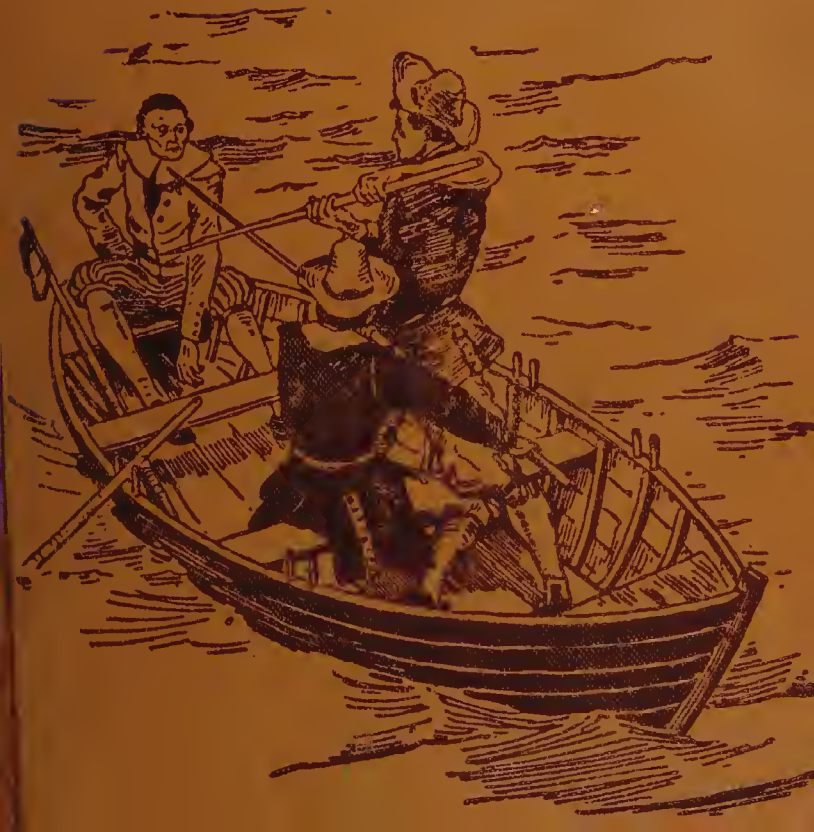
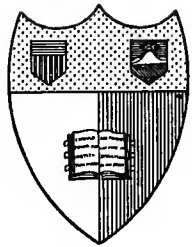
MICAH CLARKE

BY A. CONAN DOYLE





Monmouth at Taunton.

MICAH CLARKE

A TALE OF MONMOUTH'S REBELLION

BY

SIR A. CONAN DOYLE

(ADAPTED FOR SCHOOL USE)

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. M. PAGET AND
H. R. MILLAR

NEW IMPRESSION

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA
1908

CONTENTS.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

MICAH CLARKE: HIS STATEMENT.

By A. Conan Doyle.

I. OF THE STRANGE FISH THAT WE CAUGHT AT SPITHEAD.

NE evening in the month of May, 1685, about the end of the first week of the month, my friend Reuben Lockarby and I borrowed Ned Marley's pleasure boat, and went a-fishing out of Langston Bay.

At that time I was close on one and twenty years of age, while my companion was one year younger. A great intimacy had sprung up between us, founded on mutual esteem, for he being a little undergrown man was proud of my strength and stature, while my melancholy and somewhat heavy spirit took a pleasure in the energy and joviality which never deserted him, and in the wit which gleamed as bright and as innocent as summer lightning through all that he said.

As he was destined to be with me in the sequel, it was but fitting that he should have been at my side on that May evening which was the starting-point of our adventures.

We pulled out beyond the Warner Sands to a place half-way between them and the Nab, where we usually found bass in plenty. There we cast the heavy stone which served us as an anchor overboard, and proceeded to set our lines. The sun sinking slowly behind a fog-bank had slashed the whole western sky with scarlet streaks, against which the wooded slopes of the Isle of Wight stood out vaporous and purple.

A fresh breeze was blowing from the south-east, flecking the long green waves with crests of foam, and filling our eyes and lips with the smack of the salt spray. Over near St. Helen's Point a king's ship was making her way down the channel, while a single large brig was tacking about a quarter of a mile or less from where we lay. So near were we that we could catch a glimpse of the figures upon her deck as she heeled over to the breeze, and could hear the creaking of her yards and the flapping of her weather-stained canvas as she prepared to go about.

"Look ye, Micah," said my companion, looking up from his fishing-line, "that is a most weak-minded ship—a ship which will make no way in the world. See how she hangs in the wind, neither keeping on her course nor tacking."

"Why, there is something amiss with her," I replied, staring across with hand-shaded eyes. "She yaws about as though there were no one at the helm. Her mainyard goes aback! Now it is forward again! The folk on her deck seem to me to be either fighting or dancing. Up with the anchor, Reuben, and let us pull to her."

"Up with the anchor and let us get out of her way," he answered, still gazing at the stranger. "Why will you ever run that meddlesome head of yours into danger's way? She flies Dutch colours, but who can say whence she really comes? A pretty thing if we were snapped up by a buccaneer and sold in the plantations!"

"A buccaneer in the Solent!" cried I derisively. "We shall be seeing the black flag in Emsworth Creek next. But, hark! What is that?"

The crack of a musket sounded from aboard the brig. Then came a moment's silence and another musket shot rang out, followed by a chorus of shouts and cries. Simultaneously the yards swung round into position, the sails caught the breeze once more, and the vessel darted away on a course which would take her past Bembridge Point out to the English Channel.

As she flew along, her helm was put hard down, a puff of smoke shot out from her quarter, and a cannon-ball came hopping and splashing over the waves, passing within a hundred yards of where we lay. With this farewell greeting she came up into the wind again and continued her course to the southward.

"Heart o' grace!" ejaculated Reuben in loose-lipped astonishment. "The murdering villains!"

"I wish that king's ship would snap them up!" cried I savagely, for the attack was so unprovoked that it stirred my bile. "What could the rogues have meant? They are surely drunk or mad!"

"Pull at the anchor, man, pull at the anchor!"

my companion shouted, springing up from the seat. "I understand it! Pull at the anchor!"

"What then?" I asked, helping him to haul the great stone up, hand over hand, until it came dripping over the side.

"They were not firing at us, lad. They were aiming at some one in the water between us and them. Pull, Micah! Put your back into it! Some poor fellow may be drowning."

bass, a favourite sea-fish of the perch family.

Bem'-bridge Point, on the N.E. of the Isle of Wight overlooking the entrance to Spithead.

black flag, pirates' colours.

brig, a two-masted ship, square rigged (shortened from brigantine which comes from brigand, because such vessels were used by pirates).

buc-ca-neer', pirate, or sea robber.

e-jac'-u-lat-ed, suddenly cried out.

Ems'-worth Creek, an inlet of the sea on the S.E. coast of Hampshire, about two miles E. of Havant.

her helm was put hard down, that is moved one way or the other (either to port or to starboard) as far as it would go.

jo-vi-al'-it-y, merry and cheerful disposition.

Lang'-ston Bay is on the Hampshire coast, about four miles E. of Portsmouth, near Havant.

plan-ta'-tions, the sugar estates in the West Indies.

quar'-ter, the part of a ship's side between the mainmast and the stern.

sim-ul-tan'-e-ous-ly, at the same instant.

Spit'-head, the stretch of water midway between Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.

tack'-ing, taking a zigzag course so as to work the ship against the wind.

va'-por-ous, shrouded in mist, dim.

War'-ner Sands lie to the S.E. of Southsea, near **St. Helen's Point** and the **Nab.**

yaws, sways about wildly as though nobody was steering her.

II. OF THE STRANGE FISH THAT WE CAUGHT AT SPITHEAD (*continued*).

"WHY, I declare!" said I, looking over my shoulder as I rowed, "there is his head upon the crest of a wave. Easy, or we shall be over him! Two more strokes and be ready to seize him! Keep up, friend! There's help at hand!"

"Take help to those who need help," said a voice out of the sea. "Take care, man, keep a guard on your oar! I fear a pat from it very much more than I do the water."

These words were delivered in so calm and self-possessed a tone that all concern for the swimmer was set at rest. Drawing in our oars we faced round to have a look at him. The drift of the boat had brought us so close that he could have grasped the gunwale had he been so minded.

"The villain!" he cried in a peevish voice, "to think of my brother Nonus serving me such a trick! What would our blessed mother have said could she have seen it? My whole kit gone, to say nothing of my venture in the voyage! And now I have kicked off a pair of new jack-boots that cost sixteen rix-dollars at Vanseddars' at Amsterdam. I can't swim in jack-boots nor can I walk without them."

"Won't you come in out of the wet, sir?" asked Reuben, who could scarce keep serious at the stranger's appearance and address. A pair of long arms

shot out of the water, and in a moment, with a lithe, snake-like motion, the man wound himself into the boat and coiled his great length upon the stern sheets.

Very lanky he was and very thin, with a craggy hard face, clean-shaven and sunburned, with a thousand little wrinkles intersecting it in every direction. He had lost his hat, and his short, wiry hair, slightly flecked with grey, stood up in a bristle all over his head. It was hard to guess at his age, but he could scarce have been under his fiftieth year, though the ease with which he had boarded our boat proved that his strength and energy were unimpaired.

Of all his characteristics, however, nothing attracted my attention so much as his eyes, which were almost covered by their drooping lids, and yet looked out through the thin slits which remained with marvellous brightness and keenness. A passing glance might give the idea that he was languid and half asleep, but a closer one would reveal those glittering shifting lines of light, and warn the prudent man not to trust too much to his first impressions.

"I could swim to Portsmouth," he remarked, rummaging in the pockets of his sodden jacket. "Take my advice, young men, and always carry your tobacco in a water-tight metal box."

As he spoke he drew a flat box from his pocket and several wooden tubes, which he screwed together to form a long pipe. This he stuffed with tobacco, and, having lit it by means of a flint and steel with a piece of touch-paper from the inside of his box, he curled

his legs under him in Eastern fashion and settled down to enjoy a smoke.

There was something so peculiar about the whole incident, and so preposterous about the man's appearance and actions, that we both broke into a roar of laughter, which lasted until for very exhaustion we were compelled to stop. He neither joined in our merriment nor expressed offence at it, but continued to suck away at his long wooden tube with a perfectly stolid and impassive face, save that the half-covered eyes glinted rapidly backwards and forwards from one to the other of us.

"You will excuse our laughter, sir," I said at last; "my friend and I are unused to such adventures, and are merry at the happy ending of it. May we ask whom it is that we have picked up?"

"Decimus Saxon is my name," the stranger answered; "I am the tenth child of a worthy father, as the Latin implies. There are but nine betwixt me and an inheritance. Who knows? Small-pox might do it, or the plague!"

"We heard a shot aboard of the brig," said Reuben.

"That was my brother Nonus shooting at me," the stranger observed, shaking his head sadly.

"But there was a second shot."

"Ah, that was me shooting at my brother Nonus."

"Good lack!" I cried. "I trust that thou hast done him no hurt."

"But a flesh wound, at the most," he answered. "I thought it best to come away, however, lest the affair grow into a quarrel. I am sure that it was he

who trained the nine-pounder on me when I was in the water. It came near enough to part my hair. He was always a good shot with a carronade or a mortar piece. He could not have been hurt, however, to get down from the poop to the maindeck in the time."

There was a pause after this while the stranger drew a long knife from his belt, and cleaned out his pipe with it. Reuben and I took up our oars, and having pulled up our tangled fishing-lines, which had been streaming behind the boat, we proceeded to pull in towards the land.

car-ro-nade', a short cannon with a wide bore, first made at *Carron* in Stirlingshire, N.B.

char-ac-ter-is'-tics, special points or features about him.

Dec'-i-mus, Latin for 10th; no'-nus, Latin for 9th; quar'-tus for 4th; this was the way in which Saxon and his nine brothers and sisters were named.

flint and steel, the old implements for striking a light before the invention of matches.

gun'-wale (pronounced *gun'-el*), the upper edge of a ship's bulwarks.

im-pas'-sive, unmoved, stolid, not showing feeling of any kind.

in-ter-sect'-ing, cutting across and across like network.

jack'-boots, large boots reaching above the knee and protected with plates of iron. See the picture of Micah on p. 211.

lithe, flexible, active, agile.

mor'-tar piece, a very short wide cannon for throwing shells into towns (shaped like a mortar used in cookery).

poop, a deck in the stern part of a ship above the maindeck.

pre-pos'-ter-ous, absurd, foolish, ridiculous.

rix'-dol-lar, the English way of spelling the names of various foreign silver coins. The Danish *rigsdaler* is worth 2s. 2½d.

sheet, the rope which fastens the corner of a sail that is away from the wind to the side of a vessel.

touch'-pa-per, paper soaked in some chemical so that it smoulders and burns slowly instead of blazing up at once.

trained the nine-pounder on me, aimed at me with a cannon carrying a nine-pound shot.

un-im-paired', as good as ever.

"I'll push you in, as sure as my name is Micah Clarke."

III. OF THE STRANGE FISH THAT WE CAUGHT AT SPITHEAD (*continued*).

"THE question now is," said the stranger, "where we are to go to?"

"We are going down Langston Bay," I answered.

"Oh, we are, are we?" he cried in a mocking voice; "you are sure of it—eh? You are certain we are not going to France? We have a mast and sail there, I see, and water in the beaker. All we want are a few fish, which I hear are plentiful in these waters, and we might make a push for Barfleur."

"We are going down Langston Bay," I repeated coldly.

"You see might is right upon the waters," he explained, with a smile which broke his whole face up into crinkles. "I am an old soldier, a tough fighting man, and you are two raw lads. I have a knife and you are unarmed. D'ye see the line of argument? The question now is, Where are we to go?"

I faced round upon him with the oar in my hand. "You boasted that you could swim to Portsmouth," said I, "and so you shall. Into the water with you, you sea-viper, or I'll push you in as sure as my name is Micah Clarke."

"Throw your knife down or I'll drive the boat-hook through you," cried Reuben, pushing it forward to within a few inches of the man's throat.

"Sink me, but this is most commendable!" he said, sheathing his weapon, and laughing softly to himself. "I love to draw spirit out of the young fellows. I am the steel, d'ye see, which knocks the valour out of your flint."

"Give up that knife," said I sternly.

"Certainly," he replied, handing it over to me with a polite bow. "Is there any other reasonable matter in which I can oblige ye? I will give up anything to do ye pleasure—save only my good name and soldierly repute."

I sat down beside him with the knife in my hand.

"You pull both oars," I said to Reuben; "I'll keep guard over the fellow and see that he plays us no trick. I believe that you are right, and that he is nothing better than a pirate. He shall be given over to the justices when we get to Havant."

I thought that our passenger's coolness deserted him for a moment, and that a look of annoyance passed over his face.

"Wait a bit!" he said; "your name, I gather, is Clarke, and your home is Havant. Are you a kinsman of Joseph Clarke, the old Roundhead of that town?"

"He is my father," I answered.

"Hark to that, now!" he cried, with a throb of laughter; "I have a trick of falling on my feet. Look at this, lad! Look at this!" He drew a packet of letters from his inside pocket, wrapped in a bit of tarred cloth, and opening it he picked one out and

placed it upon my knee. "Read!" said he, pointing at it with his long thin finger.

It was inscribed in large plain characters: "To Joseph Clarke, leather merchant of Havant, by the hand of Master Decimus Saxon, part-owner of the ship *Providence*, from Amsterdam to Portsmouth". At each side it was sealed with a massive red seal, and was additionally secured with a broad band of silk.

"I have three and twenty of them to deliver in the neighbourhood," he remarked. "That shows what folk think of Decimus Saxon. Three and twenty lives and liberties are in my hands. Ah, lad, invoices and bills of lading are not done up in that fashion. It is not a cargo of Flemish skins that is coming for the old man. The skins have good English hearts in them; ay, and English swords in their fists to strike out for freedom and for conscience. I risk my life in carrying this letter to your father; and you, his son, threaten to hand me over to the justices! For shame! For shame! I blush for you!"

"I don't know what you are hinting at," I answered. "You must speak plainer if I am to understand you."

"Can we trust him?" he asked, jerking his head in the direction of Reuben.

"As myself."

"How very charming!" said he, with something between a smile and a sneer. "David and Jonathan, eh? These papers, then, are from the faithful abroad, the exiles in Holland, ye understand, who are thinking of making a move and of coming over to see King James

in his own country with their swords strapped on their thighs. The letters are to those from whom they expect sympathy, and notify when and where they will make a landing. Now, my dear lad, you will perceive that, instead of my being in your power, you are so completely in mine that it needs but a word from me to destroy your whole family. Decimus Saxon is staunch, though, and that word shall never be spoken."

"If all this be true," said I, "and if your mission is indeed as you have said, why did you even now propose to make for France?"

"Aptly asked, and yet the answer is clear enough," he replied. "Sweet and ingenuous as are your faces, I could not read upon them that ye would prove to be Whigs and friends of the good old cause. Ye might have taken me to where excisemen or others would have wanted to pry and peep, and so endangered my commission. Better a voyage to France in an open boat than that."

"I will take you to my father," said I, after a few moments' thought. "You can deliver your letter and make good your story to him. If you are indeed a true man, you will meet with a warm welcome; but should you prove, as I shrewdly suspect, to be a rogue, you need expect no mercy."

"Bless the youngster! He speaks like the Lord High Chancellor of England!"

Bar-fleur', a small seaport near Cherbourg in France.
beak'-er, a large drinking cup.
bill of lad'-ing, a receipt for a vessel's cargo given by the captain.

en-dan'-gered my com-mis'-sion, made me run some danger of not doing what I was sent to do.

ex-cise'-men, the officers whose duty it is to collect the excise or taxes on some home commodities and licences for some trades.

Hav'-ant, a town in S.E. Hampshire about midway between Portsmouth and Chichester.

in-gen'-u-ous, free and open, frank, candid.

Lord High Chan'-cel-lor, the highest lawyer in the service of the Crown, and so likely to speak with wisdom.

Round'-head, a supporter of the Parliament in the Civil War of Charles I.'s time,—so called because they cropped their hair close, while their opponents, the Cavaliers, wore it long. The date of this story is 1685, but Micah Clarke's father was old enough to have served under Oliver Cromwell.

sym'-path-y, feeling with a person, being of like opinion and feeling.

the jus'-tices, the magistrates. They were beginning to look on Decimus as a pirate.

Whigs, the party who about the time of the story disliked the Stuarts: three years later they had much to do with the deposition of James II. and the calling of Dutch William to the throne.

IV. OF THE MAN WITH THE DROOPING LIDS.

ALL this time Reuben had been swinging away at his oars, and we had made our way into Langston Bay, down the sheltered waters of which we were rapidly shooting. It was well-nigh dark when we beached the boat, and entirely so before we reached Havant, which was fortunate, as the bootless and hatless state of our dripping companion could not have failed to set tongues wagging, and perhaps to excite the inquiries of the authorities. As it was, we scarce met a soul before reaching my father's door.

My mother and my father were sitting in their high-backed chairs on either side of the empty fireplace when

we arrived, he smoking his evening pipe of Oronooko and she working at her embroidery.

The moment that I opened the door the man whom I had brought stepped briskly in and bowing to the old people began to make glib excuses for the lateness of his visit, and to explain the manner in which we had picked him up. I could not help smiling at the utter amazement expressed upon my mother's face as she gazed at him, for the loss of his jack-boots exposed a pair of interminable spindle-shanks which were in ludicrous contrast to the baggy Low Country knee-breeches which surmounted them.

I went out to bid "Good-night" to Reuben and when I returned to the sitting-room I found that my mother was still there, but the crackling of a fire showed that she had been into the kitchen to prepare some supper.

Decimus Saxon was seated at the edge of the iron-bound oak chest opposite my father, and was watching him keenly with his little twinkling eyes, while the old man was fixing his horn glasses and breaking the seals of the packet which his strange visitor had just handed to him.

I saw that when my father looked at the signature at the end of the long, closely-written letter, he gave a whiff of surprise and sat motionless for a moment or so staring at it. Then he turned to the commencement and read it very carefully through, after which he turned it over and read it again.

Clearly it brought no unwelcome news, for his eyes sparkled with joy when he looked up from his reading,

The Letter from the Lowlands.

and more than once he laughed aloud. Finally, he asked the man Saxon how it had come into his possession, and whether he was aware of the contents.

"Why, as to that," said the messenger, "it was handed to me by no less a person than Dicky Rumbold himself, and in the presence of others whom it's not for me to name. As to the contents, your own sense will tell you that I would scarce risk my neck by bearing a message without I knew what the message was."

"Indeed!" quoth my father. "You are yourself one of the faithful?"

"I trust that I am one of those who are on the narrow and thorny track," said he, speaking through his nose, as was the habit of the extreme sectaries.

"Good! good!" cried my father. "Micah, you shall take this worthy man to my room and see that he hath dry linen, and my second best suit of Utrecht velvet. It may serve until his own are dried. My boots too may perchance be useful, my riding ones of untanned leather. A hat with silver braiding hangs above them in the cupboard. See that he lacks for nothing which the house can furnish. Supper will be ready when he hath changed his attire. I beg that you will go at once, good Master Saxon, lest you take a chill."

"There is but one thing that we have omitted," said our visitor, solemnly rising up from his chair and clasping his long nervous hands together. "Let us delay no longer to send up a word of praise to the Almighty for His manifold blessings, and for the mercy wherewith he plucked me and my letters out

of the deep, even as Jonah was saved from the violence of the wicked ones who hurled him overboard, and it may be fired nine-pounder carronades at him, though we are not so informed in Holy Writ. Let us pray, my friends!"

Then in a high-toned, chanting voice he offered up a long prayer of thanksgiving, winding up with a petition for grace and enlightenment for the house and all its inmates. Having concluded by a sonorous "Amen," he at last suffered himself to be led upstairs.

em-broid'-er-y, working designs on cloth in needlework.
en-light'-en-ment, receiving light or knowledge.
horn glasses, spectacles in rims of horn.
in-term'-in-able, endless, extremely long.
lu'-dic-rous, ridiculous, funny.
O-ro-noo'-ko, a kind of tobacco named from the South American River. The plant is a native of the tropical parts of America.
sec'-ta-ries, members of various sects, Dissenters.
son-or'-ous, loud, noisy.
U'-trecht, a city in Holland, with considerable manufactures of wool, silk and linen.

V. OF THE MAN WITH THE DROOPING LIDS (*continued*).

MASTER Decimus Saxon in my father's black Utrecht velvet and untanned riding boots looked a very different man from the bedraggled castaway who had crawled like a conger-eel into our fishing-boat. It seemed as if he had cast off his manner with his raiment, for he behaved to my mother during supper with an air of demure gallantry which sat upon him better than the pert and flippant carriage which he had shown towards

us in the boat. Truth to say, if he was now more reserved, there was a very good reason for it, for he played such havoc amongst the eatables that there was little time for talk.

"I gather from your words, sir, that you have yourself seen hard service," my father remarked when the board had been cleared and my mother had retired for the night.

"I am an old fighting man," our visitor answered, screwing his pipe together, "a lean old dog of the hold-fast breed. This body of mine bears the mark of many a cut and slash received for the most part in the service of the Protestant faith, though some few were caught for the sake of Christendom in general when warring against the Turk. There is blood of mine, sir, spotted all over the map of Europe. Some of it, I confess, was spilled in no public cause, but for the protection of mine own honour in the private duello."

"Your weapon on such occasions was, I suppose, the sword?" my father asked, shifting uneasily in his seat, as he would do when his old instincts were waking up.

"Broadsword, rapier, Toledo, battle-axe, pike or half-pike, and halberd. I speak with all due modesty, but with backsword, sword and dagger, sword and buckler, single falchion, case of falchions, or any other such exercise, I will hold mine own against any man that ever wore neat's leather, save only my elder brother Quartus."

"By my faith," said my father with his eyes shining,

"were I twenty years younger I should have at you! My backsword play hath been thought well of by stout men of war. God forgive me that my heart should still turn to such vanities."

"I have heard godly men speak well of it," remarked Saxon. "Master Richard Rumbold himself spake of your deeds of arms to the Duke of Argyle."

"So Dicky Rumbold had not forgotten me, eh? He was a hard one both at praying and at fighting. We have ridden knee to knee in the field, and we have sought truth together in the chamber. So, Dick will be in harness once again! He could not be still if a blow were to be struck for the trampled faith. If the tide of war set in this direction, I too—who knows? who knows?"

"And here is a stout man-at-arms," said Saxon, passing his hand down my arm. "He hath thew and sinew, and can use proud words too upon occasion, as I have good cause to know, even in our short acquaintance. Might it not be that he too should strike in in this quarrel?"

"We shall discuss it," my father answered, looking thoughtfully at me from under his heavy brows. "But I pray you, friend Saxon, to give us some further account upon these matters. My son Micah, as I understand, hath picked you out of the waves. How came you there?"

Decimus Saxon puffed at his pipe for a minute or more in silence, as one who is marshalling facts each in its due order.

"It came about in this wise," he said at last.

"When John of Poland chased the Turk from the gates of Vienna, there was no war waging, save only some petty Italian skirmish, in which a soldier could scarce expect to reap either dollars or repute, so I wandered across the continent, much cast down at the strange peace which prevailed in every quarter. At last, however, on reaching the Lowlands, I chanced to hear that the *Providence*, owned and commanded by my two brothers, Nonus and Quartus, was about to start from Amsterdam for an adventure to the Guinea coast.

"I proposed to them that I should join them, and was accordingly taken into partnership on condition that I paid one-third of the cost of the cargo. While waiting at the port, I chanced to come across some of the exiles, who, having heard of my devotion to the Protestant cause, brought me to the Duke and to Master Rumbold, who committed these letters to my charge. This makes it clear how they came into my possession."

"But now how you and they came into the water," my father suggested.

"Why that was but the veriest chance," the adventurer answered with some little confusion of manner. "I had asked my brothers to put into Portsmouth that I might get rid of these letters, on which they replied in a boorish and unmannerly fashion that they were still waiting for the thousand guineas which represented my share of the venture. To this I answered with brotherly familiarity that it was a small thing, and should be paid for out of the profits of our enterprise. Their reply was that I had promised to pay the money down, and that money down they must have.

"I then proceeded to prove that having no guineas in my possession it was impossible for me to produce a thousand of them, at the same time pointing out that the association of an honest man in the business was in itself an ample return for the money, since their own reputations had been somewhat blown on. I further offered in the same frank and friendly spirit to meet either of them with sword or with pistol, a proposal which should have satisfied any honour-loving cavaliero.

"Their base mercantile souls prompted them, however, to catch up two muskets, one of which Nonus discharged at me, and it is likely that Quartus would have followed suit had I not plucked the gun from his hand and unloaded it to prevent further mischief. In unloading it I fear that one of the slugs blew a hole in Brother Nonus. Seeing that there was a chance of further disagreements aboard the vessel, I at once decided to leave her, in doing which I was forced to kick off my beautiful jack-boots, which were said by Vanseddars himself to be the finest pair that ever went out of his shop, square-toed, double-soled,—alas! alas!"

"Strange that you should have been picked up by the son of the very man to whom you had a letter."

"The working of Providence," Saxon answered. "I have two and twenty other letters which must all be delivered by hand. If you will permit me to use your house for a while, I shall make it my head-quarters."

"Use it as though it were your own," said my father.

"Your most grateful servant, sir," he cried, jumping up and bowing with his hand over his heart. "This is indeed a haven of rest after the ungodly and profane company of my brothers. Shall we then put up a hymn, and retire from the business of the day?"

My father willingly agreed, and we sang "Oh, happy land!" after which our visitor followed me to our best spare bedroom. I left him there, and returned to my father, who was still seated, heavy with thought, in his old corner.

"What think you of my find, dad?" I asked.

"A man of parts and of piety," he answered; "and in truth he has brought me news after my own heart."

"What news, then?"

"This, this!" he cried joyously, plucking the letter out of his bosom. "I will read it to you, lad. Nay, perhaps I had best sleep the night upon it, and read it to-morrow when our heads are clearer. May the Lord guide my path, and confound the tyrant! Pray for light, boy, for my life and yours may be equally at stake."

back'-sword play, a kind of fencing with a stick with basket handle, singlestick.

be-drag'-gled, wet and dirty.

car'-riage, conduct, behaviour.

cav-a-lier'-o, Spanish for cavalier, knight, military gentleman. Decimus is fond of using foreign words.

dol'-lar, the English way of spelling *thaler*, a German silver coin.

Duke of Argyle, the leader of an unsuccessful rebellion in Scotland which took place at the same time as Monmouth's.

du-el'-lo, the Italian for duel. Decimus has fought much on the continent and often adorns his speech with foreign words.

fal'-chion (pronounced *fawl-shun*), a short crooked sword.

Guin'-ea, on the west coast of Africa: the coin is so called because it was first made with gold brought from Guinea.

hal'-berd, a weapon consisting of an axe and spear at the end of a long pole.

John of Poland, John Sobieski, King of Poland, was a great soldier, and in 1683 drove away a vastly superior army of Turks who were besieging Vienna.
mar'-shal-ling, arranging in order.
mer'-can-tile, eager to make profit by trade, a pursuit despised by soldiers like Decimus.
neat, cattle.
of parts, talented, clever.
ra'-pier, a light sword, straight and narrow.
Richard Rumbold, an old soldier of Oliver Cromwell and the owner of that Rye House from which the plot of 1683 took its name.
slug, a piece of metal for firing from a gun.
thew, muscle, strength, sinew.
To-le'-do, sword — named from the Spanish city which was celebrated for the temper of the steel it manufactured.

VI. OF THE LETTER THAT CAME FROM THE LOWLANDS.

IN the morning I was up betimes, and descended to the lower room, where I found my father busily engaged fastening a new buckle to his sword-belt, while my mother and the maid were preparing the morning meal.

"Come into the yard with me, Micah," quoth my father; "I would have a word with you." The workmen had not yet come to their work, so we strolled out into the sweet morning air, and seated ourselves on the low stone bankment on which the skins are dressed.

"I have been out here this morning trying my hand at the broadsword exercise," said he; "I find that I am as quick as ever on a thrust, but my cuts are sadly stiff. I might be of use at a pinch, but, alas! I am not the same swordsman who led the left troop of the finest horse regiment that ever followed a kettledrum. Yet, if I am old and worn, you shall go in my place, Micah."

"Go! Go whither?"

"Hush, lad, and listen! Let not your mother know too much, for the hearts of women are soft. When Abraham offered up his eldest born, I trow that he said little to Sarah on the matter. Here is the letter. Know you who this Dicky Rumbold is?"

"Surely I have heard you speak of him as an old companion of yours."

"The same—a staunch man and true. So faithful was he—faithful even to slaying—that when the army of the righteous dispersed, he did not lay aside his zeal with his buff-coat. He took to business as a maltster at Hoddesden, and in his house was planned the famous Rye House Plot, in which so many good men were involved. When the plot failed, Rumbold had to fly for his life, but he succeeded in giving his pursuers the slip and in making his way to the Lowlands.

"There he found that many enemies of the Government had gathered together. Repeated messages from England, especially from the western counties and from London, assured them that if they would but attempt an invasion they might rely upon help both in men and in money.

"They were, however, at fault for some time for want of a leader of sufficient weight to carry through so large a project; but now at last they have one, who is the best that could have been singled out—none other than the well-beloved Protestant chieftain, James, Duke of Monmouth, son of Charles II. Let him appear in the West, and soldiers will rise up like the flowers in the spring time."

He paused, and led me away to the farther end of the yard, for the workmen had begun to arrive and to cluster round the dipping trough.

"Monmouth is coming over," he continued, "and he expects every brave Protestant man to rally to his standard. The Duke of Argyle is to command a separate expedition, which will set the Highlands of Scotland in a blaze. Between them they hope to bring the persecutor of the faithful on his knees.

"But I hear the voice of the man Saxon, and I must not let him say that I have treated him in a churlish fashion. Here is the letter, lad. Read it with care, and remember that when brave men are striving for their rights it is fitting that one of the old rebel house of Clarke should be among them."

I took the letter, and wandering off into the fields, I settled myself under a convenient tree, and set myself to read it.

I read it very carefully, and then putting it in my pocket returned indoors to my breakfast. My father looked at me as I entered with questioning eyes, but I had no answer to return him, for my own mind was clouded and uncertain.

That day Decimus Saxon left us, intending to make a round of the country and to deliver his letters, but promising to be back again ere long.

And I? What was I to do? Should I follow my father's wishes, and draw my maiden sword on behalf of the insurgents, or should I stand aside and see how events shaped themselves? It was more fitting that I should go than he. But, on the other hand, I was no keen religious zealot.

If I refused I should have the shame of seeing my aged father setting off for the wars, whilst I lingered at home. And why should I refuse? Had it not long been the secret wish of my heart to see something of the great world, and what fairer chance could present itself? My wishes and my father's hopes all pointed in the one direction.

"Father," said I, when I returned home, "I am ready to go where you will."

"May the Lord be glorified!" he cried solemnly. "May He watch over your young life, and keep your heart steadfast to the cause which is assuredly His!"

army of the righteous, means the forces of Parliament and of Cromwell during the period of the Civil War.

Hoddes'-den, near Hertford.

in-sur'-gents, rebels, those who *rise* against the Government (Lat. *surgo*, I rise).

kettle'-drum, a small drum so named from the shape of the metal frame over which the parchment is stretched.

re-li'-gious zea'-lot, a fanatic, one who is extremely zealous in his religion.

Rye House Plot, 1683. Charles II. and his brother, the Duke of York, were to be seized or murdered as they passed the Rye House near Hoddesden on their way from Newmarket where they had gone for the racing.

VII. OF THE HORSEMAN WHO RODE FROM THE WEST.

MY father set to work forthwith preparing for our equipment, furnishing Saxon out as well as myself on the most liberal scale, for he was determined that the wealth of his age should be as devoted to the cause as was the strength of his youth.

These arrangements had to be carried out with the

most extreme caution, for there were many Prelatists in the village, and in the present disturbed state of the public mind any activity on the part of so well known a man would have at once attracted attention. So carefully did the wary old soldier manage matters, however, that we soon found ourselves in a position to start at an hour's notice, without any of our neighbours being a whit the wiser.

It was towards nightfall upon the twelfth day of June, 1685, that the news reached our part of the country that Monmouth had landed the day before at Lyme, a small seaport on the boundary between Dorsetshire and Devonshire. A great beacon blaze upon Portsdown Hill was the first news that we had of it, and then came a rattling and a drumming from Portsmouth, where the troops were assembled under arms. Mounted messengers clattered through the village street with their heads low on their horses' necks, for the great tidings must be carried to London, that the Governor of Portsmouth might know how to act.

We were standing at our doorway in the gloaming, watching the coming and the going, and the line of beacon fires which were lengthening away to the eastward, when a little man galloped up to the door and pulled his panting horse up.

"Is Joseph Clarke here?" he asked.

"I am he," said my father.

"Are these men true?" he whispered, pointing with his whip at Saxon and myself. "Then the trysting place is Taunton. Pass it on to all whom ye

know. Give my horse a bait and a drink, I beg of ye, for I must get on my way."

My young brother, Hosea, looked to the tired creature, while we brought the rider inside and drew him a stoup of beer. His face and clothes were caked with dust, and his limbs were so stiff from the saddle that he could scarce put one foot before another.

"One horse hath died under me," he said, "and this can scarce last another twenty miles. I must be in London by morning, for we hope that Danvers and Wildman may be able to raise the city. Yester-evening, I left Monmouth's camp. His blue flag floats over Lyme."

"What force hath he?" my father asked anxiously.

"He hath but brought over leaders. The force must come from you folk at home. He has with him Lord Grey of Wark, with Wade, the German Buyse, and eighty or a hundred more. Alas! that two who came are already lost to us. It is an evil, evil omen."

"What is amiss, then?"

"Dare, the goldsmith of Taunton, hath been slain by Fletcher of Saltoun, in some child's quarrel about a horse. The peasants cried out for the blood of the Scot, and he was forced to fly aboard the ships. A sad mishap it is, for he was a skilful leader, and a veteran soldier."

"Aye, aye," cried Saxon, impatiently, "there will be some more skilful leaders and veteran soldiers in the West presently to take his place. But if he knew the

usages of war, how came it that he should fight upon a private quarrel at such a time?"

"Nay, sir, I may not stay," said the messenger, staggering to his feet. "I hope to find a relay at Chichester, and time presses. Work for the cause now, or be slaves for ever. Farewell!" He clambered into his saddle, and we heard the clatter of his hoofs dying away down the London road.

"The time hath come for you to go, Micah," said my father solemnly. "Nay, wife, do not weep, but rather hearten the lad on his way by a blithe word and a merry face. I need not tell you to fight manfully and fearlessly in this quarrel. Should the tide of war set in this direction, you may find your old father riding by your side. Let us now bow down and implore the favour of the Almighty upon this expedition."

We all knelt down in the low-roofed, heavy-raftered room, while the old man offered up an earnest, strenuous prayer for our success.

The prayer finished, we all rose with the exception of Saxon, who remained with his face buried in his hands for a minute or so before starting to his feet. I shrewdly suspect that he had been fast asleep, though he explained that he had paused to offer up an additional supplication. My father placed his hands upon my head and invoked the blessing of heaven upon me. He then drew my companion aside, and I heard the jingling of coin, from which I judge that he was giving him something wherewith to start upon his travels.

My mother clasped me to her heart, and slipped a small square of paper into my hand, saying that I was to look at it at my leisure, and that I should make her happy if I would but conform to the instructions contained in it. This I promised to do, and, tearing myself away, I set off down the darkened village street, with my long-limbed companion striding by my side.

It was close upon one in the morning, and all the country folk had been long abed. We made our way across the fields to the house of Whittier, the Whig farmer, where Saxon got into his war harness. We found our horses ready saddled and bridled, for my father had at the first alarm sent a message across that we should need them. By two in the morning we were breasting Portsdown Hill, armed, mounted, and fairly started on our journey to the rebel camp.

bait, food on a journey.
e-quip'-ment, making ready for service.
gloam'-ing, twilight, dusk (the *gloomy* time of day).
har'-ness, armour.
Ports'-down Hill, a chalky ridge stretching from Havant to Fareham, about six miles—the height being 300 to 450 feet.
Prel'-at-ists, those who think that the Church should be governed by bishops or *prelates.*
re-lay', a change of horses.
Saltoun, a small place near Haddington in Scotland, mostly owned by the family of the Fletchers. This Andrew Fletcher compelled to leave his own country joined Monmouth, but was dismissed by him for slaying a man.
stoup, flagon.
tryst'-ing place, an appointed place of meeting, often expressed by the French word *rendezvous.*
vet'-er-an, an old and hardened soldier (Lat. *vetus,* old).

VIII. WE ARE OVERTAKEN.

[At length the travellers and their tired horses reached Salisbury and dismounted in front of the Blue Boar Inn, where they found some officers of the royal army. The remaining hour or two of daylight they spent in looking over the city and cathedral.]

N our way back to the inn we passed the town lock-up, with a railed space in front of it, in which three great black-muzzled bloodhounds were stalking about, with fierce crimsoned eyes and red tongues lolling out of their mouths. They were used, a bystander told us, for the hunting down of criminals upon Salisbury Plain, which had been a refuge for rogues and thieves until this means had been adopted for following them to their hiding-places. It was well-nigh dark before we returned to the hostel, and entirely so by the time that we had eaten our suppers, paid our reckoning, and got ready for the road.

Before long the voice of Decimus Saxon, and the clink of the horses' hoofs upon the cobble-stones of the yard, informed me that all was ready for our departure.

We were not half a mile from Salisbury before the roll of kettledrums and the blare of bugles swelling up musically through the darkness announced the arrival of a regiment of the king's horse.

"It is as well, perhaps," said Saxon, "that we gave them the slip."

We had been trotting down the broad high road,

shimmering vaguely white in the gloom, with the shadowy trees dancing past us on either side, scarce outlined against the dark background of cloud. We were now coming upon the eastern edge of the great plain, which extends forty miles one way and twenty the other, over the greater part of Wiltshire and past the boundaries of Somersetshire.

The main road to the West skirts this wilderness, but we had agreed to follow a less important track which would lead us to our goal, though in a more tedious manner. Its insignificance would, we hoped, prevent it from being guarded by the king's horse. We had come to the point where this by-road branches off from the main highway when we heard the clatter of horses' hoofs behind us.

"Here comes some one who is not afraid to gallop," I remarked.

"Halt here in the shadow!" cried Saxon in a short quick whisper. "Have your blade loose in the scabbard. He must have a set errand who rides so fast o' nights."

Looking down the road we could make out through the darkness a shadowy blur which soon resolved itself into man and horse. The rider was well-nigh abreast of us before he was aware of our presence, when he pulled up his steed in a strange, awkward fashion, and faced round in our direction.

"Is Micah Clarke there?" he said in a voice which was strangely familiar to my ears.

"I am Micah Clarke," said I.

"And I am Reuben Lockarby," cried our pursuer

in a mock heroic voice. "Ah, Micah lad, I'd embrace you were it not that I should assuredly fall out of the saddle if I attempted it, and perchance drag you along. That sudden pull up well-nigh landed me on the roadway. I have been sliding off and clambering on ever since I bade good-bye to Havant. Sure, such a horse for slipping from under one was never bestridden by man."

"Good heavens, Reuben!" I cried in amazement, "what brings you all this way from home?"

"The very same cause which brings you, Micah, and also Don Decimo Saxon, late of the Solent, whom methinks I see in the shadow behind you. How fares it, O illustrious one?"

"It is you, then, young cock of the woods!" growled Saxon in no very overjoyed voice.

"No less a person," said Reuben. "And now, my gay cavalieros, round with your horses and trot on your way, for there is no time to be lost. We ought all to be at Taunton to-morrow."

"But, my dear Reuben," said I, "it cannot be that you are coming with us to join Monmouth. What would your father say? This is no holiday jaunt, but one that may have a sad and stern ending. At the best, victory can only come through much bloodshed and danger. At the worst, we are as like to wind up upon a scaffold as not."

"Forwards, lads, forwards!" cried he, spurring on his horse. "It is all arranged and settled. I am about to offer my august person, together with a sword which I borrowed and a horse which I stole, to

his most Protestant highness, James, Duke of Monmouth."

au-gust', majestic, venerable: spoken in fun, for Reuben was "a little undergrown man".
Don Decimo, Spanish for Mr. Decimus: Reuben is making fun of the way in which Saxon uses foreign words.
hos'-tel, an inn, *hotel*.
mock he-ro'-ic, pretending to be solemn and serious in fun.
muz'-zle, the projecting mouth, lips and nose of an animal.
shim'-mer-ing, glimmering, dimly shining.

IX. OF OUR PERILOUS ADVENTURE ON SALISBURY PLAIN.

"HOW comes it all?" I asked, as we rode on together. "It warms my very heart to see you, but you were never concerned either in religion or in politics. Whence, then, this sudden resolution?"

"Well, truth to tell," he replied, "I am neither a king's man nor a duke's man, nor would I give a button which sat upon the throne. I do not suppose that either one or the other would increase the custom of the Wheatsheaf, or want Reuben Lockarby for a councillor. I am a Micah Clarke man, though, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet; and if he rides to the wars, may the plague strike me if I don't stick to his elbow!"

He raised his hand excitedly as he spoke, and instantly losing his balance he shot into a dense clump of bushes by the roadside, whence his legs flapped helplessly in the darkness.

"That makes the tenth," said he, scrambling out and clambering into his saddle once more. "My

father used to tell me not to sit a horse too closely. 'A gentle rise and fall,' said the old man. But it's all very well, there is more fall than rise, and it is anything but gentle."

"Steady there!" exclaimed Saxon, "how do you expect to keep your seat in the presence of any enemy if you lose it on a peaceful high-road?"

"I can but try, my illustrious," he answered, rearranging his ruffled clothing. "Perchance the sudden and unexpected character of my movements may disconcert the said enemy. To continue my story, however, which I broke off in order to step down from my horse, I found out early in the morning that ye were gone, and Zachary Palmer was able to tell me whither. I made up my mind, therefore, that I would out into the world also.

"To this end I borrowed a sword from Solomon Sprent, and, my father having gone to Gosport, I helped myself to the best nag in his stables —for I have too much respect for the old man to allow one of his flesh and blood to go ill-provided to the wars. All day I have ridden, since early morning, being twice stopped on suspicion of being ill-affected, but having the good luck to get away each time. I knew that I was close at your heels, for I found them searching for you at the Salisbury Inn."

Decimus whistled. "Searching for us?" said he.

"Yes. It seems that they had some notion that ye were not what ye professed to be, so the inn was sur-

rounded as I passed, but none knew which road ye had taken."

"Said I not," cried Saxon, "that our meeting with the king's officers at the inn might cause us some risk? We must push on, for they may send a party on our track."

"We are off the main road now," I remarked; "even should they pursue us, they would be unlikely to follow this side-track."

"Yet it would be wise to show them a clean pair of heels," said Saxon spurring his mare into a gallop. Lockarby and I followed his example, and we all three rode swiftly along the rough moorland track.

We passed through scattered belts of pinewood, where the wild cat howled and the owl screeched, and across broad stretches of fenland and moor, where the silence was only broken by the booming cry of the bittern or the fluttering of wild duck far above our heads. The road was in parts overgrown with brambles, and was so deeply rutted and so studded with sharp and dangerous hollows, that our horses came more than once upon their knees. In one place the wooden bridge which led over a stream had broken down, and no attempt had been made to repair it, so that we were compelled to ride our horses girth deep through the torrent.

At first some scattered lights had shown that we were in the neighbourhood of human habitations, but these became fewer as we advanced, until the last died away and we found ourselves upon the desolate

moor which stretched away in unbroken solitude to the shadowy horizon. The moon had broken through the clouds and now shone hazily through wreaths of mist, throwing a dim light over the wild scene, and enabling us to keep to the track, which was not fenced in in any way and could scarce be distinguished from the plain around it.

We had slackened our pace under the impression that all fear of pursuit was at an end, and Reuben was amusing us by an account of the excitement which had been caused in Havant by our disappearance, when through the stillness of the night a dull muffled rat-tat-tat struck upon my ear. At the same moment Saxon sprang from his horse and listened intently with side-long head.

"Boot and saddle!" he cried, springing into his seat again. "They are after us as sure as fate. A dozen troopers by the sound. We must shake them off, or good-bye to Monmouth."

"Give them their heads," I answered, and, striking spurs into our steeds, we thundered on through the darkness. Covenant and Chloe were as fresh as could be wished, and soon settled down into a long springy gallop. Our friend's horse, however, had been travelling all day, and its long-drawn laboured breathing showed that it could not hold out for long. Through the clatter of our horses' hoofs I could still from time to time hear the ominous murmur from behind us.

"This will never do, Reuben," said I anxiously,

as the weary creature stumbled, and the rider came perilously near to shooting over its head.

"The old horse is nearly foundered," he answered ruefully. "We are off the road now, and the rough ground is too much for her."

"Yes, we are off the track," cried Saxon over his shoulder—for he led us by a few paces. "Bear in mind that the Bluecoats have been on the march all day, so that their horses may also be blown. But how on earth came they to know which road we took?"

As if in answer to his ejaculation, there rose out of the still night behind us a single, clear, bell-like note, swelling and increasing in volume until it seemed to fill the whole air with its harmony.

"A bloodhound!" cried Saxon.

A second sharper, keener note, ending in an unmistakable howl, answered the first.

"Another of them," said he. "They have loosed the brutes that we saw near the cathedral. We little thought when we peered over the rails at them, a few hours ago, that they would so soon be on our track. Keep a firm knee and a steady seat, for a slip now would be your last."

"Horror!" cried Reuben, "I had steeled myself to die in battle—but to be dogsmeat! It is something outside the contract."

"They hold them in leash," said Saxon between his teeth, "else they would outstrip the horses and be lost in the darkness. Could we but come on running water we might put them off our track."

"My horse cannot hold on at this pace for more

than a very few minutes," Reuben cried. "If I break down, do ye go on, for ye must remember that they are upon your track and not mine. They have found cause for suspicion of the two strangers of the inn, but none of me."

"Nay, Reuben, we shall stand or fall together," said I sadly, for at every step his horse grew more and more feeble. "In this darkness they will make little distinction between persons."

"Keep a good heart," shouted the old soldier, who was now leading us by twenty yards or more. "We can hear them because the wind blows from that way, but it's odd whether they have heard us. Methinks they slacken in their pursuit."

"The sound of their horses has indeed grown fainter," said I joyfully.

"So faint that I can hear it no longer," my companion cried.

bit'-tern, a bird of the heron family—dwelling mostly in marshy land: its peculiar note, here called "booming," is said to resemble the lowing of a bull.

cal'-en-dar, an almanack which contains many days dedicated to saints.

coun'-cil-lor, a member or a council or body of men called together to give advice.

e-jac-u-la'-tion, sudden cry.

foun'-dered, disabled in the feet so that it can go no farther.

girth deep, up to the girth or band round the belly of the horse (compare the words *gird* and *girdle*).

Gos'-port, near Portsmouth; the name is for God's Port, and it was so called by King Stephen, who landed here safely during a storm.

ill-af-fect'-ed, not well disposed towards the Government, a rebel.

im-pres'-sion, opinion, belief, that which is impressed on the mind.

la'-boured, only made with great *labour* or difficulty.

my il-lus'-tri-ous, my famous or noble friend—an instance of Reuben's pretended solemnity or mock heroic.

o'-min-ous, of evil *omen*, foreboding ill.

rue'-ful-ly, sorrowfully.

Solomon Sprent, a friend of Micah who was a retired sailor living at Havant.

the Blue'-coats, the king's cavalry.

The Wheat-sheaf was the inn kept by Reuben's father.

vol'-ume, fulness of sound.

X. OF OUR PERILOUS ADVENTURE ON SALISBURY PLAIN (*continued*).

WE reined up our panting steeds and strained our ears, but not a sound could we hear save the gentle murmur of the breeze amongst the whin-bushes, and the melancholy cry of the night-jar. Behind us the broad rolling plain, half light and half shadow, stretched away to the dim horizon without sign of life or movement.

"We have either outstripped them completely, or else they have given up the chase," said I. "What ails the horses that they should tremble and snort?"

"My poor beast is nearly done for," Reuben remarked, leaning forward and passing his hand down the creature's reeking neck.

"For all that we cannot rest," said Saxon. "We may not be out of danger yet. Another mile or two may shake us clear. But I like it not."

"Like not what?"

"These horses and their terrors. The beasts can at times both see and hear more than we, as I could show by divers examples drawn from mine own experience on the Danube and in the Palatinate, were the time and place more fitting. Let us on, then, before we rest."

The weary horses responded bravely to the call, and struggled onwards over the broken ground for

a considerable time. At last we were thinking of pulling up in good earnest, and of congratulating ourselves upon having tired out our pursuers, when of a sudden the bell-like baying broke upon our ears far louder than it had been before—so loud, indeed, that it was evident that the dogs were close upon our heels.

"The accursed hounds!" cried Saxon, putting spurs to his horse and shooting ahead of us; "I feared as much. They have freed them from the leash. There is no escape from the brutes, but we can choose the spot where we shall make our stand."

"Come on, Reuben," I shouted. "We have only to reckon with the dogs now. Their masters have let them loose, and turned back for Salisbury."

"Pray heaven they break their necks before they get there!" he cried. "They set dogs on us as though we were rats in a cock-pit. Yet they call England a Christian country! It is no use, Micah. Poor Dido can't stir another step."

As he spoke, the sharp fierce bay of the hounds rose again, clear and stern on the night air, swelling up from a low hoarse growl to a high angry yelp. There seemed to be a ring of exultation in their wild cry, as though they knew that their quarry was almost run to earth.

"Not another step!" said Reuben Lockarby, pulling up and drawing his sword. "If I must fight I shall fight here."

"There could be no better place," I replied. Two

great jagged rocks rose before us, jutting abruptly out of the ground, and leaving a space of twelve or fifteen feet between them. Through this gap we rode, and I shouted loudly for Saxon to join us. His horse, however, had been steadily gaining upon ours, and at the renewed alarm had darted off again, so that he was already some hundred yards from us. It was useless to summon him, even could he hear our voices, for the hounds would be upon us before he could return.

"Never heed him," I said hurriedly. "Do you rein your steed behind that rock, and I behind this. They will serve to break the force of the attack. Dismount not, but strike down and strike hard."

On either side in the shadow of the rock we waited in silence for our terrible pursuers. We knew that the creatures to whom we were opposed could never be turned from our throats while there was breath in their bodies. One feels in one's heart, too, that the combat is an unequal one, for your life is precious at least to your friends, while their lives, what are they? All this and a great deal more passed swiftly through our minds as we sat with drawn swords, soothing our trembling horses as best we might, and waiting for the coming of the hounds.

Nor had we long to wait. Another long, deep, thunderous bay sounded in our ears, followed by a profound silence, broken only by the quick, shivering breathing of the horses. Then suddenly and noiselessly a great tawny brute, with its black muzzle to

the earth, and its overhung cheeks flapping on either side, sprang into the band of moonlight between the rocks, and on into the shadow beyond.

It never paused or swerved for an instant, but pursued its course straight onwards without a glance to right or to left. Close behind it came a second, and behind that a third, all of enormous size and looking even larger and more terrible than they were in the dim shifting light. Like the first, they took no notice of our presence, but bounded on along the trail left by Decimus Saxon.

The first and second I let pass, for I hardly realised that they so completely overlooked us. When the third, however, sprang out into the moonlight, I drew my right-hand pistol from its holster, and, resting its long barrel across my left forearm, I fired at it as it passed. The bullet struck the mark, for the brute gave a fierce howl of rage and pain, but, true to the scent, it never turned or swerved. Lockarby fired also, as it disappeared among the brushwood, but with no apparent effect. So swiftly and so noiselessly did the great hounds pass that they might have been grim silent spirits of the night, the phantom dogs of Herne the hunter, but for that one fierce yelp which followed my shot.

"What brutes!" my companion ejaculated; "what shall we do, Micah?"

"They have clearly been laid on Saxon's trail," said I. "We must follow them up, or they will be too many for him. Can you hear anything of our pursuers?"

"Nothing."

"They have given up the chase, then, and let the dogs loose as a last resource. Doubtless the creatures are trained to return to the town. But we must push on, Reuben, if we are to help our companion."

"One more spurt, then, little Dido," cried Reuben; "can you muster strength for one more? Nay, I have not the heart to put spurs to you. If you can do it, I know you will."

The brave mare snorted, as though she understood her rider's words, and stretched her weary limbs into a gallop. So stoutly did she answer the appeal that, though I pressed Covenant to his topmost speed, she was never more than a few strides behind him.

"He took this direction," said I, peering anxiously out into the darkness. "He can scarce have gone far, for he spoke of making a stand. Or, perhaps, finding that we are not with him, he may trust to the speed of his horse."

"What chance hath a horse of outstripping these brutes?" Reuben answered. "They must run him to earth, and he knows it. Hullo! what have we here?"

A dark dim form lay stretched in the moonlight in front of us. It was the dead body of a hound—the one evidently at which I had fired.

"There is one of them disposed of," I cried joyously; "we have but two to settle with now."

As I spoke we heard the crack of two pistol-shots

some little distance to the left. Heading our steeds in that direction, we pressed on at the top of our speed. Presently out of the darkness in front of us there arose such a roaring and a yelping as sent the hearts into our mouths. It was not a single cry, such as the hounds had uttered when they were on the scent, but a continuous deep-mouthed uproar, so fierce and so prolonged that we could not doubt that they had come to the end of their run.

"Pray God that they have not got him down!" cried Reuben in a faltering voice.

cock'-pit, a space where game-cocks were made to fight (this sport is now put down), or dogs set on rats.

con-grat'-u-lat-ing, expressing joy at some fortunate event.

Di'-do, Reuben's mare.

ex-ul-ta'-tion, extreme joy at some success.

fu'-tile, vain, ineffectual.

Herne the Hunter, a royal keeper of Windsor Forest in the time of Richard II. who hanged himself on a tree called Herne's oak: ever afterwards his ghost accompanied by his phantom horse and hounds was supposed to haunt the forest.

hol'-ster, a leather case in the front of the saddle to hold a pistol.

ho-ri'-zon, the circle where earth and sky seem to meet.

night'-jar, a kind of swallow, so called from its note and because it comes out at night: it is also called the goat-sucker.

Pa-lat'-in-ate, an old division of Germany, formed of Upper and Lower Palatinate: most of it is now included in Bavaria. Mannheim, Heidelberg and Deux Ponts are the chief towns of the district.

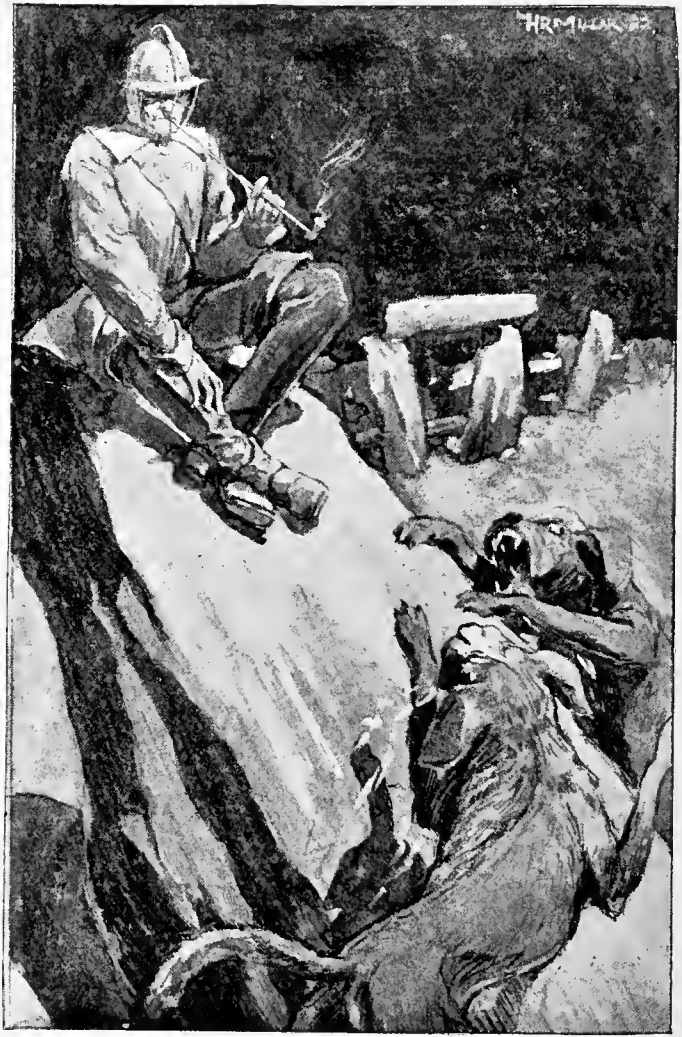
quar'-ry, the object of the chase, the prey.

re'-al-ised, brought home to myself, looked on as a *real* thing.

reek'-ing, steaming with heat and perspiration.

shift'-ing, changing, flickering, uncertain.

whin'-bushes, gorse or furze.



There sat Decimus Saxon.

XI. OF OUR PERILOUS ADVENTURE ON SALISBURY PLAIN (*continued*).

THE same thought had crossed my own mind, for I have heard a similar though lesser din come from a pack of otter hounds when they had overtaken their prey and were tearing it to pieces. Sick at heart, I drew my sword with the determination that, if we were too late to save our companion, we should at least revenge him upon the four-footed fiends. Bursting through a thick belt of scrub and tangled gorse bushes, we came upon a scene so unlike what we expected that we pulled up our horses in astonishment.

A circular clearing lay in front of us, brightly illuminated by the silvery moonshine. In the centre of this rose a giant stone, one of those high dark columns which are found all over the plain, and especially in the parts round Stonehenge. It could not have been less than fifteen feet in height, and had doubtless been originally straight, but wind and weather, or the crumbling of the soil, had gradually suffered it to tilt over until it inclined at such an angle that an active man might clamber up to the summit.

On the top of this ancient stone, cross-legged and motionless, like some strange carved idol of former days, sat Decimus Saxon, puffing sedately at the long pipe which was ever his comfort in moments of difficulty. Beneath him at the base of the monolith, as our learned men

call them, the two great bloodhounds were rearing and springing, clambering over each other's backs in their frenzied and futile eagerness to reach the impassive figure perched above them, while they gave vent to their rage and disappointment in the hideous uproar which had suggested such terrible thoughts to our minds.

We had little time, however, to gaze at this strange scene, for upon our appearance the hounds abandoned their helpless attempt to reach Saxon, and flew, with a fierce snarl of satisfaction, at Reuben and myself. One great brute, with flaring eyes and yawning mouth, his white fangs glistening in the moonlight, sprang at my horse's neck; but I met him fair with a single sweeping cut, which shore away his muzzle and left him wallowing and writhing in a pool of blood. Reuben, meanwhile, had spurred his horse forward to meet his assailant; but the poor tired steed flinched at the sight of the fierce hound, and pulled up suddenly, with the result that her rider rolled headlong into the very jaws of the animal. It might have gone ill with Reuben had he been left to his own resources.

At the most he could only have kept the cruel teeth from his throat for a very few moments; but, seeing the mischance, I drew my remaining pistol, and, springing from my horse, discharged it full into the creature's flank while it struggled with my friend. With a last yell of rage and pain, it brought its fierce jaws together in one wild impotent snap, and then sank slowly over upon its side, while Reuben crawled from beneath it, scared and

bruised, but none the worse otherwise for his perilous adventure.

"I owe you one for that, Micah," he said gratefully. "I may live to do as much for you."

"And I owe ye both one," said Saxon, who had scrambled down from his place of refuge. "I pay my debts, too, whether for good or evil. I might have stayed up there until I had eaten my jack-boots, for all the chance I had of ever getting down again. But that was a shrewd blow of yours, Clarke! The brute's head flew in halves like a rotten pumpkin. No wonder that they stuck to my track, for I have left both my spare girth and my kerchief behind me, which would serve to put them on Chloe's scent as well as mine own."

"And where is Chloe?" I asked, wiping my sword.

"Chloe had to look out for herself. I found the brutes gaining on me, you see, and I let drive at them with my barkers; but, with a horse flying at twenty mile an hour, what chance is there for a single slug finding its way home? Things looked black then, for I had no time to reload; and the rapier, though the king of weapons in the duello, is scarce strong enough to rely upon on an occasion like this.

"As luck would have it, just as I was fairly puzzled, what should I come across but this handy stone which the good priests of old did erect, as far as I can see, for no other purpose than to provide worthy cavalieros with an escape from such ignoble and scurvy enemies. I had no time to spare in clambering up it, for I had to tear my heel out of the mouth of the foremost of them, and might

have been dragged down by it, had he not found my spur too tough a morsel for his chewing. But surely one of my bullets must have reached its mark." Lighting the touch-paper in his tobacco-box, he passed it over the body of the hound which had attacked me, and then of the other.

"Why, this one is riddled like a sieve," he cried. "What do you load your petronels with, good Master Clarke?"

"With two leaden slugs."

"Yet two leaden slugs have made a score of holes at the least! And of all things in this world, here is the neck of a bottle stuck in the brute's hide!"

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "I remember. My dear mother packed a bottle of Daffy's elixir in the barrel of my pistol."

"And you have shot it into the bloodhound!" roared Reuben. "Ho! ho! When they hear that tale at the tap of the Wheatsheaf there will be some throats dry with laughter. Saved my life by shooting a dog with a bottle of Daffy's elixir!"

"And a bullet as well, Reuben, though I dare warrant the gossips will soon contrive to leave that detail out. It is a mercy the pistol did not burst. But what do you propose to do now, Master Saxon?"

"Why, to recover my mare if it can anywise be done," said the adventurer. "Though on this vast moor, in the dark, she will be extremely difficult to find."

"'And Reuben Lockarby's steed can go no farther,"

I remarked. "But do mine eyes deceive me, or is there a glimmer of light over yonder?"

"A will-o'-the-wisp," said Saxon. "Yet I confess that it burns steady and clear, as though it came from lamp, candle, rushlight, lanthorn, or other human agency."

"Where there is light there is life," cried Reuben. "Let us make for it, and see what chance of shelter we may find there."

as-sail'-ant, one who attacks.
bark'-ers, pistols.
e-lix'-ir, a liquor once supposed to preserve youth and life and to change all metals into gold: hence it became a favourite name for patent medicines like Daffy's elixir.
fren'-zied, frantic, extreme.
ig-no'-ble, unworthy, dishonourable.
im-pas'-sive, calm, not showing any feeling.
im'-pot-ent, powerless.
ker'-chief, originally meant a piece of cloth for covering the head (French, *couvrir*, to cover, and *chef*, the head).
lant'-horn, a false spelling for *lantern* which came into use because the sides were made of *horn*.
mon'-o-lith, a column or pillar formed of one single stone.
ot'-ter, a large kind of weasel frequenting the water and living on fish.
pet'-ro-nels, short guns that can be held in one hand, carbines, large pistols.
se-date'ly, calmly, quietly.
Will' o' the wisp, a light seen in marshes, which misleads travellers.

XII. OUR FIRST SIGHT OF THE ENEMY.

AS we approached we saw that the light did indeed come from a small cottage, which was built in a hollow, so as to be invisible from any quarter save that from which we approached it. In front of this humble dwelling a small patch of ground had been cleared of shrub, and in the centre of this little piece of sward our missing steed stood grazing at

her leisure upon the scanty herbage. The same light which had attracted us had doubtless caught her eye, and drawn her towards it by hopes of oats and of water. With a grunt of satisfaction Saxon resumed possession of his lost property, and, leading her by the bridle, approached the door of the solitary cottage.

[Here Micah Clarke and his companions were hospitably entertained and spent the night. In the morning, after a breakfast furnished by the remains of their supper, they resumed their journey.]

When we at last pulled up, right over against us, on the side of a gentle slope, stood a bright little village, with a red-roofed church rising up from amidst a clump of trees. To our eyes, after the dull sward of the plain, it was a glad sight to see the green spread of the branches and the pleasant gardens which girt the hamlet round. All the morning we had seen no sight of a human being, save a few peat-cutters in the distance. Our belts, too, were beginning to be loose upon us, and the remembrance of our breakfast more faint.

"This," said I, "must be the village of Mere. We shall soon be over the Somersetshire border."

"I trust that we shall soon be over a dish of beefsteaks," groaned Reuben. "I am well-nigh famished. So fair a village must needs have a passable inn, though I have not seen one yet upon my travels which would compare with the old Wheatsheaf."

"Neither inn nor dinner for us just yet," said Saxon. "Look yonder to the north, and tell me what ye see."

On the extreme horizon there was visible a long line of gleaming glittering points, which shone and sparkled like a string of diamonds. These brilliant specks were all in rapid motion, and yet kept their positions to each other.

"What is it then?" we both cried.

"Horse upon the march," quoth Saxon. "It may be our friends of Salisbury, who have made a long day's journey; or, as I am inclined to think, it may be some other body of the king's horse. They are far distant, and what we see is but the sun shining on their casques; yet they are bound for this very village, if I mistake not. It would be wisest to avoid entering it, lest the rustics set them upon our track. Let us skirt it and push on for Bruton, where we may spare time for bite and sup."

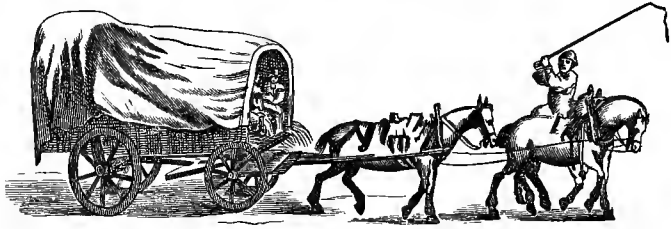
"Alas, alas! for our dinners!" cried Reuben ruefully. "I have fallen away until my body rattles about inside this shell of armour like a pea in a pod. However, lads, it is all for the good cause."

"One more good stretch to Bruton, and we may rest in peace," said Saxon. "It is ill dining when a dragoon may be served up as a grace after meat. Our horses are still fresh, and we should be there in little over an hour."

We pushed on our way accordingly, passing at a safe distance from Mere, which is the village where the second Charles did conceal himself after the battle of Worcester. The road beyond was much crowded by peasants, who were making their way out of Somersetshire, and by farmers' waggons, which were taking

loads of food to the West, ready to turn a few guineas either from the king's men or from the rebels.

Crossing over the river Brue by a good stone bridge, we at last reached the small country town for which we had been making, which lies embowered in the midst of a broad expanse of fertile meadows, orchards and sheep-walks. From the rising ground by the town we looked back over the plain without seeing any traces of the troopers. We learned, too, from an old woman of the place, that though a troop of the Wiltshire Yeomanry had passed through the day before, there were



Waggon of the second half of the seventeenth century: from Loggan's *Oxonia Illustrata.*

no soldiers quartered at present in the neighbourhood. Thus assured we rode boldly into the town, and soon found our way to the principal inn.

Battle of Worcester, 3rd Sept. 1651, in which Cromwell completely routed the Scotch who were supporting Charles II.

Brue, a river of Somerset which runs past **Bruton,** and, after a course of thirty miles falls into Bridgwater Bay.

casques, helmets.

dra-goon', a kind of horse soldier.

em-bow'-ered, sheltered as with trees in a bower.

Mere, in the south-west corner of Wiltshire near the borders of Dorset and Somerset.

pas'-sa-ble, tolerable, fairly good.

peat'-cut-ters, those who cut peat, a kind of decayed turf found in marshy land and used for fuel.

yeo'-man-ry, cavalry, volunteer soldiers. A yeoman is properly a small farmer.

XIII. OF SIR GERVAS JEROME, KNIGHT BANNERET OF THE COUNTY OF SURREY.

THE inn was very full of company, being occupied not only by many Government agents and couriers on their way to and from the seat of the rising, but also by all the local gossips, who gathered there to exchange news and consume Dame Hobson the landlady's home-brewed.

In spite, however, of this stress of custom and the consequent uproar, the hostess conducted us into her own private room, where we could consume her excellent cheer in peace and quietness.

"We are your grateful servants, mistress," said Saxon, when the smoking joint and the batter pudding had been placed upon the table. "We have robbed you of your room. Will you not honour us so far as to sit down with us and share our repast?"

"Nay, kind sir," said the portly dame, much flattered by the proposal. "It is not for me to sit with gentles like yourselves."

"Beauty has a claim which persons of quality, and above all cavalieros of the sword, are the first to acknowledge," cried Saxon, with his little twinkling eyes fixed in admiration upon her buxom countenance. "Nay, by my troth, you shall not leave us. I shall lock the door first. If you will not eat, you shall at least drink a cup of alicant with me."

Our hostess drank off her wine, but when a loud authoritative voice was heard in the passage, demand-

ing a private room and a draught of sack, her call to duty overcame her private concerns, and she bustled off with a few words of apology to take the measure of the newcomer.

After a minute's absence Dame Hobson re-entered the room with her face in a glow, and a slim young man, dressed in the height of fashion, at her heels.

"I am sure, good gentlemen," said she, "that ye will not object to this young nobleman drinking his wine in the same room with ye, since all the others are filled with the townsfolk and commonalty."

"Faith! I must needs be mine own usher," said the stranger, sticking his gold-laced cap under his left arm, and laying his hand upon his heart, while he bowed until his forehead nearly struck the edge of the table. "Your very humble servant, gentlemen, Sir Gervas Jerome, knight banneret of his Majesty's county of Surrey, and at one time *custos rotulorum* of the district of Beacham Ford."

"Welcome, sir," quoth Reuben, with a merry twinkle in his eye. "You have before you Don Decimo Saxon of the Spanish nobility, together with Sir Micah Clarke and Sir Reuben Lockarby, both of his Majesty's county of Hampshire."

"Proud and glad to meet ye, gentlemen!" cried the newcomer with a flourish.

I have said that he was dressed in the height of fashion, and such indeed was the impression which a glance would give. His face was thin and aristocratic, with a well-marked nose, delicate features, and gay, careless expression. Some little paleness

"Proud and glad to meet ye, gentlemen!"

of the cheeks and darkness under the eyes, the result of hard travel or dissipation, did but add a chastening grace to his appearance. His white periwig, velvet and silver riding-coat, lavender vest and red satin knee-breeches were all of the best style and cut, but when looked at closely each and all of these articles of attire bore evidence of having seen better days.

Beside the dust and stains of travel, there was a shininess or a fading of colour here and there, which scarce accorded with the costliness of their material or the bearing of their wearer. His long riding-boots had a gaping seam in the side of one of them, whilst his toe was pushing its way through the end of the other. For the rest, he wore a handsome silver-hilted rapier at his side, and had a frilled cambric shirt somewhat the worse for wear and open at the front, as was the mode with the gallants of those days.

All the time he was speaking he mumbled a toothpick, which together with his constant habit of pronouncing his *o*'s as *a*'s made his conversation sound strange to our ears. Whilst we were noting these peculiarities he was reclining upon Dame Hobson's best taffeta-covered settee, tranquilly combing his wig with a delicate ivory comb which he had taken from a small satin bag which hung upon the right of his sword belt.

"Lard preserve us from country inns!" he remarked. "What with the boors that swarm in every chamber, and the want of mirrors, and jasmine water, and other necessaries, blister me if one has not to do

one's toilet in the common room. I'd as soon travel in the land of the Great Mogul!"

"When you shall come to be my age, young sir," Saxon answered, "you may know better than to decry a comfortable country hostel."

"Very like, sir, very like!" the gallant answered, with a careless laugh.

Al-i-cant', a Spanish wine, so called from a port of that name in Spain.
cam'-bric, a kind of fine white linen, originally made at *Cambray* in Flanders.
chas'-ten-ing, softening, toning down.
com'-mon-al-ty, common folk.
cus'-tos rot-u-lo'-rum, Latin for keeper of the rolls or records, the principal justice of a county.
gal'-lants, well-dressed and gay young men.
gentles, men of good family, gentlemen.
Great Mo-gul', the Emperor of India before the English became the ruling power there.
knight ban'-ner-et, a rank of knighthood, above knight and below baron.
per'-i-wig, a peruke, from the French word *perruque:* it is usually shortened to wig.
sack, a dry Spanish wine.
taf'-fe-ta, a thin silk material.
ush'-er, one whose duty it is to introduce strangers.

XIV. SIR GERVAS JEROME (*continued*).

OUR hostess now withdrew, and Decimus Saxon soon found an opportunity for following her. Sir Gervas Jerome continued, however, to chatter freely to Reuben and myself over the wine, rattling along as gaily and airily as though we were old acquaintances.

"Sink me, if I have not frighted your comrade

away!" he remarked. "A hardy old soldier, I should judge, from his feature and attire."

"One who hath seen much service abroad," I answered.

"Ha! ye are lucky to ride to the wars in the company of so accomplished a cavalier. For I presume that it is to the wars that ye are riding, since ye are all so armed and accoutred."

"We are indeed bound for the West," I replied, with some reserve, for in Saxon's absence I did not care to be too loose-tongued.

"And in what capacity?" he persisted. "Will ye risk your two crowns in defence of King James's one, or will ye strike in, hit or miss, with these rogues of Devon and Somerset? Stop my vital breath, if I would not as soon side with the clown as with the crown, with all due respect to your own principles!"

"You are a daring man," said I, "if you air your opinions thus in every inn parlour. Dost not know that a word of what you have said, whispered to the nearest justice of the peace, might mean your liberty, if not your life?"

"A Daniel come to judgment!" cried our new acquaintance. "What ancient, ancient words, from so young a head! You are, I'll warrant, five years younger than a scatterbrain like myself, and yet you talk like the seven wise men of Greece. Wilt take me as a valet?"

"A valet!" I exclaimed.

"Aye, a valet, a man-servant. I have been waited

upon so long that it is my turn to wait now, and I would not wish a more likely master."

"Truly, good sir," I said with a smile, "you do but jest, when you talk of descending to such a position."

"Not a whit! not a whit!" he replied earnestly. "'To such base uses do we come,' as Will Shakespeare has it. If you would be able to say that you have in your service Sir Gervas Jerome, knight banneret, and sole owner of Beacham Ford Park, with a rent roll of four thousand good pounds a year, he is now up for sale, and will be knocked down to the bidder who pleases him best. Say but the word, and we'll have another flagon of sack to clinch the bargain."

"But," said I, "if you are indeed owner of this fair property, why should you descend to so menial an occupation?"

"The Jews, the Jews, oh most astute and yet most slow-witted master! The ten tribes have been upon me, and I have been harried and wasted, bound, ravished and despoiled. Never was Agag, King of Amalek, more completely in the hands of the chosen, and the sole difference is that they have hewed into pieces mine estate instead of myself."

"Have you lost all, then?" Reuben asked open-eyed.

"Why no—not all—by no means all!" he answered with a merry laugh; "I have a gold Jacobus and a guinea or two in my purse. 'Twill serve for a flask or so yet. There is my silver-hilted rapier, my rings, my gold snuff-box, and my watch by Tompion at the

sign of the Three Crowns. It was never bought under a hundred, I'll warrant. Then there are such relics of grandeur as you see upon my person. In this bag, too, I retain the means for preserving that niceness and elegance of person which made me, though I say it, as well groomed a man as ever set foot in St. James's Park.

"But here comes a heavy tread and the clink of armour in the passage. 'Tis our friend the knight of the wrathful countenance, if I mistake not."

It was indeed Saxon, who strode into the room to tell us that our horses were at the door and that all was ready for our departure. Taking him aside I explained to him in a whisper what had passed between the stranger and ourselves. The old soldier frowned at the news.

"What have we to do with such a coxcomb?" he said. "We have hard fare and harder blows before us. However, it is perhaps for the best. The handle to his name may make him welcome in the camp, for from what I hear there is some dissatisfaction at the way in which the gentry stand aloof from the enterprise.

"Well, Sir Gervas Jerome," he added aloud, turning to our new associate, "I hear that you are coming with us. For a day you must be content to follow without question or remark. Is that agreed?"

"With all my heart," cried Sir Gervas.

"I believe there's mettle in you for all your gay plumes," said Saxon. "I do conceive a liking for you. Give me your hand!"

The soldier of fortune's great brown grip enclosed the delicate hand of our new friend in a pledge of comradeship. Then, having paid our reckoning and bade a cordial adieu to Dame Hobson, we sprang on our steeds and continued our journey amidst a crowd of staring villagers, who huzzaed lustily as we rode out from amongst them.

A Daniel come to judgment, the words of Shylock in Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice," when he thought Portia would help him to win his case.

ac-com'-plished, well-trained, skilful, finished.

ac-cout'-red, equipped, armed.

as-tute', cunning, shrewd, sharp.

cox'-comb, a fop, dandy.

Ja-co'-bus, a gold coin stamped with the head of James II. (Lat. *Jacobus*, James).

scat'-ter-brain, a giddy, frivolous fellow.

seven wise men of Greece, sometimes called "the seven sages": seven men of Ancient Greece, the best known of whom were Thales and Solon, who became famous for their wise sayings.

to such base uses do we come, the actual words in the Grave-digger's Scene in Shakespeare's "Hamlet" are "to what base uses may we return". Sir Gervas is quoting from memory.

vi'-tal breath, the breath of life (Lat. *vita*, life).

XV. OF THE STIFF-LEGGED PARSON AND HIS FLOCK.

UR way lay through Castle Carey and Somerton, which are small towns lying in the midst of a most beautiful pastoral country, well wooded and watered by many streams. The road was crowded with peasants who were travelling in two strong currents, the one setting from east to west, and the other from west to east. The latter consisted principally of aged people and of children, who were being sent out of harm's way to reside

in the less disturbed counties until the troubles should be over.

Many of these poor folk were pushing barrows in front of them, in which a few bed-clothes and cracked utensils represented the whole of their worldly goods. Others more prosperous had small carts, drawn by the wild shaggy colts which are bred on the Somerset moors. What with the spirit of the half-tamed beasts and the feebleness of the drivers, accidents were not uncommon, and we passed several unhappy groups who had been tumbled with their property into a ditch, or who were standing in anxious debate round a cracked shaft or a broken axle.

The countrymen who were making for the West were, upon the other hand, men in the prime of life, with little or no baggage. Their brown faces, heavy boots and smock-frocks proclaimed most of them to be mere hinds, though here and there we overtook men who, by their top-boots and corduroys, may have been small farmers or yeomen. These fellows walked in gangs, and were armed for the most part with stout oak cudgels, which were carried as an aid to their journey, but which in the hands of powerful men might become formidable weapons.

From time to time one of these travellers would strike up a psalm tune, when all the others within earshot would join in, until the melody rippled away down the road. As we passed some scowled angrily at us, while others whispered together and shook their heads, in evident doubt as to our character and aims. Now and again among the people we marked the tall

broad-brimmed hat and Geneva mantle which were the badges of the Puritan clergy.

"We are in Monmouth's country at last," said Saxon to me, for Reuben Lockarby and Sir Gervas Jerome had ridden on ahead. "This is the raw material which we shall have to lick into soldiership."

"And no bad material either," I replied, taking note of the sturdy figures and bold, hearty faces of the men. "Think ye that they are bound for Monmouth's camp, then?"

"Aye, are they. See you yon long-limbed parson on the left—him with the pent-house hat. Markest thou not the stiffness wherewith he moves his left leg?"

"Why, yes; he is travel-worn doubtless."

"Ho! ho!" laughed my companion. "I have seen such a stiffness before now. The man hath a straight sword within the leg of his breeches. When he is on safe ground he will produce it—aye, and use it too, but until he is out of all danger of falling in with the king's horse he is shy of strapping it to his belt. There is another ahead of him there, with the head of a scythe inside his smock. Can you not see the outline? I warrant there is not one of the rascals but hath a pike-head or sickle-blade concealed somewhere about him. I begin to feel the breath of war once more, and to grow younger with it."

We walked our horses in the midst of them whilst the clergyman strode along betwixt Saxon and myself.

"Joshua Pettigrue is my name, gentlemen," said he. "I am an unworthy worker in the Lord's vineyard. These are my faithful flock, whom I am bringing westward that they may be ready for the reaping when it pleases the Almighty to gather them in. Since, sir," he continued, "you have had much experience in the wiles of war, I shall be glad to hand over to you the command of this small body of the faithful until such time as we reach the army."

"It is time, too, in good faith, that ye had a soldier at your head," Decimus Saxon answered quietly. "My eyes deceive me strangely if I do not see the gleam of sword and cuirass upon the brow of yonder declivity. Methinks the enemy will soon be upon us."

Castle Carey and Somerton, in Somersetshire.

cui-rass', a piece of armour to protect the breast, made of leather or metal.

Gen-e'-va mantle. The French reformer, Calviu, settled at Geneva in 1535, and since then the city has been one of the chief centres of Protestantism, and ministers everywhere copied the dress and manner prevailing there.

hinds, farm labourers, peasants.

pas'-tor-al, not tilled but kept for grazing flocks and herds (Lat. *pastor*, a shepherd).

pent'-house hat, a tall, cone-shaped, broad-brimmed hat worn by Puritans.

Pu'-ri-tans, those who desired a "purer" form of worship than they considered that of the Church of England to be. At first they were in the Church, but afterwards left it, especially on account of the Act of Uniformity of 1662. By the time of story, 1685, they were what we should now call "Dissenters".

XVI. OF OUR BRUSH WITH THE KING'S DRAGOONS.

SOME little distance from us a branch road ran into that along which we and our motley assemblage of companions in arms were travelling. This road curved down the side of a well-wooded hill, and then over the level for a quarter of a mile or so before opening on the other. Just at the brow of the rising ground there stood a thick bristle of trees, amid the trunks of which there came and went a bright shimmer of sparkling steel, which proclaimed the presence of armed men. Farther back, where the road took a sudden turn and ran along the ridge of the hill, several horsemen could be plainly seen outlined against the evening sky.

So peaceful, however, was the long sweep of country side, mellowed by the golden light of the setting sun, with a score of village steeples and manor houses peeping out from amongst the woods, that it was hard to think that the thunder-cloud of war was really lowering over that fair valley, and that at any instant the lightning might break from it.

The country folk, however, appeared to have no difficulty at all in understanding the danger to which they were exposed. The fugitives from the West gave a yell of consternation, and ran wildly down the road, or whipped up their beasts of burden in the endeavour to place as safe a distance as possible between themselves and the threatened attack.

The chorus of shrill cries and shouts, with the cracking of whips, creaking of wheels, and the occasional crash when some cartload of goods came to grief, made up a most deafening uproar, above which our leader's voice resounded in sharp eager exhortation and command.

When, however, the loud brazen shriek from a bugle broke from the wood, and the head of a troop of horse began to descend the slope, the panic became greater still, and it was difficult for us to preserve any order at all amidst the wild rush of the terrified fugitives.

"Stop that cart, Clarke," cried Saxon vehemently, pointing with his sword to an old waggon, piled high with furniture and bedding, which was lumbering along drawn by two rawboned colts. At the same moment I saw him drive his horse into the crowd and catch at the reins of another similar one. Giving my horse Covenant's bridle a shake I was soon abreast of the cart which he had indicated, and managed to bring the furious young horses to a stand-still.

"Bring it up!" cried our leader, working with the coolness which only a long apprenticeship to war can give. "Now, friends, cut the traces!" A dozen knives were at work in a moment, and the kicking, struggling animals scampered off leaving their burdens behind them. Saxon sprang off his horse and set the example in dragging the waggon across the roadway, while some of the peasants, under the direction of Reuben Lockarby and of Master Joshua Pettigrue, arranged a

couple of other carts to block the way fifty yards farther down.

The latter precaution was to guard against the chance of the royal horse riding through the fields and attacking us from behind. So speedily was the scheme conceived and carried out, that within a very few minutes of the first alarm we found ourselves protected front and rear by a lofty barricade, while within this improvised fortress was a garrison of a hundred and fifty men.

"What firearms have we amongst us?" asked Saxon hurriedly.

"A dozen pistols at the most," replied an elderly Puritan, who was addressed by his companions as Hope-above Williams. "John Rodway, the coachman, hath his blunderbuss. There are also two godly men from Hungerford, who are keepers of game, and who have brought their pieces with them."

"Let all who have pistols line the waggon," said Saxon, tying his mare to the hedge—an example which we all followed. "Clarke, do you take charge upon the right with Sir Gervas, while Lockarby assists Master Pettigrue upon the left. Ye others shall stand behind with stones. Should they break through our barricade, slash at the horses with your scythes. Once down, the riders are no match for ye."

A low, sullen murmur of determined resolution rose from the peasants, mingled with pious ejaculations and little scraps of hymn or of prayer. They had all produced from under their smocks rustic weapons of

some sort. Ten or twelve had petronels, which, from their antique look and rusty condition, threatened to be more dangerous to their possessors than to the enemy. Others had sickles, scythe-blades, flails, half-pikes, or hammers, while the remainder carried long knives and oaken clubs.

Simple as were these weapons, history has proved that in the hands of men who are deeply stirred by religious fanaticism they are by no means to be despised. One had but to look at the stern, set faces of our followers, and the gleam of exultation and expectancy which shone from their eyes, to see that they were not the men to quail, either from superior numbers or equipment.

ap-pren'-tice-ship, training, learning one's trade or profession.
bar'-ri-cade, a barrier or defence to obstruct the enemy.
blun'-der-buss, a short gun with a wide bore.
con-ster-na'-tion, terror and dismay.
e-quip'-ment, the dress, armour, weapons, etc., of a soldier.
ex-hor-ta'-tion, urging on, cheering on.
fa-nat'-i-cism, extreme zeal.
im'-pro-vised, made on the spur of the moment.
man'-or house, properly the house of the chief landowner of a district.
mot'-ley, mixed, various.
raw'-boned, without much flesh on their bones.

XVII. OF OUR BRUSH WITH THE KING'S DRAGOONS (*continued*).

WHILST we had been making our dispositions the troop of horse—for there appeared to be but one—had trotted down the cross-road, and had drawn up across the main highway. They numbered, as far as I could judge, about ninety troopers, and it was evident from their three-cornered hats, steel plates, red sleeves and bandoliers, that they were dragoons of the regular army.

The main body halted a quarter of a mile from us, while three officers rode to the front and held a short consultation, which ended in one of them setting spurs to his horse and cantering down in our direction. A bugler followed a few paces behind him, waving a white kerchief and blowing an occasional blast upon his trumpet.

"Who is the leader of this conventicle?" asked the officer.

"Address your message to me, sir," said our leader from the top of the waggon, "but understand that your white flag will only protect you whilst you use such language as may come from one courteous adversary to another. Say your say or retire."

"Courtesy and honour," said the officer with a sneer, "are not extended to rebels who are in arms against their lawful sovereign. If you are the leader

of this rabble, I warn you if they are not dispersed within five minutes by this watch"—he pulled out an elegant gold time-piece—"we shall ride down upon them and cut them to pieces."

"The Lord can protect His own," Saxon answered, amid a fierce hum of approval from the crowd. "Is this all thy message?"

"It is all, and you will find it enough, you Presbyterian traitor," cried the dragoon cornet. "Listen to me, misguided fools," he continued, standing up upon his stirrups and speaking to the peasants at the other side of the waggon. "What chance have ye with your whittles and cheese-scrapers? Ye may yet save your skins if ye will but deliver up your leaders, throw down what ye are pleased to call your arms, and trust to the king's mercy."

"This exceedeth the limitations of your privileges," said Saxon, drawing a pistol from his belt and cocking it. "If you say another word to seduce these people from their allegiance I fire."

"Hope not to benefit Monmouth," cried the young officer, disregarding the threat and still addressing his words to the peasants. "The whole royal army is drawing round him and ——"

"Have a care!" shouted our leader in a deep harsh voice.

"His head within a month shall roll upon the scaffold."

"But you shall never live to see it," said Saxon, and stooping over he fired straight at the cornet's head. At the flash of the pistol the trumpeter

wheeled round and galloped for his life, while the roan horse turned and followed with its master still seated firmly in the saddle.

"Verily you have missed the Midianite!" cried Hope-above Williams.

"He is dead," said our leader, pouring a fresh charge into his pistol.

As he spoke I saw the young officer lean gradually over in his saddle, until, when about half-way back to his friends, he lost his balance and fell heavily in the roadway, turning over two or three times with the force of his fall, and lying at last still and motionless, a dust-coloured heap.

A loud yell of rage broke from the troopers at the sight, which was answered by a shout of defiance from the Puritan peasantry.

"Down on your faces!" cried Saxon, "they are about to fire."

The crackle of musketry and a storm of bullets, pinging on the hard ground, or cutting twigs from the hedges on either side of us, lent emphasis to our leader's order. Many of the peasants crouched behind the feather beds and tables which had been pulled out of the cart.

Some lay in the waggon itself and some sheltered themselves behind or underneath it. Others again lined the ditches on either side or lay flat upon the roadway, while a few showed their belief in the workings of Providence by standing upright without flinching from the bullets. Amongst these latter were Saxon and Sir Gervas, the former to set an example to his raw

troops, and the latter out of pure laziness and indifference.

al-le'-giance, duty and obedience to those in authority.
ban'-do-lier, a leather belt worn over the right shoulder to support firearms and ammunition.
can'-ter-ing, moving in an easy gallop.
con-ven'-ticle, a meeting-house, chapel, or the congregation that met there.
cor-'net, the lowest rank of commissioned officer in the cavalry, now sub-lieutenant.
dis-pos-i'-tions, arrangement, way of placing the soldiers on the ground.
em'-phas-is, stress laid on particular words or syllables to make the meaning clearer.
whit'-tles, small pocket knives—a contemptuous reference to the poor equipment of the rebels.

XVIII. OF OUR BRUSH WITH THE KING'S DRAGOONS (*continued*).

THE cornet's death did not remain long unavenged. A little old man with a sickle, who had been standing near Sir Gervas, gave a sudden sharp cry, and springing up into the air with a loud "Glory to God!" fell flat upon his face dead. A bullet had struck him just over the right eye. Almost at the same moment one of the peasants in the waggon was shot through the chest. I saw Master Joshua Pettigrue catch him in his long arms, and settle some bedding under his head, so that he lay breathing heavily and pattering forth prayers.

The minister showed himself a man that day, for amid the fierce carbine fire he walked boldly up and down, with a drawn rapier in his left hand

—for he was a left-handed man—and his Bible in the other. "This is what you are dying for, dear brothers," he cried continually, holding the brown volume up in the air; "are ye not ready to die for this?" And every time he asked the question a low eager murmur of assent rose from the ditches, the waggon, and the road.

"Like all young soldiers, they fire too high," said Saxon, seating himself on the side of the waggon. "These rogues think that they have done their part if they do but let the gun off, though they are as like to hit the plovers above us as ourselves."

"Five of the faithful have fallen," said Hope-above Williams. "Shall we not sally forth and do battle with the children of Antichrist? Are we to lie here like so many popinjays at a fair for the troopers to practise upon?"

"There is a stone barn over yonder on the hill-side," I remarked. "If we who have horses, and a few others, were to keep the dragoons in play, the people might be able to reach it, and so be sheltered from the fire."

"At least let my brother and me have a shot or two back at them," cried one of the gamekeepers beside the wheel.

To all our entreaties and suggestions, however, our leader only replied by a shake of the head, and continued to swing his long legs over the side of the waggon with his eyes fixed intently upon the horsemen, many of whom had dismounted and were

leaning their carbines over the cruppers of their chargers.

"This cannot go on, sir," said the pastor in a low earnest voice; "two more men have just been hit."

"If fifty more men are hit, we must wait until they charge," Saxon answered. "What would you do, man? If you leave this shelter you will be cut off and utterly destroyed. When you have seen as much of war as I have done, you will learn to put up quietly with what is not to be avoided. Ha, my brave boys, they are mounting! We shall not have to wait long now."

The dragoons were indeed climbing into their saddles again, and forming across the road, with the evident intention of charging down upon us. At the same time, about thirty men detached themselves from the main body and trotted away into the fields upon our right. Saxon growled a hearty oath under his breath as he observed them.

"They have some knowledge of warfare after all," said he. "They mean to charge us flank and front. Master Joshua, see that your scythemen line the quickset hedge upon the right. Stand well up, my brothers, and flinch not from the horses. You men with the sickles, lie in the ditch there, and cut at the legs of the brutes. A line of stone-throwers behind that. A heavy stone is as sure as a bullet at close quarters. If ye would see your wives and children again, make that hedge good against the horsemen. Now for the front attack. Let the men who carry

petronels come into the waggon. Two of yours, Clarke, and two of yours, Lockarby. I can spare one also. That makes five. Now here are ten others of a sort, and three muskets. Twenty shots in all. Have you no pistols, Sir Gervas?"

"No, but I can get a pair," said our companion, and springing upon his horse, he forced his way through the ditch, past the barrier, and so down the road in the direction of the dragoons.

The movement was so sudden and so unexpected that there was a dead silence for a few seconds, which was broken by a general howl of hatred and execration from the peasants. "Shoot upon him! Shoot down the false Amalekite!" they shrieked. "He hath gone to join his kind! He hath delivered us up into the hands of the enemy! Judas! Judas!" As to the horsemen, who were still forming up for a charge and waiting for the flanking party to get into position, they sat still and silent, not knowing what to make of the gaily-dressed cavalier who was speeding towards them.

We were not left long in doubt, however. He had no sooner reached the spot where the cornet had fallen, than he sprang from his horse and helped himself to the dead man's pistols and to the belt which contained his powder and ball. Mounting at his leisure, amid a shower of bullets which puffed up the white dust all around him, he rode onwards towards the dragoons and discharged one of his pistols at them. Wheeling round, he politely raised his cap, and galloped back to us, none the worse for his

"He sprang from his horse and helped himself to the dead man's pistols."

adventure, though a ball had grazed his horse's fetlock, and another had left a hole in the skirt of his riding-coat.

A-mal'-e-kite, one of a tribe of plundering horsemen often spoken of in the Old Testament as enemies of Israel. An enemy, especially a heathen one.
An'-ti-christ, the great enemy of Christ and His religion.
car'-bine, a short, light musket used by horse soldiers.
crup'-per, a strap which passes under a horse's tail and holds the saddle in its place.
ex-e-cra'-tion, cursing.
fet'-lock, a tuft of hair that grows at the back of horses' feet, the place where it grows.
flank'-ing party, a body of troops attacking on the flank or side of the enemy.
pat'-ter-ing, repeating quickly—often used of the sound of hail.
pet'-ro-nels, carbines.
plov'-er, a kind of wading bird frequenting low, swampy ground.
pop'-in-jay, a parrot, then a mark like a parrot stuck on a pole to shoot at.
quick'-set, formed of living plants.

XIX. OF OUR BRUSH WITH THE KING'S DRAGOONS (*continued*).

THE peasants raised a shout of jubilation as he rode in, and from that day forward our friend was permitted to wear his gay trappings and to bear himself as he would, without being suspected of being wanting in zeal for the cause of the saints.

"They are coming," cried Saxon. "Let no man draw trigger until he sees me shoot. If any does, I shall send a bullet through him, though it was my last shot and the troopers were amongst us."

As our leader uttered this threat and looked grimly round upon us with an evident intention of executing it, a shrill blare of a bugle burst from the horsemen in front of us, and was answered by those upon our flank.

At the signal both bodies set spurs to their horses and dashed down upon us at the top of their speed. Those in the field were delayed for a few moments, and thrown into some disorder, by finding that the ground immediately in front of them was soft and boggy, but having made their way through it they re-formed upon the other side and rode gallantly at the hedge. Our own opponents, having a clear course before them, never slackened for an instant, but came thundering down with a jingling of harness and a tempest of oaths upon our rude barricade.

To inexperienced soldiers like ourselves it seemed impossible that our frail defence and our feeble weapons could check for an instant the impetus and weight of the dragoons. To right and left I saw white set faces, open-eyed and rigid, unflinching, with a stubbornness which rose less from hope than from despair. All round rose exclamations and prayers. "Lord, save Thy people!" "Mercy, Lord, mercy!" "Be with us this day!" "Receive our souls, oh merciful Father!" Saxon lay across the waggon with his eyes glinting like diamonds and his petronel presented at the full length of his rigid arm. Following his example we all took aim as steadily as possible at the first rank of the enemy. Our only hope of safety lay in making that one discharge so deadly that our

Our Brush with the King's Dragoons.

opponents should be too much shaken to continue their attack.

Would the man never fire? They could not be more than ten paces from us. I could see the buckles of the men's plates and the powder charges in their bandoliers. One more stride yet, and at last our leader's pistol flashed and we poured in a close volley, supported by a shower of heavy stones from the sturdy peasants behind. I could hear them splintering against casque and cuirass like hail upon a casement.

The cloud of smoke veiling for an instant the line of galloping steeds and gallant riders drifted slowly aside to show a very different scene. A dozen men and horses were rolling in one wild heap, the unwounded falling over those whom our balls and stones had brought down. Struggling, snorting chargers, iron-shod feet, staggering figures rising and falling, wild, hatless, bewildered men, half stunned by a fall, and not knowing which way to turn. That was the foreground of the picture, while behind them the remainder of the troop were riding furiously back, wounded and hale all driven by the one desire of getting to a place of safety where they might rally their shattered formation.

A great shout of praise and thanksgiving rose from the delighted peasants, and surging over the barricade they struck down or secured the few uninjured troopers who had been unable or unwilling to join their companions in their flight. The carbines, swords, and bandoliers were eagerly pounced upon by the victors

some of whom had served in the militia, and knew well how to handle the weapons which they had won.

The victory, however, was by no means completed. The flanking squadron had ridden boldly at the hedge, and a dozen or more had forced their way through, in spite of the showers of stones and the desperate thrusts of the pikemen and scythemen. Once amongst the peasants, the long swords and the armour of the dragoons gave them a great advantage, and though the sickles brought several of the horses to the ground, the soldiers continued to lay about them freely, and to beat back the fierce but ill-armed resistance of their opponents. A dragoon sergeant, a man of great resolution and of prodigious strength, appeared to be the leader of the party, and encouraged his followers both by word and example. A stab from a half-pike brought his horse to the ground, but he sprang from the saddle as it fell, and avenged its death by a sweeping back-handed cut from his broadsword. Waving his hat in his left hand he continued to rally his men, and to strike down every Puritan who came against him, until a blow from a hatchet brought him on his knees and a flail stroke broke his sword close by the hilt.

At the fall of their leader his comrades turned and fled through the hedge, but the gallant fellow, wounded and bleeding, still showed fight, and would assuredly have been knocked upon the head for his pains, had I not picked him up and thrown him into the waggon,

where he had the good sense to lie quiet until the skirmish was at an end.

Of the dozen who broke through not more than four escaped, and several others lay dead or wounded upon the other side of the hedge, impaled by scythe-blades or knocked off their horses by stones. Altogether nine of the dragoons were slain, and fourteen wounded, while we retained seven unscathed prisoners, ten horses fit for service, and a score or so of carbines, with good store of match, powder, and ball. The remainder of the troop fired a single, straggling, irregular volley, and then galloped away down the cross-road, disappearing amongst the trees from which they had emerged.

All this, however, had not been accomplished without severe loss upon our side. Three men had been killed and six wounded, one of them very seriously, by the musketry fire. Five had been cut down when the flanking party broke their way in, and only one of these could be expected to recover. In addition to this, one man had lost his life through the bursting of an ancient petronel, and another had his arm broken by the kick of a horse.

Our total losses, therefore, were eight killed and the same wounded, which could not but be regarded as a very moderate number, when we consider the fierceness of the skirmish and the superiority of our enemy both in discipline and in equipment.

So elated were the peasants by their victory, that those who had secured horses were clamorous to be allowed to follow the dragoons, the more so as Sir

Gervas Jerome and Reuben were both eager to lead them. Decimus Saxon refused, however, to listen to any such scheme.

The wounded men were lifted into the waggon and laid upon the bedding, while our dead were placed in the cart which had defended our rear. The peasants who owned these, far from making any objection to this disposal of their property, assisted us in every way, tightening girths and buckling traces. Within an hour of the ending of the skirmish we found ourselves pursuing our way once more, and looking back through the twilight at the scattered black dots upon the white road, where the bodies of the dragoons marked the scene of our victory.

case'-ment, a kind of window; the case or frame of a window.
clam'-or-ous, noisy, noisily asking.
e-lat'-ed, lifted up, in high spirits.
for-ma'-tion, the form or order in which troops are drawn up.
im-paled', pierced through.
im'-pet-us, the force or weight of a moving body.
ju-bil-a'-tion, shouting for joy.
mil-it'-ia, local troops not so highly trained as the regular army.
pro-dig'-ious, astonishingly great.
squad'-ron, a body of horse-soldiers containing two troops, about 200 men (properly a square of troops); a fleet of ships.
traces, the straps fastening the vehicle to the horse.
un-scathed', unharmed.

XX. OF THE SNARE ON THE WESTON ROAD.

[Mr. Doyle describes how, after their brush with the dragoons, the victorious peasants marched on to Taunton, where they were warmly welcomed. The leaders were hospitably entertained by the mayor, Master Stephen Timewell, the beauty and gentleness of whose granddaughter, Ruth, made a deep impression on the heart of Reuben Lockarby.

When the main body of Monmouth's army marched in from the West, Saxon, Clarke, Lockarby and others were gathered at the town gate, and the old soldier pointed out to his young friends the various leaders and men of note who surrounded the duke.]

"  HAT is Lord Grey, of Wark," said he; "the little, middle-aged, lean man at the king's bridle arm. He hath been in the tower once for treason. The man upon his left, with the red swollen face and the white feather in his cap, is Colonel Holmes. I trust that he will never show the white feather save on his head. The other upon the high chestnut horse is a lawyer, though, by my soul, he is a better man at ordering a battalion than at drawing a bill of costs. He is the republican, Wade, who led the foot at the skirmish at Bridport, and brought them off with safety. The tall, heavy-faced soldier in the steel bonnet is Anthony Buyse, the Brandenburger, a soldado of fortune, and a man of high heart, as are most of his countrymen. I have fought both with him and against him ere now."

"Mark ye the long, thin man behind him?" cried Reuben. "He hath drawn his sword, and waves it

over his head. 'Tis a strange time and place for the broadsword exercise. He is surely mad."

"Perhaps you are not far amiss," said Saxon. "Yet, by my hilt, were it not for that man there would be no army at all advancing upon us down yonder road. 'Tis he who by dangling the crown before Monmouth's eyes beguiled him away from his snug retreat in Brabant. There is not one of these men whom he hath not tempted into this affair by some bait or other. With Grey it was a dukedom, with Wade the woolsack, with Buyse the plunder of Cheapside. Every one hath his own motive, but the clues to them all are in the hands of yonder crazy fanatic who makes the puppets dance as he will. He hath plotted more, lied more, and suffered less than any Whig in the party."

"It must be that Dr. Robert Ferguson of whom I have heard my father speak," said I.

"You are right. 'Tis he. I have but seen him once in Amsterdam, and yet I know him by his shock wig and crooked shoulders. It is whispered that of late his overweening conceit hath unseated his reason. See, the German places his hand upon his shoulder and persuades him to sheathe his weapon. King Monmouth glances round too, and smiles as though he were the Court buffoon with a Geneva cloak instead of the motley."

[In the evening the duke called a council at which Clarke was commanded to keep the door. After some debate it was decided that the best thing to be done was to march to London by way of Bristol.]

"There is one point which might be urged," ob-

served Wade, the lawyer. "We have, as your Majesty most truly says, met with heavy discouragement in the fact that no noblemen and few commoners of repute have declared for us. The reason is, I opine, that each doth wait for his neighbour to make a move. Should one or two come over, the others would soon follow. How, then, are we to bring a duke or two to our standards?"

"There's the question, Master Wade," said Monmouth, shaking his head despondently.

"I think that it might be done," continued the Whig lawyer. "Mere proclamations addressed to the commonalty will not catch these gold fish. They are not to be angled for with a naked hook. I should recommend that some form of summons or writ be served upon each of them, calling upon them to appear in our camp within a certain date under pain of high treason."

"There spake the legal mind," quoth King Monmouth with a laugh. "But you have omitted to tell us how the said writ or summons is to be conveyed to these same delinquents."

"There is the Duke of Beaufort," continued Wade, disregarding the king's objection. "He is President of Wales, and he is, as your Majesty knows, lieutenant of four English counties. His influence overshadows the whole West. He hath two hundred horses in his stables at Badminton, and a thousand men, as I have heard, sit down at his tables every day. Why should not a special effort be made to gain over such a one, the more so as we intend to march in his direction?'

"Henry, Duke of Beaufort, is unfortunately already in arms against his sovereign," said Monmouth gloomily.

"He is, sire, but he may be induced to turn in your favour the weapon which he hath raised against you. He is a Protestant. He is said to be a Whig. Why should we not send a message to him? Flatter his pride. Appeal to his religion. Coax and threaten him. Who knows? He may have private grievances of which we know nothing, and may be ripe for such a move."

"Your counsel is good, Wade," said Lord Grey, "but methinks his Majesty hath asked a pertinent question. Your messenger would, I fear, find himself swinging upon one of the Badminton oaks if the duke desired to show his loyalty to James Stuart. Where are we to find a man who is wary enough and bold enough for such a mission, without risking one of our leaders who could be ill-spared at such a time?"

"It is true," said the king. "It were better not to venture it at all than to do it in a clumsy and halting fashion. Beaufort would think that it was a plot not to gain him over, but to throw discredit upon him. But what means our giant at the door by signing to us?"

"If it please your Majesty," I asked, "have I permission to speak?"

"We would fain hear you, captain," he answered graciously. "If your understanding is in any degree correspondent to your strength, your opinion should be of weight."

"Then, your Majesty," said I, "I would offer myself

The Council.

as a fitting messenger in this matter. My father bid me spare neither life nor limb in this quarrel, and if this honourable council thinks that the duke may be gained over, I am ready to guarantee that the message shall be conveyed to him if man and horse can do it."

"I'll warrant that no better herald could be found," cried Saxon. "The lad hath a cool head and a staunch heart."

"Then, young sir, we shall accept your loyal and gallant offer," said Monmouth. "Are ye all agreed, gentlemen, upon the point?"

A murmur of assent rose from the company.

"You shall draw up the paper, Wade. Offer him money, a seniority amongst the dukes, the perpetual Presidentship of Wales—what you will if you can but shake him. If not, sequestration, exile, and everlasting infamy. Have the paper ready by to-morrow at daybreak, when the messenger may start."

"It shall be ready, your Majesty," said Wade.

"In that case, gentlemen," continued King Monmouth, "I may now dismiss ye to your posts. Should anything fresh arise I shall summon ye again, that I may profit by your wisdom."

Bad'-min-ton, in Gloucestershire. B. Park, the estate of the Duke of Beaufort, is nine miles round.

bat-tal'-ion, a division of infantry smaller than a regiment. Several companies form one battalion, one or more battalions a regiment.

Bra-bant' (North and South), provinces, the former in Holland, the latter in Belgium.

Bran'-den-bur-ger, a native of Brandenburg, a province of Prussia containing Berlin.

de-lin'-quent, one who fails in his duty, a sinner, criminal.

gua-ran-tee', undertake that, promise surely that (same word as warrant).

halt'-ing, lame, limping, hesitating.

James Stuart, the rebel would not say King James.

o-pine', to suppose, be of *opinion.*

over-ween'-ing, thinking too highly, conceited, vain.

per'-tin-ent, appropriate, fitting, to the point: impertinent, means originally, not to the point.

pup'-pets, small dolls moved by wires at the will of the person who works them.
sen-i-or'-it-y, higher rank according to age in an office.
se-ques-tra'-tion, seizure of estates.
sol-da'-do, Spanish for soldier, but Decimus is the speaker.
the mot'-ley, the parti-coloured costume of fools.
the wool'-sack, the seat of the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords.
Wark, a town in the north of Northumberland, where was a border castle to resist the Scots.
Wes'-ton Road, the road running along the coast of the Bristol Channel through Weston-super-Mare.

XXI. OF THE SNARE ON THE WESTON ROAD (*continued*).

IMMEDIATELY after sunrise I was awoke by one of the mayor's servants, who brought word that the Honourable Master Wade was awaiting me downstairs. Having dressed and descended, I found him seated by the table in the sitting-room with papers and wafer-box, sealing up the missive which I was to carry. He was a small, worn, grey-faced man, very erect in his bearing and sudden in his speech, with more of the soldier than of the lawyer in his appearance.

"So," said he, pressing his seal above the fastening of the string, "I see that your horse is ready for you outside. You had best make your way round by Nether Stowey and the Bristol Channel, for we have heard that the enemy's horse guard the roads on the far side of Wells. Here is your packet."

I bowed and placed it in the inside of my tunic.

"It is a written order as suggested in the council. The duke's reply may be written, or it may be by word of mouth. In either case, guard it well. Your

mission is one of such importance that the whole success of our enterprise may turn upon it. See that you serve the paper upon Beaufort in person, and not through any intermediary, or it might not stand in a court of law."

I promised to do so if possible.

"I should advise you also," he continued, "to carry sword and pistol as a protection against the chance dangers of the road, but to discard your head-piece and steel front as giving you too warlike an aspect for a peaceful messenger."

"I had already come to that resolve," said I.

"There is nothing more to be said, captain," said the lawyer, giving me his hand. "May all good fortune go with you. Keep a still tongue and a quick ear. Watch keenly how all things go. Mark whose face is gloomy and whose content. The duke may be at Bristol, but you had best make for his seat at Badminton. Our sign of the day is Tewkesbury."

Thanking my instructor for his advice I went out and mounted Covenant, who pawed and champed at his bit in his delight at getting started once more.

My course ran along by the foot of the beautiful Quantock Hills, where heavy-wooded coombs are scattered over the broad heathery downs, deep with bracken and whortle bushes. On either side of the track steep winding glens sloped downwards, lined with yellow gorse, which blazed out from the deep-red soil like a flame from embers. Peat-coloured streams splashed

down these valleys and over the road, through which Covenant ploughed fetlock deep, and shied to see the broad-backed trout darting from between his fore feet.

All day I rode through this beautiful country, meeting few folk, for I kept away from the main roads. A black jack of ale and the heel of a loaf at a wayside inn were all my refreshments. It was not until evening that I at last came out upon the banks of the Bristol Channel, at a place called Shurton Bars, where the muddy Parret makes its way into the sea. The shore is flat and black and oozy, flecked over with white patches of sea-birds, but farther to the east there rises a line of hills, very wild and rugged, rising in places into steep precipices. These cliffs run out into the sea, and numerous little harbours and bays are formed in their broken surface, which are dry half the day, but can float a good-sized boat at half-tide.

The road wound over these bleak and rocky hills, which are sparsely inhabited by a wild race of fishermen, or shepherds, who came to their cabin doors on hearing the clatter of my horse's hoofs, and shot some rough West-country jest at me as I passed. As the night drew in the country became bleaker and more deserted. An occasional light twinkling in the distance from some lonely hill-side cottage was the only sign of the presence of man.

The rough track still skirted the sea, and high as it was, the spray from the breakers drifted across it. The salt pringled on my lips, and the air was filled with the

hoarse roar of the surge and the thin piping of curlews, which flitted past in the darkness like white, shadowy, sad-voiced creatures from some other world. The wind blew in short, quick, angry puffs from the westward, and far out on the black waters a single glimmer of light rising and falling, tossing up, and then sinking out of sight, showed how fierce a sea had risen in the channel.

Riding through the gloaming in this strange, wild scenery, I began to doze upon my horse's back, overcome by the fatigue of the journey and the drowsy lullaby of the waves. I had just fallen into a dream in which I saw Reuben Lockarby crowned King of England by Mistress Ruth Timewell, when, in an instant, without warning, I was dashed violently from my horse, and left lying half-conscious on the stony track.

brack'-en, fern.
coombs, hollow valleys between hills, dingles.
cor-res-pond'-ent, agreeing with.
cur'-lew, a wading bird with a long, curved bill and slim legs.
gloam'-ing, dusk (the *gloomy* time of the day).
in-ter-med'-i-ar-y, a middle man, a third person.
lul'-la-by, a song to lull children to sleep.
Nether Stowey, a decayed town near Bridgwater in Somerset. Coleridge composed the "Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel" there.
prin'-gled, stuck in flakes on his lips.
Quan'-tock Hills, a range of slate hills eight miles long, near Bridgwater; in one part they are over 1200 feet high.
Tewkesbury, an old town in North Gloucester; here used as a password.
wa'-fer-box, for holding wafers, which were thin, coloured tabs of paste for closing letters.
whor'-tle bushes, a plant bearing a blue berry which is good to eat—called also bilberry.

XXII. OF THE SNARE ON THE WESTON ROAD (*continued*).

O stunned and shaken was I by the sudden fall that though I had a dim knowledge of shadowy figures bending over me, and of hoarse laughter sounding in my ears, I could not tell for a few minutes where I was nor what had befallen me.

When at last I did make an attempt to recover my feet I found that a loop of rope had been slipped round my arms and my legs so as to secure them. With a hard struggle I got one hand free, and dashed it in the face of one of the men who were holding me down; but the whole gang of a dozen or more set upon me at once, and while some thumped and kicked at me, others tied a fresh cord round my elbows, and deftly fastened it in such a way as to pinion me completely.

Finding that in my weak and dazed state all efforts were of no avail, I lay sullen and watchful, taking no heed of the random blows which were still showered upon me. So dark was it that I could neither see the faces of my attackers, nor form any guess as to who they might be or how they had hurled me from my saddle. The champing and stamping of a horse hard by showed me that Covenant was a prisoner as well as his master.

"Dutch Pete's got as much as he can carry," said a rough harsh voice. "He lies on the track as limp as a conger."

At last the injured Pete began to come round. "God be praised," he exclaimed in a stronger voice. "I have seen more stars than ever were made. Had my head not been well hooped he would have knocked it in like an ill-staved cask. He hits like the kick of a horse."

As he spoke the edge of the moon peeped over a cliff and threw a flood of cold, clear light upon the scene. Looking up I saw that a strong rope had been tied across the road from one tree trunk to another about eight feet above the ground. This could not be seen by me, even had I been fully awake, in the dusk; but catching me across the breast as Covenant trotted under it, it had swept me off and dashed me with great force to the ground.

Either the fall or the blows which I had received had cut me badly, for I could feel the blood trickling in a warm stream past my ear and down my neck. I made no attempt to move, however, but waited in silence to find out who these men were into whose hands I had fallen. My one fear was lest my letters should be taken away from me, and my mission rendered of no avail. That in this my first trust, I should be disarmed without a blow and lose the papers which had been confided to me was a chance which made me flush and tingle with shame at the very thought.

The gang who had seized me were rough, bearded fellows in fur caps and fustian jackets, with buff belts round their waists, from which hung short straight whinyards. Their dark sun-dried faces

and their great boots marked them as fishermen or seamen, as might be guessed from their rude sailor speech.

A pair knelt on either side with their hands upon my arms, a third stood behind with a cocked pistol pointed at my head, while the others, seven or eight in number, were helping to his feet the man whom I had struck, who was bleeding freely from a cut over the eye.

"Take the horse up to Daddy Mycroft's," said a stout, black-bearded man, who seemed to be their leader. "It will fetch sixty pieces at the least. Your share of that, Peter, will buy salve and plaster for your cut."

"Ha, houndsfoot!" cried the Dutchman, shaking his fist at me. "You would strike Peter, would you? You would draw Peter's blood, would you? If you and I were together upon the hill-side we should see vich vas the petter man."

"Slack your jaw tackle, Pete," growled one of his comrades. "This fellow is a villain for sure, and doth follow a calling that none but a mean, snivelling, baseborn son of a gun would take to. Yet I warrant, from the look of him, that he could truss you like a woodcock if he had his great hands upon you."

"Truss me, would he?" cried the other, whom the blow and brandy had driven to madness. "We shall see. Take that, thou scurvy wretch, take that!" He ran at me, and kicked me as hard as he could with his heavy sea-boots.

Some of the gang laughed, but the man who had spoken before gave the Dutchman a shove that sent him whirling. "None of that," he said sternly. "We'll have British fair-play on British soil, and none of your longshore tricks. I won't stand by and see an Englishman kicked, d'ye see. Hang him, if the skipper likes. That's all above-board, but, by thunder, if it's a fight that you will have, touch that man again."

"All right, Dicon," said their leader soothingly. "We all know that Pete's not a fighting man, but he's the best cooper on the coast, eh, Pete? There is not his equal at staving, hooping, and bumping. He'll take a plank of wood and turn it into a keg while another man would be thinking of it. But enough said! Up with the prisoner, and let us get him safely into the bilboes."

I was raised to my feet and half carried, half dragged along in the midst of the gang. My horse had already been led away in the opposite direction. Our course lay off the road, down a very rocky and rugged ravine which sloped away towards the sea. There seemed to be no trace of a path, and I could only stumble along over rocks and bushes as best I might in my fettered and crippled state. By-and-by we all came to a halt, and the captain blew a shrill note on a whistle which hung round his neck.

The place where we found ourselves was the darkest and most rugged spot in the whole wild gorge. On either side great cliffs shot up, which arched over our

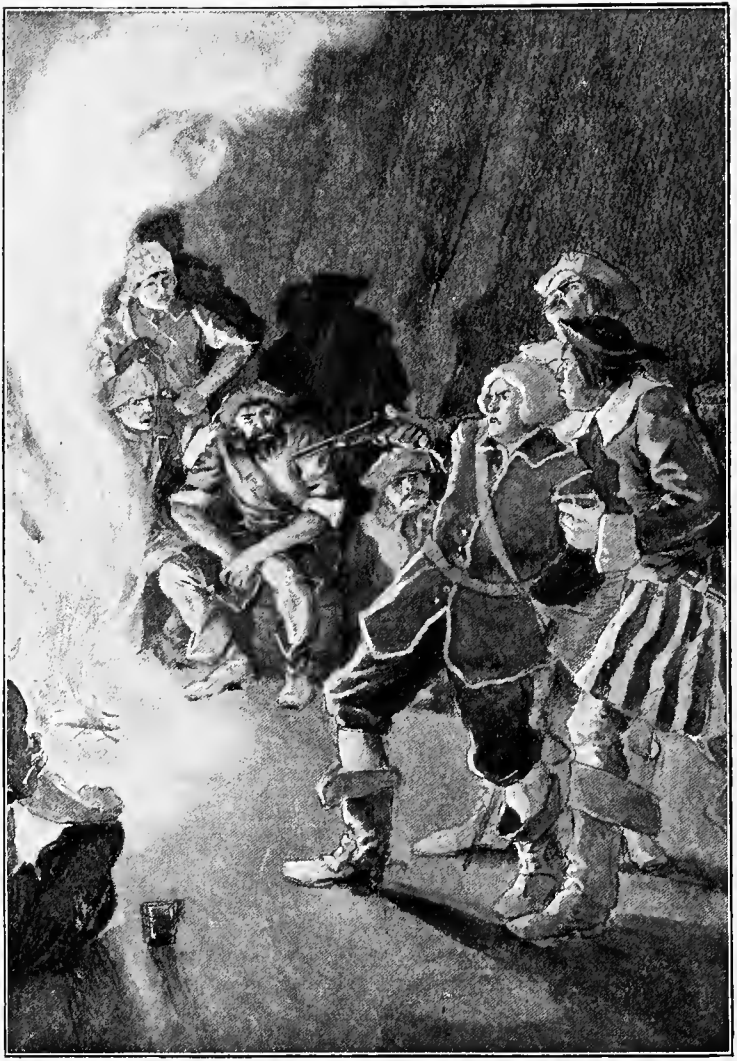
heads, with a fringe of ferns and bracken on either lip, so that the dark sky and the few twinkling stars were well-nigh hid. Great black rocks loomed vaguely out in the shadowy light, while in front a high tangle of what seemed to be brushwood barred our road.

At a second whistle, however, a glint of light was seen through the branches, and the whole mass was swung to one side as though it moved upon a hinge. Beyond it a dark winding passage opened into the side of the hill, down which we went with our backs bowed, for the rock ceiling was of no great height. On every side of us sounded the throbbing of the sea.

bil'-boes, fetters.
con'-ger, a large sea-eel.
fus'-tian, a kind of coarse cotton cloth.
long'-shore tricks, such as would be played by longshoremen or those employed in loading and unloading vessels at wharves (along the shore).
qua'-ver-ing, trembling, shaking.
whin'-yards, swords.
wood'-cock, a bird akin to the snipe.

XXIII. OF THE SNARE ON THE WESTON ROAD *(continued)*.

PASSING through the entrance, which must have been dug with great labour through the solid rock, we came out into a lofty and roomy cave, lit up by a fire at one end, and by several torches. By their smoky yellow glare I could see that the roof was at least fifty feet above us, and was hung by long



The Smugglers' Cave.

lime-crystals, which sparkled and gleamed with great brightness.

The floor of the cave was formed of fine sand, as soft and velvety as a Wilton carpet, sloping down in a way which showed that the cave must at its mouth open upon the sea, which was confirmed by the booming and splashing of the waves, and by the fresh salt air which filled the whole cavern. No water could be seen, however, as a sharp turn cut off our view of the outlet.

In this rock-girt space, which may have been sixty paces long and thirty across, there were gathered great piles of casks, kegs and cases; muskets, cutlasses, staves, cudgels and straw were littered about upon the floor. At one end a high wood fire blazed merrily, casting strange shadows along the walls, and sparkling like a thousand diamonds among the crystals on the roof. The smoke was carried away through a great cleft in the rocks.

Seated on boxes or stretched on the sand round the fire, there were seven or eight more of the band, who sprang to their feet and ran eagerly towards us as we entered.

"Have ye got him?" they cried. "Did he indeed come? Had he attendants?"

"He is here, and he is alone," the captain answered. "Our hawser fetched him off his horse as neatly as ever a gull was netted by a cragsman. What have ye done in our absence, Silas?"

"We have the packs ready for carriage," said the man addressed, a sturdy, weather-beaten seaman of

middle age. "A plaguey job we had carrying the cargo all out, but here it is ship-shape at last, and the lugger floats like a skimming dish, with scarce ballast enough to stand up to a five-knot breeze."

"Any signs of the *Fairy Queen?*" asked the smuggler.

"None. Long John is down at the water's edge looking out for her flash-light. This wind should bring her up if she has rounded Combe-Martin Point. There was a sail about ten miles to the east-nor'-east at sundown. She might have been a Bristol schooner, or she might have been a king's fly-boat."

"A king's crawl-boat," said Captain Murgatroyd with a sneer. "We cannot hang the gauger until Venables brings up the *Fairy Queen*, for after all it was one of his hands that was snackled. Let him do his own dirty work."

"Tausend blitzen!" cried the ruffian Dutchman, "would it not be a kindly deed to Captain Venables to chuck the gauger down the Black Drop ere he come? He may have such another job to do for us some day."

"Silence, man; are you in command or am I?" said the leader angrily. "Bring the prisoner forward to the fire! Now, hark ye, dog of a land-shark; you are as surely a dead man as though you were laid out with the tapers burning. See here"—he lifted a torch, and showed by its red light a great crack in the floor across the far end of the cave—"you can judge of the Black Drop's depth!" he said, raising an empty keg and tossing it over into the yawning gulf.

For ten seconds we stood silent before a dull distant clatter told that it had at last reached the bottom.

"He hath not opened his mouth since we took him," said the man who was called Dicon. "Is he a mute then? Find your tongue, my fine fellow, and let us hear what your name is. It would have been well for you if you had been born dumb, so that you could not have sworn our comrade's life away."

"I have been waiting for a civil question after all this brawling and babbling," said I. "My name is Micah Clarke. Now, pray inform me who ye may be, and by what warrant ye stop peaceful travellers upon the public highway?"

"This is our warrant," Murgatroyd answered, touching the hilt of his cutlass. "As to who we are, ye know that well enough. Your name is not Clarke, but Westhouse, or Waterhouse, and you are the same exciseman who snackled our poor comrade, Cooper Dick, and swore away his life at Ilchester."

"I swear that you are mistaken," I replied. "I have never in my life been in these parts before."

"Fine words! Fine words!" cried another smuggler. "Gauger or no, you must jump for it, since you know the secret of our cave."

"Your secret is safe with me," I answered. "But if ye wish to murder me I shall meet my fate as a soldier should. I should have chosen to die on the field of battle, rather than to lie at the mercy of such a pack of water-rats in their burrow."

Combe-Martin, in North Devonshire, near Ilfracombe.
crags'-man, one who seeks seabirds and their eggs among the cliffs or crags.
fly'-boat, a long, narrow, swift boat.
gau'-ger, an exciseman, because he has to *gauge* or measure the contents of casks.
Il'-ches-ter, a small town near Yeovil in Somersetshire.
lime'-crys-tals, generally called sta-lac'-tites; they hang like icicles from the roof of caves.
schoon'-er, a two-masted ship.
snack'-led, seized, arrested.
tausend blitzen, an expression literally meaning—a thousand flashes of lightning.
Wil'-ton, a small place near Salisbury, is famous for carpets. "Brussels" and "Axminster," the first English carpets, were made there.

XXIV. OF THE SNARE ON THE WESTON ROAD (*continued*).

"MY faith!" said Murgatroyd. "This is too tall talk for a gauger. He bears himself like a soldier, too. It is possible that in snaring the owl we have caught the falcon. Yet we had certain token that he would come this way, and on such another horse."

"Call up Long John," suggested the Dutchman. "He was with Cooper Dick when he was taken."

"Aye," growled the mate Silas. "He got a wipe over the arm from the gauger's whinyard. He'll know his face, if any will."

"Call him, then," said Murgatroyd; and presently a long, loose-limbed seaman came up from the mouth of the cave, where he had been on watch. He wore

a red kerchief round his forehead, and a blue jerkin, the sleeve of which he slowly rolled up as he came nigh.

"Where is Gauger Waterhouse?" he cried; "he has left his mark on my arm. Rat me, if the scar is healed yet. The sun is on our side of the wall now, gauger. But hullo, mates! who be this that ye have clapped into irons? This is not our man!"

"Not our man?" they cried, with a volley of curses.

"Why, this fellow would make two of the gauger, and leave enough over to fashion a magistrate's clerk. Ye may hang him to make sure, but still he's not the man."

"By your leave, captain," cried Dicon, "I would say that we are not a gang of padders and michers, but a crew of honest seamen, who harm none but those who harm us. Exciseman Westhouse hath slain Cooper Dick, and it is just that he should die for it; but as to taking this young soldier's life, I'd as soon think of scuttling the saucy *Maria* or of mounting the *Jolly Roger* at her peak."

What answer would have been given to this speech I cannot tell, for at that moment a shrill whistle resounded outside the cave, and two smugglers appeared bearing between them the body of a man. It hung so limp that I thought at first that he might be dead; but when they threw him on the sand he moved, and at last sat up like one who is but half awoken from a swoon. He was a square dogged-faced fellow, with a

long white scar down his cheek, and a close-fitting blue coat with brass buttons.

"It's Gauger Westhouse!" cried a chorus of voices.

"Yes, it is Gauger Westhouse," said the man calmly, giving his neck a wriggle as though he were in pain. "I represent the king's law, and in its name I arrest ye all, and declare all the contraband goods which I see around me to be confiscate and forfeited, according to the second section of the first clause of the statute upon illegal dealing. If there are any honest men in this company, they will assist me in the execution of my duty." He staggered to his feet as he spoke, but his spirit was greater than his strength, and he sank back upon the sand amid a roar of laughter from the rough seamen.

"We found him lying on the road when we came from Daddy Mycroft's," said one of the new-comers, who were the same men who had led away my horse. "He must have passed just after you left, and the rope caught him under the chin and threw him a dozen paces. We saw the revenue button on his coat, so we brought him down. Body o' me, but he kicked and plunged for all that he was three-quarters stunned."

"Have ye slacked the hawser?" the captain asked.

"We cast one end loose and let it hang."

"'Tis well. We must keep him for Captain Venables. But now, as to our other prisoner: we must overhaul him and examine his papers, for so many craft are sailing under false colours that we

must needs be careful Hark ye, Mister Soldier! What brings you to these parts, and what king do you serve? for I hear there's a mutiny broke out, and two skippers claim equal rating in the old British ship."

"I am serving under King Monmouth," I answered, seeing that the proposed search must end in the finding of my papers.

"Under King Monmouth!" cried the smuggler. "Nay, friend, that rings something false. The good king hath, I hear, too much need of his friends in the south to let an able soldier go wandering along the sea coast like a Cornish wrecker in a sou'-wester."

"I bear despatches," said I, "from the king's own hand to Henry, Duke of Beaufort, at his castle of Badminton. Ye can find them in my inner pocket, but I pray ye not to break the seal, lest it bring discredit upon my mission."

"Sir," cried the gauger, raising himself upon his elbow, "I do hereby arrest you on the charge of being a traitor, a promoter of treason, a vagrant, and a masterless man within the meaning of the fourth statute of the Act. As an officer of the law I call upon you to submit to my warrant."

"Brace up his jaw with your scarf, Jem," said Murgatroyd. "When Venables comes he will soon find a way to check his gab. Yes," he continued, looking at the back of my papers, "it is marked, as you say, 'From James the Second of England, known lately as the Duke of Monmouth, to Henry, Duke of

Beaufort, President of Wales, by the hand of Captain Micah Clarke, of Saxon's regiment of Wiltshire foot'. Cast off the lashings, Dicon."

"So, captain, you are a free man once more, and I grieve that we should have unwittingly harmed you. We are good Lutherans to a man, and would rather speed you than hinder you on this mission."

"Could we not indeed help him on his way?" said the mate, Silas. "For myself, I don't fear a wet jacket or a tarry hand for the cause, and I doubt not ye are all of my way of thinking. Now with this breeze we could run up to Bristol and drop the captain by morning, which would save him from being snapped up by any land-sharks on the road."

"Aye, aye," cried Long John. "The king's horse are out beyond Weston, but he could give them the slip if he had the *Maria* under him."

"Well," said Murgatroyd, "we could get back by three long tacks. Venables will need a day or so to get his goods ashore. If we are to sail back in company we shall have time on our hands. How would the plan suit you, captain?"

"My horse!" I objected.

"It need not stop us. I can rig up a handy horse-stall with my spare spars and the grating. The wind has died down. The lugger could be brought to Dead Man's Edge, and the horse led down to it. Run up to Daddy's, Jim; and you, Silas, see to the boat. Here is some cold junk and biscuit—seaman's fare, captain—an' thy stomach be not too dainty for rough living."

con-fis'-cate, taken by the state as a penalty, forfeited.
con'-tra-band, smuggled, traded in contrary to law.
fal'-con, a bird of prey.
jer'-kin, a kind of short coat or jacket.
Jolly Roger, the pirate's flag with the skull and crossbones.
junk, salt meat eaten by seamen on long voyages.
lug'-ger, a small vessel with one or two masts and long sails.
Lu'-ther-ans, followers of the reformer Martin Luther, Protestants.
pad'-ders and michers, robbers and cut-throats.
peak, the upper, outside corner of a sail.
pro-mot'-er, one who encourages or gets up.
rev'-e-nue but'-ton, on the excise-man's uniform: the excise forms an important part of the national revenue.
stat'-ute, an enacted law.
"the lashings," the cords with which Micah was bound.
va'-grant, wanderer, person without any settled home.
war'-rant, a commission giving authority.
whin-yard, sword.

XXV. OF THE SNARE ON THE WESTON ROAD (*continued*).

I SEATED myself on a barrel by the fire, and stretched my limbs, which were cramped and stiffened by their confinement, while one of the seamen bathed the cut on my head with a wet kerchief, and another laid out some food on a case in front of me. The rest of the gang had trooped away to the mouth of the cave to prepare the lugger, save only two or three who stood on guard round the ill-fated gauger. He lay with his back resting against the wall of the cave, and his arms crossed over his breast, glancing round from time to time at the smugglers with menacing eyes, as a staunch old hound might gaze at a pack of wolves who had overmatched him.

I was turning it over in my own mind whether aught

could be done to help him, when Murgatroyd came over, and dipping a tin pannikin into the open rum tub, drained it to the success of my mission.

"I shall send Silas Bolitho with you," said he, "while I bide here to meet Venables, who commands my consort. If there is aught that I can do to repay you for your ill usage——"

"There is but one thing, captain," I broke in eagerly. "It is as much, or more, for your own sake than mine that I ask it. Do not allow this unhappy man to be murdered."

Murgatroyd's face flushed with anger. "You are a plain speaker, Captain Clarke," said he. "This is no murder. It is justice. What harm do we here? There is not an old housewife over the whole country-side who does not bless us. Where is she to buy her souchong, or her strong waters, except from us? We charge little, and force our goods on no one. We are peaceful traders. Yet this man and his fellows are ever yelping at our heels, like so many dogfish on a cod bank. We have been harried, and chivied, and shot at until we are driven into such dens as this.

"A month ago, four of our men were bearing a keg up the hillside to Farmer Black, who hath dealt with us these five years back. Of a sudden, down came half a score of horse, led by this gauger, hacked and slashed with their broadswords, cut Long John's arm open, and took Cooper Dick prisoner. Dick was haled to Ilchester Gaol, and hung up after the assizes like a stoat on a gamekeeper's door.

"This night we had news that this very gauger was coming this way, little knowing that we should be on the look-out for him. Is it a wonder that we should lay a trap for him, and that, having caught him, we should give him the same justice as he gave our comrades?"

"He is but a servant," I argued. "He hath not made the law. It is his duty to enforce it. It is with the law itself that your quarrel is."

"You are right," said the smuggler gloomily. "It is with Judge Moorcroft that we have our chief account to square. He may pass this road upon his circuit. Heaven send he does! But we shall hang the gauger too. He knows our cave now, and it would be madness to let him go."

I saw that it was useless to argue longer, so I contented myself with dropping my pocket-knife on the sand within reach of the prisoner, in the hope that it might prove to be of some service to him. His guards were laughing and joking together, and giving little heed to their charge, but the gauger was keen enough, for I saw his hand close over it.

I had walked and smoked for an hour or more, when Silas the mate appeared and said that the lugger was ready and the horse aboard. Bidding Murgatroyd farewell, I ventured a few more words in favour of the gauger, which were received with a frown and an angry shake of the head. A boat was drawn up on the sand, inside the cave, at the water's edge. Into this I stepped, as directed, with my sword and pistols, which had been given back to me, while the

crew pushed her off and sprang in as she glided into deep water.

I could see by the dim light of the single torch which Murgatroyd held upon the margin, that the roof of the cave sloped sheer down upon us as we sculled slowly out towards the entrance. So low did it come at last that there was only a space of a few feet between it and the water, and we had to bend our heads to avoid the rocks above us. The boatmen gave two strong strokes, and we shot out from under the overhanging ledge, and found ourselves in the open with the stars shining murkily above us, and the moon showing herself dimly and cloudily through a gathering haze.

Right in front of us was a dark blur, which, as we pulled towards it, took the outline of a large lugger rising and falling with the pulse of the sea. Her tall thin spars and delicate network of cordage towered above us as we glided under the counter, while the creaking of blocks and rattle of ropes showed that she was all ready to glide off upon her journey. Lightly and daintily she rode upon the waters, like some giant seafowl, spreading one white pinion after another in preparation for her flight. The boatmen ran alongside and steadied the dingy while I climbed over the bulwarks on to the deck.

She was a roomy vessel, very broad in the beam, with a graceful curve in her bows, and masts which were taller than any that I had ever seen on such a boat in the Solent. She was decked over in front,

but very deep in the after part, with ropes fixed all round the sides to secure kegs when the hold should be full.

In the midst of this after-deck the mariners had built a strong stall, in which my good steed was standing, with a bucket full of oats in front of him. My old friend shoved his nose against my face as I came aboard, and neighed his pleasure at finding his master once more. We were still exchanging caresses when the grizzled head of Silas Bolitho, the mate, popped out of the cabin hatchway.

"We are fairly on our way now, Captain Clarke," said he. "The breeze has fallen away to nothing, as you can see, and we may be some time in running down to our port. Are you not aweary?"

"I am a little tired," I confessed. "My head is throbbing from the crack I got when that hawser of yours dashed me from my saddle."

"An hour or two of sleep will make you as fresh as a Mother Carey's chicken," said the smuggler. "Your horse is well cared for, and you can leave him without fear. I will set a man to tend him, though, truth to say, the rogues know more about studding sails and halliards than they do of steeds and their requirements. Yet no harm can come to him, so you had best come down and turn in."

I descended the steep stairs which led down into the low-roofed cabin of the lugger. On either side a recess in the wall had been fitted up as a couch.

"This is your bed," said he, pointing to one of them.

"We shall call you if there be aught to report." I needed no second invitation, but flinging myself down without undressing, I sank in a few minutes into a dreamless sleep, which neither the gentle motion of the boat nor the clank of feet above my head could break off.

bul'-warks, ramparts or defences, the sides of a ship above the level of the deck.
cir'-cuit, the round made by the judges to try cases.
coun'-ter, the broad top-piece of the bulwarks at the stern of a vessel.
din'-gy, a small boat.
griz'-zled, turning grey.
hal'-liard, a rope for *hauling* or hoisting *yards* and sails.
hatch'-way, an opening in a ship's deck by which access is given to other parts of the vessel.
men'-ac-ing, threatening.
Mother Carey's chickens, stormy petrels; little sea-birds.
murk'-i-ly, obscurely, dimly.
So'-lent, the stretch of water between the Isle of Wight and S. W. Hampshire, leading to Southampton from the west.
sou-chong', a good black tea.
stoat, a small animal, a kind of weasel.
stud'-ding sails (called by sailors *stunsels*), smaller extra sails set at the ends of the yards when the breeze is very light.

XXVI. OF THE WELCOME THAT MET ME AT BADMINTON.

WHEN I opened my eyes I had some ado to recall where I was, but on sitting up it was brought home to me by my head striking the low ceiling with a sharp rap. On the other side of the cabin Silas Bolitho was stretched at full length with a red woollen nightcap upon his head, fast asleep and snoring. The vessel was rising and falling with a gentle

motion, but from the flapping of canvas I judged that there was little wind. Slipping quietly from my couch, so as not to wake the mate, I stole upon deck.

We were, I found, not only becalmed, but hemmed in by a dense fog-bank which rolled in thick, choking wreaths all round us, and hid the very water beneath us. We might have been a ship of the air riding upon a white cloud bank. Covenant was staring right and left with great questioning eyes. The crew were gathered along the bulwarks and smoking their pipes while they peered out into the dense fog.

"Good day, captain," said Dicon, touching his fur cap. "We have had a rare run while the breeze lasted, and the mate reckoned before he turned in that we were not many miles from Bristol town."

"In that case, my good fellow," I answered, "ye can set me ashore, for I have not far to go."

"We must e'en wait till the fog lifts," said Long John. "There's only one place along here, d'ye see, where we can land cargoes unquestioned. When it clears we shall turn her head for it, but until we can take our bearings it is anxious work wi' the sands under our lee."

"Keep a look-out there, Tom Baldock!" cried Dicon to a man in the bows. "We are in the track of every Bristol ship, and though there's so little wind, a high-sparred craft might catch a breeze which we miss."

"Sh!" said Long John suddenly, holding up his hand in warning. "Sh!"

We listened with all our ears, but there was no sound, save the gentle wash of the unseen waves against our sides.

"Call the mate!" whispered the seaman. "There's a craft close by us. I heard the rattle of a rope upon her deck."

Silas Bolitho was up in an instant, and we all stood straining our ears, and peering through the dense fog-bank. We had well-nigh made up our minds that it was a false alarm, and the mate was turning back in no very good humour, when a clear loud bell sounded seven times quite close to us, followed by a shrill whistle and a confused shouting and stamping.

"It's a king's ship,'" growled the mate. "That's seven bells, and the bo'sun is turning out the watch below."

"It was on our quarter," whispered one.

"Nay, I think it was on our larboard bow," said another.

The mate held up his hand, and we all listened for some fresh sign of the whereabouts of our scurvy neighbour. The wind had freshened a little, and we were slipping through the water at four or five knots an hour. Of a sudden a hoarse voice was heard roaring at our very side. "'Bout ship!" it shouted. "Bear a hand on the lee-braces, there! Stand by the halliards! Bear a hand, ye lazy rogues, or I'll be among you with my cane!"

"It's a king's ship, sure enough, and she lies just there," said Long John, pointing out over the quarter. "Ha! did I not tell you?"

As he spoke, the white screen of vapour rolled up like the curtain in a playhouse, and uncovered a stately war-ship, lying so close that we could have thrown a biscuit aboard. Her long, lean, black hull rose and fell with a slow, graceful rhythm, while her beautiful spars and snow-white sails shot aloft until they were lost in the wreaths of fog which still hung around her.

Nine bright brass cannons peeped out at us from her portholes. Above the line of hammocks, which hung like carded wool along her bulwarks, we could see the heads of the seamen staring down at us, and pointing us out to each other. On the high poop stood an elderly officer with cocked hat and trim white wig, who at once whipped up his glass and gazed at us through it.

"Ahoy, there!" he shouted, leaning over the taffrail. "What lugger is that?"

"The *Lucy*," answered the mate, "bound from Porlock Quay to Bristol with hides and tallow. Stand ready to tack!" he added in a lower voice, "the fog is coming down again."

"Ye have one of the hides with the horse still in it," cried the officer. "Run down under our counter. We must have a closer look at ye."

"Aye, aye, sir!" said the mate, and putting his helm hard down the boom swung across, and the *Maria* darted off like a scared seabird into the fog. Looking back there was nothing but a dim loom to show where we had left the great vessel. We could hear, however, the hoarse shouting of orders and the bustle of men.

"Look out for squalls, lads!" cried the mate. "He'll let us have it now."

He had scarcely spoken before there were half a dozen throbs of flame in the mist behind, and as many balls sung among our rigging. One cut away the end of the yard, and left it dangling; another grazed the bowsprit, and sent a puff of white splinters into the air.

"Warm work, captain, eh?" said old Silas, rubbing his hands. "They shoot better in the dark than ever they did in the light. There have been more shots fired at this lugger than she could carry were she loaded with them. And yet they never so much as knocked the paint off her before There they go again!"

A fresh discharge burst from the man-of-war, but this time they had lost all trace of us, and were firing by guess.

"It's well the breeze freshened," said Long John. "I heard the creak o' davits just after the first discharge. She was lowering her boats, or I'm a Dutchman."

"The fog lifts a little towards the land," Silas remarked. "Methinks I see the loom of St. Austin's Point. It rises there upon the starboard bow."

"There it is, sure enough, sir!" cried one of the seamen, pointing to a dark cape which cut into the mist.

"Steer for the three-fathom creek then," said the mate. "When we are on the other side of the point,

"Warm Work."

Captain Clarke, we shall be able to land your horse and yourself. You will then be within a few hours' ride of your destination."

I led the old seaman aside, and having thanked him for the kindness which he had shown me, I spoke to him of the gauger and implored him to use his influence to save the man.

"It rests with Captain Venables," said he gloomily. "If we let him go what becomes of our cave?"

"Is there no way of ensuring his silence?" I asked.

"Well, we might ship him to the Plantations," said the mate. "We could take him to the Texel with us, and get Captain Donders or some other to give him a lift across the western ocean."

"Do so," said I, "and I shall take care that King Monmouth shall hear of the help which ye have given his messenger."

"Well, we shall be there in a brace of shakes," he remarked. "Let us go below and load your ground tier, for there is nothing like starting well trimmed with plenty of ballast in the hold."

Following the sailor's advice I went down with him and enjoyed a rude but plentiful meal. By the time that we had finished the lugger had been run into a narrow creek, with shelving sandy banks on either side. The district was wild and marshy, with few signs of any inhabitants.

With much coaxing and pushing Covenant was induced to take to the water and swam easily ashore, while I followed in the smugglers' dingy. A few words of rough, kindly leave-taking were shouted after me;

I saw the dingy return, and the beautiful craft glided out to sea, and faded away once more into the mists which still hung over the face of the waters.

boom, the yard or pole which stretches the sail out.

bo'-sun, a lower officer on a ship who looks after the boats and rigging and calls the crew to duty (spelt *boat-swain*).

'bout ship, turn the vessel round.

bow'-sprit, the pole or spar projecting from the bow of a vessel.

da'-vits, arms of iron or timber at a ship's side for holding, lowering or raising boats.

knot, a sea mile—the distance from one knot to another on the log-line. 2000 yards; more than a land mile.

lar'-board now called *port*, the left side of a ship, hence larboard bow, the left fore part of the vessel.

lee-braces, the braces, or ropes, for turning the yards on the lee or sheltered side of the ship.

load your ground tier, means here make a good meal.

plan-ta'-tions, the sugar estates in the West Indies.

Por'-lock Quay, in N. W. Somerset, formerly a market town.

quar'-ter, the part of the ship's side between the mainmast and the stern.

star'-board bow, the fore part of the vessel on the right side.

taff'-rail, the flat upper portion of a ship's stern timbers.

Tex'-el, a flat island about thirteen miles long and six miles wide, off the coast of Holland.

under our lee, on the side of the vessel away from the wind so that we were likely to be blown on to them.

XXVII. OF THE WELCOME THAT MET ME AT BADMINTON (*continued*).

TRULY Providence works in strange ways, my friends, and until a man comes to the autumn of his days he can scarce say what hath been ill-luck and what hath been good. Now here ye will perceive that I began by being dashed upon a stony road, beaten, kicked, and finally well-nigh put to death

in mistake for another. Yet it ended in my being safely carried to my journey's end, whereas, had I gone by land, it is more than likely that I should have been cut off at Weston; for, as I heard afterwards, a troop of horse were making themselves very active in those parts by blocking the roads and seizing all who came that way.

Being now alone, my first care was to bathe my face and hands in a stream which ran down to the sea, and to wipe away any trace of my adventures of the night before. My cut was but a small one, and was concealed by my hair. Having reduced myself to some sort of order I next rubbed down my horse as best I could, and rearranged his girth and his saddle. I then led him by the bridle to the top of a sandhill hard by, whence I might gain some idea as to my position.

The fog lay thick upon the channel, but all inland was very clear and bright. Along the coast the country was dreary and marshy, but at the other side a goodly extent of fertile plain lay before me, well tilled and cared for. A range of lofty hills, which I guessed to be the Mendips, bordered the whole skyline, and farther north there lay a second chain in the blue distance.

The glittering Avon wound its way over the country side like a silver snake in a flower-bed. Close to its mouth, and not more than two leagues from where I stood, rose the spires and towers of stately Bristol, the Queen of the West, which was and still may be the second city in the kingdom. The forests of masts

which shot up like a pinegrove above the roofs of the houses bore witness to the great trade both with Ireland and with the Plantations which had built up so flourishing a city.

As I knew that the duke's seat was miles on the Gloucestershire side of the city, and as I feared lest I might be arrested and examined should I attempt to pass the gates, I struck inland with intent to ride round the walls and so avoid the peril. The path which I followed led me into a country lane, which in turn opened into a broad highway crowded with travellers both on horseback and on foot.

Bristol, had about 30,000 inhabitants in 1685, and was the second city of the kingdom; in 1891, it had over 220,000, and stood about tenth on the list.

helm hard down, put as far as it will go on one side or the other.

Wes'-ton, now Weston-super-Mare in Somersetshire on the Bristol Channel.

XXVIII. OF THE WELCOME THAT MET ME AT BADMINTON (*continued*).

AS the troublous times required that a man should journey with his arms, there was nought in my outfit to excite remark, and I was able to jog on among the other horsemen without question or suspicion. From their appearance they were, I judged, country farmers or squires for the most part who were riding into Bristol to hear the news and to store away their things of price in a place of safety.

"By your leave, zur!" said a burly heavy-faced man in a velveteen jacket, riding up upon my bridle-arm. "Can you tell me whether his Grace of Beaufort is in Bristol or at his house o' Badminton?"

I answered that I could not tell, but that I was myself bound for his presence.

"He was in Bristol yestreen a drilling o' the train-bands," said the stranger; "but, indeed, his Grace be that loyal, and works that hard for his Majesty's cause that he's a' ower the county, and it is but chance work for to try and to catch him. But, if you are about to zeek him, whither shall ye go?"

"I will to Badminton," I answered, "and await him there. Can you tell me the way?"

"What! Not know the way to Badminton!" he cried, with a blank stare of wonder. "Whoy, I thought all the warld knew that. You're not fra Wales or the border counties, zur, that be very clear."

"I am a Hampshire man," said I. 'I have come some distance to see the duke."

"Aye, so I should think!" he cried, laughing loudly. "If you doan't know the way to Badminton you doan't know much! But I'll go with you, and I'll show you your road, and run my chance o' finding the duke there. What be your name?"

"Micah Clarke is my name."

"And Vairmer Brown is mine—John Brown by the register,—but better knowed as the vairmer. Tak' this turn to the right off the high road. Now we can trot our beasts and not be smothered in other folk's dust."

"What say you to a stoup of cider?" I asked, for we were passing an ivy-clad inn, with "The Beaufort Arms" printed upon the sign.

"With all my heart, lad," my companion answered. "It will serve to wash the dust down. The real Beaufort Arms is up yonder at Badminton, for at the buttery hatch one may call for what one will in reason and never put hand to pocket."

"You speak of the house as though you knew it well," said I.

"And who should know it better?" asked the sturdy farmer, wiping his lips, as we resumed our journey. "Why, it seems but yesterday that I played hide-and-seek wi' my brothers in the old Boteler Castle, that stood where the new house o' Badminton, or Acton Turville as some calls it, now stands. The duke hath built it but a few years, and, indeed, his dukedom itself is scarce older. There are some who think that he would have done better to stick by the old name that his forebears bore."

"What manner of man is the duke?" I asked.

"Hot and hasty, like all of his blood. Yet when he hath time to think, and hath cooled down, he is just in the main. Your horse hath been in the water this morning, vriend."

"Yes," said I shortly, "he hath had a bath."

"I am going to his Grace on the business of a horse," quoth my companion. "His officers have pressed my piebald four-year-old, and taken it without a 'With your leave' or 'By your leave,' for the use of the king. I would have them know that there is some-

thing higher than the duke, or even than the king. There is the English law, which will preserve a man's goods and his chattels. I would do aught in reason for King James's service, but my piebald four-year-old is too much."

"I fear that the needs of the public service will override your objection," said I.

"Why, it is enough to make a man a Whig," he cried. "Even the Roundheads always paid their vair penny for every pennyworth they had, though they wanted a vair pennyworth for each penny. I have heard my father say that trade was never so brisk as in 'forty-six, when they were down this way. Old Noll had a noose of hemp ready for horse-stealers, were they for king or for Parliament. But here comes his Grace's carriage if I mistake not."

As he spoke, a great heavy yellow coach, drawn by six cream-coloured Flemish mares, dashed down the road, and came swiftly towards us. Two mounted lackeys galloped in front, and two others all in light blue and silver liveries, rode on either side.

"His Grace is not within, else there had been an escort behind," said the farmer, as we reined our horses aside to let the carriage pass. As they swept by he shouted out the question as to whether the duke was at Badminton, and received a nod from the stately bewigged coachman in reply.

High iron gates, with the leopard and griffin, which are the supporters of the Beaufort arms, fixed on the pillars which flanked them, opened into a beautiful domain of lawn and grass land with clumps of trees

scattered over it, and broad sheets of water, thick with wild fowl. At every turn as we rode up the winding avenue some new beauty caught our eyes, all of which were pointed out and expounded by Farmer Brown, who seemed to take as much pride in the place as though it belonged to him.

As we drew near the house we came on a large extent of level sward on which a troop of horse were exercising, who were raised, as my companion informed me, entirely from the duke's own personal attendants. Passing them we rode through a grove of rare trees and came out on a broad space of gravel which lay in front of the house.

The building itself was of great extent, built after the new Italian fashion, rather for comfort than for defence; but on one wing there remained, as my companion pointed out, a portion of the old keep and battlements of the feudal castle of the Botelers. The main doorway was led up to by lines of columns and a broad flight of marble steps, on which stood a group of footmen and grooms, who took our horses when we dismounted.

A grey-haired steward or major domo inquired our business, and on learning that we wished to see the duke in person, he told us that his Grace would give audience to strangers in the afternoon at half after three by the clock. In the meantime he said that the guests' dinner had just been laid in the hall, and it was his master's wish that none who came to Badminton should depart hungry. My companion and I were but too glad to accept the steward's invitation, so, having

visited the bath-room and attended to the needs of the toilet, we followed a footman who ushered us into a great room where the company had already assembled.

After dinner we were all shown into a small ante-chamber, set round with velvet settees, where we were to wait till the duke was ready to see us. A gentleman-in-waiting came round with paper and ink-horn, making notes of our names and of our business. Him I asked whether it might not be possible for me to have an entirely private audience.

"His Grace never sees in private," he replied. "He has ever his chosen councillors and officers in attendance."

"But the business is one which is only fit for his own ear," I urged.

"His Grace holds that there is no business fit only for his own ear," said the gentleman. "You must arrange matters as best you can when you are shown in to him. I will promise, however, that your request be carried to him, though I warn you that it cannot be granted."

Acton Turville, a village in S. Gloucestershire, near Badminton.

built it but a few years, Badminton House was built in 1682, three years before the date of the story.

but'-ter-y hatch, the little door through which meat and drink were passed from the buttery or store room.

chat'-tels, any kind of property other than land or houses.

ex-pound'-ed, explained.

Flem'-ish, coming from Flanders; an old district once extending over parts of Belgium, Holland and the north of France.

fore'-bears, forefathers, ancestors.

forty-six, "In 1646 Fairfax (the Parliamentary general) advanced triumphantly to the West, raised the siege of Taunton, defeated Goring at Langport and stormed Bridgwater and Bristol".

grif'-fin, a fanciful animal with the body and legs of a lion and the beak and wings of an eagle.
lack'-ey, a footman or attendant.
ma'-jor domo, a higher servant who has the general management in a large house.
Old Noll, the familiar name by which Oliver Cromwell was known to his soldiers.
reg'-is-ter, the written record of births, deaths and marriages.
set-tee', a long seat with a back to it.
stoup, flagon.
train'-bands, bands of men trained to bear arms, without being regular soldiers.
vel-vet-een', a kind of cheaper velvet made of cotton.

XXIX. OF THE WELCOME THAT MET ME AT BADMINTON (*continued*).

FTER several of the suitors had been dismissed the turn of my honest friend the farmer came. The angry tones which greeted him promised badly for the fate of the four-year-old, but a lull ensued, and the farmer came out and resumed his seat, rubbing his great red hands with satisfaction.

"My word!" he whispered. "He was plaguey hot at first, but he soon came round, and he hath promised that if I pay for the hire of a dragooner as long as the war shall last I shall have back the piebald."

I had been sitting all this time wondering how in the world I was to conduct my business amid the swarm of suppliants and the crowd of officers who were attending the duke. Had there been any likelihood of my gaining audience with him in any other way I should gladly have adopted it, but all my endeavours to that end had been useless. Unless I took this occasion I might never come face to face with him at all.

But how could he give due thought or discussion to such a matter before others? What chance was there of his weighing it as it should be weighed? Even if his feelings inclined him that way, he dared not show any sign of wavering when so many eyes were upon him. I was tempted to feign some other reason for my coming, and trust to fortune to give me some more favourable chance of handing him my papers.

But then that chance might never arrive, and time was pressing. It was said that he would return to Bristol next morning. On the whole, it seemed best that I should make the fittest use I could of my present position, in the hope that the duke's own discretion and self-command might, when he saw the address upon my despatches, lead to a more private interview.

I had just come to this resolution when my name was read out, on which I rose and advanced into the inner chamber. It was a small but lofty room, hung in blue silk with a broad gold cornice.

In the centre was a square table littered over with piles of papers, and behind this sat his Grace with full-bottomed wig rolling down to his shoulders, very stately and imposing. He had the same subtle air of the court which I had observed both in Monmouth and in Sir Gervas, which with his high bold features and large piercing eyes marked him as a leader of men. His private scrivener sat beside him, taking notes of his directions, while the others stood behind in a half circle or took snuff together in the deep recess of the window.

"Captain Micah Clarke," said the duke, reading from the list in front of him. "What is your wish, captain?"

"One which it would be better if I could deliver privately to your Grace," I answered.

"Ah, you are he who desired private audience? Well, captain, these are my council and they are as myself. So we may look upon ourselves as alone. What I may hear they may hear. Out with it, man, never stammer and boggle, but out with it!"

My request had roused the interest of the company, and those who were in the window came over to the table. Nothing could have been worse for the success of my mission, and yet there was no help for it but to deliver my despatches.

My short delay and hesitation had sent a hot flush of anger into the duke's face, so I drew the packet of papers from my inner pocket and handed them to him with a respectful bow. As his eye fell upon the superscription, he gave a sudden start of surprise and agitation, making a motion as though to hide them in his bosom.

If this were his impulse he overcame it, and sat lost in thought for a minute or more with the papers in his hand. Then, with a quick toss of the head, like a man who hath formed his resolution, he broke the seals and cast his eyes over the contents, which he then threw down upon the table with a bitter laugh.

"What think ye, gentlemen?" he cried, looking round with scornful eyes; "what think ye this private

message hath proved to be? It is a letter from the traitor Monmouth, calling upon me to resign the allegiance of my natural sovereign and to draw my sword in his behalf! If I do this I am to have his gracious favour and protection. If not, I incur sequestration, banishment, and ruin. He thinks Beaufort's loyalty is to be bought like a packman's ware, or bullied out of him by ruffling words."

Several of the company sprang to their feet, and a general buzz of surprise and anger greeted the duke's words. He sat with bent brows, beating his foot against the ground, and turning over the papers upon the table.

"What hath raised his hopes to such mad heights?" he cried. "How doth he presume to send such a missive to one of my quality? Is it because he hath seen the backs of a parcel of rascally militiamen, and because he hath drawn a few hundred chawbacons from the plough's tail to his standard, that he ventures to hold such language to the President of Wales? But ye will be my witnesses as to the spirit in which I received it?"

"We can preserve your Grace from all danger of slander on that point," said an elderly officer, while a murmur of assent from the others greeted the remark.

"And you!" cried Beaufort, raising his voice and turning his flashing eyes upon me; "who are you that dare to bring such a message to Badminton? You had surely taken leave of your senses ere you did set out upon such an errand!"

"I am in the hands of God here as elsewhere," I answered, with some flash of my father's fatalism. "I have done what I promised to do, and the rest is no concern of mine."

"You shall find it a very close concern of thine," he shouted, springing from his chair and pacing up and down the room; "so close as to put an end to all thy other concerns in this life. Call in the halberdiers from the outer hall! Now, fellow, what have you to say for yourself?"

"There is naught to be said," I answered.

"But something to be done," he retorted in a fury. "Seize this man and secure his hands!"

Four halberdiers who had answered the summons closed in upon me and laid hands on me. Resistance would have been folly, for I had no wish to harm the men in the doing of their duty. I had come to take my chance, and if that chance should prove to be death, as seemed likely enough at present, it must be met as a thing foreseen. This being so, I stood erect, with my eyes fixed upon the angry nobleman, while his soldiers were putting the gyves about my wrists.

"Take down this fellow's statements," said the duke to his scrivener. "Now, sirrah, it may not be known to you that his gracious Majesty the king hath conferred plenary powers upon me during these troubled times, and that I have his warrant to deal with all traitors without either jury or judge. You do bear a commission, I understand, in the rebellious body which is here described as Saxon's regiment

of Wiltshire Foot? Speak the truth for your neck's sake."

"I will speak the truth for the sake of something higher than that, your Grace," I answered. "I command a company in that regiment."

"And who is this Saxon?"

"I will answer all that I may concerning myself," said I, "but not a word which may reflect upon others."

"Ha!" he roared, hot with anger. "Our pretty gentleman must needs stand upon the niceties of honour after taking up arms against his king. I tell you, sir, that your honour is in such a parlous state already that you may well throw it over and look to your safety. The sun is sinking in the west. Ere it set, your life, too, may have set for ever."

"I am the keeper of my own honour, your Grace," I answered. "As to my life, I should not be standing here this moment if I had any dread of losing it."

"Halberdiers," said the duke, "remove the prisoner and let a clergyman be sent to look to his spiritual needs!"

"Shall we take him to the strong room, your Grace?" asked the captain of the guard.

"No, to the old Boteler Dungeon," he replied; and I heard the next name upon the list called out, while I was led through a side door with a guard in front and behind me. We passed through endless passages and corridors, with heavy step and clank of arms, until we reached the ancient wing. Here, in the corner turret

was a small bare room, mouldy and damp, with a high arched roof, and a single long slit in the outer wall to admit light. A small wooden couch and a rude chair formed the whole of the furniture. Into this I was shown by the captain, who stationed a guard at the door, came in after me and loosened my wrists, and then left me.

a-gi-ta'-tion, mental disturbance.
bog'-gle, to hesitate and stop over a thing, not to do it easily.
chaw'-ba-cons, rustics, yokels.
cor'-nice, an ornamental moulding projecting from a wall or column.
cor'-ri-dor, a passage leading from one chamber to another.
dra-goon'-er, dragoon, a kind of horse-soldier.
fa'-tal-ism, the idea that you are fated from the first to a certain lot in life and that nothing you can do will alter it.
gyves, fetters.
hal-ber-diers', men armed with halberds, consisting of an axe and spear at the end of a long pole.
mission, errand, that which one is sent to do.
pack'-man, a peddler or man who carries round goods for sale in a pack.
par'-lous, perilous, dangerous.
ple'-na-ry, full, entire, complete.
ruf'-fling, rough, flustering, bullying.
scriv'-en-er, one who drew up law papers for others, such as wills, leases, etc.
se-ques-tra'-tion, seizure of estates as a penalty.
su-per-scrip'-tion, the description or name written above some document.

XXX. OF STRANGE DOINGS IN THE BOTELER DUNGEON.

SOME time afterwards I was seated with my head bowed upon my breast deeply buried in a solemn train of thoughts, when I was startled by hearing a sharp click, such as a man might give who wished to attract attention. I sprang to my feet and gazed round in the gathering gloom without being able to tell whence it came.

I had well-nigh persuaded myself that my senses had deceived me, when the sound was repeated louder than before, and casting my eyes upwards I saw a face peering in at me through the slit, or part of a face rather, for I could but see the eye and corner of the cheek. Standing on my chair, I made out that it was none other than the farmer, who had been my companion upon the road.

"Hush, lad!" he whispered, with a warning forefinger pushed through the narrow crack. "Speak low, or the guard may chance to hear. What can I do for you?"

"How did you come to know where I was?" I asked in astonishment.

"Whoy, mun," he answered, "I know as much of this 'ere house as Beaufort does himsel'. Afore Badminton was built, me and my brothers has spent many a day in climbing over the old Boteler Tower. It's not the first time that I have spoke through this window. But, quick; what can I do for you?"

"I am much beholden to you, sir," I answered, "but I fear that there is no help which you can give me, unless, indeed, you could convey news to my friends in the army of what hath befallen me. There is a Captain Lockarby, who is serving in Colonel Saxon's regiment, in Monmouth's army. Should things go wrong with me, I would take it as a great kindness if you would bear him my love, and ask him to break it gently, by word or by letter, to those at Havant. If I were sure that this would be done, it would be a great ease to my mind."

"It shall be done, lad," said the good farmer. "I shall send my best man and fleetest horse this very night, that they may know the straits in which you are. I have a file here if it would help you."

"Nay," I answered, "human aid can do little to help me here."

"There used to be a hole in the roof. Look up and see if you can see aught of it."

"It arches high above my head," I answered looking upwards; "but there is no sign of any opening."

"There was one," he repeated. "My brother Roger hath swung himself down wi' a rope. In the old time the prisoners were put in so, like Joseph into the pit. The door is but a new thing."

"Hole or no hole, it cannot help me," I answered. "I have no means of climbing to it. Do not wait longer, kind friend, or you may find yourself in trouble."

"Good-bye then, my brave heart," he whispered, and the honest grey eye and corner of ruddy cheek disappeared from the casement. Many a time during the course of the long evening I glanced up with some wild hope that he might return, and every creak of the branches outside brought me on to the chair, but it was the last that I saw of Farmer Brown.

This kindly visit, short as it was, relieved my mind greatly, for I had a trusty man's word that, come what might, my friends should, at least, have some news of my fate. It was now quite dark, and I was pacing up

and down the little chamber, when the key turned in the door, and the captain entered with a rushlight and a great bowl of bread and milk.

"Here is your supper, friend," said he. "Take it down, appetite or no, for it will give you strength to play the man at the time ye wot of."

I made no answer to this Job's comforter, so he presently left me, placing the bowl upon the chair with the rushlight beside it. I finished the food, and, feeling the better for it, stretched myself upon the couch and fell into a heavy and dreamless sleep. This may have lasted three or four hours, when I was suddenly awoken by a sound like the creaking of hinges.

Sitting up on the pallet I gazed around me. The rushlight had burned out and the cell was impenetrably dark. A greyish glimmer at one end showed dimly the position of the aperture, but all else was thick and black. I strained my ears, but no further sound fell upon them. Yet I was certain that I had not been deceived, and that the noise which had aroused me was within my very chamber.

I rose and felt my way slowly round the room, passing my hand over the walls and door. Then I paced backwards and forwards to test the flooring. Neither around me nor beneath me was there any change. Whence did the sound come from then? I sat down upon the side of the bed and waited patiently in the hope of hearing it once again.

ap'-er-ture, an opening, hole.
case'-ment, the framework of a window or similar opening.
im-pen'-e-tra-bly, so that it cannot be pierced or penetrated.
Job's com'-fort-ers, those who like Job's friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, come to condole with you and only make you more miserable.
much be-hold'-en to, much obliged to.
pal'-let, a couch or mattress, particularly one of straw.

XXXI. OF STRANGE DOINGS IN THE BOTELER DUNGEON (*continued*).

PRESENTLY it was repeated, a low groaning and creaking as though a door or shutter long disused was being slowly and stealthily opened. At the same time a dull yellow light streamed down from above, issuing from a thin slit in the centre of the arched roof above me.

Slowly, as I watched it, this slit widened and extended as if a sliding panel were being pulled out, until a good-sized hole was left, through which I saw a head, looking down at me, outlined against the misty light behind it. The knotted end of a rope was passed through this aperture, and came dangling down to the dungeon floor. It was a good stout piece of hemp, strong enough to bear the weight of a heavy man, and I found, upon pulling at it, that it was firmly secured above. Clearly it was the desire of my unknown benefactor that I should ascend by it, so I went up hand over hand, and after some difficulty

in squeezing my shoulders through the hole I succeeded in reaching the room above.

While I was still rubbing my eyes after the sudden change from darkness into light, the rope was swiftly whisked up and the sliding shutter closed once more. To those who were not in the secret there was nothing to throw light upon my disappearance.

I found myself in the presence of a stout, short man clad in a rude jerkin and leather breeches, which gave him somewhat the appearance of a groom. He wore a broad felt hat drawn down very low over his eyes, while the lower part of his face was swathed round with a broad cravat.

In his hand he bore a horn lantern, by the light of which I saw that the room in which we were was of the same size as the dungeon beneath, and differed from it only in having a broad casement which looked out upon the park. There was no furniture in the chamber, but a great beam ran across it, to which the rope had been fastened by which I ascended.

"Speak low, friend," said the stranger. "The walls are thick and the doors are close, yet I would not have your guardians know by what means you have been spirited away."

"Truly, sir," I answered, "I can scarce credit that it is other than a dream. It is wondrous that my dungeon should be so easily broken into, and more wondrous still that I should find a friend who would be willing to risk so much for my sake."

"Look there!" quoth he, holding down his lantern so as to cast its light on the part of the floor where the panel was fitted. "Can you not see how old and crumbled is the stonework which surrounds it? This opening in the roof is as old as the dungeon itself, and older far than the door by which you were led into it. For this was one of those bottle-shaped cells which hard men of old devised for the safe keeping of their captives. Once lowered through this hole into the stone-girt pit a man might eat his heart out, for his fate was sealed. Yet you see that the very device which once hindered escape has now brought freedom within your reach."

"Thanks to your clemency, your Grace," I answered, looking keenly at my companion.

"Now, out on these disguises!" he cried peevishly, pushing back the broad-edged hat and disclosing, as I expected, the features of the duke. "Even a blunt soldier lad can see through my attempts at concealment. I fear, captain, that I should make a bad plotter, for my nature is as open—well, as thine is. I cannot better the simile."

"Your Grace's voice, once heard, is not easily forgot," said I.

"Especially when it talks of hemp and dungeons," he answered, with a smile. "But if I clapped you into prison you must confess that I have made you amends by pulling you out again at the end of my line, like a minnow out of a bottle. But how came you to deliver such papers in the presence of my council?"

"'Look there,' quoth he, holding down his Lantern."

"I did what I could to deliver them in private," said I. "I sent you a message to that effect."

"It is true," he answered; "but such messages come in to me from every soldier who wishes to sell his sword, and every inventor who hath a long tongue and a short purse. How could I tell that the matter was of real import?"

"I feared to let the chance slip lest it might never return," said I. "I hear that your Grace hath little leisure during these times."

"I cannot blame you," he answered, pacing up and down the room. "But it was untoward. I might have hid the despatches, yet it would have roused suspicions. Your errand would have leaked out. There are many who envy my lofty fortunes, and who would seize upon a chance of injuring me with King James.

"But to you in this privacy," continued the duke, "I can tell my real thoughts without fear of betrayal or misconstruction. On paper I will not write one word. Your memory must be the sheet which bears my answer to Monmouth. And first of all, erase from it all that you have heard me say in the council-room. Let it be as though it never were spoken. Is that done?"

"I understand that it did not really represent your Grace's thoughts."

"Very far from it, captain. But prythee tell me what expectation of success is there among the rebels themselves? You must have heard your colonel and others discuss the question, or noted by

their bearing which way their thoughts lay. Have they good hopes of holding out against the king's troops?"

"They have met with naught but success hitherto," I answered.

"Against the militia. But they will find it another thing when they have trained troops to deal with. And yet—and yet! . . . One thing I know, that any defeat of Feversham's army would cause a general rising throughout the country. On the other hand, the king's party are active. Yet Monmouth hath gained two fights, and why not a third? They are troubled waters—troubled waters!"

The duke paced backwards and forwards with brows drawn down, muttering all this to himself rather than to me, and shaking his head like one in the sorest perplexity.

"I would have you tell Monmouth," he said at last, "that I thank him for the papers which he hath sent me, and that I will duly read and weigh them. Tell him also that I wish him well in his enterprise, and would help him were it not that I am hemmed in by those who watch me closely, and who would denounce me were I to show my true thoughts. Tell him that should he move his army into these parts, I may then openly declare myself; but to do so now would be to ruin the fortunes of my house without in any way helping him.

"You have my message, captain, and I trust that if you change it in the delivery, it will be in the direction of greater warmth and kindliness.

It is time now that you depart, for within three hours the guard is changed, and your escape will be discovered."

"But how depart?" I asked.

"Through here," he answered, pushing open the casement, and sliding the rope along the beam in that direction. "The rope may be a foot or two short, but you have extra inches to make matters even. When you have reached the ground, take the gravel path that turns to the right, and follow it until it leads you to the high trees which skirt the path. The seventh of these hath a bough which shoots over the boundary wall. Climb along the bough, drop over upon the other side, and you will find my own valet waiting with your horse. Up with you, and ride, haste, haste, post haste, for the south. By morn you should be well out of danger's way."

"My sword?" I asked.

"All your property is there Tell Monmouth what I have said, and let him know that I have used you as kindly as was possible."

"But what will your Grace's council say when they find that I am gone?" I asked.

"Pshaw, man! Never fret about that! I will off to Bristol at daybreak, and give my council enough to think of without their having time to devote to your fate. The soldiers will but have another instance of the working of the Father of Evil, who hath long been thought to have a weakness for that cell beneath us. But time presses. Gently through the casement! So! Remember the message."

"Adieu, your Grace!" I answered, and seizing the rope, slipped rapidly and noiselessly to the ground, upon which he drew it up and closed the casement. As I looked round, my eye fell upon the dark, narrow slit which opened into my cell, and through which honest Farmer Brown had held converse with me.

ben'-e-fac-tor, one who confers a benefit or kindness on another.
clem'-en-cy, mercy, readiness to forgive.
de-vised', schemed, contrived.
mis-con-struc'-tion, putting a wrong meaning, generally a worse one, on words or actions.
peev'-ish-ly, as though vexed or annoyed.
per-plex'-it-y, doubt, embarrassment.
pri'-va-cy, being alone where no one else can overhear.
spir'-it-ed away, taken away mysteriously as though by ghosts.
stone'-girt, with stone walls.
swathed, wrapt up.
un-to'-ward, awkward, inconvenient.

XXXII. OF STRANGE DOINGS IN THE BOTELER DUNGEON (*continued*).

HALF an hour ago I had been stretched upon the prison pallet without a hope or a thought of escape. Now I was out in the open with no hand to stay me, breathing the air of freedom, with the prison and the gallows cast off from me as the waking man casts off his evil dreams.

The path to the right led through groves and past carp ponds for a mile or more, until I reached the line of trees which skirted the boundary wall. Having reached the seventh tree, I clambered along the projecting bough which shot over the park wall, and

dropped down upon the other side, where I found my good old dapple-grey awaiting me in the charge of a groom.

Springing to my saddle, I strapped my sword once more to my side, and galloped off as fast as the four willing feet could carry me, on my return journey.

All that night I rode hard without drawing bridle, through sleeping hamlets, by moon-bathed farmhouses, past shining stealthy rivers, and over birch-clad hills. When the eastern sky deepened from pink into scarlet, and the great sun pushed his rim over the blue North Somerset hills, I was already far upon my journey.

It was a Sabbath morning, and from every village rose the sweet tinkling and calling of the bells. I bore no dangerous papers with me now, and might therefore be more careless as to my route. At one point I was questioned by a keen-eyed toll-keeper as to whence I came, but my reply that I was riding direct from his Grace of Beaufort put an end to his suspicions.

My road lay through Shepton Mallet, Piper's Inn, Bridgwater, and North Petherton, until in the cool of the evening I pulled up my weary horse at the Cross Hands, and saw the towers of Taunton in the valley beneath me. A flagon of beer for the rider, and a sieveful of oats for the steed, put fresh mettle into both of us, and we were jogging on our way once more, when there came galloping down the side of the hill about forty cavaliers, as hard as their horses could carry them.

So wild was their riding that I pulled up, uncertain

whether they were friend or foe, until, as they came whirling towards me, I recognised that the two officers who rode in front of them were none other than Reuben Lockarby and Sir Gervas Jerome. At the sight of me they flung up their hands, and Reuben shot on to his horse's neck, where he sat for a moment astride of the mane, until the brute tossed him back into the saddle.

"It's Micah! It's Micah!" he gasped, with his mouth open and the tears hopping down his honest face.

"Why! man, how did you come here?" asked Sir Gervas, poking me with his forefinger as though to see if I were really of flesh and blood.

"We were leading a forlorn of horse into Beaufort's country to beat him up, and to burn his fine house about his ears if you had come to harm. There has just come a groom from some farmer in those parts who hath brought us news that you were under sentence of death, on which I came away with my wig half frizzled, and found that friend Lockarby had leave from Lord Grey to go north with these troopers. But how have you fared?"

"Well and ill," I answered, wringing their kindly hands. "I had not thought last night to see another sun rise, and yet ye see that I am here sound in life and in limb. But all these things will take some time in the telling."

"Aye, and King Monmouth will be on thorns to see you. Right about, my lads, and back for the camp. Never was errand so rapidly and happily finished as this

of ours. It would have fared ill with Badminton had you been hurt."

The troopers turned their horses and trotted slowly back to Taunton, while I rode behind them between my two faithful friends, hearing from them all that had occurred in my absence, and telling my own adventures in return. The night had fallen ere we rode through the gates, where I handed Covenant over to the mayor's groom, and went direct to the castle to deliver an account of my mission.

dap'-ple-grey, grey dappled or marked with other colours.
friz'-zled, done up in short curls.
North Petherton, in Mid Somerset, 3 miles S.S.W. of Bridgwater.
Shepton Mallet, a market town in E. Somerset 4½ miles from Wells.

XXXIII. OF THE ONFALL AT SEDGEMOOR.

MONDAY, 21st June, 1685, broke very dark and windy with dull clouds moving heavily across the sky and a constant sputter of rain. Yet a little after daybreak Monmouth's bugles were blowing in every quarter of Taunton town from Tone Bridge to Shuttern, and by the hour appointed the regiments had mustered, the roll had been called, and the vanguard was marching briskly out through the eastern gate. It went forth in the same order as it entered, our own regiment and the Taunton burghers bringing up the rear.

Mayor Timewell and Saxon had the ordering of this part of the army between them, and being men who had seen much service, they drew the ordnance into a less hazardous position, and placed a strong guard of horse a cannon's shot in the rear, to meet any attempt of the royal dragoons.

It was remarked on all sides that the army had improved in order and discipline during the three days' halt, owing perchance to the example of our own unceasing drill and soldierly bearing. In numbers it had increased to nigh 8000, and the men were well fed and light of heart.

All day we trudged along roads which were quagmires, over our ankles in mud, until in the evening we made our way to Bridgwater. After a night in snug quarters we set off again in even worse weather than before. The country in these parts is a quagmire in the driest season, but the heavy rains had caused the fens to overflow and turned them into broad lakes on either side of the road. This may have been to some degree in our favour, as shielding us from the raids of the king's cavalry, but it made our march very slow. All day it was splashing and swashing through mud and mire, the rain-drops shining on the gun-barrels and dripping from the heavy-footed horses. Past the swollen Parret, through Eastover, by the peaceful village of Bawdrip, and over Polden Hill we made our way, until the bugles sounded a halt under the groves of Ashcot, and a rude meal was served out to the men. Then on again, through the pitiless rain, past the wooded park of Piper's Inn, through Walton, where

the floods were threatening the cottages, past the orchards of Street, and so in the dusk of the evening into the grey old town of Glastonbury, where the good folk did their best by the warmth of their welcome to atone for the bitterness of the weather.

The next morning was wet still and inclement, so the army made a short march to Wells. The townsfolk were strong for the Protestant cause, and the army were so well received that their victual cost little from the military chest. On this march we first began to come into touch with the royal horse.

More than once when the rain mist cleared we saw the gleam of arms upon the low hills which overlook the road, and our scouts came in with reports of strong bodies of dragoons on either flank. At one time they massed heavily upon our rear, as though planning a descent upon the baggage. Saxon, however, planted a regiment of pikes on either side, so that they broke up again and glinted off over the hills.

From Wells we marched upon the twenty-fourth to Shepton Mallet with the ominous sabres and helmets still twinkling behind and on either side of us.

That evening we were at Keynsham Bridge, less than two leagues from Bristol as the crow flies, and some of our horse forded the river and pushed on almost to the walls.

[Finding the road to Bristol barred by the royal troops, Monmouth called a council. Various plans were proposed, and it was finally decided to blow up the bridge over the Avon and then march to Bath, in the hope of reaching Wiltshire, which was known to be friendly.]

On the night of 27th June, or rather early in the morning of 28th June, we reached the town of Frome, very wet and miserable, for the rain had come on again, and all the roads were quagmires. From this next day we pushed on once more to Wells, where we spent the night and the whole of the next day, to give the men time to get their clothes dry, and to recover themselves after their privations.

The enemy's horse hovered about us during these days, but the foot had been delayed through the heavy weather and the swollen streams. On the last day of June we marched out of Wells, and made our way across flat sedgy plains and over the low Polden Hills to Bridgwater, where we found some few recruits awaiting us.

Here Monmouth had some thoughts of making a stand, and even set to work raising earthworks; but it was pointed out to him that, even could he hold the town, there was not more than a few days' provisions within it, while the country round had been already swept so bare that little more could be expected from it. The works were therefore abandoned, and fairly driven to bay, without a loophole of escape left, we awaited the approach of the enemy.

Reuben Lockarby, having been stabbed by Derrick, Mayor Timewell's apprentice, who was his rival for the love of the mayor's grand-daughter, was unable to take part in the battle of Sedgemoor, and so was left in charge of major Ogilvy, a royal officer whom Micah had taken prisoner near Keynsham Bridge.

bur'-ghers, inhabitants of a burgh or borough, citizens.
Frome, town in Somerset, 11 miles S. of Bath.
glinted off, glided away, disappeared.
Keyns'-ham, in Somerset, 4 miles S.E. of Bristol has a bridge over the Avon.
o'-min-ous, of evil omen, boding ill.
ord'-nance, great guns, artillery.
quag'-mires, bogs, places where the ground *quakes* under the feet.
River Parret, Eastover, Bawdrip, Polden Hill, Ashcot, Piper's Inn, Walton, Street, passed on the march from Bridgwater to Glastonbury.
Sedge'-moor, 4 miles E.S.E. of Bridgwater, once a marsh intersected by deep drains called "rhines"; it is now drained and tilled. It is the site of the last battle fought on English ground.
Tone, a river in Somerset, running through Taunton and joining the Parret after a course of 20 miles.
van'-guard, the part of an army marching in front of the main body.

XXXIV. OF THE ONFALL AT SEDGEMOOR (*continued*).

THE clock was on the stroke of eleven as King Monmouth rode out from the inn where he was quartered, and trotted with his staff down the High Street. All cheering had been forbidden, but waving caps and brandished arms spoke the ardour of his devoted followers. No bugle was to sound the march but as each received the word the one in its rear followed its movements. The clatter and shuffle of hundreds of moving feet came nearer and nearer, until the Frome men in front of us began to march, and we found ourselves fairly started upon the last journey which many of us were ever to take in this world.

Our road lay across the Parret, through Eastover.

Not far beyond, the road becomes a mere pathway over the plain. A dense haze lay over the moor, gathering thickly in the hollows, and veiling both the town which we had left and the villages which we were approaching. Now and again it would lift for a few moments, and then I could see in the moonlight the long black writhing line of the army, with the shimmer of steel playing over it, and the rude white standards flapping in the night breeze.

Very slow our march was, and very careful, for the plain was, as Sir Stephen Timewell had told us, cut across by great ditches or rhines, which could not be passed save at some few places. These ditches were cut for the purpose of draining the marshes, and were many feet deep of water and of mud, so that even the horse could not cross them. The bridges were narrow, and some time passed before the army could get over.

At last, however, the two main ones, the Black Ditch and the Langmoor Rhine, were safely traversed, and a halt was called while the foot was formed in line, for we had reason to believe that no other force lay between the royal camp and ourselves.

So far our enterprise had succeeded admirably. We were within half a mile of the camp without mistake or accident, and none of the enemy's scouts had shown signs of their presence. Clearly they held us in such contempt that it had never occurred to them that we might open the attack. If ever a general deserved a beating it was Feversham that night. As we drew up upon the moor the clock of Chedzoy struck one.

After we had been standing motionless for some time, Saxon rode up and Sir Gervas asked him: "How now, colonel, why are we stuck out on the moor like a row of herons among the sedges?"

"They are ordering the line for the attack," said Saxon. "Who ever saw a camp so exposed to an onfall? Oh for 1200 good horse. Would I not trample them down until their camp was like a field of young corn after a hail-storm!"

"May not our horse advance?" I asked.

The old soldier gave a deep snort of disdain. "If this fight is to be won it must be by our foot," said he; "what can we hope for from such cavalry? Keep your men well in hand, for we may have to bear the brunt of the king's dragoons. A flank attack would fall upon us, for we are in the post of honour."

"There are troops to the right of us," I answered, peering through the darkness.

"Aye! the Taunton burghers and the Frome peasants. Our brigade covers the right flank. Next us are the Mendip miners, nor could I wish for better comrades, if their zeal do not outrun their discretion. They are on their knees in the mud at this moment."

"They will fight none the worse for that," I remarked; "but surely the troops are advancing!"

"Aye, aye!" cried Saxon joyously, plucking out his sword and tying his handkerchief round the handle to strengthen his grip. "The hour has come! Forwards!"

Very slowly and silently we crept on through the dense fog, our feet splashing and slipping in the sodden soil. With all the care which we could take, the

advance of so great a number of men could not be conducted without a deep sonorous sound from the thousands of marching feet. Ahead of us were splotches of ruddy light twinkling through the fog which marked the royal watch-fires. Immediately in front in a dense column our own horse moved forwards.

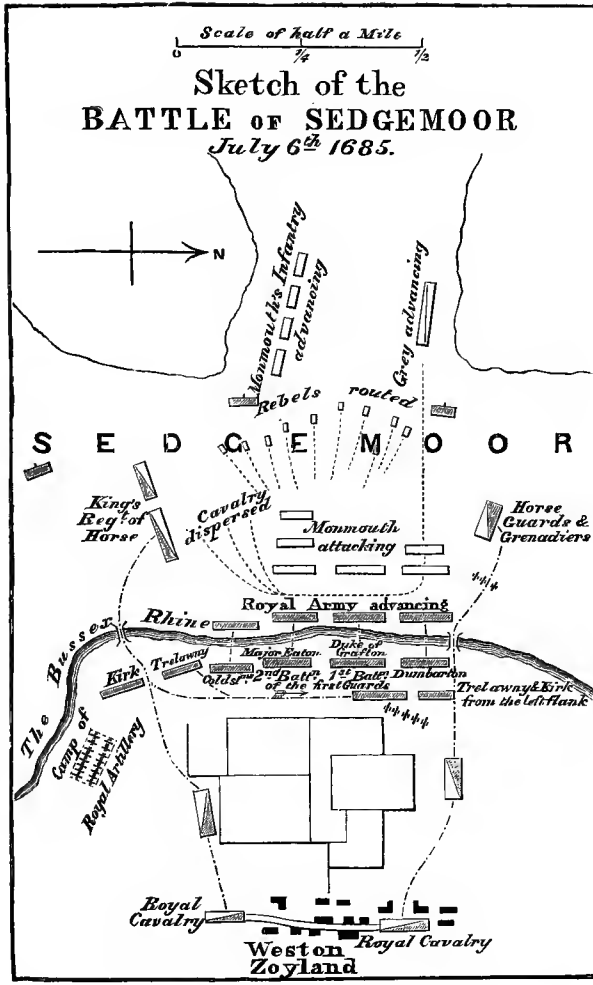
Of a sudden out of the darkness there came a sharp challenge and a shout, with the discharge of a carbine and the sound of galloping hoofs. Away down the line we heard a ripple of shots. The first line of outposts had been reached. At the alarm our horse charged forward with a huzza, and we followed them as fast as our men could run. We had crossed two or three hundred yards of moor, and could hear the blowing of the royal bugles quite close to us, when our horse came to a sudden halt, and our whole advance was at a standstill.

"Forwards, forwards!" cried Sir Gervas and I, waving our swords.

"It is no use, gentlemen," cried a cornet of horse, wringing his hands; "we are undone and betrayed. There is a broad ditch without a ford in front of us, full twenty feet across!"

"Give me room for my horse, and I shall show ye the way across!" cried the baronet, backing his steed. "Now, lads, who's for a jump?"

"Nay, sir, for God's sake!" said a trooper, laying his hand upon his bridle. "Sergeant Sexton hath sprung in even now, and horse and man have gone to the bottom!"



(From Hale's *Fall of Stuarts.*)

"Let us see it, then!" cried Saxon, pushing his way through the crowd of horsemen. We followed close at his heels, until we found ourselves on the borders of the vast trench which impeded our advance.

ar'-dour, zeal, enthusiasm.
bar'-o-net, a title above knight and below baron.
bran'-dished, waved or flourished about.
bri-gade', a part of an army formed of two or more regiments of cavalry or infantry.
Ched'-zoy, a village 3 miles E. of Bridgwater.
High Street, Bridgwater.
rhines, deep ditches or drains.
son-or'-ous, loud-sounding, noisy.
trav'-ersed, crossed. (Lat. *trans*, across.)

XXXV. OF THE ONFALL AT SEDGEMOOR (*continued*).

O this day, I have never been able to make up my mind whether it was by chance or by treachery on the part of our guides that this fosse was overlooked until we stumbled upon it in the dark. There are some who say that the Bussex Rhine, as it is called, is not either deep or broad, and was, therefore, unmentioned by the moorsmen, but that the recent constant rains had swollen it to an extent never before known.

Others say that the guides had been deceived by the fog, and taken a wrong course, whereas, had we followed another track, we might have been able to come upon the camp without crossing the ditch. However that may be, it is certain that we found it stretching in front of us, broad, black, and forbidding, full

twenty feet from bank to bank, with the cap of the ill-fated sergeant just visible in the centre, as a mute warning to all who might attempt to ford it.

"There must be a passage somewhere," cried Saxon furiously. "Every moment is worth a troop of horse to them. Where is my Lord Grey? Hath the guide met with his deserts?"

"Major Hollis hath hurled the guide into the ditch," the young cornet answered. "My Lord Grey hath ridden along the bank seeking for a ford."

I caught a pike out of a footman's hand, and probed into the black oozy mud, standing myself up to the waist in it, and holding Covenant's bridle in my left hand. Nowhere could I touch bottom or find any hope of solid foothold.

"Here, fellow!" cried Saxon, seizing a trooper by the arm. "Make for the rear! Gallop as though a fiend were behind you! Bring up a pair of ammunition waggons, and we shall see whether we cannot bridge this puddle."

"If a few of us could make a lodgment upon the other side we might make it good until help came," said Sir Gervas, as the horseman galloped off upon his mission.

All down the rebel line a fierce low roar of disappointment and rage showed that the whole army had met the same obstacle which hindered our attack. On the other side of the ditch the drums beat, the bugles screamed, and the shouts and oaths of the officers could be heard as they marshalled their men. Glancing lights in Chedzoy, Weston Zoyland, and the

other hamlets to left and right, showed how fast the alarm was extending.

Decimus Saxon rode up and down the edge of the fosse, pattering forth foreign oaths, grinding his teeth in his fury, and rising now and again in his stirrups to shake his gauntleted hands at the enemy.

"For whom are ye?" shouted a hoarse voice out of the haze.

"For the king!" roared the peasants in answer.

"For which king?" cried the voice.

"For King Monmouth!"

"Let them have it, lads!" and instantly a storm of musket bullets whistled and sung about our ears. As the sheet of flame sprang out of the darkness the maddened, half-broken horses dashed wildly away across the plain, resisting the efforts of the riders to pull them up. There are some, indeed, who say that those efforts were not very strong, and that our troopers, disheartened at the check at the ditch, were not sorry to show their heels to the enemy.

As to my Lord Grey, I can say truly that I saw him in the dim light among the flying squadrons, doing all that a brave cavalier could do to bring them to a stand. Away they went, however, thundering through the ranks of the foot and out over the moor, leaving their companions to bear the whole brunt of the battle.

"On to your faces, men!" shouted Saxon, in a voice which rose high above the crash of the mus-

ketry and the cries of the wounded. The pikemen and scythesmen threw themselves down at his command, while the musketeers knelt in front of them, loading and firing, with nothing to aim at save the burning matches of the enemy's pieces, which could be seen twinkling through the darkness. All along, both to the right and the left, a rolling fire had broken out, coming in short, quick volleys from the soldiers, and in a continuous confused rattle from the peasants. On the farther wing our four guns had been brought into play, and we could hear their dull growling in the distance.

"Sing, brothers, sing!" cried our stout-hearted chaplain, Master Joshua Pettigrue, bustling backwards and forwards among the prostrate ranks. "Let us call upon the Lord in our day of trial!"

The men raised a loud hymn of praise, which swelled into a great chorus as it was taken up by the Taunton burghers upon our right and the miners upon our left. At the sound the soldiers on the other side raised a fierce huzza, and the whole air was full of clamour.

Our musketeers had been brought to the very edge of the Bussex Rhine, and the royal troops had also advanced as far as they were able, so that there were not five pikes' lengths between the lines. Yet that short distance was so impassable that, save for the more deadly fire, a quarter of a mile might have divided us.

So near were we that the burning wads from the enemy's muskets flew in flakes of fire over our heads,

and we felt upon our faces the hot, quick flush of their discharges. Yet, though the air was alive with bullets, the aim of the soldiers was too high for our kneeling ranks, and very few of the men were struck.

For our part, we did what we could to keep the barrels of our muskets from inclining upwards. Saxon, Sir Gervas, and I walked our horses up and down without ceasing, pushing them level with our sword-blades, and calling on the men to aim steadily and slowly. The groans and cries from the other side of the ditch showed that some, at least, of our bullets had not been fired in vain.

"We hold our own in this quarter," said I to Saxon. "It seems to me that their fire slackens."

"It is their horse that I fear," he answered. "They can avoid the ditch, since they come from the hamlets on the flank. They may be upon us at any time."

"Hullo, sir!" shouted Sir Gervas, reining up his steed upon the very brink of the ditch, and raising his cap in salute to a mounted officer upon the other side. "Can you tell me if we have the honour to be opposed to the foot-guards?"

"We are Dumbarton's regiment, sir," cried the other. "We shall give ye good cause to remember having met us."

"We shall be across presently to make your further acquaintance," Sir Gervas answered, and at the same moment rolled, horse and all, into the ditch, amid a roar of exultation from the soldiers. Half a dozen of his musketeers sprang instantly, waist deep, into the

mud, and dragged our friend out of danger, but the charger which had been shot through the heart sank without a struggle.

"There is no harm!" cried the baronet, springing to his feet. "I would rather fight on foot like my brave musketeers." The men broke out a-cheering at his words, and the fire on both sides became hotter

Soldier armed with a pike.

Soldier with musket and crutch

than ever. It was a marvel to me and to many more to see these brave peasants with their mouths full of bullets, loading, priming and firing as steadily as though they had been at it all their lives, and holding their own against a veteran regiment which has proved itself in other fields to be second to none in the army of England.

am-mu-ni'-tion, stores for war, especially powder, ball, shot, and shell.
chap'-lain, a clergyman attached to a regiment, army, ship, family, or institution.
for-bid'-ding, repulsive, unpleasant.
fosse, ditch, drain, or rhine. (Lat. *fossa*, a ditch.)
gaunt'-let-ed, wearing a gauntlet or soldier's iron glove.
lodg'-ment, a position taken up by soldiers, etc.
mar'-shalled, arranged in order.
moors'-men, the inhabitants of moorland and marsh.
mus-ket-eers', soldiers armed with muskets, once the ordinary soldiers' gun.
prim'-ing, putting powder on the nipple of the gun.
vet'-er-an, an old and trained soldier. (Lat. *vetus*, old.)
Weston Zoyland, a village 4 miles S.E. of Bridgwater: here and at Hiddlezoy and Chedzoy were encamped the royal forces. After the battle there was a long line of gibbets from Weston Zoyland to Bridgwater.

XXXVI. OF THE ONFALL AT SEDGEMOOR (*continued*).

THE grey light of morning was stealing over the moor, and still the fight was undecided. The fog hung about us in feathery streaks, and the smoke from our guns drifted across in a dun-coloured cloud, through which the long lines of red coats upon the other side of the rhine loomed up like a battalion of giants. My eyes ached and my lips pringled with the smack of the powder. On every side of me men were falling fast, for the increased light had improved the aim of the soldiers.

Our good chaplain, in the very midst of a psalm, had uttered a great shout of praise and thanksgiving, and so passed on to join those of his parishioners who were scattered round him upon the moor. Hope-above

Williams and Keeper Milson, under-officers, and among the stoutest men in the company, were both down, the one dead, and the other sorely wounded, but still ramming down charges and spitting bullets into his gun-barrel. The two Stukeleys of Somerton, twins, and lads of great promise, lay silently with grey faces turned to the grey sky, united in death as they had been in birth.

Everywhere the dead lay thick amid the living. Yet no man flinched from his place, and Saxon still walked his horse among them with words of hope and praise, while his stern, deep-lined face and tall, sinewy figure were a very beacon of hope to the simple rustics. Such of my scythesmen as could handle a musket were thrown forward into the fighting line, and furnished with the arms and pouches of those who had fallen.

Ever and anon as the light waxed I could note through the rifts in the smoke and the fog how the fight was progressing in other parts of the field. On the right the heath was brown with the Taunton and Frome men, who, like ourselves, were lying down to avoid the fire. Along the borders of the Bussex Rhine a deep fringe of their musketeers were exchanging murderous volleys, almost muzzle to muzzle, with the left wing of the same regiment with which we were engaged, which was supported by a second regiment in broad white facings, which I believe belonged to the Wiltshire militia.

On either bank of the black trench a thick line of dead, brown on the one side, and scarlet on the other,

served as a screen to their companions, who sheltered themselves behind them and rested their musket barrels upon their prostrate bodies. To the left amongst the withies lay 500 Mendip and Bagworthy miners, singing lustily, but so ill-armed that they had scarce one gun among ten wherewith to reply to the fire which was poured into them. They could not advance, and they would not retreat, so they sheltered themselves as best they might, and waited patiently until their leaders might decide what was to be done.

Farther down for half a mile or more, the long rolling cloud of smoke, with petulant flashes of flame spurting out through it, showed that every one of our raw regiments was bearing its part manfully. The cannon on the left had ceased firing. The Dutch gunners had left the islanders to settle their own quarrels, and were scampering back to Bridgwater, leaving their silent pieces to the royal horse.

The battle was in this state when there rose a cry of "The king, the king!" and Monmouth rode through our ranks, bare-headed and wild-eyed, with Buyse, Wade, and a dozen more beside him. They pulled up within a spear's length of me, and Saxon, spurring forward to meet them, raised his sword to the salute.

I could not but mark the contrast between the calm, grave face of the veteran, composed yet alert, and the half-frantic bearing of the man whom we were compelled to look upon as our leader.

"How think ye, Colonel Saxon?" he cried wildly. "How goes the fight? Is all well with ye? What an error, alas! what an error! Shall we draw off, eh? How say you?"

"We hold our own here, your majesty," Saxon answered. "Methinks had we something after the nature of palisados or stockados, after the Swedish fashion, we might even make it good against the horse."

"Ah, the horse!" cried the unhappy Monmouth. "If we get over this, my Lord Grey shall answer for it. They ran like a flock of sheep. What leader could do anything with such troops? Oh, lack-a-day, lack-a-day! Shall we not advance?"

"There is no reason to advance, your majesty, now that the surprise has failed," said Saxon. "I had sent for carts to bridge over the trench, but they are useless now. We can but fight it out as we are."

"To throw troops across would be to sacrifice them," said Wade. "Ye have lost heavily, Colonel Saxon, but I think from the look of yonder bank that ye have given a good account of the red coats."

"Stand firm!" cried Monmouth distractedly. "The horse have fled, and the cannoniers also. Oh! what can I do with such men? What shall I do? Alas, alas!" He set spurs to his horse and galloped off down the line, still wringing his hands and uttering his dismal wailings.

As his escort trooped after him, the great German man-at-arms separated from them and turned back to us. "I am weary of trotting up and down like a jockey

at a fair," said he. "If I bide with ye I am like to have my share of any fighting which is going. So, steady, my dear. That ball grazed her tail, but she is too old a soldier to wince at trifles. Hullo, friend, where is your horse?"

"At the bottom of the ditch," said Sir Gervas, scraping the mud off his dress with his sword blade. "'Tis now half-past two," he continued, "and we have been at this child's play for an hour or more. With a line regiment, too! It is not what I had looked forward to!"

"You shall have something to console you anon," cried the German, with his eyes shining. "Is it not splendid? Look to it, friend Saxon, look to it!"

It was no light matter which had so roused the soldier's admiration. Out of the haze which still lay thick upon our right, there twinkled here and there a bright gleam of silvery light, while a dull thundering noise broke upon our ears like that of the surf upon a rocky shore.

More and more frequent came the fitful flashes of steel, louder and yet louder grew the hoarse gathering tumult, until of a sudden the fog was rent, and the long lines of the royal cavalry broke out from it, wave after wave, rich in scarlet and blue and gold, as grand a sight as ever the eye rested upon. There was something in the smooth, steady sweep of so great a body of horsemen which gave the feeling of irresistible power.

Rank after rank, and line after line, with waving standards, tossing manes, and gleaming steel, they

poured onwards, an army in themselves, with either flank still shrouded in the mist. As they thundered along, knee to knee and bridle to bridle, there came from them such a gust of deep-chested oaths with the jangle of harness, the clash of steel, and the measured beat of multitudinous hoofs, that no man who hath not stood up against such a whirlwind, with nothing but a seven-foot pike in his hand, can know how hard it is to face it with a steady lip and a firm grip.

But wonderful as was the sight, there was, as ye may guess, little time for us to gaze upon it. Saxon and the German flung themselves among the pikemen and did all that men could do to thicken their array. Sir Gervas and I did the same with the scythesmen, who had been trained to form a triple front after the German fashion, one rank kneeling, one stooping, and one standing erect, with weapons advanced.

Close to us the Taunton men had hardened into a dark sullen ring, bristling with steel, in the centre of which might be seen and heard their venerable mayor, his long beard fluttering in the breeze, and his strident voice clanging over the field. Louder and louder grew the roar of the horse. "Steady, my brave lads," cried Saxon in trumpet tones. "Dig the pike-butt into the earth! Rest it on the right foot! Give not an inch! Steady!" A great shout went up from either side, and then the living wave broke over us.

What hope is there to describe such a scene as that —the crashing of wood, the sharp, gasping cries, the

snorting of horses, the jar when the push of pike met with the sweep of swords! Who can hope to make another see that of which he himself carries away so vague and dim an impression? One who has acted in such a scene gathers no general sense of the whole combat, such as might be gained by a mere onlooker, but he has stamped for ever on his mind just the few incidents which may chance to occur before his own eyes.

Thus my memories are confined to a swirl of smoke with steel caps and fierce eager faces breaking through it, with the red gaping nostrils of horses and their pawing fore-feet as they recoiled from the hedge of steel. I see, too, a young beardless lad, an officer of dragoons, crawling on hands and knees under the scythes, and I hear his groan as one of the peasants pinned him to the ground. I see a bearded broad-faced trooper riding a grey horse just outside the fringe of the scythes, seeking for some entrance, and screaming the while with rage. Small things imprint themselves upon a man's notice at such a time. I even marked the man's strong white teeth and pink gums. At the same time I see a white-faced thin-lipped man leaning far forward over his horse's neck and driving at me with his sword point, cursing the while as only a dragoon can curse.

al-ert', wide-awake, brisk.
can-non-ier', an artilleryman, one who manages cannon.
dis-tract'-ed-ly, as though harassed, confused, or worried.
dun'-col-oured, dark brown.
islanders, here = the English.
mul-ti-tu'-din-ous, consisting of a multitude or great number.
pal-is-a'-dos, palisades, fences of pointed stakes to defend foot soldiers against cavalry.
pet'-u-lant, bursting or spurting out angrily.

prin'-gled, tasted of gunpowder.
pros'-trate, lying at length on the ground.
re-coiled', shrunk back from.
stock-a'-dos, for stockades—same as palisades.
stri'-dent, grating, harsh.
ven'-er-able, old and worthy of respect.
with'-y, a kind of willow.

XXXVII. OF THE ONFALL AT SEDGEMOOR *(continued)*.

ALL these images start up as I think of that fierce rally, during which I hacked and cut and thrust at man and horse without a thought of parry or of guard. All round rose a fierce babel of shouts and cries, godly ejaculations from the peasants and oaths from the horsemen, with Saxon's voice above all imploring his pikemen to stand firm. Then the cloud of horsemen recoiled, circling off over the plain, and the shout of triumph from my comrades, and an open snuff-box thrust out in front of me, proclaimed that we had seen the back of as stout squadrons as ever followed a kettledrum.

But if we could claim it as a victory the army in general could scarce say as much. None but the very pick of the troops could stand against the flood of heavy horses and steel-clad men. The Frome peasants were gone, swept utterly from the field. Many had been driven by pure weight and pressure into the fatal mud which had checked our advance. Many others, sorely cut and slashed, lay in ghastly heaps all over the ground which they had held. A few by joining our

ranks had saved themselves from the fate of their companions.

Farther off the men of Taunton still stood fast, though in sadly diminished numbers. A long ridge of horses and cavaliers in front of them showed how stern had been the attack and how fierce the resistance. On our left the wild miners had been broken at the first rush, but had fought so savagely, throwing themselves upon the ground and stabbing upwards at the stomachs of the horses, that they had at last beaten off the dragoons.

The Devonshire militiamen, however, had been scattered, and shared the fate of the men of Frome. During the whole of the struggle the foot upon the farther bank of the Bussex Rhine were pouring in a hail of bullets, which our musketeers, having to defend themselves against the horse, were unable to reply to.

It needed no great amount of soldierly experience to see that the battle was lost, and that Monmouth's cause was doomed. It was broad daylight now though the sun had not yet risen. Our cavalry was gone, our ordnance was silent, our line was pierced in many places, and more than one of our regiments had been destroyed.

On the right flank the Horse Guards Blue, the Tangiers Horse, and two dragoon regiments were forming up for a fresh attack. On the left the foot guards had bridged the ditch and were fighting hand to hand with the men from North Somerset. In front a steady fire was being poured into us, to which our reply

was feeble and uncertain, for the powder carts had gone astray in the dark, and many were calling hoarsely for ammunition, while others were loading with pebbles instead of ball.

Add to this that the regiments which still held their ground had all been badly shaken by the charge, and had lost a third of their number. Yet the brave clowns sent up cheer after cheer, and shouted words of encouragement and homely jests to each other, as though a battle were but some rough game which must as a matter of course be played out while there was a player left to join in it.

"Is Captain Clarke there?" cried Decimus Saxon, riding up with his sword-arm flecked with blood. "Ride over to Sir Stephen Timewell and tell him to join his men to ours. Apart we shall be broken—together we may stand another charge."

Setting spurs to Covenant I rode over to our companions and delivered the message. Sir Stephen, who had been struck by a petronel bullet, and wore a crimsoned kerchief bound round his snow-white head, saw the wisdom of the advice, and moved his townsmen as directed. His musketeers, being better provided with powder than ours, did good service by keeping down for a time the deadly fire from across the fosse.

"Who would have thought it of him?" cried Sir Stephen with flashing eyes, as Buyse and Saxon rode out to meet him. "What think ye now of our noble monarch, our champion of the Protestant cause?"

"He is no very great warrior," said Buyse. "Yet


H·R·MILLAR

perhaps it may be from want of habit as much as from want of courage."

"Courage!" cried the old mayor in a voice of scorn. "Look over yonder and behold your king." He pointed out over the moor with a finger which shook as much from anger as from age. There, far away, showing up against the dark peat-coloured soil, rode a gaily-dressed cavalier, followed by a knot of attendants, galloping as fast as his horse would carry him from the field of battle. There was no mistaking the fugitive. It was the recreant Monmouth.

"Hush!" cried Saxon, as we all gave a cry of horror and execration; "do not dishearten our brave lads! Cowardice is catching and will run through an army like the putrid fever."

"The coward!" cried Buyse, grinding his teeth. "And the brave country folk! It is too much."

"Stand to your pikes, men!" roared Saxon in a voice of thunder, and we had scarce time to form our square and throw ourselves inside of it, before the whirlwind of horse was upon us once more. Where the Taunton men had joined us a weak spot had been left in our ranks, and through this in an instant the Blue Guards smashed their way, pouring through the opening, and cutting fiercely to right and left.

The burghers on the one side and our own men on the other replied by savage stabs from their pikes and scythes, which emptied many a saddle, but while the struggle was at its hottest the king's cannon opened for the first time with a deafening roar upon the other side of the rhine, and a storm of balls ploughed their way

through our dense ranks, leaving furrows of dead and wounded behind them. At the same moment a great cry of "Powder!" arose from the musketeers, whose last charge had been fired. Again the cannon roared, and again our men were mowed down as though Death himself with his scythe were amongst us.

At last our ranks were breaking. In the very centre of the pikemen steel caps were gleaming, and broadswords rising and falling. The whole body was swept back two hundred paces or more, struggling furiously the while, and was there mixed with other like bodies which had been dashed out of all semblance of military order, and yet refused to fly. Men of Devon, of Dorset, of Wiltshire, and of Somerset, trodden down by horse, slashed by dragoons, dropping by scores under the rain of bullets, still fought on with a dogged, desperate courage, for a ruined cause and a man who had deserted them.

Everywhere as I glanced around me were set faces, clenched teeth, yells of rage and defiance, but never a sound of fear or of submission. Some clambered up upon the cruppers of the riders and dragged them backwards from their saddles. Others lay upon their faces and hamstrung the chargers with their scythe-blades, stabbing the horsemen before they could disengage themselves.

Again and again the guards crashed through them from side to side, and yet the shattered ranks closed up behind them and continued the long-drawn struggle. So hopeless was it and so pitiable that I could have found it in my heart to wish that they would break and fly,

were it not that on the broad moor there was no refuge which they could make for.

And all this time, while they struggled and fought, blackened with powder and parched with thirst, spilling their blood as though it were water, the man who called himself their king was spurring over the countryside with a loose rein and a quaking heart, his thoughts centred upon saving his own neck, come what might to his gallant followers.

Large numbers of the foot fought to the death, neither giving nor receiving quarter, but at last, scattered, broken, and without ammunition, the main body of the peasants dispersed and fled across the moor, closely followed by the horse. Saxon, Buyse, and I had done all that we could to rally them once more, and I had cut down some of the foremost of the pursuers, when my eye fell suddenly upon Sir Gervas, standing hatless with a few of his musketeers in the midst of a swarm of dragoons.

Spurring our horses we cut a way to his rescue, and laid our swords about us until we had cleared off his assailants for the moment.

"Jump up behind me!" I cried. "We can make good our escape."

He looked up smiling and shook his head. "I stay with my company," said he.

"Your company!" Saxon cried. "Why, man, you are mad! Your company is cut off to the last man."

"That's what I mean," he answered, flicking some dirt from his cravat. "Don't ye mind! Look out for

yourselves. Good-bye, Clarke! Present my compliments to ——" The dragoons charged down upon us again. We were all borne backwards, fighting desperately, and when we could look round the baronet was gone for ever.

We heard afterwards that the king's troops found upon the field a body which they mistook for that of Monmouth, on account of the effeminate grace of the features, and the richness of the attire. No doubt it was that of our undaunted friend, Sir Gervas Jerome, a name which shall ever be dear to my heart.

crup'-per, the place on a horse behind the rider and saddle.
as-sail'-ant, one who attacks.
dis-en-gage', to free, release.
ef-fem'-in-ate, weak, unmanly.
ex-e-cra'-tion, horror, loathing, cursing.
flecked, spotted or streaked.
ham'-strung, lamed the horses by cutting the hamstring, an important sinew in the ham.
par'-ry, in fencing, keeping off your opponent's strokes.
ral'-ly, recovery and standing of one's ground after being thrown into disorder.
rec'-re-ant, coward, mean-spirited wretch.
sem'-blance, likeness, appearance.
Tan-giers' Horse, the soldiers of Colonel Kirke, who had learnt to be cruel and brutal as Governor of Tangiers, which then belonged to England, being part of the dowry brought to Charles II. From the emblem of their regiment and in grim jest they were called "Kirke's Lambs".
un-daunt'-ed, not frightened, bold, intrepid.

XXXVIII. OF THE ONFALL AT SEDGEMOOR (*continued*).

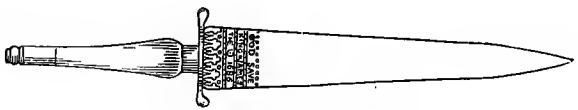
AND now it was every man for himself. In no part of the field did the insurgents continue to resist. The first rays of the sun shining slantwise across the great, dreary plain lit up the long line of the scarlet battalions, and glittered upon the cruel swords which rose and fell among the struggling drove of unresisting fugitives. The German had become separated from us in the tumult, and we knew not whether he lived or was slain, though long afterwards we learned that he made good his escape, only to be captured with the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth.

Grey, Wade, Ferguson, and others had contrived also to save themselves, while Stephen Timewell lay in the midst of a stern ring of his hard-faced burghers, dying as he had lived, a gallant Puritan Englishman. All this we learned afterwards. At present we rode for our lives across the moor, followed by a few scattered bodies of horse, who soon abandoned their pursuit in order to fasten upon some more easy prey.

We were passing a small clump of alder bushes when a loud manly voice raised in prayer attracted our attention. Pushing aside the branches, we came upon a man, seated with his back up against a great stone, cutting at his own arm with a broad-bladed knife, and giving forth the Lord's Prayer the while, without a pause or a quiver in his tone.

As he glanced up from his terrible task we both

recognised him as one Hollis, who had fought with Cromwell at Dunbar. His arm had been half severed by a cannon-ball, and he was quietly completing the separation in order to free himself from the dangling and useless limb. Even Saxon, used as he was to all the forms and incidents of war, stared open-eyed and aghast at this strange surgery; but the man, with a short nod of recognition, went grimly forward with his task, until, even as we gazed, he separated the last shred which held it, and lay over with blanched lips which still murmured the prayer.



Bayonet as made in 1686.

We could do little to help him, and, indeed, might by our halt attract his pursuers to his hiding-place; so, throwing him down my flask half filled with water, we hastened on upon our way. Oh, war, my friends, what a terrible thing it is! How are men cozened and cheated by the rare trappings and prancing steeds, by the empty terms of honour and of glory, until they forget in the outward tinsel and show the real ghastly horror of the accursed thing! Think not of the dazzling squadrons, nor of the spirit-stirring blare of the trumpets, but think of that lonely man under the shadow of the alders, and of what he was doing in a Christian age and a Christian land.

Surely I, who have grown grey in harness, and who have seen as many fields as I have years of my life, should be the last to preach upon this subject, and yet I can clearly see that, in honesty, men must either give up war, or else they must confess that the words of the Redeemer are too lofty for them, and that there is no longer any use in pretending that his teaching can be reduced to practice.

[Clarke and Saxon were chased by an officer and a trooper of the guards. The strength of the one rebel and the skill of the other brought their opponents to the ground. When Saxon would have killed the officer, Clarke restrained him, whereupon they parted in anger.]

There were many scattered bodies of horse riding hither and thither over the marshes, but I was able to avoid them, and trotted onwards, keeping to the waste country until I found myself eight or ten miles from the battle-field. The few cottages and houses which I passed were deserted, and many of them bore signs of having been plundered. Not a peasant was to be seen. The evil fame of Kirke's Lambs had chased away all those who had not actually taken arms. At last, after riding for three hours, I bethought myself that I was far enough from the main line of pursuit to be free from danger, so I chose out a sheltered spot where a clump of bushes overhung a little brook. There, seated upon a bank of velvet moss, I rested my weary limbs, and tried to wash the stains of battle from my person.

It was only now when I could look quietly at my own attire that it was brought home to me how terrible the encounter must have been in which I had been

engaged, and how wonderful it was that I had come off so scatheless. Of the blows which I had struck in the fight I had faint remembrance, yet they must have been many and terrible, for my sword-edge was as jagged and turned as though I had hacked for an hour at an iron bar. From head to foot I was splashed and crimsoned with blood, partly my own, but mostly that of others. My head-piece was dinted with blows. A petronel bullet had glanced off my front plate, striking it at an angle, and had left a broad groove across it. Two or three other cracks and stars showed where the good sheet of proof steel had saved me. My left arm was stiff and well-nigh powerless from a stab I had received, but on stripping off my doublet and examining the place, I found that though there had been much bleeding the wound was on the outer side of the bone, and was therefore of no great import. A kerchief dipped in water and bound tightly round it eased the smart and staunched the blood. Beyond this scratch I had no injuries, though from my own efforts I felt as stiff and sore all over as though I had been well cudgelled, and a slight wound got in a previous skirmish had reopened and was bleeding. With a little patience and cold water, however, I was able to dress it and to tie myself up as well as any chirurgeon in the kingdom.

blanched, white, pale.
chi-rur'-geon (chi=ki), an old form of the word **sur'-geon.**
cor'-por-al, a lower officer in the army, next in rank to a sergeant.
coz'-ened cheated, deceived.
doub'-let an inner garment.
Dun'-bar, in Haddingtonshire, 29 Cromwell routed the Scots under Leslie, who had come to support Charles II., Sept. 3, 1650.
en-coun'-ter, meeting an enemy, a fight.
in-sur'-gents, rebels, those that rise up against the Government.
scathe'-less, unharmed, without injury.

XXXIX. OF MY PERILOUS ADVENTURE AT THE MILL.

IT was now going on to midday, and I began to feel very hungry, for I had tasted nothing since the evening before. Two or three houses stood in a cluster upon the moor, but the blackened walls and scorched thatch showed that it was hopeless to expect anything from them. Once or twice I spied folk in the fields or on the roadway; but at sight of an armed horseman they ran for their lives, diving into the brushwood like wild animals. At one place, where a high oaktree marked the meeting of three roads, two bodies dangling from one of the branches showed that the fears of the villagers were based upon experience. These poor men had in all likelihood been hanged because the amount of their little hoardings had not come up to the expectations of their plunderers; or because, having given all to one band of robbers, they had nothing with which to appease the next. At last, when I was fairly weary of my fruitless search for food, I espied a windmill standing upon a green hill at the other side of some fields. Judging from its appearance that it had escaped the general pillage, I took the pathway which branched away to it from the high road.

At the base of the mill there stood a shed which was evidently used to stall the horses which brought the farmer's grain. Some grass was heaped up inside it, so I loosened Covenant's girths and left him to have a hearty meal. The mill itself appeared to be silent and empty. I climbed the steep wood ladder, and,

pushing the door open, walked into a round, stone-flagged room from which a second ladder led to the loft above.

On one side of this chamber was a long wooden box, and all round the walls were ranged rows of sacks full of flour. In the fireplace stood a pile of faggots ready for lighting, so, with the aid of my tinder-box, I soon had a cheerful blaze. Taking a large handful of flour from the nearest bag I moistened it with water from a pitcher, and, having rolled it out into a flat cake, proceeded to bake it, smiling the while to think of what my mother would say to such rough cookery. Very sure I am, that Patrick Lamb himself, whose book, the *Complete Court Cook*, was ever in the dear soul's left hand while she stirred and basted with her right, could not have turned out a dish which was more to my taste at the moment, for I had not even patience to wait for the browning of it, but snapped it up and devoured it half hot.

I then rolled a second one, and having placed it before the fire, and drawn my pipe from my pocket, I set myself to smoke, waiting with all the philosophy which I could muster until it should be ready.

I was lost in thought, brooding sadly over the blow which the news would be to my father, when I was startled by a loud sneeze, which sounded as though it were delivered in my very ear. I started to my feet and gazed all round me, but there was nothing save the solid wall behind and the empty chamber before.

I had almost come to persuade myself that I had

" I dragged the man from his hiding-place."

been the creature of some delusion, when again a crashing sneeze, louder and more prolonged than the last, broke upon the silence. Could some one be hid in one of the bags? Drawing my sword I walked round pricking the great flour sacks, but without being able to find cause for the sound.

I was still marvelling over the matter when a most extraordinary chorus of gasps, snorts, and whistles broke out, with cries and such exclamations. This time there could be no doubt as to whence the uproar came. Rushing up to the great chest upon which I had been seated, I threw back the heavy lid and gazed in.

It was more than half full of flour, in the midst of which was floundering some creature, which was so coated and caked with the white powder, that it would have been hard to say that it was human, were it not for the pitiable cries which it was uttering. Stooping down I dragged the man from his hiding-place, when he dropped upon his knees upon the floor and yelled for mercy, raising such a cloud of dust from every wriggle of his body that I began to cough and to sneeze.

As the skin of powder began to scale off from him, I saw to my surprise that he was no miller or peasant, but was a man-at-arms, with a huge sword girt to his side, looking at present not unlike a frosted icicle, and a great steel-faced breast-plate. His steel cap had remained behind in the flour-bin, and his bright red hair, the only touch of colour about him, stood straight up in the air with terror, as he

implored me to spare his life. Thinking that there was something familiar about his voice, I drew my hand across his face, which set him yelling as though I had slain him.

ap-pease', to quiet, pacify.
bast'-ed, dropped fat over the meat while it was roasting.
brood'-ing, thinking anxiously over.
de-lu'-sion, a mistaken fancy, error of the mind.
phil-os'-oph-y, wisdom, the calm reasoning which helps one to bear ills contentedly.
tin'-der box, a box for holding tinder. Before lucifer matches came in, fire was made by striking a spark on flint and catching it on a piece of tinder.

XL. OF MY PERILOUS ADVENTURE AT THE MILL (*continued*).

THERE was no mistaking the heavy cheeks and the little greedy eyes. It was none other than Master Tetheridge, the noisy town-clerk of Taunton.

But how much changed from the town-clerk whom we had seen strutting, in all the pomp and bravery of his office, before the good mayor on the day of our coming to Somersetshire! As he knelt, his great jack-boots clicked together with apprehension, and he poured forth in a piping voice a string of pleadings, excuses and entreaties, as though I were Feversham in person and were about to order him to instant execution.

"I am but a poor scrivener man, your serene highness," he bawled. "Indeed, I am a most un-

happy clerk, your honour, who has been driven into these courses by the tyranny of those above him. A more loyal man, your grace, never wore neat's leather, but when the mayor says 'Yes,' can the clerk say

James II. : from the National Portrait Gallery.

'No'? Spare me, your lordship, spare a most penitent wretch, whose only prayer is that he may be allowed to serve King James to the last drop of his blood!"

"Do you renounce the Duke of Monmouth?" I asked in a stern voice.

"I do—from my heart!" said he fervently.

"Then prepare to die!" I roared, whipping out my sword, "for I am one of his officers."

At the sight of the steel the wretched clerk gave a perfect bellow of terror, and falling upon his face he wriggled and twisted, until, looking up, he perceived that I was laughing. On that he crawled up on to his knees once more, and from that to his feet, glancing at me askance, as though by no means assured of my intentions.

"You must remember me, Master Tetheridge," I said. "I am Captain Clarke, of Saxon's regiment of Wiltshire foot. I am surprised, indeed, that you should have fallen away from that allegiance to which you did not only swear yourself, but did administer the oath to so many others."

"Not a whit, captain, not a whit!" he answered, resuming his old bantam-cock manner as soon as he saw that there was no danger. "I am upon oath as true and as leal a man as ever I was."

"That I can fully believe," I answered.

"I did but dissimulate," he continued, brushing the flour from his person. "I did but practise that cunning of the serpent which should in every warrior accompany the courage of the lion."

"Wilt have a half of this cake?" said I. "How came you in the flour-bin?"

"Why, marry, in this wise," he answered, with his mouth full of dough. "It was a wile or ruse, after the

fashion of the greatest commanders, who have always been famous for concealing their movements, and lurking where they were least expected. For when the fight was lost, and I had cut and hacked until my arm was weary and my edge blunted, I found that I was left alone alive of all the Taunton men. Were we on the field you could see where I had stood by the ring of slain which would be found within the sweep of my sword-arm. Finding that all was lost and that our rogues were fled, I mounted our worthy mayor's charger, seeing that the gallant gentleman had no further need for it, and rode slowly from the field.

"Having ridden then some leagues from the field, and noting this windmill, it did occur to me that a stout man might single-handed make it good against a troop of horse. I pulled up, therefore, and had dismounted to take my observations, when my brute of a charger gave the bridle a twitch, jerked itself free, and was off in an instant over hedges and ditches. I had, therefore, only my good sword left to trust to.

"I climbed up the ladder, and was engaged in planning how the defence could best be conducted when I heard the clank of hoofs, and on the top of it you did ascend from below. I retired at once into ambush, from which I should assuredly have made a sudden outfall or sally, had the flour not so choked my breathing that I felt as though I had a two-pound loaf stuck in my gizzard. For myself, I am glad that it has so come about, for in my blind wrath I might unwittingly have done you an injury. Hearing the clank of your sword as you did come up the ladder, I did

opine that you were one of King James's minions, the captain, perchance, of some troop in the fields below."

ap-pre-hen'-sion, terror, anxiety.
as-kance', sideways.
ban'-tam cock, a small kind of fowl which makes up for size by the importance with which it struts about.
brav'-er-y, finery, smart dress.
dis-sim'-u-late, to assume a disguise, pretend to be something else, dissemble.
fer'-vent-ly, ardently, warmly, with zeal.
giz'-zard, the hard stomach of a bird, only applied to man in jest.
leal, true, faithful, *loyal.*
min'-ions, servants, and flatterers (especially of kings).
ruse, an artful trick.
town'-clerk, an official who keeps the records of a town and generally acts as its secretary.

XLI. OF MY PERILOUS ADVENTURE AT THE MILL (*continued*).

"ALL very clear and explicit, Master Tetheridge," said I, re-lighting my pipe. "No doubt your demeanour when I did draw you from your hiding-place was also a mere cloak for your valour. But enough of that. It is to the future that we have to look. What are your intentions?"

"To remain with you, captain," said he.

"Nay, that you shall not," I answered; "I have no great fancy for your companionship. Your overflowing valour may bring me into ruffles which I had otherwise avoided."

"Nay, nay! I shall moderate my spirit," he cried. "In such troublous times you will find yourself none the worse for the company of a tried fighting-man."

"Tried and found wanting," said I, weary of the man's braggart talk. "I tell you I will go alone."

"Nay, you need not be so hot about it," he ex-

claimed, shrinking away from me. "In any case, we had best stay here until nightfall, when we may make our way to the coast."

"That is the first mark of sense that you have shown," said I. "The king's horse will find enough to do with the Zoyland cider and the Bridgwater ale. If we can pass through, I have friends on the north coast who would give us a lift in their lugger as far as Holland. This help I will not refuse to give you, since you are my fellow in misfortune. But now that we have refreshed ourselves it is time that we bethought us of taking some rest, since we may have far to travel this night."

"The matter of slumber may be readily arranged," said my companion. "If you ascend that ladder you will find in the loft a litter of empty sacks, upon which you can repose. For myself, I will stay down here for a while and cook myself another cake."

"Do you remain on watch for two hours and then arouse me," I replied. "I shall then keep guard whilst you sleep." He touched the hilt of his sword as a sign that he would be true to his post, so, not without some misgivings, I climbed up into the loft, and throwing myself upon the rude couch was soon in a deep and dreamless slumber, lulled by the low mournful groaning and creaking of the sails.

I was awoken by steps beside me, and found that the little clerk had come up the ladder and was bending over me. I asked him if the time had come for me to rouse, on which he answered in a strange quavering voice that I had yet an hour, and that he

had come up to see if there was any service which he could render me. I was too weary to take much note of his slinking manner and pallid cheeks, so, thanking him for his attention, I turned over and was soon asleep once more.

My next waking was a rougher and a sterner one. There came a sudden rush of heavy feet up the ladder, and a dozen red coats swarmed into the room. Springing on to my feet I put out my hand for the sword which I had laid all ready at my side, but the trusty weapon had gone. It had been stolen whilst I slumbered.

Unarmed and taken at a vantage, I was struck down and pinioned in a moment. One held a pistol to my head, and swore that he would blow my brains out if I stirred, while the others wound a coil of rope round my body and arms, until Samson himself could scarce have got free. Feeling that my struggles were of no possible avail, I lay silent and waited for whatever was to come.

Having lashed my arms, the soldiers dragged me down the ladder, as though I had been a truss of hay, into the room beneath, which was also crowded with troopers. In one corner was the wretched scrivener, a picture of abject terror, with chattering teeth and trembling knees, only prevented from falling upon the floor by the grasp of a stalwart corporal.

In front of him stood two officers, one a little hard brown man with dark twinkling eyes and an alert manner, the other tall and slender, with a long golden moustache, which drooped down half-way to his

shoulders. The former had my sword in his hand, and they were both examining the blade curiously.

"It is a good bit of steel, Dick," said one, putting the point against the stone floor, and pressing down until he touched it with the handle. "See, with what a snap it rebounds! No maker's name, but the date 1638 is stamped upon the pommel. Where did you get it, fellow?" he asked, fixing his keen gaze upon my face.

"It was my father's before me," I answered.

"Then I trust that he drew it in a better quarrel than his son hath done," said the taller officer with a sneer.

"He drew it in as good, though not in a better."

"Very like," said the other, twirling his moustache. "But we have no time for fine speeches now. What are we to do with the little one?"

"Hang him," the other answered carelessly.

"No, no, your most gracious honours," howled Master Tetheridge, suddenly writhing out of the corporal's grip and flinging himself upon the floor at their feet. "Did I not tell ye where ye could find one of the stoutest soldiers of the rebel army? Did not I guide ye to him? Did not I even creep up and remove his sword lest any of the king's subjects be slain in the taking of him? Surely, surely, ye would not use me so scurvily when I have done ye these services! Have I not made good my words? Is he not as I described him, a giant in stature and of wondrous strength? The whole army will bear me out in it, that he was worth any two in single fight.

I have given him over to ye. Surely ye will let me go!"

"What this reptile hath said is true," replied the tall officer. "We must keep faith with him if we wish that others of the country folks should give up the fugitives. There is no help for it!"

"For myself I believe in Jeddart law," his companion answered. "I would hang the man first and then discuss the question of our promise. However, pink me if I will obtrude my opinion on any man!"

"Nay, it cannot be," the taller said. "Corporal, do you take him down. Henderson will go with you. Take from him that plate and sword which his mother would wear with as good a grace. And, hark ye, corporal, a few touches of thy stirrup leathers across his fat shoulders might not be amiss, as helping him to remember the king's dragoons."

My treacherous companion was dragged off, struggling and yelping, and presently a series of piercing howls, growing fainter and fainter as he fled before his tormentors, announced that the hint had been taken. The two officers rushed to the little window of the mill and roared with laughter, while the troopers, peeping furtively over their shoulders, could not restrain themselves from joining in their mirth, from which I gathered that Master Tetheridge, as, spurred on by fear, he hurled his fat body through hedges and into ditches, was a somewhat comical sight.

"And now for the other," said the little officer, turning away from the window and wiping the tears of laughter from his face. "That beam over yonder

would serve our purpose. Where is hangman Broderick, the Jack Ketch of the Royals?"

"Here I am, sir," responded a sullen, heavy-faced trooper, shuffling forward; "I have a rope here with a noose."

"Throw it over the beam, then."

"The noose placed round my neck with trembling fingers."

Three or four troopers caught me by the arms, but I shook them off as best I might, and walked with, as I trust, a steady step and a cheerful face under the beam, which was a great smoke-blackened rafter passing from one side of the chamber to the other. The rope was thrown over this, and the noose placed

round my neck with trembling fingers by the hangman. Half a dozen dragoons seized the farther end of the coil, and stood ready to swing me into eternity.

"We must do our work with order," remarked the taller captain, taking a note-book from his pocket. "Colonel Sarsfield may desire some details. What is your name, sirrah?"

"My name is Captain Micah Clarke," I answered.

The two officers looked at each other, and the smaller one gave a long whistle. "It is the very man!" said he. "This comes of asking questions! Rat me, if I had not the misgivings that it might prove to be so. They said that he was large of limb."

"Tell me, sirrah, have you ever known one Major Ogilvy of the Horse Guards Blue?" asked the captain.

"Seeing that I had the honour of taking him prisoner," I replied, "and seeing also that he hath shared soldier's fare and quarters with me ever since, I think I may fairly say that I do know him."

Colonel Sarsfield, a famous soldier; he fought against Monmouth at Sedgemoor, and for James II. against William III. in Ireland after the revolution of 1688.

de-mean'-our, behaviour, conduct.

ex-plic'-it, very plain and clear.

fur'-tive-ly, stealthily, secretly.

Jed'-dart law, summary justice, hanging first and trying afterwards. Jeddart or Jedburgh is not far from the border between England and Scotland, where there were many bold robbers and raiders to keep in order and constant feuds.

mis-giv'-ings, secret mistrust, want of confidence.

pin'-ioned, secured by binding the arms.

pink, pierce, stab.

pom'-mel, the knob on a sword-hilt (compare French *pomme,* an apple).

XLII. OF MY PERILOUS ADVENTURE AT THE MILL (*continued*).

"CAST loose the cord!" said the officer, and the hangman reluctantly slipped the cord over my head once more. "Young man, you are surely reserved for something great, for you will never be nearer your grave until you do actually step into it. This Major Ogilvy hath made great interest both for you and for a wounded comrade of yours who lies at Bridgwater. Your name hath been given to the commanders of horse, with orders to bring you in unscathed should you be taken.

"Yet it is but fair to tell you that, though the major's good word may save you from martial law, it will stand you in small stead before a civil judge, before whom you must in the end take your trial."

"I desire to share the same lot and fortune as has befallen my companions in arms," I answered.

[The remaining chapters tell how Judge Jeffreys came to the West and held his famous assize; how the prisoners were first browbeaten and insulted, then hanged by the score; and how a number of them were transported to the American colonies or the West Indies. Among the last should have been Micah Clarke, but, just as the ship in whose hold he was lying chained was about to sail from Poole Harbour, Saxon, of all men in the world, came on board and bought him off. Clarke asked Saxon how he had managed to obtain his own liberty.]

"Why, marry, it is no mystery," answered the

veteran. "Cunning old birds are not to be caught with chaff. When I left you I made for a certain inn where I could count upon finding a friend. There I lay by for a while, while I could work out the plan that was in my head. Well, I bethought me early in the affair of your visit to Badminton, and of the Duke of B. We shall mention no names, but you can follow my meaning. To him I sent a messenger, to the effect that I proposed to purchase my own pardon by letting out all that I knew concerning his double dealing with the rebels. The message was carried to him secretly, and his answer was that I should meet him at a certain spot by night. I sent my messenger instead of myself, and he was found in the morning stiff and stark, with more holes in his doublet than ever the tailor made.

"On this I sent again, raising my demands and insisting upon a speedy settlement. He asked my conditions. I replied, a free pardon and a command for myself; for you, money enough to land you safely in some foreign country where you can pursue the noble profession of arms. I got them both, though it was like drawing teeth from his head. His name hath much power at court just now, and the king can refuse him nothing. I have my pardon and a command of troops in New England. For you I have two hundred pieces, of which thirty have been paid in ransom to the captain, while twenty are due to me for my disbursements over the matter. In this bag you will find the odd hundred and fifty, of which you will pay fifteen to the fishermen who have promised to see you safe to

Flushing. Farewell, lad, and may fortune go with you!"

I pressed the rough soldier's horny hand, and descended into the fishing-boat. The rope that held us was cast off, the sail mounted up, and the boat shot out across the bay. Onward she went and on, through the gathering gloom—a gloom as dark and impenetrable as the future towards which my life's barque was driving. Soon the long rise and fall told us that we were over the harbour bar and out in the open channel. On the land scattered, twinkling lights at long stretches marked the line of the coast. As I gazed backwards a cloud trailed off from the moon, and I saw the hard lines of the brig's rigging stand out against the white cold disk. By the shrouds stood the veteran, holding to a rope with one hand, and waving the other in farewell and encouragement. Another great cloud blurred out the light, and that lean, sinewy figure with its long, extended arm was the last which I saw for a weary time of the dear country where I was born and bred.

Reuben Lockarby was ill for many months, but when he at last recovered he found a pardon awaiting him through the interest of Major Ogilvy. After a time, when the troubles were all blown over, he married the grand daughter of Mayor Timewell.

One word of another friend. When Dutch William had been ten years upon the English throne there was still to be seen in the field by my father's house a tall strong-boned horse, whose grey skin was flecked with dashes of white. And it was ever observed that, should the soldiers be passing from Portsmouth, or should the

clank of trumpet or the rattle of drum break upon his ear, he would arch his old neck, throw out his grey streaked tail, and raise his stiff knees in a pompous and pedantic canter. The country folk would stop to watch these antics of the old horse, and then the chances are that one of them would tell the rest how that charger had borne one of their own village lads to the wars, and how, when the rider had to fly the country, a kindly sergeant in the king's troops had brought the steed as a remembrance of him to his father at home. So Covenant passed the last years of his life, a veteran among steeds, well fed and cared for, and much given, mayhap, to telling in equine language to all the poor, silly, country steeds the wonderful passages which had befallen him in the West.

a certain inn, that is Dame Hobson's inn at Bruton.
as-size', the sitting of the court when the judge comes round to a town to try cases.
brow'-beat-en, bullied and shouted down.
civ'-il, under the ordinary, not military law.
dis-burse'-ments, money paid out.
Dutch William, William III., 1689-1702.
e'-quine, of horses (Lat. *equus*, a horse).
Flush'-ing, a fortified seaport in Holland on the Island of Walcheren.
im-pen'-e-trable, that cannot be pierced or penetrated.
Judge Jeffreys, the judge who made himself for ever infamous by his brutality after the rebellion. James II. rewarded him by making him lord chancellor.
mar'-tial law, when the ordinary law is set aside and a place put under direct military rule.
pe-dant'-ic, making a vain display (often of learning).
pomp'-ous, displaying pomp or pride.
Poole, a seaport in Dorsetshire.
stark, stiff.

THE END.

THE ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY PRESS LIMITED.