

broke his parole to join her, and after hiding for some days in the sea-coast caves of Erris, obtained permission to return to Killala, and found half the oats, salt, and iron in his stores removed by the angry French, and his dwelling-house almost a wreck.

The bishop's dining-room, on the evening of the landing, half an hour before the scene of tranquil festivity, was soon turned into a noisy guard-room crowded with gesticulating French soldiers dragging in leather valises and cases of ammunition, and with prisoners being examined by savage-looking republican officers, while in one corner a surly-looking grenadier captain was having a severe wound dressed by a surgeon and his assistant. Three hundred soldiers swore and chattered in the court-yard and offices. Immediately on entering the dining-room, the bishop's butler was called for, ordered to collect all the plate and secure it in his pantry. Not an article stolen, nor so much as a hat, whip, or great-coat pilfered from the hall. The yeomanry were locked in the drawing-room in the middle floor. Two bed-chambers adjoining were seized for the general and his principal officers. The attic story, a library, and three bedrooms were reserved sacredly for the bishop and his family, and only on one occasion did the officers ever enter those rooms, and that occasion was the evening the tidings reached the French of their victory at Castlebar.

The bishop has left us a vivid picture (worthy of Waverley) of the first night after the landing of the French. "It is not easy," he says, "by any force of language to convey an adequate idea of the miseries of that first night which succeeded to the landing of the enemy. To the terrified imaginations of the town's people the castle instantly presented itself as the only place where they could have a chance of safety. Thither accordingly they fled, without distinction of age, sex, or condition, forcing their way into every corner of the house and offices, occupying the staircases, spreading through the bed-chambers, and some of them even thrusting themselves and their children into the same beds with the infants of the bishop's family. Women that had lain sick in their beds for a month before and one old lady past eighty, who was bed-ridden, and believed to be at the point of death, gathering strength from despair, contrived to work their way to the very top of the house. Chairs were placed round the lobby of the attic story, on which the family, with some of their principal acquaintance, remained without a thought of repose for the whole night. Indeed the leaden hand of sleep could not have closed any eye-lids but those of an infant. The whole house resounded like a bedlam with the loquacity of the Frenchmen below, and the shrieks and groans of the fugitives above. Among the last there wanted not some, who sought consolation from the whisky bottle, in consequence of which they became presently so clamorous and troublesome, that it was found necessary to restrain them by force.

Two of the bishop's clerical guests, had fled on foot to the mountains on the first alarm, leaving their horses to be seized by the French, but the Dean of Killala brought his wife and children for shelter to the castle, the Reverend Robert Nixon, curate of the parish, and the Reverend Mr. Little, of Lachan, also sought the same asylum with the bishop, his eleven children, and his thirteen servants.

On the morning after his arrival, Humbert pushed forward to Ballina a detachment of a hundred men, forty of whom he mounted on the best horses he could find in the country. He concealed under the arch of a bridge near Killala a sergeant's guard, to watch the enemy's reconnoiters. A shot from this ambuscade proved fatal to a brave young clergyman, the Reverend George Fortescue (nephew to Lord Clermont), who had put himself at the head of a party of observation from Ballina. The town at once fell into the hands of the French, the carbiners, the yeomanry—all but one fat lazy fellow, who was caught in bed—taking to their heels with great unanimity Humbert returned to Killala in triumph in poor Mr. Fortescue's two-horse curicle, with the fat yeoman (looking like a seal just awoke) by his side in full uniform. Several

hundreds of rebel peasants, recruits, rent the air with their acclamations. A green flag, with the inscription "Erin go Bragh," was now mounted over the castle gate as a rallying standard for the pikemen, to whom arms, clothing and ammunition were to be at once distributed. Ready money would arrive in the very first ships from Franco. In the mean time goods brought in voluntarily were to be paid for by drafts on the future Irish Directory. For the first three days the French commissary of stores spent his whole time in writing these valuable documents, but at last he began to treat the matter as a joke, and the people soon learned to consider it in that light also. Other promises were, however, more promptly fulfilled. Chests, each containing forty fusils, and boxes crammed with new French uniforms and gaudy helmets, were unlocked in the castle yard, and the contents given to the first applicants. About one thousand peasants were completely clothed; the next comers received everything but shoes and stockings; to the last arms only were given—in all, about five thousand five hundred stand, according to French reckoning. The muskets were well made, but the bore was too small for English bullets; the carbines were especially good; the swords and pistols were reserved for the rebel officers.

The country people pressed forward to snatch these fatal presents, forgetting that an English army of scarcely fewer than one hundred thousand men was already marching fast towards county Mayo. The ragged ploughmen and bog-cutters hardly knew themselves when dressed, washed, and powdered. The French soldiers watched with droll contempt the avidity with which the Irish recruits fell on their allowance of fresh meat. They reported that one Irish savage, having been given eight pounds of beef at once, threw himself on the ground and gnawed at it like a wild beast till it was all consumed. Many of the recruits were forced to join by the menaces of their friends and the dread of rumoured Orangeman oppression. The bishop paints quite a Hogarthian picture of the vanity and ignorance of these raw, hot-blooded lories:

"The coxcomby of the young clowns in their new dress, the mixture of good humour and contempt in the countenances of the French, employed in making puppies of them, the haste of the undressed to be as fine as their neighbours, casting away their old clothes long before it came to their turn to receive the new; above all the merry activity of a handsome young fellow, a marine officer, whose business it was to consummate the vanity of the recruits by decorating them with helmets beautifully edged with spotted brown paper to look like leopard's skin, a task which he performed standing on a powder barrel, and making the helmet fit any skull, even the largest, by thumping it down with his fists, careless whether it could ever be taken off again—these were circumstances that would have made you smile, though you had been just come from seeing your house in flames. A respectable not less provoking to mirth presented itself to your view, if you followed the new soldiers after they had received their arms and cartridges, and observed their manner of using them. It was common with them to put in their cartridges at the wrong end, and when they stuck in the passage (as they often did), the inverted barrel was set to work against the ground till it was bent and useless. At first they were trusted with balls, as well as with powder. But this practise was not repeated, after it had gone near costing his life General Humbert. As he was standing at an open widow in the castle, the general heard a ball whistle by his ear, discharged by an awkward recruit in the yard below, whom he instantly punished with an unmerciful caning."

The young soldiers were especially fond of shooting the ravens (that, since the civil war, owing to the number of unburied bodies, had increased in the devastated parts of Ireland) for their quills.

The French now required boats at once, to transport the artillery and stores from their ships, and carts and horses to bring them from the shore to the town. High prices were offered, but the fishermen and carmen did not respond.

The bishop was then applied to: but he said that he was a new comer, and, moreover, had no authority, civil or personal, in the town. Humbert replied that he was the principal inhabitant, Kirkwood the magistrate having fled and broken his parole, and he must and should procure a supply of boats and carts, and that in twenty-four hours.

Next morning, when neither boat nor car appeared, Humbert became furious. He poured forth a torrent of vulgar abuse, roared, stamped, la! his hand frequently on a scimitar that battered the ground, presented a pistol at the bishop's eldest son, and at last told the bishop himself that he would make him sensible he was not to be trifled with, for he should punish his disobedience by sending him instantly to France. Orders to this effect were given on the spot to an officer, who delivered the bishop in charge to a corporal's guard, only allowing him to put on his hat. The inhabitants stared in silence, as they saw their bishop conducted on foot through the town. The French soldiers marched him at a good pace along the road that led to the ships, and seemed to have received orders not to answer any of his questions.

Their pretended ferocity was only a ruse de guerre. Half a mile from town the general sent an express to call back the bishop, and the French officers loaded him with apologies for their hasty but good-natured chief. Humbert himself received him on the castle stairs, and pleaded the necessity of the occasion. The fishermen and boatmen, alarmed for their good bishop, had already appeared.

Though the enemy was full of professions, and took nothing with them but what was absolutely necessary for the field, they nearly ruined the poor bishop. They burned thirty tons of his coal in one month, besides setting the kitchen chimney several times on fire with their ragoûts. They drove away his nine horses, and six more belonging to his guests. They consumed his corn, potatoes, and cattle, before they touched those of any one else. They emptied his well-filled cellar and larder in three days. They carried off his cars, carts, and waggons, so that the worthy prelate computed his loss in thirty days only, at six hundred pounds.

Meanwhile, the enemy's main body, under Kilmaine, had landed, and had scarcely begun their march, when a flag of truce arrived from Castlebar, carried by Captain Grey of the carbiners. He came, under pretence of inquiry for an officer wounded at Ballina, to discover the strength of the enemy. He privately told the bishop that a force three times Humbert's number waited at Castlebar to give a good account of the enemy.

Everywhere before the French advance fluttered the impudent proclamation of General Kilmaine. In this caricature of republican aggression he said that a band of heroes had come to liberate the Irish from the hands of tyrants, to teach them the arts of war, and to despise the "low pursuits of toil and industry." "We have made," said the gasconader, "all the nations we have conquered happy by arresting their property, by applying it to the common cause, and consecrating it to the champions of liberty. Property is a common right belonging to the valour that seizes it." (Could Ganning have written a more bitter parody than this of intolerant and fanatical republicanism?) "We have already destroyed the unassuming tranquility of Switzerland, and the wealth, the power, and the bigotry of Italy are no more." The proclamation ended by imploring the Irish to cast off the bondage of religion, and to put down "that grand impostor, the Pope." The Irish were to "fly to the French standard, and enjoy at once the blessings of French fraternity."

The French entered Ballina with about nine hundred bayonets and two thousand pikes.

The omens that greeted them were not favourable. No disaffected Protestants joined the tricolour, no well-to-do persons of any kind. On a tree, in a conspicuous place, hung a rebel agent, executed for having a French commission in his pocket. The French officers embraced the unconscious rascal, "bedewed the body with tears of sympathetic civism," exposed the corpse in the streets to excite the populace against the