

A tale of The Boyne & Limerick

Orange & Green

by

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In the meantime a great army, which was to be led by King William in person, was being collected in England. It consisted of a strange medley, collected from almost every European nation—English, Scotch, Irish Protestants, French Huguenots, Dutch, Swedes, Danes, Brandenburgers, Swiss, Norwegians, and Hessians. More than half, indeed, were foreigners. All were well disciplined, armed, and clothed. In all, including the force under Schomberg, the army amounted to forty-three thousand men and fifty cannon.

King William landed at Carrickfergus on the 14th of June, and the combined army at once began their southward march. Against this force King James collected but twenty thousand men. Of these six thousand were French ; they had arrived under the command of the Count de Lauzun in March, but they had not increased the numbers of King James' troops, for he had been obliged to send in exchange an equal number of his best trained soldiers under Lord Mountcashel for service in France. Of the fourteen thousand native troops, the Irish horse, which was raised and officered by Irish gentlemen, was excellent, but the infantry was composed for the most part of raw levies, but half-armed, and the only artillery consisted of twelve guns, which had arrived with the infantry from France.

It was a sad parting when Captain Davenant and Walter left home for the front. The former was filled with gloomy forebodings. He could scarcely hope that the ill-trained levies of James could succeed against the vastly superior force of disciplined troops with whom they had now to cope ; especially as the latter were led by an able and energetic general, while the former were hampered by the incompetence and vacillation of James. The day before they started Captain Davenant rode over to the Whitefoots and had a talk with Jabez.

“ I know not how the campaign will go,” he said. “ If we are beaten we shall probably retire to the west and maintain the war there. In that case, Dublin will of course fall into the hands of William. Should this be so I will ask you to reverse our late position, and to extend what assistance you can to my wife and mother. It may be that if I do not return here none will disturb them. I have not made myself obnoxious to my Protestant neighbors, and no one may take the trouble to bring it before the notice of the English that I am absent fighting with the army of King James. If, however, they should do so, and the castle and what remains of the estates be confiscated, will you lend what aid you can to the ladies and my younger boy until I or Walter return from the war ?”

“ That will I do right gladly,” Jabez said heartily. “ Should I hear any talk of what you speak of I will go up to Dublin with some of our friends and ministers, and we will testify to the good relations which have existed between you and your Protestant neighbors, and entreat that no measures be taken against your estate. Should we not prevail, be assured that I will look after the comfort of the ladies as if they were of my own family. I can well understand that Mrs. Davenant the elder would not accept the shelter of our roof whatever her ex-

tremity. She belongs to the generation of my father, and cannot forget the past ; but I will see that they are well lodged in Bray, and have every protection from molestation and annoyance there. Should I find, as, alas ! may be the case, that the spirit of religious persecution is fiercely abroad, I will consult with them as to whether they may wish to cross the sea until you can join them, and will make arrangements as they may direct for their passage.”

“ I am truly obliged to you,” Captain Davenant said. “ It will make me comfortable to know that, whatsoever may befall me, they will have a friend in these stormy times.”

“ Say nought about it,” Jabez replied. “ Did not you and your son succor my boy in his extremity ? If I do all and more than all that I can in this matter I shall not deem that we are quits.”

The Irish army moved forward to the Boyne, which William was approaching from the north. James’ officers endeavored to dissuade him from setting everything on the hazard of the battle. They represented that his army, though now quite unequal to the contest, was rapidly improving in skill and confidence in itself ; that reinforcements were every day expected from France, which would at least make them equal to the enemy in numbers ; that they were in want of arms, artillery, and stores, all which might be expected also from France in a short period ; and that their policy was clearly to protract the war, and wear out the enemy by a contest of posts and sieges.

Unskilled as his troops might be in the field, they had proved themselves steady and resolute in the defense of fortified places ; they held all the great fortresses of the kingdom, and it would be easy to provide for the defense of these, and to occupy William’s army in small affairs till the winter, when the climate would do execution upon the invaders, while the Irish would suffer little. Then would be the time to fight.

In the meantime, it was urged, the intrigues the French were actively carrying out in Britain would have produced some effect : the French fleet was every day expected on the coast of England, and William would soon be compelled to return to that country, if not to recall the greater part of his army. In Scotland, too, the French were busy ; and there were materials in that country for creating a powerful diversion. To fight now would be to forego every advantage, and to meet the views of William, whose obvious interest it was to bring the contest to an immediate decision now while every circumstance was in his favor.

But James, who had hitherto shown nothing but timidity and hesitation, was now seized with an impulse of valor. Having acted with unfortunate cowardice before Derry and Schomberg’s camp at Dundalk, he was as unfortunately now seized with ardor to fight when prudence and discretion would have been his best policy. But while James was determining to fight in the teeth of the opinion and advice of his bravest officers, his true character was shown in his taking every precaution for his personal safety. He sent off his heavy baggage, and engaged a vessel at Waterford to convey him to France.

William, on the other hand, was naturally eager for an early engagement. He was still very insecurely seated upon the English throne. The people were either discontented or indifferent. They looked with impatience and indignation at the crowd of Dutch officers and civilians whom William had brought over with him ; while the cold and ungracious manner of the king contrasted most unfavorably with the bearing to which they had been accustomed in English monarchs.

In Scotland the Jacobite spirit was gathering in strength, and William knew that unless he speedily broke the strength of James' party in Ireland he would very shortly be confronted with difficulties and dangers on all sides.

The position which the Irish army occupied was a strong one. Its right rested upon Drogheda, a strong town in their possession. In front was the Boyne, with steep banks lined with thick hedges, with cottages scattered here and there, offering an excellent position for light troops. On the left the Boyne turned almost at a right angle, and formed a defense on this flank. To the rear the Irish position was covered by high hills and the village of Donore. Further back was the pass of Duleek.

The hedges and cottages by the river side were occupied by the Irish infantry, and upon some little hillocks which ran along the water's edge they erected some light batteries.

King William reconnoitered the position with great attention, and saw that it had been well chosen and its advantages turned to account. Notwithstanding the reports of deserters and others, he showed much anxiety to determine the exact strength of the Irish.

After examining the position for some time from a height he rode down toward the river accompanied by several of his officers. When within musket-shot of the bank, near the ford and village of Old Bridge, he perceived that a small island in the Boyne was occupied by a party of the Irish horse. Near the ford some field-works had been thrown up. It was at this point that the king determined to cross the river, and he spent some time conversing with his officers as to the arrangements for the passage.

He then rode slowly along the river bank until he arrived nearly opposite the left of the Irish line. Here he alighted from his horse, and sat down on rising ground watching his own battalions, which were marching with the greatest regularity and order into the positions assigned to them. While he was so engaged some officers of James' army were observed riding quietly along the opposite bank of the river, and also engaged in watching the movements of the British troops.

These were General Sarsfield, the Duke of Berwick, the Marquis of Tyrconnell, the Count de Lauzun, and others. Some of the English dragoons approached the river and were fired upon by the Irish. They returned the fire, and while the attention of both sides was engaged by the skirmish a party of Irish cavalry moved slowly down toward the river and halted behind a low hedge, and then wheeling about again retired.

The movements of the king and the group of officers accompanying him had been observed in the Irish army, and two field-pieces were sent down concealed in the center of the cavalry. The guns had been placed behind the hedge when the horsemen withdrew, and when William rose from the ground and mounted his horse fire was opened. The first cannon-shot killed two horses and a man by his side. The next grazed the king's right shoulder, tearing away his coat and inflicting a slight flesh wound. Had the aim been slightly more accurate, or had the gunners fired with grape instead of round shot, it is probable that the whole course of history would have been changed.

The rumor spread through both armies that the king was killed ; but the wound was a slight one, and having had it hastily bound up the king rode quietly through the camps in order to show the men that the hurt was not serious. In the evening he called a council of war. The Duke of Schomberg was strongly opposed to an attack upon the enemy while posted in so strong a position, and urged that by making a turning movement and marching straight

upon Dublin the enemy would be obliged to fall back and fight under less advantageous circumstances ; but the king, relying upon his superior numbers and the discipline of his veteran troops, determined to attack at once, knowing that it was all-important to bring the matter to a decision as early as possible.

Schomberg then urged the necessity of occupying the pass of Slane upon the Boyne, considerably to the west of the Irish line, as he would thus cut off their retreat, and, in the event of victory, render their defeat a decided one ; but the king saw that he should require his whole force to dislodge the Irish from their position, and that it was useless to occupy the pass of Slane with a small detachment, as these would be overwhelmed by the retiring Irish.

It was twelve o'clock at night before the council terminated, and then the king mounted his horse and rode through the camp. He examined into the state and preparation of each regiment, saw that the soldiers were abundantly supplied with food and refreshment for the morning, and that sufficient ammunition for the day's work had been served out. He directed the men to wear green branches in their caps, and gave " Westminster " as the word for the day.

The order of the battle finally determined upon was that the right wing of the army, under General Douglas and Count Schomberg, son of the duke, should pass the river at Slane and endeavor to turn the Irish left between Slane and Duleek. The left wing were to penetrate between the Irish right and Drogheda ; the center to force the passage of the river at the ford of Old Bridge.

A council was also held in James' camp, and here also there was difference of opinion. Some of the generals wished to hold the pass of Slane in force, but James decided against this. As the morning approached the king's new-born courage began to die out ; he ordered some movements to the rear, and sent forward more of his baggage. He would probably have declined the combat altogether had it not been too late. Finally, just as day was breaking over the council, he determined that the army should retreat during the battle and not commit themselves in a decisive engagement. The French formed the left, and were to lead the retreat, while the Irish held the right and center.

It is almost certain that if James had kept to his resolution to fight, imprudent as it appeared to be, and had brought the French battalion into action instead of leading them out of the field, the result of the battle of the Boyne would have been a very different one.

Boyne Water.

THE morning of Tuesday, the 1st of July, 1690, broke calm and bright. At about six o'clock in the morning the English right wing, under General Douglas and Count Schomberg, marched toward Slane. It consisted of twenty-four squadrons of horse and six battalions of infantry. As they marched along at the back of the river they discovered several shallows, and crossed without proceeding as far as Slane. No serious resistance was offered to their passage of the Boyne, as the Irish had here only some parties of skirmishers, who fell back as they advanced.

After forming the troops in order Douglas and Schomberg advanced, but presently perceived the French battalions and a great part of the Irish cavalry, forming the left wing of James' army, drawn up in order at some distance. They consequently halted and sent for reinforcements. When these arrived they extended their lines to the right, so as to outflank the enemy, and, supporting their cavalry by alternate battalions of infantry, again moved forward.

The Irish skirmishers fell back before their advance, taking advantage of the banks of the ditches, which divided the ground into small fields, and keeping up a galling fire upon the British as they advanced. With some difficulty the latter passed over this broken ground and formed in order of battle on the edge of what appeared to be a plain, but which was in fact a deep bog, which completely covered the Irish left. Here they came to a standstill.

William had waited until he believed that his right would have had time to fall upon the Irish left, and then ordered his center to advance and force the passage at Old Bridge. The Dutch guards, whom William relied upon as his best and most trustworthy troops, advanced in splendid order to the river side, with their drums beating the march.

When they reached the water's edge the drums ceased, and the soldiers entered the river. The stream rose as the dense column marched in and dammed it up, and the water reached the shoulders of the grenadiers, but they still moved on in regular order, keeping their arms and ammunition dry by holding them above their heads. On the opposite bank the hedges near the brink of the river were lined with skirmishers, while in the rear, in a hollow covered by some little hills, seven regiments of Irish infantry, supported by ten troops of horse and Tyrconnell's regiment of cavalry, were drawn up. The hills protected them from the fire of the British batteries, which passed over their heads.

The Dutch troops continued their way unmolested until they reached the middle of the river, when a hot fire was opened upon them from the Irish skirmishers ; but the Dutch moved on unshaken and soon gained the opposite bank, where they rapidly formed up, the skirmishers retiring before them. Scarcely had the Dutch formed their squares when the Irish horse burst down upon them at full speed and charged them with impetuosity.

They stood the charge unbroken, but again and again the Irish horse charged down upon them with the greatest gallantry. William pushed two regiments of French Huguenots and one of British across the river to the assistance of the Dutch guards, and ordered Sir John Hanmars and the Count of Nassau's regiment to cross lower down the stream to support them.

As the supports were making a passage, General Hamilton advanced at the head of a body of Irish infantry to the water's edge, and dashing into the river encountered the French Huguenot regiments in the middle of the stream. A desperate fight ensued, but the French made their way across, and Hamilton, falling back with his infantry, opened to the right and left, permitting the Irish horse to charge through them.

These rushed with fury upon the French regiment of Colonel La Callimot, and cut their way right through them. Then wheeling they charged them in flank again, broke them and drove them into the river. La Callimot himself was killed, and but few of his regiment regained the opposite bank. In the meantime the Dutch guards, now reinforced, were advancing slowly, the Irish infantry holding fast to the hedges and brushwood, and contesting every inch of the ground, while, wherever the ground permitted it, the Irish horse burst down upon them, evincing a gallantry and determination which would have done honor to the finest cavalry in Europe.

The king continued to make repeated efforts to support his Dutch troops, and after the French were broken he pushed forward the Danish horse ; but no sooner had they crossed the bank than the Irish cavalry burst down upon them, broke them and drove them back into the river. They fled across the stream in disorder, and dispersed in all directions.

So far success had rested principally with the Irish ; the Dutch guards alone remained unbroken in the center ; the French infantry and Danish horse were broken and destroyed. Old Duke Schomberg exerted himself to the utmost to restore the battle at this point, and having rallied the French infantry advanced with them, and a few French cavalry, toward the river, where he was met by some of the Irish horse returning from the pursuit of the Danes. The old duke was cut down and his party again routed, and at the same moment Walker, the clerical commander of Derry, received a mortal wound.

After his successful defense of Derry, this man had gone to London, where he had been fêted and made much of, and had then attached himself to King William's army, where he posed as a high military authority, although much discouraged by the king, whom his arrogance and airs of authority displeased.

While in the center William's forces were getting worsted, and on his right Douglas and Count Schomberg were inactive and powerless, he himself was leading his left wing across the river. The passage was a difficult one, and the king himself was only extricated with much exertion from a quicksand into which his horse had plunged.

The Irish did not oppose the crossing, and as soon as his forces were across the stream William ranged them in order. They consisted of a large body of Danish, Dutch, and Enniskillen horse, and a considerable force of infantry. As soon as all were in order the king, though still suffering from the wound he had received the day before, drew his sword and put himself at the head of his troops. The Irish right wing, which consisted chiefly of infantry, moved forward to meet them, but perceiving the numerous cavalry, led by the king himself, preparing to take them in flank, they halted, faced about and marched slowly to the little hill of Donore. Having gained this point, they again faced round and charged down upon the British who had followed them closely.

At this moment the Irish cavalry, who had moved rapidly from the center to the support of the right, charged down upon the Danish and Dutch horse led by the king, and no sooner had they come in contact than the Danes and Dutch turned and rode off with the Irish cavalry in pursuit. The king rode toward the Enniskilleners. Colonel Wolseley told his men that it was the king, and asked if they wished to follow him. They replied with a shout, and the king, placing himself at the head, rode toward the Irish infantry; but as they advanced they were met by a well-directed volley, and being much more fond of plundering and slaughtering than of close fighting, they turned horse and rode away.

Again and again the king rallied his infantry and brought them back to the fight, but the Irish infantry stood their ground with great steadiness until Hamilton, their general, was wounded and taken in a charge of cavalry. After this they fell back from Donore upon Duleek in good order, the enemy not wanting to molest them, and the rest of the Irish infantry followed their example.

No more singular battle than that of the Boyne was ever fought. In the morning, at break of day, part of James' army, with most of his artillery, were in march for the pass of Slane, and actually on their retreat. The left wing, composed chiefly of French infantry, supposed to be the best troops in the army, never fired a shot. The center and right, composed entirely of Irish, most of whom had never before been in battle, were alone engaged. With the exception of his Dutch guards, all William's foreign troops had been repeatedly broken ; his cavalry had been driven off the field by the Irish horse, while no division of the Irish was broken or suffered a decided defeat, until the infantry from the hill of Donore were compelled to retreat, which they did in perfect order.

Throughout the day the Irish cavalry showed a vast superiority to those of the British, and even broke and destroyed regiments of infantry ; and when the whole army fell back they closed up the rear, and effectually prevented any attempt at pursuit. Thus the battle of the Boyne was fought rather to cover a retreat than defend a position. The loss on either side was estimated at about five hundred, and General Hamilton was the only prisoner taken by the British.

The honors of the fight certainly rested with the Irish, who, against a vastly superior force, comprising some of the best troops in Europe, maintained themselves throughout the day, and gained, indeed, in most points, a decided advantage.

King James' valor had entirely evaporated before the first shot was fired. Instead of following William's example, and leading his troops in the conflict which was to decide the fate of his crown, and which he himself had precipitated, he took up his position at a safe distance from danger, on the hill of Donore, and as soon as the battle approached that point he rode off to Duleek, where he placed himself at the head of the French troops, and led their retreat.

He soon, however, rode on ahead, and arrived in Dublin in a state of consternation and despair, the first fugitive from the field of battle. In the meantime the army was whole and unbroken, marching in perfect order from the field of battle, while its king and commander was doing his best to ruin the cause by spreading dismay and alarm throughout the country. The next morning the king sent for the mayor and corporation of Dublin, and told them that he was under the necessity of taking care of himself, and recommended them to do the same, and to make the best terms they could with the enemy. He then at once mounted and made his flight to Waterford, ordering the bridges to be broken down behind him, although the British army had not yet moved from its position on the Boyne.

On reaching Waterford James at once embarked on board the ship he had ordered to be in readiness, and sailed for France. His conduct, and his conduct alone, converted the battle of the Boyne, which was in effect a kind of drawn battle, into a great victory for William. It had, indeed, more than answered the object which the Irish commanders proposed to themselves. Their plan was to accustom the new and badly armed levies to stand firm against the steadiness and experience of William's veteran troops, and then to withdraw without committing themselves to a decisive combat, with a view of protracting the campaign until William should be forced to leave Ireland, and his foreign army should be worn out by winter service in an uncongenial climate. Every day would, they calculated, improve their own army and weaken and reduce that of the enemy.

Their position at the Boyne enabled them to try their plan of partial combat to what extent they chose without danger of being forced into a more extensive action than they deemed expedient. The Irish troops had greatly surpassed the expectation of their own officers, and had filled William's generals with amazement ; and it is probable that, if a large part of the infantry and artillery had not been sent off early in the day, the experiment might have been turned into a brilliant victory. As it was, William was so surprised and alarmed at the resistance he had encountered that he remained some days at the Boyne without advancing.

He had been told by all except the Duke of Schomberg that the resistance of the Irish would be contemptible, and the most forward of those who had scoffed at the courage of the Irish had been the Enniskilleners, who had themselves on the day of battle shown so unmistakably the white feather. After this the king disliked and despised these troops, and hung

them without ceremony when taken in those acts of plunder and slaughter to which they were so much addicted.

So far from the flight of King James discouraging the army, it caused universal joy. It was his constant vacillation, interference, and cowardly action which had paralyzed his troops ; and they felt that, now they were free to act without his interference, they would be able to cope with the invaders.

William at once offered favorable terms if Ireland would submit to his authority; but these were declined, partly owing to the powerful influence of France, partly to the fear that the terms would not be observed, partly to the apprehension of all the gentry that the lands which they had but just recovered from the hands of Cromwell's settlers would be again taken from them.

At the battle of the Boyne Walter Davenant with his father's troop had taken part in all the desperate charges upon the enemy. During the long hours the battle had lasted the cavalry had been incessantly engaged. Time after time they had charged down upon the Dutch squares, and no sooner had the ranks been reformed after recoiling from the line of fixed bayonets than they were called upon to charge in another direction.

Walter's heart beat high as they dashed into the midst of the French infantry, or shattered and drove before them the Danish horse ; but there was little time to think, and looking back upon the day when all was over it seemed to him a chaos of excitement and confusion, of which he could hardly recall even the chief incidents. As the troops halted for the night they were in no way dispirited at the result of the battle, as the retreat had been begun before a blow was struck. They knew that it was neither intended nor hoped that the ground would be successfully held ; and every man felt a pride in the thought that some eighteen thousand newly raised Irish levies, of whom but a small portion of the infantry were armed with muskets, had sustained throughout a long summer's day the attacks of more than double their number of veteran troops, supported by fifty pieces of artillery.

The loss of the Irish horse had been comparatively small. Charging a square in the days when the bayonet was fixed in the muzzle of the gun was not the desperate undertaking that it now is, when from the hedge of steel issues a rolling and continuous fire. The French regiment, once broken, had been cut down with scarce any resistance, while the mercenary cavalry had been defeated with the greatest ease. Thus among the brigade of the Irish horse there were but few fallen friends to mourn, and nothing to mar the pride that every man felt in the behavior of the Irish troops against such overwhelming odds. That the king had fled every one knew, but the feeling was one of relief.

“ His absence is more than a victory to us,” Captain Davenant said as with a group of officers he sat by a fire made of a fence hastily pulled down. “ His majesty has his virtues, and, with good counselors, would make a worthy monarch ; but among his virtues military genius is not conspicuous. I should be glad myself if Lauzun and the French would also take their departure, and let us have Mountcashel's division back again from France. If we are left to ourselves, with our own generals, Sarsfield and Mountcashel, we can tire out this continental ruffraff that William has gathered together. The dissensions caused by French interference have been our ruin so far ; leave us to ourselves and we shall do. The Irish today have proved their fighting qualities ; and, if proper use is made of the resources and difficulties of the country, I defy them to conquer us. I feel more hopeful now than I have done since the first day we took the field.”

“ Do you think we shall fight another battle before Dublin, father ?” Walter asked.

“ I have no idea what the generals will decide, Walter, but I should imagine that we shall march to the west. We had a strong position to-day, but in the open field at present we could not hope to cope with William’s superior numbers and great artillery train. His guns were little use to him yesterday ; but on level ground they would tear our ranks to pieces, without our being able to make any return. Among the rivers and bogs and mountains of the west we should find scores of places which we could hold against them. Besides, in my opinion we should not fight pitched battles, but should harass them with continuous marches and attacks, leaving them masters only of the ground they stand on, until at last we completely wear them out and exhaust them.”

“ Then you think we shall abandon Dublin altogether ?”

“ I think so, Walter.”

“ But will they not persecute the Catholics when they have them in their power ?”

“ There may be some disturbance in the city, Walter, before the English troops march in ; but William will no doubt put an end to this as soon as he arrives. He cannot wish to drive the Catholics of Ireland to desperation. At any rate I do not think we need feel at all uneasy about those at home ; lying on the coast to the east of the town of Dublin, and altogether out of the track of the movements of troops, there is little fear of trouble there. In our district there is little preponderance in numbers of one religion over the other ; and unless the presence of troops, or worse, of those savages from Enniskillen or Derry, excite them, there is little fear of the Protestants of that neighborhood interfering with our people, especially as they have no grounds for complaint in the past. No, I do not think that you need disquiet yourself in the slightest about those at home.”

As Captain Davenant had thought probable, the Irish army, after marching into Dublin in good order, with flags flying and music playing, left on the following day for the west. They were accompanied by most of the leading Catholic families ; and on their departure the corporation at once wrote to William inviting him to enter the capital. Before his arrival, however, the Protestant mob destroyed a great quantity of property belonging to the Catholics, and carried their excesses to such a point that the town would probably have been destroyed by fire had not the better classes of Protestants armed themselves and taken energetic steps to repress the tumult.

As the troops marched into Dublin Walter said to Captain Davenant :

“ Can I ride over to see how they are at home ? They will have heard of the battle. Mother and grandmother must be terribly anxious.”

“ I shall be glad for you to go, Walter, for it would greatly ease their minds at home ; but we are to start again almost immediately, and probably the whole army will have marched off before you get back in the morning. There is no saying what may occur after we have gone. There may be a general attack upon the Catholics. At any rate it will be dangerous in the extreme for a single officer in our uniform to be riding through the town after we have left. Even in the country villages there must be intense excitement, and any one in the king’s uniform might be fired at in passing through any of the Protestant settlements.”

“ Well, father, suppose I do not start until it gets dark, then I can get home without attracting notice ; there I can put on a suit of my old clothes, and bring my uniform out in my valise.”

“ Well, perhaps you might manage in that way, Walter ; and I should be very glad to relieve their minds at home, and to know how they are going on. If you like you can stop there for a day or two. I don’t suppose that William will be here with his troops for a few days. He has learned that our army is not to be despised, and he may hesitate to advance upon Dublin until he receives certain news that we have moved away, and that he will not have to fight another battle for the possession of the city. Should you hear that William’s troops have arrived in the town, you will of course make a detour so as to avoid it on your way to rejoin us ; and now I will write a letter at once for you to take to your mother.”

As soon as it was dark Walter mounted and started for Bray, where he arrived without molestation on the way. His arrival was an immense relief to the ladies, who had been suffering an agony of suspense since the news of the battle had reached them. King James’ hurried arrival and panic flight to Waterford had caused the most alarming reports as to the battle to circulate throughout the country, and by many it was supposed that his army had been utterly destroyed. Walter’s arrival, then, with the news that his father as well as himself had passed through the day unhurt, was an immense relief ; and they were grateful to learn that, so from having been routed, the Irish army had accomplished its object of fighting the battle and then falling back in perfect order and without molestation.

“ Father says, mother, that he believes next time, when we shall be no longer hampered by the interference of the king, we shall be able to make even a better fight of it, especially if, as we all hope, the French officers will follow the king’s example and take themselves off.”

“ How long are you going to stay, Walter ?”

“ I shall stay over to-morrow, mother, and start next morning early. I ought to be able to come up to the army before night, but if not I shall overtake them on the march next day.”

“ I wish I was older,” Godfrey, who had been listening to the account of the battle, said. “ It is so hard to have to stay at home here while you and father are having such fun !”

“ You would not think it was fun if you were with us, Godfrey,” Walter said. “ I used to think it would be fun, but I don’t think so now. Just while the fighting is going on one is so excited that one doesn’t think of the danger, but when it is over it is awful to see the gaps in the ranks, and to know that so many of those who were riding with you have fallen, and that it may be your turn next time.”

“ Ah, it’s all very well for you to talk, Walter, because you are going through it all, but you would think just the same as I do if you were in my place.”

“ That is true enough, Godfrey. Anyhow, I am glad you are not old enough. I don’t mean that I should not like to have you with us, but then there would be nobody at home with mother. Now if anything happens to father and me, she has got you, and as you grow up you will be able to look after her and take care of her. It is bad enough for her having two of us in the war ; it would be worse still if there were three.”

As the next evening Walter heard that there was news that William’s troops had not yet moved from the Boyne, he thought that it was safe to take the direct road through Dublin. He

had laid aside his uniform on reaching home, and in the morning started in his civilian clothes, with the uniform in the valise strapped behind the saddle. He carried his sword as usual, for almost all gentlemen at that time rode armed, and this would therefore excite neither comment nor attention. He carried also a brace of pistols in a belt underneath his coat. On arriving in Dublin he found the greatest uproar and excitement prevailing. Mobs of men were marching through the streets smashing the windows of Catholics and sacking the houses. Fortunately, he was warned before he got into the thick of the tumult by meeting some women running and crying loudly. He asked what was the matter, and learned that their houses had been sacked, and that any Catholic found in the street was being beaten and ill-treated. As Walter was anxious to avoid anything which might arrest his journey westward he made his way out of the town as soon as possible, and was heartily glad when he reached the outskirts and gave rein to his horse. He passed many groups of people as he rode. Some were Protestants making their way to Dublin to join in the greeting to William and his army on their arrival. Others were Catholics afraid to remain in their abodes now that the army had retired west, and journeying to the capital, where they believed that William would prevent disorder and pillage. It needed no inquiry as to the religion of the respective groups. The Protestants were for the most part men, and these came along shouting and waving their weapons, wild with exultation over the triumph of their cause. The Catholics were of all ages and both sexes ; many of them had carts, and were carrying with them their most valued possessions. All wore an expression of grief and anxiety.

As Walter rode into one village a fray was going on. A party of Protestants, riding boisterously along, had knocked down a woman with a child in her arms, and had answered the angry remonstrance of the peasants with jeers and laughter. Stones had begun to fly ; the Protestants had drawn their swords ; the villagers had caught up hoes, spades, and other weapons, and a fierce fight was going on. The women with shrill cries encouraged the peasants, and aided them by hurling stones at the rioters. Walter saw that his interference would be of no avail, and, with a heavy heart at the bitter hatred which the two parties in Ireland exhibited for each other, he turned from the road, made a circuit round the village, and continued his way. After that he avoided all towns and villages, and slept at night in the cabin of a peasant lying some little distance from the road. The following day he again pressed on, and before evening overtook the retiring army.

On the arrival of King William with his army in Dublin, a proclamation was issued assuring all save those who resisted his authority of his protection, and threatening severity against those who disturbed the peace or committed outrage on personal property. Letters of protection were granted to all who applied for them ; and hearing this, Jabez Whitefoot at once went into Dublin to apply for protection for the family of Captain Davenant. On hearing, however, that no persecution of Catholics would be allowed, and that the army was likely to march west at once in pursuit of the Irish, he thought it better to leave the matter alone, as his application would only draw the attention of the authorities to the fact of Captain Davenant and his son being engaged in the hostile army. He felt sure that the ladies need fear no molestation save from the soldiers or Northerners, as his own influence with the Protestants of his neighborhood would suffice to prevent these from interfering with the household at the castle.

The Irish army marched toward the Shannon, and were concentrated part in the neighborhood of Athlone and part at Limerick. William shortly prepared to follow them. He, too, divided his army into two columns.

The main body, under his own command, took the road to Limerick, while the other division, consisting of five regiments of cavalry and twelve of infantry, was dispatched under the command of General Douglas for the purpose of investing the fortress of Athlone.

As the armies marched west their path was marked by wholesale outrage and destruction. Although protections were granted to the peasants and inhabitants of the towns and villages through which the armies marched, they were entirely disregarded by the soldiers, who plundered, ill-used, and sometimes murdered the defenseless people, carrying away without payment all provisions on which they could lay their hands.

The king sometimes hanged those who were caught in these acts of plunder and slaughter, but this had but little effect. The Dutch soldiers alone maintained their order and discipline. The foreign mercenaries, composed for the most part of the sweepings of the great cities, behaved with a brutality and cruelty almost without example, and which was acknowledged by all the historians of the time, Protestant as well as Catholic. Indeed, the Protestant inhabitants suffered even more than the Catholics, for many of the latter fled at the approach of the army, while the Protestants, regarding them as friends and deliverers, remained quietly at home, and suffered every insult and outrage at the hands of this horde of savages, who were perfectly indifferent as to the religion of those they plundered.

Captain Davenant's troop was with the force which had retired to Athlone, and there awaited the approach of the column of General Douglas. The reports of the conduct of the enemy that were brought in by the flying peasants filled the Irish troops with indignation and rage, and when, on arriving before the town, General Douglas sent a messenger to demand its surrender, Colonel Grace, who commanded, only replied by firing a pistol toward him.

Athlone stood on either side of the Shannon. The town on the eastern bank of the river was called "the English town," that on the western "the Irish"—a distinction existing in many of the Irish towns, where the early English settlers found it expedient to live apart from the Irish for mutual protection against attack. Colonel Grace had retired to the west bank of the river, which was strongly fortified, destroying the English town and breaking down part of the bridge across the river.

The garrison consisted of three regiments of foot and nine troops of horse ; and when Douglas erected his batteries and opened fire on the castle they replied briskly, and their guns got the better of those in the batteries. A strong detachment of horse and mounted grenadiers was sent by Douglas to Lanesborough, some miles north of the town, with orders to pass the river at that point, but the post was held by Irish troops, who easily repulsed the attempt.

It was next proposed to pass the river at a ford a short distance from the bridge ; but the troops had little heart for the enterprise, as the ford was covered by field works erected by the Irish. The assailants were already reduced to considerable straits. They had consumed all provisions found in the town, plundering without mercy the Protestant inhabitants, who had been well treated by the Irish troops, while the conduct of the army effectually deterred the country people from bringing in provisions.

The circulation of the report that General Sarsfield, with fifteen thousand men, was on the march to cut off the besiegers of Athlone, determined General Douglas to make a speedy retreat. In his fear of being cut off he abandoned all his heavy baggage, and quitting the high-road, made his way by unfrequented routes, which added to the hardships of the march. In its retreat the column was accompanied by the unhappy Protestant inhabitants, who feared to re-

main behind lest the Irish should retaliate upon them the sufferings which had been inflicted upon their countrymen.

In the meantime the main English army had done but little. In Dublin a commission had been appointed to examine into and forfeit the lands of all Catholics and adherents of King James, and having set this machine at work, the king proceeded with his army southward through Carlow, Kilkenny, and Waterford, all of which places surrendered, the garrisons being allowed to march out with their arms and baggage to join their main army on the Shannon.

At Waterford the king received such serious news as to the state of things in England that he determined to return home. On arriving at Dublin he was overwhelmed with petitions from the inhabitants as to the shameful conduct of the troops left in garrison there, especially those of Trelawney's, Schomberg's, and some other regiments of horse, who, the people complained, treated them, although Protestants, far worse than James' Catholic soldiers had done. Inquiry showed these complaints to be well founded, and finding it impossible to restore order and discipline among them, the king at once sent these regiments back to England. Then, receiving better news from home, he again started to rejoin his army, and marched toward Limerick, being joined on his way by the division under Douglas, which had driven along with them all the cattle and horses of the country through which they had passed.

Limerick was at that time the second city in Ireland. The country, for a long distance along the mouth of the Shannon, was much wooded, but in the immediate vicinity of the town it was surrounded by thick inclosures, houses, orchards, gardens, and plantations. The cultivated land was everywhere divided into small fields inclosed by hedges, and intersected by lanes. To the east of the town the Shannon divides itself, forming an island on which part of the city is situated.

This was called the English town, and was connected by a bridge, called Thomond Bridge, with the Clare side of the river on the north, and on the south by another bridge with the Irish town on the county of Limerick side. The Thomond Bridge was defended by a strong fort and some fieldworks on the Clare side, and on the city side by a drawbridge flanked by towers and the city walls. The bridge was very long and narrow. The position of the English town was indeed almost impregnable. It was built upon a rock of considerable extent, and the land outside the walls was low and marshy, and could at any time be flooded. The Shannon was broad and rapid. The Irish town on the Limerick shore was not strong, being defended only by ordinary walls. If this were captured, however, the English town could still hold out.

The king made his approaches to the city slowly, being obliged to level the numerous inclosures as he moved on. These were occupied by the Irish infantry, who, lining every hedge, kept up a galling fire, falling back gradually as heavy bodies of troops were brought up against them, until they reached the cover of the guns of the city and fort ; upon these opening fire, William's army halted and encamped before the Irish town.

Here, as at the Boyne, the king had a narrow escape, a cannon-ball from the walls striking the ground at his foot as he was passing through a gap in a hedge.

The king had learned that great dissensions existed between the Irish and French, and relied upon this as much as upon the strength of his arms to obtain possession of the city.

His information was indeed correct. King James in his flight had left no orders as to who should assume the supreme command. The Duke of Berwick had considerable claims.

Lauzun and the French officers declined altogether to receive orders from Tyrconnell, and the Irish officers equally objected to act under the command of a Frenchman. Consequently, during the whole siege, the main Irish army, which, by acting upon William's rear, could speedily have made his position untenable, remained inactive. M. Boileau, a French officer, was governor of the town, but Lauzun, having examined the fortifications, pronounced the place wholly incapable of defense, declaring that the walls could be knocked down with roasted apples, and so ordered the entire French division to march to Galway, and there await an opportunity for embarking for France, leaving the Irish to defend the city if they chose.

Lauzun, in fact, was a courtier, not a soldier. He desired to get back to Versailles at any hazard, and had so inspired his officers and men with his own sentiments that there was a general cry among them to be recalled to France. They had indeed no interest in the cause in which they fought. They looked with contempt at their half-armed and half-trained allies, and they grumbled continually at the hardships which they had to undergo. It was indeed an evil day for King James' cause when he exchanged Mountcashel's fine division for these useless allies, who throughout the war not only did no service, but were the cause of endless dissension and disaster.

As soon as King William had taken up his position in front of Limerick he sent a summons to Boileau to surrender. The latter consulted with Tyrconnell, Sarsfield, and some other officers, for even to the last moment it was a question whether the place should be defended.

At last, however, a decision was made. The reply was addressed to William's secretary, Sir Robert Roulwell, as Boileau could not acknowledge the prince as king, and was too polite to hurt his feelings by a denial of the royal title. He expressed great surprise at the summons he had received, and said that he hoped to merit the good opinion of the Prince of Orange better by a vigorous defense than by a shameful surrender of the fortress which had been committed to his charge by his master King James II.

The king's camp was now formed in regular order ; he himself taking his place on its right, having near him the Horse Guards, and the Blue Dutch Guards, who were always his main reliance. To the left of these were the English and Dutch regiments, further on the French and Danes, while the Brandenburgers and other German regiments formed the extreme left of the line. To their great satisfaction the post assigned to the Danes was one of the rude circular redoubts called in Ireland Danish forts, and probably constructed by their own far-off ancestors.

Orange and green : a tale of the Boyne and Limerick ([190-?])

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