

ground was soft, their horses' hoofs made so little sound that when they rounded the end of the copse the Hanoverian soldiers saw they were surrounded and stood still.

Giving orders to his party to wait for orders, Alistair rode forward and called upon the enemy to halt.

"What is the meaning of this stealthy approach, sir," he said, addressing the lieutenant in charge, "when it is understood that negotiations are being carried on between the Prince and the authorities of the government in the city? What do you and your party want here?"

The Hanoverian officer seemed annoyed at the imputation cast upon him, and answered somewhat tartly:

"We are King George's men, sent out to obtain some information as to our opponents. You have the advantage of us on the present occasion, but our turn will come. What is your pleasure?"

"My pleasure," said the young cornet, "is that you and your men return as speedily as possible to those who sent you, and tell them that Prince Charles awaits patiently their reply to the overtures he has sent. These are all the orders I am empowered to give you. Doubtless, as you insinuate, we shall meet again soon. I wish you good-night, sir."

Then, turning to his own company, he said:

"Keep your position, and allow our friends to return to the city with the budget of information they have collected as to the strength and position of the Prince's forces."

His men did as they were commanded, and the red-coats at once began to retrace their steps.

On the way back to camp, Charles, who rode by his brother's side, seemed excited and nervous. When the first quiet chance was afforded him he said eagerly: