

great distance from us, land. This cheered us up a lot. Tough-un even began to pick up his cheek, though we had our work cut out for us. We took to the oars again, Curley relieving old Tough and me, turn and turn about. Clearly it was Dover before us. We could see some white cliffs away to the left, low-lying land with a town before us. However, Dover or not, it was land, and that was enough for us just then. We pulled in and gradually made out the town plainer, and somehow there seemed to be something outlandish about it. I can't say what it was, but it looked foreign, un-English, and then we began to think that this might be France. What were we to do?

"Look here, Bob," said Brown, with his face all puckered up into a puzzled form. "We can't go and give ourselves up to a lot of parley-voos. We must right about face and pull back."

"We can't do that, Tough-un," said I; puzzled though I was, I felt we couldn't row all the way back.

"Who talks about giving ourselves up," Curley cried eagerly; "we are not at war."

"Well, anyway, we've no right to be in foreign land. It is desertion;" and Brown looked decidedly black.

"I'm not only tired out, but famishing and dying of thirst, too. All we can do now is to go ahead and see what happens when we land."

Curley agreed with me, and as Tough was suffering as much as we were from hunger and thirst, we pulled in towards the two long piers. It was hard work, that pull, and by the time we got near the pier we found that the heavy-breaking sea made the entrance a tremendous difficulty. I suppose by that time the people on the piers saw that the boat was only manned by three small lads. Anyway, crowds began to gather, and signals were made to us through a speaking-trumpet. But as it was in his own lingo we weren't a bit the wiser. We had to rest occasionally to regain strength and look at the narrow ugly entrance, where the waves broke in huge white masses against the black piers. The "froggies" on the piers made no end of a row, dancing about in a funny kind of way.

"I say, Bob," shouted Curley, "let us put on our tunics and show them what we are." I thought Curley's idea a good one, for we meant to show the Frenchmen what English drummer boys could do. We had been too busy to think of our tunics before, and they lay at the bottom of the boat in the sea-water. However, we put them on, and certainly the scarlet tunics seemed to produce a commotion on shore. Tough and I grasped our oars again and pulled hard for dear life. Curley watched the old tarpaulin chap and steered according to his signs. Well, at last we got between the piers, and then after a brief pull got into quieter water. The people ran along the piers, yelling and gesticulating like a lot of escaped lunatics; but they seemed friendly, and so gave us heart. We pulled on down the pier, guided by the signs of the crowd, to a landing. A hundred willing hands took hold of the boat and we were dragged out of the boat, clapped on the back, our hands wrung, and our ears deafened with their outlandish tongues. We stood there like three young fools; dripping wet, miserable cold, and dying of hunger and thirst. At last some English gentlemen pushed their way through the crowd and began to congratulate and question us. We were glad enough to find someone who could understand us, and lost no time in telling them that we wanted food and drink before we could do much speaking. They said they would take us to their hotel. Just as we were moving off two big fellows in uniform, with clanking sabres and spurs, came up and arrested us. Of course the crowd was pretty big then, and the people began to scream and throw their

arms about again. One English gentleman asked the "Johnny d'armes" what they meant to do. Then they explained to us that we had been missed and our description telegraphed to the Consul.

"You are deserters, you young blackguards," said a stern-looking fellow, who looked like an officer.

"That we arn't," we exclaimed in an indignant chorus, and I tried to explain it out. I was interrupted by a fresh arrival—Captain —, the Consul, who was anything but kind to us at first, until he heard just the outline of our adventure. Then he seemed pleased, and turning round to the crowd, gave them a bit of a speech, and many of them came and shook hands with us and made no end of fuss. The upshot of it all was that we were taken by the "Johnny d'armes" to a nice English-looking inn, where we were given a glorious breakfast by the landlady, who hung about us, asking if we had mothers, and all the rest of it. One of the chaps in uniform remained in the room, making jokes, no doubt, and looking fierce. After breakfast the Consul and one of the military-looking Englishmen came back and told us that we should have to remain under arrest until the night boat went off, when we should be handed over to the captain. Meanwhile we were taken off by the gentleman to his hotel, followed by our big "Johnny d'arme," and introduced into the drawing-room, where several beautiful ladies came round us, and gave us sweets, while we told our story over again. We remained at the hotel all day, had a good dinner with the "Johnny d'arme," and at night the Consul came for us, and took us on board the Folkestone packet. We were given in charge of the captain, who told us to go below in the second-class cabin, where one of the petty officers kept his eye upon us. We saluted, and then shook hands with the Consul and his friend Major — (who gave us a letter to our chief), and then as the hawsers were cast loose, these gentlemen and the "Johnny d'arme" went ashore, and we were hurried below. Of course the sailors and officers chaffed us a bit, but at last that rough passage came to an end, and when we got on deck we were handed over to a corporal who had been sent over for us, and we started under arrest for Dover. We had a long talk with the adjutant, and then had to go before the colonel. He gave us a stiff lecture for having ventured out on a spree, which might have ended so seriously, and finally ordered us off to the provost sergeant. Well, sir, I was a great favourite of Sergeant Robinson, and he gave me a birching such as never youngster had before, I believe. You see, I had given him and my dad a rare fright. After that Curley, Tough and I had to go to hospital for a couple of days; but when we came out, why, sir, officers and men, and the barrack women did their best to spoil us."

"You and your chums after that night's terror might have been let off without further punishment, eh, Sergeant?"

"I don't know about that, sir. It might have ended worse, and the birching did us no harm. Anyway, I have never been absent without leave since that birching." —Volunteer Service Magazine.

Do not forget to ask your lady friends to gather maple leaves to be sent to the Royal Canadians in India to wear next Dominion Day.

NELSON'S HOUSE AT MERTON.

The sale of some property at Merton, in Surrey, has revived controversy as Nelson's home there. It seems pretty clear that after the death of Lady Hamilton, in 1808, Merton Place, their house, passed into strange hands, and

more recently was pulled down, and the materials sold. The old house must not be confounded with Merton abbey. The latter was the scene of the famous statues of Merton, in 1236, and amid its ruins now stands a modern building used as a tapestry and glass works, by William Morris, the poet. Lord Nelson acquired Merton Place in 1802, and came to live there with Sir William and Lady Hamilton, to both of whom he was much attached. He had previously lived at 147, New Bond Street before his separation from Lady Nelson. He was delighted with his Merton home. In 1803, Sir William Hamilton, far advanced in years, died there in his wife's arms, holding Nelson by the hand, and commending her to his care and protection. A few weeks afterwards Nelson left to take command of the Mediterranean Fleet. He returned to Merton Place in 1805, but a few days later, at 5 a.m., was roused by Captain Blackwood with news that the French and Spanish fleets had refitted at Vigo. He was pacing one of the garden walks, which he used to call his quarter-deck, when Lady Hamilton came up, and seeing that he longed to follow the combined fleets, bade him offer his services. He looked at her, says Southey, with tears in his eyes, exclaiming, "Brave Emma! Good Emma! If there were more Emmas there would be more Nelsons." His last minutes at Merton were employed in prayer over the cot of the child, Horatia Nelson, who he described as his "adopted daughter. He wrote in his private journal, "Friday night (September 13th, 1805), at half-past ten, I drove from dear, dear Merton, where I left all which I hold dear in the world, to go to serve my, from the journey, for Trafalgar interceded. His estate at Merton ran into the parish at Wimbleton, and while there he was very fond of fishing in the River Wandle hard by.

A SHRED OF SILK.

In the church of Alverstoke, down by the Hampshire coast, there is hanging a stained and tattered piece of silk the sight of which can scarcely fail to rouse a sense of pride in the breast of even the most phlegmatic of Englishmen. It is all that war and the seasons have spared of an old regimental color of the Forty-fourth Foot, but it is a record of imperishable heroism.

It has waved through the battle smoke around the Burmese forts; it has traversed the India plains; it has climbed the mountain wall that lifts upward from the Indus shore; it has witnessed a struggle between a handful of Englishmen and a whole nation arms it is the very flag that floated over the bayonets on that fatal morning in the year '48, as the battalion filed slowly through the breach in the cantonment wall at Cabul, out into the winding sheet of snow stretching from the city to the grim defile of the Jugdulluck.

The men who guarded the banner are sleeping by the Cabul road. Its blackened shreds, perhaps the only vestige that is left of the whole doomed column rest there in the quiet Hampshire church in a case of glass and oak.—Temple Bar.

DUKE ALFRED OF SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA

A question of etiquette in connection with Duke Alfred's accession is at present occupying many of the hangers-on of the Courts of the small Principalities of Germany. As an English