

ESCAPE FROM ENGLAND

Charles II (1630–1685), King of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1649–1685)

September–October 1651

After that the battle¹ was so absolutely lost as to be beyond hope of recovery, I began to think of the best way of saving myself; and the first thought that came into my head was that, if I could possibly, I would get to London as soon, if not sooner, than the news of our defeat could get thither. And it being near dark, I talked with some, especially with my Lord Rochester, who was then Wilmot,² about their opinions which would be the best way for me to escape, it being impossible, as I thought, to get back into Scotland.

I found them mightily distracted, and their opinions different of the possibility of getting to Scotland, but not one agreeing with mine for going to London, saving my Lord Wilmot; and the truth is, I did not impart my design of going to London to any but my Lord Wilmot. But we had such a number of beaten men with us of the horse that I strove, as soon as ever it was dark, to get from them; and though I could not get them to stand by me against the enemy, I could not get rid of them now I had a mind to it.

So we—that is, my Lord Duke of Buckingham,³ Lauderdale,⁴ Derby,⁵ Wilmot, Tom Blagg,⁶ Duke Darcey,⁷ and several others of my servants—went along northward towards Scotland; and at last we got about sixty that were gentlemen and officers, and slipped away out of the high-road that goes to Lancashire and kept on the right hand, letting all the beaten men go along the great road, and ourselves not knowing very well which way to go, for it was then too late for us to get to London on horseback riding directly for it, nor could we do it because there was yet many people of quality with us that I could not get rid of.

So we rode through a town short of Wolverhampton, betwixt that and Worcester; and went through, there lying a troop of the enemy's there that night. We rode very quietly through the town, they having nobody to watch, nor they suspecting us no more than we did them, which I learned afterwards from a country-fellow.

We went that night about twenty miles to a place called White Lady's, hard by Tong Castle, by the advice of Mr. Giffard, where we stopped and got some little refreshment of bread and cheese such as we could get, it being just beginning to be day. This White Lady's was a private house that Mr. Giffard, who was a Staffordshire man, had told me belonged to honest people that lived thereabouts.

And just as we came thither, there came in a country-fellow that told us there were 3.000 of our horse just hard by Tong Castle, upon the heath, all in disorder, under David Leslie⁸ and some other of the general officers. Upon which there were some of the people of quality that were with me, who were very earnest that I should go to him and endeavour to go into Scotland; which I thought was absolutely impossible, knowing very well that the country would all rise upon us, and that men who had deserted me when they were in good order would never stand to me when they have been beaten.

This made me take the resolution of putting myself into a disguise, and endeavouring to get afoot to London in a country-fellow's habit, with a pair of ordinary gray-cloth breeches, a leathern doublet, and a green jerkin, which I took in the house of White Lady's. I also cut my hair very short and flung my clothes into a privy house, that nobody might see that anybody had been stripping themselves. I acquainting none with my resolution of going to London but my Lord Wilmot, they all desiring me not to acquaint them with what I

¹ The Battle of Worcester (3 September 1651)

² Henry (1612–1658), Viscount Wilmot, Royalist general; later created Earl of Rochester (1652)

³ George Villiers (1628–1687), Duke of Buckingham

⁴ John Maitland (1616–1682), Duke of Lauderdale

⁵ James Stanley (1607–1651), Earl of Derby

⁶ Colonel Thomas Blagg (–1660), Groom of the Bed-Chamber to Charles II

⁷ Conyers d'Arcy (1670–1653), Baron Darcy of Meinhill, Baron Darcy de Knayth, and Baron Conyers

⁸ David Leslie (c. 1600–1682), Covenanter general

intended to do because they knew not what they might be forced to confess; on which consideration they, with one voice, begged of me not to tell them what I intended to do.

So all the persons of quality and officers who were with me (except my Lord Wilmot, with whom a place was agreed upon for our meeting at London if we escaped, and who endeavoured to go on horse-back, in regard, as I think, of his being too big to go on foot) were resolved to go and join with the 3.000 disordered horse, thinking to get away with them to Scotland. But, as I did before believe, they were not marched six miles after they got to them but they were all routed by a single troop of horse; which shows that my opinion was not wrong in not sticking to men who had run away.

As soon as I was disguised, I took with me a country-fellow whose name was Richard Penderell, whom Mr. Giffard had undertaken to answer for to be a honest man. He was a Roman Catholic, and I chose to trust them because I knew they had hiding holes for priests that I thought I might make use of in case of need.

I was no sooner gone (being the next morning after the battle, and then broad day) out of the house with this country-fellow but being in a great wood I set myself at the edge of the wood near the highway that was there, the better to see who came after us, and whether they made any search after the runaways, and I immediately saw a troop of horse coming by, which I conceived to be the same troop that beat our 3.000 horse; but it did not look like a troop of the army's, but of the militia, for the fellow before it did not look at all like a soldier.

In this wood I stayed all day without meat or drink; and by great good fortune it rained all the time, which hindered them, as I believe, from coming into the wood to search for men that might be fled thither. And one thing is remarkable enough—that those with whom I have since spoken of them that joined with the horse upon the heath did say that it rained little or nothing with them all the day, but only in the wood where I was, this contributing to my safety.

As I was in the wood I talked with the fellow about getting towards London, and asking him many questions about what gentlemen he knew; I did not find he knew any man of quality in the way towards London. And the truth is my mind changed as I lay in the wood, and I resolved of another way of making my escape; which was to get over the Severn into Wales, and so to get either to Swansea or some other of the sea-towns that I knew had commerce with France, to the end I might get over that way as being a way that I thought none would suspect my taking ; besides that, I remembered several honest gentlemen that were of my acquaintance in Wales.

So that night, as soon as it was dark, Richard Penderell and I took our journey on foot towards the Severn, intending to pass over a ferry half-way between Bridge North and Shrewsbury. But as we were going in the night, we came by a mill where I heard some people talking (memorandum that I had got some bread and cheese the night before at one of the Penderell's houses, I not going in) and as we conceived it was about twelve or one o'clock at night, and the country-fellow desired me not to answer if anybody should ask me any questions because I had not the accent of the country.

Just as we came to the mill, we could see the miller, as I believed, sitting at the mill door, he being in white clothes, it being a very dark night. He called out, "Who goes there?" Upon which Richard Penderell answered, "Neighbours going home" or some such like words. Whereupon the miller cried out, "If you be neighbours, stand, or I will knock you down." Upon which, we believing there was company in the house, the fellow bade me follow him close; and he ran to a gate that went up a dirty lane up a hill and, opening the gate, the miller cried out, "Rogues! Rogues!" And thereupon some men came out of the mill after us, which I believed was soldiers.

So we fell a running, both of us, up the lane, as long as we could run, it being very deep and very dirty, till at last I bade him leap over a hedge, and lie still to hear if anybody followed us; which we did, and continued lying down upon the ground about half an hour, when, hearing nobody come, we continued our way on to the village upon the Severn where the fellow told me there was an honest gentleman, one Mr. Woolfe, that lived in

that town, where I might be with great safety, for that he had hiding-holes for priests. But I would not go in till I knew a little of his mind, whether he would receive so dangerous a guest as me, and therefore stayed in a field under a hedge by a great tree, commanding him not to say it was I, but only to ask Mr. Woolfe whether he would receive an English gentleman, a person of quality, to hide him the next day, till we could travel again by night, for I durst not go but by night.

Mr. Woolfe, when the country fellow told him that it was one that had escaped from the Battle of Worcester, said that for his part it was so dangerous a thing to harbour anybody that was known that he would not venture his neck for any man unless it were the King himself. Upon which, Richard Penderell, very indiscreetly and without any leave, told him that it was I. Upon which Mr. Woolfe replied that he should be very ready to venture all he had in the world to secure me. Upon which Richard Penderell came and told me what he had done. At which I was a little troubled, but then there was no remedy, the day being just coming on, and I must either venture that or run some greater danger.

So I came into the house a back way, where I found Mr. Woolfe, an old gentleman, who told me he was very sorry to see me there because there was two companies of the militia foot at that time in arms in the town, and kept a guard at the ferry to examine everybody that came that way in expectation of catching some that might be making their escape that way; and that he durst not put me into any of the hiding-holes of his house because they had been discovered, and consequently if any search should be made, they would certainly repair to these holes; and that therefore I had no other way of security but to go into his barn and there lie behind his corn and hay. So after he had given us some cold meat that was ready, we, without making any bustle in the house, went and lay in the barn all the next day, when towards evening his son, who had been prisoner at Shrewsbury, an honest man, was released and came home to his father's house. And as soon as ever it began to be a little darkish, Mr. Woolfe and his son brought us meat into the barn; and there we discoursed with them whether we might safely get over the Severn into Wales; which they advised me by no means to adventure upon because of the strict guards that were kept all along the Severn where any passage could be found for preventing anybody's escaping that way into Wales.

Upon this I took resolution of going that night the very same way back again to Penderell's house, where I knew I should hear some news what was become of my Lord Wilmot, and resolved again upon going for London.

So we set out as soon as it was dark. But, as we came by the mill again, we had no mind to be questioned a second time there; and therefore asking Richard Penderell whether he could swim or no, and how deep the river was. He told me it was a scurvy river, not easy to be passed in all places, and that he could not swim. So I told him that the river being but a little one, I would undertake to help him over. Upon which we went over some closes to the river side, and I entering the river first to see whether I could myself go over, who knew how to swim, found it was but a little above my middle; and thereupon taking Richard Penderell by the hand, I helped him over.

Which being done, we went on our way to one of Penderell's brothers (his house being not far from White Lady's) who had been guide to my Lord Wilmot and we believed might, by that time, be come back again; for my Lord Wilmot intended to go to London upon his own horse. When I came to this house, I inquired where my Lord Wilmot was. It being now towards morning, and having travelled these two nights on foot, Penderell's brother told me that he had conducted him to a very honest gentleman's house, one Mr. Pitchcroft, not far from Wolverhampton, a Roman Catholic.

I asked him, what news? He told me that there was one Major Careless in the house that was that country-man; whom I knowing, he having been a major in Our army and made his escape thither, a Roman Catholic also, I sent for him into the room where I was, and consulting with him what we should do the next day. He told me that it would be very dangerous for me either to stay in that house or to go into the wood, there being a great wood hard by Boscobel; that he knew but one way how to pass the next day, and that was to get up into a great

oak, in a pretty plain place, where we might see round about us; for the enemy would certainly search at the wood for people that had made their escape. Of which proposition of his I approving, we (that is to say, Careless and I) went and carried up with us some victuals for the whole day—viz., bread, cheese, small beer, and nothing else—and got up into a great oak that had been lopped some three or four years before, and being grown out again very bushy and thick, could not be seen through, and here we stayed all the day. I having, in the meantime, sent Penderell's brother to Mr. Pitchcroft's to know whether my Lord Wilmot was there or no, and had word brought me by him at night that my Lord was there; that there was a very secure hiding-hole in Mr. Pitchcroft's house, and that he desired me to come thither to him.

Memorandum — that while we were in this tree we saw soldiers going up and down in the thicket of the wood, searching for persons escaped, we seeing them now and then, peeping out of the wood.

That night Richard Penderell and I went to Mr. Pitchcroft's, about six or seven miles off, where I found the gentleman of the house, and an old grand-mother of his, and Father Hurlston, who had then the care, as governor, of bringing up two young gentlemen, who I think were Sir John Preston and his brother, they being boys.

Here I spoke with my Lord Wilmot and sent him away to Colonel Lane's, about five or six miles off, to see what means could be found for my escaping towards London; who told my Lord, after some consultation thereon, that he had a sister that had a very fair pretence of going hard by Bristol to a cousin of hers that was married to one Mr. Norton, who lived two or three miles towards Bristol, on Somersetshire side, and she might carry me thither as her man; and from Bristol I might find shipping to get out of England.

So the next night I went away to Colonel Lane's, where I changed my clothes into a little better habit, like a serving-man, being kind of gray-cloth suit. And the next day Mrs. Lane and I took our journey towards Bristol, resolving to lie at a place called Long-Marson, in the vale of Evesham. But we had not gone two hours on our way but the mare I rode on cast a shoe, so we were forced to ride to get another shoe at a scattering village, whose name begins with something like Long -. And as I was holding my horse's foot, I asked the smith what news? He told me that there was no news that he knew of since the good news of the beating of the rogues, the Scots. I asked him whether there was none of the English taken that joined with the Scots? He answered that he did not hear that that rogue Charles Stewart was taken, but some of the others, he said, were taken, but not Charles Stewart. I told him that if that rogue were taken he deserved to be hanged, more than all the rest, for bringing in the Scots. Upon which he said that I spoke like an honest man, and so we parted.

Here it is to be noted that we had in company with us Mrs. Lane's sister, who was married to one Mr. -, she being then going to my Lord Paget's, hard by Windsor, so as we were to part, as accordingly we did, at Stratford-upon-Avon.

But a mile before we came to Stratford-upon-Avon, we espied upon the way a troop of horse, whose riders were alighted and the horses eating some grass by the wayside, staying there, as I thought, while their muster-master was providing their quarters. Mrs. Lane's sister's husband, who went along with her as far as Stratford, seeing this troop of horse just in our way, said that for his part he would not go by them, for he had been once or twice beaten by some of the Parliament soldiers, and he would not run the venture again. I, hearing him say so, begged Mrs. Lane softly in her ear that we might not turn back, but go on if they should see us turn. But all she could say in the world would not do, but her brother-in-law turned quite round and went into Stratford another way. The troop of horse being then just getting on horse-back about twice twelve score off and, as I told her, we did meet the troop just but in the town of Stratford.

But then her brother and we parted, he going his way, and we ours towards Long-Marson, where we lay at a kinsman's, I think, of Mrs. Lane's, neither the said kinsman nor her aforementioned brother-in-law knowing who I was. The next night we lay at Cirencester, and so from thence to Mr. Norton's house beyond Bristol, where as soon as ever I came, Mrs. Lane called the butler of the house, a very honest fellow, whose name was

Pope and had served Tom Jermyn, a Groom of my Bed-Chamber when I was a boy at Richmond. She bade him to take care of William Jackson, for that was my name, as having been lately sick of an ague, whereof the said I was still weak and not quite recovered. And the truth is, my late fatigues and want of meat had indeed made me look a little pale; besides this, Pope had been a trooper in the King my father's army, but I was not to be known in that house for anything but Mrs. Lane's servant.

Memorandum — that one Mr. Laffells, a cousin of Mrs. Lane's, went all the way with us from Colonel Lane's on horse-back, single, I riding before Mrs. Lane.

Pope the butler took great care of me that night, I not eating, as I should have done, with the servants upon account of my not being well. The next morning I arose pretty early, having a very good stomach, and went to the buttery hatch to get my breakfast, where I found Pope and two or three other men in the room, and we all fell to eating bread and butter, to which he gave us very good ale and sack. And as I was sitting there, there was one that looked like a country-fellow sat just by me, who, talking, gave so particular an account of the battle of Worcester to the rest of the company that I concluded he must be one of Cromwell's soldiers. But I asking him how he came to give so good an account of that battle, he told me he was in the King's regiment; by which I thought he meant one Colonel King's regiment. But questioning him further, I perceived that he had been in my regiment of guards, in Major Broughton's company, that was my major in the battle. I asked him what a kind of man I was to which he answered by describing exactly both my clothes and my horse; and then looking upon me, he told me that the King was at least three fingers taller than I. Upon which I made what haste I could out of the buttery, for fear he should indeed know me, as being more afraid when I knew he was one of our own soldiers than when I took him for one of the enemy's.

So Pope and I went into the hall, and just as we came into it Mrs. Norton was coming by through it; upon which, I plucking off my hat and standing with my hat in my hand as she passed by, that Pope looked very earnestly in my face. But I took no notice of it, but put on my hat again and went away, walking out of the house into the field.

I had not been out half an hour but coming back I went up to the chamber where I lay; and just as I came thither, Mr. Laffells came to me and in a little trouble said, "What shall we do? I am afraid Pope knows you, for he says very positively to me that it is you, but I have denied it." Upon which I presently, without more ado, asked him whether he was a very honest man or no. Whereto he answering me that he knew him to be so honest a fellow that he durst trust him with his life as having been always on our side. I thought it better to trust him than go away leaving that suspicion upon him, and thereupon sent for Pope, and told him that I was very glad to meet him there and would trust him with my life as an old acquaintance. Upon which, being a discreet fellow, he asked me what I intended to do? For, says he, I am extremely happy I know you, for otherways you might run great danger in this house. For though my master and mistress are good people, yet there are at this time one or two in it that are very great rogues, and I think I can be useful to you in anything you will command me. Upon which I told him my design of getting a ship, if possible, at Bristol; and to that end bade him go that very day immediately to Bristol, to see if there were any ships going either to Spain or France that I might get a passage away in.

I told him also that my Lord Wilmot was coming to meet me here; for he and I had agreed at Colonel Lane's, and were to meet this very day at Norton's. Upon which Pope told me that it was most fortunate that he knew me and had heard this from me, for that if my Lord Wilmot should have come hither, he would have been most certainly known to several people in the house, and therefore he would go. And accordingly went out and met my Lord Wilmot a mile or two off the house, not far off, where he lodged him till it was night, and then brought him hither, by a backdoor, into my chamber; I still passing for a serving-man and Laffells and I lay in one chamber, he knowing all the way who I was.

So after Pope had been at Bristol to enquire for a ship, but could hear of none ready to depart beyond sea sooner than within a month, which was too long for me to stay thereabout, I betook myself to the advising afresh with

my Lord Wilmot and Pope what was to be done. And the latter telling me that there lived somewhere in that country, upon the edge of Somersetshire at Trent, within two miles of Sherburn, Frank Windham, the Knight Marshall's brother, who being my old acquaintance and a very honest man, I resolved to go to his house.

But the night before we were to go away, we had a misfortune that might have done us much prejudice; for Mrs. Norton, who was big with child, fell into labour, and miscarried of a dead child and was very ill, so that we could not tell how in the world to find an excuse for Mrs. Lane to leave her cousin in that condition; and indeed it was not safe to stay longer there where there was so great resort of disaffected idle people.

At length, consulting with Mr. Laffells, I thought the best way to counterfeit a letter from her father's house, old Mr. Lane's, to tell her that her father was extremely ill and commanded her to come away immediately, for fear that she should not otherways find him alive; which letter Pope delivered so well, while they were all at supper, and Mrs. Lane playing her part so dexterously that all believed old Mr. Lane to be indeed in great danger, and gave his daughter the excuse to go away with me the very next morning early.

Accordingly the next morning we went directly to Trent to Frank Windham's house, and lay that night at Castle Cary, and the next night came to Trent, where I had appointed my Lord Wilmot to meet me, whom I still took care not to keep with me, but sent him a little before, or left to come after me.

When we came to Trent, my Lord Wilmot and I advised with Frank Windham whether he had any acquaintance at any sea-town upon the coast of Dorset or Devonshire; who told me that he was very well acquainted with Giles Strangways,¹ and that he would go directly to him and inform himself whether he might not have some acquaintance at Weymouth or Lyme, or some of those parts. But Giles Strangways proved not to have any, as having been long absent from all those places as not daring to stir abroad, having been always faithful to the King. But he desired Frank Windham to try what he could do therein, it being unsafe for him to be found busy upon the sea coast. But withal he sent me three hundred broad pieces², which he knew were necessary for me in the condition I was now in, for I durst carry no money about me in those mean clothes and my hair cut short but about ten or twelve shillings in silver.

Frank Windham, upon this, went himself to Lyme and spoke with a merchant there to hire a ship for my transportation, being forced to acquaint him that it was I that was to be carried out. The merchant undertook it, his name being —, and accordingly hired a vessel for France, appointing a day for my coming to Lyme to embark. And accordingly we set out from Frank Windham's, and to cover the matter the better, I rode before a cousin of Frank Windham's, one Mrs. Judith Coningsby, still going by the name of William Jackson.

Memorandum — that one day during my stay at Trent, I hearing the bells ring (the church being hard by Frank Windham's house) and seeing a company got together in the church-yard, I sent down the maid of the house, who knew me, to enquire what the matter was. Who returning, came up and told me that there was a rogue, a trooper come out of Cromwell's army, that was telling the people that he had killed me and that that was my buff coat which he had then on. Upon which most of the village being fanatics, they were ringing the bells and making a bonfire for joy of it.

This merchant having appointed us to come to Lyme, we (viz., myself, my Lord Wilmot, Frank Windham, Mrs. Coningsby, and one servant of Frank Windham's, whose name was Peter) were directed from him to a little village hard by Lyme, the vessel being to come out of the Cobb at Lyme and come to a little creek that was just by this village, whither we went, and to send their boat ashore to take us in at the said creek and carry us over to France, the wind being then very good at north.

So we sat up that night, expecting the ship to come out, but she failed us. Upon which, I sent Frank Windham's man Peter and my Lord Wilmot to Lyme the next morning to know the reason of it. But we were much

¹ Giles Strangways (1615–1675)

² Broad piece — a gold 23 shillings coin

troubled how to pass away our time the next day till we could have an answer. At last we resolved to go to a place called Bridport, about four miles from Lyme, and there stay till my Lord Wilmot should bring us news whether the vessel could be had the next night or no, and the reason of her last night's failure.

So Frank Windham, Mrs. Coningsby, and I went in the morning on horse-back away to Bridport, and just as we came into the town, I could see the streets full of red-coats, Cromwell's soldiers, being a regiment of Colonel Haynes'—viz., fifteen hundred men going to embark to take Jersey—at which Frank Windham was very much startled and asked me what I would do? I told him that we must go impudently into the best inn in the town and take a chamber there as the only thing to be done, because we should otherways miss my Lord Wilmot in cafe we went anywhere else, and that would be very inconvenient both to him and me. So we rode directly into the best inn of the place and found the yard very full of soldiers. I alighted and, taking the horses, thought it the best way to go blundering in among them and lead them through the middle of the soldiers into the stable, which I did; and they were very angry with me for my rudeness.

As soon as I came into the stable, I took the bridle off the horses and called the hostler to me to help me, and to give the horses some oats. And as the hostler was helping me to feed the horses, "Sure, Sir," says the hostler, "I know your face?"; which was no very pleasant question to me. But I thought the best way was to ask him where he had lived? Whether he had always lived there or no? He told me that he was but newly come thither; that he was born in Exeter and had been hostler in an inn there, hard by one Mr. Potter's, a merchant, in whose house I had lain in the time of war. So I thought it best to give the fellow no further occasion of thinking where he had seen me for fear he should guess right at last; therefore I told him, "Friend, certainly you have seen me then at Mr. Potter's, for I served him a good while, above a year."

"Oh!" says he, "then I remember you a boy there" and with that was put off from thinking any more on it, but desired that we might drink a pot of beer together; which I excused by saying that I must go wait on my master and get his dinner ready for him. But told him that my master was going for London and would return about three weeks hence, when he would lie there and I would not fail to drink a pot with him.

As soon as we had dined, my Lord Wilmot came into the town from Lyme, but went to another inn. Upon which we rode out of town as if we had gone upon the road towards London; and when we were got two miles off, my Lord Wilmot overtook us (he having observed, while in town, where we were) and told us that he believed the ship might be ready next night, but that there had been some mistake betwixt him and the master of the ship.

Upon which, I not thinking it fit to go back again to the same place where we had sat up the night before, we went to a village called —, about four miles in the country above Lyme, and sent in Peter to know of the merchant whether the ship would be ready. But the master of the ship, doubting that it was some dangerous employment he was hired upon, absolutely refused the merchant, and would not carry us over. Whereupon we were forced to go back again to Frank Windham's to Trent, where we might be in some safety till we had hired another ship.

As soon as we came to Frank Windham's, I sent away presently to Colonel Robert Philips, who lived then at Salisbury, to see what he could do for the getting me a ship, which he undertook very willingly and had got one at Southampton, but by misfortune she was, amongst others, pressed to transport their soldiers to Jersey, by which she failed us also.

Upon this, I sent further into Sussex, where Robin Philips knew one Colonel Gunter, to see whether he could hire a ship anywhere upon that coast. And not thinking it convenient for me to stay much longer at Frank Windham's (where I had been in all about a fortnight, and was become known to very many), I went directly away to a widow gentlewoman's house, one Mrs. Hyde, some four or five miles from Salisbury, where I came into the house just as it was almost dark with Robin Philips only, not intending at first to make myself known. But just as I alighted at the door, Mrs. Hyde knew me, though she had never seen me but once in her life, and

that was with the King, my father, in the army when we marched by Salisbury some years before, in the time of the war; but she being a discreet woman took no notice at that time of me, I passing only for a friend of Robin Philips, by whose advice I went thither.

At supper there was with us Frederick Hyde, since a judge, and his sister-in-law, a widow, Robin Philips, myself, and Dr. HENCHMAN,¹ since Bishop of London, whom I had appointed to meet me there. While we were at supper, I observed Mrs. Hyde and her brother Frederick to look a little earnestly at me, which led me to believe they might know me. But I was not at all startled at it, it having been my purpose to let her know who I was; and accordingly after supper Mrs. Hyde came to me and I discovered myself to her, who told me she had a very safe place to hide me in till we knew whether our ship was ready or no. But she said it was not safe for her to trust anybody but herself and her sister, and therefore advised me to take my horse next morning and make as if I quitted the house, and return again about night; for she would order it so that all her servants and everybody should be out of the house but herself and her sister, whose name I remember not.

So Robin Philips and I took our horses and went as far as Stonehenge, and there we staid looking upon the stones for some time, and returned back again to Hale (the place where Mrs. Hyde lived) about the hour she appointed. Where I went up into the hiding-hole that was very convenient and safe, and staid there all alone (Robin Philips then going away to Salisbury) some four or five days.

After four or five days' stay, Robin Philips came to the house and acquainted me that a ship was ready provided for me at Shoreham by Colonel Gunter. Upon which, at two o'clock in the morning, I went out of the house by the back way and, with Robin Philips, met Colonel Gunter and my Lord Wilmot together from fourteen or fifteen miles off on my way towards Shoreham, and were to lodge that night at a place called Hambleton, seven miles from Portsmouth, because it was too long a journey to go in one day to Shoreham.

And here we lay at a house of a brother-in-law of Colonel Gunter's, one Mr. —, where I was not to be known (I being still in the same gray-clothe suit, as a serving-man) though the master of the house was a very honest poor man, who, while we were at supper, came in, he having been all the day playing the good-fellow at an ale-house in the town and, taking a stool, sat down with us. Where his brother-in-law, Colonel Gunter, talking very feelingly concerning Cromwell and all his party, he went and whispered his brother in the ear and asked whether I was not some round-headed rogue's-son, for I looked very suspiciously. Upon which, Colonel Gunter answering for me that he might trust his life in my hands, he came and took me by the hand and drinking a good glass of beer to me, called me brother round-head.

About that time my Lord Southampton, that was then at Titchfield, suspecting, for what reason I don't know, that it was possible I might be in the country sent either to Robin Philips or Dr. HENCHMAN to offer his service if he could serve me in my escape. But being then provided of a ship, I would not put him to the danger of having anything to do with it.

The next day we went to a place four miles off of Shoreham called Brighthelmstone, where we were to meet with the master of the ship as thinking it more convenient for us to meet there than just at Shoreham, where the ship was. So when we came to the inn at Brighthelmstone, we met with one MANSSEL,² the merchant who had hired the vessel, in company with her master,³ the merchant only knowing me as having hired her only to carry over a person of quality that was escaped from the battle of Worcester without naming anybody.

And as we were all (*viz.*, Robin Philips, my Lord Wilmot, Colonel Gunter, the merchant, the master, and I), I observed that the master of the vessel looked very much upon me. And as soon as we had supped, calling the merchant aside, the master told him that he had not dealt fairly with him, for though he had given him a very good price for the carrying over that gentleman, yet he had not been clear with him for, says he, he is the King

¹ Humphrey HENCHMAN (1592–1675), later Bishop of Salisbury (1660–1663) and Bishop of London (1663–1675)

² Francis MANSSEL

³ Captain Nicholas Tattersall, master of the SURPRISE

and I very well know him to be so. Upon which the merchant denying it, saying that he was mistaken, the master answered, "I know him very well, for he took my ship, together with other fishing vessels at Brighthelmstone, in the year 1648" (which was when I commanded the King my father's fleet, and I very kindly let them go again). "But," says he to the merchant, "be not troubled at it, for I think I do God and my country good service in preserving the King and, by the grace of God, I will venture my life and all for him, and set him safely on shore, if I can, in France." Upon which the merchant came and told me what had passed between them, and thereby found myself under a necessity of trusting him. But I took no kind of notice of it presently to him, but thinking it convenient not to let him go home, least he should be asking advice of his wife or anybody else, we kept him with us in the inn and sat up all night drinking beer and taking tobacco with him.

And here I also ran another very great danger as being confident I was known by the master of the inn, for as I was standing after supper by the fire-side, leaning my hand upon a chair and all the rest of the company being gone into another room, the master of the inn came in and fell a talking with me, and just as he was looking about and saw there was nobody in the room, he, up on a sudden, kissed my hand that was upon the back of the chair and said to me, "God bless you wherever you go; I do not doubt before I die but to be a lord, and my wife a lady." So I laughed and went away into the next room, not desiring then any further discourse with him, there being no remedy against my being known by him and more discourse might have but raised suspicion. On which consideration, I thought it best for to trust him in that manner and he proved very honest.

About four o'clock in the morning myself and the company beforenamed went towards Shoreham, taking the master of the ship with us on horseback behind one of our company, and came to the vessel's side, which was not above sixty tons. But it being low water, and the vessel lying dry, I and my Lord Wilmot got up with a ladder into her and went and lay down in the little cabin till the tide came to fetch us off.

But I was no sooner got into the ship and lain down upon the bed but the master came in to me, fell down upon his knees, and kissed my hand, telling me that he knew me very well and would venture life and all that he had in the world to set me down safe in France.

So about seven o'clock in the morning, it being high-water, we went out of the port; but the master being bound for Pool laden with sea-coal, because he would not have it seen from Shoreham that he did not go his intended voyage but stood all the day with a very easy sail towards the Isle of Wight (only My Lord Wilmot and myself, of my company, on board). And as we were sailing, the master came to me and desired me that I would persuade his men to use their endeavours with me to get him to set us on shore in France, the better to cover him from any suspicion thereof. Upon which, I went to the men, which were four and a boy, and told them, truly that we were two merchants that had some misfortunes and were a little in debt; that we had some money owing us at Rouen, in France, and were afraid of being arrested in England; that if they would persuade the master (the wind being very fair) to give us a trip over to Dieppe, or one of those ports near Rouen, they would oblige us very much and with that I gave them twenty shillings to drink. Upon which they undertook to second me if I would propose it to the master. So I went to the master and told him our condition, and that if he would give us a trip over to France, we would give him some consideration for it. Upon which he counterfeited difficulty, saying that it would hinder his voyage. But his men, as they had promised me, joining their persuasions to ours and, at last, he yielded to set us over.

So about five o'clock in the afternoon, as we were in sight of the Isle of Wight, we stood directly over to the coast of France, the wind being then full north; and the next morning, a little before day, we saw the coast. But the tide failing us and the wind coming about to the southwest, we were forced to come to an anchor within two miles of the shore till the tide of flood was done.

We found ourselves just before an harbour in France, called Fescamp; and, just as the tide of ebb passage into France the vessel that brought us over had no sooner landed me, and I given her master a pass for fear of meeting with any of our Jersey frigates, but the wind turned so happily for her as to carry her directly for Pool without its being known that she had ever been upon the coast of France.

We stayed at Rouen one day to provide ourselves better clothes and give notice to the Queen, my mother (who was then at Paris) of my being safely landed. After which, setting out in a hired coach, I was met by my mother with coaches, short of Paris and by her conducted thither, where I safely arrived.

Archibald Constable, ed. *An Account of the Preservation of King Charles II After the Battle of Worcester, Drawn Up By Himself*
(Edinburgh: Moir, 1801):3–72. [modernized]