

opinion to the determination of the king to attempt the reduction of Ireland,—an instance also of the gambling spirit of that age. Rowland Davies, Dean of Ross, who had been ejected from his benefices, is going with the army of William as a Chaplain. He and four of his friends desire to raise money; and they borrow four hundred pounds under a bond, signed and sealed at Jonathan's Coffee-house, the great resort of stock-jobbers, "for the payment of six hundred pounds within a month after king William and queen Mary are in actual possession of Dublin and Cork."* Of the condition and prospects of king James, a lamentable account is given by his official biographer. The duke of Berwick had been beaten at Belturbet; Charlemont had surrendered; but these misfortunes "were nothing in comparison of the disappointments the king met with from the court of France." Louis would not consent to make England the seat of war instead of Ireland. He would not believe that the friends of James in England, at the head of an Irish and French army, would soon "make the English weary of resisting God and their duty." † Louis would only consent to send six thousand men into Ireland. The English were masters of Ulster. The Catholics who quitted it upon Schomberg's landing brought such prodigious flocks of cattle with them, as ate up the greatest part of the grass and corn of other counties, according to the lugubrious memoir writer. The Rapparees destroyed on all sides; there was no corn nor meal to feed the army; no cloth, no leather; "and the brass money put an absolute stop to importation."—We cannot have a more striking picture of the effects of an improvident and iniquitous administration of public affairs.

Ulster, at the beginning of June, was big with expectation of the arrival of king William. Absurd reports preceded him. An officer came from London to Belfast, and reported that the parliament was adjourned; that the king was speedily to set out, "and will bring with him four hundred thousand men." ‡ On the 7th, the busy chaplain, preaching one day, dining jovially in the English quarters on another, saw many troops landing at Carrickfergus, and the train of artillery in the harbour. On the 10th, in the evening, on a false report that the king was landed, "all the country flamed with bonfires." § On the 14th, over a bowl of punch, "we received the news of the king's landing, and being at Belfast, and spent the night jollily." On the 15th, the officers of

* "Journal" of Rowland Davies, p. 101.

† "Life of James II." vol. i. p. 336.

‡ Rowland Davies, p. 117.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

the various regiments crowded round William, and were presented to him. Troops continued to arrive, "insomuch that there was not less than five hundred sail of ships together in the Lough." William reviewed the troops on the 17th and on the 19th, and then gave orders that they should march after him. The army was composed not only of English and Englishers. There were Brandenburgers, Dutch, Danes, and French Huguenots. The spirit of the king triumphed over his feeble body. He was all animation. His eye sparkled with the exultation of hope. "I will not let the grass grow under my feet," he exclaimed. James appeared equally alert at the call of danger. He left Dublin on the 16th of June. William's army was at Loughbrickland on the 26th of June, consisting of thirty-six thousand men. The troops had manifested a very different conduct from those of James, who had ravaged the country in the preceding year; for William had issued an order that they "do so carry themselves both in garrison, quarters, and wheresoever they shall march, as persons ought to do who are under military discipline;" that they should not presume to rob or spoil, to do violence or extort, "but that they duly pay such reasonable rates for their provisions," as shall be ordered and appointed.* The captains of king William's forces paid in a better coin than the brass money of king James. It was expected that the Irish army would have disputed the passage of William at the pass near Moyra Castle, now known as Ravensdale; but they left it open; and on the 27th the English army was at Dundalk forming "a camp at least three miles in length, in two lines." † King James still retired as William advanced; but at length, on the 30th, as the English army approached Drogheda, the enemy was seen encamped on the opposite south bank of the Boyne.

The army of James was in a strong defensive position. The stream which divided the counties of Louth and Meath was between him and his rival. "The river was deep, and rose very high every tide; and after these difficulties were surmounted, there was a morass to be passed, and behind it a miry ground." ‡ The camp of James on the Meath side was defended by intrenchments and batteries. The fortress of Drogheda, on the Louth side, was held by the Irish, and displayed the ensigns of James and of Louis. The numbers of his enemy were variously reported to William. He had received tolerably accurate information from a man who

* Harris, "Life of William," Appendix xl.

† Harris, p. 266.

‡ Rowland Davies, p. 121.

knew how to deal with exaggerations. An officer who had deserted from James's army greatly magnified their real amount. Mr. Cox, a civilian with sir Robert Southwell, bade the officer look upon the English camp and say what their numbers were. "He confidently affirmed them to be more than double their real number; whence his majesty perceived he was a conceited ill-guesser."* William, surrounded by his generals, rode along the bank of the river on the morning of the 30th to inspect the position of the enemy. "We shall soon be better acquainted with their numbers," he observed.† He alighted from his horse near the village of Old Bridge. It was a rising ground, within musket-shot of the river. His breakfast was spread on the grass, and he rested for an hour. On the opposite bank there were watchful eyes directed towards the group which surrounded William; and it was soon perceived that no common enemy was within the reach of cannon. Two field pieces were quickly brought down from the hill, and planted in a ploughed field screened by a hedge. The king had remounted. One piece is fired, and the horse of prince George of Hesse is hit. Another shot, and William himself is struck. The ball has rent his buff-coat, and grazed his right shoulder. His officers crowd around, for the king stooped upon his horse's neck. He alights, and the slight wound is dressed. A shout went through the camp of James; and the tale passed from mouth to mouth that the prince of Orange was killed. The rumour soon crossed the sea. On the 2nd of July *feux-de-joie* were fired in Paris, to proclaim the great triumph. The next day had its own tale, of which James himself was the bearer. William was soon riding through every part of his army; and when the sun of that last of June was set, he was still in the saddle, making arrangements by torchlight for the coming struggle. He had resolved to pass the river the next morning. The enterprise was thought by Schomberg too dangerous. William felt that there was greater danger in delaying a decisive action. The event proved that the daring of the comparatively inexperienced prince was a better policy than the caution of the old hero of many a well foughten field.

The right wing of William's army was the earliest in its movements after day-break on that first of July. It was led by the son of marshal Schomberg, accompanied by the earl of Portland. There were twenty-four squadrons of horse and dragoons, and six

* Harris, p. 267.

† *Ibid.*

regiments of foot under the command of Meinhart Schomberg, the marshal's brave son. Every man had a green bough in his hat, according to an order issued by the king on the previous night. This right wing marched towards the bridge of Slane, about five miles from the main camp. Rowland Davies, who was with this division, says, "at two fords we passed the river, where there were six squadrons of the enemy to guard the pass." Other accounts represent the right wing as passing over the bridge of Slane. Whether by the fords or by the bridge, the passage was resisted by some squadrons of horse, but they soon gave way. The French general Lauzun saw that the movement of the English right wing must be met, and he rapidly moved his best troops to prevent the rear of James's army being attacked. "As soon as we passed the river," says Davies, "we saw the enemy marching towards us, and that they drew up on the side of a hill in two lines." Portland recommended the horse and foot to be drawn up also in two lines, intermixing horse and foot, squadron with battalion—"grounded upon the example of Cæsar at the battle of Pharsalia."* Rowland Davies parades no such learned authority, in relating the same fact; and he says, "thus the armies stood for a considerable time, an impassable bog being between them." Reinforcements of foot having arrived, "we altered our line of battle, drawing all our horse into the right wing; and so, outflanking the enemy, we marched round the bog and engaged them, rather pursuing than fighting them, as far as Duleek." †

It was arranged that king William should lead the left wing, and pass the Boyne about a mile above Drogheda. This division consisted wholly of cavalry. Marshal Schomberg, commanding the centre, composed almost entirely of infantry, was to cross the river about half a mile higher up at the ford of Old Bridge. Count Solmes led his Dutch regiment of guards through the rapid water, though up to their middle. The English foot crossed up to their armpits. The Danes and French refugees also waded through the stream at other points. The south bank was bristling with Irish horse and foot. Some attempt at resistance was made by the Irish infantry while the greater part of the troops were still in the water; but at last the columns had crossed. Then the Irish foot would not face these resolute soldiers of many nations. An ancient fear of the Danes perhaps contributed to their panic. But the Irish cavalry, led by Hamilton, fought with desperate courage

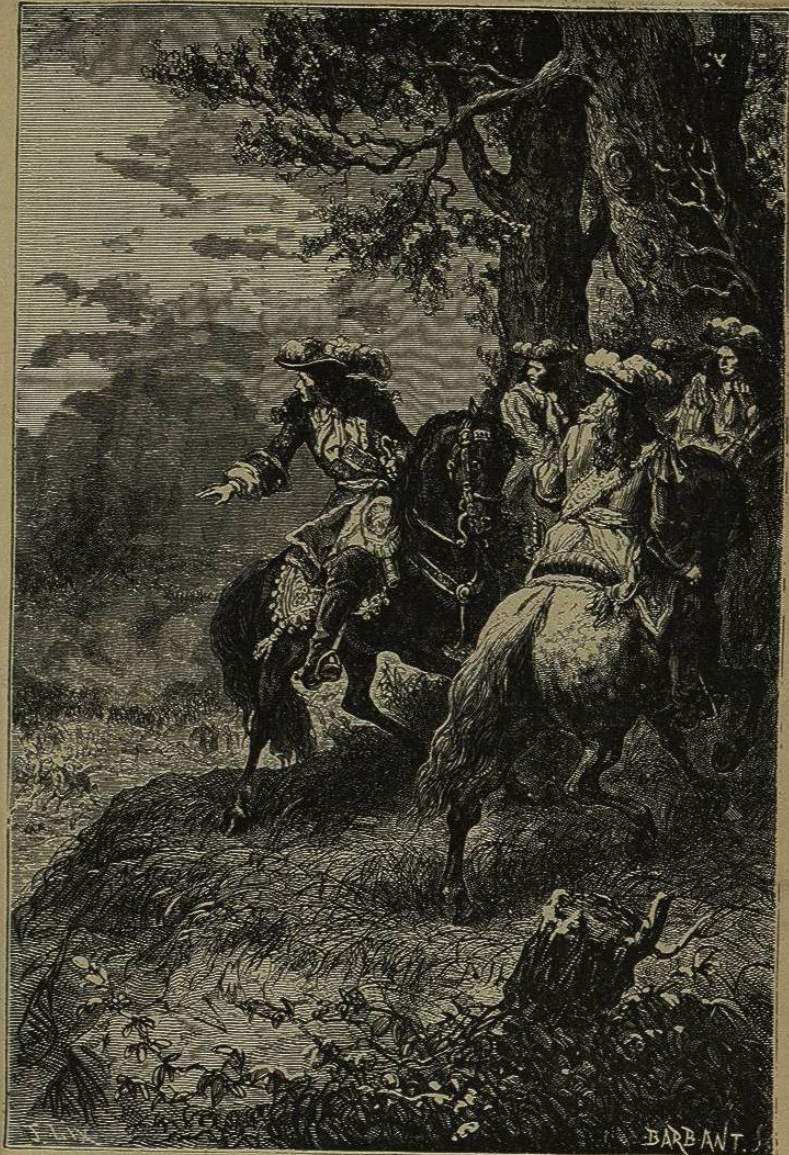
* Harris, p. 268.

† Journal of Davies, p. 123.

against the infantry that had gained the shore, or were still in the bed of the river. The issue was very doubtful. Callemot, the commander of the Huguenots, was killed. The veteran Schomberg saw the danger; and rushing to the river without waiting to put on his cuirass, crossed, and led the retreating Protestants, exclaiming, "Allons, messieurs! Voilà vos persécuteurs." Schomberg fell in the confusion; his skull was cloven. On the same ground fell the heroic defender of Londonderry, George Walker. At this critical juncture William arrived on the field. He had brought his left wing across the stream, with some difficulty. There was a rapid tide. The bed of the stream was in some places a deep mud. His own horse floundered in the miry bottom, or was carried along by the rushing tide. But the king and his cavalry were at last on firm ground. William drew his sword, and was soon in the heat of the fight. The Irish horse retreated towards Donore, about a mile from the pass. Here, from his tent on the hill near the church, now a ruin, king James had watched the progress of the battle. Here his retreating horse made a stand. They turned upon their pursuers, and William's cavalry began to give way. He rode up to the Enniskilleners, and exclaimed, "What will you do for me?" "It is the king," said their officer. "You shall be my guards to day," cried William, and led on the yeomen who were conquerors on the field of Newton Butler. The battle of the Boyne was not yet won. Again and again "Little Will" * rallied his troops whenever they gave way, and brought them up to the charge. The fate of the day did not long remain in suspense. Hamilton, the traitorous messenger to Tyrconnel, was taken prisoner. "Will the Irish fight any more?" said William. "Yes, sir, upon my honour, I believe they will." "Your honour!" exclaimed the injured prince; and then directed that his prisoner's wounds should be looked to. There was little more fighting. James saw the day was going against him; and he mounted his horse and fled, the French covering his retreat. At nine o'clock that night he arrived in Dublin.

It is remarkable that a battle so momentous in its consequences, should have been attended with so small a sacrifice of life. The loss in James' army did not exceed fifteen hundred men, chiefly cavalry. On William's side the loss of men was not more than five hundred. If we may judge from a passage in Rowland Davies,

* "Little Will, the scourge of France,
No Godhead, but the first of men."—PRIOR.



JAMES AT THE BATTLE OF THE BOYNE.— Vol. iv. 511.

the steadiness of the Dutch guards repelled the attacks of the Irish horse, by a mode of fighting which is mentioned as if it were novel: "Count Solmes marched over the river with the blue Dutch regiment of guards. No sooner were they up the hill, but the enemy's horse fell on them, ours with the king being about half a mile lower, passing at another ford. At the first push, the first rank only fired, and then fell on their faces, loading their muskets again as they lay on the ground. At the next charge, they fired a volley of three ranks. Then, at the next, the first rank got up and fired again, which being received by a choice squadron of the enemy, consisting mostly of officers, they immediately fell in upon the Dutch as having spent all their front fire. But the two rear ranks drew up in two platoons and flanked the enemy across; and the rest, screwing their swords into their muskets, received the charge with all imaginable bravery, and in a minute dismounted them all. The Derry regiment also sustained them bravely, and as they drew off maintained the same ground with great slaughter."

Such was the battle of the Boyne, in which Protestant Europe was fighting against Roman Catholic ascendancy, in the island which had been distracted for a century and a half with the bitterest wars of religion. The Londoner, the Scot, and the English settler of Ulster, the Dutch Calvinist and the French Huguenot, stood the brunt of that first of July, with equal resolution and equal confidence in their leader.

A great principle was manifested in this battle—a principle not always understood by statesmen or warriors—that the results of a victory are not to be estimated by the numbers of killed and wounded on the side of the vanquished—nor by the possession of the field of battle—not even by the submission of the district in which the conquering army has gathered its laurels. Looking at the mere material results of the 1st of July, there was no sufficient cause for the dispersion of the Irish army, many of whom James had seen fighting bravely in his cause as he looked upon the valley of the Boyne from the hill of Donore. The real victory was in its moral consequences—in the instant and complete exposure of the character of the man for whom the better part of the Irish Catholics had been fighting, out of an honest conviction that they were in arms for the cause of their country and their religion. James first deserted them in his intense selfishness; he afterwards insulted them in his cowardly ingratitude. On the morning of the 2nd of July, he assembled the magistrates of Dublin. He said that he had

been often told, that when it came to the touch, the Irish would not bear the brunt of a battle. He had provided a good army, and had made all preparations to engage a foreign invader, and he had found the fatal truth of which he had been forewarned. Though the army did not desert him as they did in England, yet when the trial came they basely fled the field, and left it a spoil to his enemies. Thenceforward he determined never to head an Irish army, and now resolved to shift for himself, as they themselves must do. He exhorted them to prevent the plunder or destruction of the city; and to submit to the prince of Orange, who was a merciful man. After this, the most devoted slave of the house of Stuart would perfectly understand that this ungenerous and cruel attack of James upon his army was a mere selfish expedient to cover the ignominy of his own desertion of the cause for which his adherents had fought—some with admirable resolution; others as well as the miserable discipline in which they had been trained, would lead a reasonable man to expect. They had been trained to plunder, to ravage, to make war with the instinct of savages; and when they had to meet the shock of civilized warfare, they fled as a lawless multitude always will flee, regardless of everything but their own safety. The battle of the Boyne manifested the utter disorganisation of the principle force by which Ulster had been wasted and harassed during a year of evil government.

There was another battle being fought on the south-eastern coast of England, at the very hour when the shot that was fired across the Boyne had very nearly settled the question whether the Revolution of 1688 should be a striking-point in a race of honour and prosperity, or a broken trophy of one brief and useless effort for liberty and the rights of conscience. The departure of William for Ireland was the signal for an attack upon the English coasts, which was to be accompanied with an insurrection of the Jacobites. A fleet sailed from Brest under the Count de Tourville. The English fleet was in the Downs, under the command of the earl of Torrington. He sailed to the back of the Isle of Wight, and was there joined by a squadron of Dutch vessels under a skilful commander, Evertsen. Queen Mary and her Council were aware that the French fleet had left Brest. It soon became known that the English admiral had quitted his position off St. Helen's, and had sailed for the Straits of Dover upon the approach of the French. The Council determined to send Torrington positive orders to fight. The French fleet was superior in vessels and guns to the

combined English and Dutch fleet; but the inequality was not so great that a man of the old stamp of Blake would have feared to risk a battle. Torrington did something even worse than hesitate to fight. He let the brunt of the conflict fall upon the Dutch. He put Evertsen in the van, and brought very few of his own squadron into action. The Dutch fought with indomitable courage and obstinacy, but were at length compelled to draw off. The gazers from the high downs of Beachy Head witnessed the shameful flight of a British admiral to seek the safety of the Thames. When the news came to London that Torrington had left the Channel to a triumphant enemy—when an invasion was imminent, for England was without regular troops—when plotters were all around, and arrests of men of rank, even of Clarendon, the queen's kinsman, were taking place—then, indeed, there was an hour almost of despair such as was felt when De Ruyter sailed up the Medway. But the very humiliation roused the spirit of the people. The queen was universally beloved; and, although studiously avoiding, when the king was at hand, any interference in public affairs, she took at once a kingly part in this great crisis. "The queen balanced all things with an extraordinary temper," writes Burnet. She sent for the Lord Mayor of London; and inquired what the citizens would do, should the enemy effect a landing? The Lord Mayor returned to the queen with an offer of a hundred thousand pounds; of nine thousand men of the city trainbands, ready instantly to march wherever ordered; and a proposal for the Lieutenancy to provide and maintain six additional regiments of foot; and of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council to raise a regiment of horse, and a thousand dragoons, by voluntary contributions.* The same spirit was manifested throughout the land. The people might grumble against the Dutch; they might feel some commiseration for an exiled prince; they might be divided about questions of Church government; they might complain that the Revolution had brought them increased taxation. But they would have no Papist government thrust upon them by the French king. They would not undo the work of their own hands. The gloom for the disaster of Beachy Head was quickly forgotten. On the 4th of July a messenger had brought letters to the queen which told that a great victory had been won in Ireland, and that the king was safe; and, says Evelyn in his quiet way, "there was much public rejoicing."

* Maitland's "London," vol. i. 495.