

CHAPTER XII.

The Forged Passport.

For obvious reasons, I cannot devery much concerned if he got into as much for you." trouble for having dealt with me, I I told Huyliger I was ready to follow realize that the hardships he had en- his instructions and would do anydured in common with the other in- thing he suggested. habitants of that conquered city may possibly have distorted his idea of right and justice, and I shall not dehim by revealing his identity.

This man-we will call him Huyliger because that is as unlike his name as it is mine-was very kind to me on that memorable night when I aroused him from his sleep and in a few words of explanation told him of

my plight. He invited me inside, prepared some food for me and, putting on a dressing gown, came and sat by me while I ate, listening with the greatest inter- Spain, and we put my age at thirty. est to the short account of my adven-

tures. He could speak English fluently, and he interrupted me several times to express his sympathy for the sufferings

I had endured. "O'Brien," he said, after I had concluded my story, "I am going to help you. It may take several days-perhaps as long as two weeks-but eventually we will provide the means to enable you to get to Holland."

I thanked him a thousand times and told him that I didn't know how I could possibly repay him.

"Don't think of that," he replied; "the satisfaction of knowing that I have aided in placing one more victim half of a rubber stamp which had eviof the Huns beyond their power to dently been thrown away by the Gerharm will more than repay me for all the risk I shall run in helping you. other half out of the cork from a wine You'd better turn in now, O'Brien, and bottle. He was very skillful with a gratitude in a substantial way." to do."

As I removed my clothes and noticed that my knees were still swollen to twice their normal size, that my left ankle was black and blue from the wrench I had given it when I jumped from the train and that my ribs showed through my skin, I realized what a lot I had been through. As a matter of fact, I could not have weighed more than one hundred and fifty pounds at that time, whereas I had tipped the scales at one hundred and ninety when that it was a counterfelt. I was with my squadron in France.

I lost no time in getting into bed don't know what I dreamed of that through the experiences of my whole knock on the door and Huyliger en- Huns. tered in response to my invitation to enter, he told me that it was nearly noon! I had slept for almost twelve hours.

I cannot say that the thought did not run through my head that perhaps after all I was living in a fool's paradise, and that when Huyliger reappeared it would be with a couple of German soldiers behind him, but I dismissed such misgivings summarily, realizing that I was doing Huyliger an injustice to let such things enter my head even for an instant. I had no right to doubt his sincerity and it would do me no good to entertain such suspicions. If he was going to prove treacherous to me, I was powerless any way to cope with him.

In a few moments my host reap-peared with a tray containing my breakfast. I don't suppose I shall ever forget that meal. It consisted of a cup of coffee-real coffee, not the kind I had had at Courtral-several slices of bread, some hot potatoes and a dish of scrambled eggs.

Every mouthful of that meal tasted like angel-food to me and Huyliger sat on the edge of the bed and watched me enjoying it, at the same time outlining the plans he had made for my

escape. In brief, the scheme was to conceal

Huyliger said I would be given suf- house contained. ficient money to bribe the German guards at the Dutch frontier, and he huge pantry but it was absolutely bare, assured me that everything would work except of dust and dirt. A door which out according to schedule.

clared. "Only three weeks ago I heard | where it led to in case it became necesfrom an English merchant who had sary for me to elude searchers. escaped from a German detention camp In that cellar I found case after case evening."

and came to me for assistance and whom I had been able to get through the lines. His message telling me of his safe arrival in Rotterdam came to scribe the man to whom I applied for me in an indirect way, of course, but the passport nor the house in which the fact that the plans we had made he lived. While, in view of what sub- carried through without mishap makes sequently happened, I would not be me feel that we ought to be able to do

"I want to rejoin my squadron as soon as I possibly can," I told him, "but I realize that it will take a cerliberately bring further disaster on tin length of time for you to make the necessary arrangements, and I will be as patient as I can."

The first thing to do, Huyliger told me, was to prepare a passport. He had a blank one and it was a comparatively simple matter to fill in the spaces, using a genuine passport which Huyliger possessed as a sample of the handwriting of the passport clerk. My occupation was entered as that of a sallor. My birthplace we gave as As a matter of fact, at that time I could easily have passed for thirtyfive, but we figured that with proper food and a decent place to sleep at night, I could soon regain my normal appearance, and the passport would have to serve me, perhaps, for several weeks to come.

Filling in the blank spaces on the passport was, as I have said, a comparatively easy matter, but that did not begin to fill the bill. Every genuine passport bore an official rubber stamp, something like an elaborate postmark, and I was at a loss to know how to get over that difficulty.

Fortunately, however, Huyliger had mans, and he planned to construct the in the morning I'll tell you what I plan | penknife, and although he spoilt a score or more of corks before he suc ceeded in getting anything like the result he was after, the finished article was far better than our most sanguine expectations. Indeed, after we had pared it over here and there, and removed whatever imperfections our repeated test disclosed, we had a stamp which made an impression so closely resembling the original that without a magnifying glass, we were sure, it would have been impossible to tell

Huyliger procured a camera and and still less in getting to sleep. I the passport in the place provided for that purpose, and we then had a passnight, but I had plenty of time to go port which was entirely satisfactory life, for when I was aroused by a prove equally so to our friends the

It had taken two days to fix up the passport. In the meanwhile Huyliger informed me that he had changed his plans about the convent and that instead he would take me to an empty house, where I could remain in safety until he told me it was advisable for me to proceed to the frontier.

This was quite agreeable to me, as I had had misgivings as to the kind of a priest I would make and it seemed to me to be safer to remain aloof from everyone in a descried house than to have to mingle with people or come in contact with them, even with the best of disguises.

That night I accompanied Huyliger to a fashionable section of the city, where the house in which I was to be concealed was located.

This house turned out to be a fourstory structure of brick. Huyliger told me that it had been occupied by a wealthy Belgian before the war, but since 1914 it had been uninhabited save for the occasional habitation of some refugee whom Huyliger was befriend-

Huyliger had a key and let me in, but he did not enter the house with me, stating that he would visit me in the morning.

I explored the place from top to bottom as well as I could without lights. me in a convent until conditions were The house was elaborately furnished, ripe for me to make my way to the but, of course, the dust lay a quarter border. In the meanwhile I was to be of an inch thick everywhere. It was a dressed in the garb of a priest, and large house, containing some twenty when the time came for me to leave rooms. There were two rooms in the the city I was to pretend that I was a basement four on the first floor, four Spanish sailor, because I could speak a on the second five on the third and five the payment to him of the amount he little Spanish, which I had picked on the top. In the days that were to up on the coast. To attempt to play come I was to have plenty of opporthe part of a Belgian would become in- tunity to familiarize myself with the creasingly difficult, he pointed out, and | contents of that house but at that time would bring inevitable disaster in the I did not know it and I was curious event that I was called upon to speak. enough to want to know just what the

Down in the basement there was a evidently led to a sub-basement at-"Yours is not the first case, O'Brien, tracted my attention and I thought it

told me that there were 1,800 bottles of it! I was so happy at the turn my as soon as I could. I had the passport stairs. affairs had taken and in the rosy pros- he had prepared for me, and I figured pects which I now entertained that I that even without further help I could celebration then and there. On second thought, however, I remembered the I would have to use my own ingenuity in my possession." old warning of the folly of shouting to get through. before you are well out of the woods, and I decided that it would be just as well to postpone the festivities for a

while and go to bed instead. In such an elaborately furnished house I had naturally conjured up ideas of a wonderfully large bed, with thick hair mattress, downy quilts and big soft pillows. Indeed, I debated for a while which particular bedroom I should honor with my presence that night. Judge of my disappointment, therefore, when after visiting bedroom after bedroom, I discovered that there wasn't a bed in any one of them that was in a condition to sleep in. All the mattresses had been removed and the rooms were absolutely bare of everything in the way of wool, silk or cotton fabrics. The Germans had apparently swept the house clean.

There was nothing to do, therefore, but to make myself as comfortable as I could on the floor, but as I had grown accustomed by this time to sleeping under far less comfortable conditions, I swallowed my disappointment as cheerfully as I could and lay down

for the night. In the morning Huyliger appeared and brought me some breakfast, and after I had eaten it he asked me what connections I had in France or England from whom I could obtain

I told him that I banked at Cox & Co., London, and that if he needed any money I would do anything I could to get it for him, although I did not know just how such things could be arranged.

"Don't worry about that, O'Brien." he replied. "We'll find a way of getting it all right. What I want to know is how far you are prepared to go to compensate me for the risks I am rendering you!"

The change in the man's attitude

"Of course I shall pay you as wel. as I can for what you have done, Huylias possible the disappointment his demand had occasioned me, "but don't you think that this is hardly the proper time or occasion to talk of compensation? All I have on me, as you know, is a few hundred francs, and that, of I get back, if I ever do, I shall not no concern about my showing my to you if I wanted to."

"That's all right, O'Brien," he insisted, looking at me in a knowing sort

to be taken care of now!" of compensation? How can I arrange to get it to you? I am willing to do

anything that is reasonable." "I want - pounds," he replied, me. If I had been Lord Kitchener instead of just an ordinary lieutenant took a photograph of me to paste on in the R. F. C., he would hardly have in the house, but we were standing asked a larger sum. Perhaps he near a landing at the time and the decided to see the thing through. I thought I was.

"Well, my dear man," I said smilingto both of us and would, we hoped, ly, thinking that perhaps he was joking, "you don't really mean that, doyou?

"I certainly do, O'Brien, and what is more," he threatened, "I intend to get



Outlining the Plans He Had Made for My Escape.

every cent I have asked, and you are going to help me get it." He pulled out an order calling for

sign it. I waved it aside. "Huyliger," I said, "you have helped the power to help me further. I appre-

mind so obstinately I would advise to do for me. you to think it over. I'll be back this For perhaps two hours 1 sat on that tured for me.

It was evident, however, that Huyliger still had an idea that I might change my mind with regard to the payment he had demanded, and I decided that it would be foolish to do anything until he paid me a second visit.

much difficulty, and when I got there

At the beginning of my dealings with Huyliger I had turned over to him some pictures, papers, and other things that I had on me when I entered his house, including my identification disk,. and I was rather afraid that he might refuse to return them to me.

All day long I remained in the house without a particle of food other than the breakfast Huyliger had brought to me. From the windows I could see plenty to interest me and help pass the time away, but of my experiences while in that house I shall tell in detail later on, confining my attention now to a narrative of my dealing with Huyliger.

That night he appeared as he had promised.

"Well, O'Brien," he asked, as he entered the room where I was awaiting him, "what do you say? Will you sign the order or not?"

It had occurred to me during the day that the amount demanded was so fabulous that I might have signed the order without any danger of its ever being paid, but the idea of this man, who had claimed to be befriending me, endeavoring to make capital out of my plight galled me so that I was determined not to give it to him whether I could do so in safety or not.

"No, Huyliger," I replied, "I have decided to get along as best I can without any further assistance from you. I shall see that you are reasonably paid for what you have done, but I will not accept any further assistance from you at any price, and what is more I want you to return to me at once all the photographs and other papers and belongings of mine which stunned me. I could hardly believe my I turned over to you a day or two

"I'm sorry about that, O'Brien," he retorted, with a show of apparent singer," I replied, trying to concent as far cerity, "but that is something I cannot

> "If you don't give me back those papers at once," I replied hotly, "I will take steps to get them, and d-d quick too!"

"I don't know just what you could course, you are welcome to, and when do, O'Brien," he declared coolly, "but as a matter of fact the papers and easily forget that kindness you have pictures you refer to are out of the shown me. I am sure you need have country. I could not get them back

Something told me the man was

lying. "See here, Huyliger!" I threatened, of way; "you may take care of me advancing towards him, putting my afterwards, and then again you may hand on his shoulder and looking him papers and I want them here before "Well, what do you want me to do? midnight to-night. If I don't get them How much do you expect in the way I shall sleep in this place just once more and then, at 8 o'clock to-morrow morning. I shall go to the German authorities, give myself up, show them the passport that you fixed for me, and he named a figure that staggered tell them how I got it, and explain everything."

Huyliger paled. We had no lights moonlight was streaming through a stained-glass window.

The Belgian turned on his heel and started to go down the stairs.

"Mind you," I called after him, "I shall wait for you till the city clock strikes twelve, and if you don't show next time you will see me is when you confront me before the German authorities. I am a desperate man, Huyliger, and I mean every word I say."

sat on the top stair and wondered just remained in the house. story would be discredited when I put it to them?

Of course, my threat to give myself up to the Huns was a pure bluff. While I had no desire to lose the papers which Huyliger had and which inplace of my poor chum Raney, I certainly had no intention of cutting off my nose to spite my face by surrendering to the Germans. I would have been shot, as sure as fate, for after all I had been able to observe behind the border." German lines I would be regarded as

a spy and treated as such. At the same time I thought I detected a yellow streak in Huyliger, and I figured that he would not want to take the risk of my carrying out my threat even though he believed there was but a small chance of my doing so. If I did, he would undoubtedly share my fate, and the pictures and papers he had of mine were really of no use to him, and I have never been able to ascertabl why it was he wished to retain them unless they contained something-some information about mewhich accounted for his complete change of attitude towards me in the had mentioned and demanded that I first place, and he wanted the papers as evidence to account to his supe-

riors for his conduct towards me. When he first told me that the plan me out so far and perhaps you have of placing me in a convent disguised as a priest had been abandoned he exciate what you have done for me, al- plained it by saying that the cardinal though now, I think, I see what your had issued orders to the priests to The other was a stranger. motive was, but I certainly don't in help no more fugitives, and I have

staircase musing about the peculiar I think I saw through their game Albany Journal

left, was to get out of that house just opened and Huyliger ascended the

"I have brought you such of your be longings as I still had, O'Brien," he was half inclined to indulge in a little now get to the border without very said softly. "The rest, as I told you, I Huyliger's brother. cannot give you. They are no longer

I looked through the little bunch he handed me. It included my identification disk, most of the papers I valued, and perhaps half of the photographs.

"I don't know what your object is in retaining the rest of my pictures, Huyliger," I replied, "but as a matter of only of sentimental value to me and you are welcome to them. We'll call it a beat."

I don't know whether he understood the idiom, but he sat down on the stairs just below me and cogitated for

a few moments. "O'Brien," he started finally, "I'm sorry things have gone the way they have. I feel sorry for you and I would really like to help you. I don't supit. At the same time, I hate to leave you to your own resources and I am my life as dearly as possible. going to make one more suggestion



"Your Lives Won't Be Worth a Damn."

other plan to get you into Holland not. I'm not satisfied to wait. I want straight in the eye, "I want those and if you will go with me to another house, I will introduce you to a man But for our own protection, you owe who I think will be in a position to help you."

"How many millions of pounds will he want for his trouble " I answered, sarcastically.

"You can arrange that when you see him. Will you go?"

I suspected there was something fishy about the proposition, but I felt that I could take care of myself and knew Huyliger would not dare to deliver me to the authorities because of the fact that I had the tell-tale passport, which would be his deathknell as well as my own.

willing to go with him whenever he if they get the passport, too, and up with those papers by that time, the was ready, and he suggested that we go the next evening.

I pointed out to him that I was entirely without food and asked him whether he could not arrange to bring He let himself out of the door and I or send me something to eat while I

what he would do. Would he try to "I'm sorry, O'Brien," he replied, "but steal a march on me and get in a first I'm afraid you will have to get along word to the authorities so that my as best you can. When I brought you your breakfast this morning I took I hope I never shall, because I am a desperate chance. If I had been discovered by one of the German soldiers thing for which I might otherwise be entering this house with food in my sorry. possession, I would not only have paid the penalty myself, but you would have cluded the map and the last resting been discovered, too. It is too dangerous a proposition. Why don't you go out by yourself and buy your food at of the misfortunes of those who were the stores? That would give you con- referred to them for help. In all counfidence and you'll need plenty of it when you continue your journey to the

> what he said and I really could not blame him for not wanting to take any I know that the average poor peas chances to help me in view of the relations between us.

out food for many hours at a time before and I suppose I shall be able to well-stocked larder. Perhaps the poor do so again. I shall look for you to- have less to lose than the rich if their morrow evening."

The next evening he came and I ac the Huns. companied him to another house not very far from the one in which I had for helping escaped prisoners and other been staying and not unlike it in ap- fugitives, and it is not to be wondered pearance. It, too, was a substantial at that they are willing to take as few dwelling house which had been unten- chances as possible. A man with a anted since the beginning save perhaps family, especially, does not feel jusfor such occasional visits as Huyliger tifled in helping a stranger when he and his associates made to it.

ducted me to a room on the second pains. floor, where he introduced me to two men. One, I could readily see by the resemblance, was his own brother. I suppose I ought to hold no grudge

Very briefly they explained to me tend to be blackmailed and I tell you since wondered whether there was that they had procured another pass- themselves. right now that I won't stand for it." anything in my papers which had port for me-a genuine one-which "Very well," he said, "it is just as turned him against me and led him to would prove far more effective in helpwe have handled successfully," he de- might be a good idea to know just you say, but before you make up your forsake me after all he had promised ing to get me to the frontier than the counterfeit one they had manufac-

of choice wine-Huyliger subsequently My first impulse, after the man had turn in my affairs, when the front door right at the start, but I listened pastiently to what they had to say.

"Of course, you will have to return to us the passport we gave you before we can give you the real one," said

"I haven't the slightest objection," I replied, "if the new passport is all you claim for it. Will you let me see it?"

There was considerable hesitation on the part of Huyliger's brother and the other chap at this. "Why, I don't think that's necessary

it all, Mr. O'Brien," said the former. "You give us the old passport and we will be very glad to give you the new fact, the ones that are missing were one for it. Isn't that fair enough?" "It may be fair enough, my friends," I retorted, seeing that it was useless to conceal further the fact that I was fully aware of their whole plan and why I had been brought to this house. "It may be fair enough, my friends," I said, "but you will get the passport

indicating my inside breast pocket, "only off my dead body!" I suppose the three of them could pose you will believe me, but the have made short work of me then and matter of the order which which I there if they had wanted to go the asked you to sign was not of my doing. limit, and no one would ever have However, we won't go into that. The been the wiser, but I had gone through proposition was made to you and you so much and I was feeling so mean toturned it down, and that's the end of wards the whole world just at that moment that I was determined to sell

that I have here," patting my side and

"I have that passport here," I replied, "and am going to keep it. If to you for your own good. I have anyou gentlemen think you can take it

from me you are welcome to try!" To tell the truth, I was spoiling for a fight, and I half wished they would start something. The man who had lived in the house had evidently been a collector of ancient pottery, for the walls were lined with great pieces of earthenware which had every earmark of possessing great value. They cartainly possessed great weight. I figured that if the worst came to the worst that pottery would come in mighty handy. A single blow with one of those big vases would put a man out as neatly as possible and as there was lots of pottery and only three men, I believed I had an excellent chance of holding my own in the combat which I had invited.

I had already picked out in my mind what I was going to use, and I got up, stood with my back to the wall and told them that if they ever figured on getting the passport, then would be

their best chance. Apparently they realized that I meant business and they immediately began to expostulate at the attitude I

was taking. One of the men spoke excellent English. In fact, he told me that he could speak five languages, and if he could lie in the others as well as I knew he did in my own tongue, he was not only an accomplished linguist, but a most versatile liar into the bargain.

"My dear fellow," said the linguist, it is not that we want to deprive you of the passport. Good heavens! if it will aid you in getting out of the country, I wish you could have six just like it. it to us to proceed on your journey as best you can without it because as long as you have it in your possession you jeopardize our lives, too. Don't you think it is fairer that you should risk your own safety rather than place the lives of three innocent men in

danger?" "That may be as it is, my friends," I retorted, "and I am glad you realize your danger. Keep it in mind, for in case any of you should happen to feel inclined to notify the German authorities that I am in this part of the country, think it over before you do so. Remember always that if the Germans get me, they get the passport, too, and the history of that clever little piece of pasteboard, I will implicate all three of you, and whoever is working with you, and as I am an officer I rather think my word will be taken before yours. Good night!"

The bluff evidently worked, because I was able to get out of the city without molestation from the Germans.

I have never seen these men since. afraid I might be tempted to do some-

I do not mean to imply that all Belgians are like this. I had evidently fallen into the hands of a gang who were endeavoring to make capital out tries there are bad as well as good, and in a country which has suffered so much as poor Belgium it is no wonder There was a good deal of truth in if some of the survivors have lost their sense of moral perspective.

ant in Belgium would divide his scanty rations with a needy fugitive sooner "Very well," I said; "I've gone with than a wealthy Belgian would dole out a morsel from his comparatively generosity or charity is discovered by

There have been many Belgians shot knows that he and his whole family Huyliger let himself in and con- may be shot or sent to prison for their

Although I suffered much from the attitude of Huyliger and his associates, against them in view of the unenviable predicament in which they are in

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

We Suppose This Is So. In place of most of our troubees we night easily have much worse ones .-