

THE WILD GEESE

BY Stanley J. Weyman.

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Synopsis of Previous Chapters

Colonel John Sullivan, an Irish soldier, who has served abroad for many years, returns to his native Kerry on the sloop *Cormorant*, a French smuggling vessel, laden with Bordeaux wines. The cargo of the sloop is seized by the natives of Skull, against the futile protests of Captain Augustin, who realizes that he has no law on his side. Colonel Sullivan is coldly received by Flavia and her brother, The McMurrough, because of his alien faith and his undesirable position as their legal guardian. When Captain Augustin returns with Luke Asgill, the nearest justice, and demands the return of the confiscated cargo, Flavia and her guardian are in favor of returning the cargo on the captain's payment of the dues. The McMurrough objects to this, but finally agrees to it on Colonel Sullivan's offer to get back Flavia's favorite mare, which was seized by the British soldiers. The Colonel and his servant, Bale, set out and find the mare at the barracks of Tralee. The Colonel is invited into the messroom by the English officers, and one of them, named Payton, who seized the mare, throws wine in his face. The Colonel refuses to fight, because his right arm is permanently disabled. He wins a left-handed fencing bout with the maitre d'armes, at the same time winning the mare on a wager. At dinner upon his return to Morristown, he is amazed when Flavia drinks a toast "to the King across the water" and fears that a rising is contemplated. His fears are realized next morning, when his kinsman, Ulrick, warns him to leave the place and people to their fate. The Colonel refuses, and next morning after breakfast is invited to join a family council of war. He refuses to join the proposed uprising, knowing its futility. Fearing that the Colonel may turn informer, The McMurrough and his friends imprison him and his servant Bale. The next morning the two are led out to their death by the agent of The McMurrough, O'Sullivan Og. At the last moment this sentence is revoked and the Colonel and Bale are rowed out through the mist to imprisonment on a Spanish war ship in the harbor. The rowboat capsizes and the two prisoners, luckily escaping, take refuge on the French sloop.

CHAPTER XII.—Continued The Sea Mist

"That is the reason," Colonel John answered cryptically and to the skipper's surprise. But that surprise lasted a very short time. "Listen to me," the Colonel continued, "I have good news for you, and I will give you not only freedom but a good bargain." The skipper stared. "How so?" he asked. Then Colonel John unfolded the plan on which he had been meditating while the gorse bushes pricked his feet and the stones galled him. It was a great plan, and before all things a bold one; so bold that the seamen, who crowded the foot of the companionway, opened their eyes. Augustin smacked his lips. "It is what you call magnificent!" he said. "But," he shrugged his shoulders, "it is not possible!" "If the fog holds?" "But if it—what you call—lifts? What then, eh?" "Through how many storms have you ridden?" the skipper answered. "Yet if the mast had gone?" "We had gone! Vraiment!" "That did not keep you ashore." Augustin cogitated over this for a while. Then, "But we are eight only," he objected. "Myself, nine." "And two are eleven," Colonel John replied. "We do not know the ground." "I do." The skipper shrugged his shoulders. "And they have treated you—but you know how they have treated you," Colonel went on, appealing to the lower motive. The group of seamen who stood about the door growled seamen's oaths. "There are things that seem hard," the Colonel continued, "and being begun, you'll find they are done while you think of them!" Captain Augustin of Bordeaux swelled out his breast. "That is true," he said. "I have done things like that." "Then do one more!" The skipper's eyes surveyed the men's faces. He caught the spark in their eyes. "I will do it," he cried. "Good!" Colonel John cried. "The arms first."

CHAPTER XIII.

Flavia McMurrough enjoyed one advantage over her partners in conspiracy. She could rise on the morning after the night of the bonfires with a clear head. Colonel John had scarcely passed away under guard before she was afoot, gay as a lark and trilling like one, for on this day would they begin a work the end of which no man could see, but which, to the close of time, should shed a lustre on the name of McMurrough. No more should their native land be swept along, a chained slave in the train of a more brutal, a more violent, and a more stupid people! From this day Ireland's flag should be recognized for what it was, her wit be turned to good uses, her old traditions be revived in the light of new glories. The tears rose to the girl's eyes, her bosom heaved, as she pictured the fruition of the work to be begun this day and with clasped hands and prayerful eyes sang her morning hymn. The tears gushed from her eyes and with an overflowing heart she thanked heaven for the grace and favor that assigned her a part in the work. It was enough—may she be forgiven!—if in the first enthusiasm of the morning, she gave a single thought to the misguided kinsman whose opposition had

exposed him to dangers at which she had vaguely guessed. She lived in a dream, but a golden dream, and when she descended to the living room her lips quivered as she kissed the hand and received on her bent knees his episcopal blessing. "And on this house, my daughter," he added, "and on this day!" "Amen!" she murmured in her heart. True, breakfast, and the hour after breakfast, gave some pause to her happiness. The men's nerves were on edge with potheen and they had not been at table five minutes before quarrelling broke out. The Spanish officer who was in attendance on Cammock came to words with one of the O'Beirnes, who resented the notion that the Admiral's safety was not sufficiently secured by the Irish about him. The peace was kept with difficulty, and so much ill-feeling survived the outbreak that Cammock thought it prudent to remit two-thirds of the sailors to the ship.

This was not a promising beginning, where the numbers were already so scanty that the Bishop wondered in his heart whether his dupes would dare to pass from words to actions. But it was not all. Some one spoke of Asgill, and of another justice in the neighborhood, asserting that their hearts were with the rising, and that at a later point their aid might be expected. "The Evil One's spawn!" cried Sir Donny, rising in his place, and speaking under the influence of great excitement. "If you're for dealing with him, I'm riding! No Protestants! I'd as soon never wear sword again as wear it in their company!" "You're not meaning it, Sir Donny!" Uncle Ulrick said. "Faith, but if he's not, I am!" cried old Tim Burke, rising and banging the table with his fist. "This what I'm meaning, and not a bit of a mistake! Just that!"

Another backed him, with so much violence that the most moderate and sensible looked serious and it needed

it, indeed, my daughter! But do what he would, he spoke without fervor. They passed along the edge of the lake, catching now and then the shimmer of water on their right. Thence they ascended the steep path that led up the glen of the waterfall to the level of the platform on which the old tower stood. Leaving this on the right they climbed yet a little higher and entered a deep driftway that, at the summit of the gorge, clove its way between the mound behind the tower and the hill on their left, and so penetrated presently to the valley of the Carraghlin. The mist was thinner here, the nature of the ground was more perceptible, and they had not proceeded fifty yards along the sunken way before Cammock, who was leading in the company of The McMurrough, halted.

"A fine place for a stand," he said, looking about him with a solitary eye. "And better for an ambush. Especially on such a morning as this, when you cannot see a man five paces away." "I trust," the Bishop answered, smiling, "that we shall have no need to make the one or to fear the other." "You could hold this," Flavia asked eagerly, "with such men as we have?" "Against an army," Cammock answered. "Against an army!" she murmured as her heart beating high with pride, they resumed their way, Flavia and the Bishop in the van. "Against an army!" she repeated fondly.

The words had not fully left her lips when she recoiled. At the same moment the Bishop uttered an exclamation, for the McMurrough turned as if to flee. For on the path close to them, facing them with a pistol in his hand, stood Colonel Sullivan.

He levelled the pistol at the head of the nearest man, and though Flavia, with instant presence of mind, struck it up, the act helped little. Before Cammock could clear his blade, or his companions back up his resistance, four or



He Levelled the Pistol at the Head of the Nearest Man

five men of Colonel John's following flung themselves on them from behind. They were seized, strong arms pinioned them, knives were at their throats. In a twinkling, and while they still expected death, sacks were dragged over their heads and down to their waists, and they were helpless. It was well, it was neatly done; and completely done, with a single draw. The men had not seized Flavia, and, white as paper, but with rage, not fear, she screamed shrilly for help—screamed twice.

She would have screamed a third time, but Colonel Sullivan, who knew that they were scarcely two furlongs from the meeting place, and from some hundreds of merciless foes, did the only thing possible. He flung his arms round her, pressed her face roughly against his shoulder, smothered her cries remorselessly. Then raising her, he bore her, vainly struggling—and, it must be owned, scratching—after the others out of the driftway. The thing done, the Colonel's little band of firemen knew that they had caught the die and must now succeed or perish. The girl's screams, quickly suppressed, might not have given the alarm; but they had set nerves on edge. The prick of a knife was used—and often to apprise the blinded prisoners that if they did not move they would be piked. They were dragged, a seaman on either side of each captive, over some hundred paces of rough ground, through the stream, and so into a path a little better than a sheep track which ran round the farther side of the hill of the tower, and descended that way to the more remote bank of the lake. It was a rugged path, steep and slippery, dropping precipitously a couple of feet in places, and more than once brought her to the ground, but she was carried. Of his fate also there could be no doubt.

She felt all that was most keen, most poignant, of grief, of anger, of indignation. But the sharpest pang of all—most cruel, and most fatal—was inflicted by the consciousness of failure, and of failure verging on the ignominious. The mature take good and evil fortune as they come, but to fail at first setting out in life, to be outwitted in the opening venture, is a mishap which sours the magnanimous and poisons young blood. She had not known before what was to hate. Now she only lived to hate: to hate the man who had shown himself so much cleverer than her friends, who, by a twinkling, and by a single blow, had wrecked her plans, duped her allies, betrayed her brother, made her name a laughing stock, robbed Ireland of a last

Colonel only pressed her face more ruthlessly to his men's lives depended on his silence. But the sweat stood on his brow; and, after carrying her no more than three hundred yards, he staggered under the unwilling burden. He was on the path now and descending, and he held out a little farther.

But presently, when he hoped that she had swooned, she fell to struggling more desperately. He thought, on this, that he might be smothering her; and he relaxed his hold to allow her to breathe. For reward she struck him madly, furiously in the face, and he had to stifle her again.

But his heart was sick. It was a horrible, a brutal business, a thing he had not foreseen on board the *Cormorant*. He had supposed that she would faint at the first alarm; and his courage, which would have faced almost any event with coolness, quailed. He could not murder the girl, and she would not be silent. No, she would not be silent! Short of getting her down and binding her hand and foot, which would take time, and was horrible to imagine, he could not see what to do. And the man with him, who saw the rest of the party outstripping them, and a good as dis- appearing in the fog, who fancied, with every step that he heard the feet of merciless pursuers overtaking them, was frantic with impatience.

Then Colonel John, with the sweat standing on his brow, did a thing to which he afterward looked back with great astonishment. "Give me your knife," he said, with a groan, "and hold her hands! We must silence her, and there is only one way!"

The man, terrified as he was, and selfish as terrified men are, recoiled from the deed. "My God!" he said. "No!" "Yes!" Colonel John retorted fiercely. "The knife!—the knife, man! And do you hold her hands!" With a jerk he lifted her face from his breast—and this time she neither struck him nor screamed. The man had half-heartedly drawn his knife. The Colonel snatched it from him. "Now her hands!" he said. "Hold her, fool! I know where to strike!"

She opened her mouth to shriek, but no sound came. She had heard, she understood; and for a moment she could neither struggle nor cry. That terror which rage and an almost indomitable spirit had kept at bay, seized her; the sight of the gleaming death poised above her, the knowledge that she was to be murdered, her eyes glared at the steel; then, with a queer sobbing sound, she fainted.

"Thank God!" the Colonel cried. He thrust the knife back into the man's hands, and raising the girl again in his arms. "There is a house a little below," he said. "We can leave her there! Hurry, man!—hurry!"

He had not traversed that road for twenty years, but his memory had not tricked him. Less than fifty paces before they came to a cabin, close to the foot of the waterfall. The door was fastened—for what, in such a place, was there to steal?—and Colonel John thrust it open with his foot. The interior was dark, the place was almost windowless; but he made out the form of an old woman, nursing her head, crouched with a pipe in her mouth beside a handful of peat. Seeing him the woman tottered to her feet with a cry of alarm, and shaded her bleared eyes from the instant glare of the light. She gabbled shrilly, but she knew only English, and Colonel John attempted no explanation. "The Lady of the House," he said, in that tongue. And he laid Flavia, not ungently, but very quickly, on the floor. He turned about without another word, shut the door on the two and hurried along the path at the full stretch of his legs. In half a minute he had overtaken his companion and the two pressed on together on the heels of the main party.

The old bedlame, left alone with the girl, viewed her with an astonishment which would have been greater if she had not reached that age at which all sensations become dulled. How the Lady of the House, who was to her both Tower and Providence, came to be there, and there in that state, passed her conception. But she had the sense to loosen the girl's frock at the neck, to throw water on her face and to beat her hands. In a very few minutes Flavia, who had never swooned before—fashionable as the exercise was at this period in feminine society—sighed once or twice and came to herself.

"Where am I," she muttered. Still for some moments she continued to look about her in a dazed way. At length she recognized the old woman and the cottage. Then she remembered, with a moan, what had happened—the ambush, the fight, the knife. She could not turn whiter, but she shuddered and closed her eyes. At last, with a shiver, she looked at her dress. "Am I—hurt?" she whispered.

The old woman did not understand, but she patted Flavia's hand. Meanwhile the girl saw that there was no blood on her dress and she found courage to raise her head and to throw a flood of no wound. At that she smiled faintly. Then she began to cry—for she was a woman. But, broken as she was by that moment of terror, Flavia very quickly overcame her weakness. She rose, she understood and she extended her arms in rage and grief and unavailing passion.

She would that the villains had killed her! Why should she survive, except for vengeance? For not only were her hopes for Ireland fallen, not only were those who had trusted themselves to The McMurrough perishing even now in the hands of ruthless foes, but her brother, whom her prayers, her influence, had brought into this path, he, too, was snatched. Of his fate also there could be no doubt.

She felt all that was most keen, most poignant, of grief, of anger, of indignation. But the sharpest pang of all—most cruel, and most fatal—was inflicted by the consciousness of failure, and of failure verging on the ignominious. The mature take good and evil fortune as they come, but to fail at first setting out in life, to be outwitted in the opening venture, is a mishap which sours the magnanimous and poisons young blood. She had not known before what was to hate. Now she only lived to hate: to hate the man who had shown himself so much cleverer than her friends, who, by a twinkling, and by a single blow, had wrecked her plans, duped her allies, betrayed her brother, made her name a laughing stock, robbed Ireland of a last

chance of freedom! Who had held her in his arms, terrified her, mastered her oh, why had she swooned? Why had she not rather, disregarding her womanish weakness, her womanish fears, snatched the knife from him and plunged it into his treacherous breast?

CHAPTER XIV. The Colonel's Terms

Cammock and the Bishop, certain only that they were in hostile hands, and hurried, blind and helpless, to an unknown doom, might have been pardoned had they succumbed to despair. But they did not succumb. The habit of danger, and a hundred adventures and escapes, had hardened them; they felt more rage than fear. Stunned for a moment by the audacity of the attack, they had not been dragged a hundred yards before they began to calculate the chances. If the purpose of those into whose hands they had fallen were to murder them they would have been piked on the spot. On the other hand, their captors' object was to deliver them to English justice, weeks, if not months, must elapse before they stood at the bar on a capital charge; much water must flow under the bridges, and many a thing might happen, by force or fraud, in the interval.

(To be Continued)

POLO FOR THE WEALTHY

A GAME that only wealthy people can play has been much needed, and it seems to have been found in polo. It may be true that polo is actually a better game than baseball or tennis, but how can the financially elect be expected to amuse themselves satisfactorily in ways that are equally open to those classes that are said to have to work for a living. Now almost any one can play baseball or tennis. There is positively no way in which the wealthy members of a baseball or a tennis team can be identified inasmuch as a certain simplicity of attire is essential to the game, while the implements cost at most but a few dollars. Obviously, these games are unsuited to those who toil not, neither do they spin.

But the English aristocrat of wealth has discovered that polo "fills the bill." To play polo you must have at least three ponies, and three ponies imply a banking account of satisfactory dimensions. The Duchess of Westminster may not care in the least about polo as a game. She probably doesn't, but she knows the value of an amusement that implies wealth, and so she has called her friends around her and bidden them rejoice in a game that only rich people can play. A club has been formed and the committee contains such well-known names as Lady Constance Stewart, Richard, Mrs. David Beatty and the Baroness Erhardtstein. Several American women have been admitted within the charmed circle.

The uniform is described as chic. It consists of a tunic and a divided skirt, both of navy blue. Upon the tunic will be epaulettes of gold braid and the cap will be similarly decorated with gold and fastened with elastic, as pins were considered to be too dangerous and a leather strap too ugly. Polo is likely to remain fashionable for a longer time than golf, which was introduced to society women by Princess Patricia. Golf, of course, had the fatal disadvantage of being open to people who are not rich, and it was for this reason that bicycles went out of fashion. The Countess of Warwick was responsible for the bicycle craze, which lasted quite a time, until the horrid proletarian discovered that the lissome wheels were within their reach, and that of course, spoiled it. The Countess of Warwick had 20 bicycles painted to suit

REINFORCED CONCRETE IN FIRE

A FURTHER example of the fire-resisting qualities of reinforced concrete is forthcoming from a report made by an auditor for an insurance agency in America. A building constructed of reinforced concrete at South Elgin, Illinois, used for the manufacture of drugs, was recently subjected to such a fire that a total loss was claimed. The auditors, however, contended that the concrete floors and ceiling were not sufficiently damaged to warrant their demolition, but the owner claimed that the concrete had been weakened by the intense heat about 60,000 pounds of drugs having been consumed. It was finally decided to test the building by putting a weight of 400 pounds to the square foot on the panels, and it was agreed that they should be held defective if they deflected more than three-sixteenths of an inch, that having been the original test made by the architects when the building was turned over to the owners. Tests were made of eight panels involved in the fire, and all of them showed considerably more than three-sixteenths of an inch deflection when only 250 pounds to the square foot had been placed upon them. The panels of the building not affected by the fire were subjected to the same weight, and the deflection was shown to be less than one-tenth of an inch. As a result of the test a total loss was allowed only on six panels, a compromise being effected on the other two. It was held by the auditors that had the building been of any other construction than concrete it would have been totally destroyed on account of the great heat engendered by the burning of the drugs and chemicals, the weakening of the concrete was caused by the expansion of the steel re-inforcements. The conclusion reached was that reinforcement under the intense heat.

THIS comes from an article which appeared in a leading New York paper last month. "When Dr. Frederick Cook stamped his mucklugs on the icy hub of the earth's axle, he switched into his identity the colossal current of unrivaled fame, and instantly became a magnet."

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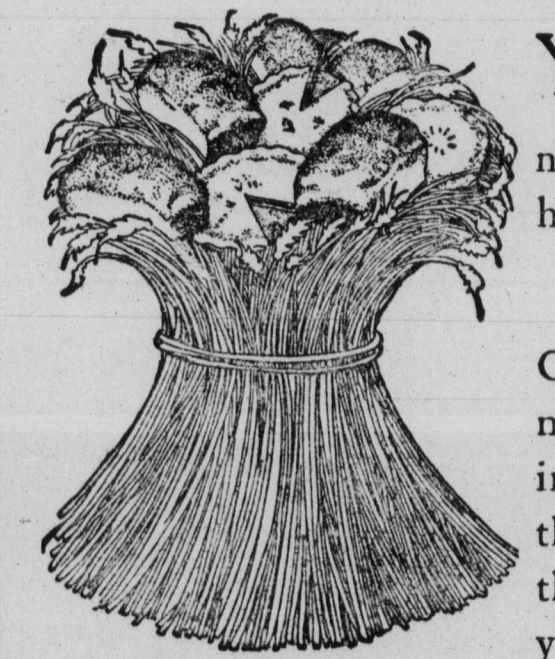
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