off.

"The orders are that you shall maintain yourself here as long as possible, as in the darkness and confusion it is unlikely that the allies can attack you from the rear before morning. The marshal himself holds the plateau, and will continue to do so.

"You are to make your way tonight, if possible, in battalions and in good order, through the intervals between the various divisions of the enemy. All are to endeavour to join him on the plateau. Those who cannot do this are to make for Ghent or Lille."

"Your order scarcely comes as a surprise, sir," the general said bitterly. "We have heard firing in our rear for some time, and we were afraid that things had gone badly with us after all."

He at once gave orders that the troops behind the village were to take up a position to resist any attack made in that direction.

Desmond dismounted, as did Mike, and the latter took the two horses, fastened them to a tree, and then, with Desmond's scarf, bound his arm firmly against his side.

"We have made a mess of it entirely, your honour," he said, "and have got a terrible bating. Sure we were lucky in

getting here. Faith, I thought we were caught when you were

"It was a narrow escape, Mike, and if they had waited till I had got a little nearer, and had seen my uniform, I must have surrendered."

"It seems to me that we are like rats in a trap, Mr. Kennedy."

"Something like it, Mike, but it is hard if we can't get through them in the dark."

"That we will do, sure enough," Mike said confidently; "but which way should we go?"

"That I can't tell you."

The firing was now abating, and presently died away completely except for a few scattered shots, showing that the allies had been halted where they stood, and were no longer pressing forward. In the meantime the general had called together the colonels of the several regiments, had explained the situation to them, and repeated Vendôme's orders. The news came like a thunderbolt upon them, for the din of firing round the village had completely deadened all distant sound, and they were wholly unaware of what was passing in other parts of the field

"I must leave the matter to your individual discretion," the general said. "Those of you who think your men can be relied on can try to escape and join the marshal in a body. Those who have not that confidence in their regiments — and indeed some of these have been almost annihilated — had best tell them to scatter. Those who remain here will assuredly be made prisoners in the morning. It is possible that that may be the better plan, for it is better to surrender than to be cut to pieces. I therefore leave the matter entirely in your hands. I myself shall remain here. We have done all that men can do in the way of fighting, and as I was told to hold this place till the last I shall remain at my post."

Desmond was present when this conversation took place. "We will wait another hour, Mike," he said, as he rejoined his follower. "We may be sure that the greater part of the enemy's troops will be asleep by that time."

"Shall we go on horse or on foot, your honour?"

"I think the best plan will be to lead our horses, Mike, across this country. Once through them we could then gallop round and join the troops on the plateau."

"I should say, sir, that if I were to steal out to where they have been fighting for the last six hours I might get a couple

of uniforms to put over our own. They will be lying thick cnough there, poor chaps. If we had them on we might pass through any troops we meet, as we both speak English.

"That is a good idea, Mike, if you can carry it out."

"Sure I can do that, and without difficulty, your honour. I will fasten the horses to this tree, and perhaps your honour will keep an eye on them."

"I will stay with them, Mike."

The soldier at once made off. The village was now crowded with troops, all order was at an end, and the regiments were considerably mixed up. The officers went among them saying that an attempt was going to be made to pass through the enemy and join the force on the plateau. They pointed out that there was at least as much hope in being able to do so as in making off singly.

Many of the soldiers, not having themselves suffered defeat, responded to the call, and several bodies, four or five hundred

strong, marched out into the darkness.

The majority, however, decided to shift for themselves, and stole away in threes and fours. Of those that remained some broke into the village wine and beer shops and drank to stupefaction, while others, exhausted by the efforts of the day, threw themselves down and slept. Mike was away half an hour.

"I have got an officer's cloak for you and a helmet with feathers. I think he must have been a staff-officer who was killed while delivering his orders. I have got a soldier's over-

coat and shako for myself."

"Capital, Mike! Now I think that we can venture out, and we will go the shortest way. We might very well lose ourselves among these hills if we were to try to make a circuit."

Having put the Dutch uniforms over their own they set out, taking the way to the left until they came to the main road by which the British reserve had advanced, then they mounted their horses.

"It is no use trying to make our way through the broken ground, Mike. There is another road that goes through Huerne. We will strike that, and get round on the right of the enemy.

They rode on through Huerne. The village was full of wounded. No one paid them any attention, and they again went on until suddenly they were challenged with the usual Who comes there?"

"A staff-officer with dispatches," Desmond replied. He heard the butt of the soldier's musket drop upon the ground,

and rode forward.

"Can you tell me, my man," he said as he reached the sentinel, "where the Duke of Marlborough is to be found?"

"I don't know, sir," the man replied. "Only our regiment is here. I know there are a number of cavalry away there on the left, and I heard someone say that the duke himself was there. There is a cross-road a hundred yards farther on, which will lead you to them."

Thanking the man, Desmond rode on. A few bivouac fires had been lighted, and these were already beginning to burn low, the troops having dropped asleep almost as soon as they

"I hope we shall meet no more of them, Mike," Desmond said, as they went on at a brisk trot. "I sha'n't feel quite safe

till we get to Mullen."

They met, however, with no further interruption. As they crossed the bridge they halted, took off the borrowed uniforms, threw away the headgear and put on their own hats, which they had carried under their cloaks. Then they rode on up the hill after having first satisfied the officer commanding a strong guard placed at the bridge that they were friends.

Another ten minutes and they were upon the plateau. Desmond had no difficulty in finding out where the headquarters were established at Hayse and riding there, he at once went into the house occupied by Berwick and reported his return.

"I am glad to see you back again, Kennedy," the duke said heartily. "It is something to have recovered one friend from the wreck. Now, what is your news?"

Desmond related what had happened to him from the time he left, and said that a large proportion of the troops at Diepenbeck had already left, and as he heard no outburst of firing, he hoped most of them had got safely away.
"I see you are wounded."

"I have had my wrist smashed with a musket-ball."

"You had a narrow escape of your life," Berwick said, "If you had been hit a little farther back the ball would have gone through your body. Sit down at once. I will send for my surgeon.

He instantly gave orders for the surgeon of the staff to come to his tent, and then made Desmond, who was suffering terribly

from the agony of the wound, drink a tumbler of wine.

"I know you are all busy, doctor," the duke said as the surgeon entered, "but you must do something for Mr. Kennedy, who is badly wounded in the arm."

The surgeon examined the wound and shook his head.

"Both bones are fractured," he said, "and I am afraid that there is nothing for it but amputation."

"Then leave it till tomorrow, doctor," Desmond said faintly. "There must be a number of poor fellows who want your attention much more than I do."

"That would do if I could make you a cradle, but we are

badly off for all surgical appliances."

"Could you cut one out of one of my jack-boots?"

"A capital idea, Mr. Kennedy. Nothing could be better." The surgeon at once cut off the foot of one of Desmond's boots, and then divided the leg longways. "There," he said, taking up one of the halves, "you could not wish for a better cradle."

He took out some lint that he had brought with him, together with some flat splints, bound the hand in its proper position, and then laid the arm from the elbow to the fingers in the cradle, round which he tightly put a few bandages to keep it in

"Now for your scarf," he said, and with this made a sling to support the arm. The whole operation did not take five min-

"Now, Mr. Kennedy, you had best lie down and get what

sleep you can."
"Yes, lie down at once, Kennedy," Berwick said; "we are going to march off at daybreak, and the marshal and I have arranged everything between ourselves. You had better try and eat something, if it is only a wing of that chicken and a few mouthfuls of meat. Your faintness must be due as much to hunger as to your wound, for you have been at work since early morning and cannot have had time to eat anything.

This was indeed the case, and Desmond managed to swallow a few mouthfuls and then lay down upon the sofa, where in spite of the pain of his wound he presently dozed off, being utterly worn out with the work and excitement of the day.

Before morning some five thousand of the troops from Diepenbeck marched into the camp in good order and with their arms, and as soon as it was daylight the whole force started for Ghent. With deep regret Desmond learned from the marshal that none of his comrades had returned, and as they had not reached Diepenbeck he felt sure that they were either killed or prisoners.

After repulsing the cavalry sent in pursuit, the army marched away unmolested, being joined as they went by large numbers of fugitives, who had made their way through the allied lines in small parties. Marlborough's army remained on the ground they had won, collecting and caring for the wounded of both armies. Two days later Berwick's corps joined Vendôme, and that of Eugene marched into Marlborough's camp.

In spite of the loss that he had suffered at Oudenarde, this reinforcement raised Vendôme's army to over one hundred and ten thousand men, which was about the same force as Marl-

borough had under his command.

After Eugene had joined him, standing as he did between Vendôme's army and Paris, Marlborough proposed that the enemy's fortresses should be neglected, and that the army should march directly on Paris. The movement might have been attended with success, but was of so daring description that even Eugene opposed it, while the commanders of the Dutch, Danes, and Prussians were unanimously against it. Consequently he decided to lay siege to Lille - a tremendous undertaking, for Lille was considered the strongest fortress in France, and Vendôme, with over a hundred thousand men, was within a couple of days' march of it.

His dispositions were made with extreme care, and a tremendous convoy of heavy artillery, ammunition, and provisions was brought up from Ostend without the French being able to interfere with its progress. Marlborough, with his British contingent and the Hanoverians, was to cover the operations of the siege, which was to be undertaken by Prince Eugene with the

rest of the allied army.

Vendôme marched at once with his army, and, making a circuit, place himself between Lille and Paris, deserting his recent conquests in Ypres, Ghent, and Bruges, all of which fell into the hands of the allies.

Convalescent

Desmond was not present with the French army for many hours after their arrival at Ghent. He suffered intense pain on the ride and was then taken to a hospital that had been hastily formed for the reception of wounded officers. Here the surgeons agreed that there was nothing for it but to amputate the arm half-way between the wrist and the elbow. The limb was already greatly swollen.

"Under ordinary circumstances," the surgeon said, "we

should wait until we had reduced the inflammation, but this might be a matter of a week or ten days, and there is no time to spare, as the army will probably march away in a few days. Travel would increase the inflammation to such an extent that your life might be sacrificed."

"I would rather have it taken off at once, doctor," Desmond said. "The operation cannot hurt very much more than the arm is hurting already, and the sooner it is over the better."

Surgery was in its infancy at that time and anaesthetics were undreamt of. But the surgeons of the French army had large experience, and the operation was very skilfully performed. The stump was then seared with a hot iron.

"You have stood it well," the surgeon said, for, except when the iron was applied to the wound, no groan had issued from Desmond's lips. "Now, your servant must keep these dressings continually soaked with water, and in a few days we may hope that you will be able to travel in a waggon without danger.'

When the army marched away a week later, Desmond was placed in a waggon half-filled with hay, with several other wounded officers. At Arras, where there was a large military hospital, he was kept for a few days, and then sent on to Amiens only the most severe cases being retained at Arras. He gained strength very slowly, and it was six weeks before the surgeons pronounced him to be sufficiently convalescent to be moved.

"It would," they said, "be probably some months before he

would be fit to return to active service."

He was sitting looking listessly out of the window of the chamber that he and three other officers occupied, when Mike came in, followed, to Desmond's intense surprise, by Monsieur de la Vallée.

"My dear Desmond," the latter exclaimed, hurrying forward and grasping his hand, "you must have thought that we had all forgotten you."

"Indeed I never thought anything of the kind, Philip. I did not suppose that you had ever heard of me since we parted at Moulins."

"News travels but slowly, but we did hear that fifteen subalterns of O'Brien's regiment were captured in the Salisbury. I wrote to a friend in Paris, and he told me that you were among the number, but that you had escaped. Ten days ago I received another letter from him to say you had been wounded at Oudenarde. Of course I set out as soon as I received his

"What! have you ridden all the way from the south of

France to come to me, Philip?"

"Of course I have, and should have ridden all across Europe if it had been necessary. I went round by Pointdexter. The baron is laid up with an attack of gout, or he would have accompanied me. He sent all sorts of messages, and so did Anne, and the latter informed me that I need not show my face at the château again until I came accompanied by you. When I reached Paris my friend had learned from the surgeon that you were at Amiens, and so here I am. I met your faithful Mike at the gate of the hospital. I was glad, indeed to see that he had come out unharmed from that terrible fight. When I told him I had come to take you away he almost cried with joy.'

"It is wonderfully kind of you, Philip, but I am sure I am

not strong enough to ride."

"No one is thinking of your riding at present, Desmond. I have brought a horse-litter with me, and four of my men with the quietest horses on the estate. All you have to do is to lie down in it, and talk with me whenever you are disposed. You have a whole batch of adventures to tell me."

"I feel better already, Philip. I own that I have been downhearted of late, for it seemed to me that I should be an invalid for months, and be living in Paris without a friend except Mike, for all the regiments of the Brigade are either with Vendôme or in Spain. Your kindness so cheers me that I feel capable of anything."

"Well, we will start tomorrow morning, Desmond. I shall go at once and see the director of the hospital and get an order for

your discharge.'

The next morning they set out. Desmond had to be assisted downstairs. There he was laid on a litter packed with soft rugs. This was raised and placed between two horses, ridden by two of de la Vallée's men. De la Vallée himself took his place by the side of the litter. Mike rode on ahead leading Desmond's charger, and the other two servants fell to the rear in readiness to change with those bearing the litter when half the day's journey was done.

Seeing that the exertion of being moved had exhausted his friend, de la Vallée rode for some time in silence. Then, when Desmond opened his eyes and smiled at him, he said, "I hope

you are feeling comfortable?"

"Perfectly. I hardly feel any motion."

Every care had been taken to prevent jolting. The poles of the litter were unusually long, thus adding to their elasticity. The ends passed through leathern loops suspended from the saddle, and were at this point covered with a thick wrapping of flannel bandages, which aided in minimizing the effect of

The first day's journey was performed at a walking pace, and they reached Beauvais, twenty-five miles being accomplished,

The fresh air and slight easy motion were beneficial, and in the afternoon Desmond was able to talk cheerfully with his friend. There was, however, no continued conversation, Philip saying he would ask no questions about Desmond's doings until he was stronger. In the evening, however, after partaking of supper, Desmond, without being asked, related the incidents, so far as he knew them, of the battle of Oudenarde, and of the manner in which he received his wound.

"The whole disaster was due entirely to the Duke of Burgundy, or rather to the king, who placed him in command over two generals of the highest skill and reputation. If he had wanted to accompany the army, Burgundy should have done so just as our King James did, merely as a volunteer. I am told that the king showed great courage in the battle. For my part, I think his presence was altogether a mistake. He claims that the English are his subjects, and yet he takes part with a foreign army in battle against them. His being present will

certainly not add to his popularity in England."
"I agree with you," de la Vallée said. "It would have been much wiser for him to have abstained altogether from interference in the matter. It was, of course, a different thing when he attempted to land in Scotland. Then he would have been leading the loyal portion of his subjects against those whom he considers rebels against his authority. That was quite a different thing from acting without cause or reason as a volunteer in the French army against those whom he regards as his

countrymen and subjects.

"I am afraid, Desmond, that, though it may shock you to think so, these Stuart princes of yours are not wise men. Legitimate monarchs of England though they may be, they do not possess the qualities that endear kings to their people. From what I have heard, James was a heavy pedant, a rank coward, essentially not a man to be popular among a spirited people. Charles had a noble presence and many fine qualities. But although his ideas of kingly power would have suited us well enough in France, his arbitrary measures alienated a large proportion of his people and brought ruin upon him.

"Your second Charles, in spite of his numerous indiscretions, was not unpopular, because the people were wearied of stern puritan rule, and were therefore disposed to look leniently upon his frailties, while they appreciated his good temper and wit. His fatal mistake was allying himself so closely with us - a grievous mistake indeed when we remember that for centuries the two nations had been bitterly opposed to each other. As for his brother, he forfeited his throne by his leanings towards the Catholic Church, in whose communion he died. Decidedly the Stuart kings were not a success.

"As to James III, as you call him, I know nothing beyond the fact that he is a protégé of the king of France, and has now fought against his own people - a blunder, as it seems to me, of the worst kind, and one which is certain to alienate many of

his supporters on the other side of the water.

"Were he to mount the throne, it would be partly due to the aid of French troops and French money - men and money, mind you, of a power at war with England! He would therefore necessarily, like Charles II, be regarded as a protégé of France. He would be bound in gratitude to Louis, and the position of England would be altogether changed; she would become the ally of Spain and France, her ancient enemies, and opponent of her present allies, Holland, Austria, Protestant Germany, and Denmark."

Desmond was silent. He could not but agree with what his friend said, and had himself considered that it was a most unwise step for James to appear in the field fighting against his countrymen. "I don't think I am strong enough to argue, Philip," he said with a smile, after a long pause, "and I don't mean to give you a victory when I am fighting under disadvan-

tages.

"The Stuarts certainly never did any special benefit to Ireland, and assuredly brought ruin and misery upon us. At the present moment I don't seem able to explain why we should be so devoted to the cause of these Scottish Stuarts rather than to that of Anne, who is, after all, of the same family and race. However, we will fight it out when my brain is not so dull as it is at present."

They slept the next night at Pontoise, having made a somewhat short journey, though Desmond protested that he felt

quite equal to going on to Paris.

"You are a good deal better today, Desmond, but there is no hurry, and we will take matters quietly. If you continue to make improvement we shall be able in another day or two to travel faster, and I hope that before we get to the end of our journey you will be strong enough to sit your horse for a few

miles each day."

They made no stay in Paris, but proceeded on their way the morning after their arrival. Melun and Montargis were their next halting-places. Desmond was gaining strength rapidly. His good spirits were returning, and at their evening halt he had been able to recite the history of his escape from England. His wound had a less angry appearance, and on the day of their leaving Montargis the horses, at his request, occasionally broke into a trot for a mile or two.

"You are looking paler. I think the motion is too much for you," Philip said after one of these occasions when they again

settled down to a walking pace.

"I feel a bit tired, Philip, but one must make a beginning, and I shall never get strong unless I begin to use my muscles. At present I acknowledge I feel as if I had been beaten all over with sticks, but I have no doubt that I shall shake this off after a bit.'

This was indeed the case, and on the last three days of their journey to Pointdexter he sat his horse for two or three hours. Philip had, on the last day, sent on one of his men to inform the baron that he would arrive that evening with Desmond, and as they were seen approaching, the baron and his daughter came out from the château and welcomed them as they alighted.

"Do not upset the young fellow by appearing shocked at his appearance," the former had said to Anne. "It was certainly a blow this morning to hear that he had lost his left hand, and that the greater portion of the journey had had to be performed in a litter, so you must expect to find him greatly pulled down. But see, they are breaking into a trot, so he has evidently gained strength on the way."

In spite of the warning, the girl's eyes filled with tears as she saw Desmond's thin face and wasted figure and his left arm in

"Welcome to Pointdexter, Monsieur Kennedy! Many have entered here since the old château was built, but none who have rendered such vital service to our race. Do not try to speak, I see that you are shaken with your journey. We will soon put

that right."

"It has been a rather longer journey than we have previously made," Desmond said, after dismounting and shaking hands with the baron and his daughter. "We rode somewhat faster than usual, as we were both of us anxious to be here. It was good indeed of Philip to make such a journey to bring me to you.

"If he had not done so assuredly we should. My foot was so bad with this villainous gout that I could not put it in a stirrup,

but we should have had out the family coach."

"You are all very good, Baron," Desmond said. "But I think that Philip was right. I can assure you that the journey has done me an immense deal of good, and he will tell you that I am very different now from what I was when he found me at Amiens, for I had begun to think that I should never get away alive."

"Do not let us stay talking here," the baron said. "Anne has had some soup prepared for you under her own eyes, and that and a glass or two of good Burgundy will do wonders for

you."

Desmond, indeed was greatly revived, and was able to join

in a cheerful conversation with his hosts.

"We are both dying to hear your adventures," the baron said, "and how you managed to escape from that jail in England as you did, and also how it was that we met with that dreadful disaster at Oudenarde. It really seems that those terrible fellows Marlborough and Prince Eugene are invincible."

"They are good generals, Baron. Beyond troubles with the commanders of the forces of their allies, they are able to carry out their own plans. The Dukes of Vendôme and Berwick are also able commanders, but they were hampered by the presence of the Duke of Burgundy, who on several occasions overruled their opinions and ruined their plans. It is to him alone that the defeat at Oudenarde is due. The French soldiers fought as well as ever, and it was the position in which they were placed, and not the superior fighting powers of the enemy, that caused their defeat.'

"But how is it," the baron asked, "that with, as I hear, one hundred and ten thousand men Vendôme does not raise the siege of Lille? It seems incredible that, with so great a force, he should remain inactive while the enemy are carrying out

their works for the siege."

"That I cannot tell you, sir. We heard all sorts of rumours at Amiens, but it seems that Marlborough had taken up a strong position and entrenched himself there with seventy thousand men, while Eugene is conducting the siege operations."

"Well, it seems to me very strange, Monsieur Kennedy, after having during the last reign defeated the best infantry of Spain, humbled Austria, subdued Bavaria, crushed the enemy in Italy, and shown ourselves to be the best soldiers in Europe, we should now suffer defeat after defeat by an army containing men of half a score of nationalities, though led by the greatest general that England has ever produced."

"And, Baron, with English troops under him who have for

hundreds of years shown themselves invincible!"

"Yes, yes," the baron said hastily; "we know all about Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, and how well they fought in Holland. But I thought, Kennedy, that you were the enemy of the English, and were here with your brave countrymen to fight

against them."

"Not in my case assuredly, Baron. I came over here because there is no opening for Irish gentleman at home, and because only by the aid of France could our lawful king be placed on the throne. It is true that the English under Oliver Cromwell not only conquered us but divided a great portion of our land among themselves, and although we were again defeated by a usurping Dutch king with the Dutch troops under his command, that is no reason why I should feel any animosity to the people at large, whose qualities I admire. I own that I would rather it had fallen to my lot to fight for France against Spaniards, Germans, and Italians, than against the English."

"Did you lose many friends at Oudenarde, Monsieur Ken-

nedy?" Anne asked.

"I lost my two greatest friends," Desmond said; "at least I fear that both are dead. They were the two who escaped with me from the English prison. They, with Monsieur d'Eyncourt, another of Berwick's aides-de-camp, started with me to carry orders to the troops, who were all surrounded by the enemy. We went by different roads to increase the chances of one of us getting there. I succeeded but none of the other three got through."

Day by day indeed his strength increased. At first he wandered about in the park, accompanied by Philip and Anne, for the baron, although somewhat recovered from his attack of gout, still walked with difficulty. In a week he again took to horse exercises, and was ere long able to join in hunting and

hawking parties.

The house was gay, for the baron, as soon as Desmond was able to take his share in conversation, invited many of the neighbouring gentry to the château and introduced him to them as the man who had done so much for his daughter and himself.

Several entertainments were given, at which the château was thrown open to all-comers, in honour partly of Desmond and partly of the approaching marriage of the baron's daughter to Monsieur de la Vallée. This had been arranged to take place in September. Before that time arrived Desmond had completely recovered his strength, and being now fit for service, was anxious to leave but his friends would not hear of his departure until after the marriage. As news came that Lille had been captured by the allies, and it was certain that both armies would soon go into winter quarters, he allowed himself to be persuaded to stay.

The siege had been one of the most terrible in history. The place was stoutly defended, and its conquest cost the allies dearly, twelve thousand being killed and wounded, and over seven thousand succumbed to diseases. Of the garrison, nearly seventeen thousand strong, but four thousand five hundred re-

mained alive at the time it capitulated.

Its fall caused general consternation throughout France, for it opened the road to Paris, and during the winter Louis made strenuous efforts to obtain peace, but the terms demanded by the allies were so onerous that the negotiations were broken off.

In spite of the general distress throughout the country the

wedding was a gay one.

Desmond had written to the Duke of Berwick, who was now in Paris, saying that he was fit for duty, and would report himself at the end of the month, and on the day before he was about to leave Pointdexter he received a reply from him.

It ran as follows: -

Dear Monsieur Kennedy, I am heartily glad to hear of your restoration to health. I mentioned you to His Majesty today, who was pleased to speak very highly of you. The campaign is virtually at an end for the present year. His Majesty has informed me that various changes will be made in the spring. Marshal de Villars is to replace the Duke of Vendôme in the command of the northern army. The latter has been unfortunate, and misfortune on the part of a soldier is regarded as next door to a crime. Certainly the defeat at Oudenarde was not his fault, but had he taken my advice Lille might have been saved.

Doubtless he was as much dissatisfied with me as I was with him, and perhaps with reason for, as you know, I am not accustomed to mince my phrases. However, as His Majesty was pleased to say, it is evident that having two generals acting together, each with an independent command, is a mistake, and one that should not be again committed. Therefore next spring I am to take command of an army in Dauphiny, to check the

Austrians and Italians.

He said, "If you can spare him, Duke, I should be glad if you would let me have this young Irishman for a time. I shall promote him to the rank of captain for the great service he rendered. I shall also settle upon him a pension of fifty louis a year for the loss of his hand. I will send him to Spain, having had several complaints from the Duke of Orleans who, as you know, is now in command there, of the incompetence of many of his staff." I said that although I had found you a most zealous and useful officer, and had a warm regard for you, I would of course accede to his Majesty's wishes in the matter.

Enclosed in this letter is the order for you to join the Duke of Orleans, and a private letter from myself to the duke, giving a sketch of your services and exploits, which will doubtless give

you at once a place in his favour.

I do not think that this war will last very much longer. France is well-nigh ruined by the sacrifices she has made, and the drain upon the allies must be almost as great. Therefore I trust that another campaign will bring it to an end.

Desmond was sorry to leave the service of the duke, but consoled himself with the hope that it would be only temporary, and the prospect to a year's campaigning in a new country was by no means displeasing to him. Therefore, after writing a suitable letter to the duke, he took leave of the Baron Pointdexter, with many thanks for his kindness, and attended by Mike started for Spain.

"It's glad I am to be on the move again, Captain Kennedy," the soldier said as they rode away. "Sure, your honour, idleness is not good for a man, expecially when he has lashings of the best of food and drink. When I came to buckle on my swordbelt this morning I found it would not meet within three inches and the coatee is so tight that I feel as if I was suffocated."

"You will soon work it down again, Mike. From what I hear of Spain there is no fear of your getting too much food there.

Rough work and small rations are, I hear, the rule." "I am ready for a good spell then, your honour. I hardly know myself now, for I am flabby and short of wind. Still, I am sorry to leave the château, for I have had the best time I ever had in my life. Everyone was mighty kind, and seemed to think that I had done great things in helping to rescue Miss Anne,

whereas I did nothing at all except to follow you."

A Mission

On arriving at Madrid in the first week in December, 1708, Desmond, after putting up at an hotel, proceeded to the headquarters of the Duke of Orleans and sent in his name together with Berwick's letter of introduction. In a few minutes he was shown into his room. The duke looked at him in some surprise.

"Are you Captain Kennedy?" "I am, Your Royal Highness."

"The Duke of Berwick has very strongly recommended you, saying that you had performed excellent service under him, and that he parted with you with regret at the express wish of His Majesty. He speaks of you as a young officer, but I was hardly prepared to see one so youthful."

The duke invited Desmond to dine with him that evening, and presented him to several of his staff who were among the company. These were for the most part personal friends and associates of the duke, gallant gentlemen, but wholly ignorant of war and adverse to hard work, and it was not long before Desmond found that his services were called into requisition whenever it was necessary that a despatch should be carried to a distance.

He was by no means sorry that this should be the case, for he soon tired of the stiffness and ceremony of the Spanish Court, and it was a relief to him, when he could get away and enjoy an evening's talk with the officers of one or other of the four Irish

regiments there.

Many of these expeditions were attended by considerable danger, for the wars that had for some years devastated the

country had resulted in general disorder.

Armed bands, under the pretence of acting in the interst of one claimant or other to the throne, traversed the country, pillaging the villages, driving off flocks and herds to the mountains and ruthlessly slaying any who ventured to offer the smallest opposition.

Catalonia and Valencia had been the scene of the greater portion of the conflicts between the rival claimants. Throughout the rest of the country the population looked on apathetically at the struggle for mastery, caring but little which of the two foreign princes reigned over them. But in the out-of-the-

way districts the wilder spirits left their homes in numbers, enticed by the prospects of plunder, under the leadership of

one or other of the partisan chiefs.

Desmond had from the moment of his arrival spent the greater portion of his spare time in the study of Spanish, and, aided by his knowledge of French made rapid progress. It was essential for his work, as without it he could not have made his way about and safely delivered the orders of which he was the bearer. In the beginning of March the duke sent for him.

"I have been greatly pleased, Captain Kennedy, with the activity that you have displayed, and am going to make a further call upon you. This mission is of greater importance than any on which you have hitherto been engaged, and is one which ordinarily would be entrusted to an officer of higher rank, but I feel that I cannot do better than place it in your hands.

"From what we learn, I believe that it is the intention of the enemy to commence the campaign by crossing the frontier near Badajos. By so doing they can either follow the valley of the Guadiana to the sources of the river and then come down into Valencia, or they could cross the sierras, come down into the

valley of the Tagus, and march on Madrid.

"In the first place I want a report as to the state of the fortifications of Badajos and the efficiency of its garrison. I am, of course, acquainted with the official reports sent by the Spanish commander of the town to his Government, but I have come to place no faith whatever in Spanish reports, which for the most

part are a tissue of falsehoods.

"Your first duty, then, will be to give me as complete a report as possible of the state of things there, of your impressions of the capacity of the governor as shown by his preparations, also of the moral of the troops. In the next place, I shall be glad of any information you can gather of the country beyond the frontier, and the state of the roads in all that neighbourhood. Here again the native reports are absolutely untrustworthy.

"During the past four years there has been a good deal of fighting near the frontier, but the reports of the officers commanding the Spanish forces there are devoid of any practical information as to the roads on our side of the boundary. As it has been resolved to give the enemy battle as soon as he crosses the frontier, it is most important that I should know the best lines by which troops can move, the state of the bridges, and the positions in which a battle on a large scale can best be fought.

"You see the mission is an important one, and I selected you for it as a proof of the confidence I feel in your ability. While carrying out this duty, you shall have the temporary rank of major, as it will less ruffle the susceptibility of the Spaniards if an officer of that rank be employed than if a captain be sent to institute such inquiries.

"You will, of course, be provided with a letter to the Governor of Badajos, couched in such terms that he will not consider your mission has any reference to himself, its object being to discover whether the magazines at Badajos are sufficiently well supplied to admit of their being, if necessary, drawn upon for the subsistence of the army. Also, whether the garrison needs strengthening in case the enemy should lay siege to the town before our army is at hand to give battle.

"Thus you will ostensibly confine your inquiries to the amount of provisions and ammunition, and consult the governor as to whether he considers the force at his disposal sufficient for the defence of the fortress against a vigorous attack.

"You will be furnished with a native guide well acquainted with the passes of the sierras between the Tagus and the Gaudiana. This part of your journey will not be unattended with danger, for the mountains swarm with bands of partisans, that is to say, bandits. I shall, however, give you an order to the officer in command of the garrison at Toledo to furnish you with an escort of ten troopers under an officer, to conduct you across the mountains. Four of these will accompany you to Badajos, and remain with you until you return to Toledo. Once in the valley of the Guadiana you should have little chance of falling in with any bands of guerillas, but an escort will add to your weight and importance in the eyes of the Spaniards."

"I feel greatly honoured, Your Royal Highness, by your selecting me for the mission, and will carry it out to the best of

my ability."
"In an hour the papers will be ready for you, and you can start at daybreak tomorrow."

"We are going on a long trip this time, Mike."

"Back to France, your honour?"

"No, we are going to the western frontier by Badajos."

"It makes no difference to me, sir, where we are going, but in truth I shall be glad to go anywhere. I am mightily sick of this town, where the people have no great love for the French, and the best part of them seem to look down upon us soldiers as if we were dirt under their feet. It is unsafe to go through the streets alone at night. A score of men have been found lying dead with a knife between the ribs."

"Yes, the population here is very much divided, Mike, and even those who are favourable to Philip have no love for the foreign soldiers whose bayonets keep him on the throne."

"How long shall we be away, your honour?"

"I should say a month. I am to have temporary rank as major while engaged on this business. Anyone under that grade would receive but little courtesy from the Spaniards."

"They are a mighty haughty lot," Mike grumbled.

That evening Desmond received a packet containing his appointment as major while on special service, details of instructions as to the points to be attended to, and letters from the duke to the commandant of the garrison at Toledo, and from Philip to the Governor at Badajos.

The next morning he started at daybreak, accompanied by Mike, and arrived that evening at Toledo. Here he presented

his letter to the commandant.

"Very well, sir," the officer said when he had read it. "At what hour do you wish the escort and guide to be ready in the

"I should like to start as early as possible, Colonel. I myself, being well mounted, might cross the sierra in a day, but the

troopers' horses could not do that."

"You would not gain anything if they could, Major Kennedy, for even if your horse could carry you over sixty or seventy miles of mountain roads in a day you would certainly need a couple of days' rest before proceeding farther. The general says nothing about a non-commissioned officer, but I shall take it upon myself to send one to accompany you with the four men, it will take a good deal of trouble off your hands.'

"I am much obliged to you, Colonel."

"Now that we have finished business," the officer said, "we can talk of other things. You will, of course, put up here."

"Thank you, Colonel, I will gladly accept your invitation." The colonel rang a bell and ordered a servitor who answered to show Major Kennedy's servant where to put up his master's horses and his own, to bring up the officer's valises, and to make the soldier comfortable below.

"We shall sup in half an hour," he said to Desmond when the man had left. "Two of my majors are going to share the

As soon as the valises were brought up, Desmond changed his uniform, got rid of the dust of the road, and was just ready when a servant knocked at the door and said that the supper was served.

The meal was a pleasant one. The three French officers were anxious to hear the last news that had reached Madrid from France.

In passing over the hills the next day, a large party of armed men suddenly made their appearance on a height above, but seeing that an attack was likely to meet with a stout resistance they did not interfere with their passage. Desmond congratulated himself on having an escort, for it would have gone hard with him had he been accompanied only by Mike. On the fifth day after leaving Madrid he arrived at Badajos, with the sergeant, the four troopers, and Mike. After some formalities for the town, being close to the frontier, was liable at any moment to be suddenly attacked - Desmond was conducted to the governor, a pompous Spanish officer.

"Are you Major Kennedy?" he asked, looking with some

surprise at his young visitor.

"My name is Kennedy, sir, and I have the honour of being major and to serve on the staff of his grace the Duke of Orleans. I am the bearer of a letter to you from His Majesty King

The Spaniard took the letter and read it, and Desmond could see by the expression of his countenance that he was by

no means pleased.

"I do not understand," he said coldly, "why an officer should have been specially despatched to obtain information

which I have already duly furnished."

"I understood from the Duke of Orleans, sir, that as news has been received that the enemy's plans were to cross the frontier near this town, it became a matter of special importance to see that it was sufficiently supplied with provisions and munitions of war to stand a siege."

"Well, sir, I will obey His Majesty's orders and give you every facility. My officers shall be instructed to open such magazines as you may select, and you will be then able personally to judge as to the quality and condition of the stores. It will, of course, be impossible, to go through the whole of the magazines, but as many as you wish shall be opened, and a party of soldiers told off to count the bales and cases."

"A very few will suffice, sir. I have little doubt that everything will be found in excellent order, but should there be any deficiencies the duke assured me that they would be at once

made good."

"If you will call tomorrow morning, sir," the governor said, "I will have some of the officials placed at your disposal. I am convinced you will find that my reports on the stores and ammunition in hand are fully borne out."

"The governor is, as I expected, a good deal put out, Mike," Desmond said as he rejoined his follower, who was waiting outside with the horses. "Now, let us find out the best hotel,"

"Didn't he ask you to stay with him, your honour?" Mike

asked in surprise.

"No, he is much too grand a man for that. However much a Spaniard may place his house and all within it at your service, it is very seldom that he invites a stranger to enter it. Moreover, glad as they may be to have French help in fighting their battles, they look with suspicion and dislike upon an individual Frenchman. Besides, I fancy I shall find that these stores and magazines by no means tally with the report sent in by the governor. I heard the Duke of Berwick one day speaking about it, and he said there was corruption and dishonesty among their officials from the highest to the lowest."

The next morning, on going to the governor's, Desmond found a number of officials assembled there. "These are the officers in charge of the stores and magazines," the governor said. "Colonel Mendez will accompany you, and will see that

everything is done to facilitate your examination."

The governor bowed formally. Desmond returned his salute, and then went down with the Spanish colonel, the other officials following. He saw that there was an expression of malicious pleasure on the colonel's face, and guessed that he was by no means sorry at the investigation that was to take place.

"I think, sir," Desmond said, "that it will not be necessary for us to have all these officials going round with us. It will be impossible in one day to do more than examine one department. As ammunition is the most important of all stores, I would suggest that we take only those in charge of the war material.'

"Very good." Turning to those behind he said: "For today all those save the officers in charge of the magazines can be relieved from this duty. Their turn will come tomorrow or next day."

With the exception of five or six all moved away.

"We have three magazines in the town," the colonel went on, "so as to lessen the chance of our resources being destroyed by a single blow. There is the Central magazine, another that is known as the San Juan magazine, and the Western magazine."

"We may as well visit the Central one first, as no doubt that

is the most important one."

As they went on, a party of twenty soldiers fell in behind, while Mike and two troopers of his escort also, at his orders, accompanied them. The magazine was formed in what had formerly been an old castle, but which was now used for another purpose, that of a store, its thick wall affording protection against any but very heavy missiles.

On entering what had been the court-yard Desmond saw that the greater portion of it was occupied by storehouses, massively built, and covered by some five or six feet of earth. "The first of these on the right contains musketry ammunition," Colonel Mendez said. "The next two contain cannon balls. Powder is stored in the three houses at the farther end, and the three on the left side contain hand-grenades, fuses for mines, signal rockets, and other miscellanies, such as brimstone.

"We will examine number one first," Desmond said.

"Which is the officer in charge?"

One of the officials stepped forward with a key. Desmond

saw that his face was pale, and that he had a sullen look.

"I will ask you before we enter," he said, "how often do you take stock of your stores? I suppose when the governor sends in his half-yearly report?"

"We do not do it that way at all," the man said. "I have a book. It was given to me by the officer I succeeded. Here it is. You will see that he handed over so many barrels of cartridges. On one side of the page I put down the number of barrels issued, and on the other the number I receive, and thus at any time, without disturbing the contents of the store, I can state the number of barrels it contains."

'Then how long have you held this position, sir?"

"I have been in charge of this store and of those used for powder in the cellars underneath the castle for ten years."

"The man whom you succeeded - how long had he been

here?"

"I believe he had been here for twenty years or more."

"And his system of keeping account was the same as yours?" "Precisely. He handed his books to me, and I have kept mine in the same way."

"Then it is a fact, if I understand you rightly, that there

has been no taking of stock for the past thirty years?"

"It was not necessary," the officer said in a surly tone.
"There can be no mistake possible considering the way in which we made our entries."

They now entered the store. It was some sixty feet long and forty feet wide, with pillars of masonry along the centre to

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support the weight of the roof. It was lighted only by small loopholes in the thick walls. Four of the soldiers carried lanterns, and they were about to enter when Desmond said,

"There is no loose powder lying about, I suppose?"

"None," the officer replied. "The barrels were all carefully examined before being taken into the store. They are, as you can see, strongly made. A leakage is out of the question, unless by any accident one should fall off the pile and burst, but such a thing has never happened as far as I know."

"I see by your book that there should be three thousand four hundred and eighty-two barrels, each containing five hundred cartridges. Certainly an ample supply even for a pro-

longed siege.'

The barrels were piled in four tiers, one above another, forming a wall on each side of a central path seven feet wide.

'Give me your hand, Mike," Desmond said to his follower, and, standing upon it, he was able to scramble on to the top. "Twelve barrels deep," he said as he descended. "Now let us count the number in each line."

The wall of barrels extended only some two-thirds of the length of the stores, and there were thirty barrels in each line. He made a rapid calculation. "That is three thousand two hundred, but I see that in addition there is a small pile on each side beyond the others which would about make up the correct total. Your record is accurate."

The official took up the lantern as if the matter was now finished, but Desmond said: "No, sir, I have but begun. My instructions were to see how much musket ammunition there was here at present. I only know how many barrels there are. And now, Colonel, I will ask you to call your men in and set them to work. I wish two passages made through each of these piles of barrels. Three feet wide will be sufficient."

"It would be very dangerous to move them," the official

said hastily.

"Not if it is carefully done. You tell me the barrels are

strong, and that there is no leakage.

The soldiers set to work at four points chosen at hazard by Desmond. The barrels, as they were taken down, were ranged along on each side of the central path. When three lines had been cleared out, one of the soldiers gave an exclamation.

"This is lighter than the one I carried out last!" he said.

"Carry it out into the courtyard," Desmond said. "I should like to look at the contents."

It was taken out to the courtyard, and one end carefully taken

"You see, Colonel," Desmond said as he looked at its contents, "you would have been reduced to great straits long before you expected it.'

The colonel, who belonged to the artillery, looked into the

barrel, which was full of earth.

"Empty it out!" Desmond ordered. They did so. There

was not a single cartridge in it.

"This is scandalous!" the colonel exclaimed. "I did not expect that everything would be found right, but I had no idea of such villainy as this!" He turned to the men. "Arrest the commissary at once," he said. But that official was nowhere to be found. He had slipped away as soon as the men began to take down the barrels. Some soldiers were at once sent off in search of him.

"We will continue the work," Desmond said, "and see how

extensively this fraud has been carried on."

The same result was met with in each of the openings. The first three lines consisted of barrels filled with cartridges; the

seven lines behind contained nothing but earth.

"You see, Colonel, instead of having over three thousand two hundred barrels of cartridges, you have less than a thousand. It is almost beyond belief! It is clear that this fellow, and probably the man who was in charge before him, have been in collusion with the contractors for these cartridges, and allowed them to send in seven barrels of earth for every three of cartridges. No doubt they calculated that there was little chance of the fraud being detected - never indeed until there was a prolonged siege - for they would naturally serve out the barrels from the front row as they were required, filling their places with fresh ones as supplies came in."

The other storehouses were now examined. The number of cannon ball alone tallied with the account. There were large deficiencies in the store of powder, and indeed among almost

all the other munitions.

"It is infinitely worse than I thought," the colonel said, "and I fear that the store-keepers are not the only people con-

cerned in these frauds."

"Now, Colonel, if you do not mind, I should like to go to one of the provision stores at once. Possibly, after what we have discovered, some pretext to stop further examination may be invented if we wait till tomorrow."

Great as had been the fraud in the magazines, that in the

supplies of provisions was even greater. There was a deficiency of many hundreds of sacks of flour and beans. The meat stores were entirely empty, although they should have contained a large number of tierces of salted beef.

This was a matter of minor importance, for in case of the approach of an enemy the people of the country round would drive their cattle into the town, and indeed the allowance of meat to a Spanish soldier was so small that he could do well without it, existing entirely upon bread and fried beans.

Of wine there was scarce half the amount indicated. A great number of the barrels had been filled only with water. It was

late in the afternoon when the work ceased.

"I should require a fortnight," Desmond said, "to get accurate figures. This, however, is comparatively unimportant. It is quite sufficient to know that in no case is there half the amount either of ammunition or of provisions given in the governor's last report. Fraud on a large scale has been carried out, and I cannot but think that some men of higher rank than these storekeepers must have been concerned in the affair."

"There has certainly been something wrong in the supply of clothes, Major Kennedy. My men have had no new ones served out to them for the past year and a half, although I have made repeated applications during the past two months."

"Yes, I noticed when I walked about in the town yesterday

that many of the troops were almost in rags.'

"Well, sir, as a Spaniard I lament this terrible exposure. Blame, however, must not be laid entirely upon the military. The supply of provisions of all kinds, of everything but guns and ammunition, is in the hands of the junta of the province, and of the civil authority here. Many of the members must be concerned in the matter, and I have no doubt that the officials here are heavily bribed to shut their eyes, and to arrange matters so that the frauds may escape attention.

"I know that once when I proposed to the governor to examine some of the barrels of cartridges as they came in, he answered me very sharply, and told me that my business was to work the guns and not to meddle with the duties of the store-

keeper."
"Then do you think, Colonel?"

"I think nothing," the officer replied. "The governor is the governor, and it is not for me to discuss his conduct in any way, nor even to admit the possibility of his knowing of this affair.

Only two or three of the storekeepers had been arrested, the rest had slunk away as soon as they saw how matters were going.

Treachery

At this moment an officer came down and said that the governor wished to see Colonel Mendez and Major Kennedy at once. As they entered the room they saw the governor walking up and down in a state of great agitation.

'I hear, Colonel Mendez," he said, "that you have placed several of the commissariat storekeepers under arrest. What

does this mean, sir?"

"It means, sir, that Major Kennedy has discovered enormous deficiencies in the stores, and there can be little doubt that a number of persons must have been concerned in the matter besides those in charge of the storehouses. Wholesale bribery must have been practised by those who supplied the goods to those whose duty it was to receive them."

"I shall order a commission of inquiry to sit at once, and beg that you, Colonel Mendez, will send me a detailed report of the matter, which is, I need hardly say one of extreme

gravity."

"I was right," Colonel Mendez said, as they left the governor's house. "I suspected that something was wrong ever since he refused to allow me access to the magazines. I have no doubt that he has been acting in collusion with the contractors."

"What will he do, do you think, Colonel?"

"He will endeavour by every means in his power to prevent any word of your discovery from leaking out. If I may advise you, I should say take every precaution for your own safety. His position is a desperate one, for one cannot doubt that your report will be followed by his removal from his post, his dismissal from the army, and the confiscation of everything of which he is possessed. Therefore it is almost a matter of life and death to him to prevent your report from being sent to headquarters, and have you removed altogether. This done, the facts might not leak out. It would be supposed at Madrid that you had been stabbed by some street ruffian."

"But your evidence would be as strong against him as mine." "Yes, but that evidence is not yet given. He can, in the first place, suppress my report to him. In the second place, he would consider it unlikely that I should venture to make the matter public, for he has powerful friends at court. Therefore, any interference on my part would be more disastrous to my pros-

pects than to his.

"It is humiliating to say so, Major Kennedy, but both our civil and military systems are rotten to the core. There are, of course, honest men in both services, but as a rule corruption is almost universal. Still, although he cannot fear me as he must fear you, he may endeavour to make himself safe by removing me also from his path. For a time I shall take good care to remain in my own barracks as much as possible."

"I will also be careful," Desmond said, "and I thank you

for the warning."

"If I were in your place I should mount my horse at once, and with the troopers of the escort ride straight for Madrid."

"I cannot do that, Colonel, for the examination into the state of the stores here was only a part of my instructions, and I must, if possible, carry these out to the letter before leaving for Madrid. I might, however, send off my dispatch by two of the troopers with me.'

"I think you may take my word for it, Major, that they would never reach their destination. Even while we are speaking a messenger may be sent off either to one of these bands in the mountains, or to two or three of the contractors, telling them it is a matter of life and death to them to prevent you or your messengers from reaching Madrid."

"The look-out is certainly far from comfortable," Desmond

admitted.

When he reached the hotel he told Mike what Colonel Mendez had said.

"By the powers, your honour, it is a nasty scrape that we

seem to be in, almost as bad as when you were shut up in that prison in London."

"Worse, Mike, for then we knew that we should be tried, but hoped that Louis would interfere in our favour. Here we have only ourselves to depend upon, and the blow may come at at any moment."

"Well, at any rate, your honour, we will see that none get at you unbeknown. I will lie down in your room against the door, and if the sergeant places a man on guard outside, it is

hard if anyone gets at you."

At about two o'clock in the morning Desmond, who had just dropped off to sleep, was aroused by hearing the sentry outside his door challenge. There was no answer; all remained quiet. Mike leapt to his feet and opened the door.

"What is it?" he asked the sentry.

"I saw two or three men at the end of the corridor. It was too dark to make them out clearly. They were coming this way. I levelled my carbine and cried, 'Who comes there?' and and at once they stole away. They could have been after no good, for their steps were noiseless, and they must have come up without boots."

"Keep a sharp look-out, sentry," Desmond said, "and see that they don't steal up to you, for if they do, you may be stabbed before you have time to turn round. It is lucky that I carried out your suggestion, Mike, and posted a sentry at the

door."

In a few minutes Desmond was again asleep. He had had a long day's work, and believing that the affair was over, at least for the night, he did not even try to keep awake. As soon as Mike heard by his breathing that he was asleep, he got up noiselessly and seated himself near the open window with a loaded pistol.

An hour passed, and then he heard a slight stir in the street. He did not look out, but grasped his pistol tightly. Their room was on the first floor. Presently he heard a grating sound against the window. It was very dark, and he knelt down so that he would be able to make out any figure that showed above the

window-sill.

He thought first of rousing his master, but as he had another pistol in his belt, and his sword leaned against the wall ready to his hand, he thought it better to let matters take their course.

He had heard no further sound, but presently a round object appeared in sight. Stretching out his arm, he fired without a moment's hesitation. There was a sound of a heavy fall below, followed by some muttered exclamations. In a moment Desmond was on his feet, a pistol which he had laid by his pillow in his grasp.

"What is it, Mike?" "It is only a gentleman who had a fancy for looking in at the window, your honour, and I have no doubt would have come in without saying by your leave, if I had not cut the matter short by putting a bullet into his forehead. He came up on a ladder." He looked out of the window. "They are taking it down now, your honour. Shall I give them another shot?"

"No, Mike, let them go. The lesson has been good enough." The sentry had also run into the room on hearing the shot. "It is all over," Desmond said. "Seeing that you prevented them from getting in at the door they tried the window. Mike has shot one of them."

There was a sound of feet and loud talking in the passage, and as Desmond went out, the landlord, two of the servingmen, and several of those staying at the hotel ran up.

"What is it, señor? We heard a shot."

"Yes, a fellow tried to enter my window by means of a ladder, but fortunately my man heard him and shot him before he came in. No doubt it was some prowling marauder, who, seeing my window open, thought that there was a chance of

"Carrambo!" the landlord exclaimed, "then we shall have

inquiries and all sorts of trouble."

"I don't think you will," Desmond said quietly. "I fancy he had some friends down below, and they will probably carry his body and the ladder away, and if you hold your tongues nothing more will be heard of it. Mike, you and the sentry take a lantern and go down and see."

The landlord looked out of the window.

"As far as I can see everything is quiet there," he said. "Are you sure that your servant was not dreaming?"

"That you will soon ascertain if you go down with him," Desmond said. "I fancy that you will find some traces of the affair there."

The landlord, followed by his two servants, went down with the soldiers, and then, lighting a lantern and handing it to them, went out, keeping carefully behind them.

"There," Mike said, when he stopped under Desmond's window, "does that look like a dream?" and he pointed to a patch of blood on the pavement.

"It is true enough," the landlord said. "Pedro and Lopez, fetch pails of water and brooms and get rid of this blood, otherwise we shall be having inquiries made in the morning.'

"Well, Mike," Desmond said when they were again alone, "the campaign has opened with spirit. This is something like that journey with the Baron de Pointdexter, when we expected to be attacked every minute."

"Well, we got through that all right, your honour, and it is

hard if we don't get through this.'

At six o'clock a volley of musketry was fired. "They are practising early, sir," Mike said.

"It can't be that, Mike, it is too close. They would go beyond the outer works to practise, and by the sound it is certainly much nearer than that, though possibly just outside the

"I will go out and inquire, your honour. When one is at war it is as well to know exactly what the enemy are doing."

"Take one of the troopers with you, Mike. Pierre speaks Spanish well."

Mike returned in an hour.

"They have shot all the prisoners we took yesterday," he said. "I hear they held a sort of court-martial in the evening at the governor's. It did not sit more than ten minutes. They were all found guilty of fraud and treachery, and were shot this morning."

"Worse and worse, Mike! Evidently the governor is determined to get rid of all whose evidence might throw any light on this matter. After what has happened here, and these summary executions, I feel very uncomfortable as to Colonel Mendez. Will you go to the artillery barracks with a message from me? Take Pierre with you again."

When Mike returned Desmond saw that his news was bad.

"The colonel had not been seen when I got there, and his servant went up to his room and found him lying dead, stabbed to the heart.'

"Another witness gone," Desmond said, "an honourable man and a pleasant one. Well, Mike, the matter becomes more and more serious. After this there is but one thing open to me, and that is to return to Madrid at once. The question is, shall we mount and ride at once, or shall I go and take leave of the governor?"

"Of course, your honour, you can do as you like, but I should say that the sooner we are out of this the better. The longer we stay here the more time he will have to take care

we don't get back alive.

"There was another thing I did not tell you, sir. As we went to the barracks we passed some cavalry men talking. They were arguing that the enemy must be marching this way, for at two o'clock last night ten troopers were suddenly called up and sent off, the gates being opened for them by order of

the governor."
"Just what I expected, Mike. He has written to warn the various contractors that the frauds have been discovered, no doubt telling them that all messengers from here must be stopped. Well, I think you are right. We need not mind saying good-bye to this scoundrel. Order the sergeant to saddle up at once. Let the men eat a meal as quickly as possible, and let each put a bottle of wine and a loaf of bread into his valise, so that we shall be able to ride without stopping anywhere. We mount in twenty minutes."

Exactly twenty minutes later the little troop started. The men had, at Desmond's orders, loaded their pistols and short guns. Avoiding the principal streets they rode by narrow lanes until they emerged close to the eastern gate. Through this he and his followers rode, without question, at a quiet pace until beyond the exterior fortifications and then broke into a canter.

They struck off from the road when nearing Merida, and followed a country track until they came upon the road between that town and Torre Mocha. Avoiding the latter place, they took the road to Truxillo, and late in the afternoon approached that town and halted in a wood two miles distant from it.

Here Desmond consulted his map. There were two roads from Truxillo. Crossing the sierra the main and shorter road came down upon the Tagus at Almarez, the other passed through Deleytoza and came down upon the bridge at Condo. Beyond Deleytoza it appeared to be a mere mule track.

"If there are any parties watching," he said to Mike, "they will expect that my messenger or I myself will travel by the main road to Almarez, for not only is it better, but it is shorter. But, again, they might think that if I suspected we might be attacked I should take the road through Deleytoza, and would at any rate make matters safe by watching both roads. It is a difficult question which to choose."

"Well, your honour, if you have got to fight, it would be best to do so on a good road. Our horses would be of no use to us if we were going single file along a bad road, while on a good road we could charge the spalpeens and cut our way through."

"You are quite right, Mike, and we will take the main road. See here, Mike, this is my report that I wrote out yesterday evening." He took a packed from the inside of his coat. "When we start tomorrow morning I shall put it in my left holster. If I am shot you will not wait for a moment, but will snatch it out and ride on to Madrid, and deliver it to the duke there."

"If your honour is killed I will carry out your orders, but if it is only wounded you are, I will try to take you off with me."

"You must do as I order you."

"I obey your honour's orders when they are reasonable," Mike said doggedly. "But leave you behind to have your throat cut by those villains! I would not do such a thing, so there is

Desmond smiled at the earnestness of his faithful follower. "Well, Mike, you must be guided by circumstances; but remember, it is of extreme importance that this report should reach the Duke of Orleans. Unless he has it we may lose Badajos and the cause suffer irreparable injury."

"To the devil wid the cause," Mike said. "The cause doesn't trouble me one way or the other. I don't care a brass farthing whether Philip or Charles reigns over the Spaniards. It is not a nice job they will be taking on, any way, and not worth a drop of Irish blood."

The next day they set out at daybreak, and in two hours were mounting the slope of the sierra. There were no signs of any men until they reached a point where the road ran between

steep hills. "There they are," Desmond exclaimed, reining in his horse. "Thirty or forty of them on the road. Now, my men, we will ride forward to those boulders and then we will dismount and give them a volley. If you keep that up it will soon be too hot for them to remain on the road while we, sheltered behind the rocks, will be safe from their shot. It is certain that your guns will carry farther and shoot straighter than theirs, as Spanish powder is so much inferior to French."

Accordingly they rode forward at a canter to the heap of boulders, then suddenly left the road, dismounted, and took cover among the rocks.

"Take steady aim, men," Desmond said, "then you can hardly miss hitting some of them, standing close together as

they do." The bandits had halted undecided at their sudden disappearance and before they could form any plans five muskets flashed out, and four of their number fell. A cry of rage burst from them, and there was a general discharge of their guns, the balls pattering thickly against the stones. The soldiers now fired as quickly as they could load, doing considerable execution. Their foes left the road and imitated them by taking shelter behind stones. For ten minutes the combat continued, and then a party of men were seen mounting the hill on either side.

"That is just what I hoped for," Desmond said. "Fire at them so as to force them to climb a little higher up the hill. As soon as they are pretty well out of gun-shot, we will mount and charge down the road. There cannot be many men left

there."

His orders were followed. Some of the men on the hillside dropped, and the others continued to mount the slopes. When, as they believed, out of fire, they moved forward so as to take the defenders of the rocks in flank.

"Now, fire a volley among the men in front of us," Desmond said. "We are not likely to hit any of them, but it is sure to draw their fire, and there will not be many unemptied

guns as we pass them.'

As he expected, the volley was answered by a general fire from their hidden foes, then the party leapt into their saddles and, pistol in hand, galloped up the road. Several hurried shots were fired from the front and then, at a shout from their leader, some twenty men leapt from their hiding-places and ran down into the road.

Desmond was supported on one side by Mike and on the other by the sergeant. He dropped his reins - the horse had learned to obey the motions of his knees - and drawing his sword, rode straight at the bandits. Only a few muskets were discharged, and these so hurriedly that the balls missed their aim, and with a shout the party fell upon the brigands.

The pistols of the troopers and Mike cracked out, but they had no need to draw their swords, for the rush of the horses struck such a panic into the Spaniards that they sprang from the road, leaving the path clear, and the party thundered past

them without a check.

"Is anyone wounded?" Desmond asked, when they had passed beyond gun-shot of their assailants.

"I have a ball in my shoulder, Major," one of the troopers

"Well, we have been fortunate," Desmond said. "I will see to your wound, my man, when we get a little farther. If those fellows had not been so scared, we might have lost half our number."

They stopped half a mile farther, and Desmond examined the trooper's arm. "The ball has gone through the flesh," he said, "without touching the bone, so you will soon have the use of it again." He bound the wound tightly with the soldier's

sash, and then made a sling.

They slept that night at Almarez, made a short journey to Oropesa, and a long one on the following day to Toledo, where Desmond dismissed his escort with a handsome reward for their services, and upon the next afternoon rode with Mike into Madrid. The Duke of Orleans looked astonished when he entered the room.

"What! back already, Major Kennedy? Surely you cannot have carried out all the work that I entrusted to you?

"By no means, Your Royal Highness, but what I did carry out was so important that I deemed it my duty to ride back at

once. There is the report, sir."

A heavy frown settled on the duke's brow as he perused the document. "Infamous!" he exclaimed, when he had finished. "And you say that two attempts were made to murder you that night, and the Spanish colonel who gave you so much assistance was assassinated?

"Now, sir, I must ask you to come with me to the king. The matter is too serious for a moment's delay. I must lay the whole

case before His Majesty."

Leaving Desmond in the ante-chamber, he went in to the

king, and read the full report to him.

I have met with many bad cases of Spanish corruption," the king said, when he had finished, "but this is by far the worst. Steps must be taken instantly to secure the governor, arrest the contractors, and fill up the magazines. What do you

"I think, sir, that if we send forward at once a regiment of French soldiers from Toledo, accompanied by Colonel Crofton's regiment of dragoons, there is no likelihood that any resistance will be offered - indeed I should imagine that the governor will have taken to flight as soon as he learns that his plans for the assassination of Major Kennedy have failed."

"So I should think," the king said. "He will certainly have warned his accomplices, the contractors, and probably by this time they are all on their way either into Andalusia or to the north. Any that are found shall certainly be hanged. This young officer of yours must be a wonderfully shrewd fellow. I should like to question him as to how he discovered these frauds."

Desmond was called in.

"This is Major Kennedy, Your Majesty," the duke said.
"I have noticed him before, cousin," Philip said. "Now, sir, will you give me an account of how you discovered these frauds?'

Desmond then related how he had caused the piles of barrels to be opened out so that he could examine those next to the wall as well as those in front, and how he had similarly examined the other stores.

"Very good indeed, sir," the king said. "Most officers would have contented themselves with counting the number of barrels and sacks. The matter shows both zeal and shrewdness."

Captured

"He has shown that on various occasions," the duke said. "as you may judge from the promotion that he has received. As you see by the loss of his hand he has suffered as well as fought on behalf of France. When Your Majesty is at leisure I will some evening relate to you a story which I heard from the king himself, of the manner in which he twice rescued a fair damsel from an evil-minded noble who carried her off,"

"I shall hear it with pleasure, cousin. You say he holds only temporary rank. I think that after the signal service he has

rendered it should be made substantial."

"I certainly intend to make it so," the duke said.
"Pardon, sir," Desmond said, "but while thanking you for your kindness I would beg to be allowed to remain a captain. Already I have obtained more promotion than others have done after many years of good service, and I should regret very much passing over the heads of so many of my old companions."

"It is the first time that I have had promotion declined," the duke said, smiling. "However, for the present at least I will

let the matter remain so."

With an expression of warm thanks Desmond retired. "We must lose no time over this matter," the king said. "For aught we know this scoundrel may be in communication with the enemy, and may be prepared to open the gates of the fortress at the first summons."

"I will act at once," the duke replied. "I will send orders to Toledo for a regiment to march at nine o'clock tomorrow morning, and if you will send a similar order to Colonel Crofton, he will overtake the infantry before they get to Almarez."

"I will do so, and will also send with them three fieldofficers with full power to arrest, try, and execute all those who

have taken part in this treacherous fraud."

On the duke leaving the king, Desmond joined him in the ante-chamber, and as they walked towards the French headquarters, said: "I hope, sir, you will permit me to start tomorrow with any force you may be sending, as I wish to carry out the rest of the mission with which you entrusted me."

"By all means do so if you wish it," the duke said. "Colonel Crofton's regiment will start at nine o'clock tomorrow morning, and you may accompany it. On the road it will

overtake one of our regiments from Toledo."

"I have a job for you, Mike." "What is it, your honour?"

"I want you to take off all the marks of a field-officer from

my clothes. I am going to be a captain again."

Mike looked with surprise at his master. "Well, your honour, it is ungrateful bastes they must be. Sure I thought that the least they could do was to make you a full major, though if they had made you a colonel it would be no more than you deserve."

"I was offered the majority, Mike, but I declined it. It would be absurd at my age to have such a rank, and I should be ashamed to look officers of our brigade, who have done twenty years of good service and are still only captains, in the

face. I would much rather remain as I am."

"Well, it may be you are right, sir, but it is disappointed I am entirely."

"You will get over it, Mike," Desmond laughed.

"That may be," Mike said doubtfully, "but I should have

felt mighty proud of being a colonel's servant."

"I don't suppose you will ever be that, Mike. You know that after the last war was over, several of the Irish regiments were disbanded. No doubt it will be the same when this war is finished, so you could not count upon seeing me a colonel, at any rate not for another twenty years."

"Ah, your honour, I hope we shall be back in old Ireland

years before that!"

"I hope so too, Mike. I have only been out here for two years, and yet I am beginning to feel that I should like a quieter life. No doubt the loss of my hand has something to do with that, but I would give up willingly all chance of ever becoming a colonel if I could but settle down in the old country, though I fear there is very little chance of that."

"But sure there may be fighting there too, your honour," Mike said. "and if King James goes across the water there is

sure to be divarsion that way."

"I hope not, Mike. It is not that I do not feel as loyal as ever to the cause of the Stuarts, but if they cannot come to their own without Ireland being again deluged with blood, I would rather they stay away. Twice Ireland has suffered for the Stuarts. I am loyal to the Stuarts, as I said, but I am still more loyal to Ireland, and would rather that King James remained all his life at St. Germain than that those scenes should ever come again."

"That's true for you, sir, and when I come to think of it, I should be just as easy and comfortable in a snug little cot in Killarney, whether King James or Queen Anne was ruling it

in England."

"Quite so, Mike, and if I had, as you say, a snug little cot to go to, and an income to live comfortably in it, and no fear of being hauled off to prison and hanged for joining the brigade, I should not be sorry to settle down. We start back for Badajos tomorrow morning.'

"Faith, your honour, it has been so hard getting away from there that I should not have thought you wished to put your foot inside the place again. You might not be so lucky in getting

off next time."

"We are going in a different way, Mike. Colonel Crofton's regiment of Irish dragoons is going with us, and a French infantry regiment from Toledo."

"Then I am well content to go back, your honour, and I

hope we shall see that murthering governor hung."

"I think you have a good chance of seeing that, Mike, if he has not taken himself off before we arrive."

"Why are we going back, your honour?"

"To carry out my original orders, Mike - survey the roads, and passes, and bridges. The duke cannot rely upon Spanish reports in these matters, and it is most important that we ascertain how good are the roads into Portugal, or where best to oppose the enemy if they cross the Guadiana."

The next morning Desmond joined Colonel Crofton's regi-

ment as it was on the point of starting from the barracks.

Desmond's prophecy proved to be correct. As they descended into the valley of the Guadiana they met an officer of the garrison, who was bearing a dispatch saying that the governor and his family had suddenly left without issuing any orders. As he had taken all his portable property with him it was supposed that he did not intend to return.

Colonel Crofton sent him back with instructions to the colonel commanding the troops that he was coming with a regiment of dragoons and one of infantry, and had full authority from the king to take all measures that seemed to him desirable. Accordingly, when they arrived at Badajos they were met at the gate by the colonel commanding the troops, and a party of his officers.

"I have the king's authority," Colonel Crofton said to him, "to act as temporary governor until another is appointed. I do not know whether you are aware of the circumstances that led to the flight of Don Juan de Munos?"

"No, sir, we have heard nothing."

"Well, Colonel, if you will accompany me to the governor's house I will enter into the matter fully with you. You may well believe that it is serious, as I have been dispatched here with my regiment, and with one of French infantry, for both of whom quarters must be found at once.'

"There is plenty of room, sir. The barracks will contain ten thousand men, and at present we have but four thousand

here."

When the four colonels arrived, after seeing that the troops were housed, Colonel Crofton obtained from them the names and addresses of the various contractors. Half an hour later parties of the cavalry regiment were dispatched under officers

with orders to arrest and bring them into Badajos.

During the meal Colonel Crofton explained to the four colonels the discovery of the frauds. He then requested them and Desmond to accompany him to the stores. This they did, after sending to the barracks for a party of fifty men for fatigue duty. The gaps made during Desmond's explorations had been carefully filled up again, but upon fresh openings being made his reports were fully borne out.

Some hours were spent at the central magazine, and orders given that the other magazines should be opened and examined

on the following day.

Desmond did not join in this search, but started early with Mike to carry out his own mission. He had been furnished with reports sent in by the provincial and local juntas as to the state of the roads but, as he had expected, he soon found these to be grossly inaccurate.

The roads marked as excellent and fit for the passage of artillery and trains were found to be mere bridle roads. Others marked as high-roads were almost impassable lanes. The bridges across the streams were for the most part in such a bad condition as to be unsafe for a country cart and, until re-

paired, impossible for the passage of artillery.

He carefully noted all the points at which work was required to render them in any degree practicable for the passage of troops, and reported fully to Colonel Crofton. The latter dispatched the greater portion of his troops with a large number of peasants with materials to fill the deep ruts, repair the bridges, and make the roads as far as possible fit for the passage of an army.

In ten days Desmond had surveyed all the roads down both the valley of the Guadiana and that of the Tagus, and had sent off his report to Madrid, together with his observations as to the points at which a defensive position could, in his opinion, be best taken up.

Having done this, he prepared to undertake the second part of his mission, and to investigate the roads on the Portuguese

side of the frontier.

"Now we shall have to keep our eyes open, Mike," he said. "So far as we have heard there are no bodies of the enemy's troops anywhere in this neighbourhood, but there is a bitter enmity between the Spanish and Portuguese, and we shall be liable to be attacked by the peasants."

"Are we to ride in our uniforms, your honour?"

"Certainly we are, Mike. If we are captured in uniform we should be dealt with as prisoners of war and have a right to fair treatment. If we are taken in disguise we shall be shot as

"Faith, your honour, the alternative is not a pleasant one. If we go as civilians we may be shot as spies; if we go in uni-

form we may be murdered by the peasants."

The following day they rode out, and for nearly a week examined the lines of route across the frontier. They followed the roads between the foot of the mountains and the frontier as far as Portalegre, but avoided the towns of Campo Mayor and Arronches, crossed the hills and struck upwards by the bank of the Zarina to Frontiera, and thence west as far as Lavre.

They met with no interference by such peasants as they saw working in the fields, or by those in the small villages through which they passed, these supposing the uniforms to be those of English or Dutch officers. They found that the roads were fully as bad as those of Spain, and would present great difficulty to any army with artillery and a long train of wagons.

In one of the places they heard from a peasant with whom they conversed that there was another pass over the mountains from Elvas. The man spoke in Portuguese, but the language sufficiently resembled Spanish for Desmond to understand its

"We must investigate that road, Mike, for if it is practicable it would be the most direct for an army coming from Lisbon. Of course we shall have to make a wide circle round Elvas, as there is sure to be a strong garrison there."

Accordingly they passed round the fortress at a distance, and presently came upon the road. It showed signs of having lately been repaired in some parts, but these were so badly done that they increased rather than diminished the difficulties it

presented to the passage of troops.

They had ridden some ten miles, and were already among the mountains, when they dismounted to rest their horses and to eat the food they carried with them. Suddenly, looking down the road behind them, they saw a squadron of cavalry coming

"This is awkward, Mike. There is nothing for it but to ride on, and when we reach the foot of the mountains, strike across country until we come upon the road to Badajos. They are a good two miles behind us, so we need not blow our horses.'

Mounting, they proceeded at a trot up the road. As far as they could see, the cavalry did not quicken their pace, which showed that they were on some ordinary duty and not, as Desmond at first supposed, in pursuit of them. They therefore took matters quietly, and indeed sometimes the road was so steep that it would have been impossible for the horses to go beyond a quick walk. Suddenly on reaching the crest of a rise they saw at a distance of a hundred yards ahead a party of officers, followed by an escort of dragoons.

"We are caught this time, Mike!" Desmond exclaimed. "Escape is impossible. I will ride straight up and surrender. Fortunately they are English uniforms, so we are certain to get fair treatment, which we could not be sure of had they

been Portuguese."

So saying he rode forward at a trot. The party had drawn rein at his approach, and he rode up to one who was evidently a general officer.

"Sir, I surrender as a prisoner of war. My name is Kennedy, and I am a captain on the staff of the Duke of Orleans."

And what are you doing here, sir?"

"I am surveying the road, General, by which the allied army

is likely to advance."

The general's question had been in French, and he replied in the same language. "You do not bear a French name, sir,"

the general said.
"No, sir, I am an Irishman," Kennedy replied in English. "I belonged, before I received a staff appointment to one of the regiments of the Irish Brigade."

"You are a daring fellow to venture so far across the frontier."

"I simply obeyed my orders, sir."

"Well, sir, I shall have an opportunity of talking to you later on. I, as you see, am engaged in precisely the same work as you are, namely, in ascertaining for myself the state of the roads across these mountains."

"Then, General," Desmond said with a smile, "I should

say that your investigations are hardly satisfactory."

The general also smiled. "Not so much so as I could wish," he said. "Now, may I ask why, seeing you are well mounted, you did not turn and ride for it when you first saw us?"

"The reason is simple, General. A squadron of cavalry were coming up behind me and there was no possibility of escape.

"Ah! no doubt they were sent out to meet me. Well, sir, if you will give me your word not to attempt to escape, you can retain your sword and ride with us."

"I give my parole, sir, with many thanks for your courtesy."
"And now, Captain Kennedy," the other went on, "it is probable that you have about you the result of your investigations along these roads, which I must request you to hand to me. It may be as useful to me as it would have been to the Duke of Orleans, and may save me a good deal of trouble."

Desmond took out the notebook in which he had each day jotted down the result of his observations, with suggestions as

to the points where repairs were most needed.

The general glanced through the notebook. "You have done your work very thoroughly, Captain Kennedy, and have rendered me considerable service. Now we will move forward again. Please follow with my aides-de-camp."

These were two pleasant young men, who were glad of a

talk with an officer from the other side.

"How long have you been riding about here, if it is fair to

put the question?" one said.

As the notebook contained all the particulars of his journeys on that side of the frontier, Desmond replied at once: "Eight days, I think. I have been up the road to Portalegre, and to Lavre, and if I had not heard of this road over the mountains I should now be on my way to Madrid. But luck has been

"Promotion must be very rapid in your army," the other aide-de-camp said, "or you would hardly be a captain al-

ready."

"I was fortunate enough to attract the notice of the King

of France and the Duke of Berwick. When one has such a piece of good fortune, promotion is rapid."

"It is lucky for you that you fell into the hands of the Earl of Galway instead of the Portuguese generals', who would probably, in spite of your uniform, have made short work of

you." "I did not know the general was the Earl of Galway," Desmond said. "Certainly it was lucky that I fell into his hands. If I had not seen the English uniforms I should have turned and charged the squadron behind us, preferring to be killed

fighting than to be hanged or shot like a dog." In a few minutes they met the squadron of cavalry, who had, as the general supposed, been sent out by the Governor

of Elvas to meet him. Half of these now took their place in front, and the remainder, drawing aside to let the party pass,

fell in behind.

Mike had, without orders, fallen in with the earl's escort, and more than once Desmond heard his laugh as he chatted with the troopers. On arriving at Elvas the general directed his aides-de-camp to obtain a room for Desmond in the house in which they were quartered, and as no one attended to him, Mike undertook his usual duties as his servant. The next morning one of the aides-de-camp came in and said, "The general wishes to speak to you, Captain Kennedy."

On entering the general's apartment the earl asked him to

take a seat.

"I could not see you yesterday evening," he began, "as I was learning from the Governor the state of the stores here.

I should like to have a talk with you.

"You and I are to a certain extent in a similar position, From motives of religion principally, you Irish have left your country and are fighting for a foreign monarch. I, as you are doubtless aware, belong to a French Huguenot family, and, being forced to leave France by the severe edicts, entered the service of Holland and followed the fortunes of King William, and am now fighting against the troops of the country of my birth. In other respects there is a similarity. We have both lost a hand in the service of our adopted countries, I at the siege of Badajos, and you at -?"

"Oudenarde, sir."

"I have been thinking it over," the general went on. "I might, of course, send you to Lisbon as a prisoner, but one extra prisoner would not largely benefit my government. You have not been taken in action. Your papers have saved me an immense deal of trouble, for we are no more able to rely upon the information given by the Portuguese than, I should think. the Duke of Orleans can upon that of the Spaniards. Therefore, sir, I think that in the present case I can make an exception to

"In an hour I shall mount and ride down the road to Badajos, and I shall there restore your liberty to you and permit you to recross the frontier. It would be a thousand pities that so young and gallant an officer should waste perhaps some years of his life in an English prison, for the number of prisoners taken in Flanders is so great that it is impossible for the French to find officers to exchange for them.

"You will understand that, dealing with allies so jealous and susceptible as the Portuguese, I can hardly take the step of releasing you, as it would be at once rumoured that I had been in communication with a French officer, doubtless from some

sinister motive.

"I think, Captain Kennedy, it would be as well," he said with a smile, "that you should withdraw your parole, and do so before we start, in the presence of the officers of my staff. Of course you must be placed under a very strict guard, and although so near the frontier, you will find it very difficult to escape. Still, such things are managed."

"I thank you most deeply, sir," Desmond said, understanding the tone in which the earl spoke, "and I shall ever retain

a deep feeling of gratitude for your generosity."

When the party assembled in readiness to mount, Desmond walked up to the earl and said in a tone that could be heard by the officers round:

"Sir, I have changed my mind, and beg to be allowed to

withdraw my parole."

"You are at liberty to do so, Captain Kennedy, but nevertheless I shall take you with us today. I shall not, of course, ask you to give any information as to matters on the other side of the frontier, but there are points on which you could inform me without detriment to your friends."

"That I shall be happy to do, sir."

The earl called up four troopers. "You will place this officer and his servant between you," he said, "and keep a vigilant look-out upon their movements."

Desmond had not told Mike of the conversation with the earl, thinking it better he should remain in ignorance that this escape was connived at by an English general. Mike was therefore greatly astonished when he heard that his master had withdrawn his parole, and they were henceforth to be strictly

guarded.

The party rode until they reached a rise from which they could obtain a view of Badajos and of the country extending far up the valley of the Guadiana. The ground in front of them sloped gradually. The earl took his place with two or three officers of his staff fifty yards in front of the rest, and, dismounting, examined Badajos with his telescope. Then he asked one of his aides-de-camp to bring Captain Kennedy to him.

"You may as well bring his servant too," he added, "no doubt he knows the country as well as his master does, and

may not be so unwilling to answer questions,"

The order was carried out, and Desmond and Mike rode up with the aide-de-camp, followed closely by the four troopers. The earl at once began to question Desmond as to the names of the villages visible up the valley. He had remounted now, but his staff, who had dismounted when he did, remained on their feet, as it was evident that he had no intention of moving forward for some time.

While they were speaking, the earl, accompanied by Desmond, rode forward some twenty yards, as if to obtain a better view. Mike had followed him, but the four troopers remained behind the group of officers, having no orders to follow the

general so closely.

"This is good ground for galloping, Captain Kennedy," the earl said quietly. "You are within two miles of Badajos."

"Thank you deeply, sir. Now, Mike, ride for it!" and, spurring his horse, he dashed off at a headlong gallop. There was a shout of surprise, the officers of the staff ran to their horses, which were being held by the orderlies, and the four troopers at once galloped forward, snatching their carbines from the slings.

"Do not fire," the earl shouted as they passed, "take them

alive."

As the officers came up, the general signalled to them to stop. "Don't go farther, gentlemen," he said, "the troopers will doubtless overtake them. For all we know, there may be a Spanish force in the village just on the other side of the frontier, and instead of capturing two prisoners you might be taken or shot yourself."

Desmond looked back, He saw that only the four dragoons

were following.

"They will not overtake us, Mike," he said. "Our horses are better than theirs." Indeed they had increased their lead fast.

A few minutes later they heard a trumpet-call in their rear. and their pursuers at once checked their horses and rode back in answer to the recall.

"Tare an' ages," Mike exclaimed, "but that was nately managed. Who would have thought that they would have let us give them the slip so easily!"

"Well, Mike - but this you must never mention to a soul -

the earl gave us this chance of escape."

"Then he is a rale gintleman, sir, and mighty obliged I

feel to him, for I have had enough of English prisons."

The pursuit over, Desmond rode on at a canter to Badajos, and reported to Colonel Crofton that he had been taken prisoner but had managed to effect his escape as he was but carelessly guarded.

"I shall now, sir, return to Madrid. I have completed the work I was told to carry out, and shall finish writing up my report this afternoon, and start tomorrow morning.'

"I congratulate you on your escape. The Portuguese are not very particular, and might have paid small regard to the fact that you were in uniform."

"Fortunately, sir, it was not by them that I was captured."

Desmond had not been called upon to give evidence before the commission of inquiry, it being found that all the contractors had left their homes a week before the troops arrived at Badajos. Some had apparently gone to Andalusia, while others had made for Catalonia. All had unquestionably made a considerable sum of money by their frauds, and would take good care not to fall into the hands of the French.

"They will never be able to return here," Desmond re-

marked to Colonel Crofton.

The latter smiled. "You do not know these people yet, Captain Kennedy, or you would not say so. Some of these fellows are certainly among the richest men in the province. When the affair has blown over, they will, partly by influence and more by bribery, obtain from the central junta an order that no proceedings shall be taken against them. Anything can be done with money in Spain."

On the morning following his return to Badajos Desmond started on his way to Madrid. Although this time he had no fear of a planned attack, he thought it safer and better to travel north from Badajos and skirt the foot of the sierras until he reached the banks of the Tagus, where there was a strong garri-

son in each of the towns.

The journey passed without an incident, and on reaching

Madrid and presenting his report he received high commendation from the Duke of Orleans. He then spent a long day with the general's staff explaining his report and going into details as to the nature of the roads, the repairs necessary, and the positions which were in his opinion most suitable for battle.

On the following day the members of the staff were all summoned to meet him by the Duke of Orleans, who informed them that he had received a sudden summons to return to Paris, and that Marshal de Bay would in his absence be in command of the French troops. The announcement came as a great surprise to Desmond, but was not unexpected by the other officers.

During the winter the King of France had been engaged in efforts to bring about a general peace, and had offered terms that showed he was ready to make any sacrifices to procure it.

The allies, on the contrary, were bent upon continuing the war. The victory of Oudenarde, the capture of Lille, Namur, and other fortresses, opened the way to Paris, and knowing the general distress that prevailed in France, they raised their demands higher and higher as they perceived the anxiety of Louis

One of the obstacles to this was the situation in Spain, and it was reported that Louis was ready to yield on this point also, and not only to consent to the cession of the Spanish dominion in Spain, but to his grandson Philip surrendering the crown to the Archduke Charles, and that ere long the

French troops would be withdrawn altogether.

While during the month that had elapsed since Desmond first left Madrid these rumours had increased in strength, it was known that couriers were constantly passing to and fro between Madrid and Versailles with private communications between Louis and Philip, and there was great excitement in Madrid at the rumour of this desertion of their king by France.

The rumours were indeed correct. The King of France had informed Philip that, great as was the affection he bore for him, the state of France, which was necessarily his chief care, would compel him ere long to recall his troops from Spain.

Philip had entreated him not to desert him, and declared that in any case he would remain in Spain, trusting in the support of the people who had selected him as their monarch. At present, however, the communications were proceeding, and nothing definite had been arranged. The whole of the staff were to remain with Marshal de Bay in the same position as they had held under the duke and, except for the departure of the prince, matters went on as before.

An Old Friend

The change of command had been effected so suddenly that Desmond had not been able to make up his mind to ask the Duke of Orleans to allow him to return with him to France, in order that he might again join the Duke of Berwick. However, before he could decide whether to do so or not, the duke had taken his departure. Desmond spoke to the head of the staff, and asked him for his advice.

"I should think you should remain here, Captain Kennedy. There is likely to be a great battle fought in a few weeks, but if the rumours are correct, we may not be here much longer. Certainly I hope there will be no change until then, for if we win the battle, and so relieve Spain from the risk of invasion for a time, we can leave the country with a better grace, as Philip would then only have to battle with his rebellious subjects in Catalonia.'

"I should certainly not wish to leave when a great battle is about to be fought," Desmond said, "and will serve under the Marshal de Bay until it is certain what is going to be done."

In a short time a general movement of the troops, both Spanish and French, began. Desmond and the other aides-de-camp were actively employed in keeping up communication between the various columns which were to assemble near Badajos.

Moving forward at the same rate as the troops, the march was a pleasant one. It was April now, the country looked bright, and the heat was not too great for marching. The marshal had gone on with the greater portion of his staff, Desmond having been detailed to accompany the division from Toledo.

When within two days' march of Badajos, an orderly brought a note from the marshal, requesting him to ride forward at once. This he did without loss of time. Marshal de Bay had taken up his quarters at Badajos, and on arriving in the town Desmond alighted at the governor's house.

"This is an excellent report of yours, sir," the duke said, when the colonel introduced Desmond to him. "As we came down, I noticed that the roads had in many cases been thoroughly repaired at the points mentioned in your report and the bridges in many places greatly strengthened. Had it not been for that, I do not know how I should have got my guns

"And now, sir, I want to ask you a few questions as to the road on the other side. By your report I see that you consider the road through Campo Mayor to be the only one by which an army could move, and that a large body of workmen must be employed to make the other road fit for the passage of cannon.' He then asked a number of questions concerning this road.

"I see," he said, "you have marked several places in your report where an enemy coming down that road could post themselves strongly, and others which might be defended to advantage by us."

"Yes, sir, this would depend largely upon the respective

strength of the armies."

The marshal nodded approvingly. "From all I hear from our agents in Lisbon," he said, "the enemy's forces will be superior to our own in numbers, but the main portion are Portuguese, who have shown very little fight hitherto. Their

cavalry are almost entirely Portuguese.

"The only really fighting portion of their forces are the English and Dutch, who are most formidable foes, but against these we have our French regiments, on whose bravery we can rely. Were it not that I think the Portuguese will probably, as at the battle of Almanza, fly as soon as the engagement begins, I should fall back and take up a strongly defensive position. As it is, in spite of their superior numbers I think we can meet them on an equal field."

The conversation lasted over an hour, and then Desmond retired, leaving Colonel Villeroy with the marshal. As he left the house an officer standing at the door seized his hand.

"My dear Kennedy," he said, "who would have thought that we should have met again here!"

Desmond staggered back. For a moment he could not believe the evidence of his eyes and ears.

"Why, O'Neil, I thought you were dead."

"I am worth a good many dead men yet," the other one laughed. "Let us go into this wine shop and crack a bottle. We can then talk over matters quietly."
"And O'Sullivan, is he alive too?" Desmond asked.

"No, poor fellow. He has never been heard of since that tremendous licking we got. There is not a shadow of hope.

Then many questions were asked on both sides, and when

these were answered Desmond said:

"Now about yourself, O'Neil. I thought I was the only one

that got through safe."

O'Neil told him how he had escaped.

"I was shot through the body and fell unconscious. When I came to next morning I decided that if I were to fall in the hands of the English it must not be in the uniform of the Irish Brigade."

Desmond nodded, understanding. O'Neil could have been

shot as a traitor.

"So I took the uniform off a dead French officer and when a stretcher party came they took me to an English hospital at Oudenarde. Three weeks later I had recovered sufficiently for me to be taken to Ostend and then to England."

"Then you escaped?" O'Neil nodded. "But how did you

get back to France again?"

O'Neil smiled. "It was easy, remembering how you had managed it before."

"You went down to Rye and got the same boatman to sail

you across?"

Again O'Neil nodded, and both broke into laughter at that.

It was good to be re-united.

The next morning Desmond was sent off to hurry up a body of troops which was still some seven or eight marches away. The news had come that the allied army was in motion, and would probably concentrate near Portalegre. This seemed to show that they intended to invade Spain by Badajos and the valley of the Guadiana, for had their aim been to advance up the valley of the Tagus to Madrid they would have marched towards Montalvao and so on by Alcantara to Almarez.

After two days' hard riding he met the column, which, on receiving the order from the marshal to hasten forward with all speed, performed double marches until they arrived at Badajos.

Desmond found that the allies had not wasted their time, and that their advance guard was already at Campo Mayor. The Spanish army were posted on the Caya river, a stream that flowed down from the sierra and fell into the Guadiana at Badajos.

Their position was a defensive one. The army of the allies was known to be some twenty-two thousand strong, of whom some five thousand were cavalry. The Spanish had about the same strength of cavalry, but were inferior in infantry. The number of guns also was about equal, both sides having about forty cannon.

On the 7th of May the two armies faced each other on opposite sides of the river Caya. As neither party made any movement of advance, Marshal de Bay determined to force on an engagement, and sent orders to the cavalry to cross the river and to place themselves on the road between the enemy

and Campo Mayor.

The allies suffered, as the French had done at Oudenarde, by conflicting counsels. The Earl of Galway was in command of the British and of two or three Dutch regiments. The Marquis de Frontiera was in command of the Portuguese, who formed by far the greater portion of the force, and as soon as the movement was seen on the other side of the river, he determined to cross and attack the Spaniards.

The Earl of Galway was strongly of opinion that it would not be wise to take the offensive, but that the army should remain in its present position until the intentions of the enemy were clearly ascertained. Their cavalry, he urged, could do little by themselves, and it was evident that the infantry could not be attacked while they remained under the shelter of the guns of

the fortress.

The Marquis de Frontiera, however, and the other Portuguese generals were unanimous in insisting that battle should be given at once, and the former gave orders for the Portuguese cavalry, with a body of foot and five field-pieces, to march

immediately.

Seeing that if unsupported this force must meet with disaster, the Earl of Galway reluctantly ordered the troops under his command to advance. The river was fordable, and they met with no opposition until they crossed it and formed up in order of battle. The Portuguese horse were now divided on each wing, the British were in the centre; a portion of the Portuguese infantry were on either flank, the rest were in the rear.

"Captain Kennedy, you will carry my orders at once to our cavalry to charge the Portuguese horse on the right wing."

Desmond saluted, and was about to ride off when he paused a moment and asked: "May I charge with Brigadier Crofton's dragoons, sir?"

The marshal nodded, and Desmond galloped off. Crofton was in command of the first line of cavalry, his own regiment, which, composed partly of Irishmen and partly of Spaniards, was in the centre of the line. After delivering his orders to the general commanding the cavalry, Desmond rode on to

"The cavalry are going to charge, sir," he said, "and I have

permission to ride with you."

Crofton waited until the order from the general arrived, and

then, drawing his sword, shouted, "The first brigade will charge," and, riding forward, led the way against the Portuguese horse, whose cannon had already opened fire.

The Portuguese fell into disorder as soon as they saw the long line of horsemen charging down on them like a torrent, and when it neared them broke and fled. They were soon overtaken, great numbers were cut down, and the remainder galloped off, a panic-stricken mob, and did not draw rein until they reached Campo Mayor.

The Spaniards at once turned the five cannon the fugitives had left behind them upon the allied infantry, and then, after a few rounds had been fired, the cavalry charged the British

infantry.

But they had now foes of a different metal to reckon with, and although three times the horsemen re-formed their ranks and hurled themselves against the infantry, they were each time repulsed with heavy loss. Then, swerving round, they fell on the Portuguese infantry in the second line, whom they dispersed as easily as they had defeated the cavalry.

The Earl of Galway now brought up the brigade of Brigadier-General Pierce, which consisted of the two British regiments of Barrimore and Stanwix and a Spanish regiment which had been recently raised and named after himself.

These charged the enemy with great bravery, drove back their infantry for some distance, recovered the five guns the cavalry had lost, and, still pressing forward, fought their way deep into the centre of the Spanish ranks. Had they been supported by the Portuguese infantry on their flank the battle might still have been won. But the latter, in spite of the persuasions and orders of their officers, refused to advance, and turning their backs made off in confusion although not yet attacked by the enemy.

Orders were then sent to the Portuguese horse on the left to charge to the assistance of Pierce's brigade. But instead of doing this they also galloped off the field, and after defending themselves with desperate valour for some time, the little brigade, being unsupported, and being surrounded by the whole strength of the Spaniards, was forced to surrender.

In the meantime the Earl of Galway, seeing that the battle was lost through the cowardice of the Portuguese, was preparing to withdraw his men, and had only despatched Pierce's brigade to check the advance of the enemy while he did so.

Seeing that these by their ardour were irretrievably cut off, he gave the order to the Marquis Montandre to draw off the British infantry, who alone remained firm, and against whom the whole of the French and Spanish forces now advanced, while he himself with a small body of cavalry charged into the midst of the enemy in hopes of reaching Pierce's brigade and drawing it off.

Although weakened by the loss of that brigade, attacked on both flanks as well as in front, and frequently charged by the Spanish horse, among which Crofton's dragoons were conspicuous for their bravery, the retreating British maintained ad-

mirable order.

Occasionally when severely pressed they charged the enemy and beat them back till they were able to withdraw from the field with comparatively trifling loss, thus saving the flying Portuguese from annihilation. As at Almanza, the whole of the fighting and almost all the loss fell upon the English, although a considerable number of Portuguese were cut down in their flight, before the Spanish cavalry returned to join in the attack on the retiring English.

The allies had altogether seventeen hundred men killed or wounded, and two thousand three hundred taken prisoners, of whom fifteen hundred were Pierce's brigade and eight hun-

dred Portuguese, who were cut off by the cavalry.

Among the prisoners were the Earl of Barrimore, all the officers of Pierce's brigade, Lord Pawlet, one of the earl's aidesde-camp, two of his pages, and his master of horse. After the battle was over and Desmond had rejoined the marshal, he was sent to ride over the field and ascertain who had fallen and what prisoners had been taken. Night was already coming on, and, after fulfilling his mission as far as was possible in the confusion he came upon two Spanish soldiers with a prisoner.
"Whom have you there?" he asked in Spanish.

"I don't know, sir. We found him lying under his horse, which in its fall had so pinned down his leg that he could not

Standing close there was light enough for Desmond to distinguish the prisoner's features. He gave a slight start of surprise, then he said, "You have done well, my men. Here is a doubloon to get some drink with your comrades when you get into the town. I will look after the prisoner."

The men saluted and went off, well pleased to have got rid of the trouble of marching their prisoner into the town. Mike, surprised, moved up to take charge of the captive. It was the

Earl of Galway!
"My lord," Desmond said, "I will now endeavour to repay

the kindness you showed me. You see that little hut, Mike, just at the edge of those trees. Hide the earl there. Our cavalry are still all over the country hunting down fugitives."

The earl, who was scarcely able to walk, his leg having been injured by the weight of the horse upon it, murmured his thanks but did not speak again until they had entered the shed,

when Desmond said:

"Now, General, I will first cut down your riding-boot to ease your leg. Then if you will lie down in that corner, we will pile this firewood over you. It will not be safe for you to attempt to go forward for two or three hours yet. I have a report to make to Marshal de Bay. When I have handed it in I will return at once. Mike, you stay near the hut, and if any searching party should come along, you can say there is no need to search the hut, as you, with an officer, have already examined it."

In a few minutes the earl was completely hidden. Desmond then rode into Badajos and delivered his report to the marshal. He then went to the stable, took out his spare horse, and, lead-

ing it, rode out to the hut again.

"Has anyone been here?" he asked Mike.

"Not a soul, sir."

"Take the horses into the wood then, and stay with them for the present. It will not be safe for the earl to move for a couple of hours."

"Now, General," he went on as he removed the firewood,

"I fear that you have been very uncomfortable."

"I can hardly say that I have been comfortable, but that is of no consequence. The pain in my leg has abated since you cut the boot open. And now, how can I express my gratitude to you for thus sheltering me?"

"It is but a fair return of services, sir. You gave me my

liberty, and I am doing my best to restore yours to you.'

"It is all very well to say that, Captain Kennedy. I am the general in command of the British forces in Portugal. You are risking even your life in thus aiding me to escape.'

"That may be, General, but it was nevertheless my duty as a matter of conscience to return the kindness that you showed

"Well, sir, I shall be your debtor for life. Do you intend to remain always an exile, Captain Kennedy?" the Earl of Galway went on. "It seems to me little short of madness that so many gallant men should cut themselves altogether adrift from their native country, and pass their lives fighting as merce-

"I do not use the word offensively, but only in its proper meaning of foreigners serving in the army of a nation not their own. Nor do I mean to insult Irish gentlemen by even hinting that they serve simply for pay. They fight for France mainly in the hope that France will some day aid in setting James Stuart on the British throne. A forlorn hope, for although Louis may encourage the hopes of the Stuarts and their followers it suits him because it gives him the means of striking at England by effecting a landing in Scotland or Ireland."

That is true, sir," Desmond replied, "and I own I have no great hope that by the means of French assistance the Stuarts will regain their throne. But what could I do if I were to return to Ireland? Were I to land in Ireland I have no means of earning my living, and would doubtless be denounced as

one who had served in the Irish Brigade."

"In that matter I might asssist you, Captain Kennedy. I have no doubt that my influence and that of my friends in England would suffice to gain permission for you to visit Ireland on private business, on my undertaking that you have no political object whatever in desiring to do so, and that you engage yourself to enter into no plots or schemes for a rising. That is certainly the least I can do after the service you have rendered me - a service that in itself shows you do not share in the bitter enmity so many of your countrymen unfortunately feel against England."

"I have no such enmity assuredly," Desmond said.

"I will write at once to London and obtain a safe conduct for you. I think the war will not last much longer. All countries are being impoverished by it. War is a dreadful waste."

He sighed.

"And now, Captain Kennedy, I will be making my way to join the remains of my army. I thank you again most heartily for your generous conduct, and, believe me, you may always command my services in any direction. I only regret that these unhappy political difficulties should drive you and so many of your brave countrymen into the service of a power that has always been, and so far as I can see is likely to remain, an enemy of England."

"I may say, sir, that Lord Godolphin has for a certain reason promised to befriend me, and if you write to him on the subject of a safe-conduct, I think I could rely upon his taking a favour-

able view of the matter.'

"I will do so certainly," the earl said. "His power is great. If he is favourably disposed towards you, you may consider the matter as done."

They chatted for some time longer, and then Desmond said: "I think now, sir, that it would be safe to move. Everything is perfectly quiet, and I have no doubt that by this time the cavalry have all returned to Badajos. However, I will accompany you for a short distance, for you may be stopped by some of our advance posts. You had best take the cloak and hat of my man, and as I am well known no questions will then be asked."

"By the way," Lord Galway added as, Mike having brought up the horses, he mounted, "where shall I send a letter to you with your safe-conduct? We are in communication with many persons at Madrid, and can pass a letter through the lines at

any time."

"When there, I lodge at the house of Don Pedro Sarasta, in the Calle del Retiro. I will request him to forward any letters to

me should I be absent."

The earl made a note of the address in his pocket-book, and then, putting on Mike's cloak and hat, started with Desmond, who passed him without question through the lines of outposts, which were indeed but carelessly kept.

The Homeward Road

Two days after the fight the Marquis de Bay moved forward with his army with the intention of fighting another battle, but Galway and Frontiera had by this time reorganized their forces and occupied so strong a position near Elvas that he could not venture to attack them.

However, he occupied the country for a considerable distance beyond the frontier, maintaining his army upon the provisions and forage collected by his cavalry in the villages and small towns. As it was evident that, after the proof given of the inability of the Portuguese to withstand any attack, there was no probability of offensive operations being renewed by the allies, the force was withdrawn across the frontier and went into quarters, the general returning to Madrid, where he received an enthusiastic welcome from the inhabitants.

By this time, however, the knowledge that the king of France was entering into negotiations which would necessitate his desertion of Spain greatly excited the population against the French stationed in the capital. They were hissed and hooted when they appeared in the streets, and for a time the indignation was so great that the troops were ordered to remain in their barracks.

The king himself, however, gained rather than lost popularity as he issued a proclamation to the people, saying that, having accepted their invitation to be their king, he would remain with them until driven from his throne by force, and he trusted absolutely in their affection and aid to enable him to withstand any foes who might attempt to dethrone him.

In the autumn another change occurred. Although, in order to obtain peace, he had granted all the demands, however exorbitant, of the allies, and had undertaken to withdraw his troops from Spain, Louis of France stood firm when to these conditions they added another, namely, that he should himself undertake by force to dethrone his grandson.

This monstrous demand united at once both those who

wished to continue the war rather than grant such humiliating terms as those which had been insisted upon, and the party who were in favour of peace, even at that cost. The negotiations were abruptly broken off, and the French troops, who were already on the march towards the frontier, received orders to remain in Spain.

Now that he had O'Neil with him, the time in Madrid passed more pleasantly for Desmond than before. He was frequently away for several days carrying despatches to the commanders

of the forces in Valencia and Barcelona.

In the capital the French were again regarded as friends, and as several successes had been gained and places captured in Catalonia, the hope that the civil war that had so long been waged was approaching its end made the people doubt whether any attempt at invasion from the west would be contemplated, and they gave themselves up to gaiety. Balls and fêtes were frequently organized, and at these the French were among the most honoured guests.

Early in the spring preparations were made for active operations. Lieutenant-General O'Mahony had just returned from Sicily, where he had rendered distinguished service. In the previous year Crofton had been made a major-general, and two new regiments of Irish infantry had been formed of deserters

from the enemy in Catalonia and Portugal.

These were commanded by Colonel Dermond M'Auliffe and Colonel John Comerford. These two regiments, with another under Colonel Macdonald, marched from Madrid in April.

As the Marquis de Bay was not yet moving he offered O'Mahony, who had the command of the force, the services of Desmond and O'Neil as aides-de-camp. The offer was welcome one, for as none of the men in the newly-raised regiments was acquainted with the language, Desmond, who now spoke Spanish well, would be far more valuable to him than Spanish officers could be.

For two months the little force moved about in Catalonia, the rapidity of its marches baffling the attempts of the archduke's forces to interfere with its operations. These were principally directed against various small fortresses held by partisans of Charles. Several of these were captured, thus clearing the roads they guarded, and opening the country for the more important operations that Philip himself was about to undertake.

It was not until July that the royal army approached Lerida, where O'Mahony's force joined it. General Stanhope marched with the troops under his command and encamped at Balaguer, where he was joined by Baron de Wetzel with some troops, which had been brought from Italy.

As Stanhope's force was insufficient to give battle until joined by the main army of Charles, he marched, on the 31st of July, headed by two English and two Dutch regiments of dragoons, to secure the passes near Alfaro, and so check the advance of the Spaniards.

After performing a long and difficult march, they took up a defensive position. Stanhope found, however, that the river in front of him was so low that cavalry and artillery could pass easily, and even infantry could cross without difficulty.

Scarcely had he taken up his position when two brigades of infantry and nineteen squadrons of cavalry were seen approaching, having been detached from the Spanish army to occupy the position which had been secured by the rapidity of Stanhope's march. They therefore waited for their main army to come up, but before it did so the whole of Stanhope's force had arrived, and was prepared for battle.

Although it was past six o'clock in the evening, Charles, on his arrival, decided to fall upon the enemy before they could encamp, which they might do in a position in which it would be difficult to attack them.

Fourteen cannon at once opened fire from an eminence, whence they commanded the position taken up by the advance force of the Spaniards. This position was on low ground in front of the ridge upon which the village of Almenara stood,

and nothing could be seen of the force that lay behind this

The advance force of Spaniards ascended this ridge as soon as the artillery opened upon them, and General Stanhope obtained leave from Marshal Staremberg, who commanded the archduke's army, to charge them.

With ten squadrons of horse he rode up the ascent, and there when he gained it, saw to his surprise twenty-two squadrons facing him, flanked with infantry, and supported with another line of cavalry equally strong. He sent back at once for fourteen squadrons from his second line, and when six of these came up he advanced against the Spaniards, who at the same time moved forward to meet him.

The cavalry on Philip's left at once gave way. The centre and right, aided by the fire of the infantry, made a stout fight, but were driven back by the English and Dutch cavalry. The fighting was severe, for of the six English squadrons who charged, two hundred men and twenty-one officers were killed or wounded.

Philip's second line of cavalry gave but feeble support, and Stanhope's horse soon had them all in confusion, and, driving them from the field, pursued them hotly. The fugitives dashed into their own infantry, who were just arriving in force, and their panic communicated itself to them, and a total rout took place.

The pursuit was kept up until it was so dark that the troopers were unable to see each other's faces, and they then halted, having defeated the Spanish without the aid of their infantry, which had not come up in time to take any part in the fight. Much of the baggage, together with tents, many cannon, and a quantity of ammunition, fell into the hands of the victors. Owing to the darkness the number of prisoners taken was small.

O'Mahony and his troops had taken no part in the engagement, as, having arrived late on the previous evening after a long march, they were still at Lerida. It had not been deemed necessary to hurry them forward, as no battle was expected to take place for some days – as indeed would have been the case had the force sent forward arrived at the river before Stanhope.

The routed troops arrived under the shelter of the guns of Lerida. Charles did not attack them there, but, making a detour seized several places in Aragon with the intention of cutting the line by which Philip would probably retire, and forcing him to fight again.

Philip, however, on his part, marched from Lerida in order to retire into Castile by way of Saragossa. Charles followed hotly, and a portion of his cavalry came up to the rear of the

enemy in the defile of Penalva.

Here the Spaniards posted a strong force of grenadiers, and the defile being too narrow for the cavalry to act, these dismounted, and a hot fight took place in which both parties claimed the victory. However, Philip retired the same day in great haste. Charles, arriving three hours later, ate the dinner that had been prepared for his rival.

The Spaniards, covered by the defence of the pass, crossed the Ebro and posted themselves in a strong position within a

mile of Saragossa.

On the 21st of August Marshal Staremberg, with his general having reconnoitred their position, gave orders for the attack to take place the next morning, and at daybreak the cannon on

both sides opened fire.

General Stanhope, who commanded on the left wing, found that the enemy had the greater part of their cavalry facing him, and therefore strengthened his force by four battalions of foot and six squadrons of Portuguese horse. The Spanish line ran obliquely from the river on their left to a steep hill on their right occupied by their cavalry and a battery of artillery. These, therefore, were much nearer to the attacking force than were those on the plain.

The battle began at twelve o'clock, Charles's force marching in two lines, with the exception of Stanhope's cavalry and infantry. These, from their situation, were the first to come in

contact with the enemy.

The four battalions first pushed forward up the hill, and driving the Spanish cavalry back, allowed Stanhope's horse to ascend the hill and form on its crest. The battle speedily ranged

along the whole line.

The Spaniards, with superior numbers, gained ground on their left. Here O'Mahony's corps were stationed, and they drove a portion of the allies across the Ebro again, but this success was more than counterbalanced on the other flank, where Stanhope's cavalry and infantry carried all before them. The latter, posted in a hollow, opened so heavy a fire upon the Spanish infantry as they advance that they fell into disorder, and as their cavalry were driven off, hotly pursued by Stanhope they fell back upon the centre, which they threw into disorder. Seeing that the battle was lost, the Marquis de Bay gave the order to retire.

Two hours after the first shot was fired the rout of the Spanish centre and right was complete, but a considerable portion of the troops were rallied by de Bay at Alagon, three leagues above Saragossa. The left wing, under Generals Amezaga and O'Mahony, were checked in their course of victory by the disaster which befell the centre and right, but, maintaining their discipline, they fell back in good order and rejoined their defeated comrades at Alagon.

All the cannon and most of the colours of the regiments forming the centre and right fell into the hands of the victors. The loss of the allies was about two thousand men killed and wounded, and that of the Spaniards and French three thousand killed and wounded and between five and six thousand

prisoners.

Philip rode at once to Madrid, and on the eveing of the battle the archduke entered Saragossa, while de Bay retired with the

broken remains of his troops towards Navarre.

Desmond and O'Neil, who had ridden behind O'Mahony, saw the Spanish troops of the archduke yield before the impetuous attacks of the Irish regiments, who, as they pressed their foes backwards, burst into loud cheering, believing the victory already won. Presently O'Mahony stopped the advance. "We must not push too far forward," he said. "It seems to

me that things are not going so well in other directions. Our centre is being pressed back. What is going on on the right I cannot say, but the enemy seems to have gained the top of the hill, for our cannon there are silent. If the centre is driven back, those we have now beaten will rally, and we shall be taken in flank by the fire of their centre. Therefore let us be content with what we have done, and wait and see how things turn out elsewhere."

Even before the rout of the Spanish right their centre was yielding, for opposed to them were the British and Dutch regiments, whose attack they were altogether unable to with-

It soon became clear that at all other points on the field the battle was going against the Spaniards, and an aide-de-camp presently rode up hastily with orders from Marshal de Bay for

his left to fall back and retire to Alagon.

Deep was the rage and disappointment among the troops of O'Mahony and Amezaga as they faced about and set out on their march. They were unmolested. The troops they had beaten were in no position to follow them, while the allied cavalry and the infantry of their centre were in full pursuit of the rest of Philip's army, the remnants of which the little force joined at Alagon before nightfall.

It was some days before the archduke's army moved forward again. The troops were exhausted by the long marches they had made, and there was a difference of opinion among the

generals as to the course that had best be followed.

The king wished to pursue the beaten enemy and if possible to intercept their march towards France, but Count Staremberg and Stanhope were of the opinion that they should first occupy Madrid, and then march into Navarre, so as to bar the advance of fresh French troops into Spain and at the same time open communications by sea with England, whence they could be supplied with reinforcements and stores of provisons.

Finally Charles gave way, and the allies marched towards Madrid. The main portion of the army halted at Alcala, a day's march from the capital, and General Stanhope marched on with his division to Madrid, which opened its gates without resistance, Philip having retired with his army. Charles entered

the city on the 28th of September, 1710.

The alarm in France at the news of the defeat at Saragossa was great, and Louis at once despatched the Duke of Vendôme to command there.

The latter, travelling fast, and gathering up the garrisons of the towns through which he passed, crossed the frontier at nearly the same time as Charles entered Madrid, and effected a junction with de Bay's army, which had by this time been increased by some fourteen thousand men drawn from the garrisons of towns in Navarre, Castille, Galicia, and Valencia.

Vendôme had no doubt that the intention of the allies in marching upon Madrid was to open communication with the Portuguese, and determined to throw himself between the capital and the frontier. Marching with all speed, he encamped near Salamanca on the 6th of October, and thence moved to Plasencia, thereby securing the bridge of Almarez and preven-

ting the Portuguese from joining Charles.

Had it not been for the usual indecision and want of energy on the part of the Portuguese Government the junction might have been effected before Vendôme arrived at Plasencia, for both Charles and Stanhope had, after the victory of Saragossa, written urgently, begging that the Portuguese army should at once advance and join them at Madrid, and that at any rate, if the whole army could not move, at least the troops in the pay of England should push forward instantly.

Stanhope indeed had marched with his division to the bridge

of Almarez to facilitate the junction, and had defeated a Spanish force guarding the bridge. However, the Portuguese did not arrive, and when a messenger brought the alarming news that a Spanish and French army had occupied Plasencia, Stanhope fell back towards Madrid.

As large French reinforcements were known to be approaching the frontier, and Philip's army was already much superior in numbers to that of the allies, it was decided in a council of war to evacuate Madrid. The forces which had occupied Toledo and other towns were recalled, and early in December the army left the capital, the archduke riding at once to Barcelona, while the army, of which Stanhope's division formed

the rear guard, followed in the same direction.

The movement had been delayed too long. Vendôme and Philip were already at hand, and on the 9th fell upon Stanhope's division at Brihuega. This force, consisting of eight English battalions and the same number of Portuguese horse, defended themselves desperately, and although the town was wholly without fortifications they repulsed every attack until their ammunition was exhausted, and they were then forced to surrender.

Staremberg, on hearing that Stanhope was attacked and surrounded, turned back and marched with all speed to relieve him, but on arriving within three hours' march of the town,

heard that he had surrendered.

The Duke of Vendôme, hearing of his coming, drew his troops out and formed them in line of battle, and the next morning attacked him vigorously. The allied right held their ground but the left fled, and Vendôme swept his right round and took the centre and right of the allies in the rear.

Three battalions of the second line, however, fell in turn upon the French rear and repulsed them, and the left wing,

rallying again, renewed the battle.

The combat was indecisive, both parties claiming the victory. Staremberg wrote to Charles that he had captured all the enemy's guns and had killed six thousand of them, while the French claimed that they had totally defeated the allies and captured all their cannon, killed four thouand, and taken nine thousand prisoners.

The balance of probability lies to some extent with the French, for the day after the battle, Staremberg retired and marched to Barcelona, but the fact that he was not at once pursued shows that the French and Spaniards must have

suffered very heavily.

Desmond had passed unscathed through the battle of Saragossa. O'Neil had been severely wounded, but had managed to sit his horse until the division effected its junction with the Marquis de Bay's shattered forces. Great was the wrath among

the two Irish regiments at the issue of the battle.

"What is the use," an officer said to Desmond, "of our throwing away our lives fighting for these Spaniards when they themselves are useless, save when they meet the Portuguese, who are still more contemptible? Here have we, on level ground, beaten the enemy, while the right and centre, although having a great advantage in position, allow themselves to be scattered like a flock of sheep."

"They had stouter foes to meet than we had," Desmond said. "We had only Spaniards opposed to us, while they had English and Dutch to fight. As the best French troops have found in Flanders that these were at least a match for them, we must not blame the Spanish too severely for giving way before

they were attacked."

"There is something in that, I admit, Kennedy. It seems that in this war it would be much better if the Spaniards and Portuguese had both remained at home and allowed the French and us fight it out with the English and Dutch. The battles would have been small but at least they would have been desperately fought."

"Well," Desmond said, "for my part I am sick of fighting in quarrels that do not concern me, and when this campaign comes to an end I shall, if possible, rejoin Berwick. The cause of the Stuarts is not advanced in the slightest by what is taking place in Spain, and if I am to fight, I would rather do so where

victory would benefit us."

"Perhaps you are right, Kennedy. I know that I myself, had it not been for the persecutions and the priest-hunting, and the closing of our chapels, would never have thought of leaving Ireland and taking foreign service, but now there is no going back."

"No, I suppose not," Desmond said gloomily. "Nothing short of an amnesty ensuring freedom of worship, and perfect civil equality to all, would induce the majority of us to return to Ireland, and indeed it is not easy to see what we could do if we got there. The estates of our fathers are in the hands of strangers. We should soon be altogether without resources, and we should be almost driven to conspire again, even though success would in no way mend the matter. However, there is no chance of such an act being passed, for, even if the English

Ministry desired to do so, the Protestant feeling in England and Scotland would be too strong for them, and Parliament, which strongly represents that feeling, would reject the bill by an immense majority."

"Then there is nothing to do but to go on fighting," Moore

"I see nothing else for it, Moore, but I own that I do not care for the life. I have had three years of it now, and don't like the prospect of another thirty."

"You have been fortunate too, Kennedy."

"Yes, I have been fortunate in the way of getting promotion, fortunate that I was not, long before this, put under the sod. But it is no great gratification to be a captain, and though in another thirty years, if I live, I may be a general, I don't think even that would reconcile me to the life. It is just as hard, and a good deal more responsible, and if thirty years passed over, and the Stuarts were not restored, they assuredly never would be, and I should have wasted my life for nothing.

"Well, I am very glad," Moore laughed, "that all our fellows do not look at it in the same light as you do, but take things as they come. I don't bother myself about the future."

"It is a good thing," Desmond said, "and it is the national character to take things as they come. I dare say I shall get into the same way some day, but just at present, I suppose partly because we have got a thrashing, I feel rather down in the dumps."

Desmond continued his duties as aide - de - camp to O'Mahony and took his share in the various operations that ended with the army going into winter quarters and Philip making a triumphant entry into Madrid. Then he went to the

"General, I wish to ask leave to return to France, at any rate for a time. The Duke of Berwick, when he despatched me to join the staff of the Duke of Orleans, said he would reinstate me on his staff as soon as the duke no longer required my services. I have therefore come to ask you to dispense with my services, and permit me to return to France."
"Certainly, Captain Kennedy. Your assistance has been

of great value to me, but there is no chance of anything being done during the winter. That being so, you may go and I will give you a testimonial stating the fine service you have given

The general held out his hand. He was loth to see this brilliant young officer leave him, but would not stand in his way.

Next day Desmond, accompanied by Mike, left the brigade, and rode for Madrid. When he reached his lodgings he found a

letter awaiting him there.

Desmond was surprised, for in the campaigning of recent months he had forgotten the arrangements made with the Earl of Galway. Now it all came back to him and in sudden excitement that made his hands tremble, he opened the letter. The letter was from, of all people, Lord Godolphin.

Dear Captain Kennedy.

At the request of the Earl of Galway, and in consequence of your silence on a matter you know of, I have pleasure in sending you a safe-conduct to visit Ireland on private affairs, and to remain there if you wish. If you decide to remain I can promise you a full pardon and restoration of your rights as an Irish subject of the queen.

I will also obtain a reversal of any attainders or acts of confiscation that may have passed against your family. All this provided you give your promise not to take part in any secret

plots or conspiracies against the reigning family.

With the letter was an official safe-conduct from Lord God-

olphin.

Desmond felt dazed, for a moment not understanding. This was more than he had ever hoped for. He could go back to his native Ireland! More, he could return feeling secure against bigotry and discrimination, and by the tone of the letter there was the prospect that the lands of his family might be restored to him.

Even without that, Desmond would be quite a wealthy man, for in his service abroad he had accumulated a fair amount of money, certainly sufficient to set himself up in some comfortable estate in his homeland. If additionally the lands of his family reverted to him he would be a wealthy man.

Suddenly a wave of homesickness swept over him. All at once he was sick of this country, with the heat and dust and flies, and the sight of terribly wounded men that followed every

campaign.

He had turned to the profession of soldiering in the eagerness of youth, but now he was a man, a hardened warrior, and he saw the emptiness of military life. War settled nothing, he could realize after several years of it. War brought nothing but pain and misery.

He looked at the stump of his arm. That was what war had

brought him - he was maimed for life.

He sighed, thinking of the green fields of Ireland, the soft mists over the lakes and mountains. Ireland, loveliest country on earth, he thought to himself, and all at once he could not get there quick enough.

He went downstairs, shouting to Mike to saddle up. Mike came clattering round from the stables, his freckled face regis-

tering surprise.

"Your honour, we have just arrived."

"Your honour is just going to leave," said Desmond grimly. "We leave Madrid today - this very hour. I cannot wait a moment longer in this wretched land."

"And where do we go, your honour?" Mike asked.

"To Ireland!" shouted Desmond exultantly. "Home! Do you hear that, you old rascal? We're going home!"

"They'll hang us," wailed Mike.

"Not they," cried Desmond, and flourished the safeconduct. "Lord Godolphin says I can go back, and it will be safe for you to return with me."

"The saints be praised," said the good Mike, and burst into tears like any child blubbering. "Glory be, I never thought

to see this day."

Only then did Desmond realize how his servant's heart must have ached at times to think of a life-long exile. Only then did he realize that Mike, no less than he, craved to return to his

Suddenly Mike dashed away his tears and began to run around like a madman. In a few frenzied minutes everything was packed, the horses re-saddled, and food obtained for their

iourney.

And a few minutes later they were riding hectically through Madrid, two joyous soldiers, Mike occasionally giving vent to a cheer that brought heads round in astonishment to watch them.

They took the road for the border, and in record time had crossed France and were waiting for a packet to take them

Then, one glorious day, they looked ahead and saw, just on sunset, the faint outlines of land looming ahead. It was Ireland,

The warriors had returned, returned to peace and the comforts of a good life in their native land.

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WHAT IS A CORNER CUT-OUT?

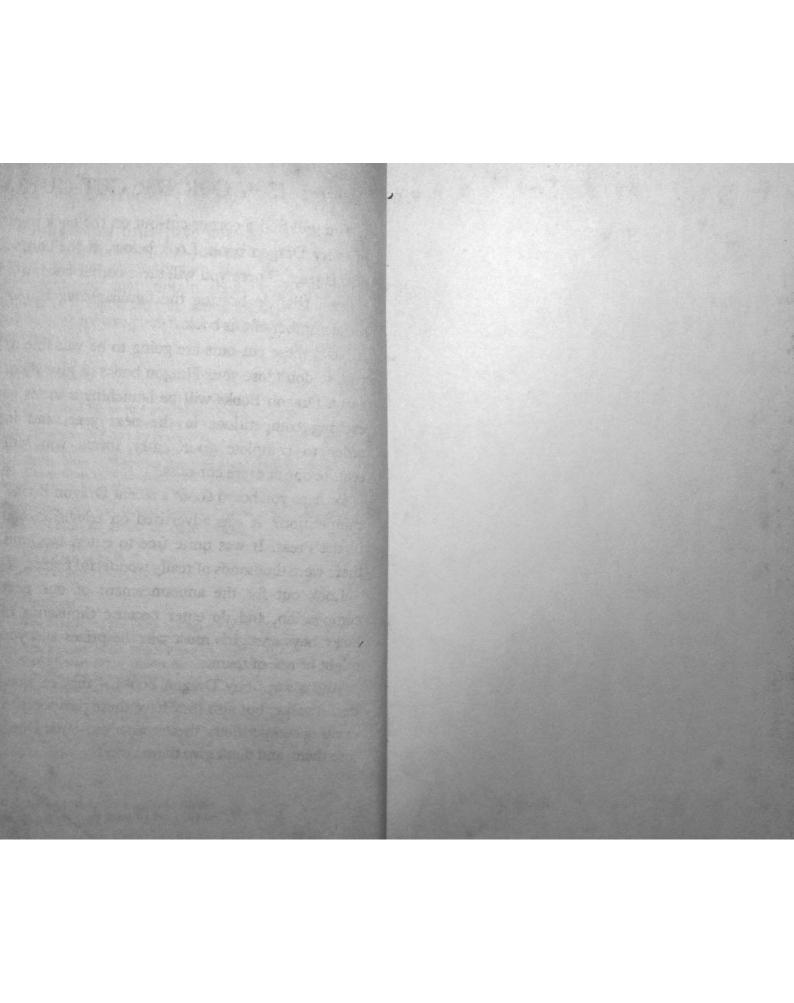
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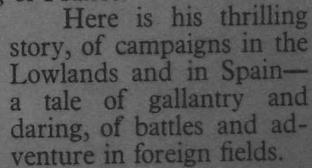
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For older boys and girls (12-15 years)

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IN THE IRISH BRIGADE