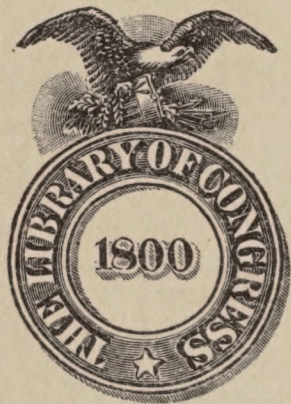




*The Lovely
Lady Hamilton*
ALEXANDRE DUMAS



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THE LOVELY LADY HAMILTON



“ Never had painting or sculpture produced such a masterpiece.”

(See page 24)

The Lovely Lady Hamilton

(“EMMA LYONNA”)

OR

The Beauty and the Glory

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE OF ROYALTY
AND REVOLUTION

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

AUTHOR OF

“THE THREE MUSKETEERS,” “MONTE CRISTO,” “THE REGAL
BOX,” “THE KING’S GALLANT,” “ALL FOR A CROWN,” ETC.

Translated from the French by HENRY L. WILLIAMS

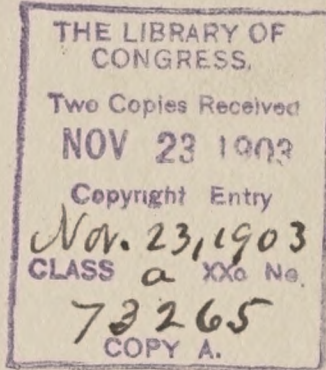


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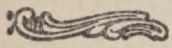
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The Lovely Lady Hamilton




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P R E F A C E



Nelson has been sketched in battle, slight, but entire steel; stiffly daring shot and sword, though at each victory he left a limb; a parson's son who had a touch of the Puritan, acclaimed for saving his country; but never so humanized by ardent love as in these pages. Marble breast over a tender heart; the iron hand which could retain at his single eye the telescope to calmly watch the enemy blow up from his red-hot shot; his one arm spared on which should enter the royal coterie, "the Lovely Lady Hamilton." This revelation is "the touch of nature," and makes him brother to us all, no longer the historic muse's reserved son. Dumas depicts Nelson crossing the conventional confines to pair off with the cynosure of the Neapolitan Court—just a child of Adam yearning for affection of the eternal Eve.

Genius plays its puppets with a sure hand; he places the two foremost objects of the Georgian era, sea hero and unmatched Belle of the Court, on a splendid stage—*La Bella Napoli*. Naples, with the sinister glamour of the slumbering volcano; its smoke vainly trying to veil the superb sunshine; its hidden fervor making its ductile people the feeblest folk and yet the most ferocious of Europe. The city which dances on the crater's edge, is shown under the Vesuvian glare, the warships' rocket flash, the mob-torches' flare, the siege-guns' flashing jets, and those tropical lightnings, accompanying the ephemeral but destructive storms.

Out of the chaos into which the great French revolution of 1789 hurled shattered society and sovereignties

rose, among other petty offsprings of the vast cataclysm, the Parthenopean Republic, reared by Italian patriots on the ruins of the Neapolitan-Bourbon throne. Its sensual King Ferdinando was expelled, with his fiery Queen Caroline, sister of Queen Marie-Antoinette, escaping a similar doom. In these war clouds distinctly shone out the maritime glory of England, in the person of her greatest hero, Admiral Nelson. But all his bravery and genius could not brush away obstacles which withered under the smile of a mere woman, Emma Hart, otherwise Lyons, called ungrudgingly "the Lovely Lady Hamilton." Her witchery aided his talent, and the French were swept from the seas.

Her life is altogether a romance, and evidences that beauty, by sheer might, can elevate its happy possessor to the throne. It was she who baffled cabinet ministers and the formidable republic, and kept Napoleon sealed up in Egypt.

Emma was born in a cot, her father being a coal miner. When he died, leaving his widow and child penniless, they had to tramp Northern England, at risk of being shipped to Botany Bay as vagrants. On returning homeward, however, the lord of the manor considerably allowed a pittance with which the girl received a parish schooling. The mother dying, and the allowance with her, the girl became nursemaid; but ambition stirred her to rise above "the station in which Providence had placed her"; she staked her restricted savings on equipping herself to go to London. Here she fell in with a fellow-servant who, however, had found the theatre more profitable than sweeping rooms; with her, while awaiting an opening "on the boards," she saw the plays and was fired by them, learned taste in attire from seeing the aristocrats in the park, and forced to earn a penny, let her growing and manifest charms serve as sufficient introduction to the

profession of artists' model. Thus she was the favorite study for Romney, the celebrated painter. He set her forward as the chief inspirer of his works, and she became the artistic standard.

A popular quack, named Dr. Graham, essaying the tricks of Mesmer, in vogue in Paris, hired Emma to represent the Goddess Health in his lecture hall. All London crowded it to worship this "effect of his Beauty-perfector" rather than to listen to his claptrap.

Among the *dilettante* was the rich and eccentric archæologist, Sir William Hamilton, foster brother of King George, and enjoying the means to gratify a mania for the splendors of Greek art. He saw in this peerless woman a modern realization of the masterpieces of Phidias and Apelles, and married her. But not to have his bride mobbed on the promenade, he embarked with her, being made British Ambassador to Naples.

It was plunging over the pan-edge into the fire. The sensitive Italians bowed to her graces and attractions. When she disembarked, it was like Venus greeted on rising from the sea. The British blond aroused the glutinous King out of his table stupor and kindled an affection unquenchable in his Queen. The poets and artists and singers had no other idol, and she swayed statesmen like the impressionable *lazaroni*.

She might have lolled her life away on sumptuous cushions, but she chose to parade her patriotism, personal passion and gratitude for the royal house by baffling the French Republic and the native rebels with a hate like her mistress'. She used all her influence to nullify the French-Neapolitan treaty of neutrality, and enabled Nelson to refit his battered fleet for the annihilation of the French fleet at Aboukir (1798). Farther still, she urged the Englishman, subjected like all by this "siren in the sea of the world," to aid the tottering King to suppress the

Parthenopean Republic. He cannonaded and executed the revolutionists at her beck. When Nelson died, after the battle of Trafalgar (1805), the portrait of "his guardian angel" was hanging in his cabin, where naval etiquette prescribed the King's should be, and her miniature was on his heart. As he lay on "the dying deck" he sent a loving kiss to his darling, and expressed his hope that the nation would provide for her and their love-child. But she died in want in 1815, and the child suffered from the neglect of the Puritans. "A less unhappy fate should have visited a woman," says Southey, who saw her in her prime, "whose personal accomplishments were seldom equaled, and whose powers of mind were not less fascinating than her person."

Dumas has chosen for his theme the most distinguished and appetizing phases of her luminous career, and not one of her lovable and loving qualities is omitted in these pages.

H. L. W.

The Lovely Lady Hamilton.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROYAL GALLEY.

The magnificent Bay of Naples opens out between Cape Campanella and the rock on which Virgil imposed the name of Misena Headland, in locating there Hector's trumpeter's grave.

This gulf, always gay, and furrowed by thousands of craft, ringing with laugh, and song, and musical instruments, was noisier and more animated than usual on the 22d of September, 1798.

The month of September is splendid here, as it comes between summer's devouring heats and autumn's capricious showers. The day we come upon was one of the finest.

In golden flood the sunbeams poured upon the hilly amphitheatre which ran around from Nisida to Portici, as if to embrace the blessed city against the flanks of Mount St. Elmo, surmounting the old stronghold of the Angevin princes, like a mural crown set on the brow of modern Parthenope.

The immense azure sheet, like carpet set with gold spangles, shuddered under a light, balsamic, and odoriferous morning breeze; so soft that it brought a smile upon the grateful cheek it fanned; so sprightly that it developed in the bosoms inhaling it that tremendous aspiration for

infinitude which makes vain man believe he is, or may be, a demi-god, and that this world is but a mounting-block for a ride as on Pegasus.

Eight o'clock sounded from San Fernandino's Church, on the square of that name.

Scarcely was the last vibration lost in space than the thousand bells of the three hundred sacred edifices gladly and tumultuously bounded out of the belfry apertures, and the fort's cannon, bursting out in thunder-peal, seemed trying to smother the uproar, while wrapping the town in smoke and flame. Fort St. Elmo, flaming and fuming like a crater in eruption, imitated Vesuvius active, before the real Vesuvius, dead.

The bells and the guns saluted a glittering galley which was shooting out from the docks, crossing the military port, and standing out gallantly for the open sea, under both oar and sail. It was followed by ten or twelve smaller barges, almost as lavishly ornamented as the captain-galley, which might have vied with the Bucentaur, carrying the Doge to wed the sea with Venice.

The commander of this vessel was an officer, in his forty odd years, wearing the rich uniform of the Neapolitan navy. His visage, of manly, severe, and imperial beauty, was tanned by sun and tempest. Though his head was bare, on account of respect for his passengers, he held it loftily; the hair was grizzled, showing that it had many times had the storm pass over it. One did not need to see the speaking-trumpet, hanging by a thong to his right wrist, to know at a glance that he was the chief; for nature had impressed rule indelibly in his tone and in his glance.

His name was Francesco Caracciolo, and he came of the antique race of the princes of his name, accustomed to be ambassadors and favorites of royal heads.

His attitude on the poop was as if it were a day of fighting.

The stern was covered with a purple awning, fringed with gold and emblazoned with the coat-of-arms of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies; it was intended to shield the august passengers from the sun.

The passengers formed three groups, varying in aspect and demeanor.

The most notable consisted of five men, occupying the center of the shaded spot, and three of them stood on the edge. Around their necks were ribbons of many colors, belonging to the orders of knighthood of all countries; and their chests were adorned with stars, crosses and broaches. Two of them displayed, as distinctive tokens of their office, gold keys crossed on their buttons; they were royal chamberlains.

The principal person was a man nearing fifty, tall and thin, but built on strong lines. The habit of bending forward to hear the better had slightly stooped his shoulders. In spite of the coat he wore, covered with gold embroidery, emblems of chivalry in diamonds, and the title of "majesty" continually applied to him, he had a vulgar look, and none of his features, analyzed, revealed regal dignity.

His feet were large, his hands coarse, and there was no delicacy in the joints. The bald brow denoted the absence of lofty feelings; the retreating chin, a weak and irresolute character, and the immeasurably long and full nose was the sign of base luxury and gross instincts.

Alone, the eye was quick and sarcastic, but yet that was false, and sometimes cruel.

This was Ferdinand IV., son of Charles III., King of the Two Sicilies and of Jerusalem, Infanta of Spain, but whom the lazzaroni of Naples simply dubbed "King Nosey (*Nasone*)."

The man with whom he was most directly conversing, but the least gorgeously clad of all, though his was the laced coat of foreign diplomats, was an old gentleman, close to seventy. He was slight and small, with a lack of hair, white and brushed back.

His face was narrow, with pointed nose and chin, mouth drawn in, with the gaze clear, investigating and intelligent. His hands, of which he took extreme care, and over which fell masses of admirable English point lace, were loaded with gold rings in which were set precious antique cameos. He wore only two orders, the local badge of St. Januarius, and the Red Ribbon of the Bath, with its starry medallion, displaying a scepter between a rose and a thistle, among three imperial crowns.

We see in him Sir William Hamilton, foster brother of King George III., and for years British Ambassador to this Italian court.

The three others were the prime minister, John Acton, of Irish origin; the royal aide-de-camp, Marquis Malaspina, and the royal premier's chamberlain, Duke of Ascoli.

The second group, like a painting by Angelica Kauffmann, comprised but two women, on whom, although ignorant of their station, it was impossible for the dullest observer not to bestow peculiar attention.

The leader, though past life's brilliant period of youth, preserved remarkable traits of beauty. Her figure, rather above than below medium height, was beginning to be marred by growing stoutness; but this served also to diminish certain wrinkles which were on a brow of ivory white, broad and domineering. Less through age than by political worries and the weight of her crown, they came; but her forty-five years were not betrayed thereby. Her light hair, uncommonly fine, and of a charming tint, admirably enframed a face which had its primitive oval distorted by the contractions of pain and

nervousness. Her worn blue eyes were often lit up by thoughts, and then flared a dull fire like electricity; it had been love, then ambition, and now was hatred. Her lips were carmine and moist, and were often set in a disdainful expression. Her teeth were still fine and lustrous as pearls.

Nose and chin were of a pure Grecian line; the neck, shoulders and arms had remained irreproachable.

This was the daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria, sister of Queen Marie Antoinette of France, Maria Carolina of Austria, Queen of the Two Sicilies, as being consort of Ferdinando. For reasons which will be unfolded in due course, she had taken him in indifference in the outset, then disgust, and now held him in scorn. This was not to be the last stage, yet political exigencies brought together the illustrious partners when they were not parted completely. Then the monarch went hunting in his preserves, or reposed in his "snuggery" at San Leucio, while the queen played at politics with the Minister Acton or reposed under orange groves like an enslaved princess at the feet of her favorite, Lady Hamilton, the "Emma Lyonna" of the Italians.

One glimpse of the latter sufficed to make understood the signal favor she enjoyed from the queen, as well as the frenetic enthusiasm raised by this enchanting model among the English artists, who have pictured her in endless attitudes, and the Neapolitan poets who sang her in all keys.

If ever a human being arrived at the perfection of beauty, then it was Emma, Lady Hamilton.

If you looked long at her—and who could wrest the eye away?—the goddess appeared where the woman stood.

Still we will endeavor to paint this woman, who dropped into the dingiest pit-hole of poverty, but attained

the most splendid summit of prosperity. At this time she was held to rival—nay, outrival—in gracefulness and comeliness the Greek Aspasia, the Egyptian Cleopatra, and the Roman Olympia.

When one tired of examining her in detail, each new phase was a successive dazzlement. The chestnut tresses wound around a countenance like a girl in her teens. Her eyes could not be called any one color; like the rainbow, they sparkled under brows which only Raphael could have traced; her white and flexible neck was as the swan's; arms and shoulders, they recalled not the cold contour of the Greek statuaries, but the living undulations of Germain Pilon's; supple, slightly rounded, palpitating—the gracefulness was in itself charming.

Her mouth was like the fairy princess', which dropped precious stones; hers let fall pleasant sounds and loving kisses.

In contrast with the very royal bedizenment of Queen Carolina, Emma was arrayed in a long, plain tunic of white cashmere with ample sleeves; it was in the Greek style, pleated and drawn in at the waist by a red and gold morocco belt, incrustated with rubies, opals and turquoises; the clasp was a splendid modern cameo, representing her husband, Sir William. She wore a costly Indian shawl, with which she would perform the Oriental shawl dance to amuse the queen.

The third collection consisted of two men talking science and political economy, who were the prince royal and his librarian, and his pale consort, the Princess Clementine of Austria.

At fifteen she had left the palace to wed Francis of Bourbon, now Duke of Calabria, and since then, she had not once been seen to smile.

The infant, pressed to her bosom, was to live to be a second Maria Carolina in name, with her mother's weak-

ness, but not her vices; she married the Duke of Berry, from whom Louvel's "steel divorce" set her free.

All this cluster of princes, dukes and royalties glided over the azure sea, under the purple hangings, to the sound of melody directed by Cimarosa, court composer. They were driven forward by the gentle Baya breezes, whose voluptuous breath goes to make the roses flourish at Poestum.

At the same time, there loomed up on the sky line, gradually enlarging, though still beyond Capri and Campanella Head, a warship. On sighting the royal flotilla it changed its course to sail nearer and fired a hailing cannon shot. Through the puff of white smoke, a ball was seen running up to the gaff, and, unfolding, displayed the English red cross.

CHAPTER II.

THE HERO OF THE NILE.

The vessel showing the British colors and heading for the royal fleet was named the *Vanguard*. The officer commanding was Commodore Horatio Nelson, fresh from destroying the French fleet at Aboukir, and depriving General Bonaparte and his republican army of all hope of returning home.

Nelson was one of the greatest seamen that ever existed, the only man who counterbalanced—and, truth to say, overbalanced—Napoleon's fortune on the European Continent.

He was at this epoch a man of forty. His father was a petty village curate, and he had lost his mother when young. An uncle in the navy who was a relative of Walpole, the premier, procured his appointment as midshipman, and he went with him to sea on the *Redoubtable*.

Going to the Polar regions, he was shut up six months in the ice, had a body-to-body struggle with a white bear, which would have gulped him down but for a shipmate thrusting his musket down its throat and blowing a hole in his side.

Sailing to the Equator, he lost himself in the Peruvian wilds where, drinking water into which a bough of the poisonous manchineel tree had fallen and soaked, he was badly sickened for life.

When in Canada, he fell in love and offered to send in his resignation in order to make a foolish match. His officers seized him by surprise and carried him aboard his

ship, the *Seahorse*, and he was not restored his liberty until well out to sea.

When Toulon was surrendered to the English, Nelson was captain of the *Agamemnon*; he was sent on this deck to Naples to announce to the King of Sicily the taking of that foremost French military port.

Sir William Hamilton, the English ambassador, met him in the king's presence, took him to his residence and, leaving him in the reception-room, went to tell his wife:

"Emma, I am bringing you a little fellow who cannot boast of his beauty!"

Sir William was one of the first to make a cult of beauty; he worshiped the lovely in art and had carried his way to own the finest living Venus in Europe by wedding Emma Lyons, in the teeth of all kinds of remonstrance.

"But," he went on, "I shall not be much astonished if he does not some day prove the glory of our country and the dread of our foes!"

"How came you to foresee so much?" she inquired.

"By the few words we exchanged. 'By the foot of Hercules one recognizes the god!' Come and do him the honors, my dear! I have never offered my house to any of our officers, but I do not wish a man of this character to lodge elsewhere."

So it came about that Nelson dwelt in the British Embassy.

Did Emma also divine the greatness of this unprepossessing hero? It is undoubted that the lady's overwhelming charms produced their inevitable effect upon him. At all events, he obtained from Naples the reinforcement and supplies he required, and went away wildly, deeply in love with the incomparable siren.

Was it from the pure ambition of glory, or to cure himself of an unconquerable passion that he sought to throw away his life at the capture of Clavi, where he lost

an eye, or in the Teneriffe Expedition, where he left an arm? None can tell, but on both occasions he played with his life as though he set little value on it.

He came back maimed and half blinded, but Lady Hamilton displayed that tender and sympathetic pity which beauty must hold for the martyrs of glory.

It was in June, 1798, that he paid his second visit to Naples and again was by Lady Hamilton's side.

It was Nelson's critical position.

Charged to blockade the French fleet in Toulon and demolish it if it stole forth, he let it slip through his lines, and it took Malta on its flight and disembarked thirty thousand troops at Alexandria.

Nor was this all; driven off by storms, losing heavily, short of food and water, he could not continue the pursuit, but was obliged to refit at Gibraltar.

It seemed he was lost; it was natural to accuse him of treason, for the sound seamen had passed a month in the Mediterranean, which is but a salt water lake, seeking a fleet of thirteen ships of the line and nearly four hundred transports, not only without overtaking them but without even tracing their wake.

There was a French ambassador at Naples, and it was necessary to obtain under his very eyes, and with the winking of the Sicilian Court, powers to draw water and collect supplies from Messina and Syracuse, as well as material for spars and masts in Calabrian forests.

The two Sicilies had a treaty with France commanding the strictest neutrality, and to allow this to Nelson was to belie the treaty and break the neutrality.

While Ferdinando and Carolina detested the French, that might not be enough—but Emma Hamilton was on the spot. More through her love for England than their hatred for France, all that Nelson desired was granted. He knew that nothing but a great victory could save him

from the fate of Admiral Byng. He quitted Naples more loving than ever, because grateful, vowing to win or die "on the dying deck."

He won, and was all but killed. Never since powder was invented, and cannon made to profit by its invention, had any naval combat so shaken up the seas with disaster.

Out of the thirteen battle-ships in the French fleet, two only managed to escape the flames and the enemy. One ship, the *Orient*, was blown up; another and a frigate were sunk, and nine were captured.

During the action, the admiral had acted the part of the hero. He had offered himself to death, who would have none of him but the blood tribute from a severe wound. A last shot, out of the wrecked *Guillaume Tell*, broke a yardarm of the *Vanguard*, which he commanded. It fell and struck him on the forehead just as he raised his head to learn what damage had been wrought; this blow ripped the skin over his sole good eye, and knocked him down, smothered in blood.

Believing the wound mortal, he began to speak of his last wishes; but the surgeon, at the heels of the chaplain, examining the skull, found the bones intact; it was merely a scalp wound, though the skin flapped down to the mouth. As soon as this was replaced and smoothed back, Nelson picked up his speaking-trumpet and resumed his work of devastation, thundering: "Keep up the fire!" There was Titan's breath in his hatred for France.

Swift dispatch boats bore to England and the two Sicilies the news of Nelson's victory and the destruction of the republican fleet. So greatly were the French feared and the Revolution execrated that, through all Europe, was an immense hurrah of joy resounding even into Asia.

After being mad with rage, the Naples Court, above others, became furious with delight.

Lady Hamilton received the admiral's letter, announcing the defeat which shut up thirty thousand French soldiers in Egypt, and Bonaparte with them.

It is curious to measure the terror impressed on Europe's sovereigns by the union of Bonaparte and France, by the presents Nelson received from these rulers, wild with glee at seeing France debased and believing her champion ruined.

England made Nelson a peer of the realm, and awarded a gold medal; his title of Baron of the Nile had two thousand a year attached to it; the House of Lords awarded the same amount; Ireland supplied a thousand a year; the East India Company gave ten thousand guineas down on the nail. As for royal gifts, snuff boxes and the like, we have no room for the catalogue.

On receiving Nelson's advices, Lady Hamilton ran to her friend, the queen, and held the paper open to her. On casting her eyes on it, Caroline shrieked with pleasure. She recalled her son and the king, and ran like a fury through the rooms, kissing all the ladies she met, and returned to hug the bearer of good tidings. She did not weary of reiterating:

"Nelson! What a brave Nelson! Oh, the savior and liberator of Italy! Lord protect him and preserve!"

Without heeding the French envoy, although he was that Garat who had read to King Louis XVI. his death sentence, and was sent to Naples as a warning of the Directory to the Sicilian monarchy, she ordered full preparations to be made for welcoming the British admiral as a triumphant warrior should be greeted. She believed there was nothing more to be feared from France.

On her part, being a woman, she reserved as her offering to the conqueror one that all the titles, boons and

favors of all the potentates of Europe could not vie with—she approved the passion of the sea king for Emma the Lovely.

On the morning of the memorable twenty-second of September, 1798, she called Lady Hamilton to her and said, with a kiss on her brow among the chestnut tresses :

“My loved Emma, in order that I should be the ruler here—the true king, and you the queen under me, this hero must be devoted to us, and I leave it to you to enchain him !”

Let us explain why a queen should enforce such an enslavement on an English ambassador’s wife.

CHAPTER III.

THE GHASTLY PAST—THE SPECTACULAR PRESENT.

Never had woman a more extraordinary destiny than Emma Lyons.

Never was a past more streaked with clouds and sheen. She was never to know precisely her birthday or its place. As far back as her mind would go, she saw herself as a child of three or so, coarsely clad in one garment, walking barefoot over hilly roads, in a northern clime, amid mists, clutching with her frozen hand at her mother's gown. This was a poor country woman who took her up in her arms when she was too tired to walk or when a burn had to be forded.

She remembered that she was often hungry and cold in these wanderings.

In the towns which they passed through, she recalled their stoppings before a fine house or a bakery, where her mother taught her to put out her little hand; she was told to ask, and while at the fine house she rarely received a paltry coin; at the baker's they usually had a roll given them.

At dusk they would be sheltered in a barn or the stable of some lonely farm. To be warmed by the kine's breath was a luxury to the tired child; in these places, they were not allowed to depart without having a bowl of fresh-drawn milk in the morn.

The end of this journey was a petty town in Flintshire, where John Lyons, Emma's father, "hailed from." He had died young, afar from his source, looking for that mirage of the poor worker—work.

Her mother becoming a farm servant here, Emma was a goose-girl, driver of the cows or sheep; she remembered a brook in which she studied the effect of flowers in her hair.

When about ten, an Earl of Halifax, benevolent toward his tenants, furnished the funds for the girl to have an humble education. Emma retained of this dame's school a vision of her form in a beehive straw hat, a blue frock and a black pinafore. Here she made rapid progress in the rudiments, thanks to her wondrous sharp aptitude, but her mother came to take her away. Lord Halifax had died, and his heir did not do charity to any but his own poor. Emma was sent to a widower's house, where three little children were left on hand.

She was out walking with the children, when she was noticed on the road by a painter, who uttered a cry of delight at her charming looks. He was Romney, the artist, who later became famous. He inquired of her as to her wages and the like, and said:

"You are wasted here, pretty child. If you were to come to town (London), an artist like me would gladly pay you five guineas every time you came for a sitting."

He gave her some gold for that sketch, and his written address. But while she took the directions, she repelled the gold. She remarked that she was saving up her money for her betterment, and could travel even to London at her own charge.

She had looked long and narrowly at the sketch, and failed to see what would justify the painter and his brothers in paying five guineas for such easy work. But on looking in the mirror, she suddenly revised this disparaging criticism. She had saved up some four pounds, and with this she started for London.

She had concluded that she was surpassingly handsome. Indeed, on her farewell a sister servant observed:

“You are right; were I good looking as you, I would not stick in this barren country. Your face will be your fortune in town, and when you have a house of your own, send me word and I shall run to be your housemaid!”

She was met with disappointment in town, for Mr. Romney, rising in importance, was on a sketching tour abroad.

Emma was dumfounded; but she remembered that her late employers, the Hawardens, had a nephew in the capital, a noted surgeon. She found him at home. Dr. Hawarden was a worthy gentleman, who took her into his house and let her be companion to his wife. The lady liked her and was not jealous; quite otherwise, for she took her to the play with her.

The Drury Lane Theatre curtain, on rising, revealed a new world to the rustic girl. The stage was presenting “Romeo and Juliet,” that love’s young dream which has no parallel in any tongue. Emma returned home bewildered, dazed and intoxicated. She could not sleep a second that night’s end, trying to repeat the fragments of the marvelous balcony scene.

The following day, she borrowed Shakespeare from the library, and in three days had *Juliet’s* part by heart. She began to muse over the means to return into the play-house and a second time quaff that sweet poison of love and poetry in magical mixture. From that moment she went to the theatre as often as possible, read all the romances of the press, and in her room repeated all the scraps of playbooks she held in mind, and imitated the dancing steps. What was recreation to her mistress, became occupation to the maid.

Emma was now fifteen, in all the flower of youth and beauty.

Her pliant and harmonious form, yielding to all poses

by its natural undulations, attained the labored perfection of the most skillful ballet-dancers.

Her face had retained the bloom of childhood and the velvet of modesty; by its impressibility it endowed the features with supreme mobility. In sorrow all was affecting, and in joy the beholder was gladdened. The spiritual candor so appeared under the purity of the lineaments that it was said that she was goodness marred by want of prudence.

It was impossible for Emma, after having seen the sights of London, and its beauties wrapped and decked with the treasures of all-the-world's tribute to the modern Tyre, to console herself for the daily genteel drudgery with her stage-struck consolation in her own rooms.

Besides, she heard that Mr. Romney had become town's talk, and his lure of "five guineas a sitting" hummed in her ears.

She went to his studio, and she was not so glad as he on seeing that his forecast had been verified. Romney has painted Emma Lyons under all forms—Ariadne, the memorable Bacchante, Leda, Armida, and so on, a gallery without duplicates; and an engraver devoted his talents almost entirely to perpetuating this female Proteus, whose exhaustless attitudinizing would have delighted antiquity.

This advertising of the existence of a beauty impossible to see off canvas or out of marble, attracted the heed of a charlatan, Dr. Graham, who professed a cult of material beauty.

He found that here was the living Venus to illustrate his lectures, and to be pointed to as the palpable evidence of the truth of his theory. He had to pay dearly for this treasure, but it was priceless to him as it was peerless to the world.

He had a gilded couch made for her; a veil for this priestess of the old, old creed, and he trumpeted to the

public that he at last could exhibit the unique and supreme epitome of beauty which would henceforth cause his theories to triumph.

On this appeal made to luxury and science, all the adepts in the universal faith in woman's charms ran to Dr. Graham's Temple of Hygeia.

His triumph was complete. Never had painting or sculpture produced such a masterpiece. Apelles and Phidias were vanquished.

Attracted by that curiosity which swayed the town, young Sir Charles Grenville, of that Warwick family whose head was surnamed "the king-maker," a nephew of Sir William Hamilton, saw Emma Lyons, and fell desperately in love with such an impeccable beauty. It was one of those wild and incontinent loves which flame up to enlighten the whole world on the object. He told his uncle of his discovery, and added that he had promised to marry the terrestrial goddess. So much was he in earnest that he had engaged teachers in the accomplishments of high society for his betrothed, and, what cost even more, pledged himself to compensate Dr. Graham for the loss of his almost divine example. He would marry the unrivaled Emma on attaining his majority if the family opposed an earlier union.

Under the first professors in the capital, Emma had made immense progress in music, elocution and drawing; after perfecting herself in her own tongue, she had learned French and Italian; she recited poetry like Sappho and blank verse like a Siddons. As for dancing and striking attitudes, Emma Lyons had no more to learn from the first Grimaldi and Vestris II.

Unfortunately for this chance of Emma Lyons, known at this period as "Hart," entering into the pale of the British peerage by the lead of Grenville, a change in

the ministry made him lose an office on which depended the most of his income.

Sir Charles, like the rest of the patricians, did not think of lessening his expenses; he applied to his uncle for money. The old gentleman was obdurate for some time, but, on a final appeal, wrote from his country seat that he would soon be in town, when he would "look into the matter."

Sir Charles did not wish this act, which resembled a lawyer's, rather than the yielding of the generous uncle of the current comedy. He wanted as little to see Sir William as for him to see his sweetheart, and yet she might prevail where the spendthrift might not.

Sir William ran up to town a week before his appointment. He employed the sennight in making inquiries about his nephew and the prize of which he had boasted.

Unhappily, beauty makes foes as well as friends, and his informants represented the Circe out of the notorious Graham's fane as a dangerous adventuress.

Sir William, therefore, accosted his relative with no alternative but for him to renounce this *mésalliance* or give up his succession, which meant all his revenue. He gave him three days to decide.

All hope pivoted upon Emma, who might obtain the young amoroso's pardon if she showed that he was not to blame.

She understood that this old beau would be hardened against the powdered, rouged, overdressed belle of the period, and, pushing aside the array of her expected position, resumed the rustic apparel of early days—the straw hat, plain frock and simple carriage; her tears or smiles, coming at will, as they do to a consummate actress, her caressing voice and coaxing gaze should do the rest.

She had no sooner been shown into Sir William's presence than she threw herself at his feet. Whether it was

a happy chance or skillful preconcerting, her hat-ribbon became loose, and down fell her splendid chestnut tresses upon her admirable shoulders.

In "situations of woe" this enchantress was inimitable.

The old archæologist was until then enrapt in the marbles of Athens and carvings of Greece. He was for the first time to behold this living figure surpassing the cold and pallid goddesses of Praxiteles.

That passion which he could not comprehend in his nephew, violently entered his heart and overcame him without his trying to resist it.

Only, he overlooked the charmer's low birth, his nephew's debts, the publicity of Dr. Graham's triumph, and every objection, on condition that Emma should enter the family as his bride, and not poor Charles'.

The intermediary had conquered more than she had set out to do; she foresaw that she could not dwell in London after having incurred Sir Charles' legitimate wrath, which carried along with it that of his young and gallant friends who liked a certain fairness in love matches. She declared that she would accept Sir William's hand in wedlock, but on condition that, taking the embassy of the Two Sicilies, she would accompany her husband as the lady ambassadress.

Sir William consented to everything; Sir Charles had to console himself with his debts, incurred for this fleeting *fiancée*, being liquidated.

Emma's, Lady Hamilton, loveliness made its customary effect at Naples; not only did it astound, but it dazzled.

As a distinguished archæologist, mineralogist and antiquary, Sir William had the suffrages of scientific worthies; as foster brother of King George III. and his friend as well, all the courtiers bowed to him; as the ambassador of Great Britain, political notables gathered around him. With her facility in acquiring any useful art, it took

but a few days for the Englishwoman to learn as much science and politics as she wanted to know; ere long, for the frequenters of Hamilton's drawing-room the lady's judgments were laws.

Her success was not to stop there.

Scarcely was she presented at Court than the Queen Maria Carolina proclaiming her the intimate friend and created her the inseparable bosom-intimate. This daughter of the great Empress Maria Theresa not only showed herself in public with this ex-goddess of the Graham Olympus, but took an airing in the Toledo Street drive, in the same carriage and wearing a similar dress, while she would pass the evening in seeing this amateur dancer, posturer and mime reproduce the most ardent statues of antiquity.

Hence, hatred and jealousy without number against the queen's favorite.

Carolina heard what insolent comments were floated about this sudden and marvelous friendship; but hers was one of those absolute and valorous spirits which carry the head high to confront calumny and slander. Whoever wished to be well received by her had to share his homage between her associate in the government, Acton, and the English fascinatress.

Everybody knows the events of the year 1789—the taking of the Bastille of Paris and the bringing back the King Louis XVI. to Versailles; of 1793, when king and queen were executed; while in '96 and '97, Gen. Bonaparte's victories in Italy shook all the thrones, and, momentarily, at least, crumbled down the oldest and least mutable of them all, the Pontifical Chair.

Amid these deeds, which had a terrible repercussion in the Naples Court, Nelson appeared, and enlarged, as the champion of the aged royalties.

His victory at Aboukir restored hope to the monarchs,

clapping their hands to their heads whence their diadems were falling.

At any cost, Maria Carolina, being a woman of greed, all for riches, ambition and power, wished to preserve hers.

It is not astonishing that she called to her aid the fascination her dearest friend exercised over all men. She said to Lady Hamilton, on the morning when she led her to the British admiral :

“This man must be ours, and for that he must be your puppet !”

What a recompense for the members offered on the altar of his country, by this son of a humble rural pastor ; for the hero who owed his greatness to his own courage and his fame to his genius, to see the whole Court, headed by the king and queen, and have for the reward of his conflicts this beauteous creature’s smiles !

He adored her

CHAPTER IV.

BANQUO AT THE BANQUET.

We saw how, at the cannon shot fired on the *Vanguard*, the British ensign rose to the gaff, almost as maimed as its commander, and that Nelson recognized the royal train coming toward him.

The captain-galley was already flagged, with both the national and the royal colors.

When the two vessels were but a cable's length apart, the band on the royal barge began to play "God Save the King," to which the English seamen, manning the yards, replied with three cheers, uttered with that regularity which the English infuse in this official demonstration.

Nelson ordered the helm to be set so that the barge would draw up alongside the ship. He then had the side-steps let down on that side instead of the rope ladder, and waited at the head of the way, hat in hand.

All the sailors and marines, even those pale and ailing from not being healed of their wounds, were called upon deck, and presented arms in three-deep file.

The captain expected to see the visitors come up and over the side in etiquette order—that is, the king, the queen, the prince royal, and so on; but, with purely womanly seductiveness, the queen urged the lovely Lady Hamilton to take the lead.

Blushing to precede the queen this time, Emma mounted the stairs, and, either with real feeling or well-played purpose, on seeing Nelson with an additional wound, his brow bound with a black scarf, and white with loss of blood, she emitted a scream, lost color her-

self, and all but swooning, sank on the hero's bosom, murmuring :

“Oh, great and dear Nelson !”

Nelson dropped his hat, and with an outcry of glad-some amaze, wrapped his remaining arm around her, and while upholding her, pressed her to his heart.

The queen darted a glance at her captain of the royal galley, but he did not evince any emotion at this weakness of man and woman, the more remarkable as both were the supposed unimpassioned English.

In the profound ecstasy into which Nelson was thrown by this unawaited reception, there was an instant for him of oblivion of the entire world and ineffable perception of the joys of the Mahomedan paradise, if not of the Christian's heaven.

When he returned to his senses, the king, the queen, and the whole court had clambered upon the deck, and the welcome was general.

Ferdinando took him by the hand and greeted him as Liberator of the universe; he tendered him a magnificent sword, on the hilt of which, by the ribbon of the Order of The Merit of San Ferdinand, just organized, hung the letters patent making the British victor the Duke of Bronté. This was a bit of the queen's feminine flattery, as the title means “the Duke of Thunder.” Bronté was one of those three Cyclops (remember, Nelson was now one-eyed), who forged Jove's thunderbolts in the flaming caves of Mount Aetna.

Next came the queen, who hailed him as the protector of thrones, avenger of kings, and her friend; she clasped the hands of Nelson and Emma and shook them in her grasp together.

In turn came the others—hereditary princes, royal princesses, cabinet ministers, courtiers; but what was

their adulation to the praise of the monarch, and Lady Hamilton's caresses?

It was agreed that the guest should go ashore in the royal galley; with its four-and-twenty rowers, it would travel faster than a sailing vessel. But in the first place, Emma besought that they might inspect, in the queen's name, this glorious *Vanguard*, on which French balls had inflicted gashes, like the commander's, not yet closed.

Nelson did the honors with a seaman's pride in his battleship, and during this visit Lady Hamilton, leaning on his arm, drew from him particulars of the action, and forced him not to spare himself.

The king with his own hands girded on him the fine sword which had belonged to King Louis XIV. His consort handed him the patent of nobility. Emma passed the San Ferdinando decoration around his neck, during which act her flossy, odoriferous hair floated against his powder-specked cheek.

It was about two in the afternoon, and it took nearly three hours to get to Naples.

Nelson handed over his command to Captain Hardy, his flag-captain, and to the crash of guns and the music of the band, went down upon the royal barge. Light as a sea bird, it sprang from the side of the colossus, and gracefully flitted over the waters.

On his ship, Admiral Caracciolo had to do the honors. The Briton and he had met before; at the Siege of Toulon, they had together fought the French. Although the result of the operation was bad, the Italian's skill and courage had won him the rank of admiral, so that he was the peer of Nelson, albeit he had the advantages of birth and an illustrious line of three centuries.

This may explain a shade of coolness in the salutation the two naval potentates exchanged, and the marked haste

with which the Sicilian regained his post of command on the quarter-deck.

The queen pressed Nelson to sit near her under the purple awning, alleging that the other parties might do as they liked, but that this was their own hero, hers and Lady Hamilton's. Whereupon, the latter, as a matter of course, placed herself at the queen's feet.

During this time, Sir William Hamilton, as the Dr. Pangloss of aristocracy, knowing the history of Naples better than its king himself, explained how the Isle of Capri, which they were then sailing by, was obtained by exchange for Ischia, by Augustus Cæsar. The sovereign appeared to listen with the utmost attention, but when he ended, returned:

"My dear ambassador, the flight of quails has gone on these three days; if you will join me in going shooting, we will hie at them on Capri! We shall bowl them over by hundreds!"

The Englishman, being inborn something of a sportsman, and, in fact, owing to that the high credit he held with the sovereign, bowed in assent, and withheld for a finer occasion a dissertation on Tiberius, his twelve pleasure-residences, and the probability that the Azure Grotto, to the ancients, did not have its present magical hue, but owes it to the sea level rising in these two thousand years.

In this interval, the governors of the four forts of Naples kept their spyglasses on the vessels, and particularly the royal one, and when they saw it heading for the port, they concluded that Nelson must be aboard. They ordered an immense salute of one hundred-and-one guns, most honorable of all, being the same as that to hail the birth of an heir to a crown.

In a quarter of an hour the thundering ceased, but only to begin again when the flotilla, still led by the royal barge, entered the military port.

At the foot of the slope leading up to the palace, the court equipages and the British ambassador's were waiting; the latter outrivaled the royal turnouts in luxury. It had been settled that, on this day, the reigning pair should cede their rights to Sir William and his lady, who would convey the hero to their residence, and that the English representative should give the banquet and festival.

As for the capital, it was to illuminate and give a show of fireworks.

Before landing, Lady Hamilton turned to Admiral Caracciolo, and said, with her sweetest voice, and wearing her most winning look:

"The gala we are giving our illustrious fellow-countryman would be incomplete, if the sole seaman who can pair off with him should not join with us all in celebrating his victory and drinking the toast to England's greatness, the happiness of the Two Sicilies, and the downfall of that arrogant French Republic, which dares to declare war against kings. We have set apart the giving of this toast to the man who so bravely fought at Toulon!"

The Italian bowed courteously enough, but quite gravely.

"My lady," was his answer, "I sincerely regret my inability to accept the complimentary part preserved for me as your guest, but, just as far as the day has been fine, so will the night be tempestuous."

The lady gave a glance to the sea line. Apart from a few clouds, thinly streaking it toward Procida, the sky blue was limpid as her eyes. So she smiled.

"You doubt my words, my lady," went on the prince; "but the man who has passed two parts of his life on this capricious sea called the Mediterranean, knows all the secrets of the Cave of the Winds. Do you see those light films dropping from above, but rapidly bearing down

on us? They tell that the wind, which stood at north-west, is shifting to the west. About ten to-night it will blow out of the south, and be what we call the sirocco. Naples harbor is open to all winds, and particularly to that one. I am bound to see to the anchorage of the English vessels, so mauled in the action that they have not the solidity to resist a storm. What we have done this day, lady, is a fair and square declaration of war upon France, and mark! the French army is at Rome, only five days' march from us! Believe me, lady, that in a very few days we shall need both our fleets to be in good fighting trim!"

Lady Hamilton tossed her head in token of disagreement, if not of denial.

"I accept your excuse, prince," she replied, "since it proves such great solicitude for the interests of their Britannic and Sicilian majesties. But I do hope, at the least, that we shall see your delightful niece, the Lady Cecilia, at the ball, for she can have no excuse; she was duly notified that we reckoned upon her company as soon as we had the word of Nelson's coming."

"That is just what I was going to say to you! During the last few days, both my mother and sister-in-law have been unwell, and this same morning I received a letter from our poor Cecilia, expressing to me all her sorrow that she will be unable to share in the feast. Besides, she charged me to offer her apologies to your ladyship, which I have the honor to do!"

While the Englishwoman and the Italian officer were passing these few words, the queen drew near enough to hear as well as see, and, comprehending the motive of the austere Neapolitan's double refusal, she frowned, her lower lip pouted, and her face was covered with pallor.

"Have a care, prince!" she interjected, in a shrill voice,

and with a smile as light but as menacing as the herald clouds he had pointed out as indicating storm, "beware! Those ladies who do not figure at Lady Hamilton's party will not be included in the court invitations!"

"I am very sorry, madam," Caracciolo responded, without his serenity appearing in the slightest to be altered by this threat, "my poor relative's indisposition is so serious that if the rejoicings given by your majesty to Lord Nelson were to last over a month, she could not be present; and consequently, the younger lady to whom she is the chaperon cannot go by herself."

"Oh, very well, prince," retorted the queen, incapable of governing herself; "in the proper time and place this refusal will be borne in mind!" She took Lady Hamilton by the arm, saying: "Come away, my dear Emma."

She started off quickly, but muttering: "Oh, these Neapolitans! I know that they hate me, but they lose nothing in my returning the compliment. I execrate them!"

But however rapidly she had left the spot, Admiral Caracciolo outpaced her, and made a sign to the band. The trumpets blared brilliantly, the guns thundered anew, the bells again clanged, and, with shame on her front, the lovely lady had to walk off to the landing-stage under all the tokens of joy and triumph.

With the royal personages, she and Nelson stepped into the first coach; the Prince and Princess Royal, with Sir William and Premier Acton, occupied the next; the other vehicles filled up according to regulation.

They proceeded directly to Santa Clara Church, to hear the *Te Deum*. That over, they went to the English Embassy, the vastest and handsomest palace in the town.

The pace had been at a walk, for the streets were jammed with sight-seers. Little accustomed to the noisy and superficial demonstrations of southerners, the Briton was

intoxicated by the shouts of "Long life to Nelson! our liberator forever!" They came out of a hundred thousand throats, while many neckerchiefs waved from innumerable hands.

Amid the vociferous ovation, one thing could not but startle him—the familiarity of the lazzaroni, the beggars and idlers, who climbed upon the footboards, driving-box and steps, without the coachman, footmen, outriders or equerries appearing the least uneasy. They actually jerked the king's queue and all but tweaked his nose, hailing him as "King Nosey" (*Nasone*)!

They addressed him as "hail, fellow, well met!" and asked him when he was going to sell the fish he caught at the public mart, and when he would eat macaroni in the common way at the playhouse.

This was far from the exclusiveness of the English monarchs and the veneration with which they are surrounded; yet Ferdinando appeared so pleased by the familiarity, retorted so merrily to the quips and gross jokes; and even gave such smart fisticuffs to those who pulled his pigtail too roughly, that Nelson could see, in these buffets and horseplay, the unconstrained outbursts of spoiled children, overfond of their father, and a fond parent's over-indulgence toward this progeny.

At the Embassy gates, however, was fresh tribute to the stranger's pride.

The archway was transformed into one of triumph, surmounted by the new coat-of-arms accorded to the Victor of Aboukir Bay, by the King of England, with the title of Baron of the Nile and a peerage. The doorway was flanked by those tall masts originated in Venice, from the top of which floated scarlet streamers bearing in gold letters the name "Horatio Nelson." The sea breeze spread them out and let the people gratefully read.

The stairway was a laureled vault, spangled with

costly flowers, woven into the monogram of "H. and N." These initials appeared on everything—the liveried servants' buttons, the porcelain service, the very cloths on the immense table for eighty guests, laid out in the picture gallery. Hidden music, loud enough to lull, but not to interfere with chat, mingled with the perfumes. The spacious palace, as the abode of Armida the Enchantress, to which the Italians likened it, was full of untraceable melody and permeating odors.

As royal etiquette makes royalty at home wherever it is, the banquet was served as soon as the two majesties were seated. Nelson sat opposite the king, between the queen and Lady Hamilton.

Apicius lived in Naples once; and, aping him, Sir William had levied a contribution on all the world's productions.

Innumerable candles were reflected in the mirrors, candelabras and cut crystal dishes, and filled the grand gallery with a light, softer while almost more potent than the sun's on its hottest day.

Spreading over the gold-broidered coats, the silverware, the gems in the decorations of knightly orders, worn on breast and at the gorge, casting off a myriad sparks of all hues, it seemed to surround the royal pair and splendid guests with that glory which, to enslaved peoples, makes earth's grandees a race of superior and privileged beings.

To each course was a toast. The king set the example by proposing the first to the glorious reign, the cloudless prosperity, and the lengthy life of his beloved cousin and august ally, George the Third of England. Counter to all usage, the queen had drunk to Nelson's health as liberator of Italy. Following this model, Lady Emma had drunk to the hero of the Nile; she passed to the admiral her cup, which by touch of her lip was converting the

wine to flame; and at each round, the cheers frantically resounded as though to split the ceiling.

The dessert was reached with increasing enthusiasm when an unexpected occurrence carried it to delirium.

As the guests were only waiting for the king's rising to be the signal for all to end the feast, he rose, indeed, but remained gravely there. Immediately, that full, broad and profoundly saddening air, ordered by King Louis XIV. to be composed for ex-King James II. exiled from Windsor, and the royal guest at St. Germain's, Lulli's "God Save the King!" burst forth. It was chanted by the choicest voices from the Theatre Royal, accompanied by their orchestra, over a hundred strong.

Each verse was furiously applauded, and the latest was more noisily and longer hailed than the others, when, instead of its being terminated, a pure and sonorous voice uttered a verse, added for the occasion, which we give in prose since the words did no honor to Italian poetry:

"Let us all join in hailing the glory of Victory's favorite, and the Terror of the French! The olden land of the Pharaohs sings with noble Albion, the proud mother of Nelson: 'God Save the King!'"

These bombastic lines brought forth universal acclamation, which was going to swell with the repetition, when suddenly all voice died away on the lip, and all eyes, appalled, turned toward the doorway as though Banquo's specter was going to invade the gala hall.

A tall man, with a forbidding mien, stood in the doorway, arrayed in that severe yet magnificent costume of the dignitaries of the first French Republic. Not a feature could be missed, so profusely flooded was he by the light. His coat was long-skirted and of dark blue; the blood-red waistcoat was brodered with gold; the white breeches were fitted skin-tight and covered with high boots, whose

tops were turned down. He rested his left hand on his sword hilt, and his right was thrust into his bosom. Unpardonable impudence! his head was surmounted by the three-cocked hat, on which floated the bunch of the three feathers, red, white and blue, emblem of the Revolution, which was to raise the mass to the level of the throne, and debase royalty to the scaffold.

This was the ambassador of France, the identical Garat who, in the name of the National Convention, had, in the Temple Prison, read the death warrant to King Louis XVI.

The reader may judge the effect of such an intruder at such a time and place.

Amid a deathly hush, none thinking to break it, he said, in a steady, ringing and far-sounding voice :

“I doubted still, despite the incessantly renewed acts of treachery by the lying Court known as the Two Sicilies, wishing to see with mine own eyes, and hear with mine own ears! I see, and I hear! More straightforward than that Roman who, in a fold of his toga, bore to the Carthaginian Senate peace or war—I bring ye solely war, for you have this day expelled peace.

“Therefore, King Ferdinando, and Queen Carolina, it is war, since you would have it! A war, mark you, of extermination, in which you will be bereft, I warn ye, of throne and existence! in the teeth of the hero of this feast and the impious power which he represents. Farewell! I leave Naples, abode of perjury! Shut the gates behind me; gather your warriors behind the walls; load your ramparts with cannon; collect your fleets in your havens; you can but delay the vengeance of France! it will come inevitably and no less fearfully! for all gives way to the march of the grand nation whose cry sets the world echoing :

“‘The Republic forever!’”

CHAPTER V.

THE KING AND THE QUEEN.

The modern Balthazar and his dread-filled guests were left spellbound by the three mystic words, resounding overhead, while they seemed also to see them flaming on the wall by the harbinger of liberty. He had come, like the antique herald, to fling the dart, promising war before slowly departing, his saber tip clanking on the marble stairs.

To this martial sound, barely dying out, succeeded the whirr of post-chaise wheels flying hence at the gallop of four fleet horses.

The King Charles III. of Spain, who reigned at Naples, had three sons.

Of them the third was left with the crown, which his sire had conquered with the sword, but still was forced to abandon it.

This young prince was aged but seven, and was under a double tutorship, moral and political. The political instructor was the Regent Tanucci, a fine and wily Florentine; the moral one, Prince San Nicandro, his preceptor.

The latter tried to make his pupil an ignoramus, with the approval of the intelligent regent, wishing to reign all the time. This was the more easy as San Nicandro knew nothing himself and could not very well impart information. After having removed all light from his path, he led Ferdinando into his father's tastes; King Carlo having been an inveterate hunter. If he were tired of shooting, coursing or sparrow-popping, he taught him the tranquil and commonplace pursuit of fishing as a rest.

As Ferdinando was naturally mild and kind, this double vice, from the instructor's point of view, was corrected. Yet he preserved some good sense which led him into the right course now and then.

But the sovereign's life has to be divided into two periods; before and after the French Revolution; in other words, each side of 1798.

Anterior, he was a plain, good soul, rather inclined to goodness than evil.

Subsequently, he is the man we see: apprehensive, implacable, mistrustful and more prone to wickedness than good.

It was an odd character; native wit, no education, heedlessness as to glory, dread of danger, no feelings, no heart, permanent luxuriousness, perjury established as a principle, worship of royal power carried as far as in Louis XIV., cynicism about private or political life shown broadly by his deep scorn for the flatterers and parasites around him, seeing in the great nobles merely courtiers. He regarded the people as slaves to be trodden upon.

By these traits, you may weigh the man who stepped on the throne at the same youthtime as Louis XIV., dying at almost his age, too, reigning sixty-six years, from 1759 to 1825, including the minority.

Now, for his consort.

Maria Carolina, Archduchess of Austria, had left Vienna, in April, 1768, to marry Ferdinando at Naples.

She was just sixteen, but this favorite daughter of Maria Theresa was precocious; she was literate more than taught; she was philosophical; but she could hate those who also loved wisdom.

She was fair and could be winning. Her hair was gleaming as if dusted with gold; her broad forehead was without the furrows of the hatreds, cares and enmities flourishing about the throne. Her eyes could dis-

pute in tone with that blue of the skies whereunder she was fated to reign. Her profile was Grecian from the straight nose and the slightly sharp chin, token of absolute will. Her face was oval, her lips high-colored and her teeth ivory white.

Neck, bust and shoulders were like the finest statues found in Pompeii or brought from Rome to her palace. Thirty years following, as we have stated, she enjoyed this beauty.

She was haughty and lofty, as became an empress' daughter; she loved luxury, command and power.

She arrived with Germanic dreams into the happy land of Tasso and Virgil to meet a boy bridegroom of ten years. Coming of a great race, he should be fair, brave and graceful. Instead of her juvenile fancy and poetic dream was a youth with a large nose, thick ankles, coarse hands, and a mouth fit for speaking the jargon of the Naples Mole with its appropriate gestures.

As Prime Minister Tanucci wished neither king nor queen to oust him. He eyed her jealously and was delighted that her superiority humbled his ward and that Ferdinando's coarseness repelled her.

It was plain that two characters so opposed could not dwell on good terms.

It was Ferdinando's rudeness which kept widening the breach. In one of their quarrels, he bade her leave the room, emphasizing his order with a movement of the lifted foot which looked like a kick to the witnesses, though unused to seeing that *argumentum ad backulatum* applied by the royal boot to a royal petticoat. Another time he gave her a box on the ear so noisily that the echo was heard outside the palace. The queen flew to her rooms; but however much she protested that all was over between them, she had to open the door, and they patched up peace.

In fact, the overturning of things aristocratic in France made pantomimic kicks and slaps, petty mockeries. If the effect was deep on Ferdinando, it was terribly more so on Carolina.

The man was simply selfish and was made to remember his position, and while he felt utter indifference about the fate of Louis and Marie Antoinette, whom he had never seen, he was alarmed about the same fate befalling him.

In the woman it was a deadly blow to her family affection. She adored her mother, sister and brothers—everything Austrian, in short, for which she had sacrificed Naples at any time. Her royal pride was mortally wounded, not so much by the mere doom, as its ignominy. Her most ardent hate was aroused by this odious French people, who not only treated kings and queens thus meanly, but royalty itself. It brought to her lips such a vow against France as young Hannibal framed against Rome.

On learning of the deaths of King Louis and his queen, Carolina went almost mad with rage. In this ire against the French the two were alike, except that the king's was sluggish, and hers active. He wanted to keep the regicides afar—she to bring them near for their destruction.

With time, patience and stubbornness, Carolina had reached the end she proposed.

With the hope of taking part in some coalition against France, or to wage war independently, she induced the premier, Acton, to raise an army, build a fleet and have all ready to open fire at the king's command.

Valuing aright the impotence of the native generals, who had never fought a pitched battle, and the soldiers, who knew their incapacity as well, she sued her nephew, the Emperor of Austria, for one of his generals. This

Mack passed for the foremost of strategists, though his record was for failures. He was expected in Naples at any moment.

At this juncture, when Bonaparte was sequestered in Egypt, and the victor over him at Aboukir arrived at Naples with his fleet, she was given great and savage joy by the certainty that with her Circe, Lady Hamilton, she could make Nelson her ally in her hatred, and accomplice in her revenge. Such delights are only known to hearts in such mourning and desperation.

In this mood, the French envoy's declaration of war, far from daunting her, had, on the contrary, rung in her ears like the bronze clang sounding the long-looked-for hour of deliverance.

This was not the case with the king. He was so badly impressed by the defiance that he passed a very poor night. But for recreation he gave orders that he would go hunting on the morrow.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE LIGHT.

It was close to two in the morning, when the royal pair, quitting the English Embassy, returned to the palace.

Deeply absorbed in the incident, the king went immediately to his quarters, to which his partner made no objection, as she was fully as eager to be alone in her own.

The sovereign did not hide the reality of the crisis, and in such dilemmas there was one man whom he truthfully consulted, as this adviser was of good counsel. He recognized in him superiority over the throng of courtiers. This was Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo.

Ruffo had assisted his dean, the Archbishop of Naples, in the *Te Deum* in honor of Nelson. He had been at the Hamilton supper, where he had seen and heard all, and the king, in passing out, had said :

“I expect you to-night at the palace.”

Ruffo had bowed to acknowledge the invitation. Indeed, scarcely ten minutes after the monarch had returned and bade the usher to let in the churchman, the latter was announced.

“Show his eminence in!” exclaimed the king, loudly, for the arrival to overhear him; “I should really think that it will please me to see him!”

Thus invited by the welcome, the dignitary did not wait for the usher, but responded by his presence to the pressing call.

“Well, what does your eminence say to what has oc-

curred?" inquired the ruler, dropping into an easy-chair and nodding for the other to be seated also.

Knowing that the greatest reverence to exalted personages is to obey their orders instantly, their invitations being commands, he took a seat.

"I say that this is a grave matter," was his reply. "Happily, your majesty has done all this for English honor, and it is for English honor to uphold your majesty."

"What do you think, at bottom, of this English bulldog, Nelson? Be frank, cardinal."

"Your majesty is so kind to me that I am always frank. As for bravery, he is a lion; for military instinct, a genius; but for brains, a mediocre spirit, luckily!"

"Luckily? Why do you say that?"

"Because he can be guided in any direction by the two reins to the bridle."

"What are they?"

"Love and ambition. Love falls into Lady Hamilton's province; the other is your line. His birth is vulgar and he has no education. He has conquered his grades without stepping into a royal antechamber. Treat such an upstart like a great nobleman, and you will intoxicate him. At that stage, your majesty can do as he wills with him. Can one rely on Lady Hamilton?"

"The queen always says that she can."

"Then you need no other assurance. Through that woman you can sway all; she will bring her swain over as she has her husband—they are both, then, for royalty—of the Two Sicilies. The diplomate and the seaman are both infatuated with her."

"I am afraid she will play the prude."

"Lady Hamilton?" with the greatest astonishment. "Your majesty cannot imagine that!"

"Oh, I do not mean a prude's prudery. Do you see,

our Nelson is not handsome, with one arm gone, an eye blinded, and his forehead scarred. If that is the price to pay for heroism, it is not the sauce for my macaroni!"

"Pooh! Women have odd notions! And, anyway, Lady Hamilton is so fond of the queen! If there is no love in the matter, there is friendship to move her."

"Let it pass!" said the king, like one who turns the riddle over to Providence as too difficult. "But you must have some advice to give me in this puzzle."

"Certainly; the only reasonable course. Your majesty has a treaty of alliance with Cousin Austria?"

"I have treaties of alliance with everybody. That is what tangles me up so."

"But it is stated that for the next coalition you are to furnish so many troops?"

"Thirty thousand."

"And combine your movements with Austria and Russia?"

"That's settled."

"Well, sire, whatever the pressure set upon you, do not enter into the campaign until the Russians and Austrians are themselves in the field."

"My intention, by Jove! Your eminence understands that I am not going to have all the fun of fighting these regicides to myself. But, suppose France does not wait for our coalition? In short, she has already opened war on me!"

"I believe, from my friends at Rome, that she is not in shape to open war on anybody farther——"

"Eh! that consoles me no little."

"Now, if your majesty will allow a second piece of advice. I was asked for only one, but this is a consequence of the former. In your majesty's place, I should write to my nephew, the emperor, to learn from him, not

diplomatically but confidentially, when he means to set his men in the field, and by his reply, regulate my moves.”

“Your eminence is right; and I will write to him straightway.”

“Have you a sure carrier?”

“My private courier, Ferrari.”

“But is he sure, sure, sure?”

“Hello, cardinal! you want a man thrice sure, when it is hard to find a man sure once! I believe him more sure than the most. He has given me abundant proofs of his fidelity.”

“Where would he be?”

“Where he should be; resting somewhere in the outer rooms, booted and spurred, to be ready to start at the first order, at any hour of the night or day.”

“Let the writing be done first; then we will look him up.”

“It is easy for your eminence to talk of writing; but where the mischief am I to find writing materials in a palace and at this unearthly hour?”

“The Scriptures say: ‘Seek and ye shall find——’”

“Thanks for sparing me the Latin—something like ‘Queer eye and in Venice,’ eh?”

The religious prince did not laugh while the king went to a desk and rummaged all the drawers without finding anything.

“The Scriptures are out!” he remarked, falling into his chair disconsolately. “And a good thing, too, for I detest writing!” sighed he.

“Yet your majesty was resolved to do it this night?”

“No doubt! but nothing is handy, you see! I should have to knock up a secretary or some such functionary, and he would be sulky! You must see that where a king is no author, there would be no writing tools. Of course, one could get all the requisites of the queen. She is a

scribbler and no mistake! But if it got wind that I, a king who does not write, was writing, it would be believed that the realm was in danger! 'The king wrote a letter!' 'To whom?' 'That's telling!' 'Oh, oh!' It would be an event to upset the palace!"

"Sire, it falls to me to find what evades your majesty."

"How do you know to find things here?"

Ruffo bowed to his master and withdrew, but in a minute returned, carrying some paper, a bottle of ink and a few quills. The king stared at him with admiration.

"Where the deuce did you find all that?" he wanted to know.

"In a room where the ushers wait for orders."

"But I forbade the rogues having pens and ink all over the place!"

"They keep the things to put down the names of the callers. You never were offended by the sight, as they were hidden in a cupboard, where I routed them out, so that we have all that is needed for your wishes."

"You are the man for a pinch! Apropos, have a pinch out of my box, cardinal! Ha, ha! But, your eminence, is it absolutely necessary," he went on, snuffing dolefully, "that the letter should be in mine own hand?"

"It would be better, since it would look more confidential."

"Then, dictate—yes, dictate, I tell you, or otherwise I should be two hours over half a page! Ah, my blessings, backward, on that confounded San Nicandro, for having made me such a noodle!"

The churchman dipped a pen in the ink and offered it to his pupil. Bowing, he set to his task:

"MOST EXCELLENT BROTHER, COUSIN, NEPHEW, ALLY AND CONFEDERATE: I am bound to inform you without delay what happened last night at the English Embassy here. Lord Nelson, touching at Naples, on return from

Aboukir Bay, and Sir William Hamilton giving his fellow-countryman a reception, Citizen Garat, minister of the French Republic, snatched at the chance to declare war on me for his government.

“By return of this same messenger bearing this, most excellent brother, etc., etc., let me know your arrangements about the coming war, and particularly the precise time when you reckon to go into the field, as I wish to do nothing without utter concord with you. I await your reply in order to regulate my movement in every point by your instructions. These presents have no other aim than to wish you all kinds of prosperity. Believe me,

“Your majesty’s good brother, cousin, uncle, ally and confederate.”

“Temple of Jerusalem! That is a mouthful!” ejaculated the secretary, despite himself. He looked up questioningly.

“Well, it’s done and your majesty has only to sign.”

The usual sign-manual went down: “Ferdinando, B. (Bourbon).”

“Bless us! just think that I should, alone, have lost the whole night hammering out such an epistle. Thank you, dear cardinal!” He looked around wistfully. “Anything like an envelope?”

“Pho! we’ll make one,” replied Ruffo, at ease.

“You can? Now that is another art that block, San Nicandro, failed to teach me. Still, as he omitted teaching me to write letters, he must have thought that to make envelopes for them was superfluous!”

Ruffo took a sheet of paper, and by tearing and folding it made an inclosure for the royal missive. The other watched him with wonder and approval.

“Can your majesty oblige me with the privy seal?”

“I will give it you—do not disturb yourself!”

The letter being sealed up, the king scratched the address on it.

"I should not like anybody to know that I wrote to my nephew or by whom it was carried," the king mused, audibly, holding his chin in his hand.

"You might have me stabbed as I leave the palace," hinted Ruffo, merrily.

"Oh, you do not count in that way; you are another. Myself, since you have been dictator! You need not thank me—the joke is spontaneous."

"But we must get at Ferrari by some hand."

"Oh, we'll find him somehow."

"If I had a hint as to his lying-place, I would go turn him out!"

"I could do that, and would, if I knew!"

"You said he was under this roof?"

"Well, it is a wide roof! Wait, wait! I am not such a fool as I look!"

He opened the door of his sleeping-room and whistled. A retriever dog bounded up from the carpet where he crouched, next to his master's bed, and ran to rise with his forepaws on the king's breast, rattling the badges, stars and plaques, to say nothing of his licking his chin, in which the master seemed to feel as much pleasure as the animal.

"Ferrari read this dog; so he can find his trainer every time!" explained the monarch. Changing his voice and speaking to the creature as to a child, he continued: "Where is our poor Ferrari, Jupiter? We must seek our poor Ferrari! Seek him, good boy!"

Jupiter appeared to completely understand, for he leaped two or three times in the room, sniffing and pointing, while yelping joyously at having something to do which limited man is at a loss to accomplish; finally, he went and scratched at a secret door.

"Aha, we shall light upon him, eh?" said the king,

lighting a candle at the main luster, and opening the passage door, while saying: "Set to, boy! seek him!"

The king followed the dog and the cardinal the king, not wishing to be left alone, and also to quench his curiosity. Jupiter had run to the end of the passage, where there was a second door to scratch at.

"So, so, we are on the right track, eh, Jupiter?" questioned the master.

He opened the second door, which opened on an empty waiting-room. Jupiter found another door here and rose up against it.

"We are getting on fine!" chuckled the sporting sovereign. "We burn!" he added to the follower. He opened the third panel.

It gave issue to a staircase, up which Jupiter flew a score of steps, where he accompanied the inevitable scratching with short yelps.

"*Zitto!*" (hist) said the leader, opening this fourth door cautiously; it was the last, since they had arrived at the termination of their quest; a man, equipped for riding, was sleeping on a camp-bed.

"Bravo!" exclaimed the king, proud of the dog's intelligence; "just make a note of it that not one of my ministers, including the chief of police, could do what that hound has done!"

Thwarting the impulse of Jupiter to jump upon his trainer's couch, the king made the sign for him to "down!" and he stopped still before him. Ferdinando went up to the slumberer and touched him on the shoulder with the finger-tips. Light as was the pressure, the latter immediately awoke, staring about him with the startled gaze of one aroused in the midst of his first sleep. But instantly recognizing the master, he rose from the bed and stood up, with his elbows held close, to receive orders.

"Could you start right off?" demanded the king.

"Right off, sire!"

"Could you go as far as Vienna without stopping?"

"Farther!"

"How many days do you require to get there?"

"On the last trip, I did it in five days and a night to boot; but I noticed how I could get along faster and save twelve hours."

"Once at Vienna, how long does it take to recuperate?"

"No longer than it will take the receiver of your majesty's note to write the answer."

"Then, you might be home in twelve days?"

"Bar accidents, and if the person does not keep me waiting."

"Hie down to the stables and saddle a horse for yourself; ride him as far as you can. Leave him at any posting house and retake him on your return. You are to tell no one whither you go! And you are to let no one—not even the queen—see the reply."

"It is good, sire!"

"None but the emperor is to receive the letter."

"Nobody else!"

"Have you any money?"

"Always."

"Here's the letter. Whip, start, go!"

The honest fellow took the letter, slipped it into an inner leather pocket of his vest, stuck under his arm a packet of necessaries for traveling, and donned his riding-cap. Without anything further, he started to go down the back stairs.

"Are you not going to say good-by to Jupiter?" inquired the king.

"I did not think it allowed," responded the courier.

"Not when you are two old friends and both in my service?"

The man and the dog exchanged caresses, and the man, wiping away a tear, almost tumbled downstairs to make up for the lost time.

"I am sorely blundering, sire, but that is a man who would die for your sake at your bidding," remarked the cardinal.

"I believe the same, and I shall try to reward him handsomely."

The two returned to the royal sitting-room by the way they had traversed, closing all the doors as they went through. In the antechamber, a footman was waiting with a letter from the queen.

"Whew! it's three o'clock!" ejaculated Ferdinando, looking at the timepiece. "This must be of importance."

"Sire, the queen saw that your apartments were lighted and she reasoned that your majesty had not retired."

The sovereign opened the letter with the repugnance he always showed for her communications.

"Plague on it! this is amusing!" said he, at the first lines; "here goes my hunting party to the Greek *kalends*, whoever they are! This note, cardinal, announces that as the feast is over and on account of important intelligence, Captain-General Acton and the queen have determined on holding an extraordinary council this very day! All the good that is above fall on Signor Acton and his advisee! Do I ever pester them? I do not mind what they do, if they will only let me be tranquil."

"Sire," observed the cardinal, "this time I am obliged to hold with the queen and her chief counselor, for an extraordinary council appears to me of the utmost necessity, and the sooner it is held the better."

"They shall hold it, but you shall be at the board!"

"I, my lord? I have no right to be at the state council!"

"But I have the right to give you the privilege!"

"I accept," answered the prelate, bowing; "the others will bring their wits and I my devotedness."

"That's well." To the messenger: "Tell the queen that I shall open the council at the hour—ten, it is stated." He turned to the churchman, who bowed to imply that he heard the appointment.

The footman disappeared and the high priest was about to do likewise when they heard the gallop of a horse passing under the archway of the building. The king took his privy counselor by the hand, saying:

"In any case, we have got Ferrari safe away! Eminence, you will be informed among the first of my nephew's response. Good-night! They will have to look out for squalls at the meeting, for the queen and her understrapper will find that I am not in a good humor!"

"Pooh!" replied the other, laughing, "you'll feel better when you have slept on it!"

Going into his bedroom, the king rang his bell as if to crack it. The gentleman in night-waiting ran, thinking his master had gone mad.

"I am going to bed," roared the king, thunderously. "Another time, take care to shut my blinds and draw the curtains! for I do not want all the night watchers to see that my lights are burning up to three in the morning!"

Let us learn what went on in the queen's *camera obscura* after having known what occurred in the king's *camera lucida* at the same time.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE DARK.

The queen had no more than entered within her suite, than Acton sent in to say that he had two pieces of news to acquaint her with; but it was clear that he was not expected or was not the only person expected, since she rather tartly remarked:

“Very well! let Lord Acton wait in the drawing-room; as soon as I am free I shall see him.”

Acton was used to such fits of sulkiness. It was a long time since he had been reckoned of this new Elizabeth the Essex or Leicester; he was nominally the queen's gallant, but whether she had other gallants or not, she certainly had other advisers. It was a political tie leashed them now. Acton needed her influence over the ruler to retain his office; and the lady, for her ability to please or to gain revenge, equally passionate for either, wanted his genius in plotting and endless complaisance too, as he would bear all for her sake.

The queen was divested rapidly of her court dress, flowers, diamonds and ornaments; she scaled off the rouge with which princesses besmeared their cheeks in those days, drew on a long, full dressing-gown of white, and taking a taper, went into a lonesome corridor. At its end she reached an isolated chamber, severely furnished, communicating with outdoors by a secret passage, of which she had one key, and her *sbirri* (spirit, in the sense of familiar demon), Pasquale di Simone, another.

In daytime, windows of this room were sealed up so that not the faintest ray of light could penetrate. Over

the center of the table was clamped down a bronze lamp, with a shade so arranged that it concentrated all the beams upon the board and left the rest of the room in darkness.

Those who had complaints to make were heard here. If the denouncers, despite the gloom thickening in the hall, dreaded recognition, they might wear masks or clothe themselves in the outer room with one of those long gowns in which penitent monks accompany condemned prisoners to the gallows or their bodies to the pit—gowns which converted a man into a phantom, for all that was seen of the wearer was through the apertures for looking out, resembling the gaps in a skull.

At this table were three inquisitors, who had acquired enough ghastly notoriety to make their names tolerably lasting. They were Castalcicala, the foreign minister; Guidobaldi, vice-president of the Junta, sitting in permanency these four years; and the fiscal proctor, Vanni.

The latter had been recently made a marquis by the queen, in recompense for his special services.

But this night, the board was deserted, the lamp unlit and the room lonely. The only living thing—that is, with a semblance of life—was the clock, which, with its monotonous ticking and shrill striking, troubled the funereal silence apparently dripping off the ceiling and weighing upon the air.

The shadows reigning everlastingly in this hall, thickened the air, and one entering felt that he breathed another atmosphere, difficult to bear.

The people, noticing that the room windows were always closed, called it the dark room (*camera oscura*).

From the vague rumors escaping from it, the people, with their characteristic instinct of guesswork, as if catching a glimpse of what happened, spoke the most of it, but after all was considered, feared it the least, since

the deadly darkness hid no thunderbolts for them, and its decrees passed over the lowly to smite higher heads.

At the moment when the queen entered, pale and illumined, like Lady Macbeth, solely by the candle she carried, the clock escapement whirred as it does before the hour is struck, and the gong sounded half-after two.

The chamber was empty, but she must have expected a tenant, since she showed astonishment. She hesitated to advance; but soon overcoming the start at the clock striking, she peered into the corners, and slowly and thoughtfully moved toward the table. It was covered with papers like a judge's desk, and triply offered writing materials.

The intruder listlessly turned over the papers; her eyes scanned without reading; her ears were strained to catch the least noise; but her mind was wandering far from its seat. In another instant, unable to contain her impatience, she sprang up, hastened to the secret entrance door, pressed her ear to it and listened.

In a few moments she heard a key grating in the lock without, and muttered, eagerly:

“At last!”

She opened the door on a dark passage and challenged:

“Is that you, Pasquale?”

“Ay, your majesty!” was replied by a man's voice below stairs.

“You come very late!” she said, reproachfully, regaining her seat with a gloomy mien and frowning brow.

“By my faith, it's a wonder I come at all!” replied the fellow upraided for lacking diligence. The voice sounded nearer.

“Why should you not have come at all?”

“Because it was a tough job,” answered the speaker, finally appearing at the doorway.

This man was of the tribe of human ferrets—useful,

when one could hold him subjective, but fierce in his free course.

“Did you do it, though?”

“Yes, lady, thanks to Heaven and my patron saint, we did it and did it prime! but it cost dear!”

While explaining, he laid on an armchair a cloak containing some articles sending out a metallic ring at the contact with solidity. The queen watched this with a mingling of disgust and curiosity.

“What’s the loss, my dear man?”

“One killed outright and three fitted for the bier—no less!”

“No matter; a pension to the widow and reward to the wounded.”

The *bravo* bowed his thanks.

“Then the spy was with a band?”

“No, lady; he was all alone; but he was a lion; I had to fling my knife at him from ten paces—had I closed in, I should have been paid out like the boys. But that keeled him over!”

“Did you have to wrest away his papers by force?”

“Nay; for he was dead, then. It was easy!”

“Ah!” sighed the queen, shuddering a little. “You were obliged to k—kill him?”

“Hang it all; it was kill him or be killed. I thought he might stand us off and get up a wrangle which would bring a crowd about us, but when I asked if he were the French go-between he asserted that he did go two roads about. Says he: ‘I am your man!’ and he dropped two of my boys with his pair of pistols. Then, two down, t’others come on! He laid another brace low with a slash of his sword. He was one of those plucky lads who did not care to lie.”

The hearer frowned to hear the murderer eulogize a victim.

“Being slain, what did you do with——”

“The *corpus*? A patrol was coming up, and so we left him, having enough to do to carry off those of ours who were not stiffening like him.”

“Bungler! he will be recognized!”

“What by—what as? I don’t know that he was a Frenchman because he worked for the French; he spoke Italian fairly and under his cloak, which I took as a trophy, he was clad like any not the gentry. The cloak itself is so much better cloth than his under duds that I should bet he borrowed that. Oh, these secret messengers are a bit of the highwayman, or they could not get over the road. I ought to know, for I have done a trifle in that line myself. Well, here’s the cloak, his or his neighbor’s, his sword, which is military, and his firearms. He handled them deftly, I answer for that! As for his charge, here is a wallet and a letter which stuck to it with his blood.”

He threw upon the table a morocco pocketbook, dyed redder than its original tint; a portion of a letter was glued, indeed, to it. The cutthroat tore them asunder carelessly and laid them apart. The queen stretched out her hand toward them; but no doubt she hesitated to touch the ensanguined prize, for, stopping halfway, she inquired:

“How could he be disguised, since our information said that he was a soldier and would be in uniform? However, the papers in that letter-vase ought to remove any doubts.”

Pasquale seemed sure of his mark. He shrugged his shoulders while his mistress took up the pocketbook, though the fresh blood dyed her glove tips, and opening it, found a letter within, bearing this superscription:

“To Citizen Garat, Ambassador of the French Republic at Naples.”

The seal bore the arms of the Republic, but breaking it, she opened the missive and uttered an outcry of glee over the first lines she read. This gladness increased as she progressed in her reading, and when she had ended, she said:

“Pasquale, you are a precious fellow, and I shall make your fortune!”

“Your majesty has been a long time promising that!” retorted the *sbirri*.

“Rest easy now about my keeping my word; but, in the meanwhile, here is something on account.”

She put a scrap of paper under her hand and scrawled a few words. It was an order on the treasury for a thousand ducats.

“Half for you—half for your men.”

“Bless you majesty!” said the *bravo*, blowing on the ink to dry it before he folded up the paper and pocketed it; “but before I leave your majesty, I ought to say that the question rises whether that soldier shifted his uniform for plain clothes and borrowed that fashionable cloak in or out of town. He may have been the bearer of other letters and I should like to know where he delivered the rest of the budget.”

“It is just what I thought of, too, my dear Pasquale. Have you any suspicions as to those who keep up communications with the French?”

“Hazy yet; but I hope to verify them pretty soon. I posted some lookouts on the seashore road, with orders to meet me at the Giants’ Statue, where, if your majesty will give me leave, I will run and meet them.”

“You cannot do better. If they are there, bring them to me, for I should like to learn about those friendly to the Jacobins under our eaves.”

Di Simone disappeared in the corridor, his steps being heard fainter and fainter as he went down the stone slabs,

Remaining alone, the illustrious inquisitress glanced vaguely over the board when she spied the second paper, which the man had treated as a mere rag, apart from the wallet to which its defender's blood had cemented it. In her desire to read the official dispatch to the French envoy, and in her satisfaction over it, she had forgotten it.

It was a note written on fine paper; in a thin, dainty and aristocratic hand, feminine; by the first words the queen recognized a love letter. It commenced with the word:

"Caro!"

Unfortunately for the inquirer, the blood had almost wholly spread over the written page. One could only make out the date, twentieth of September, and read the regrets of the writer that she could not keep an appointment since she was obliged to stay with the queen during the reception of Admiral Nelson. The only signature was one letter, an E.

The reader was completely bewildered.

Such an epistle, addressed to a Caracciolo, could not be found on a courier with advices from the French general, Championnet, commanding at Rome, with a dispatch to Ambassador Garat. She reflected that the wily Pasquale was no doubt correct in assuming that the messenger had disguised himself and been loaned a cloak which contained the amorous epistle, conjoined to it by hazard of the assassin's knife.

She rose and went to examine the spoil of the hirelings. The cloak was simply a well-made over-garment worn by any gentleman of the city. The saber was the French regulation one, she believed; but the pistols were not only stylish but must have come from the Royal Armory in Naples; on a shield was engraved a "C."

The investigatress put aside the firearms with the letter as affording a clew.

As Di Simone did not return and was probably toasting the bounty, she locked up the cloak and sword in a closet and took the letter, dispatch and wallet with her to her own rooms. Acton was still waiting.

Shutting up the wallet and pistols in a drawer of her secretary, and only keeping the letter, she entered the drawing-room. On seeing her, the minister rose and bowed without evincing any chafing at having been made to wait. She went up to him.

“You are something of a chemist, eh?” she demanded.

“I have some laboratory knowledge, if I am not a chemist in the full sense,” was his answer.

“Do you think that the blood can be extracted from this letter without effacing the ink?”

Acton looked at the fouled page and was gloomy.

“Lady mine,” said he, “for the terror and chastisement of those who shed it, Providence has set it that blood leaves blots the least rapidly sponged out. If this be a common ink, composed of a plain color and a mordant, the operation will be difficult, for the chloride of potassium, in eradicating the blood, would injure the ink; but if, on the contrary, which is not likely, the ink contains nitrate of silver, or bone black and gum, a solution of hyperchlorate of lime will remove the stain without affecting the ink.”

“That is all very well, but do your best; it is highly important that I should know the contents of that writing. But you stated that you had serious news to communicate? I am waiting, sir.”

“General Mack arrived while we were jubilating, and as I invited him, he was set down at my house, where I found him when I got home.”

“He is welcome, and I believe Heaven is on our side. What other news?”

“Not less weighty. After the warrior, the sinews of

war! I managed to exchange a few words with Admiral Nelson and he is about procuring the money, as much as your majesty desires."

"Thank you; that completes the series of boons."

Going to the window, she parted the curtains, and gave a glance at the royal windows.

"By a happy singularity, the king is still up," she said. "I will send him word that we shall hold council and say that it is essential that he should attend."

"I understood that he was going a-hunting," remarked the minister.

"A fig! he can put that off for another day," she replied, disdainfully.

Taking up a pen, she wrote the note which we saw the king receive.

As the captain general stood for fresh orders, she said with her most gracious smile, "Good-night, my dear general! I am grieved to detain you so late, but when you know what I have done, you will own that I have not wasted my time."

She held out her hand to her confidant, who kissed it respectfully and bowed to take leave, when she called out to stay him:

"By the bye, the king will be out of sorts at the council."

"I am afraid he will!"

"Recommend your colleagues not to breathe a word, and not even to reply if unquestioned; all the play will be done between the king and me."

"I am sure that your majesty, like all fair tragediennes, has taken the best part."

"I believe so, too! but you shall see."

Acton having bowed and gone, she muttered, as she rang for her tiring-woman, "If Emma does what she promised me, all will go swimmingly!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STATE COUNCIL.

Besides the occult councils held by the queen in the dark room, there were four at the palace weekly.

All the cabinet ministers attended, with the queen assiduously and the king only when forced, about nine out of ten sessions. But she pretended simply to look on, and would coop herself up in a window recess with Lady Hamilton and scarcely heed the papers read and the speeches drawled. She had introduced the English-woman as one of her appendages, much as Ferdinando brought Jupiter, the retriever.

All played their parts; the ministers pretended to debate; Ferdinando pretended to listen, but scratched his dog behind the ears; Carolina looked bored and ran her fingers through Lady Hamilton's locks, dog and favorite both crouching. As they passed by them, the cabinet officers would stroke Jupiter and compliment Delilah, in the intervals of discussion, recompensed by a smile from the master or mistress.

Acton alone seemed to comprehend the gravity of the situation, pilot charged with the responsibility of steering this vessel beaten by the head wind out of France, on this sea of sirens, where eight diverse dominions had been wrecked.

Supported by the British fleet, nearly sure of Nelson's concurrence, and strong through her hate for the French, the queen had decided not only to affront danger but to run to it and taunt it.

So the king's sulky and testy bearing set off the queen's

blithesome and victorious air. Like the courtiers who took Acton's hint to preserve Pythagorean silence, his pet, Jupiter, sneaked in, with hanging head and his tail hung under between his legs. Though the hunt was postponed, the royal Nimrod protested by wearing a hunting costume.

The royal chairman dolefully excused himself and called upon the queen to be the orator of the melancholy occasion.

"Oh, my lords and gentlemen," began she, with the captiousness always shown for her lord's speech and manners, "the matter is very simple, and were the king in the mood for it, he could lay it before you in his blunt speech shortly. The French Ambassador, Citizen Garat, quitted Naples last night in a huff, declaring war on us."

"And," supplemented the king, "it is only right to say that we bring this war upon ourselves, and our good friend, Dame Albion, has attained her wishes! The main thing now is to know if she will uphold her end of the battering-ram! But Lord Acton must see about that."

"And the brave Lord Nelson," added the queen. "For that matter, he has shown what courage and genius allied will do!"

"Never mind all that. I do not shrink from saying bluntly that a struggle with France is a mighty tussle!"

"Less mighty," retorted the queen, bitterly, "since Citizen Bonaparte is shut up in Egypt, where he must stay until France can build another fleet to rescue him, which will give him time to experiment raising sugar-beets with the seed the Directory sent out to plant over the Nile valley!"

"Why, yes," sneered the monarch, "they have penned up the victor of Arcola and a few other strong places, but they have left unconfined other victors in Massena, Bernadotte and a host of enviable champions; without in-

cluding that General Championnet, who, by the way, is only fifty or sixty miles off; in other words, within three days' march!"

The queen pouted at this mention of the French commander, for by his own dispatch, she knew him to be temporarily impotent. The king thought the sneer was aimed at him.

"I may be off a league or two," acknowledged he, "but I am close enough. The saints know that since he got in among us, like the devil among the tailors, I have inquired often enough about how near he is!"

"Oh, I do not question your geographical lore!" persisted the queen, with her pendent Austrian lip almost touching her chin.

"Nay, nay, I fully understand that you only deny my political craft. Though San Nicandro did his utmost to make a donkey of me, and succeeded according to your test, I may observe to the gentlemen of the council that the situation is mixed up. There is more to do than send three or four ships of the line and some thousands of troops to Toulon. And by the same token, they came home in a damaged state, men and ships! Though Citizen Bu-o-na-par-te was not much of a victor, then, he gave them their porridge hot! It will not any longer suffice to send the coalition four cavalry regiments to perform prodigies of valor in the Tyrol, but to be cut to pieces all the same! Note that, in '93 and '96, we were covered by the whole of Upper Italy, occupied by your nephew's troops, but it may be said, without any mud-throwing, that they did not hurry into the field, though that Bonaparte fellow pared Master Francis' nails pretty close to the quick with the Campo-Formia Treaty. The truth is, my Nephew Francis is a wary chap; the force you offer him is not enough to back him up, and he is waiting for what the Russian emperor has promised us.

He knows the French, for they have brushed his hair the wrong way!"

Ferdinando chuckled, because he was beginning to recover his jollity at having had a tilt at the queen's relative. The latter was piqued by this slight, and the faint hilarity which timidly applauded the royal jester of his own Court.

"I would have the king to observe that the Neapolitan Government is not free to choose time and the men like the Emperor of Austria. We did not declare war on France, but France has done so on us; so we must consult with the war minister about our means."

"Certainly, we must know about the means and men. Where are the sixty-five thousand troops some gentlemen mentally paraded to us?"

The captain-general read out a list.

"By St. Januarius, I have an army of over sixty thousand!" exclaimed the sovereign.

"All in new uniforms, too, in the Austrian mode."

"Do you mean to say they wear white?"

"Instead of green, yes, sire."

"Alack-a-day!" sighed the ruler, with grotesque sadness, "white or green—they are fast colors—they will run as well in one as the other!"

"You have a sorry opinion of your subjects," commented the queen.

"Sorry? No, a bright one! I think they are too intelligent to go and get slain for a quarrel which does not concern them. Out of those sixty-five thousand are fifteen thousand veterans; but they have never fired a loaded cartridge or heard a ball whistle. They will not run at the first bullet, but they will at the second! Save you! me and my dog listen to you, but we also listen to others, and we hear how you raised that army! Enrolled them by lottery, and let the rich men's sons buy themselves

substitutes. Do you think that these siftings—the culls rejected—will go and get killed for unjust stewards, speculative sheriffs, thievish understrappers, and above all a ruler who hunts, fishes and finds his fun in riding over their crops and whooping his hounds over their kitchen-gardens? They would be numskulls! If I were a soldier in such a service, I should desert and turn brigand; at least, brigands do have a jolly life and really fight among themselves.”

“I am forced to believe that there is much truth in your majesty’s saying,” granted the war minister.

“Of course, I speak the truth always,” said the council president, “when I have no grounds for falsifying understood! But now, admitting your sixty-five thousand Rolands equipped in the latest Austrian vogue, who is going to lead them? You, General Ariola?”

“Sire, one cannot be both head of the war department and head of the army!”

“And you would rather be head of the department—I agree with you!”

“Sire,” interrupted the queen, “it is useless for your majesty to look about for a commander-in-chief, for we have one.”

“You never mean that you found him in my realm!” protested Ferdinando.

“No, my good lord, though he is to be found in your realm at present! I begged my nephew to send me a man whose military fame will impose on the enemy and satisfy our friends’ exactions!”

“What is his celebrated name?”

“The Baron Charles Mack!” and she advanced toward the door, which, as if by magic, opened as for royalty, both wings, and a personage was ushered in, to the general surprise.

The cause of this entire astonishment was a man of

about fifty-five years, tall, pale, fair, wearing an Austrian general's uniform, with the general's insignia, and among other adornments the tokens of the orders of Maria Theresa and St. Januarius.

"Sire," said the queen, "I have the honor to present Baron Charles Mack, under promise of being appointed commander-in-chief of your majesty's armies."

"Enchanted to make your acquaintance, general!" responded the potentate, but eying ascant the St. Januarius decoration, which was in his gift, but which he could not recall bestowing in this quarter.

Mack was bowing and about to make some civil reply when the lady broke in:

"Sire, I was in the belief that it became us, as well as the general, not to let him arrive without some token of our appreciation, so I directed our envoy at Vienna to invest him with the insignia of our order."

"And I, my liege," interjected the baron, with a flourish too theatrical to be real, "full of gratitude to your majesty, came with lightning promptitude to say: 'My sword is yours!'"

The king rolled back his chair as the sword was, indeed, drawn. Like James I., he did not like the flash of steel.

"This weapon is for your service and her majesty's, and will never rest quiet in its scabbard until it shall have overthrown that infamous French Republic, which is humanity's negation and Europe's shame! Will you accept my vow, sovereign?" continued Mack, swinging the blade formidably.

Little inclined to dramatic outbursts, Ferdinando had the good sense to properly measure all the ridiculous bluster in this entrance, and with his mocking grimace he muttered in the Neapolitan dialect:

"*Ceuza!*" (braggart).

As this was unintelligible to any man not born in the fumes of Vesuvius, Mack did not understand it, and as he could not wait with his sword balanced in the air for the king's more explicit compliment, he addressed the queen.

"Did not his majesty do me the honor of a remark?"

"In one local word full of meaning, his majesty did convey his gratitude," replied Carolina, ingeniously.

While the king still quizzed him roguishly, Mack majestically slid his falchion into the sheath.

"And now," continued the monarch, in the same jeering vein, "since my dear nephew has sent me one of his first generals to upset this infamous French Republic, I hope he has accompanied him with a plan of campaign drawn up by the Aulic Council."

This request, made with well played simplicity, was another quip of the royal merry-maker, for the Aulic Councils had drawn up the plans of '93 and '96, under which Archduke Charles and his generals had been thoroughly beaten.

"No, sire; I begged of my august master, the emperor, free will on that subject, which favor he accorded me."

"Then you will let us have it forthwith, eh? for I admit that I await such a boon with impatience."

"I have drawn it up," replied the arch-strategist, like a man quite satisfied with himself.

"Hark to that, gentlemen!" exclaimed Ferdinando, becoming droll again at having a butt. "Before even Citizen Garat declared war on us, in the name of the confounded French Republic, the hag in the red nightcap was trounced! thanks to the genius of our new chief general! We are plainly under the shield of the god of battles and St. Januarius! I thank the general."

Inflated by the eulogy which he literally interpreted, the Austrian bowed.

“What a pity,” went on the badgering king, “that we have not a map here on which to follow the plan of this leader. I heard that General Bonaparte had a large chart in his Parisian headquarters, on which, with his secretaries, he used to follow the developments of his theories and plans. If we had one here, we might be enlightened and set at ease by watching on it the unfolding of this scheme, which may be as good as any of the Corsican innovator!”

“As good,” returned Mack, contentedly.

He gave an order to an usher, who brought in a large portfolio, emblazoned with gold; the Austrian arms on one side and Mack’s name and titles on the reverse. Out of this was extracted a large map of the Roman States, which he spread on the table.

All the officers approached, for Mack bore the reputation of being the leading strategist.

The queen turned away as if not interested, and on the king’s rebuke, retorted as she pointed to Cardinal Ruffo, counselor by courtesy, whom she hated, “perhaps I should displace a master of these things!”

Mack glibly disclosed his plans by which the French were to be forced to evacuate Rome, beaten at their last stand.

“Grand!” declared the king. “But if they are not beaten?”

“Sire, when I have the honor to tell your majesty that I shall beat them, beaten they must be!”

“Then, all goes well. Only you said that the plan included my going with you afield, in which event I should be mixed up with the warfare?”

“No doubt.”

“You give me the first news of it! Do I occupy any rank to speak of?”

“The supreme command, of course!”

"The front of battle? Humph! you forget that I am not a man of bloodshed. The supreme command for me?" continued the railler. "Did San Nicandro rear me for a Hannibal or an Alexander? Did I study so as to be beaten according to all the rules and regulations?"

"Sire," replied Mack, "a son of Henry IV. and Louis XIV. knows war without being taught it!"

"My dear general, tell such rot to fools and not to a blockhead like me."

"Oh!" exclaimed the foreigner, astounded to hear a potentate express so frankly such an opinion on himself.

"And then, one of the first parts for a general is bravery, I take it?"

"Incontestibly!"

"It follows that you are brave! Are you sure?"

"Hem!"

"Well, I am not sure I am!"

The queen blushed up to her ears; Mack stared at the speaker. Ministers and courtiers smiled, knowing their master's cynicism.

"Well," said the king, gazing around, "you have had the plan laid bare. Do you approve?"

Under the queen's eyes, all approved, with the exception of Cardinal Ruffo, who though counselor *ex officio*, or because he was *ex officio*, ventured criticism. And what was more annoying, his criticism was so just that, to say nothing of the king approving, Mack was compelled to assent to it.

"My lord cardinal," observed Mack, biting his lip, "the king is free to choose between us, your plan and mine, for, perhaps," he proceeded, with a superficial grin, "to wage a war which may be styled a holy one, Peter the Hermit is to be preferred to Godfrey of Bouillon."

Ferdinando did not know any too clearly who were the first King of Jerusalem and the crusading preacher, but

while baiting the Austrian, he did not wish to discontent him.

“What do you say, my dear general!” he cried out, warmly. “I take your plan as excellent, and you see that these gentlemen hold it so, too. Well, we have got our army, and our plan of operations. And the commander-in-chief? There is nothing lacking but the funds.”

The financial minister had to admit that equipping the army in the Austrian mode had exhausted the treasury.

“Do you hear that, lady?” appealed the monarch to the queen. “No money!”

“Sire, money is not wanting, since we have a million pounds sterling at your disposal.”

“A million pounds! by Pluto!” (The good king meant Plutus, but it was a close shot.) “Who is the gold-finder who has turned up this mass?”

The lady went over to that door by which she had introduced the baron.

“I am to have the honor to present him,” she explained. Addressing a person invisible but nigh without, she pursued: “Will your grace kindly confirm to the king my announcement, to wit, that to wage war upon the Jacobins, money is forthcoming?”

All eyes were turned toward this ingress, when who should appear on the threshold but Nelson, radiant, while behind him, like an Elysian shade, was partly eclipsed the graceful figure of Emma Lady Hamilton, who was prompting Nelson’s devotion and the English subsidy.



“ All eyes were turned toward this ingress, when who should appear on the threshold but Nelson.”

(See page 74)

CHAPTER IX.

GIVE AND TAKE.

Nelson's advent at such a point was significant. It was the deadly foe of France sitting with the Naples council and sustaining with all the power of its gold, Carolina's falsehood and treachery.

Everybody knew the newcomer except Mack, so lately arrived; the queen led the Briton by the hand up to the redoubtable maker of plans, and thus introduced him:

"I present the hero of the sea to the hero of the land."

Nelson, inimical for all land fighters, might be little flattered by the parallel, but he was in too good spirits at the time to be hurt, and, saluting Baron Mack courteously, the Baron of the Nile turned to the king.

"Sire," he said, "I am delighted to be empowered to say to your majesty and his cabinet that I can treat in England's name on all questions anent the war with France."

The king was trapped; during his repose, Carolina had bound him hand and foot as the little folk bound Gulliver; he was forced to put the best face on the unpleasant matter.

The direct envoy of Great Britain laid on the table the full powers:

"Upon his arrival at Naples, the Right Honorable Lord Nelson, Baron of the Nile, is authorized to concert with our ambassador at the Court of the Two Sicilies in sustaining our august ally, the King of Naples, in all the necessities arising from a war with the French Republic.

"London, this 7th of May, 1798.

W. PITT."

Acton translated the lines to his lord, who beckoned Ruffo to his side, as a reinforcement in counteraction to the queen's accessions. The cardinal divined what the king wanted to know.

"A million English is about five and a half million ducats," he interpreted.

"Whew!"

"This sum," added Nelson, "is a first instalment toward meeting the difficulties."

"But," objected Ferdinando, "this is the winter equinox and it takes time for a ship to carry news between London and Naples; before we get matters in working order, the French will have marched into Naples!"

Carolina forestalled the Englishman's reply.

"Your majesty may dwell tranquil on that point—the French are not in the condition to carry the war so far!"

"But Garat declared it!"

His consort smiled disdainfully.

"Citizen Garat was in too much of a hurry. If he had waited a little while to know the state of things at Rome, he would not have been so precipitate. For, here is the dispatch the citizen would have received this morning if he had not hastened off last night!"

She drew from its envelope the message which her private police officer had stolen from the bearer after having slain him, and brought to the dark room. The king glanced at it, but it was in French, and might as well have been in Hebrew. As if he trusted to no one but Ruffo there, he passed it over to him, saying:

"Let us have the Italian of that, cardinal."

In the midst of the densest silence, the prelate read:

"CITIZEN AMBASSADOR:

"Having been only a few days in Rome, I deem it my duty to bring under your notice the state of the forces over which I am set in command. From these, my pre-

cise notes, you may regulate your conduct toward the perfidious court, which, impelled by our eternal enemy, England, only waits for the favoring moment to open war upon us."

Nelson and the queen exchanged a glance, smiling. Nelson did not understand Italian, but he must have been given an inkling of this text through Emma.

The confidential paper went on with details revealing that the French had less than ten thousand fit men, five siege guns and not two hundred thousand cartridges.

"You hear, sire?" cried the queen, exultantly. "Against that I believe we have nothing to fear in this war!"

"'With these means,' " continued the reader, "'the citizen ambassador will readily see that I cannot repulse a hostile aggression, and still less, carry war into the Neapolitan territory——'"

"Does not that encourage you?" sneered the queen.

"Humph! is there any more to the same tune?" said Ferdinando.

"Therefore, I cannot too strongly urge you, citizen ambassador, to maintain as far as French dignity allows, the good harmony between the Republic and the Court of the Two Sicilies, and to calm the Neapolitan patriots. Curb all movement for a rising for three months, as that time will be necessary for me to organize the army, otherwise the rising will be premature and inevitably abortive.

"In fraternity,

"CHAMPIONNET.

"18th September, 1798."

"Well, sir," said the queen, "if you were but half encouraged before, this ought to fully reassure you."

"On one point, yes, but not on another."

"Ah, I understand. You allude to the traitorous republican party among us? You see it is not a phantom; but, existing, it is to be curbed. The Jacobins themselves give us that advice."

"But how the plague did you obtain such a paper?" said

the king, viewing it, in the cardinal's hands, with curiosity.

"That is my secret, sir! Allow me to preserve it. But I fear that I interrupted Lord Nelson in answering a question of your majesty's."

The Englishman explained that there would be no delay, as Sir William Hamilton would draw by a letter of exchange on Baker & Son, bankers, for the sum, which Nelson will indorse, and the bankers' correspondents in Italy would cash. As the sum was important, the king should notify the parties in time.

Ruffo whispered to his patron, who nodded, and resumed:

"But my good ally of England, however friendly to Sicily, does not hand over cash for nothing. I know 'the old Lady of Threadneedle Street!' What is required in exchange?"

"A trifle which cannot prejudice your majesty. When the British fleet, now blockading Malta, takes it from the French, it is promised that your majesty shall transfer his rights over that island to his Britannic majesty, in order that we may, now having only Gibraltar in the Middle Sea, make Malta a naval station and provisioning haven for our vessels."

"Good! that will not cost me a pang, since it belongs to the Knights of Malta."

"That's true; but when we shall have taken Malta, we will dissolve the order!"

"Yes, yes," interpolated Ruffo, with haste; "but when the order is dissolved, its property returns to the kingdom of the Two Sicilies; hence, if England needs another naval station in the Mediterranean, why, we will oblige her—but it will cost twenty-five millions of francs!"

Any discussion of the point raised by this amiable pre-

late was stopped by a loud burst from hunting-horns in the courtyard.

The king ran to the window and opened it to look out before the flourishing was over.

“Sounding the tally-ho when the hunting was put off, worse luck! Will somebody explain what they are setting up this miserable taunt for?”

A chief huntsman responded from the depths:

“May it please your majesty, it means that we have unearthed fifteen wild boars, so that we may count on not losing the day.”

“Count on your grandmother!” roared the exasperated monarch; “do you hear that, my lady? Fifteen boars, and I cannot hunt them!”

“Why should you not hunt them?” rejoined the queen, smilingly stepping forward. “Now that business is finished, nothing prevents you going!”

The king became radiant.

“Huzza! my Diana! you not only meet to replace the prime minister, but the grand huntsman! You have your wishes and I mine! Dear me! I am so invigorated that I feel brave! After all, what is a campaign but a hunt? And a wild boar is as hard to face as a soldier! Good-by, all!”

“But Malta?” inquired Ruffo, wistfully.

“A rock which is good for nothing but twice a year when the quail fly over! No pheasants and no drinking water! They have to get all the green stuff over from Sicily, since they cannot grow so much as a radish there! Let the British take Malta, and clear me out these Jacobins, which is all I ask of them. Fifteen boars! eh, Jupiter; seek 'em!”

He dashed out, mock-trumpeting the horns.

“My lord,” said the queen to the admiral, “you can write to your government that the Two Sicilies will make

no opposition to the cession of Malta. Gentlemen," she added to the cabinet officers, "the king thanks you for the good counsel you have offered. The session is over."

Courtesying to all, and giving a killing glance to poor Ruffo, she sailed out, accompanied by Mack and Nelson.

CHAPTER X.

A SUPERABUNDANCE OF E'S.

The Neapolitan royal country seat was at Caserta. The mansion and grounds are likened to those of Versailles. The Neapolitans who had not traveled in France asserted that Caserta was finer than Versailles; those who had seen the model thought it was as fine; but impartial sightseers set it beneath; in this we agree, and will maintain that all taste goes with us.

It was here that Ferdinando gave a dinner to Andreas Baker, son of the banker who put the English gold at his disposal, for a king might dine a banker in his manor when it would be too great a condescension to feast him in his palace.

The queen was not sorry to lose their company, for she was eager to speak with Captain-General Acton. Leaving Sir William Hamilton and his lady to preside at the table, she passed into her sitting-room.

“Well?” she demanded.

“Your majesty is probably inquiring as to that mutilated letter?”

“No doubt! Have I not written to you twice about it? I feel engirt with daggers and plots and do not see clearly.”

“As I promised, I have succeeded in removing the blood stains.”

“That was not the crux—but have you left the writing plain?”

“Plainly enough to be read with a magnifying glass.”

"Was it a very difficult operation, that it took so much time?"

"On account of the importance of the success, I tried several ways."

"To the result!"

He held out to her the letter, and also handed her a magnifying lens, which was used to study paintings minutely. What was untouched by the blood was legible enough, but there were irregular gaps which, being imperfectly filled by the letters faded by the experimental acids, became a puzzle. But with much attention and Acton's hints, she could in the end decipher as follows:

"DEAR CARACCILO:

"Excuse your poor darling for not keeping the appointment at which she promised herself so much bliss; I vow it was no fault of mine; it was after seeing you that I was notified by the queen that with all the court ladies I must be present at the reception to Lord Nelson. She did me the compliment of saying that I was one of the stars with which she hoped to dazzle the victor of the Nile. It would only be half the task with him, since he has but one eye. Be not jealous, since I prefer Acis to Polyphemus. I will inform you when I am free.

"Your fond and faithful, E."

"Pshaw!" observed the lady, "this gives little information and the writer seems to have foreseen that her epistle would be read by a stranger. But then the Caraccioli have always been gallants and she may be a woman of caution!"

"I do not see that she is a miracle of caution, and for that matter none aver the ladies of the palace to be of that sort. We shall find out this evening who it is. That is, if your majesty kindly acted on my suggestion to invite all the ladies who were at the Nelsonic reception and whose names begin with the fifth letter of the alphabet."

"There are only seven! Princess Cariati, an Emilia; Countess St. Marco, Eleanora; Marchioness San Clemente, Elena; Duchess Termoli, Elisabetta; Duchess Tursi, Elisa; Marchioness Altaville, Eufrasia; and Countess Eugenia Policastro. I am not including Emma, Lady Hamilton, who cannot be tangled in this affair."

"But of your seven wise and foolish matrons and virgins, two are over the age to write to Caraccioli even."

"Granted; but what will we do with the five?"

"Try them, not in a balance, but with a pen. Let your majesty get them to furnish samples of their handwriting, comparing them with this——"

"You are right," said she, laying her hand on her confidant's. "Knowing the woman, we shall capture the man. Let us go back to the company." She rose.

"I should like the audience ten minutes longer. Business of the highest degree."

She took her seat again.

"The night that letter was given me, the king's rooms were lit up till three in the morning? Does your majesty know who kept the king up so late?"

"Cardinal Ruffo—a gentleman in my train told me that."

"Did he tell you that on the heels of that interview a courier rode off—the king's own messenger, Ferrari?"

"How do you know?"

"My English groom, Tom, sleeps in the stables, he is so fond of horses. At about three, he spies Ferrari ready dressed for a ride, coming into the place, saddling a horse with his own hands, and dashing off. He told me the same, when holding my stirrup for my ride. I wondered who would be communicated with after a confab between the prelate and the ruler, and concluded that the latter wrote to his nephew."

"The *Kaiser* of Austria? The king do such a thing without warning to me!"

"I don't say the king, but the cardinal——"

"Tut, tut!" said Carolina, frowning, "I may not be an Anna of Austria; but Ruffo is not a Richelieu! He had best take care!"

"To me the matter looks bad."

"Are you sure?"

"Any doubts were soon scattered. For my groom followed on the track. Ferrari left his horse at the posting-house of Capua, taking a fresh one and saying that he would call for his own about the third or fourth of next month——"

"In twelve days?"

"Scant time to get to Vienna and home; Ferrari will do it, though these are war times——"

"Indeed they are!"

"So you ought to know what the king, under prompting of Cardinal Ruffo, wrote to the emperor and what the emperor replies."

"Do not ask Ferrari then, as he is attached exclusively to his master, and incorruptible."

"Every fort has a window through which a purse can be tossed. Ferrari may not be so incorruptible, after all."

"If he still rejects the bribe, however large, and tells the king, who is quite mistrustful already?"

"Let Sir William Hamilton seduce him, then. If he fails, we shall not be compromised. And we can try our own pressure——"

"Too late! And Sir William would not consent——"

"Your majesty could induce his wife to talk him over!"

"But Ferrari might slip by without our knowledge!"

"Not without mine. I will have him waylaid; told that the king is here, and we will bring him to Sir William."

"That may succeed, as likely that it may fail," muttered the queen, brooding.

"It is much to have prospects even, and with a woman and a queen, chance will lean to you!"

"You are right, Acton. We are playing with fire. If it strikes out the light we need, well and good! If it spreads too far, we must hope to control it. Send a man to Capua to intercept Ferrari and notify Sir William."

Shaking her head, overburdened with racking cares, as if to shake off some of them, she entered the drawing-room with a light step and smiling lips.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ACROSTIC.

A number of guests had arrived, among whom were the seven persons the initial of whose first names happened to be E.

The men were Nelson and two of his officers; also his friends, Captains Trowbridge and Ball. The Italians were men of fashion or of politics, descendants mainly of the oldest Spanish or Neapolitan families.

All eagerly awaited the queen's coming, and bowed to her respectfully.

Carolina had set herself two tasks this evening—first to show off Emma the Lovely so as to ensnare Nelson more than ever; and second to learn by handwriting the lady who was enamored of a Caracciolo. To attach the Neapolitan admiral with the conspirators linked with the French, was an immense advantage. Only those who participated in the queen's private evening parties, in which "Emma Lyonna" was the great charm and principal ornament, could relate to what height the modern Armida lifted her beholders in delirium and enthusiasm. If her magical poses and voluptuous pantomime had deep influence on northerners, how much more must they have electrified the violent southern imagination impassioned with song, music and poetry, and knowing Cimarosa and Metastasio by heart?

(In our own tours of Naples and Sicily, we met old gentlemen who had witnessed these magnetic exhibitions and, after fifty years' past, they had quivered like youths over the burning memories.)

It is admitted that Lady Hamilton was lovely. What must she have been on this evening, when she wished to bewitch Nelson and outshine the belles in their elegant costumes?

Faithful to her traditions of liberty and art, Lady Hamilton wore an attire which, though novel, was to be adopted by all the beauties. A long tunic of blue cashmere fell in those folds only seen in antique statuary; floating over her shoulders in long wavy tresses, her hair threw off the reflections of melting gold; her girdle was the queen's gift, a chain of unequaled diamonds, which, after being caught up in a knot like an ordinary cord, reached to her knee. Her arms were bare from the shoulder to the finger-tips; but one arm was clamped in at the top and wrist by serpents in diamonds with ruby eyes; one hand was loaded with rings, while the other, on the contrary, shone solely with the brightness of the fine skin and the luster of the pink nails.

Her feet, being in flesh-colored stockings, seemed nude in their sky-blue sandals having gold laces.

This stupefying glamour, heightened by the odd apparel, had a touch of the supernatural, alarming and terrifying. From this revival of Greek paganism, women shrank with jealousy and men with dread. To love this Astarte was to be found dead, by one's own hand, on her temple steps.

Attractive as she was, and because so fascinating, Lady Hamilton sat lonely on a sofa at its end, though there was a ring around her. No one but Nelson, her husband's guest, had a right to sit by her; but he devoured her with his sight, and leaned on Trowbridge, enchanted, wondering by what miracle of chance or political sport, the veteran seaman, mutilated in many battles, had such a claim on a privileged creature uniting all the perfections.

But in this royal hall, where so many envious and wishful looks were enveloping her, she was less abashed and more placid than in the alcove at Dr. Graham's.

On seeing the queen, she rose and ran to her as though to be saved by her help, crying out:

"Pray your majesty, cast your shadow over me or tell these friends that there is no such risk run by approaching me as to rest under the upas tree."

"Do you complain of that, ungrateful being!" laughingly returned the sovereign; "why are you so fair as to cause hearts to burst with jealousy and despair?"

She kissed her and whispered: "Look your finest to-night—you must!"

Encircling her favorite's neck with her arm, she led her back to the sofa, around which everybody pressed now.

Acton came in just then, darting a glance at his mistress to transmit that all was going as she desired. After having conversed with Lady Hamilton, she said, aloud:

"I have prevailed on our good dear to afford us this evening a specimen of all her talents. That is, she will kindly oblige us with a national English ballad, or the like; a scene out of Shakespeare, and dance The Shawl Dance, which has only been seen by myself."

There was a buzz of joy and curiosity.

"Ah, but your majesty should mention that I do this on condition of having a memento of this happy night!" protested the English siren.

"What is it?" asked the ladies, and after them the gentlemen, similarly interested.

"Why," said Lady Hamilton, "the queen happened to remark the singularity that there are as many as seven or eight of the ladies present who have their Christian names begin with the same letter, E."

"Why, that's so!" ejaculated the court ladies, after verifying the count. "Seven E's!"

"Well, if I meet your wishes, you ought to meet mine?"

"You ladies must allow that it is only fair!" interpolated the mistress of the *fête*.

"You have only to mention it, my lady," was the reply.

"I beg to conserve a precious keepsake of the occasion," proceeded the amateur actress. "Let the queen kindly write her name on a sheet of paper, with each letter to become the first letter of a line, written by each of the seven E's. Let them be rhyming couplets, to test your qualities of improvisation, native to you—good or not—and I hope, as my 'Emma' makes me an E, there will be some poor ones so as to pair me off! As a souvenir of this evening, during which I had the honor to be in the society of the handsomest queen in Christendom and its fairest ladies, I will enframe it in my album."

"With all my heart," said Carolina; "I will do my part."

Going up to a table, she wrote her name, "Carolina," across a page of paper.

"But we are not all poetesses!" protested the ladies, sentenced to make "lightning poetry."

"Invoke Apollo, and if he is not less gallant than your admirers, he will make you so!" retorted the hostess.

There was no receding; besides, Lady Hamilton had gone up stoutly to the altar for the tribute, that is, the writing table, and already was writing a line from the first letter in her royal name, C., as its own commencement.

The other ladies resigned themselves, and one after the other came up to the ordeal and wrote something to which they appended their names. When the last, Marchioness San Clemente, had finished, the queen almost

snatched up the acrostic. The concurrence of the eight muses had produced the solution sought by her. She read aloud:

ACROSTIC TO QUEEN CAROLINA.

Chosen to wield a sway supreme!—Emma Hamilton.
 A diadem must on you gleam!—Emilia Cariatì.
 Replete with all our tribute—love!—Eleonora San-Marco.
 On you long fall the light above!—Elizabetta Termoli.
 Let Mount Vesuvius blaze your fame!—Elisa Tursi.
 In all our poems sound your name!—Eufrasia, of Altavilla.
 Now do our hearts, forever thine!—Eugenia, of Policastro.
 Ask but to worship at your shrine!—Elena San Clemente.

“Just notice, General Acton,” observed the queen, while the gentlemen were applauding the authoresses, astonished that they had done so well (!), “what a pretty hand the Marchioness of San Clemente writes!”

The minister took the paper to hold it up to a candle, compared it in his mind’s eye with the incriminatory letter, and with a smile returning the valuable and ominous autograph to the sovereign, rejoined:

“Very pretty, indeed!”

CHAPTER XII.

SAPPHIC VERSES.

The dual praise of queen and premier on the marchioness' handwriting passed without anybody attaching weight to it, including the object. The former clung to the acrostic, promising to let Emma have it on the next day, and as this first ice, which chills the opening of all parties, was broken, all mingled in that delightful babble, which the royal hostess knew how to farther in her intimacy, by her art in banishing etiquette and dropping all social fetters.

In these unrestrained gatherings Carolina not only forgot she was a sovereign, but that she was woman. Electrical flashes dashed out of her orbs, her nostrils dilated, her bosom heaved, like the rolling waves, her voice became rancid and uneven, and a rasping came from her mouth which was astonishing, reminding one of a panther or, by imagination, of a bacchante.

Going up to Lady Hamilton and putting her rose-coral hand on her alabaster shoulders, she demanded:

“Have you forgotten, fair one, that you are not your own property this evening? You promised us wonders and we are fretting to applaud you.”

Counter to the queen, the amateur figurante seemed drowned in languor. Her neck had no strength to support her head, which bent toward one shoulder or the other, and sometimes in a spasm sank backward; her half-closing eyes veiled the burning pupils under the long lashes; her parted lips showed the white teeth between

purple; her hair darkened by contrast with her complexion.

She had not seen, but she felt the royal hand upon her shoulder, and a shiver ran over her frame.

“What is your desire?” she inquired, listlessly, and with a toss of the head in superior gracefulness. “I am ready to obey you. Would you like the balcony scene from ‘Romeo and Juliet?’ But it is a duo to be done fitly, and there is no Romeo.”

“Nay, nay, no love scenes,” returned the hostess, laughingly. “You would drive them all wild and give me a turn, too, I dare say! No; rather something to freeze the blood or at least *frapper* it! Juliet’s monologue among the tombs; that is all I tolerate this evening.”

“If you will supply me with something white and light, I will take the stage!”

There lay on a divan an ample white China crape shawl, probably in readiness, and Emma having taken it from her patron, waved all aside with a tragedienne’s imperative gesture. In a trice, she stood alone in the center.

The queen gave a synopsis of the tragedy, not as well known in Italy, though the story is Italian and ought to have been familiar to all. As soon as the explanation had brought the spectators to the point where Juliet is left alone after having been informed that she must wed “the County Paris,” Emma took the cue.

A dolorous sigh had attracted all sight upon her. She had already wrapped herself in the shawl, so that none of her dress was unconcealed; in her hands her face was hidden; but gradually she let them slide down and her pale countenance was seen. It was impressed with the utmost misery, and it was impossible to perceive the slightest trace of the stupor that it had previously worn.

Quite otherwise, it showed anguish, forced to its paroxysm; terror arrived at its apogee.

Slowly she turned as it were on herself, as if to follow with her gaze her mother and the nurse, even when lost to sight, and with her arms extended as if to bestow an eternal farewell on the world, and with a voice whose every vibration thrilled the heart, she said:

“Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again.

* * * * *

Romeo, I come!” (She drinks the poison.)

“This do I drink to thee!”

Making the gesture of drinking a draft, she seemed to shrink and collapse, like a molten wax figure, into her own frame, and fell inert on the carpet, where she remained without a stir.

The illusion was so great that, forgetting it was acting, Nelson, more familiar with oceanic tempests than scenic ones, uttered a shout and flew toward the actress, to enwrap her with his hale arm and lift her up as though she were a child.

He was rewarded; for the lady's first act, on reopening her eyes, was to smile upon him. Then only did he understand his blunder, and retired, confused, into a corner.

The queen took his place, and all the ladies thronged around and complimented the would-be *Juliet*.

Never had the magic of art, carried to this point, gone beyond. Though expressed in a foreign tongue, none of the feelings animating the Montague beloved had missed the viewers. By her skill, fiction had become reality. The noble company, quite unaware of the mysteries of English drama, were deeply moved.

After the hush of stupefaction there were enthusiastic eulogies and charming flatteries.

Emma, born for the theatre, but forced by fortune on the political stage, felt sadness after the glow of this tribute, even from the queen. If she had been allowed, she would have fallen into one of her brown studies; but her hostess was afraid that such relapses were not without regrets and remorse. She hurriedly impelled her to fresh conquests, in the intoxication of which she would forget herself.

Taking her by the arm and shaking her as a mesmerized medium to be called out of a trance, she said:

“No dreaming! You know that I do not like reveries. Sing or dance! The night is yours—do either!”

“With your leave, I will chant,” replied the other. “I never play that scene without being left in a trembling, which gives my voice the *tremolo* so liked by you. What shall the piece be?”

“Something odd! What do you say to that fragment found in the Herculaneum ruins, which they attribute to Sappho? The prince royal’s librarian has found a genuine hymn with music of the period which you think goes with it. Put them together with your cunning in harmony, and again astound my company!”

Leaving her *protégée*, she sat on a settee near the Duke of Rocca-Romano, and engaged in conversation with him. Lady Hamilton had disappeared, but soon returned. She had donned a laurel garland, a red mantle, and found, in the Royal Museum, of the treasures unburied under the Vesuvian lava, a Lesbian lyre which may never have been touched since a contemporary of Sappho handled it.

There was an outcry of amaze, for she was hardly recognized. This was not the gentle yet ardent *Juliet*; a flame like Phædra’s shot from her eyes; her rapid step had the virility of the Dianas, and her motion seemed to send off a magnetic current in a perfume. This was a rebellious creature who aspired to be adored by the gods.

In this antique ode the suicidal poetess was supposed to have become enamored of Neptune.

The lyre strings, which were of metal, were swept by the new Sappho, as if to wrench them asunder. Standing by an armchair, over which she towered as though it were a rock crag, she chanted in frenetic strains, with wailings in the minor key:

SAPPHO TO NEPTUNE.

“Oh, to plunge in the whirl of those waters!
To hear of your sirens and tritons the chants!
And to see circling swirls of your daughters,
Who find in broad ocean full room for their dance!

“Now, I peer at you, king, tempest-ruling.
My voice, only human, fades cold on my lips;
Where are words not to you puny—puling?
You who with Leviathan toys as with ships?

“Ah—as white as that foam, upwards seething,
From billows your sheep, in a numberless drove,
I pale—I spring to your arms—cease breathing,
And die on that bosom, as vast as my love!”

This time she let the lyre slide from her grasp and reach the floor, while she succumbed upon the chair and let her head sink to rest on the back, as if floating away.

The queen had turned from her conversation at the second verse, and now flew to the rescue as though her favorite were drifting off toward Neptune's grotto. The rest were puzzled whether they ought to applaud as in a theatre at such an unwonted and classical performance, but, breaking all bounds, the men rushed to the center and were followed by the dames. As for Neptune, that is to say, Nelson, who might have his doubts that Herculaneum had aptly furnished these lines to suit the guest of the evening, he looked on, trembling beyond the others, but even more enamored. The queen, recovering, took

the fallen laurel wreath and placed it on the Briton's brow.

He snatched it off, as though it scorched his temples, and pressed it on his breast. At this juncture the hostess felt a hand venture to grasp her wrist; it was Acton's.

"Come," he whispered, "without an instant being lost! Heaven has worked for us beyond our hopes!"

"Ladies," said the queen, "in my absence—for I am forced to go away a while—it is Lady Hamilton who is ruler here! In lieu of power I leave you genius and beauty."

Turning to Nelson, she whispered in his ear:

"Ask her to dance the Shawl Dance, intended for me; but she will do it at your request."

She followed Acton out, leaving Emma frenzied with pride, and Nelson mad with love.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE LETTER IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER.

The queen had kept step with her confidant; for she was aware that only a grave matter would induce him to drag her away from her company. She wished to question him as soon as they were in the lobby, but he merely remarked:

“For mercy’s sake, come quick! We have no time to lose! In a few minutes you will know all.”

He took a narrow stairway which led to the palace pharmacy. As the royal family have private physicians and surgeons, so they have a special drug store, for there must be no tampering with their medicines or adulterations. The royal doctors kept their drugs here for accidents and illness, and Acton had free access to it.

Guessing the destination, the queen inquired:

“No mishap to the children (of the royal family, of course; in the palace there are no others)?”

“No, lady—be not alarmed! If we have an experiment to make it will be on the vulgar herd—*in anima vili!*”

He opened the door of the store. The queen, entering, cast a rapid glance around. On a bed a man was lying, insensible. She approached with more curiosity than dread.

“Ferrari!” she exclaimed. “Is he dead?” she demanded, in the tone of saying: “Have you killed him?”

“No, just stunned!” was Acton’s reply.

The lady looked questioningly.

“Great goodness, my lady; it is the simplest thing go-

ing! As agreed, I sent my secretary to Capua, to acquaint the posting-master there that the king wished his courier, on the way home, to go to him at Caserta. Ferrari only took the time to change his horse, but, reaching the archway of the palace entrance, something must have pierced the horse's foot, for it threw him in its fall. The rider's head struck the gateway guard-post, and when he was picked up senseless I ordered him to be taken to this temporary hospital and dispensed with the aid of a doctor, as I dabble in such matters myself."

"So, now," said the conspirator, seizing her coadjutor's intention, "we have no need to talk him over or to bribe him. We do not fear his saying anything; as long as he dwells thus while we open and read his message, it is all! But, you know, he must not awake while we are at work."

"I have given him twenty drops of laudanum."

"Is that enough for a courier accustomed to hard drinking?"

"You may be right. I shall dose him with ten drops more."

He induced the unconscious man to swallow some soothing liquor.

"He will not regain his wits?"

"Not enough to know what is going on."

Acton drew the dispatch from Ferrari's vest. He put it to a candle, the heat of which gently softened the wax seal. This was the Emperor of Austria's private seal, Marcus Aurelianus' head. He handed his accomplice the open page and she read as follows:

"Schoenbrunn Manor, this 28th of September, 1798.
 "Most Excellent Brother, Cousin and Uncle, Ally and
 "Confederate, Greeting:

"I reply to your majesty with my own hand, as you wrote me.

“My advice, in accord with the Aulic Council’s, is that we ought not to commence the war with France until we should have assembled all our chances of success. One that I may rely upon is the co-operation of forty thousand Russian troops, led by Field Marshal Suwarrow, whom I intend for the command of my forces. These cannot be here before the end of March. Therefore, temporize, dear brother, cousin and uncle; retard the opening of hostilities as much as you can. I do not believe that France is any more eager for the strife than we are. Profit by her pacific dispositions. Give any good reasons for your fencing, and we will go into the field with all our means, in April.”

Then follows the usual epistolary flourish of emperors, and the name: “FRANCIS.”

“It is opposite to what I expected,” grumbled the lady.

“Not so for me, madam,” rejoined Acton. “I never believed they would rush in. Well, I am awaiting your orders.”

“My orders are founded on my reasons for immediate war. But how in the face of such a letter?”

“Let your majesty shoulder the responsibility of plunging into war, and—did you never hear of reading between the lines of a letter?” Acton asked.

“Surely; but there is nothing between the lines of this one.”

“There is none now, but paper is a passive agent and bears what is put upon it. Now, suppose that there is put upon it, between the lines, what would be the direct contrary of what did appear?”

“Is that possible?” she queried, grasping her associate by the arm.

“With an acid we can take out the body of the letter, leaving salutation and signature, and substitute the recommendation to precipitate hostilities!”

“What you propose is a grave matter, general!”

"That is why I said that only a queen could undertake such a responsibility."

The tempted one reflected shortly, her forehead pleating, her eyebrows meeting, her hands clinching and her gaze hardening.

"It is well. I undertake it," said she. "To the work!"

Acton attended to the sufferer, who had moaned. He felt his pulse and remarked:

"He is good for two hours."

He motioned for his accomplice to hide in the window curtains while he rang for a smoothing iron and a chafing dish, with charcoal lit in it. It was his own man, his secretary, and not a domestic who served him. He bade him wait without. It being his confidential spirit, there was no need for the queen to hide; but the secretary did not show that he noticed a third party when it was not visible on his first look in.

"We shall need him to write the letter," he explained. "The king knows our hands; and it is his trade to write all caligraphy."

Acton set the flat-iron on the heater; took a phial of oxalic acid out of the closet and made a bath of some, which he spread upon the body of the letter with a quill, its feather end trimmed into a brush. The ink turned yellow, faded and disappeared. The amateur chemist, with a damp cloth, carefully removed any excess of acid. The sheet had become perfectly blank; he pressed it between two sheets of plain paper and ironed it all as one would a handkerchief.

"There! While it is drying into shape, let us frame the real reply of the Kaiser!"

It was the queen who dictated, and this is the text:

"Nothing could be more agreeable to me than the letter in which you offer to submit to me in all points.

"News from Rome tells me that the French army be-

fore that city is in the most complete want; the French army in upper Italy is in much the same state.

“Charge yourself with deliverance from the one, my most excellent brother, cousin and uncle, ally and confederate, while I charge the other.

“As soon as I learn that you are at Rome, I will enter into the campaign with one hundred and forty thousand men. You say you have sixty thousand, and I expect forty thousand Russians. This makes more than sufficient for the next peace to be drawn up in Paris!”

“How does that read?” asked the forger.

“The Kaiser will never write so well!” was the reply.

“All that we wait for is to have this set down in the *fac-simile*.”

The partly effaced letter being like new, Acton called in his scribe.

“Dick, just get those words in on the blank in the writing of the first and subsequent standing parts.”

The young man, without asking any questions or showing any astonishment, sat down by the table, took up his pen as if for the most ordinary task, executed the order, and rose to receive further instructions.

Acton scrutinized the forgery by the candlelight. Nothing indicated the treachery committed. He put the letter in its wrapper, warmed the wax over the heat, and smearing the seal spot with some fresh wax, stamped it with a seal, previously copied from the emperor's. He put this paper in the messenger's vest pocket, and examined his patient by the candle rays, attending to the head wound for the first time. It was a bad blow; the cut of the skin was two inches long, but there was no fracture.

“Dick, mark what I say. Send for a doctor at the San Marco Hospital. It will take an hour for him to come. During that time administer to this man about a wineglassful of raw coffee boiled. It will bring him

round, but the doctor will assume that he had ether or smelling salts tried on him, and you will let him so believe. He will dress his wound and, according to its severity, he will be sent on his journey on horseback or in a carriage."

"Yes, your excellency."

"The poor fellow," Acton continued, dwelling on each word, "was picked up after his fall by the servants here, carried into the pharmacy by your direction, and cared for by you and the local practitioner. Consequently, neither the queen nor I saw anything of him. You understand?"

"I do, your excellency."

"Whereupon," went on Acton, turning to his royal principal, "you can let events go on of themselves and without any uneasiness return into the drawing-room, for all will be executed as laid down."

The lady watched the secretary out, and remarked, as the door closed after him: "You have a valuable fellow there, general!"

"He is not so much mine as yours, your majesty, like all under me."

He bowed to let the lady pass him by.

When the queen retook her place, Emma Lyonna, wound in an Indian shawl fringed with gold, amid enthusiastic applause from her audience, was concluding a step by falling on a sofa with the reckless affectation of ease of a *prima ballerina*; no professional dancer had ever lifted her beholders to that seventh heaven; the ring around her when she began had, by insensible attraction, contracted, as if every one wished to feel the whirls of air and perfume which she sent forth. But gasping: "Room, room!" she had dropped on the divan, where the hostess found her.

On seeing the latter the throng parted to let her go up to her favorite.

The clapping and "encores" redoubled, as all knew that a way to the royal favor was to compliment her *protégée*.

"From what I see, it strikes me that Lady Hamilton has kept her promise. And then she has earned her repose; for it is one in the morning, and I thank you for having forgotten that Caserta is several miles out of the town."

This was plainly a starting signal. All the entertainments of the evening were praised in one burst of admiration; the hostess gave her hand to be kissed by her nearest friends, but retained Nelson and his two companions.

She called the Marchioness of San Clemente to her, and said:

"My dear Elena, your day of service would be in a day—that is, it being morning, to-morrow—but the Countess San Marco, having some business next week to do, has begged to take your day now, to have a holiday then. So you have the day off!"

"Oh, I thank your majesty—I may profit by this to go down to our country seat with my lord!"

"Good! That is exemplary!"

She bowed to the lady of honor, who, being the last, courtesied and departed. Her mistress was alone with Acton, Lady Hamilton, and Nelson and his brother officers.

"My dear lord," she said to the admiral, "I may conjecture that in a couple of days the king will receive news from Vienna, which will suit your ideas on the crisis, for I am supposing that you are of the opinion that the sooner we are in active warfare, the better?"

"I am not merely of the opinion, but if it be adopted I shall be ready to support it, with the English fleet helping," replied Nelson.

"Good; but that is not what I detained you to say.

The king, I am aware, has trust in you. However favorable to war may be the Vienna news due, he may still waver. But a note from your lordship, in the same tone as the emperor's, would remove his irresolution."

"Should such a letter be addressed to the king?"

"Why, no! I know my august spouse. He is by no means disposed to following advice directly given. I should like it better if it came from a letter confidentially addressed to Lady Hamilton. Ah! write collectively to her and Sir William! Happy idea! To her as my best friend—to Sir William as the king's best friend. This double shot will tell more surely!"

"Your majesty knows that I am neither diplomatist nor politician," was the seaman's response. "My letter would be a blunt man's writing, straight, though with the left hand, frank and bluff, what I think, and nothing shorter!"

"It is all I beg, admiral. Besides, as you will return to town with the captain-general, you can talk it over. Come to dinner, as there will be something to discuss, I promise! We will have Baron Mack to table, too, so that you may concert something."

The Englishman bowed.

"It will be quite a family party!" pursued the hostess. "Sir William and his lady will be there. I would return to town to-night, only my poor Emma is too tired out. Of course, you saw, admiral," proceeded the lady, lowering her voice, "that it was for you, and you alone, that she said, and sang and did all those splendid acts which you saw and heard. Shakespeare to those Italians! Pearls, indeed, before porkers! Ha, ha!" She added, in a still lower key: "She would have stubbornly held me off, but I assured her that the English piece would ravish you! All her native 'strong-headedness'—that's a word of hers—fell before that plea."

“Oh, my lady, to talk like that!” protested the blushing Emma.

“Do not turn scarlet, but give your hand to our noble hero! I would willingly give him mine, but I am sure he prefers yours, and, besides, these gentlemen are waiting for mine.”

She held out both her hands to the English officers, while their superior, seizing Emma's with more passion than court etiquette permitted, carried it to his lips.

“Is that true, what the queen says,” he demanded in an undertone, “that it was for me that you consented to play and sing and dance—that dance which made me furious with jealousy?”

The charmer looked at him as well she knew how to look at him whom she wished to deprive wholly of reason; and with a tone more enthralling than was her gaze, she answered, in their tongue, become more melodious than Italian itself:

“What an ungrateful dog you are to ask that!”

A footman announced that the captain-general's carriage stopped the way.

Acton looked at the others, who bowed.

“Any particular orders?” inquired Acton, covertly, of the queen.

“Yes, indeed! At nine to-night, the three state inquisitions to be in the dark chamber!”

The confidant retired with his companions, who had passed over the sill, and the queen, throwing her arms around Emma with the exaggeration she infused into all her actions, exclaimed:

“What bores those men are! They never let us poor women have five minutes for ourselves!”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE KING ENACTS PILATE.

It was the beginning of October, and the king was sitting in his cabinet, still without intelligence from Vienna. He was delighted by any interruption to his dullness and particularly so when the interruption was due to his counselor, Cardinal Ruffo, being announced.

"Well, my most eminent," he cried out. "No news! Ferrari, contrary to his wont, is some hours behind. So I sent for you to beguile the time, thinking, like a selfish devil, that I might kill time with you while time will kill me by myself."

"You were quite right, sire. Crossing the yard, I spied a horse led to the stable, streaming with sweat, and saw the rider, too, supported between two. This man painfully climbed up the stairs this way. By his riding boots, leather breeches and 'frogged' jacket, I believed I identified the poor courier we expect. Some mishap has befallen him."

A lackey appeared at the door.

"Sire," he said, "the messenger, Antonio Ferrari, has arrived, and waits in your study for your majesty to receive his dispatches."

Without inquiring whether the bearer of the expected reply was hurt or not, Ferdinando swiftly went up the back stairs and was installed in his study, with Ruffo.

Ferrari, lame with his hurt, still upheld between two servants, had just reached the sill; he was colorless and his head was bound with a blood-soaked bandage. On perceiving his master, as if that sight restored his powers,

Ferrari pushed aloof the sustainers and took three forward steps. While the helpers retired and shut the door after them, he drew the message out of the inner pocket with his right hand, while he saluted the monarch with the other.

“Good!” exclaimed the king, taking the letter and speaking thus by way of thanks, “my jolterhead of a rough rider has run so as to be ready to drop!”

“Sire,” remonstrated the courier, “your majesty knows well that there is not a horse in your kingdom able to throw me fair; but the nag tripped on something and balked at the many carriages blocking my way in, and when a steed goes down, a good rider goes down with it.”

“Where were there many carriages blocking your way?”

“Caserta Manor gateway, sire.”

“What plague took you into Caserta?”

“The Capua posting-master told me you were there.”

“So I was; but I quitted it at seven in the evening,” grumbled the king.

The cardinal noticed that the courier was pale and reeling.

“Sire, if this questioning is to go on, pray let the man have a seat, or he will fall ill.”

“Oh, very well. Take a chair, you dolt!”

The prelate rolled an armchair to the messenger, and in full time, for he would have fallen his length on the floor; he dropped into the chair, as it was. The other eyed this with amazement at so much kindness being shown to a mere servant, and, taking the cardinal aside, said:

“Do you mark that he talks of Caserta? Caserta, mind! How did this happen?”

“The queen was giving an evening party,” replied the

luckless one. "The courtyard was crammed with vehicles; the horse made a slip, and I was hurled against a wheel guard."

"Humph!" muttered the king, turning the missive over and over again in his hands as if flinching from opening it. "Is this from the emperor?"

"Straight, sire; I was delayed a couple of hours, as the emperor was at his country place."

"Let us see what my nephew has to say, eminence——"

"If you will allow me to give this man a glass of water and lend him this bottle of ammonia, unless your majesty will approve of his being put to bed. In that case I will call for the domestic to do it?"

"No, no! I may want to question him."

There was a scratching at the door and a series of yelps. Jupiter had discovered that his trainer was home and he wanted to welcome his friend, for Ferdinando was only his master. Ferrari, recognizing his pet, also, mechanically held out his hand to the door.

"Will you stop your noise?" thundered Ferdinando, stamping.

Ferrari let his hand fall.

"Sire," risked Ruffo, "will you not allow the two friends to greet each other as they said good-by on parting?"

Reckoning that the dog's presence would do as much good as salts or water, the prelate took advantage of the king being enrapt in his letter, of which he had broken the seal, to open the door to Jupiter. As if guessing that he owed the favor to a distraction, he crawled around the king as far as possible, to get to Ferrari, and then sneaked to the back of his chair, where he twisted his head around so as to lick his pendant hand surreptitiously.

The cardinal was called to read the letter, and the king turned to the bearer.

“It was the emperor himself who wrote that?”

“I do not know that, but he handed it to me.”

“Nobody has handled it since?”

“I’ll take my oath!”

“It has not left your possession, eh?”

“It was in my pocket when I was stunned, and all right when I came around.”

“You were stunned, though?”

“I could not help that, as the shock was violent.”

“What was done to you, then?”

“I was carried into the little ’potecary shop they have at the Manor. Master Richard took care of that and me.”

“I do not know any Master Richard in my place—who is he?”

“Lord Acton’s secretary, whom he calls ‘Dick’—that is, short for Richard, though I do not see how.”

“Nor I. But who dressed your wound?”

“A doctor from the nearest hospital, for you had your medical attendants with you. I saw nobody but him and Richard.”

Ruffo came over.

“The letter is formal,” he remarked. “The news the emperor had from Rome tallies with ours. He says that if your majesty will tackle General Championnet’s army he will do the same with General Joubert’s.”

“Yes, and see! He adds that as soon as I reach Rome he will cross the frontier with a hundred and forty thousand men.”

“The figure is positive.”

“The body of the letter is not in Francis’ hand!” observed Ferdinando, distrustfully.

“No? Oh, some secretary’s, as usual! But the salutation and signature are his. His majesty may easily have a trustworthy secretary to whom he may intrust this secret.”

Ferdinando took the letter again and fumbled with it.

"Tush! The seal is the right one—I would know that head of Mark Antony anywhere."

"Marcus Aurelianus, your majesty means."

"Are they not much the same?"

"Not so much," and the priest smiled; "but that is not the point. The writing is the Kaiser's as far as it goes, and the signature; in all conscience, you can ask no more. Any questions for the bearer?"

"No; let him be cared for." He turned aside.

"And men go and get killed for kings!" commented the cardinal, going over to ring the bell which brought a footman.

"Let us have the two lusty fellows in who helped Ferrari," said he.

"Thank your eminency, but I have come around and I can get to my room by myself."

Ferrari indeed scrambled to the upright, bowed to the king and staggered over to the entrance, followed by Jupiter. But the king called the dog, which only partially obeyed, for it went as far as the door, but there, stopping with a whimper, turned and slunk under the king's table.

"What is this dunce hanging about here for?" demanded the king, regarding the lingering footman.

"Please, your majesty," returned the man with a shiver; "it's his excellency, Sir William Hamilton, who asks to know if your majesty will give him a hearing."

"Of course! You know I receive him at any time."

"Should I be off?" inquired the cardinal, seeing the man go.

"Not at all. Stay, for the solemnity of this request indicates an official stamp, and I may be glad to have your eminence by to confer on the audience."

The English ambassador was announced.

“Mum!” whispered the monarch, showing the imperial letter before hiding it in his fob.

The private counselor nodded as much as to say that the caution was useless.

Hamilton came in and bowed to the king and his companion.

“Welcome, Sir William! All the more welcome, as I thought you were out at Caserta.”

“I was, sire; but the queen did us the honor, my lady and me, to bring us in, in her own carriage.”

“Ah, the queen’s come back?”

“Yes, sire.”

“Been here long?”

“Just arrived; and having a communication to make to your majesty——”

Ferdinando winked to his ecclesiastical ally.

“Secret?” he asked.

“It depends,” was the diplomatic response.

“I presume it hinges on this war?” queried the king.

“Precisely, it does concern this war.”

“In that case you may disclose before his eminence. It is the very topic we were discussing when you were announced.”

Sir William and the rival statesman bowed, a thing they never did when they could avoid it.

“Well,” resumed Hamilton, “Lord Nelson was at the party last night, and as it broke up he handed my lady and myself a letter which I feel bound to impart to your majesty.”

“In English, I judge?”

“Lord Nelson has no other tongue, but I can translate it into Italian if desired.

“We listen!” And the king made a sign of attention to Ruffo to doubly justify the plural.

The admiral pleaded that the long interest of the Ham-

iltons in the royal family induced him to write to them. He had but a brief time to study the situation, but it was clear that the Sicilians detested the French and their doctrines as heartily as they loved the rulers and their principles. He regretted that dangers were allowed to accumulate through the policy of delay. He hoped that General Mack's arrival would lead to the government sending the army forward.

However, if disaster unfortunately did befall, he offered his ships to embark the royal family and their treasures.

But he hoped that the inspiring words of William Pitt would enter the Neapolitan ministers' heads, and that they would see that the boldest steps were the surest.

"That is a letter to be meditated upon," observed the sovereign. Then he muttered to Ruffo: "They seem all in one cry!"

"And a very good one!" was his reply.

"And do you sincerely advise this war, cardinal?"

"I believe that if the emperor keeps his promise, and if Nelson strictly guards our coasts, it would be better for us to attack and defeat the French than have them surprise and defeat us."

"You want war? Nelson wants war?" asked the king of the Englishman.

"At least he counsels it with the warmth of sincere and unalterable devotedness."

"And you, too, want it?" inquired the monarch, directly.

"As envoy of England, I answer that in saying so I second my gracious sovereign's desires."

"Cardinal," pursued the king, pointing to his toilet table, equipped with a wash hand-basin, and a silver pipe with faucet for running water, "do me the pleasure to fill that bowl and let me have it at hand."

The arch-priest obeyed without any observation and

presented the filled basin to the requirer. He had rolled up his sleeves and, with a good deal of pother, laved and rubbed his hands in a kind of fury.

“Does Sir William see what I am doing?” he asked.

“I see, but I do not see the explanation perfectly.”

“Well, here you have the explanation: Like Pontius Pilate, I wash my hands of it!”

CHAPTER XV.

A NEPHEW IN THE HAND.

The queen's own inquisitors, whose names remain execrated in Naples, and ought to be bracketed with Jeffries for posterity, were the Prince of Castelcicala, Guidobaldi and Vanni.

The prince, highest in rank and consequently the lowest in degradation, was ambassador at London when the queen called him home, in her need of a great name to cover her private vengeance. He understood that there was more to gain by demeaning himself than by noble conduct and calculated all that might accrue to one who served royal hatred. From peer he became spy, and from ambassador, executioner.

Guidobaldi had neither risen nor descended by his office; iniquitous judge and prevaricating magistrate, he remained the same wretch; only he operated on a larger scale.

But dreaded and abhorred as were Castelcicala and Judge Guidobaldi, they were less dreaded and detested than Fiscal Proctor Vanni.

There is no comparison for him in the human kind; he hunted down his prey like a police officer; after spying to make up a case against him, he tried him, to doom him. He was wolf and hyena, morally and bodily. Vanni was not content with lodging the accused in horrid prisons, but pressed on after more to encage. If the parents sought his release, that entreaty doubled the captive's woes. If they appealed to the ruler, it was not so much a useless act as dangerous, since then he appealed to the

queen, and she never pardoned if her husband did, sometimes.

Once Vanni was appointed inquisitor, he cried out on the housetops that all conspirators must be imprisoned or he would not answer for the safety of the royal family. Whenever he saw the queen, he was on the brink of a catastrophe—the eve of a massacre in the palace.

As in three years of this terror the stuffed prisons revealed no guilt, Vanni had recourse to torture to obtain some result. Not ordinary torture, as if any torment were ordinary; but to use his own words, accompanied with one of those laughs which twisted his mouth, when he felt he would have his own way:

“Such pangs as a corpse might feel!”

The other judges revolted at this, and this unanimity was the deliverance of the prisoners and Vanni's downfall. But on the dissolution of the *junta*, Vanni dropped into the fiscal proctor's chair.

The queen held out her hand to him and created him a marquis. Out of the three rejected by the bench and the public, she constituted a secret tribunal, her own private judgment seat, trying in solitude, striking in the dark, but with the poisoned dagger rather than the headsman's sword.

We have seen how the retriever, Pasquale, among these hounds stuck at nothing. We shall look on at Guidobaldi, Castelcicala and Vanni at work.

The three inquisitors sat at the table in the dark chamber, gloomy and restless, illumined by the bronze lamp, but the shade fell on their faces, so that they could not be recognized from the other end of the table, even if their presence were known.

The queen's summons perturbed them; what if a cleverer spy than they had discovered a well-based plot?

Without confiding in one another, they were revolving this in their mind, anxiously awaiting for the door from the royal apartments to be opened, when their mistress appeared.

From time to time they had cast quick and moody glances into the darkest corner where Pasquale was standing. Perhaps he stood closer than they in the queen's confidence. But though they gave him orders, they durst not question him. His presence showed that it was a portentous matter.

Even in their eyes, Di Simone was more dreadful than Master Donato, the executioner. That was the secret and mysterious one; the one carried out the law, the other the queen's grudges.

If the queen's good will ceased to hold Castelcicala and company as her faithful ones, still she could not pass them over to the law, as they knew too much; but she could point them out to Pasquale with the gesture which signifies cutting a throat. All they knew and might say would not only fail to save them, but would enhance the doom. A stab scientifically applied between the sixth and seventh left rib—all was spoken. The ruinous secrets would die with the man whose last sigh would be to the passer-by, at a few steps off, just a puff of wind, a trifle more sad than the others.

At the last vibration of nine o'clock from the clock which had startled Carolina on her lonely visit, she appeared.

The three state inquisitors rose like one man and advanced, saluting her. She carried divers objects under a red shawl, worn more like a mantle. Pasquale did not stir; his rigid outline remained glued against the wall like a tapestry figure.

The queen spoke without giving time for the triumvirate to utter their homage.

“This time, Signor Vanni,” she said, “it is not you who hold the clew or are following the track of a conspiracy, but I. Apter than you who arrest the culprits without having the evidence to convict them by, I bring the fatal proof and the means to find the guilty.”

“Yet we do not fail in zeal!” ventured the slighted judge.

“No; for those you arraign say you have too much of it!”

“That can never be when your majesty is in question!” protested the prince.

“Never!” echoed Guidobaldi.

Approaching the board, the lady opened her shawl so as to remove from under it a brace of pistols and a letter red stained. They watched her do this with the highest astonishment.

“Be seated, gentlemen,” said she. “Marquis Vanni, take up the pen and write the instructions I shall give you.”

The judges being seated and she standing, wrapped in her purple shawl like a Roman empress, she dictated the following words:

“On the night of the twenty-second of September last, there was a meeting of patriots, as they style themselves, in the ruins called Queen Joanna’s palace. They were awaiting intelligence from the French headquarters, which is sufficiently treasonable proceedings, I take it. This messenger came by boat, and after their conference he was brought into the town and left, with his destination the residence of the French Embassy. On his lonely way he was struck down——”

“Struck down!” was the triple outcry.

"You may call it murdered, if you please."

"By whom?" demanded Vanni.

"That is none of your business," said the queen, in a chilling voice. "We have no reason to pursue the assassins."

Vanni saw that he was off the route, and was hushed.

"Before falling, this messenger from the French used a sword which is in that closet yonder and these firearms which you see, on his assailants and to fair purpose. The sword, you may see for yourselves, is of French make. These pistols, though, come out of the royal armory; the mark of 'C.' is presumably that of the owner's family."

Not a breath interrupted the speaker; they might be marble.

"I tell you the messenger wore a French army regulation sword and he probably wore a French army uniform when he landed, but he was reclothed by his friends, our unfaithful subjects. In particular, his outer coat was a stylish one, in the pocket of which was forgotten a love letter."

"This love letter is signed merely with an 'E.," commented Castalcicala, who had looked at the paper.

"It is written by the Marchioness of San Clemente, one of my ladies," went on the royal denunciatrix with a singular smile, seeing a grim joke in Elena being a "lady of honor." "And the addressee is a Caracciolo. Now, listen!"

The three leaned and stretched over the board, so that their heads came within the circle of light suddenly.

"I have given my lady a day free, so that it is likely she will meet her loving Caracciolo to-morrow. Do you understand what should ensue, gentlemen?"

Their eyes dwelt on her still so inquiringly that she felt that she was not followed.

"It is simple, though!" she sneered. "Pasquale shall attend the rendezvous, which will probably be at a strange house, for a San Clemente would not make such trysts in her own mansion, lady of honor that she is. Pasquale then will fall on the lover——"

"Slay a Caracciolo!" exclaimed the prince with all his aristocratic blood curdling. "Arrest him without doing him any harm. Di Simone's fellows will convey him to St. Elmo Castle, charging the governor to bestow him in the surest cell. If he consents to name his accomplices, who carry on correspondence with the French commander, all will go smoothly. If he refuses, that will fall into your province, Signor Vanni. You would be a stupid tribunal if you cannot extract evidence, and you may torture him as one may a cadaver. Is this clear, gentlemen? Am I not a good lime-hound when I meddle with unearthing conspirators?"

"There is the stamp of genius in all the queen does!" chirped Vanni. "Any further orders?"

"None. Put the pieces of evidence together, and the Lord preserve ye!"

The queen waved them to go out and, saluting low, they left her alone with the agent of their decrees. As the door closed, she beckoned him and he came forth with the width of the table only between them. She flung a purse, weighty with coin, on the board.

"Have you heard?" she familiarly asked.

"Yes, majesty!" the police officer replied, snatching up the reward, and thanking with a bow."

"At this hour to-morrow report to me here."

On the morrow she learned that the lover of Elena, Marchioness San Clemente, was Nicolini Caracciolo, and, arrested quietly, he had been as quietly placed in St. Elmo fort and locked up.

“Ah!” she cried, exultantly, “the brother of the Duke of Bocca Romana, and nephew of the admiral. Oh, if we have the good luck to find the admiral compromised in this conspiracy with the Jacobins abroad and especially the Jacobins at home!”

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BACKWARD JOURNEY.

As we have no intention of making ourselves the historian of the campaign to Rome, we will let a few lines from history join our narration.

A fortnight after the arrest of the young Caracciolo and the other events related, on one of those fine autumn days which to the Neapolitans are what summer days are to other climes, the royal army was reviewed before it went into camp under the orders of General Mack and the native officers, representing the most illustrious houses. Shouts of "Our king forever!" "Long live Nelson!" "Brava, England!" and "Death to the French!" roared like gusts of gathering tempest.

Ferdinando made a speech, for the first time addressing the mob directly, telling of his love for them, vaunting his race, appealing to their courage and intrusting his wife and family to them.

Since the battle of Velletri, in 1744, assuring the throne to Carlo III., the Naples people had heard no great guns fired in earnest, and they believed they were the greatest warriors in creation.

So Ferdinando became the idol of the throng.

At the San Germano camp, whence the true departure would take place, the queen and the inseparable Lady Hamilton, both wearing riding habits, and mounted on fiery steeds to have their equestrian skill admired, passed the review of the first army corps. With all means of inspiring animation—double pay, wine free, fine talk and

warm smiles—the court quitted the soldiery with augury of victory.

At the last stage of the grand advance, the French receding much like a retreat, Mack left the king, not to draw him into the combat, and soon sent a letter stating that he had the foe at his mercy and would immediately expel him from the states of Church and Rome.

At Corneto, the king could hear cannon, and he said: “That is Mack, crushing Championnet. The dancing has begun!”

So he went to the playhouse, offering an attraction of his own to the audience. He had it trumpeted that between the opera and the ballet he would eat macaroni as he did on gala occasions at Naples. This promise crammed the house.

The king listened to the opera heedlessly, more attentive to the expected arrival of couriers from his general to tell him of the progress of the undoubted victory.

When his turn came for his little interlude, he stepped to the front of his box. With his pantomime, like a Neapolitan, he signified that he was going to show them, how Punch (Pulcinello) eats macaroni by the mile. The Romans received this mimic introduction with some coolness; but the confident, real glutton made a grin and nod to signify: “You do not know what you are going to see; but when you shall have seen, you will wish yourselves joy!”

He turned to the Duke of Ascoli and muttered: “There is no opposition clique in the house, is there?”

“If one, it will be an enemy won over to your side,” replied the astute courtier.

So the king thanked his flatterer with a smile, took a platter of macaroni in one hand and, standing well forward, mixed the golden tomato sauce and paste, actually with his hand, and the scientific blend attained, opened an

immeasurable mouth, into which, still unassisted by spoon or fork, he flung a cascade of macaroni.

At sight, the Romans, though grave and having preserved a high notion of royal dignity, burst into laughter. This was no longer a ruler of the state, but the buffoon Osco Pulcinello. Encouraged by this merriment, which he took for applause, the gourmand had already gulped down a portion of the mess and was preparing to engulf the rest, when the stage-box door opened with a crash, not at all according to etiquette, so that he spun around, his jaws open and his dripping hand held up. He wished to glare at the blunderer who allowed himself to disturb him in so important a display.

It was General Mack in person.

He was ghostly white, covered with dust, and frightened. Without asking the news he brought, the king let the dish fall and wiped his fingers on his handkerchief.

“Have the French——?”

“They have!”

Both understood.

In plain words, the Neapolitans had met the French. The latter had beaten Mack, with a fraction of his forces in number. The Italians lost three thousand dead, as many wounded, five thousand prisoners; and with eight thousand muskets and thirty pieces of cannon, the military chest was the Republican's prize—two wagonloads of gold. The English loan paid the French arrears in their woe-begone army!

The king backed into the retiring-room attached to the box and shut himself in with his invincible strategist.

“Sire,” stammered the latter, “I left the battlefield and the army to come myself to acquaint your majesty that there is not a moment to be lost in quitting Rome!”

“Quit Rome?”

“Or else the French will outstrip us in the Abruzzi passes.”

“The French outspeed us to the Passes? San Gennaro have mercy! Ascoli!”

The duke came in.

“Let all the court keep their places to the end of the spectacle, mind! It is urgent that they should be seen, so nothing askew should be suspected. But, you, come along with me.”

The order was transmitted to the officials, who were fretting about what had happened, though far from suspecting the real occurrence, and the duke rejoined his master, already in the corridor, faltering:

“Ascoli! Ascoli! Why don’t you hurry, you fool! Did you not hear the unconquerable General Mack say that there is no time to spare or those French beauties will be ahead of us at Sora?”

The Austrian Bombastes had grounds for fearing the rapidity of the French army. On the night of their victory they pushed on to prevent the fugitives from getting through the gap in the Abruzzi Mountains.

Meanwhile, the king had bundled the duke and the general into his carriage at the theatre door and drove off. He remembered that the Jacobins had vowed that if they caught him, crowned as was his head, they would hang him at the first lamp-post, an end more plebeian than his cousin Louis of France’s, who had only been beheaded by the guillotine, emblem of equality, before death.

At the Farnese palace, a courier was seeking the king. He bore a dispatch from the Emperor of Austria. The king opened it on the spot and read: “Let me felicitate you on the success of your army and your triumphal entrance into Rome!”

The king read no further, but stuffed the paper in his bosom.

"That is what they call coming in at the nick!" muttered he; but he gave the bearer a gold piece.

The grinning man asked if he would have to bear back any answer.

"Certainly, but I have no time to write. Have I, Baron Mack?"

The hero of war, on maps, hung his head.

"Never mind, I have a good memory," remarked the messenger.

"Then, if you are sure of carrying my words to your august master without changing a syllable, say to him that his cousin, brother, uncle, godfather and the rest of the titles, King Ferdinando, to wit, is an ASS!"

The royal courier drew back aghast.

"Don't change a syllable and you will repeat one of the greatest truths that ever crossed your lips!"

The rider retired stupor-stricken.

Mack had meditated during this episode. He said that as the Roman campaign might not be safe for a carriage which, besides, would have to stick to the roads, it would be better to take the saddle. The king was a good rider. They need go only as far as Albano, where they could have a post-chaise.

As the monarch was in silk stockings, they had to find riding-boots and a horseman's cloak for him.

At Ripetta town-end, they saw a frantic mob jamming up the people's gate.

The king stopped Mack's horse by seizing the reins.

"Hello, general," said he. "What is all that rush?"

"If thirty miles could be run in five hours, I should say that they were your majesty's soldiers on the run!"

"That is just what they are! I know my hares! When they are running out of battle they have wings to their heels!"

Muffling his mantle over his eyes, the sovereign passed

through his unsuspecting warriors. At San Giovanni gate, where the king had been presented with the city keys with great pomp a few days previously, Mack left him to go on to Albano, while he hastened back to his forces.

"Lord preserve your majesty!" were his parting words.

"And Old Nick fly away with you, you imbecile;" muttered the other, burying the spurs in his horse.

It will be observed that, since the state council, the potentate had not altered his opinion of the illustrious planner of campaigns.

All along this doleful ride, the fugitive was in a panic. He kept asking Ascoli if he did not see this or that terror, and with his ruling cynicism, added:

"I told Mack that I was not sure about my bravery. Well, I am sure now; I am not brave!"

At Albano the posting-house was shut up; but the duke pronounced the magic words which open every door: "You will be well paid!" The result was that they were offered, not all they desired, but all the host could give.

The cab would have to do, but the room for which the king asked was still an easier matter.

"I wonder that your majesty is wasting so much time," ventured Ascoli, who did not desire rests.

"Did you not hear that the Jacobins threaten to hang me if they seize me? Well, to disappoint them in that intention, which would make them lose any prospect of a lot in paradise which they have not forfeited, let us shift clothes."

"So if they overtake us, they will hang me in your coat?"

"You hit it! While they think they are handling the king, they will not bother about me, his hanger-on! If you run a danger, well, you still will have saved your monarch,"

“The danger is not the point—it is to serve your majesty.”

He stripped off his coat. Though so profoundly selfish, the other was touched by this devotedness; he clapped his friend on the shoulder and then, taking off his garments as far as necessary, they played the valet to each other.

“Now for the trimmings,” said the king, jocularly.

And he took off his decorations and placed them on the other, like the most expert court costumer.

“You are entitled to the Maria Theresa Order, are you not?”

“I have not that honor.”

“I will remind my brother of Austria to give you the collar. Remind me if I should forget it—I do miss such things!”

“Yes, your majesty is forgetful!” remarked the duke, sharply.

“Don’t throw my faults up to me at this time! You belong to the St. Januarius Order, of course?”

“Not yet.”

“That’s a shame! I give it to you in giving you my badge herewith! You have well won it! Oh, how well you look in that coat! It might be made for you!”

“But the badge is set in diamonds—worth some six thousand ducats!”

“I would it would fetch ten, now! But is it not droll? I am much at ease in your coat—the other stifled me. Ah!”

They heard steps coming. The king threw his cloak on the other’s shoulders.

The postmaster entered to announce the readiness of the vehicle. He was astonished at the transformation in the travelers, and observed the stouter man arranging the traveling cloak about the second.

"His excellency," said the king, as if proud of his master or companion, "does not like any bother on the road. So he wishes to pay all expenses beforehand."

"Nothing goes better than that," replied the host. "Eight stages, two relays, fourteen ducats in all. How much does your excellencies give the postboys?"

"A ducat, if they keep up the pace. But you do not catch old travelers paying the postboys in advance, since then they do not ride steady."

"If you will stand them a ducat drink money, your excellency will go as if they conducted the king!"

"Exactly, I would like his excellency to go as if the king!"

"Then, why not have an extra rider go ahead to keep the road clear and get the change of horses in time?"

"Do so!" said Ferdinand. "His excellency did not think of that. A ducat for the forerunner, half for the horse's bait—four more—eighteen in all—let us say, a round twenty! Any difference is for the trouble we give you!"

The speaker, having in fumbling in the duke's pocket found a purse, paid with the other's coin, which enhanced his mirth.

About to step into the post-carriage, Ascoli forgot himself, or rather remembered himself, so far as to want to let his superior precede; but the latter took off his hat to him, and, bowing, said:

"Never such bemeanment! After your excellency! And take the right-hand seat, for it is quite enough honor that I should ride in the same coach!" and he took the second place.

With the seducing promise that the postboys would be doubly paid, the cab went off at full speed, passing some straggling shadows which moved along the roadside with startling velocity. The king wished to know their nature.

“My lord,” was the rider’s reply, “it appears that there has been some fighting between the French and the Neapolitans, and, the latter getting the worst of it, they are hurrying home to tell their wives!”

“Faith, I hoped we had the start,” remarked the monarch to the duke. “But we are distanced. It is humiliating. What legs those rogues must have! Six francs more drink money if you get ahead of them.”

CHAPTER XVII.

ALL IS LOST—PLUS HONOR.

While the news kept arriving that the French were retreating and the Neapolitans following them up, all was serene or rather gay at Naples.

In fact, a letter on the eve of the crisis had arrived for the queen from her lord's hand, which was read at one of her grand suppers.

After having seen how he wrote under the dictation of Cardinal Ruffo, we may as well see how he wrote to a queen with his own hand.

“MY DEAREST SPOUSE :

“I have been out hunting this morning at Corneto, where they laid bare some ancient tombs that would have delighted Sir William Hamilton, but I left the wiseacres to rummage among the old bones and went to the chase.

“It was more wearying than mine at Persano, and there was less game. I killed only three wild boars, one of which retaliated by disemboweling three of my best hounds. At the same time, we heard cannon toward Civita Castellana, being Mack pounding the French just where he said he would pitch into them. This, you see, does great honor to his strategical skill. I dare say the French are replying, but they have only eight thousand men against our forty thousand, so that it is in our favor.

“I am writing to you, my dearest spouse, as the dinner is not quite ready and I am wolfishly hungry—but I utilize the half hour in agreeably writing to you.

“After dinner, I am going to the play, to hear the ‘Secret Marriage,’ and see a ballet composed in mine honor. It is called ‘Alexander the Great Entering Babylon.’ As you are Learning enthroned, I need not point out there is a delicate hint at me in this allusion. If it is as good

as they tell me, I will have the composer take it to the San Carlo and produce it there for your benefit.

“This evening I expect news of the decisive victory, with which I shall send a courier on the instant.

“No more to say but that I hope you and the family are enjoying as good health as mine, and may Heaven keep you.
FERDINANDO B.”

The important part of the missive disappeared under the secondary; there was more about sticking boars than killing the French; but “the state is I!” is the motto of all absolute monarchies.

But through the selfish gloss, the royal message produced the effect the queen anticipated, and no one was bold enough among the opposition not to share the lady’s hopes as to the result of the battle.

The queen’s supper was in her own apartments. Her guests were Hamilton and his lady, Nelson, Prince Castelcicala, Lord Acton, who scented reverses and was more attentive to the queen than ever, as he felt that she would be his sole support.

What enlivened the company was the belief that the cannonade presaged the defeat of the foe; if any did not believe the king’s forecast, they assumed the laugh like the others.

Alone, suffused with the glow from Emma Lyonna’s countenance, still Lord Nelson appeared dull. He did not join in the chorus of hope which caressed the queen’s pride and hate. This preoccupation finally was noticed by the hostess and, as she could not ascribe it to Emma’s rigor, she inquired into the cause of this absence of mind and constraint.

“Though my frankness may displease your majesty,” the Englishman replied, “I am going to make answer like a plain mariner. I am uneasy. I always am so when I hear the guns speaking.”

“Your lordship forgets on what side the guns are firing,” retorted Carolina.

“No; it is because the royal letter lets us know on what side is the firing! If any mishap befalls your majesty, my uneasiness will change to remorse.”

“Why did you write to me urging war, then?”

“Because it was affirmed to me that the Emperor of Austria would take the field at the same time as we did.”

“How do you know that he has not done so, or is doing so?”

“If so we should have heard it. A German kaiser does not march with his guard of two hundred thousand men without the earth quaking under them a little. If he has not started, he cannot very well do so before April.”

“In any case, ought we to despair?”

“I do not think of despairing; but I fear that the Neapolitan army is not strong enough to withstand the rush of the French.”

“Do you imagine that ten thousand French under Championnet can overcome sixty thousand Neapolitans commanded by General Mack, famed as the premier strategist of Europe?”

“I only say that the upshot of any battle is doubtful, and that the fate of Naples depends on this one being decided, and that if Mack is unfortunately defeated, the French will be here in a fortnight.”

“My lord,” reproached the queen, “do you so little esteem our soldiers that you think they cannot vanquish these Jacobins six to one, when you with your Englishmen would want no odds to attack them?”

“At sea, lady, for the sea is the Briton’s element. Born on an island is the same as on a moored ship. On sea, I say it boldly, an Englishman can whip two Frenchmen; but it is another matter on land. What the English are on the water, the French are on land. Lord knows I hate

the French and have vowed a war of extermination upon them, and I would all the lot of them were aboard one ship and I could lay my poor *Vanguard*, battered as she is, alongside that ship. But because one don't like a foe, it is no reason to underrate. A man can hate without despising. If I scorned the French I should not stoop to hate them."

"Oh, my good lord," interrupted Emma, with one of her peculiar shakes of the head, charming and full of grace, "do not croak like the bird of ill omen. The French will be beaten by General Mack on land as they were by Lord Nelson on the sea. Hark!"

They heard the clacking of a whip as when a rider wishes to herald that he is bringing news—probably good. But what checked the rising spirits of the hearers, was that the sound was accompanied by the rumbling of carriage wheels. Indeed, the vehicle was brought to a stop under the palace gateway.

Suddenly, Acton, who had taken a few forward steps, fell backwards into the room, like a man struck by some impossible sight.

"The king!" he gasped. "What does this mean?"

It was truly the king, who came in almost instantly, followed by the Duke of Ascoli. Once he had reached his own grounds and had no more to fear, he had taken his station. He was in a droll mood; spite inspired by his defeat struggled in him with delight at having escaped the peril, and he felt all that impulse to "poke fun" which was natural to him.

"Yar-r-rh!" snarled he, rubbing his hands to warm them without paying any attention to those present. "This is a good deal snugger than on the road! What do you think, Ascoli?"

The guests overwhelmed him with their salutations.

"Good-evening, good-evening—I am glad to see the

table set. Since we left Rome, we have not found a piece of meat we could drive a tooth into. Cheese and bread off the palm of the hand was all that came under the hand, ha, ha! Very restorative! What scurvy roadside houses my kingdom has, and how I pity the poor travelers who have to take pot-luck in such hovels! To table, Ascoli, to table—I am mad with hunger!”

He sat at table without looking to see if he crowded any one out or not, and made the duke sit beside him.

“Sire, will you be kind enough to calm my disquiet,” entreated the queen, drawing near the one whom all shunned with respect, “by telling me to what circumstance I owe this unexpected return?”

“Lady, it was you who related to me—for I’ll be hanged if it would have been that locked-up library, San Nicandro!—the tale of the French king, Francis the First. After some battle or another, he was taken prisoner by some emperor, whose name I forget, and he wrote to his mother, or his wife, or yet another, a letter of some length which rounded off with this pretty tag: ‘All is lost but honor!’ Now, suppose I arrive out of a Pavia—I recall the battle now! and that not having been such a soft king as Francis, I don’t write to you, but I bring my own letter——”

“‘All is lost save honor?’” repeated the queen, frightened.

“Oh, dear, no, lady!” said the monarch, with a shrill laugh, “there is a slight variation: ‘All is lost—plus honor!’”

“Fie, sire!” exclaimed Ascoli, ashamed as a Neapolitan at the royal callousness.

“Honor is not lost,” resumed the king, frowning and grating his teeth, which revealed that he was not as insensible to the position as he feigned. “What do those fellows seek who are tearing over the road so fast that,

after enriching my postboys to make them go speedy, I had all the difficulty in the world to outrun them? After shame, is it?"

All were steeped in a glacial silence. Without knowing much, all suspected too much. But the king, being seated, had stretched out a fork and speared a roast pheasant happening to be before him, and divided it into halves for himself and his fellow-fugitive. But, looking around, he spied that all but the queen were standing.

"Pray be seated," said he; "things will not be improved by your letting your soup get cold." Pouring out a brimming glass of red wine for himself and passing the bottle to the duke, he went on: "To the health of General Championnet! Hey, ho! but we have a man who keeps his word, there! He promised his friends, the Republicans of Rome, that he would come back to them before the twentieth day, and he is with them on the seventeenth! He ought to be drinking this fine Bordeaux and I making wry faces over cider!"

"How now! what do you say, sir? Championnet in Rome again?" demanded the queen.

"As truly as that I am at Caserta; but he may be no more warmly received there than I am here!"

"If you were not better received, sire, and with the greeting you are entitled to, you should attribute it to the astonishment caused by your sudden appearance at the very time when we so little expected it. It is barely three hours since your courier notified me the next advices would be of the battle."

"Oh, I am the bearer. The news is that we have been thrashed till the seams show!" Then, turning to Nelson, he added: "What do you say to that, my lord, who is the vanquisher of vanquishers?"

"Half an hour before your majesty arrived, I was ex-

pressing my fears that there might be a reverse," returned Nelson.

"But nobody would believe that!" added the queen.

"That is always the way with prophecies, and yet Lord Nelson is not a prophet in his own country. In any case, he is right, and the others wrong."

"But what about our forty thousand men with which General Mack demonstrated that he would crush the ten thousand men of Championnet?"

"Oh, Mack does not seem to be a prophet like Lord Nelson, for it was the ten thousand little Championnets who crushed the forty thousand huge Macks. By the way, Ascoli, I invited the Pope to come on the wings of the cherubs to spend Easter with me in Rome! I hope he will not have been too much in a hurry to accept the call. Pass me some of that haunch of venison, Castelicala—a portion of pheasant is no great stop-gap to a man who has not eaten in twenty-four hours!"

Being served, he turned to the queen to hear any farther questions. She had but one and the last. It was to draw out the elucidation of the transformation by dress of the king and his companion. But Ferdinando insisted on all being at their places at the board before he would speak. They sat, but none cared to eat.

"Well, I will tell you the honor I have done Ascoli," he said. "You must promise that the Jacobins boasted that if they made me captive, it would not be long; they would hang me!"

"They would be capable of it!" interjected the queen.

"You allow that, madam? As we had to start without any disguising, at Albano I proposed to Ascoli that we should change coats. I told him that it was so that if the Jacobins stopped us they would take him for the king and let me pass—but I did not let him know until we were on safe ground that if they caught the king—

that is, a good semblance, they would hang him, or the semblance! Ha, aha!"

"Excuse, sire, I thought of all that, but that was the very reason why I accepted the cover."

Again the king felt touched by this simple nobility. Ascoli was the one among the courtiers who had begged the least and got the least, because he had not been reminded of him.

"Ascoli!" said the sovereign, "I repeat what I told you, that you shall retain that coat with all the stars and bars and things, while I retain your coat. And if ever you have a favor to ask of me or a reproach to make, come to me wearing that coat of mine, and you shall not go away unsatisfied."

"Bravo!" said Sir William, "never have I seen the king more grand!"

"Sire!" joined in Nelson, "let me offer my felicitations: you have shown yourself a king twice this evening."

"It is to make up for the days when I fall below the mark," returned Ferdinando, with that tone between wittiness and good humor, which made it so difficult to judge him correctly. "Is the barter fair, Ascoli?"

"Quite, except that all the gratitude is on my side," was the response. "Still, I would ask your majesty to kindly return me a little tortoise-shell snuffbox out of the pocket, containing a miniature of my daughter. At the same time I will restore this letter from the emperor of Austria which your majesty was hastily looking at and which you thrust into your pocket at the first line only!"

"That is so; I remember it now."

Taking the letter, he opened it mechanically.

"Is our nephew well?" asked the queen, with some uneasiness.

“I hope so—but I was interrupted, as Ascoli remarked—the first line felicitated me on entering Rome and it was not the moment to smile over that. Now, it is different, and I will read it.”

At the third or fourth line his face fell and became more and more cloudy.

“By St. Januarius!” he exclaimed, “this is queer! and, unless I am squinting——”

“Oh, what is it, sire?” asked the queen, anxiously.

“Nothing—the emperor announces something unexpected—that is all!”

“But by your expression I feared it was bad.”

“Bad! You are not wrong, madam—for birds of evil omen flock together. This is our day for bad news.”

A footman, coming in, went up to the king and whispered:

“Sire, the person you asked for on stepping out of the—hem!—vehicle, being by chance over at San Leucilo, awaits your majesty in the private rooms.”

“That’s good! I am going to meet him. By the way, just ask if Ferrari—who lately brought me a message, is still here?”

“Yes, sire.”

“Bid him not budge! I shall need him in about half an hour or less.”

The footman went out.

The king excused himself on the plea of needing repose after his night’s flight.

He addressed Nelson in particular.

“My lord, I hope to see you this day again. In these circumstances I want to know my friends and how far I can depend upon them.”

“Sire,” replied Nelson, with a bow, “I trust that your majesty has not doubted and never will doubt my devotion or the affection in which my august sovereign holds

you, nor the support which the English nation will lend you."

The king nodded his thanks and his belief in his pledge.

"Sir William Hamilton," he proceeded, "you may recall that when this wretched war broke out I washed my hands of it? Come what may, it is no longer any concern of mine! It concerns those who did all without consulting me or, if I were consulted, did not heed my advice."

In the same parting glance including Acton and his wife, he walked out.

The queen crossed rapidly to Acton and asked quickly:

"Did you hear that, and that he mentioned Ferrari, after reading the emperor's letter?"

"Certainly; but Ferrari does not know anything, for all passed in his loss of consciousness."

"That does not matter. It will be prudent to get rid of that fellow."

"Right! We will rid ourselves of him." So said Acton.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BETWEEN TWO TEMPTRESSES.

The party broke up when the king withdrew, as though he was the sole tie that held the elements in bondage.

The queen informed Sir William that never had she so stood in need of a friend, and must retain his wife by her. Sir William went to his rooms to formulate a dispatch to his government, and Nelson had another to write to his superior officer, the Admiral Lord St. Vincent, who had been rewarded, thanks to patronage, always more lavishly than his greater inferior.

He was interrupted in his report of the state of affairs at the point memorable :

“ ‘The Neapolitan officers have not lost much honor, for God knows they have little to lose, but they lost all they had——’ ”

Here, he heard behind him something like the flutter of gossamer wings. It was the literally sylph-like footsteps of that wondrous Emma Hamilton. Turning, he breathed an exclamation of joy.

But the intruder brought a finger to her lips, wearing a charming smile, and hushed him like a statue of silence. Advancing to his chair, she leaned over the back and whispered :

“Come with me, Horatio! The queen must see you before she sees her husband again.”

Nelson sighed to think that an order from the admiralty might part him from this Circe, and change his destiny. Every word, gesture and endearment of hers was a fresh link in the chain which bound him. He rose



“The intruder brought a finger to her lips, wearing a charming smile and hushed him like a statue of silence.”

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painfully, a prey to that vertigo which attacked him all the time when he saw her anew after a separation.

"Lead me," he pleaded; "you know that I cannot see my way when you dazzle me."

Emma drew off one of those flimsy scarfs which were the fashion, and tossed one end up into the air for him to seize it, which he did and kissed it rapturously, and said:

"Come, my dear Theseus, this is the clew to the maze, even though you leave me for another Ariadne. Still, I forewarn you that if you leave me, I shall never console myself, though the consoler were superhuman."

Nelson followed. He would have done anything she asked now.

"My most-beloved queen, I bring him who is both my tyrant and my slave."

The queen occupied a sofa in the sitting-room common to the two beauties. The scarcely suppressed flame in her eyes was anger.

"Come and sit near me, Nelson, my defender," she said. "I have downright need of the view of a hero to comfort me in such abasement. Did you see that crowned buffoon make himself his own messenger of shame?" she disdainfully tossed her head. "Did you hear him jesting at his own cowardice? Ah, Nelson, it is sad for a proud queen and valorous woman to have a king for mate who does not know rightly how to sway either sword or scepter!"

She let the guest sit by her while Emma, throwing herself upon a cushion at her feet, covered the man whose mission it was hers to fascinate with a spelling gaze while playing with her jewels.

"The fact is, the king is a great philosopher," pronounced the admiral.

"Do you seriously deck with that name this oblivion of

dignity? That he who was reared as a lazzaroni should not have the genius of reigning, may pass; but he might have a manly spirit! It was Ascoli who had the kingly heart under the royal coat! If those Jacobins had caught the duke, that other would have let them hang him to cover his escape, without a word to save him! To be daughter of Maria Theresa and wife of a Ferdinando, admit, it is a freak of hazard which makes one doubt Providence!"

"Pooh! things are better as they are!" sneered Lady Hamilton, with her English good sense, "you do not want to be king and queen at the same time, do you? Better be a golden Queen Bess than a Maria de Médicis!"

"I would I were a man and could bear a sword!" ejaculated the other, not listening.

"It would never pair off with this," returned Emma, touching Nelsons, "and, thank Heaven, as long as that protects you, you will want none other!"

Nelson looked at her with infinite love.

"Alas, my dear one," he said, "the good Lord knows that the words I am about speaking break my heart as they come forth; but do you think I should have sighed when you startled me by coming upon me when I least awaited it, if I also had not my dread."

"You, the *Dreadnought*?" objected Lady Hamilton.

"I foretell what he is going to say," broke in the queen, putting her handkerchief to her eyes. "I grant I am weeping, but they are tears of rage!"

"But I do not foresee, and I want a clearing up," persisted her friend. "What do you mean, Nelson, by terrors? I wish you would speak out!"

She put an arm around his neck and kissed his scarred brow.

"Believe me," Nelson said, tenderly. "if this brow, red-

dening with pride under your lips, does not also redden with joy, it is because I see great grief in the nigh future."

"The only one I know in this world is to be parted from you."

"You guess it!"

"We are to be parted?" burst forth the beauty with alarm well played; "what now can separate us?"

"A whim of Mr. Pitt—an order from the admiralty office. Can I not be sent to capture Martinique or the Trinity Islands, as I was to win at Calvi, Teneriffe or Aboukir? I left tokens of my skin at those places—elsewhere I shall leave my head, and England will have nothing more of me at her service!"

"You would obey such an order?"

"Would my Emma set me betwixt love and duty? Am I to be a traitor or a madman?"

"Oh, I admit that you cannot say to King George: 'Master, I do not wish to quit Naples because I am fond of a lady there who loves me to despair,' but you could tell him: 'King, I do not want to abandon a queen whose sole support, sustainer and defender I am. You crowned heads owe mutual support and must answer for one another to the King of kings as brothers and their keepers.' If you do not care to talk to him in that strain, why I shall get Sir William to do it, since he is the king's foster brother and he has the claim to speak so."

"I may be egotistical, my lord," added the queen, "but we are ruined if you do not shield me; and when the question is of upholding a throne, and protecting a realm, do you not think that it is included that a man of feeling like you should risk something to save us?"

"You are right. Somehow, I see nothing but my love. It is amazing how that is my polar star! Your majesty makes me happy in showing me that devotion is in what I saw merely as passion. I was just writing to Lord

St. Vincent, and I will finish the letter by sueing him to let me confine myself to your service. He will write to the admirality on my behalf."

"And Sir William shall write directly to the king and the prime minister," confirmed the diplomatist's better-half.

"I hope you understand what need we have of you and the immense services you can render us," resumed the royal pleader. "In all probability, we must quit Naples and dwell in exile."

"Do you think things so desperate, lady?"

With a sad smile, the queen shook her head.

"Yet it seems to me that the king could——"

"If the king should make a stand it would be a mishap to me, mark! The Neapolitans detest me, being a race loathing talent, beauty and bravery. Always bent under some foreign yoke, they calumniate and hate all who are not of their kind. They hate Acton because he was born abroad; Emma, because she is English, and I, I suppose, because I am Austrian. Supposing that with a scrap of courage, the king rallies the wreck of our forces and stops the French in the Abruzzi, the Jacobins here will rise and renew the horrors of the Parisian massacres. Who can deny that they would treat me like my sister, the Queen Marie Antoinette, and Emma like her bosom-friend, the Lamballe Princess? Thanks to his lazzaroni to whom he caters and who adores him, Ferdinando will slip through, but, my dear Nelson, Acton, I, and Emma will be slain! Now, do you not think that Heaven reserves for you a high part in letting you do for us here what Mirabeau, Lafayette and my two imperial brothers failed to do in France for their royal family?"

"It would be too great a glory—everlasting! and one to which I dare not aspire!"

"It is plain that you have not perceived that it is our

amity with England that has ruined us? If, firm to the treaty with the Republic, we had not let your fleet victual and take in water and repair damages at Syracuse, you would have been driven to recruit at Gibraltar, and so would have missed the French fleet at Aboukir."

"True; I should have lost them. And an infamous naval court decree would have befallen me instead of a triumph. How could I say that I was watching Naples when I ought to have been looking Tunisward."

"In short, was it not because of the rejoicings over your victory that the war was flung in our faces? Nelson, the fate of the Two Sicilies is wrapped up in your flag, and you are bound to the destiny of its princes! It will be said in time to come: 'All turned from them, allies, friends and kinsmen—but with the world against them, they had Nelson for them, and he saved them!'"

With the gesture emphasizing her speech, the queen offered her hand to the admiral, who knelt on one knee and took it to kiss.

"Would your majesty promise me one thing?" stammered he, ensnared by the flattery.

"You have the right to ask anything of those who shall owe everything to you!"

"I beseech your royal word that if you have to quit Naples, it will be on my deck, and on none other that you will cross to Sicily?"

"I swear that, Nelson, and that, wherever I go, my sole and eternal friend, Emma, goes with me!"

With a passionate transport, the speaker took her favorite's head between her hands and laid a kiss on the peerless forehead.

"My gage is given," answered the Englishman. "Henceforth your friends and enemies are mine. Though I am lost in trying to save you, I shall save you."

"Oh, here is really the kings' champion and the thrones'

good knight!" cried out Lady Hamilton. "You are the man I dreamed you to be when I gave you all my love and my whole heart!"

At this moment gentle tapping came at the door.

"It's Acton," explained the mistress; "run into my rooms while I receive his response to what I wished to know."

Intoxicated with love, pride and praise, Nelson let Lady Hamilton draw him away into the other apartment.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE KING'S PRAYER BOOK.

In a second, the queen visage suffered a change, as though it donned or doffed a mask. Her gaze hardened, and in a curt voice she spoke the single word:

“Come!”

It was Acton, of whom she inquired who had called the king away.

“Cardinal Ruffo,” he said. “I cannot say what they talked about, but I know what they have done. They have verified their suspicion, or at least the cardinal’s suspicion, that the royal correspondence was tampered with. They sent for Ferrari.”

“I foresaw all that, and that is why I said that it will be right to do what we arranged.”

“At the first opportunity!”

There was nothing farther for the queen to order, and her right-hand man left her to her study.

She had reckoned on the perfidy being discovered in the end, but not that the king would penetrate it. In fact, it took Cardinal Ruffo with his knowledge and insight into nefarious practice to trace for the royal pupil’s benefit the treatment which Ferrari and the letter he bore had undergone. The other had witnessed this demonstration with the wonderment of a man who would never have attained this height of perception by his own wits.

“Now,” said the man of the church, fixedly eyeing the monarch, “are you fond of Ferrari?”

“Of course. I prize him.”

“Then, though it give you a pang, you should part

with him for a space. I believe the local air is pernicious to him at this season."

"That is easy; we will send him into Germany again."

"It is a fatiguing journey, but some fatigues are beneficial!"

"I want to be clearly rid of this nightmare. I shall send my nephew, the emperor, the dispatch in which he told me he would go into the field as soon as I entered Rome, and I'll ask him what he thinks of it?"

"And for nothing to be suspected, your majesty will go into Naples with all the Court to-day, but bidding Ferrari to come to me at San Leucio this night, where he is to take my orders as if your own. It is I who will write to the emperor, in your name, exposing the doubts and begging him to write the responses to me."

"Fine! but won't Ferrari fall into French hands, since they will be guarding the passes?"

"He must sail over to Trieste and go therefrom by post, returning the same route, which will give him a rest on the boat."

"You are a prodigy, and I should be hard to please and he, too, if this did not suit."

"Then to other matters."

"This priest, Pronio, who is waiting without? After all, a priest is more in your line to catechise."

"I am of the opinion that he comes in another capacity than the clerical one!"

Curate Pronio, when introduced, appeared as a man who would not see forty again. One might identify this parish priest as such by his tonsure, but it was so overgrown by his thicket of black hair as to be barely perceptible. He was strongly built and was more fitted for a cuirassier's breastplate than the cassock.

"Cardinal Ruffo, I beg to present to you the Curate

Pronio. He comes recommended by the Bishop of Nicosia. Tell your tale—Cardinal Ruffo is my friend.”

“To be brief, sire: I was with a nephew of mine, late at night, on the main road, when I recognized in one of two gentlemen traveling in hot haste in a shabby post-chaise, your majesty. The king, believed to be in Rome, in a change of clothes and skurrying home—it was an event!”

“One to be proud of!” hinted the king, sarcastically.

“I questioned the postilions, who were dropped at this stage, and learned that there had been a great battle and that the Neapolitans had been beaten—the king was retiring.”

“Scuttling off like a rabbit, smoked out! Oh, speak you as plainly, and we can hit it off together, father!”

“The idea took me that the Neapolitans were in full flight to Naples and that the French would be at their heels! I saw but one means of stopping this man-hunt.”

“I should like to hear the means,” observed Ruffo.

“I am a little interested myself,” subjoined the king.

“Revolutionize the Abruzzi and the ‘Land of Labor!’ as there is no army, oppose the invader by the roused population.”

Ruffo looked hard at the speaker.

“Do you happen to be a genius, reverence?” he asked.

“Who can tell what a man is?” was the reply. “Well, I thought to apply to the king and show my idea. So I presented myself under the influence of the bishop’s name.”

“So the bishop knows you?”

“Not a whit, or I the bishop. I hope to be forgiven this lie in favor of the good intention.”

“I’ll be dashed but I forgive you—eminence, absolution for the good priest!”

“If the king approves, I will raise the mountains in a

week from one peak to the farthest! I have two friends to carry out my project."

"Men of note?"

"In their way. One is Gaetano Mammone, known as the Sora miller, and the other a brigand named Michele Pezza, young, but promising. He has taken the title of Fra Diavolo——"

"The devil's brother? That is promising!" agreed the king.

"With these men, I engage to succeed. Revolutions are not set going with novices fresh out of the convent school!"

"You seem to be pretty sure of your scheme, reverence," commented the cardinal.

"A man has to be sure who will be hanged if he fails!"

"Whew! to make captains of a miller and a brigand—this requires reflection," dissented the monarch.

"I will refer to my breviary while your majesty reflects," assented the priest, like one who did not let go the line when he had felt his fish nibble.

And for that matter, withdrawing into a nook, he pulled out a well-thumbed little book and buried himself in the pages.

The king and his adviser having consulted, the latter went to the writing table, where he filled up a kind of blank, appointing Curate Pronio "the king's captain commanding in the Abruzzi, and Terra Lavore, and "anywhere else on occasion." The new general was empowered to appoint his lieutenants under him.

"By the way, curate," remarked the king; but the revolutionist in embryo interrupted him brusquely, saying:

"Your majesty will excuse me, but since these few minutes I am your majesty's captain!"

"Just so, captain! I was only going to point out that your prayer-book is showing itself by sticking out of your

pocket, and it is not as becoming as a *sabretasche* to a military man!"

Pronio plucked out the book and presented it to the speaker. Opening it at the first page, the king read the title:

“ ‘ ‘The Prince,’ by Machiavelli.’ ”

“Hello, what's this about?” asked Ferdinando, not knowing work or author.

“Sire,” replied Pronio, “it is the prayer-book for kings!”

“Oh, if you study that sort of thing, the cardinal must be right, for he was suggesting that none better than you, who, warrant you, can raise a population, could draw up the proclamation which is the red rag to that bull, the people.”

The curate-captain went to the table, and, taking up the pen, wrote with a facility proving that he was copying some matter already cut and dried in his head. He offered this to the ruler, who passed it over to his counselor, who read:

“While I am in the capital of Christendom, busy in re-establishing the Holy Church, the French, though I thought myself at peace with them, threaten to descend upon the Abruzzi country. In spite of the dangers, I risk all to pierce their lines and regain my imperiled capital. Once I am in Naples, I shall march to encounter them with a numerous army, with which to exterminate them. Meanwhile, let the people fly to arms, to succor the faith and defend their king—I say, their father, ready to lay down his life to shield the altars and goods of his subjects, their loved ones and their liberty! Whoso does not fall in under the flag of this holy warfare will be accounted traitor to the land! whoever abandons it, after taking his place in the ranks, will be punished as a rebel and enemy of Church and State!”

This effusion was dated “Rome, December 7th, 1798.”

While Pronio had but slightly watched the royal countenance in glancing at his document, he studied the prelate's with the utmost attention. Two or three times, when Ruffo looked up during the perusal, he met the priest's eyes fixed on his face.

"I am not mistaken; you are a clever man!" said the cardinal. "Sire, there is not a soul in your confines able to concoct such a proclamation, and your majesty may boldly sign it."

The king signed, without hesitation, as a token of confidence.

"Just add: 'Captain Joseph Pronio is charged with the publication of this, my proclamation, and to watch over the intentions being fully performed,' and then copy it all in duplicate, while the king signs this order for you to draw ten thousand ducats from the treasury."

The king, not being as quick a scribe as the priest, the two writings were finished at about the same time.

Pronio handed the cardinal the two copies of his work, and the latter said:

"You see the confidence the king has in you. Cash this order for ten thousand ducats, and at Naples have as many thousand copies printed as can be done in twenty-four hours. Scatter the rest broadcast, but mind that the first ten thousand are properly displayed in the city."

"Printing cannot cost all that. What am I to do with the balance?"

"Buy guns and ammunition."

Pronio was going to bound out of the room in excitement.

"Stay! Do you not see that the king's hand is held out to you?"

The priest-captain received the favor, and rushed forth ready to be killed for the monarch. The latter saw him

leave without sorrow; much of the scene was beyond his comprehension.

"Of course," said the king, "that San Nicandro deceiver is to blame, but I do not understand your enthusiasm over this fraudulent proclamation, which has not one word of truth in it."

"That is precisely why! I admire this because it avers what neither your majesty nor I would dare assert."

"Will you make that plain, so that I may not mourn for my ten thousand ducats?"

"Your majesty is not rich enough to pay its full value. Do you not see that you were at Rome when you composed this! You were tranquilly re-establishing the expelled Church, innocently, wholly for the happiness of the Pope, not making war on the republicans, with whom you would have dwelt at peace if they had not threatened to invade the Abruzzi."

"I see where I am!" said the listener.

"And the world will see that it was not on your part, but on the part of the French that the bad doings, the rupture and the treachery, came. Though the French representative, Garat, had menaced you, still you trusted to them as to allies of whom you were proud. You went to Rome, full of confidence in their fair play, and while you were there, tranquil, the French caught you unawares and thrashed Mack. There is nothing astonishing that a strategist and an army should be whipped when attacked in an unguarded moment."

"It happens every day," admitted the hearer. "It is about the only way an invincible general gets defeated."

"Your majesty adds that you broke through the enemy's ranks to get home into your capital, in peril, whence you will emerge with a numerous army to exterminate them. This is far from fleeing before the following French: you break through their ranks regardless of dan-

ger—you dare it, if anything! And why do you so hardily expose your sacred person? To regain your capital, to defend it! to exterminate——”

“Enough!” roared the pupil in statecraft, “I see through it, my dear cardinal! Your eminence is right, thanks to this proclamation, I shall be held up as a hero! Your Pronio is a genius. Did he learn these traits in that Machiavillain?”

“He has left his ‘Machiavelli’ behind him! You can keep it, my liege, to study at leisure, for that sharper has nothing more to learn from it!”

CHAPTER XX.

THE TWO ADMIRALS.

Pronio must have been a genius, for the proclamation, distributed over Naples, was like a pouring of turpentine on a smoldering fire. The king, hearing a hundred thousand voices declaring that they were ready to die for him from the highest to the lowest, hugged the idea of defending his capital, and to appeal from the cowardice of the army to the savagery of the mob.

He, therefore, rose on the morning of the eleventh of December, prepared to accept resistance instead of flight, when the Admiral Francis Caracciolo was announced.

Spurred on by the queen's prejudice, the king did not like the admiral, but he had to esteem him. His grade had been won by his admirable valor against the Mediterranean corsairs; the cleverness with which he had maneuvered his frigate, the *Minerva*, out from under the guns of Toulon, when Bonaparte had recovered the port from the English; his coolness in protecting other vessels under fire and bringing them home, though battered and crippled. He had not lost one.

Ferdinando believed that the naval prince had come to beg mercy for his nephew, incarcerated for intrigue with the French and with the native conspirators. Enchanted with having this means of being disagreeable, he ordered his instant admission.

Arrayed in his full dress as admiral, Caracciolo entered, calm and dignified as ever. His high social position had put his family for hundreds of years on a footing with the various rulers of his land, so that he joined to

his supreme dignity a perfect courtesy, of which he gave a specimen to the queen in refusing to let his family associate with the feasters at the Court welcoming Lord Nelson.

Such courtesy on any part always embarrassed the dull king, that not being his leading mark. So, when he saw the officer stop at the prescribed distance and wait for the sovereign to address him, pursuant to etiquette, he hastened to open proceedings by hurling the reproach he had prepared for him:

“Oho! here you are, my lord admiral! It appears that you were very anxious to see us?”

“That is true, sire!” replied the other, bowing; “I believed in the urgency of my having the honor to see your majesty.”

“Oh, I know what brings you!”

“I am the more glad, as that is justice given my fidelity.”

“Yes, yes, you want to beg off that rogue, your nephew! It appears that he is involved in a bad affair, for it is no less than the crime of high treason! But I forewarn you that all pleas, even yours, are useless, and justice must take its course.”

The austere face wore a flitting smile.

“Your majesty is in error,” he returned. “In great political catastrophes family incidents disappear. I do not know and have no wish to know what my relative has done. If he is guiltless of the accusation, he will be released in due time, as others have been, though after three years. If he be guilty, let justice be done. Nicolini is of high race and entitled to the sword, which is of so noble a class that even in the headman’s hands it doesn’t discredit the victim.”

The hearer was no little astonished at this calm and

simple dignity, for there was not a shade in his own nature.

“But, then, if not to plead for your nephew, what can you have called to speak to me about?”

“I come to speak of yourself and your realm.”

“Oh, to give counsel?”

“If your majesty deigns to consult me, I shall be glad and proud to put my humble experience at command. In the contrary case, I can as gladly and proudly put the lives of the brave seamen I command, and mine, at his call.”

The king chafed to find a vent for vexation; but, before such respect and reserve, he could not be angered.

“Well, I will consult you, admiral,” he waveringly rejoined.

But a footman, coming out of the private rooms, approached the king to speak of some visitor whose name Caracciolo did not overhear, and took care not to hear.

The king turned to the admiral, inquiring: “Might what you have to say be said before a witness?”

“Before the whole world, my liege!”

“In that case, let us have the nobleman in! Besides, the comer is more than a witness—he is a friend, an ally, a brother officer, as it is——”

The door opened and an usher called out:

“The Baron Horatio Nelson of the Nile, and Burnham-Thorpe, Duke of Bronté!”

At the string of titles, a smile, slight but not without bitterness, ruffled the Neapolitan’s lips.

Nelson came in, not knowing whom the monarch was conversing with, but, fixing on his foregoer his gray eyes, he recognized the admiral.

“I believe I have no need to present you, gentlemen,” remarked the host. “You are acquainted?”

“Since we met under the French fire, at Toulon,” responded Nelson.

“I had the honor to make your acquaintance before then,” corrected Caracciolo, with his usual suavity; “I remember a day when, in a brig, on the coast of Canada, you fought four French frigates and gave them the slip by taking a passage believed impossible. That would be in 1786, I believe, a dozen years ago.”

Nelson bowed to this honorable flattery.

“My lord,” said the king, “Admiral Caracciolo has come to offer me his counsel on the situation. As you know him, sit and listen to what he says. When done, you can make any fit answer. I must say beforehand that I shall be happy if two illustrious men of naval warfare agree in the one mind.”

“As I am certain my lord is a true friend of the kingdom,” took up the Italian, “I hope there will be only slight divergences in detail, which will not prevent our agreeing at bottom.”

“Speak away, good Caracciolo,” said the king, using the familiar style of the sovereigns to their great peers.

“Yesterday, there was a rumor in town that, despairing of defending your mainland, your majesty would withdraw to Sicily. I hope this is wrong!”

“It looks as if you were of the other side!”

“Sire, I am always on the side of honor as against disgrace! The honor of your realm is at stake—your own name, and that depends on your standing out to the last extremity.”

“But you know the state of affairs?”

“Yes, sire; bad, but not lost. The army is dispersed, but not destroyed. There must be left some forty thousand, four times more than the French, and fighting on its own ground, in inexpurgable defiles, aided by a friendly population of twenty towns and sixty villages,

with three impregnable forts, to say nothing of Capua, the final rampart of Naples—the French can never penetrate this far!”

“Would you undertake to rally the army, my lord?”

“Yes, sire, with my four thousand seamen! Lord Nelson will back me as to sailors being good at anything, for he has accomplished wonders by landing seamen for land operations. I would fortify the passages and, with some as garrison, mount guns and bear the onset if only with our boarding pikes. When the soldiers see how we rebuff the French charge, terrible though it be, they will rally behind us, particularly if your majesty is the living standard.”

“You don’t say so?” mumbled the king, watching Nelson, who kept silent.

“There will always be time for your majesty to take to the ships. The French have no armed craft and your majesty has three fleets in the port—the English, the Portuguese and your own.”

“What does my lord say to the admiral’s proposition?” demanded the sovereign of the Briton, thus compelling an answer.

Nelson was striking off meaningless figures on paper as he sat.

“I can say that there is nothing worse in danger than to change the course resolved upon.”

“So the king has come to a resolution?” queried the Italian.

“No; not yet; I hesitate——”

“The queen has decided on the departure,” replied the Englishman.

“The queen?” exclaimed the other admiral, without giving the master time to intervene. “Very well! let her go! In such straits, women may quit; but men ought to face the music.”

"But you see, prince, that my Lord Nelson is of the opinion that we ought to go."

"Pardon me, sire, but I don't think I have heard my lord give any opinion."

"I press you to give it, my lord!" said the king.

"My advice is the same as the queen's. I shall with joy see you seek in Sicily the safety which Naples cannot afford."

"I beg my Lord Nelson not to give his advice lightly," remonstrated the Italian, knowing in advance what weight was in *dicta* from one of his merit.

"I said so, and I do not retract."

"Sire, you should not forget that my lord is English."

"What do you mean by that, sir?" demanded Nelson, sharply.

"That you would speak otherwise were you Neapolitan."

"Why should I speak otherwise, whatever I was?"

"Because you would heed your country's honor instead of the interests of England."

"What interest has Great Britain in my advice to the king?"

"In enlarging the peril, you swell the reward! It is known that England is after Malta."

"England already has Malta, which the king has given her."

"Oh, sire! I heard so, but I would not credit it," reproached Caracciolo.

"Why the sirocco would you want me to hang on to Malta?—a rock only fit to cook eggs on, in the sun!"

"Sire," continued Caracciolo, without including Nelson, "I supplicate you in the name of all true sons of Naples, to listen no more to foreign advisers who push your throne within two inches of the gulf. Lord Acton is a foreigner, Sir William Hamilton is another, and so

is Lord Nelson. How can they be nice judges of Neapolitan behavior?"

"That is fair," retorted Nelson, "but they can be just in appreciating Neapolitan cowardice. That is why I told your king, after what passed before Rome, that he could no longer trust knaves who abandon him through fear or treachery!"

Caracciolo turned dreadfully pale and his hand was going, in spite of his will, to his sword hilt; but as he bethought him that Nelson had but one hand, and that his left, and that a cripple may learn to handle the pen very well without becoming a good swordsman, he restricted himself by saying:

"All peoples have their weak moment. The French, before whom we fled, have had three such panics: Poitiers, Cressy and Agincourt; but at Fontenoy they wiped that all out. One victory to three defeats."

Caracciolo uttered these words while looking at his opponent, who bit his lip till the blood came.

"Sir," continued he to his king, "it is the duty of a ruler loving his people to offer them the chance to blot out the failure. Let the king give the word, and not one of the invaders will escape alive out of the mountain passes, if they have the rashness to dash into them."

"My dear Caracciolo," said the monarch, whose secret desire was thus fondled, "your advice is also a man's, whose counsel I appreciate—Cardinal Ruffo's."

"That is all that was lacking," jeered Nelson; "put a churchman at the head of your armies!" with a scornful smile.

"Wait," quickly observed the taunted one, trying to remember; "such a course did not succeed badly with one of my forefathers, Louis XIII. or XIV—who set a cardinal at the head of the troops; and—by Jupiter! it is

Cardinal Richelieu!—in taking La Rochelle and forcing the Susa Pass, he did not do any harm to the monarchy.”

“The good spirit of Naples prompts you,” interposed Caracciolo, grasping at this hope. “Yield to Cardinal Ruffo. Follow his counsel and—what can I say more? I will follow his orders!”

“Sire,” broke in Nelson, rising and bowing to the host alone, “your majesty may as well bear in mind that if the Neapolitan admirals and generals take orders from a priest, an English officer obeys only the orders of his government!”

Flinging on his colleague the threatening glance of undying hate, the speaker went forth by the private door which would lead him to the queen’s suite.

Ferdinando watched him out, and did not speak until the door closed after him.

“Well, that is pretty return for my thanks, in the shape of twenty thousand ducats a year, the duchy of Bronté, my sword, which came down from King Philip V., and my grand collar of the San Ferdinand order. He is short-spoken, but he says quite enough!”

“My poor Francis, you are right. The country is going to the foreigners! There are outsiders on the inside everywhere—and the Neapolitans cannot squeeze into a corner. What a bulldog that Nelson is! Never mind! you gave him a snarl for his bark! If ever we go to war with England, and you two meet on the seas, you will have to look to yourself!”

“I am happy to have won your approbation at the risk of making an enemy of the victor of the Nile.” He laughed.

“Did you notice the wry face he made when—what do you call it?—Fontenoy was thrown up to him! the English were well served at that place?”

“With reasonable pepper, my liege!”

“I am going to see Ruffo to-day, and we will talk this over again. But as we are in chat, why the deuce did you make an enemy of the queen? You know that when she takes a hating, she takes it thoroughly!”

Caracciolo shook his head, as much as to say that he had no reply to make to the royal misliking.

“So I may hope that your majesty will renounce the shameful running away, and defend Naples to the last gasp?”

“Carry away better than the hope—the certainty! At the council this day I will let them know that I will stay in Naples. I have firm in mind your idea about defending it. Rest easy! As for Nelson? if he is saucy to me again, I will fling ‘Fontenoy’—if I have got that right—into his crop!”

“A last grace! if your majesty changes his mind—if you do retrace anything—let me hope that the departure will be on a Neapolitan deck!”

“Also be easy as to that! If reduced to that extremity—but not answering for the queen, who has a will of her own! I pledge you my word of honor that I will sail on your own ship, the *Minerva*. You have your warning: bid your cook, if good—or change him! to lay in a good stock of macaroni and Parmesan cheese, if you are not well supplied! That’s a bitter pill, in ‘Fontenoy,’ is it not?”

The prince, relying on the double promise and ravished at the result of his interview, went away without thinking of his nephew accused of helping the enemy.

The king eyed him with marked kindness.

“Only to think that one is stupid enough to quarrel with a man like that for the sake of a termagant like the queen, and a hussy like Lady Hamilton!”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE EMPEROR'S ANSWER.

The king kept the promise made to Prince Caracciolo; highly and resolutely, he declared to the assembled ministers that the popular desire decided him to remain in Naples and defend the entrance of his kingdom against the French. Before so firmly expressed a determination, open opposition was not possible; it would have been made but by the queen, and Acton assured her that he would find the means to induce the king to leave anyway.

Ruffo had approved of the conduct of Caracciolo toward Nelson and had an interview with the admiral. They agreed that they would await the rising in the mountains and act according to its fruits. This news surpassed all hopes. Pronio had set the keynote to his priestly brethren, and nobles and magistrates had echoed them. The cry of "To arms!" was ringing throughout. He had seen Fra Diavolo and the miller, and, with the royal warrant, their power was limitless, since they had royal protection.

Caracciolo had struck the nail on the head, for it chimed with English policy that the Sicilian monarchs should be on the island where they could expect nothing from their own people or army and would have to rely wholly on England's ships and troops.

Hence, Nelson, Sir William and Emma urged the queen to take to flight. Her personal apprehensions strengthened their pleas. The masses so detested her that, while they would have defended her husband, they would have awarded her imprisonment, if not death.

Meanwhile, time went on with its unfeeling regularity,

and though harassed by the irregulars under Pronio and the licensed brigands, the French marched in three columns through the Abruzzi, over the Land of Labor—tillage land—and part of the Campania.

On the eighteenth, General Championnet was at San Germano and advancing on Capua.

Volunteers, headed by nobles, came to take leave of the queen and dispute the way with the republicans.

The nearer the danger, the more all divided into the king's and the queen's party—this to stand and that to flee.

The twenty-first day opened with one of those three days' hurricanes which the Neapolitans say takes that time "*Nasce, pasce, moi!*" ("Be born, devour and die"!) But between the gusts and the showers, the people crowded into the streets, goaded by the forerunning of a dire catastrophe.

What denoted an uncommon occurrence was that the rabble did not swarm in their own wards. But, long-shoremen, fishers, and lazzaroni, all flocked to the quarter where the royal palace was the center.

Among the gatherings were three men, fatally noted already by figuring in the riots which had spilled much blood. They were Pasquale di Simone, a butcher who was called by his trade name, and a monk with the ill-chosen epithet of Fra Pacifico.

All the assemblage, without knowing what was coming, waited for somebody or some event. The king was just as ignorant, but he was rendered uneasy by the gathering, and peered out of a curtained window, while mechanically stroking his dog, Jupiter, at the sea of heads, from which rose shouts of "Long live the king!" or "Death to the Jacobins!"

Carolina, who knew where her partner was, kept in the adjoining room, with Acton, ready to act according to

emergencies, while Lady Hamilton was packing up the queen's jewels and secret papers.

About eleven o'clock, a young man, galloping a speedy English horse, came through the concourse by making signs to the three mob leaders and, reaching the palace, rode in at the grand courtyard gates. Alighting, he threw his reins to a groom, and as if informed where he might find the queen, walked straight into the cabinet where she was closeted with the premier. As if by enchantment, the door had opened, and it shut behind him when he had passed.

"He comes! he follows so close that he will be here in half an hour."

"Did you warn those who expect him?"

"Yes."

"Well, go to my rooms, and notify Lady Hamilton that she may prepare Lord Nelson."

The young man ran up the back stairs with a speed indicating how familiar he was with the inner part of the palace, and transmitted the message to Lady Hamilton.

"Have you a reliable porter for a note to Lord Nelson?" she asked.

"I am the man."

"But you know there is no time to lose!"

"I think as much!"

On the queen's writing-desk she penned this line:

"Most likely this night. Hold ready! EMMA."

With the same celerity shown in flying up the stairs, the young man hastened down them, and leaving the residence, took the slope to the military port. Here he leaped into a skiff, and through wind and rain was rowed to the *Vanguard*. With her yards apeak to offer less purchase to the gale, she was tugging at her anchors, both down, five or six cable lengths off the pier, surrounded by the

other vessels, English or Portuguese, under Admiral Nelson's orders.

The young man, who will have been recognized as Acton's "Dick," sent in a word of recognition to the English officer, nimbly mounted the side rope, and, finding the commander in his cabin, handed him his missive.

"Her majesty's order shall be performed, and to be a clear witness, you shall bear them back."

Calling his flag captain, he continued: "Hardy, have the launch manned and this gentleman taken aboard the *Alcmena*."

Putting the lady's note in his bosom, he wrote in his turn:

"Most secret!"

"Three barges and the *Alcmena's* cutter, the men carrying cutlasses only, to be at La Vittoria at half-after seven, sharp! One boat will do the landing; the others bearing off with the oars apeak, ready to drop and spring to it. The *Vanguard's* long-boat will do the speaking and any fetching off. All the small craft employed will report to Commander Hope alongside the *Alcmena*, before seven.

"Mind you have the grapnels in the barges.

"All the spare boats of the *Alcmena* and *Vanguard* will have the men armed with steel only, and the launches, with their bowguns, will assemble beside the *Vanguard*, under command of Captain Hardy, who will stand out to sea at eight precisely and proceed halfway to Molosiglio. Four to six marines in each barge. In case of need of help, use the flash signals.

HORATIO NELSON.

"P. S.—The *Alcmena* is to be ready to slip her cables and set to sea in the night if needs must."

While these orders were received with respect equal to the punctiliousness with which they were carried out, a second horseman had come over the Madalena Bridge, and strove to ride up Piliero Street.

But he found the crowd denser, and spite of his dress as a royal messenger, he met difficulty in continuing, even

though he slackened his gait. Moreover, as though it were expressly done, rough fellows threw themselves against his horse's shoulder, and these then set to inveighing Ferrari, for this was the king's private courier. Habituated to have his coat respected, Ferrari at first replied with cuts of his whip. The ruffians fell back and held their customary peace.

But at the San Carlo Theatre corner, a man sought to cross before the horse and bungled so that he was felled, or fell.

Ferrari reined in, but as the fellow struggled into a sitting position under the poised fore hoofs, he cried out:

"I am ridden down by the Jacobin!"

"Yes," said a friend of his, running to help him, "it is a friend of the French trying to escape in disguise!"

"That's a stolen coat of the king's riders," said a third. All raised the shout:

"It's a Jacobin! Death to all Jacobins!"

Di Simone darted his dagger and the horse was stabbed to the quick in the shoulder. The "Big Butcher" rushed to seize the forelock and with it wrench the head around so that, with his own knife, he could slash open the neck artery as if a sheep or a calf. The horse reared, neighing with pain, and paddled in the air with his fore feet, while the bystanders were drenched with gore. The sight of blood has a magical influence on the far southerners.

No sooner were the dregs of the slums splashed with blood than they rushed as one wolf upon both man and horse.

Ferrari knew that if his steed went under, he was a dead man. He held him up as well as he could with bridle and between his knees, but the animal was mortally stabbed. After flagging and swerving, he made a desperate leap and it was forward.

The royal courier felt that the animal was giving way beneath him.

As he was only forty paces from the guardhouse at the palace gates, he shouted for help; but his voice was drowned under the yells a hundred times reiterated.

“Death to the Jacobins!” multiplied.

He pulled a pistol out of the holsters, hoping that the detonation would be heard if his voice could not. But at that nick, down sank his horse.

The jerk set his firearm off at random and the bullet struck a boy, who fell.

“The Jacobins are slaying children now!” vociferated a man who had had a narrow escape from the shot.

At this, Fra Pacifico, who was leading a donkey and drubbing it with an oak cudgel to reach the scene, burst through the murderous mob and saw Ferrari standing up over the writhing steed and also near the dying boy. He swung his mace and before the hapless Ferrari could steady himself, he knocked him down with a single blow. But it was ordained that Ferrari should perish under the king's own eyes.

The five or six hirelings in the secret of the tragedy pounced on him and defended him, while the Butcher, grasping him by the spurred boots, roared:

“Make way for the carrion!”

The horse was left where it quivered, but the harness was stripped off. All followed the prize. At twenty paces, they were under the king's windows. Ferdinando had opened the blinds to learn the grounds for this awful uproar. At seeing him, the din redoubled.

The main cry denoted that the crowd had secured another legitimate prey—a Jacobin. He did not at all dislike this summary disposal of his enemies, so he smiled and smirked, and bowed to his people.

Encouraged, they wished to show that they were worthy of his laudation.

They lifted up the miserable Ferrari, bleeding, maimed, tattered and torn, but still living; in their upheld arms he recovered consciousness.

He recognized his master, and his arms were extended to him, and a voice—if that hoarse sound was a voice—faltered:

“Help, help! Sire, it is your Ferrari!”

At this terrible sight, so unexpected and inexplicable, the king threw himself back and staggered to the farthest corner of the room, where he fell into a chair.

Quite oppositely, Jupiter, who, being neither man nor king, and no more ungrateful than cowardly, emitted a howl of grief, and with his jaws frothing, his eyes injected with blood, sprang out of the window to assist his friend.

At this moment, the room door opened, to let the queen rush in. She caught her lord by the hand and dragged him to the window, where she pointed to the tribe of fiends tearing Ferrari in piecemeal, and gasped:

“Sire, you behold the wretches on whom you rely for the defense of Naples and our own. Now, they are cutting our trusted servitors to pieces—to-morrow they will tear our children! Do you still persist in staying among them?”

“Get all ready! I will be off this evening!” stammered the king.

Still seeing poor Ferrari hacked to mince, and still hearing his agonizing call to him for help, he fled with his head buried in his hands, his eyes closed, and his ears stopped up, to take refuge in his most remote chamber.

When he slunk forth, two hours afterward, the first thing he saw was Jupiter, smothered with blood—not all his own!—lying exhausted on a rag which, by the royal buttons and the frogs and fur, must have belonged to the

unfortunate courier. Ferdinando dropped on his knees beside the retriever, and made sure that the dog had not been deadly wounded. Desiring to know for certain what this relic was, so studiously guarded, he drew from under him the fragment of the rider's vest. By a providential chance, it was the very portion about the inner pouch for carrying dispatches. Undoing the stud inclosing it, he found intact the imperial writ which the faithful messenger was bringing in response to his letter.

He restored to Jupiter the rag, on which the dog crouched himself with a doleful whimper, and returned into his room. He locked himself in, unsealed the missive and read :

“TO MY DEAREST BROTHER, ETC. :

“I never wrote the letter sent to me by your messenger, Ferrari, and it is false from one end to the other. That which I have the honor to write to your majesty was wholly in my own hand, and instead of exciting you to enter into the campaign, it dissuaded you from attempting any stroke until next April, when only I could expect to see our good and true allies, the Russians, arrive.

“If the forgers are such as your majesty can seize, I do not conceal that I shall be glad to see them punished according to their deserts.

“I have the honor, with respect, to be your majesty's dearest brother, etc.,
FRANCIS.”

The queen and Acton had committed a fruitless crime ; unless there was good result in its determining Ferdinando to quit Naples for refuge in Sicily.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE FLIGHT.

It was settled that the king, the queen, all the royal family, except the prince royal, and his children and wife, as well as Sir William Hamilton, Acton and the palace favorites, should go by the *Vanguard*.

It will be remembered that the monarch had promised his own admiral that it would be on his ship that he would sail from Naples; but, falling again under the queen's yoke, he forgot his pledge for two reasons.

The first was his shame to face the officer upon breaking his word. The second arose from a hint of his consort that Caracciolo, sharing the principles of the Neapolitan nobility—the patriotic ones—might, instead of carrying the sovereign over to Sicily, hold him as a hostage for the Italian Jacobins, who would force him to establish their kind of government, or put him on trial, a shade worse, as the English had Charles I. and the French, Louis XVI.

As consolation and damages for the honor he was thrust from, the native admiral was to transport the heir to the throne and his party.

All day long, the valuable property to be carried away was stowed in a secret passage long unused, for shipment.

Ferdinando, having on his mind the queen-Acton treachery about his correspondence, shut himself up all day and would not receive anybody. This was a special bar to Admiral Caracciolo's learning anything direct. From his deck, he saw the passing of boats to and fro among the English ships and signals which set him sus-

pecting something. He also heard that Castelcicala had left town suddenly and that Venni was trying in vain to see the king, as though to present his farewell, also.

The king had wished to have Cardinal Ruffo as traveling companion, but he had noticed that he and Nelson did not agree and, besides, the churchman was detested by the queen. Ferdinando preferred his repose to such jars. And he had no doubt that the cardinal was keen enough to come through anarchy itself without his hat being knocked off.

The embarkation was at ten at night. All the party for the *Vanguard* assembled betimes in the queen's rooms.

The king came in at the clock stroke, leading his retriever by a leash; Jupiter was the sole friend on whose fidelity he could depend, and, of course, the only one he would take along. He had thought of Ascoli, but he expected that, like Ruffo, he could take care of himself. The larger parlor was badly lit, for it was feared that an illumination would betoken that some event was commencing. The newcomer looked around on the fugitives forming different groups.

The principal was composed of the queen, on a sofa, with Lady Hamilton at hand, the four young princesses posed by her and the two princes, her favorites, one leaning on her knee and the other in her lap. The girls were seated or reclining.

Acton, Hamilton and Castelcicala were chatting in a window bow, listening to the wind howling and the rain pattering on the panes.

Around a table were the queen's chosen ladies, the Countess of San Marco, her pet, the chief. Afar in the dark, was Acton's confidential man, Richard, who might be regarded as in the queen's service as well as his master's.

Everybody stood at attention as the ruler arrived, but he made a sign that all were to keep their places.

“Don’t disturb yourself—it is not worth the pains!” he said.

He sat in an armchair by the door, playing with Jupiter.

The silence was lugubrious, for even those who spoke, did so in a low voice.

It was at the half-hour that the bearer of the starting signal was to come. This was Count Thurn, a German in the Neapolitan service, put under Nelson’s orders, together with Marquis Nizza, commanding the Portuguese fleet.

Thurn had been given a key, the outer door of the private passage being a solid and massive one, allowing a way out on the military haven.

The clock chimed the half in the stillness.

There was almost instantly a knocking heard at the great door. Why should the trusted hand knock, when it was supplied with the key?

In such crises, what would be merely trouble and disquiet becomes terror.

The queen started and rose.

“What’s that?” she murmured.

The king looked on contentedly; he did not know what had been arranged.

“It can be none other than the Count of Thurn,” said Acton, always calm and logical.

“Why should he knock? I gave him a key!”

“I will go and see, if I am allowed,” was the answer.

The minister took a candle and stepped into the lobby. His royal mistress watched him with anxiety. The mournful silence became deadly. But the investigator returned after a few seconds.

“The heavy door has not been opened for a long time, probably,” he said. So it works hard and the count

snapped off the key in the lock. He was forced to knock to get into communication with us. I tried myself on my side to move the door, but it will not budge."

"What's to be done?"

"Break it down; and I gave the word accordingly."

In truth, there could be heard the smashing of the door by sledge hammers and the panels yielding. But the unusual noise in such premises was ominous. The steps approaching and the hand opening the doors were Thurn's.

"It was an accident impossible to foresee," he excused himself to the queen.

"It's a sign!" grumbled she.

"If that," interposed the king, "it is a sign that we ought to stay here and not go!"

His partner was afraid that he was returning to his own will.

"Let us begone!" she said.

"All is ready," replied Thurn; "only I should impart to the king an order given me by Lord Nelson."

The monarch rose and went over to the candelabra, where the count was waiting with the written order. Ferdinando could not read it, as it was in English, so that the bearer had to translate it.

"TO THE ADMIRAL, COUNT OF THURN:

"Gulf of Naples, 21st December.

"Make the Neapolitan frigates and corvettes ready for burning."

"You are sure you have not construed that wrong?" queried the sovereign.

"It is so there!"

"But why burn vessels which we were ten years a-building and cost so much?"

"Because they ought not to fall into the French hands."

"Why cannot they, too, sail over to Sicily?"

"It is Lord Nelson's order, and I wished to have it revised by your majesty before putting it before Marquis Nizza to be executed."

"Sire, sire!" interrupted the queen, "we're losing precious time, and for trifles!"

"Plague! do you call men-of-war trifles? Look at the Navy Budget for the last ten years and you will see that they ran into over a hundred millions!"

"It is eleven, and Lord Nelson is waiting," she persisted.

"You are right to be going, for Nelson does not wait for king or queen! Count, follow those orders and burn my fleet. What England cannot take away, she burns. Ah, my poor Caracciolo, how right you were, and how wrong I am not to follow your advice! Away, ladies and gentlemen! don't keep my Lord Nelson waiting!"

Snatching the light from Acton's hand, he showed the lead and all followed him.

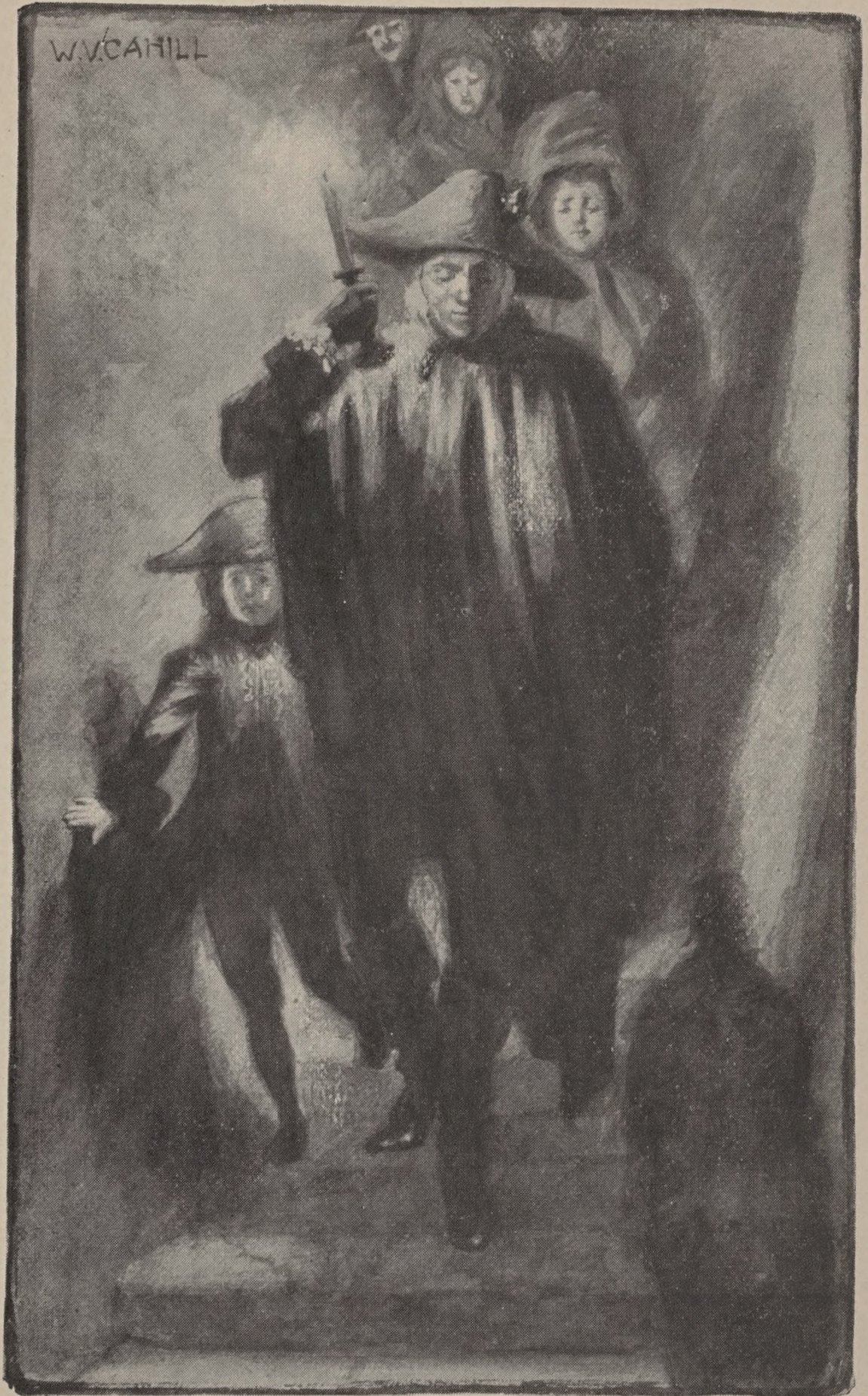
Not only was the Neapolitan fleet doomed, but its king had approved the decree.

Many royal flights have been known since the great Revolution, but Ferdinando was the first to make such nocturnal and furtive ones. He went on, speechless, listening and his heart palpitating. When he got down as far as the window before the Giants' Way, he thought he heard steps without, and snuffed the candle with so unsteady a hand that he put it out. They were plunged in obscurity. All had to feel their way, step by step, on the narrow and uneven staircase.

Still, the last step was reached without mishap, and a fresh and damp puff of outer air fanned their faces.

This was only a few steps from the landing-stage.

As the waters in the military haven are imprisoned by its breakwater, they were fairly calm. But the gale was



“ He went on, speechless, listening and his heart palpitating.”

(See page 176)

heard roaring and the waves hurled up on the strand. On the pier under the castle walls, Thurn looked up wistfully and questioningly at the sky. It was loaded low with heavy yet swiftly carried clouds. It resembled an aërial sea surging down to meet the other one and mingle its fury with it. In the narrow space between heaven and the deep, coursed the hurricane from the southwest, causing wreck and havoc—a thing not unusual in the Bay of Naples in the bad season.

The king intercepted the uneasy glance.

“If the weather is too bad, let us not go this night,” he said.

“It is Lord Nelson’s order,” replied Thurn; “yet if your majesty plumply refuses——”

“His order! Nelson’s order to override the tempest? But there is peril of life here!” said the other testily. “Come, do you answer for us, count?”

“To set you aboard the *Vanguard*, I will do all that is in the scope of a man struggling against wind and weather.”

“God ’a’ mercy, that’s no kind of answering! Would you go out for a sail on the bay on such a night?”

“Your majesty sees that I do—for I am only waiting for your majesty to say the word to get to the ship.”

“I say—were you in my shoes?”

“In your majesty’s stead, and not taking orders from any but events and God, I should look at it twice!”

The queen was fretting, but so powerful was etiquette that she did not dare to step down into the waiting boat in precedence.

“Well, what are we waiting for?” she inquired.

“What? Did you not hear what Thurn says? It’s bad weather. He will not warrant our safety, and here is Jupiter, who gives the best advice by tugging at his thong—to go back under cover!”

“Let us return, sir! and let all of us be torn to pieces like your unhappy servant. But I would dare the sea and its tempest rather than Naples and its hideous population.”

He looked at her with some sadness as he said:

“I deplore my faithful servitor more than anybody, I beg you to believe, since I know what to think of his death! But it is not I who have anything to fear from Naples and its folk.”

“Yes, I know all that,” she returned, sharply. “As Naples sees in you a fit representative, she adores you. But I have not the happiness to enjoy her favor, and I—I go!”

Casting etiquette to the winds, she went down into the boat. The royal children, more accustomed to follow their mother than their father, trooped down after her like a flock of young swans.

Young Prince Albert, alone, letting go Lady Hamilton’s hand, ran to his father and, seizing him by the hand, to draw him toward the boat, said:

“Come with us, father!”

The king was not in the habit of resisting when he had no supporters. He glanced around him for some such support, but all eyes fell under his search, although there was more appeal for a retreat than fire for the venture.

Ferdinando felt so lone and cast-off that he hung his head and let the prince lead him, while he led his dog, the only thing which objected to his quitting the land. He went down into the boat and sank on a seat, muttering:

“Since you all want it so—come, Jupiter, come!”

Scarcely was the king seated than the naval lieutenant who took the coxswain’s post on this occasion, cried out:

“Put off!”

Two sailors who had been holding the boat to the stage with gaffs, disentangled the hooks and used the points to

push off and get the head around. Down dropped the oars and the boat was headed to sea.

The boats charged to embark the other fugitives came up to the stage and received them.

How different this stealthy flight in the night, with the blasts whistling and the breakers thundering, from the joyous feast of the September sunset, when on an even sea, to Cimarosa's music, the ringing of bells, the resonance of cannon, the same personages went to greet the victor of Aboukir Bay. Three months only have passed, and now they are driven, fleeing from those French whose defeat they had too prematurely toasted, to seek hospitality in the midnight dark, on the same *Vanguard* which they had welcomed!

CHAPTER XXIII.

A CURIOUS SEA RACE.

The departure of the ruler left Naples in stupor. To see the English vessels disappear on the horizon left all in prostration.

One evening, a strange rumor ran about the streets. Those who repeated it, said: "Look out for the fire!" yet none knew where the fire was or where it would break out. But the people assembled on the waterside, staring.

A thick smoke rose skyward from the middle of the gulf, and drifted from east to west; it was the Neapolitan fleet, burning by Nelson's orders and under the Marquis Nizza's supervision.

It was a gorgeous spectacle, but it was costly!

Before this great illumination to celebrate the king's abandoning his capital in the face of an advancing foe, the illustrious fugitive was on the sea, as related.

Having had notice of his guests, Lord Nelson was making his hospitality afloat as comfortable as possible. The admiral had not given up his own cabin, but he had housed the newcomers handsomely by providing the gun-rooms, from which the guns had been drawn in or otherwise disposed of.

Caracciolo had done more on his ship; he gave up his own cabin to the prince royal.

They were three days out when the wind fluctuated and shifted from south to west-northwest.

Scarcely had the English admiral perceived this, than he gave his captain, Hardy, his friend rather than subordinate, orders to trim ship.

“Must we stand out by-and-large from Capri?” asked the navigator.

“With this wind it does not matter. We will sail free.”

Hardy studied the wind a while and shaking his head, responded:

“I do not believe this will hold.”

“Never mind; let us get all the profit out of it while it blows. Although I am ready to die, and cheer on my men to be killed for the king and the royal family from the highest to the last, I shall not reckon them in safety until landed at Palermo.”

“What signals are we to show the other craft?”

“To set sail after our fashion and keep in our wake, straight for Palermo, get there as they please.”

But off Capri, the wind failed, as Hardy had foreseen.

This calm gave the passengers time to take a little food and rest, for they had been sick and worried after the start. Lady Hamilton had the English sea-footing and was fair as if on a meadow instead of the slimy deck. She had remained with the queen while her husband messed with the officers.

Nelson came on deck after supper. It was to be feared that during the night would come a high wind or a squall.

The king had thrown himself on a bed, but not to sleep; he was no better seaman than warrior. All the sublime aspects and grand movements of the sea escaped him entirely. He knew nothing about it but the dangers and the sickness. About midnight, finding that slumber still failed him, however he might toss and turn, he left the stateroom and, followed by his tenacious Jupiter, went up the companion stairs.

And soon as his head passed above the deck level, he spied Nelson and his navigating officer, probing the heavens with seeming anxiety.

“You were right, Hardy. Your old experience does not

go begging. I am a sea soldier, while you are a seaman. Not only has the wind blown itself out, but we shall have another gale, and a fierce one."

"Saying nothing, my lord, about our being in a poor position to bear the brunt of it. We had better have taken the *Minerva's* route."

Nelson growled in ill humor.

"I no more like the great Mogul, that haughty Caracciolo, than you, but it must be acknowledged—to give the devil his due—that the compliment you paid me is his rating also. He is a thorough sea dog and the proof is that, in passing between Capri and Campanella Head, he hugged the island so that the gale spared him and tempered the rainfall. While we caught the blast and the drencher!"

Nelson had turned slowly to the black cloud looming up before them. There was no shelter there.

"Well, we are a mile off Capri, anyway!" he remarked.

"I would it were twenty," muttered Hardy, low, but not low enough to escape his superior's ear.

A gust out of the west sprang up and lashed their faces, precursor of heavier attacks.

"Have the topsails taken in, and close up to the wind."

"Has your lordship no fear for the sparring?" asked the officer, remembering the shot still embedded in the masts.

"I am afraid of the coast—that is all," was the reply.

In that full, sonorous voice of the seaman who outroars the winds and waters, were repeated the directions which concerned the boatswain and the helmsman:

"Hand in those topgallant sails! Luff!"

The king had heard this talk and the commands without understanding anything; he divined, however, that danger impended and would come out of the west. He had finished the task of getting out upon the deck.

Though Nelson did not understand Italian any better than he did English, he asked him :

“Is there any danger?”

Nelson bowed, but turning to his officer, he said :

“I believe his majesty does me the honor to question me. If you can make heads or tails of his lingo, Hardy, give him an answer.”

“There is not a jot of danger aboard a ship commanded by Lord Nelson, sire,” returned the other Englishman, “because, do you see? he foresees the danger. But I believe we are going to have a squall.”

“A squall—yes, but I thought I had heard enough of squalls already!”

The seaman could not withhold his smile.

“Yet it is pretty fair weather after what we left port with, for me!” remarked the royal voyager, contemplating the moon gliding over a snowy sky broken up with rifts through which rich blue showed.

“Oh, sire, you should not look up overhead. But over yon, on the sea and sky line, before us. D’ye see that black line slowly rising and parted from the sea by just a streak of white, as it might be a silver hair? Well, in ten minutes that black squall will burst right on us.”

The second gust was laden with spray or rain. Under its pressure, the *Vanguard* lay down to it, or, rather, from it, and groaned.

“Clew up the mainsail,” struck in Nelson, taking command direct to leave his sailing-master to continue the conversation with the pupil in navigation. “Haul in the mainjib!”

The operations were performed with a promptness which proved that the men knew their importance, and the ship, relieved of some of her canvas, ran under her stay-sails, the three topsails and the flying-jib.

Nelson spoke a few words in English to his officer.

“Sire!” interpreted the second, “my lord begs me to point out to your majesty that the squall will burst on us pretty quick, and that it will have no more respect to your head than to the curly pate of our sauciest middy.”

“Might I go and cheer up the queen and tell her that there is no real danger?” asked the king, not sorry to be cheered up at the same time into the bargain.

“Why not, sire? With the help of the cherub that sits up aloft and my lord, I will answer for the whole basket of fish.”

The monarch went below, followed by Jupiter, who whined pitifully, for he had the animal’s sensitiveness of discomfort.

As predicted, the squall came along, and with frightful thunder and a deluge, it declared war on the whole fleet. Ferdinando had things against him; for, after having been betrayed on land, he was buffeted by the sea, also traitor to him.

In spite of the assurance conveyed to her by the king coming down, the queen understood by the first shocks that the *Vanguard* was the plaything of the storm. Next under the deck, she could tell by the quick patter of the sailors’ feet that the danger was great; mighty were their efforts against it. She sat on her bed with all her brood about her.

Lady Hamilton kept running from one to another, giving hot tea to her mistress and sweet lemonade to the children, and uttering words of cheer and devotedness.

Nelson came down in half an hour, as the squall was over. But the squall, which is sometimes a mere passing freak to clear the sky, is at others herald of a hard storm. He could hardly aver to the lady that all was over and promise her a quiet night.

On her invitation, he had a cup of tea with her. The children, through fatigue and the recklessness of their

age, dropped off to sleep, not having their elders' fears to keep them awake.

The admiral had not been a quarter of an hour below when, while studying the ship by her movement, he heard a gentle knock at the door. It opened on the queen bidding the visitor come in, and a young naval officer appeared. It was clear that he came for his officer.

"It's you, Mr. Parkinson, is it? What is wrong, sir?"

"My lord, the captain sends me to say that the wind has got round to the south, and that if we stand on in this course we shall be thrown upon Capri."

"Well, stand off, then!"

"Ah, but it is a rough sea, and the old ship labors and is losing speedway."

"Oh, oh! so you are afraid that she will miss stays?"

"The good old bark would go to the bottom, my lord."

Nelson rose, bowed to the hostess and the king, and followed the lieutenant.

The king did not know English, but the queen did; still, the sea terms bothered her; she only judged that there was a fresh danger. She looked inquiringly at Lady Hamilton.

"It appears that a difficult maneuver must be attempted, and they do not dare try it in Lord Nelson's absence."

The hearer frowned and moaned a little. Emma tottered over to the door and listened there.

Valuing the strait, Nelson had hurried to his station. The wind was the dreadful African sirocco and the ship had it dead aft.

The admiral's look around him was rapid and wary. Though cloudy, there was a tendency to clear up. Capri stood out to larboard, and the glimmer of the moon, flitting through the vapor, allowed one to spy the white points, which were the whitewashed houses. Most to be discerned was the long, snowy fringe, being the shore, all

its line, covered with surf to a height appalling, inland. With the glance, the seafarer had judged the situation. The wind overfilled the sails; masts and yards, creaked with the strain.

"We must wear ship," he said to his second.

Veering was hazardous, as, if the ship did not turn handily, she would be swept upon shore.

Scarcely was the helm shifted and the sails trimmed for the turning to go off on quite another tack, than it would seem that winds and waves understood the intention and united to oppose it. The upper sails pressed still more heavily on the yard and the mast, which whipped like a reed. A terrible crack was heard. If the topmast went by the board, the vessel would be lost.

At this moment of anguish, the commander felt a light touch on his left arm; turning his head, he saw Emma.

He stopped a moment to plant a kiss on her enfevered forehead, then stamping his foot as if the wood were living flesh, he growled:

"Why the deuce don't you obey the tiller?—get around with you!"

The *Vanguard* obeyed. She fell off sluggishly, but regained her impetus and went about neatly; after some minutes of doubt, she ran off, slanting to the west-north-west.

"That's it!" said Nelson; "now, we cannot run into any land till we cross a hundred and fifty leagues clear!"

He breathed again.

"My dear Lady Hamilton, will you kindly translate into Italian what his lordship has just said?"

It was the king's voice, for he had followed the lady upon deck.

The explanation was given him.

"Dear me!" said he, without any idea of maritime problems; "it seems to me that this road will never bring

as to Sicily, for the boat is headed for Corsica, if anywhere."

To the Englishwoman's repetition of the criticism, Nelson replied, with some impatience:

"Sire, we have to move like the bishop in chess, since we cannot go in the teeth of the wind. If your majesty will stay on deck, in another twenty minutes, it will be seen that we take another turn and so regain the space if not the time we lose."

"I think I understand what you are doing. But it did not need any more spinning and turning to churn up my soul in me! I wish there was a little less whirling, if you could manage it!"

"Sire, if we were on the Atlantic and the wind were against us, but you wanted to reach Rio or the Azores, I would tack in 'legs' of sixty or eighty miles, so that your majesty would be spared attacks of what I am not spared either; but we are in a land-locked sea, this Mediterranean, and we can tack only in a few-mile reaches."

"Reaching!" repeated the king, rolling his eyes.

"Anyway," went on the seaman, glancing at disappearing Capri, "your majesty may rejoin the queen and encourage her, for I answer that all goes well!"

The king drew a breath of relief, though he had not literally traced the speech; but the words were pronounced with such conviction that it passed from Emma to him. So he went below, and announced that all danger of being wrecked was passed, which assurance the lady confirmed. In half an hour, the queen, completely set at ease, was slumbering on her friend's shoulder.

The burst of wind which almost hurled Nelson on the Capri strand had shaken Caracciolo, but not so sensibly. Part of the violence had been diminished by his sheltering himself by the isle to windward; besides, having a lighter craft, the Italian admiral had been able to manage more

easily than his rival in the *Vanguard*, disabled, and her standing sticks weakened by shot.

When, after a few hours' rest, Nelson came on the afterdeck at daybreak, he saw that while he had with great pains doubled Capri Head, Caracciolo and his ship had reached Cape Licosa, giving him some twenty miles' advance. Better than this; while the Briton was sailing under topsails, staysails and outer jib, the Italian had full sail spread and, at every tack, gained on the wind.

Untimely enough, the king came on deck just then, and caught Nelson, through his spyglass, viewing his colleague.

He asked the officer of the watch where they were. He was amazed to be told that the rock in sight, though they had passed it, was still Capri. They had not run twenty miles since three o'clock the day before!

The admiral wanted to know what dashed the royal spirits, but only snapped his fingers when told that it was on account of the little progress made. As this gesture was rather disrespectful, the monarch resolved to be revenged by humbling his pride.

"What was his lordship gazing at when I came here?" he inquired.

"That ship a-weather of us."

"You mean, ahead?"

"It is and it isn't!"

"What is it? anything to do with us? I can't presume that, for, the *Vanguard* being the best ship and the best seaman commanding her in our Lord Nelson, no captain of a ship could outstrip us, I suppose."

Nelson bit his lip when this remark was intensified by being put in terse English.

"The king's right," he said; "none ought to outstrip the admiral's flag, especially when his ship has royalty aboard.

So the committer of this rudeness should be punished, and on the spot. Just signal for Prince Caracciolo to fall off and wait for us."

By the speaker's countenance, Ferdinando had guessed that his shot had told, and having also felt sure by the curt, imperative tone that Nelson was administering a reprimand, he watched the officer carry out the order.

He went away to the signaling chest and returned with an armful of flags. He attached them to the halyard in a fixed order and by his own hand.

"Did you send word to the queen that a gun is to be fired so that she will not take alarm?" asked the chief.

Hardy nodded. There was no use in his speaking, as a gunshot went off and a booming column of smoke rushed out of the upper gundeck. Five flags strung on the line were simultaneously run up to the gaff, transmitting Nelson's snub with full naval bluntness. The signal shot was to attract the *Minerva's* attention, and she hoisted a flag to signify "warning heeded." But whatever effect the rebuff made on the Neapolitan, he did not waver in obeying.

In came his topsails, down fluttered outermost jib and the topgallant sails sagged. Nelson watched this with his glass. He saw the *Minerva* under reduced canvas; only the jib and mainsail remained full, so that the frigate lost three parts of her way; while on the other hand, the English flagship, as the wind calmed a little, had all her cloth put out, except the skysails.

In a few hours the *Vanguard* had recovered all the gain the *Minerva* had enjoyed. It was then only that the latter resumed all sail set. But though Caracciolo had so little offered to the wind, he did not lose a length while keeping a quarter of a mile behind the *Vanguard*, though this massy colossus had every stitch spread.

On seeing this facility of his admiral in evolutions, the *Minerva* obeying her director like a good steed, Ferdinando began to regret that he had not embarked with his old friend, the prince, as he had promised, instead of on the *Vanguard*.

CHAPTER XXIV.

KING DEATH COMES ABOARD.

The course was in long stretches all day, which became more distressing as the sea roughened.

Delicate always, the young Prince Albert could not resist these shocks; he had become exhausted with suffering and reposed without rest on Emma's lap. At each laying over on a fresh tack, his pangs increased. About three o'clock, his nurse mounted on deck.

It required no less than her presence to un wrinkle Nelson's front. She came to say that the prince was worse and that the queen begged to know if they could not be landed somewhere or the ship motion moderated. They might make in at St. Euphemia Gulf, but what would Caracciolo think of this backing out? That the *Vanguard* could not keep the open sea and that the vanquisher of men had been overcome by Neptune?

His maritime disasters were memorable, nearly as much so as his victories. Not a month anterior, in the Gulf of Lyons, he had been met with a wind which broke off his three masts so that he had to enter Cagliari harbor in tow, this other ship of his being less damaged.

Nelson questioned the skies with that deep-seeking eye of the navigator to which no dangers are un signaled.

The weather was not reassuring. Lost in clouds which the sun but faintly tinged with its yellow hue, it slowly faded out in the west, cutting the sky with those rays which augur high winds and cause pilots to say: "The sun is drawing up our anchors."

"The lighthouse of the Mediterranean," Stromboli,

which they heard in the distance, was lost to sight, as well as the archipelago surrounding it, in the foggy mass floating on the very waters and seeming to come forward. On the other, or northern side, the outlook was less obscured; but as far as eye could reach, no ship was sighted but the *Minerva*, which seemed the *Vanguard's* shadow as she imitated all her moves.

The other vessels, profiting by the admiral's leave, "independent sailing," had stood out to the open or taken refuge in Castellamare port.

If the wind held and they stuck to the route to Palermo, they would have to reach to and fro all night long and probably the next day.

Two or three more days at sea were more than the young prince could bear, affirmed Lady Hamilton. If, however, with this same wind, they headed for Messina, they might get in there in the night.

Thus acting, Nelson was not revoking his plan, but acceding to the king's order. So he ordered the change, and after reflecting on the form to preserve his pride, sent the word to the consort frigate:

"King's order for *Vanguard* to steer for Messina. *Minerva* can continue to Palermo."

Caracciolo signaled that he would obey. The *Vanguard* shook out her sails and had but to shift her helm to bear off on the new destination, for if they met with mishap there was still St. Euphemia's to put into.

The Englishman gave a last look at the *Minerva*, which shot off light as a gull, over the creaming sea, and leaving the deck to the officer, went down to dinner in the main cabin.

Hearty eater as was Ferdinando, not even he bore him company. Besides the tribute to the greater king at sea than he on land, a deep and growing disquiet suspended the cravings of appetite. Still, Nelson's company cheered

the illustrious fugitives, and all drew up to the board, with the exception of Lady Hamilton and the prince, whose sickness was alarming. The doctor was doing his best for him, but the specific, we know, had not been found in those days. Weak tea and lemonade was prescribed, and as the fretful sufferer would take nothing from any hand but Emma's, the mother was compelled to abandon him entirely to the English woman, whom the boy called "his auntie."

Insensible to others' woes, the king had personal troubles which prevented him from attending to his son, though he was really more tender than his wife.

In order to be nearer to Emma, Nelson was forced to inquire closely about the child. The wind moderated, and the ship began to careen and right itself; after the pitching and tossing, the rolling. Torment after torture.

Nelson gazed on the apparently lifeless child.

"Ay, I feel why the queen asked to be landed anywhere," he said. "Unhappily, I do not know in the whole Lipariot Archipelago one port where I can risk the *Vanguard* with her draught. On top of that, we have the fortunes of a kingdom to bear, and we are so far from Messina, Milazzo and St. Euphemia's."

"But it seems to me the storm is quieting," observed Emma.

"You mean, the wind is slackening, for we have not had anything like a storm this day. Lord save us from a storm in these waters! Yes, the wind is falling off, but it is but a truce, and I shall not hide from you my fears that we may have a worse night than the last."

"What you say is not enlivening, my lord!" broke in the queen, who had been listening and knew enough English to seize the pith of this.

"But you may rest certain that respect and attachment watch over you!" was his reply.

Lieutenant Parkinson came to confer with his superior, who stood aside with him. They whispered briefly together.

“All right!” returned the commander in his stern, official voice. “Make fast all the guns with the strongest tackle. I am going on deck. Madam,” he went on, to the queen, “if I had not so precious a charge, I should let my officers work the ship, but having the honor of a king on board, I must manage all myself. Do not be disquieted if I have to deprive myself of the honor of being by you.”

Ferdinando stopped him on the way out as if he would go with him.

“For Heaven’s sake, madam, prevail on the king to stay here. Up there he would demoralize the officers!”

On this broad hint being transmitted, the sovereign dropped into an easy-chair, muttering:

“Oh, Caracciolo!”

The commander had not set one foot on the deck before he saw that not only was a serious event portending, but an unexampled one had happened. The serious portent was in the on-comer being a tempest. The unexampled occurrence was that the compass needle had lost its steady attraction and was varying from north to east. He comprehended that a magnetic current was created by the action of the volcano near by, and the magnetic needle yielded to the influence.

By worse luck, it was a dark night; not a star above by which to steer the ship.

If the south wind softened and the sea smoothed, the danger would grow less and even disappear. The ship could be stripped and laid by to await daylight. But the things were not in this state, and it was evident that if the wind ceased to come out of the south it would rush from another quarter. In fact, the blast sank to gusts

and they to puffs, and finally died out, and soon the sails were heavily flapping against the masts.

The calm was alarming over the waste.

Men and officers eyed each other in distress. This menacing suspension of hostility by the elements was like the truce granted by a foe, not altogether for preparing for renewed action, but for making peace with Heaven. The flame in a battle lantern rose upright without a tremor. The waves slapped the sides of the ship with a sad sound, and the depths of ocean emitted sounds of mysterious solemnity.

“Nasty night at hand, my lord,” said Hardy.

“Pooh! Not so dreadful as that day in Aboukir Bay!” was the response.

“Do we hear thunder? That’s odd, for it booms dead ahead and the fresh wind is getting up aback!”

“It is the thunder of Stromboli! We are going to have a terrible thwack! Take in all sail!”

Excited by the danger, the topmen flew nimbly into the rigging and in five short minutes the vast sheets of canvas were rendered inoffensive and bound to the yards.

The calm deepened. The waves ceased to lick the vessel’s sides. The sea was smoothed as though aware that something violent was nigh. Light veils streaked the sky and circled around the topgallant masts, a token of the coming whirlwind.

All at once, as far as the eye could reach in the gloom, the surface of the sea was seen to heave and, next, to undulate. This broke into foam, and a terrifying roaring raced over the froth, spurred by the west wind, which smote the vessel so fiercely that her masts sloped under the irresistible blow.

“Port your helm!” shouted Nelson. “Port!” He added, but it was to himself, so low was the tone: “Life is at stake!”

The men at the wheel obeyed; but, for an instant, the ship refused to right herself. During this space of anxious expectation, a cannon to starboard, breaking from its lashings and rolling clear across the deck, killed one and crippled five or six men.

Hardy took a step to jump down on the 'tween-deck, but his chief stopped him by grabbing his arm, saying:

"Keep cool! Bid the men have their axes ready. I shall raze the hull to a tub, but I'll bring her through!"

"She rises! She rises!" rang out a hundred voices of the crew.

Truly, the gallant bark rose slowly and majestically, like a courteous and courageous adversary saluting before really plunging into a fight. Ceding to the rudder, and swinging her sturdy high poop around to the fury, she cleft the surge, running before the turbulence.

"Is the compass true again?" cried the admiral.

"No, my lord," answered Hardy, returning. "I am afraid that we are running straight upon Stromboli."

At this, as if retorting to a thunder-burst of the west, one of those rumblings was heard presaging an eruption; an immense spout of fire gushed up to the very sky, but was almost immediately smothered in the rain. But this jet of flame had illumined things for a mile away. They were hurried toward this natural pharos, whose light seemed enkindled expressly for the *Vanguard's* use.

"Hard a-starboard!" cried the officer to the steersmen.

The ship headed from the east-south-east to the south-east.

"Your lordship is aware that, from Stromboli to Panaria, a distance of some seven or eight miles," interjected Hardy, "the sea is speckled with reefs and islets flush with the water?"

"Yes, sir. So put one of your sharpest lookouts forward, and one of your best boatswains in the fore

weather-shrouds and send me Lieutenant Parkinson to oversee the heaving of the lead."

"I will do it myself. Hi! bring a lantern into the main-mast chains and—— Your lordship must have a chance to hear what I sing out!"

This order had prepared the hearers for a crisis. Nelson went around to the binnacle to see if the compass had corrected itself, but the needle was fluctuating still.

"Land ahead!" called out the most forward hatch.

"Larboard the helm!" shouted Nelson.

The ship closed to the south. A cracking was heard out of a kind of cloud enveloping the bow. This was the parting of many ropes; and an immense strip of canvas, torn from the reefing-knots and yard, was carried away.

"That's nothing!" jeered Hardy. "But there goes the jib, blown out of the bolt-ropes!"

"Breakers a-weather!" cried the lookout.

It was vain to try to veer in that strait, and they would probably miss stays.

Nelson reasoned with himself that rarely are islands so near that a vessel even of bulk cannot crash between them. English oak and coral! pooh!

"Tiller a-starboard!" said he.

This word made all quiver. This was going on still into the onslaught—taking the bull by the horns, as the popular saying is.

"The lead, the lead?" queried the admiral.

"Ten fathoms," replied Hardy, reading the dripping line.

"Stand by, all hands!" cried Nelson.

"Breakers to la'board!" said the lookout.

Nelson approached the bulwarks and saw the sea storming up over some obstacle half a cable length off.

But the *Vanguard* was rushing so fast that she already was passing them.

“Steady!” said the commander to the men steering.

“Breakers on the sta’board!” cried the lookout.

“The lead?” demanded Nelson.

“Six!” replied Hardy.

“We are in the passage between Stromboli and Pan-aria,” remarked Nelson, as if verifying by a chart. “In ten ticks, we are safe—or in Davy’s locker!”

Indeed, instead of that regularity which rolling waves always maintain even at the typhoon’s heights, these billows seemed dashing against one another, and there could be discerned amid the tufts of foam and spray a chaos in which howled all the hellhounds of Scylla.

One narrow ribbon wound between two rolls of breakers.

This was the thin channel through which the *Vanguard* was to be threaded.

The water had shallowed to six fathoms. The admiral frowned, for the ship would touch bottom at five.

Word came from the master-steersman. The ship was losing way; her speed sensibly was reduced.

Nelson looked about him. The wind, cut and broken by the islands amid which the *Vanguard* had been swept, would have been caught only in the upper sails if they could be stretched. On the other hand, something under the keel impeded the pace.

It was still six fathoms.

The chief steersman was an old Sicilian who noticed that the admiral was cogitating. He begged to be let say a word. He explained that a current was setting in through the narrows. By luck, it would give half a foot, if not a foot, of more water. It would be felt as far as Paolo, which placed the admiral more at ease.

“Make ready to hoist up the topsails and topgallant sails,” ordered the chief.

Though this astounded the crew, it was executed with

that mute and passive obedience which is the mariners' first characteristic, more particularly in danger. The order was no sooner repeated by the boatswains than the sails were seen aloft to be shaken out, fall into place and, drawn taut, belly out. Only on high did they hold the wind.

"She's going again!" ejaculated the old helmsman, joyously, indicating that he had been worried by the fear that the *Vanguard* would wallow in the trough instead of tracing the restricted route laid down for her safety.

The next sounding gave seven fathoms.

But the lookout in the foretop called down: "Breakers ahead!"

"Breakers a-starboard!" shouted the watcher, clinging to the capstern at the heel of the jibboom.

"Hard a-starboard!" roared Nelson; "hard, hard, hard!"

The triple repetition of the direction proved the imminence of the danger; for to tell the truth, the vessel was obeying the impulse of the two men bearing all their weight and strength on the spokes of the wheel: the flying jibboom was well over the crest of foam seething on a reef. All followed the ship's movement. If she was ten seconds more sluggish to the rudder, she would run on the rocks.

Unfortunately in turning off she came more in the wind and was meeting with no resistance. A frightful squall beat on her, and for a second time bowed her down so that the tips of the studding sailbooms skimmed the silvery wave tops. At the same time the masts so creaked and squeaked, and as if the lower rigging alone held the frame together, all three topgallant masts snapped and leaped over with a tremendous crash.

Nelson's voice rose above the storm:

“Topmen, up aloft—with your knives and your teeth, cut away and cast over the side!”

To anticipate this order, a dozen men had been fretting against the curb of discipline. At this spur, they bounded up the chains and shrouds, and scaled the ratlines like a troop of monkeys. In a trice they were in the maze of splinters and tangled cordage, slashed and plucked asunder with such fierceness that in a few minutes sails, ropes and chips all were in the sea.

The good ship rose, but slowly, to the level keel. But while she was recovering, an enormous green sea flung itself so forcibly over upon the foredeck that the whole caved in, unable to bear the weight. Under this, the fore-castle true-deck luckily resisted the pressure and she did not go down. The water choked up the scuppers and ran off to lee like a waterfall. It was a miraculous escape, and the seamen looked up at each other like men returning to their senses after a deadly swoon.

As the ship shook herself of the residue of the cataract, a woman's voice was heard in a scream:

“My lord, in Heaven's name, come down to us!”

Nelson could but recognize Emma Hamilton's voice calling him to her aid. He glances anxiously around him.

In the rear, Stromboli was rumbling and fuming. On either hand, immensity. Forward the sheet of water stretching to the Calabrian coasts, on which the staggering giant, though crippled, traversed the shoals and rocks, the vanquisher!

The order was given to take in the topsails, but leave the mizzen and staysails. Nelson handed his deck-officer the speaking-trumpet—the badge of command—and hastened to go down the companionway. At the foot of it he found Lady Hamilton.

“Oh, my friend, come! come quick! The king is mad

with fright! the queen is in a swoon! and the young prince is dead!"

Nelson entered.

The king was on his knees, his face buried in the cushions of a sofa, while the queen had fallen on a divan, holding in her arms the dead body of her son.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SEA SENDS STORMS.

As host the admiral was bound to invigorate his illustrious guests in their calamity.

"Madam," he said, "I can do nothing against the grief befallen you, as it comes of heaven, which should comfort you; but I can aver that the survivors need can believe they are pretty well out of danger."

"Do you hear that, dear queen!" exclaimed Emma, lifting up Carolina's head.

"I don't understand a word of your gibberish, but if it is said that all is serene, why, it is done out of kindness!" the king said, slightly.

"My lord says so because it is the plain truth!"

The king, getting up, whisked the dust off his knees.

"Are we in at Palermo?" he inquired.

"Not quite," was the answer; "but as we shall have a favorable wind by daybreak, we ought to be there this evening. We deviated solely to oblige the queen."

"Yes, say by my entreaty and not my order. At present, go where you please. It is all one now to me, for my poor darling lies dead in my arms."

"Hence I am seeking the king's instructions."

"As you assert there is no more danger, my instructions are to put us on land at Palermo as well as anywhere else. But," continued Ferdinando, staggering as the ship gave a lurch and recovered, "it strikes me that there is a plague of agitation in your floating castle, and though we are eager to say good-riddance to your hard

blow, which is not a tempest, it is in no hurry to shake us off!"

"In earnest, we are clearly not quits with it," responded the admiral. "But I am much mistaken if the hottest spells are not over. My advice is that your royal highnesses ought to take the repose you need and let us take care of the passage."

Ferdinando turned to his wife, who answered:

"I say that his lordship's advice is always good to follow, particularly when it is in matters of the sea."

Nelson bowed at being given a free hand, and as he was naturally of a tender heart, and, as a curate's son, devout, he murmured a "God rest the little one?" as he passed by the dead princeling.

When he took his place on deck again, dawn was peeping. Worn out, the tempest was sighing its last—terrible sighs, like the panting of the Titan under Sicily, who moved it every time he stirred in his grave. Nelson cast a glance on the splendid page of nature's album unrolled under his gaze, but he had too often seen it to be long absorbed.

He called his sailing-master to ask his opinion on the weather.

"Why," cried Hardy, "the storm is washed out. We shall have a change of wind, and, anyway, it will further our running into Palermo. I'll undertake to redeem your promise thereto, to those royals."

"But you are as tired as I, for you have had no more rest."

"Well, that being so, let us take it watch-and-watch. Let your lordship turn in for four or five hours, while, whatever happens, you know that with me on deck, I am not a whit dashed when I have blue water on every hand! Come the wind from any-guess-where, I will

make it send us toward Palermo, so that, when you turn out, why, we shall be on the route."

As the admiral was not a hale man, he gave way and went below for his few hours' sleep. When he came up it was eleven in the day.

The wind was south and fresh, and the *Vanguard*, at eight knots, had doubled Cape Orlando.

Nelson gave his faithful second a shake of the hand as thanks for his substitution, and bade him take his turn-in.

Seeing that all was going well, he went down to the mid-decks where the chaplain had laid out the young prince on Lieutenant Parkinson's bed. The lifeless boy seemed sleeping. Nelson was surprised, and felt a pang that he should be here mourning when those to whom the child should be dearest, father, mother and sisters, left the care to the clergyman. A tear moistened his single eye and fell on the rigid hand, half hidden in the magnificent lace ruffle. At this he felt a light touch on his shoulder; the hand was Emma's.

She was a little jealous of her pet; it was in her arms, not the mother's, that he had passed away. She came to array him in the dead clothes, so that a seaman's rough hand should not have that office. The sea-lion kissed her hand. Before death, the vastest and most ardent love has modesty.

The king was on deck when he got back.

Full of the mournful sight, Nelson thought he would have to console the sorrowing father. But the king felt better and was hungry. He was glad to see the admiral that he might tell the cook that he wanted the plate of macaroni without which no meal was perfect in his eyes. He pointed out the various islands where he had gone shooting, and said:

"I only hope that I shall find as fine game in my Sicilian preserves as on the main!"

So this potentate, whose territory the French were despoiling him of, this father whose son had been reft away—he only prayed for the twofold comfort that he should find forests stocked with game!

But other matters fretted Nelson in his own province. What had become of Caracciolo? and how should he get into Palermo? He was familiar with the Atlantic, but not with this present sea. There were two Sicilian sailors aboard, one, the sound steersman. But how could the first navigator of the day trust to a simple sailor to conduct a seventy-four-gun ship-of-war, and to a foreign seaman to traverse Palermo Passage?

If they got up in the daytime, they might call a pilot to come off by signaling. In the night they would have to stand off-and-on till day came.

To annoy him the more, the king, in his ignorance of nautical difficulties, was sure to ask him:

"If that is Palermo over there, why do we not sail right in?"

And Nelson would never bow to replying: "Because I do not know my way in!"

Besides, in a country where human life was the cheapest of commodities, would there be such a thing as a board of pilots, or even one?

They would soon know, for at nightfall, or 5 P. M., they were off the capital.

The king had gone down at two, when he found the macaroni cooked to a turn and dined perfectly. His children dined with him, but their mother kept her room as a mourner.

At half after three, the king came up with his son, Leopold, and his dog, who had come the voyage well. They joined Nelson on the quarter-deck, where he was

wistfully but vainly searching the sea, without anywhere descriing the *Minerva*.

It would have been a feather in his hat to have distanced the Neapolitan admiral, but the chances were that the native had got in ahead.

They doubled the cape at four. The wind blew forcibly out of the southwest. They could not enter the port without tacking, and in this twisting they would easily strike a rock or stick on a shoal.

At sight of the port, signals were sent up and down for a pilot to come off.

By the aid of his telescope, Nelson was enabled to survey all the shipping in the haven, and he distinguished nearest them all, and like a picket set in advance of the regiment, the *Minerva*, with all her standing rigging intact and fitly riding at her anchors. He bit his lip with spite, for he had hoped that she would not have out stripped him.

Night fell swiftly. He showed the signals anew, and fired a gun, after having notified his guests what the noise was for.

The darkness was so thick that soon they could only make out the town by the lights in the houses. A second shot was about to be fired when the officer of the watch reported that a boat was coming out. With the glass Nelson could also spy a local boat, under a three-cornered sail and manned by four men, bringing off a sailor, wearing the thick hooded jacket of the Sicilian seafarers.

"Boat ahoy! what are you wanting?" challenged the watch in the bow.

"Pilot!" was the short answer.

"Toss the man a line, and take his boat in tow!" commanded the admiral.

As the shallop came nearer, it furled its sail. The four

men dropped their oars and took to rowing. They ran alongside the *Vanguard*, where a rope was cast out to the pilot. Grasping it with the mariner's tenacity, he walked up, while also climbing the rope itself, along the side, like an experienced fellow; entered at one of the deck portholes and presently stood on the deck. He walked straight to the post where the admiral, his captain, and the king, with his boy, were waiting.

"You did not hurry yourself," gruffly remarked the officer of the deck.

"I came off at the gun-fire."

"Did you not see the signals?"

The pilot was not inclined to argue; he said nothing.

"Do not lose precious time," interrupted Nelson. "Ask him in his tongue if he is used to the port, and can take in a vessel of our burden?"

"I can talk your lordship's tongue," replied the stranger, in excellent English. "I know the port and I answer for all."

"That's good! Take the sailing into your hands, as you are the master here. Only don't forget that you are sailing a ship which bears your sovereigns."

"I know that I have that honor, my lord."

Without taking the speaking-trumpet offered him by Hardy, he gave his commands in a ringing voice which sounded all over the deck.

Like a steed which acknowledges a skillful rider and comprehends that all tricks and opposition to his will are useless, the *Vanguard* yielded to the newcomer, and even showed a willingness not unnoticed by the king.

The latter went over to the pilot, as Nelson and his officer stood aloof, moved by the same national pride and ship etiquette, to let the pilot rule.

"Do you think I can get ashore this night, my friend?" inquired Ferdinando.

"Nothing will prevent that, since we shall be at the moorings in an hour."

"Which is the best hotel at Palermo?"

The pilot laughed. "I don't suppose the king will stop at any hotel whatever, when he has the old King Roger's palace."

"Where I am not expected—where I should not get a bite to eat, and where the stewards, not suspecting my arrival, will have stolen even the bed sheets!"

"Quite otherwise, your majesty will find things in order. For I know that, this morning, at eight o'clock, on getting in port, Admiral Caracciolo saw to everything for your comfort."

"How would you know this?"

"I am the admiral's own pilot, and I can answer for it that, being anchored at eight o'clock, he was at the old palace by nine."

"So I shall have nothing to worry about but a carriage of some kind?"

"As the admiral foresaw that your majesty would arrive this evening, he has had three coaches waiting since five o'clock before the Marine Buildings."

"Upon my soul! this Admiral Caracciolo is mightily useful, and when I go traveling again I will choose him for my quartermaster!"

"It will be a great honor for the prince, less for the rank offered him than for the confidence it proves."

"Was the admiral buffeted by the storm?"

"Not a buffet!"

"It is clear that I should have done better if I had sailed with my own admiral," muttered the king, pulling at his own ear.

The pilot winced, and the other asked why he started.

"Nothing; but, I guess, the admiral would be pleased if he heard that much from your majesty's mouth."

"Oh, I am not talking up my sleeve." He turned to Nelson and said: "Do you know, my lord, that our admiral arrived at eight this morning without any hard blows? He must be a wizard of the waves, since we could not pull through without losing our t-t-topmasts and sundry other oddly-named things. You may translate that literally to your chief," he added to Hardy.

"Sire," Nelson replied, "your majesty was free to choose between the *Vanguard* and the *Minerva*; the *Vanguard* being chosen, all that wood, iron and canvas can do was done for your service by the *Vanguard*."

"All the same," continued the sovereign, who had the burning of his fleet on his heart, and the pressure of England through this intermediary, "if I had taken passage by the *Minerva*, I should have landed this morning and passed a fine day on firm land. But that is a fly bite. I am not the less grateful to your lordship, who did his best! To do what you can is to do your duty!" he finished, with feigned good humor.

Nelson stamped his foot and left his captain in charge while he went into his cabin.

At this juncture the pilot called out:

"Stand by to let down the anchor."

Setting sail, and the anchorage of a warship are the solemn moments on shipboard. So, when all interested had gone to their stations, the deepest silence reigned aboard. To passengers, this is prodigious; a thousand men, officers included, mute and attentive, awaiting a word.

The officer on duty repeats the pilot's directions and the boatswain repeats his by sound of his "call."

The men manning the ropes began to haul together, and as the yards swung into place, and the slack of the chain cable came out, the quivering *Vanguard*, of her own volition, forged through the maze of shipping, and,

spite of the scanty room for her course, proudly arrived at her place of mooring.

Meanwhile, the sails were hauled up partially, to hang in festoons. Those left spread stood so to be laid about and check the too great impetus of the ship. "Let go the anchor!" cried the pilot. Trumpet and whistle repeated the same. Off from the sides leaped one huge hook, falling with deafening splash into the tide. The massive chain followed, serpentine and throwing up spouts of spray.

The vessel groaned and strained, shaken to her depths. There was cracking throughout her joints; then, in the midst of the water bubbling and boiling, there came a shock; the anchor had taken hold.

The pilot's task was done; he had nothing more to do. So he went respectfully over to the officer next the chief and bowed to him. Hardy had twenty guineas ready for him, from the admiral, which he tendered. But the smiling guide shook his head, and said, as he repulsed the gold:

"I am paid by my own government; besides, I do not take any gold unless it bears the stamp of my own rulers—Ferdinando or Carlo."

The king had not let his eyes wander from him, and, as he was passing him with a bow, he caught him by the hand.

"Could you not do me a little service, friend?" he asked.

"Any order the king gives must be done, if in a man's power."

"Could you take me ashore?"

"Nothing is easier. But is that mean fisher's bark worthy to carry a monarch?"

"Take me, all the same!"

The pilot bowed, but returning to Hardy, he said:

“Captain, here’s the king wanting to be landed. Do you mind letting down the side ladder of state?”

Hardy was amazed at the royal whim.

As the king looked at him captiously, he observed that he would have to defer to the admiral, as no one could leave a British warship without the commander’s permission.

“Not even me? Am I a prisoner on the *Vanguard*?” queried the indignant sovereign.

“The king is never a prisoner; but the more noted the guest is, the more disgraced the host would feel at his departing without saying farewell.”

Clever Hardy bowed and went below.

“Confounded English! It would not take much to make me a Jacobin just to get out of your clutches!” muttered the king.

The caprice astonished the superior as much as his officer. So he came hastily upon deck.

“Is it true that the king wishes to take French leave of the *Vanguard*?” he demanded, counter to the rule that a question should never be put straight to a royal person.

“Nothing truer. My dear lord, I am finely treated on board, but I shall have better treatment on dry land. It is plain that I was not born to be a sailor!”

“Lower away the long boat!” began Nelson, but the fugitive interposed.

“It is useless! Don’t call up any of your brave fellows who must be tired out!”

“But I cannot credit what my captain said! that your majesty would go ashore in a fish-boat?”

“It is quite true. The fisher-pilot seems a skillful sea-

man and a faithful subject. I conclude that I can trust in him."

"But I cannot allow another boat than ours, or other men than his majesty's, to transport you ashore."

"That's what I said to your captain: I am a prisoner here!" retorted the monarch.

"Rather than leave your majesty one moment under that impression I will bow to his wish."

"That's nice! In this way we shall part good friends."

"But the queen?"

"Oh, she is fatigued. She is ailing. It would be too much bother to set her ashore in a skiff with the family. Put them all ashore to-morrow. I recommend them to your lordship's care, with all the court!"

"Do not I go with you, papa?" inquired little Leopold.

"No, no! what would mamma say if I took you, the apple of her eye?"

Nelson had ordered out the steps of honor used for magnates, ladies and soldiers.

But the pilot slid down a rope and swung himself into the boat.

"My Lord Nelson," said the passenger, "as I quit your ship, let me tell you that I shall never forget your attentions with which we were overwhelmed aboard, and, to-morrow, the men of the *Vanguard* shall receive proof of my satisfaction."

The admiral bowed, but he said not a word. The self-dismissed guest scrambled down the steps and sat down in the fisher's boat with a sigh of relief which the admiral heard in the opening in the bulwark where he stood, bowing.

"Push off!" said the pilot to the fisher, holding on by the gaff. The boat left the ship's side and went away.

"Oars out, lads, and pull lustily!" continued the pilot.

The four oars dipped and were plied with a concord not often met with in fishers, but much like man-of-war's men, and this vigorous impulsion sent the light craft over to the Marine Building, where the royal carriages were waiting.

The pilot was the first to jump out, with the painter in his hand, which he tied to a spile and bound the boat to the jetty. But before he could offer his hand, Ferdinando gathered himself up, and, neatly for a bulky man, sprang upon the firm pier.

"Hurrah!" said he, joyously. "I am on my own ground again! Old Harry take King George now! and the English admiralty, Lord Nelson, the *Vanguard*, and the whole fleet of his Britannic majesty! My friend, this is for yourself!"

"Thank you, majesty." The pilot rejected the purse just as he had the English offering; "but your majesty may have heard what I was bound to reply to the British captain: my government pays me."

"But you said that you would not take coin without the head of Carlo or Ferdinando upon it?"

"Sire, are you sure that this handed out to me does not bear the mint-mark of George?"

"You are a saucy dog to give a lesson to your tyrant! In any case, learn that if I borrow money of Old Dame Albion, she makes me pay high interest. The money is for your men, and this watch for you, you stickler! If ever I become king again, and you want any favor, come to me, and show me that watch, and you will see, I shall 'keep good time' with you!"

The pilot tossed the purse to his rowers, but pocketed the watch.

"To-morrow," he said, "I shall come to the palace, and

I hope your majesty will verify his promise about the favor.”

“I must say you strike while the iron is hot!” laughed the king, ready to laugh at anything now. He stepped into the first of the royal carriages, and called out: “To the royal palace, and plaguey quick!”

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PILOT'S REWARD.

Admiral Caracciolo, having notified the governor of Palermo that the king was coming, that functionary passed the notice on to the other officials.

Of course, a deputation was waiting to make speeches to the king, who, on his part, needed both nourishment and sleep, and the prospect of official addresses set him shuddering from his crown to his soles. So he cut the ceremony short by "taking it as read," and promised *largesse* to the poor, which would be bestowed on the morrow. As for the bishop, who was amid all his clergy, he mentioned a vow to build a church as a thank-offering for his miraculous escape from shipwreck, and wished a *Te Deum* sung for the same at the cathedral.

"Reduced though our purse is, we will try to recompense the church for our safety."

It was the turn of the magistracy—but he did not let their welcome take up his time. Recognizing the chief judge as a crony, he said:

"So we have you again, Master Cardillo? Are you still an inveterate card player and furious sportsman? Then I invite you to my card parties on condition you ask me out to your shooting!"

This was a regular dismissal, and he left to retire by the grand stairs. Four footmen held the lights for him, and he was followed by Jupiter, the only guest he had an inclination for. A dinner for thirty had been served. But the king sat at the head of the table and made them place the retriever on a chair at the other end, where he

was given all the dishes he tasted, to finish them. Never had Jupiter found himself at such a banquet. After the supper. Ferdinando took the pet with him into his sleeping-room, ordered the softest rugs to be laid at the foot of the bed for him, and as he patted his intelligent head before laying down his own head, he said:

“I hope that you will never have to say, according to some poet or another, that you found the stranger's stairs hard to climb and the exile's bread bitter!”

On which he nodded off to slumber, dreaming that he had made a miraculous draft of fishes in Castellamare Gulf and a tremendous battle in Ficuzza Woods.

In Naples, the king was awakened at eight, but there was no such rule here, and he slept on till ten. In the meanwhile, the queen, the family and their train were landed and lodged in the palace and about the town. The prince's remains were placed in King Roger's chapel for the time. The royal order was for them to lie in state for one day before interment. The official note went forth about the mourning, and so—Amen!

It was announced to the king that Admiral Caracciolo begged the honor to be received. It will be remembered that, if that pilot's story was to be believed, he had advertised the royal arrival and played his master-of-ceremonies capitally.

All the antipathy which Nelson was inspiring welded the exile to his own admiral. So he eagerly ordered his being ushered into the library next his sitting-room, where he himself came in such continued eagerness that he had not finished dressing.

“My dear admiral, I am downright glad to see you—in the first place for having thought of my welfare as soon as you yourself were blown into port!”

The other bowed, and said, without the greeting unclouding his face:

"Sire, that was my duty as a good and faithful subject."

"I want to offer you my compliments to boot for the gallant style in which you carried your ship through the storm! You came near to making Old Nelson burst with spite! I should have split with laughter over it if I had not been so thoroughly scared!"

"Admiral Nelson could only do his best," returned the Italian. "He could not handle an old-fashioned hull, battered and shattered like the *Vanguard*, as I could the new model and lighter craft, my frigate, which, moreover, has never been under fire."

"That is what I told him, not in those very words, but to the same effect, saving that I put it in another sense! I furthermore observed that I felt deep regret at having broken my word to voyage under your charge and gone with him instead of with you."

"I know that, and I was profoundly touched."

"You know? how—did he tell you? Eh! I understand: you were the pilot?"

Caracciolo did not reply to this, but he said presently:

"Sire, I came to beg a boon."

"You hit on a happy day! Speak!"

"I beg the king to accept kindly my resignation of admiralship of the Neapolitan navy."

The king fell back a step, so far was he from expecting this request.

"Sire, it is useless to have an admiral when there is no longer a fleet."

"You need not harp on that," exclaimed the exile, with plain anger; "my Lord Nelson had it burned. But, some day, we will be masters at home again, and we'll rebuild all that."

"But still, as I have lost the royal trust," went on the Neapolitan, coolly, "I deserve no more to command it."

"When did you lose my trust, Caracciolo?"

"I prefer to let it stand at that than reproach a ruler in whose veins flows the oldest regal blood in Europe, with having broken his word."

"That's right—I did promise you——"

"Not to leave Naples, or, if so, upon my deck!"

"Come, come, dear fellow! none of that." He held out his hand warmly.

But the admiral had a paper ready and put it in the proffered hand. It was the resignation.

"The king has no right to refuse it," added he.

"Oh, have I no rights now? Not to refuse your resignation!"

"No! for you granted me yesterday the first boon I should ask, and that is to accept my resignation."

"Yesterday, I—am I going mad or you?"

"I have all my wits. But you may not have recognized me. You will remember this watch, though?"

"The pilot!" exclaimed Ferdinando, looking at the time-piece, which bore his portrait set with brilliants. "How could you, an admiral, stoop to playing the pilot?"

"Sire, there is no inferior station when one is saving a king!"

The royal countenance took the sad expression not seldom on it.

"I am truly an unfortunate prince," he mourned, "for my friends leave me, or are driven away."

"Sire, you are wrong to accuse Heaven of what you do or allow to be done. You are a man with will and power—a king. With your free will, you can choose between ill and good. It is by your choosing the bad that the good shun you."

More grieved than irritated, the king rejoined:

"Caracciolo, let me tell you that nobody has ever spoken to me as you do."

"Because, apart from a man who loves you and wishes

the welfare of the realm, your majesty has none around him but courtiers who love themselves and seek but the dainties of fortune."

"What other such is there but you?"

"One your majesty forgot and left in Naples, but whom I have brought over to Sicily—Cardinal Ruffo."

"The cardinal well knows that I am always prone to listen to him."

"Ay, but after hearing his advice, you heed the queen's and Nelson's, and Acton's. I am in desolation at having to lack respect, but I must say that those three names will be accursed now and for all time!"

"Do you not think that I curse them, too?" responded the listener; "do you imagine that I do not see that they are pushing the country into ruin, and me to my perdition? I am not clever, but I am not a mole!"

"Well, then contend with them!"

"It is easy to say, contend—but I am not a man of contention! I was not born for a fighting life. I am one for sensations and pleasures; with a good heart which has been soured by keeping it in a ferment. There they are, three or four of them, all wrangling over my crown, scepter and throne. I let them play with them, hoping that they will brain one another with the rod, or choke with the crown around their neck. I never asked my fairy godmother for a reign. I like horses, hunting, and a jolly meal. With ten thousand a year and freedom in my guise, I should be the happiest man in creation. But, maintaining that I am the king, they do not leave me an instant's peace. They make wars without my wish and I get the blows. They blunder and I, officially, have to repair these blunders. You ask for your resignation—you are right. But you ought to apply to the others, for it is really they whom you serve, and not me."

"That is why, wishing to serve you and not that crew,

I wish to retire into private life, such as your majesty pictures."

"If I sign, what will you do?"

"Go back to Naples, to serve my country. Naples is now in the stress when she needs all her sons' courage and intelligence."

"Take care what you do in Naples, prince!"

"I shall try as ever to conduct myself as an honorable man and a good citizen."

He pointed to the watch lying on the table.

"Iron head!" thought the monarch, and impatiently he took up the pen and wrote at the foot of the resignation:

"Granted; but the Prince of Caracciolo must not forget that Naples is in the enemy's hands." He signed the usual: "Ferdinando, B."

The ex-admiral looked at the paper and supplement, and, folding it up, saluted the sovereign.

"You are forgetting your watch," remarked the latter.

"That was not given to the admiral, but the pilot. The pilot does not exist, and the admiral is no more."

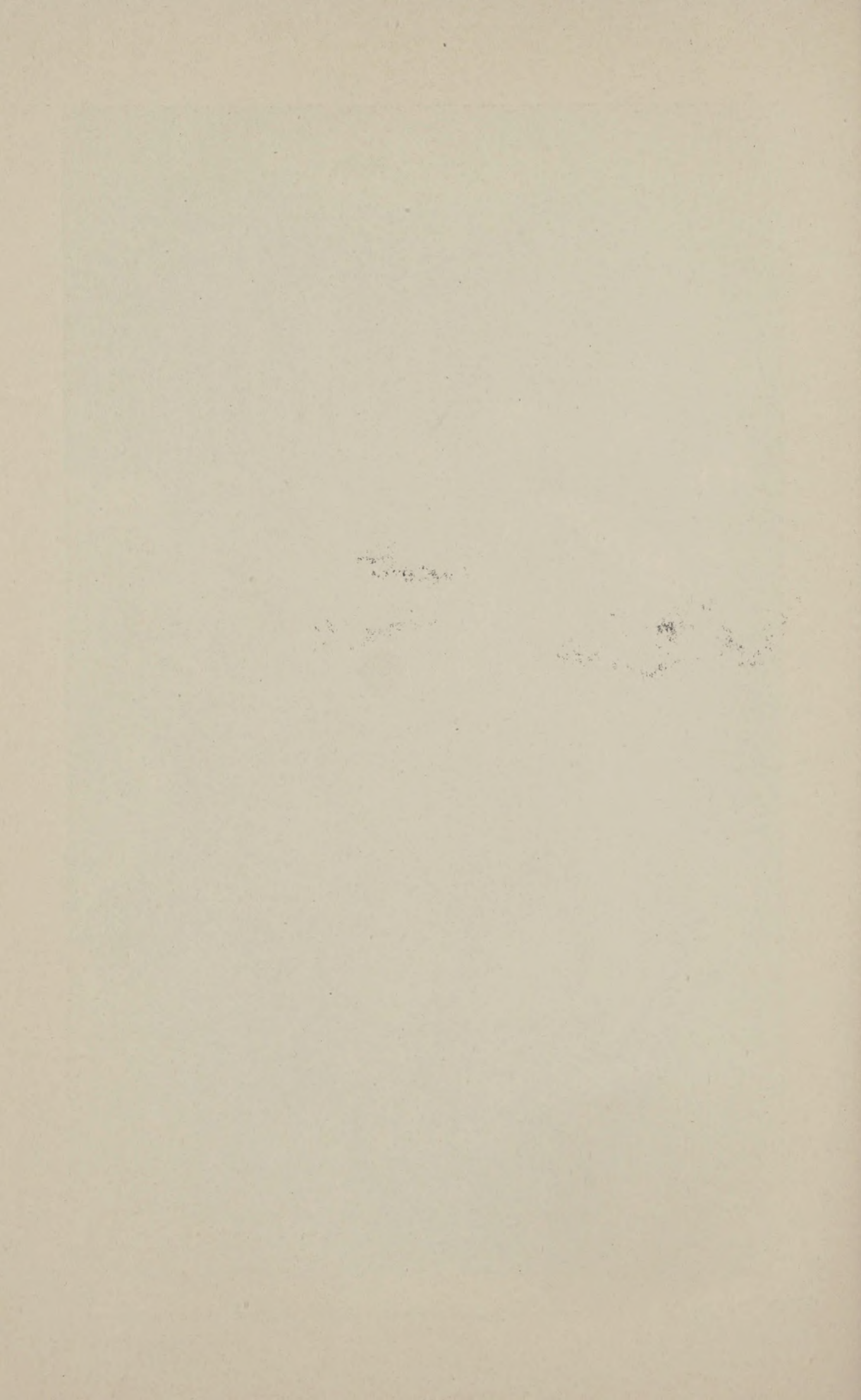
"Still, let me hope that the friend will survive," spoke the Bourbon, with the dignity which flashed from him once in a while. "Take the watch, and if ever you feel inclined to go against your king, look on his likeness there."

"Sire, I am no longer in the royal service. I am a plain citizen. I must do what my country orders."

He left the king not merely sad, but pondering.



“Lord Nelson, ever the parson’s son, never played; but he stood behind her.”
(See page 221)



CHAPTER XXVII.

RUFFO "RUFFS" THE CARDS.

As soon as he had settled down at Palermo, the king organized a cabinet and then arranged about his card-parties and hunting excursions.

The royal party was not the only one in the grand saloon. A few paces from the king's table for Reversino, a game in which the lowest by tricks wins, was the faro table at which Lady Hamilton presided. Whether she stood as banker or punter, she held the place of worship. It was a spectacle to watch the play of passions on the fair English visage. Extreme in everything, Emma staked frantically, and delighted in plunging her hands in the gold weighing down her lap, and making it jingle as she let it pour in cascades between her fingers on the board.

Lord Nelson, ever the parson's son, never played; but he stood behind her, leaning on her chair back, or sat there, devouring her with his single eye, speaking only to her, and in English, in an undertone.

While the king restricted his stakes to a thousand ducats at most, at Emma's table one stood to win or lose upwards of fifty thousand. It was at this altar of beauty and chance that the richest lords of Sicily clustered. If Emma noticed one of these wearing a very fine jewel, she would point it out to Nelson; and the next day, at whatever the price, it was obtained, a ruby, pearl or diamond, and was next seen on Emma's neck, arm or finger.

The queen did not gamble. Strange to say, it was an unknown passion to this slave of passions.

A foreigner entering this drawing-room and seeing the pastime, without knowing who were the participants, would never have guessed correctly.

A king, a queen and royal family in that rosy stout host, gayly holding his aces when he ought to have thrown them away, the lady embroidering a pair of slippers, and the smiling young man friendly with all the company! Yet they had lost a kingdom and were tantamount to being in exile!

Meanwhile, as the scattered hounds finally find the kennel after having been dispersed by a stag, the court sycophants arrived in Sicily from Naples. They brought the news as it occurred.

A riot against Mack, who had sought shelter in the French camp; a general of the people nominated in Maliterno; and, above all, the uninterrupted march of the French upon the capital. Then, the governor of St. Elmo Castle appeared. If his story was true, he had been surprised in his stronghold, and thrust into the dungeon of Nicolini Caracciolo, who was set up as commander of the citadel in his place! The story of his sufferings drew from the queen an order on the treasury and the appointment as governor of Palermo. A victim of the Caracciolo and the Jacobins deserved no less.

A council was held with Nelson. It was necessary, not merely to prevent the Revolution from triumphing at Naples, but from crossing the Strait and invading Sicily.

The council decided on nothing. The queen knew the political machine to its least crank, but she had no great ideas. The king only reiterated that he had washed his hands of the whole mess.

"Those who marred must do the mending!" he declared.

Acton, crushed by events and weighed down by the knowledge that the king had proof of the forged im-

perial letter, saw his unpopularity grow, and he offered to transfer his post to whoever would suggest the plan of relief and regeneration.

The only man for good counsel was Cardinal Ruffo. But the cardinal had no card but one. "Transport the counter-revolution into Calabria and set at its head the Duke of Calabria."

The first clause of this project pleased the king, but the second appeared absolutely impracticable.

The Duke of Calabria was a splinter off the same rock, or a slice of the same putty of which his father was composed. He would not altar his namby-pamby existence for any political speculation. He had never cared to go to Calabria because he was afraid of catching its current fevers. So it was not likely that he could be persuaded by his father to go and feel the fever of a chief guerilla being shot at.

Thus it stood; the French were masters in Naples, the Parthenopean Republic was proclaimed, and the provisional government was sending out deputies to secure the provinces.

The council adjourned to await better news, and lo! there came news which no one expected:

"The prince royal has made a landing in Calabria. He has declared himself at Brindisi and Tarento, and has roused in arms all the southern point of the peninsula!"

At the tidings, the counselors stared with astonishment, and the king burst out laughing.

The session was adjourned to discover the meaning of this hoax, worthy of carnival time, and the king went to his rooms with the intention of summoning Cardinal Ruffo, who would know, if any one did, who ventured on such alarming jokes.

The prelate was there, having exercised his standing

privilege to be ushered in at all hours without being made to dance attendance.

The eminent churchman wore a smile.

"Do you know the news?" queried the king, still laughing.

"That the hereditary prince landed at Brindisi and set all Southern Calabria in a blaze? Yes, majesty."

"Yes; but the pity is that there is not one word of truth in the tale. The hereditary prince of Calabria is no more in his born-land than I am, and I shall take great care not to go there."

"He has been closeted with his librarian in the library, commenting on the 'Erotico Biblion,' a work by Mirabeau, written in his imprisonment."

"Is it fairy tales? If so, he has found in it the art of being, like a bird, as the Irish doctor on the *Vanguard* humorously said, in two places at once."

"But he is; he is ubiquitous. Well, the key to the riddle is that when I need a prince royal for a project of mine and I cannot procure the real article, I make a substitute."

"This is news, indeed!" spoke the hearer. "You might tell me how princes are manufactured, as it is rather an opposition to kings and their trade."

"An auxiliary, my liege, not an opposition. But I will reveal the process if you will seat yourself comfortably, as those English say, in that reclining-chair."

The monarch disposed himself at ease and "the manufacturer of princes" began his recital.

"Does your majesty remember the visit paid you by the royal ladies, Victoire and Adelaide, daughters of his majesty, Louis XV. of France?"

"I have reason to remember the poor old dames, for when I quitted Naples I felt constrained to send them

traveling-money, and suggested that they had better get away into Austria or join me by and by at this town."

"Does your majesty also remember that they had half a dozen gentlemen guardsmen with them, one of whom, Cesare Boccheciampi, a Corsican, bore a striking likeness to the prince royal?"

"It struck me as important or dangerous, for, the first time, I took him for his betters!"

"That's it. It came to my mind in my cogitations to use this phenomenon."

The king eyed the narrator like one who does not see the drift of a story, but has such confidence in him that he already admires him.

"I suspected that the Duke of Calabria would never consent to play an active part in the counter revolutionary campaign, so I thought to profit by Cesare's strong likeness. So I imparted my idea to him and I will do him the justice to say that he did not flinch. He offered himself and his brother officers for the king's service. I did not give him any plan, but held this language with him:

"'If nothing happens to you along the road to Brindisi, go over to Sicily by boat. But—if something extraordinary and unexpected does arrive, you have wit and bravery; your fortune and your comrades'—a fortune you could not without my hint attain, but above your highest dreams of ambition—is in your hands!"

"With such faith in their courage, why not confide the plan?"

"Because amid seven young adventurers one might be a traitor."

The king sighed assent; he would give a wider measure.

"I suppose you have reason to hide the plan from me?" he said.

"The less because it has succeeded. I wrote to an agent of mine at Montejasi, named Gironda—who could not disclose my plan, as he was ignorant—that H. R. H. the Duke of Calabria, despairing of those dull churchmen, shifting politicians and, above all, his father too tender about him, were holding him in peace, but he meant to make a desperate effort to gain his father's kingdom! He had sailed for the mainland with the Duke de Saxe, his lord high constable, and his first equerry. I besought my man to watch over his safety if he believed the attempt would miss fire, but to help him in all ways if it looked promising. What I foresaw happened.

"Seven aristocratic young strangers in a town inn! The mayor was notified. It appeared to him that he had before his eyes—for they dined on the balcony of the inn—the Prince of Calabria, and his officers and their retainers. On the other hand, the rumor was also circulated that the seven were spies and precursors of the republicans. A mob of some hundreds besieged the inn, when, at the first sight of the supposed hereditary prince, the mayor hailed him as:

"'Our own prince! Long live the Duke of Calabria!'

"Master Cesare started; the incredible and unexpected occurrence I premised had come to pass—or, rather, would pass if he did not seize it by the forelock. So he took a step forward and simply gave the mayor and town councilmen his hand to kiss!

"On that, several natives, who had been to Naples and did not want to be a day after the fair, recognized the prince. The mob carried the mock prince on their shoulders to the cathedral, where the joy-bells were ringing, and the *Te Deum* was immediately entoned. Cesare was no more to be daunted by the church than

by the authority. At the close, he bowed to the bishop as a good son, and embraced him as a good son might a father spiritual!"

"Saints be praised! your Cesare is a prince of impostors!" ejaculated the king, between laughing and crying.

"This so frightened his comrades that they left by the first boat for Corfu, but he had the young sparks rally around him who were dying of *ennui*, and at last accounts they all had raised the Land of Bari and were likely, if they met the foe, to die of bullets!"

"What delicious news, by which we must profit."

"That is what I am here for, sire!"

"I am a philosopher, but I should not be sorry to see the French chased out and a few Jacobins hung on the public squares."

"In order to bring that about, let me finish what I have well commenced."

"You? alone?"

"Precisely; without the concurrence of Mack, Nelson or any of them!"

"You will reconquer Naples alone?"

"With Cesare as my lieutenant and our stout Calabrians as the nucleus. Appoint me your vicar-general—your *alter ego*?—and I will go over to the mainland with my chaplain and my secretary, where I will laugh at your council of state. I will lead an army for the Holy Faith, and, making a junction with Cesare, I will in three months be under the walls of Rome."

The king seized a pen with the alacrity of taking a gun from the loader to fire into a covey, and rapidly signed the orders Ruffo had ready. Not only was it his appointment, but a treasury order to fill the military chest—more English gold!

He would have prevailed as well without the money

in the old quarter where he went to stir up the sluggish baronets and direct their stings.

In entering Lower Calabria, the fomentor of counter revolution set his foot in ancient Brutium. It was the sanctuary for escaped Roman slaves. It had let ages pass over its stagnancy with the utmost ignorance. The same men who were shouting one way overnight, without knowing what they said, shouted the reverse next day with the same dullness.

But though they were brutish peasants, there joined them galley slaves, the jailbirds of whom the keepers were delighted to be rid, and vagrants; but the leaders were enthusiastic priests and royalists.

The army of "the Sanfédists" swelled with the rapidity of the rabble of the First Crusade. It had to be recognized like a tidal wave. The queen, overjoyed at this army surpassing in numbers and violence and mercilessness the forces of the Miller Mammone and the bandit Fra Diavolo, sent the cardinal-general, though she still did not love him, a banner of her own working. It was magnificent, though he might more prize the flattering letter which accompanied it. On the white satin was lettered: "To my dear Calabrians!" and on the other side was a cross and the antique Latin for "In this sign I conquer!"

While this was accomplished in Bari Land, Naples was witness to events not less weighty.

The Emperor of Austria had at last moved. This move was fatal to the French army. The emperor, in waiting for the Russians, had acted wisely. Flushed with his victory over the Turks, Suwarrow had crossed Germany and taken Brescia as his token of acceptance of the united command of the Austro-Russian army.

General Macdonald, succeeding Championnet, had "re-

tired" many of his advanced posts, and Ruffo pushed in at each weakening of the invasion.

The Holy Faith army was at last under the capital's walls. Only the St. Elmo Castle was held by French soldiers and other strongholds by the native revolutionists. The port was blockaded by Nelson's ships.

But there was tidings of a French fleet being out in the Mediterranean, trying to unite with the Spanish and destroy the enemy piecemeal.

Naples had seen its navy annihilated by Nelson's orders and could not hope to replace it. But some gunboats formed a flotilla to assist the forts in resisting the possible attack of the English fleet if it coöperated with Ruffo's army in a storming of the city.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TRAITOR OR PATRIOT?

Admiral Francesco Caracciolo had truly wished to dwell in obscurity. But that was impossible to a man of his stamp at such times.

Naples looked to him as the only naval officer of incontestible merit.

As soon as there was a republican government, he was singled out to be not only the Minister of the Navy but the admiral over the petty fleet which might be put to sea.

Caracciolo hesitated briefly between the country's salvation and the peril he personally faced. His own feelings, princely birth and the society he had frequented, all drew him rather toward royalistic opinions than democratic ones. Nevertheless, he had been sharply wounded by the preference of the royal family for Nelson to convey them over to Sicily. That the Duke of Calabria should be "consigned" to him, like the baggage, was rather an accident than a favor, and revenge urged him to make his sovereigns repent of the scorn with which they treated him.

As soon as he was determined to serve the Republic, he applied himself to the task not only like a man of reliability but one of genius. With marvelous swiftness and to the best, he equipped a dozen gunboats as well as some which were built on the spur, and with three small vessels saved from the conflagration, he had a fleet of thirty sail.

He was waiting at this stage to have a chance of doing

something more than what the sailors style "a brush," when, one morning, he descried that, instead of the ten or fifteen English vessels off the harbor, only three or four hovered; the others had sailed away in the night. He did not know it then, but they had gone in prevision of the maneuver of the French fleet now on the sea.

Indeed, Cardinal Ruffo, as much puzzled as the admiral and the French in the castles, learned, by a letter from the queen, that ten of the ships had appeared off Palermo. She had heard that the French, dismayed by the overthrow of their forces by the Austro-Russians, were to evacuate Naples. She could not credit this, but she believed that the worst of the royalists' danger was over. She signed herself the cardinal's "true friend."

One morning in May, Naples shuddered at the cannonade.

Three vessels remained off the harbor, blockading. One of the number was the *Minerva*, which had been the Neapolitan's flagship. The German, Count Thurn, now commanded it.

The news circulated that the French fleet was out of port cruising with a view of eventually bringing back General Bonaparte from Egypt with his army. A local newspaper, however, had asserted that it was coming to relieve Naples.

Caracciolo had frankly taken up the republican cause, and, like all fair-dealing men, did not do things halfway. He resolved to profit by the departure of the greater number of the blockaders to try to retake the islets around Naples which the royalists had occupied, and on which were planted gibbets for the revolutionists.

Leaving harbor on a calm sea, and protected by the fort batteries, Caracciolo attacked the English trio with his left wing, while in person he assailed Thurn in his

former ship. This latter was a plain attack on the royal standard.

Unfortunately, the wind sprang up from the south, contrary to the gunboats and other small craft of the Republic. Twice Caracciolo tried to board the *Minerva*, but it was steered handsomely to baffle him.

His left wing, on the wind strengthening, was driven back to town.

This action, passing under the eyes of the citizens, on their housetops and other elevations, did the adventurer much honor and was a triumph to his men. While seriously injuring the enemy, his loss was only five killed, a miracle after five hours' firing.

As it was indispensable to make it appear it was a battle with the English, this skirmish was magnified so that when the story reached Palermo, it augmented Carolina's grudge against Caracciolo and furnished her with another weapon against him for the king's use.

Thenceforward, Caracciolo was a rebel, having fired on his sovereign's flag.

About this time, Ruffo was reinforced by some Russians. The royalist forces elsewhere were relieved by the French retiring into Upper Italy, and they might soon strengthen the cardinal militant. As for the Land of Labor, it was entirely in Mammone's hands and the king styled him "Dear General and Friend," while the queen sent a ring to Fra Diavolo with her hair in it.

At the verge of Ruffo's reaping his harvest, a rumor was spread that he had raised his host, which, with all its stains, was irresistible, to capture Naples, not for the king again, but to make his brother, Francesco, lord paramount!

This view of how he was being undermined, quickened him to make a move less costly of blood, at least, by which the patriots would surrender. He proposed

to let them go from the country. The queen had dedicated the headmost to execution, but she had consented to the subordinates being exiled to France if "it cost too much to send them to America!"

Ruffo obtained assent of the native republicans to a capitulation in which the rebels should have person and property guaranteed. They were to be sent to Toulon or might remain at their option. He signed, as did Captain Foote, left by Nelson in charge of the blockade.

Unfortunately, within six-and-thirty hours, Nelson returned with seventeen sail, transporting nearly twenty thousand soldiers. The Duke of Calabria, the genuine this time, was on board to give the royal stamp on all proceedings. The Hamiltons were Nelson's guests likewise.

The queen was at her villa of Favorita, at Palermo, when Captain Foote took the capitulation for approval. She had expected to hear quite another *finale* to the overthrow of the insolent revolutionists. She was ready to die of rage at not having her revenge.

Emma found her writhing on a sofa and biting the pillow like a tigress.

"What has happened?" she inquired.

At her voice, the infuriated woman sprang up.

"If you do not help me, the royalty is forever dishonored, and I have nothing to do but return to Vienna, and die as mere archduchess!"

Lady Hamilton had come to her rejoicing.

"I understood that all was ended. Naples was retaken, and I might write to London for new dresses for the balls and festivals sure to follow the triumph over your return."

"Festivals? If we give any when we pass into Naples, it will be the glorification of shame! Feasts!—pests! Oh, that abominable cardinal!"

"Oh, has your majesty flown into this rage over that cardinal?"

"Wait till you hear what that soldier-priest has done! Don't you know that an English naval officer has brought the capitulation framed by the cardinal?" She pointed to the floor, strewn with fragments of writing paper. "There's their capitulation! To treat in any way with those scoundrels! to grant them life! to give them free passage to Toulon! As if exile were any punishment for the crimes they committed! And he did that after I had written that there must be not one life spared!" Her rage redoubled. "Only one hope remains and that is based on you!"

"The only woman who loves you!" said the English lady. "If anything depends on me, you will be saved."

"And they lost! Yes, on you and—Nelson."

The lovely Lamia's smile replied more eloquently than any speech, however affirmative.

"Nelson has not signed the agreement," continued the irate queen. "He must refuse."

"But did not Captain Foote do so in his stead?"

"There is our chance. Foote is not his *alter ego*, as the cardinal the king's, and the admiral will say that he did not give Foote full acting powers and he will repudiate them."

"Well?"

"Enchantress, it will be an easy task! you must obtain from Nelson that he will treat the capitulation as I did—tear it up!"

"I will try," responded the smiling siren. "Where is my lord?"

"Cruising off the Lipari Islands. He awaits Foote with my orders. You shall bear my orders and I do not believe he will debate them from your lips."

"What are the orders?"

"No treaty—or pardon! Try to understand! A Caracciolo who has insulted us and betrayed us! such a fellow to go and enter the French service—to return here and disembark his brother traitors on some lone spot of our land! which he knows to be undefended! Do you not also wish that man dead?"

"I have no wishes but yours."

Captain Foote was to receive, on the *Seahorse*, the queen's written orders by Sir William Hamilton, but her real ones went by Lady Hamilton to Nelson direct.

At this canceling of his work, Ruffo protested with the warmth which Ferdinando's savior had a right to evince, but Nelson and Hamilton were both inspired by the same evil genius and became more and more bent on the rupture of the treaty and the resumption of hostilities.

Ruffo was still the representative of the king. He smiled to hear that there was talk of imprisoning him on board the British ship, the *Foudroyant*. That was all that was lacking to show what they are paid who serve kings. But he simply threw away the shield which might protect him; he sent in his resignation.

It is true that Nelson had bid him farewell very coldly after their last interview, when the cardinal could not swerve the other into doing justice. As the admiral turned back, a hand on his shoulder reminded him of whom he had pleased by his inhumanity. It was Emma.

She came to say that Sir William wished to see him.

The diplomat was closeted with one Scipion Lamarra, a spy of the queen.

Lamarra was wishing to arrange the means of making a capture of Admiral Caracciolo, who had taken to flight on perceiving that the treaty would be annulled rather

than he, as the queen's own particular nightmare, should escape so easily.

The spy came to announce that the prince had quitted town and had taken refuge in the house of one of his servants. The Englishmen not only urged him to proceed on the quest, but pledged him the four thousand ducats head-money to him who produced the prize. Lamarra immediately vowed that it should be his, or the greater portion of it.

He had passed among the admiral's crew as a friend of the family and so had learned that the refuge of their chief was at an old reliable servant's. Where? It would not be in the city, as that would be under the lion's claw.

Lamarra reasoned that it would be more likely on one of the Caracciolo estates. In the open country, he could get away if hunted. One of these farms was at Calvesano, at the foot of the mountains. As a sharp fellow, Lamarra judged that it would be there. A mountain is the natural refuge of the proscribed man. The man-hunter obtained a safe conduct from Nelson, and, disguised as a rustic, presented himself at the Calvessano farm as a patriotic refugee, who, fleeing as an outlaw and extenuated by hunger and crushed by fatigue, preferred to die on a doorstep to staggering into the bare mountains. He entered the farm with what seemed the hardihood of desperation and begged a piece of bread and a truss of straw in the barn.

The pretended fugitive played his part so well that the farmer had no suspicion.

He hid him in a niche while he went out to make sure he was not hotly pursued. After a tour of the farm, he returned in ten minutes, drew him out of the hole, and, making him sit at table, gave him bread, cheese and wine. Scipion Lamarra pounced on the bread like a

famished man, gulping and munching with such avidity that the compassionate host calmed him into moderation, telling that there was no lack of meat and drink, and he might feast at leisure.

As Lamarra was following this advice, in came another farmer-looking man, a little older than the master, who introduced him as his brother. The newcomer dropped Scipion a nod as if he were quite at home and, drawing a stool into the ingleside, sat down. The false fugitive remarked that the elder brother chose the darkest corner. Having seen Admiral Caracciolo in Naples, Lamarra had need of no more than a glance to recognize the asserted brother of the peasant.

Thereupon, the spy comprehended the whole proceeding. The host had not dared receive any stranger without consulting with his lord; under cover of seeing that the fugitive was not followed, he had gone to get permission of Caracciolo. The latter, eager for news from the capital, had come in, less doubting than his tenant that the stranger was an outlaw.

"So you come from Naples?" he inquired of the eating man, affecting indifference.

"Alas, yes." He did not want to frighten the admiral for fear that he would seek another shelter. "They are shipping the patriots to Toulon," said he, dolefully.

"How is it you did not go with them?"

"Because I do not know a soul in France, but I have got a brother in Corfu. I am trying, therefore, to scramble along as far as Mamfredonia, where I hope to take ship."

The chat was confined to this. The man seemed so wearied that it was a pity to keep him up for gossip. Caracciolo told the farmer he had better see him abed, and Scipion took leave of the pair with warm protesta-

tions of gratitude. Arrived within a room, he bade his host good-night with a plea to be aroused in the morning that he might make an early start for the seaside.

"That chimes in—for I am going to Naples with the lark on the morrow!" replied the other.

Lamarra did not risk any comment. He knew all he sought, and chance, often accomplice in dark crimes, had helped him beyond his wishes.

As early as two, the farmer came to awaken him. In an instant he was up and ready dressed for his journey. The farmer gave him a little parcel prepared beforehand. A sandwich of ham and bread, and a bottle of wine.

"My brother, who carries the bag, wants to know how you are off for money?" asked he.

The harbored scoundrel felt some shame; he showed that he had a few pieces of gold in a purse; then, having had a by-path pointed out to him, he took leave, begged him to thank his brother for him, and off he went.

But he had barely stepped a hundred paces than he turned and, skirting the farm, stopped where the road dipped between hills. He waited for the farmer, who must go that way if headed for Naples.

In half an hour, through the shadows beginning to be enlightened, he distinguished a man's outline, following the Calvessano road to the capital, and he soon recognized him as his befriender. He stepped plainly out to him. Recognized, likewise, the farmer stopped, amazed.

"You? What are you dawdling here for?"

"I was waiting for you to tell you that, by order of Lord Nelson, it is death to harbor a rebel!"

"What has that to do with me?"

"So far as you harbor Admiral Caracciolo. Not a bit

of use your denying, for I knew my lord—the man you would pass off on me as your brother.”

“That can’t be all you have to tell me?” queried the man, with the grin of a traitor.

“Ha, ha! I see that we shall come to a bargain!”

“How much were you promised if you handed over the admiral?”

“Four thousand ducats, mate!”

“That looks like two thousand for me!”

“You open your mouth too wide, my friend!”

“Yet I only half open it!”

“Would you be content with two thousand?”

“Yes, if no inquiries were made about any money the admiral brought to my house!”

“But supposing things do not move as smoothly as you fancy?”

The farmer drew back a step and drew a pistol from each pocket.

“If things do not come out at the hole I see, why, I shall stand you off and before you can get back to town—allowing a bullet does not stop your traveling—we shall be too far for you to overtake us.”

“Look here, partner; I cannot, and be hanged if I wish to, do without your aid.”

“It’s a bargain, eh?”

“For my part, so! But if you will trust in me, I will take you to some one who will talk to you about your making money and will be no haggler about terms.”

“Any name for this easy-going dealer?”

“They call him Lord Nelson.”

“So you come from him?”

“I come from higher up!”

“You said it; we shall make the bargain! Come, with you!” and the farmer chuckled.

The two honest fellows jogged on toward Naples.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SEA LION AND HIS PREY.

On the night of the twenty-eighth, six sailors, disguised as countrymen, but armed to the teeth, were put ashore at Granatello, and, guided by Lamarra, reached Calvessano by three in the morning.

The farmer was on the alert, while Caracciolo was sleeping in that profound trust honorable men have—unfortunately, almost always in rogues. The admiral slept with his sword under his pillow and a brace of pistols on his night table; but, forewarned by the farmer of these precautions, the kidnapers, on rushing into the bedroom, made themselves masters of the weapons to begin with.

Seeing that he was taken and that resistance would be fruitless, Caracciolo drew himself erect and held out his hands for the cords ready to bind them. He had been willing to avoid death as long as death did not face him; but on its starting up, he bore himself gallantly as usual.

A willow cart was at the door, waiting. Caracciolo was set in it; the guards sat around him and Scipion drove. The traitorous farmer kept in the background. He had settled about the price, and having received a part down, he would have the rest after delivery of his lord and master.

Granatello was reached at seven, where the prisoner was transferred from cart to boat; the peasants re-became sailors and rowed out to the *Foudroyant*.

Since ten o'clock, Nelson had been above decks watch-

ing, with his telescope to his eye, at this point. He saw a boat leave the shore, but at seven miles or so he could not make it out clearly. As it was the only object specking the calm and even surface, he did not turn his view from it.

An instant afterward, the beautiful creature whom he had on board, smiling as if a feast day had dawned, showed her head by the steerway and came beside him. Though indolent, so that often half the day was gone before she began her day, she had risen betimes this morning with presentiment of great events brewing. Nelson pointed to the yawl, not venturing to declare it the prize, but judging by the straight course it traced for the ship that it was their wish realized.

“Where is Sir William?” inquired he.

“I was going to put the same question to you,” laughed the lady.

“Parkinson,” said the admiral, also laughing, “try to find Sir William and tell him that the boat is coming off with what we sought, I believe.”

During the short space while the young officer was bringing Hamilton, the boat continued to approach, and Nelson’s doubts to fade. Though disguised as peasants the rowers plied the ash too regularly to be such, and, besides, standing at the prow, and making triumphal signs, was Lamarra. By the time Sir William had joined the two, there was no room for misgivings. Nelson had recognized the queen’s spy and told by his signs that Caracciolo was the prisoner being brought.

What stirred the hero’s heart as he learned this longed-for event? Neither romancist nor historian has eyes sufficiently piercing to see underneath the impassibility expanded over his visage.

Soon the three interested in this capture could descry

the admiral bound and lying in the boat. His body, set athwart, served as cushion to two of the oarsmen!

It might not be thought worth while to go around the ship to reach the side ladder, ready slung there, or it was intended to carry derision to a shame. The boat was simply run along the other side, where a seaman hooked on with a gaff, and Lamarra climbed by a simple rope ladder hanging for common use. He wanted to be the first to announce to the Englishman the success of his errand.

Meanwhile, the seamen untied the admiral's legs so he could mount. But they left his wrists bound, with such rigidity that when the bonds were taken off, they left bloody tokens from their numerous biting coils.

The Neapolitan had to pass before the inimical group whose joy insulted his plight, and was led to a between-decks room, where two sentries were stationed at the door.

Hardly had the prize made this brief passing, than Sir William hastened down to his stateroom eager to be foremost in telling the gladsome news to the king and queen, and wrote:

"We have just seen the sight of Caracciolo, pale, half dead, his eyes downcast, with a long-grown beard, and his hands pinioned. He has been brought aboard the *Foudroyant*. His trial will take place before Sicilian officers. If condemned, which is likely, his sentence will be immediately executed. He seems half dead with mortification. He demands to be tried by English officers."

Hamilton was right about the trial not going to be long. Nelson had at once asked Count Thurn to take the matter in hand. He did not trouble about hearing the evidence or weighing it; all in his province was to utter the sentence and determine the penalty!

He fixed the court to be on his own vessels, for (Clarke's "Life of Nelson" shows it) the admiral feared that if it took place on a Neapolitan deck, the crew would revolt, "so beloved was Caracciolo by his navy."

So the Neapolitan council of war assembled in the English ship. On scanning the row of judges, Caracciolo shook his head; they had all served under him and he knew them as court intriguers who would not dare absolve him.

Though under fifty, his unpowdered and undressed hair and untrimmed long beard, made him appear seventy. Before the court, he drew himself up to his full height, and recovered the assurance, firmness and demeanor of the man born to command; his features, which had been convulsed with wrath, assumed the mold of haughty calmness.

He did not deign to answer the questioning, but branded his answer to this, in summary:

"I was not serving the Republic, but my country; I was not fighting against the royalty, but murder, pillage and incendiaries. I was long merely a private soldier when I was constrained to take command of the Republican navy, a post impossible for me to refuse."

For that matter, Captain Trowbridge had written to his chief three months previously to the effect that "Caracciolo had been seen mounting guard at the palace; he had refused to do service, but the republicans had compelled everybody to take a turn."

Being asked why, if he was forced to go on military duty, he had not taken advantage of the numerous openings for escape, he answered that flight was flight under any circumstances, and that it might have been nicety about honor which retained him, but he was so withheld. If it were a crime, still he avowed it.

The interrogation stopped there and then. All that

was wanted was a clear admission, which they had obtained from his simple, calm and dignified confession. His manner had "won the sympathy of those English officers who understood Italian." But the crime was proven.

Caracciolo was taken back to his prison-room and still doubly guarded.

Thurn carried the sentence report to Nelson. He read it greedily; ferocious glee was seen on his face. He snatched up a pen, approved, and set the place of execution to be on the *Minerva*, the mode, hanging at the yardarm, and the time, that day at 5 P. M. The body was to hang until sunset, when the rope should be cut and the body cast into the sea.

Two bystanders were next the admiral when he wrote this decree. Faithful to a promise made the queen, Emma Hamilton remained dumb and did not utter a word in favor of the culprit. But Sir William, though tolerably insensible in this quarter, could not abstain from remarking:

"Mercy dictates that a sentenced man should have twenty-four hours to prepare for death."

"I have no mercy for traitors," was Nelson's stern rejoinder.

"If no mercy, give religion its due!"

Without replying, Nelson handed the sentence to Thurn, saying to him:

"Have that executed."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BLOTCH ON THE GLORY.

During the solemn hours trailing between the decision and the execution, Caracciolo made two calls for Lieutenant Parkinson to intercede for him with his superior—to obtain a revision of the judgment, and to alter the mode of death; to be shot and not hanged.

Admiral Caracciolo had often expected to die by shot or the boarder's ax, if not the headsman's. His title of princedom gave him the right to die under the ax. His rank as admiral entitled him to die like a soldier. Both claims were annulled by his being assigned to perish as assassins and thieves do, by an infamous death.

Not only had Nelson gone beyond his powers by condemning one equal to him in naval rank and superior to him by social degree, to a death which, to Caracciolo's eyes, doubled the horrors of the parting pang.

To escape this shame he had stooped to imploring.

"I am an old man," he said to Parkinson; "I do not leave any family to mourn my passing; it will not be supposed that at my age and isolated as I am, that I suffer at quitting life; but the disgrace of dying like a pirate is unbearable and I own that it breaks my heart."

During the lieutenant's absence he was agitated and uneasy. It was clear that on the young officer's return, he bore a refusal.

"I am giving you Lord Nelson's speech word for word," said the messenger: 'Caracciolo has been impartially tried by his own country's officers; it is no place for me, a foreigner, to interfere.'"

The Italian smiled bitterly.

"So, so, Lord Nelson had the right to intervene to have me hanged but not to have me shot instead? But, perchance, my young friend, you did not press the prayer as another might have done?"

"Prince," answered poor Parkinson, with his eyes wet, "I so persisted that my lord wagged his finger at me and said: 'Lieutenant, if I have any warning to give you it would be, mind your own business!' Never mind that!" he continued, "if your excellency has any other mission for me to undertake, dash me if I will not do it with all my heart, though they break me for it!"

Caracciolo smiled to see how the officer was affected and offered him his hand, with the words:

"I applied to you because you were the youngest officer, and it is rarely at your age one has a hard heart. A question: Do you believe that if one applies to Lady Hamilton she could obtain any favor from Lord Nelson?"

"She has great influence over my lord. Let us try it!" said Parkinson.

"Well, do so; beseech her. It may be, in a happier time, I did her some wrong, but let her forget that, and in commanding the file of soldiers to shoot at me, I will fall, blessing her."

Parkinson went out and, not finding the lady on the deck, pushed his way to her quarters, but the door remained closed against all his entreaties. On his account, Caracciolo saw that all hope was gone, and not wishing to abase his dignity, shook the young gentleman's hand and forebore any more speaking.

At one o'clock, Count Thurn came in to announce the leaving the *Foudroyant* to go over to the *Minerva*, and directed two seamen to bind his hands. Caracciolo held them out. But the count explained that they must be

bound behind him after sentence. He put his hands behind him. The rope was left with a long end, which one sailor held. Without doubt, it was feared that if he were free to walk, he might leap overboard to exchange the ignominious death for suicide.

Hence, like a murderer, the Prince of Caracciolo, admiral of Naples and of the Parthenopean Republic, was thrust off the *Foudroyant's* deck, bound and in leash, passing through a double file of the English seamen. Outrage carried so far overleaps and falls back on the perpetrator.

The two long-boats, armed for war, accompanied the one carrying the culprit.

They accosted the *Minerva*. On again seeing at close range the fine frigate which had been his throne and had carried him so splendidly to Palermo, the admiral sighed. He was forced to mount by the weather or interior side-ladder. On deck were ranged the officers, marines and seamen.

It was half-past one.

As it was his former chaplain who kept that post on the Neapolitan ship, he submitted to his consolations, and expressed that he felt the stronger for them and the more resigned.

At five o'clock, a picket took him upon deck. He noticed one of his old sailors in grief. Without speaking, the man showed that he was holding the fatal rope.

"As no one ashore knew how I was going to die, no one weeps for me but you, old shipmate! Shake my hand and tell my family how I was 'turned off!'"

Glancing off, he perceived a group on the *Foudroyant*. Of the three, one held a spyglass.

"Stand aside, my men!" said he to the sailors surrounding him. "You are blocking Lord Nelson's view of me!"

The cord had been run through a block at the tip of the mizzenmast-yard. It dangled over his head.

Count Thurn waved his sword.

The slip-knot having been passed around the admiral's neck, twelve men, manning the line, hauled the body up to ten or more feet aloft. At the same time, a gun was fired.

Lord Nelson's amendment to the sentence was performed.

Although he had not missed a point in the act, from the moment when the gun was fired, the count went down into the cabin and wrote the report, which was carried over to the English flagship. It was dated: "On board his Sicilian majesty's ship, the *Minerva*, this 29th day of June, 1799."

As Nelson meanwhile had seen the dying body swinging, he had gone down into his cabin, where he wrote to Lord Acton:

"MY LORD: I have no time to transmit the finding of the judges and their trial of the miserable Caracciolo, and will only say here that he has submitted to the just decree pronounced against him. I inclose my approval."

By the same mail carrier, Sir William wrote to the same, confirming the execution. "But for God's sake, induce the king to come aboard the *Foudroyant* and hoist his royal standard there."

The admiral's logbook contained the following:

"Saturday, 29th June; weather still but misty; arrived H. M. ship *Rainha* and the brig *Balloon*. A court-martial was held, tried, doomed and had executed Francesco Caracciolo, on board the Neapolitan frigate, the *Minerva*."

King Ferdinando was reassured, Queen Carolina satisfied, Emma Lyonna accursed, and Nelson dishonored!

CHAPTER XXXI.

“THEY RISE AGAIN.”

The admiral's execution spread deep consternation over Naples.

To whatever party a man belonged, he acknowledged the prince to have been worthy of consideration for his birth and talents; his life had been irreproachable, and pure of all moral blemishes.

His doing to death was a terrifying sight; at sundown, as ordered, the rope had been cut, and the body, on which all eyes were fastened, no longer sustained, rapidly plunged into the sea, dragged down by the cannon balls fixed to the heels. Then a piteous outcry escaped from all lips and ran over the waves like the complain of the Spirit of the Waters, echoing against the *Foudroyant's* sides.

The gunshot and, then, the sight of the hanging man had drawn the cardinal's servants' attention that way, and it was related to him; but he could not recognize the body and it was by direct report from Nelson that he learned the cruel truth. It was the more cruel as Caracciolo and he had agreed to protect one another as the fortunes of war rendered either of power to the other.

“Alas!” he exclaimed, letting his arms fall by his side, “to what have we come that the English hang Neapolitan princes in our own port!”

This communication was a matter of duty or it was an insult; and an insult to him, the royal vicar-general, with the sole power of life and death, was a defiance.

How could Lord Nelson, subject of the English King George, condemn in the name of King Ferdinando?

The queen would not accept his resignation and the king was coming to set his seal on the tragedy on the *Minerva*.

In fact, on the morn of the ninth of July, two sail were entering the harbor. The English one was the *Seahorse*, Captain Foote, and the Neapolitan the *Siren*, flaunting the royal standard; the monarch had declined English transport. His former preference would have aggravated the Neapolitan defection in his navy, which the Caracciolo affair had breached.

With the ruler came Acton and Castelcicala; the queen had stayed behind, dreading her unpopularity. The king spent the day at Procida, considering the death warrants to the surrendered and imprisoned rebels and signing away the lives of some forty thousand! The more gentle process of exile would drive away sixty thousand—more than a quarter of the Naples population!

By the way, the name of Caracciolo had a chance still of being prolonged as Nicolini, after becoming governor of St. Elmo Castle, had escaped and lived to be an old man.

Next morning the king came from Procida, still on the *Siren*. The British saluted as he neared and all the people left their houses to see the return.

As it was least awkward to enter a capital under the fire of a castle still in the enemy's hands, the king was urged by Cardinal Ruffo, who joined him upon the *Foudroyant*, for that purpose, to approve the capitulation. But Nelson and Lady Hamilton—his evil genius, says Sacchinelli, the historian of the period—protested the agreement should be null and void.

Upon this, the cardinal, veiling his red cheek with a flap of his purple robe, went ashore into the house where

the treaty had been signed, and vowed this treacherous monarchy to Divine vengeance.

The same day, the prisoners on the English and other ships were taken two by two in chains, to the prisons.

The lazzaroni seeing this, thought that, with King “Nosey,” the days of massacre had come again, and set to sacking and pillaging as merrily as when King Mob reigned in the town. The chroniclers mildly say that their pens refuse to trace the picture of the crimes and infamous deeds enacted.

While the slaughtering was going on in the town, there was a holiday on the water.

The British flagship entertained the “homing” sovereign. The *Foudroyant* gave a supper and a ball. The floating fortress was a magical show; illumined from stem to stern and from waterline to tops, all her thousand flags fluttered in the glow and blaze, and her rigging was but the web of a woof of laurels.

On this tenth of July, 1799, Nelson was giving royalty the return feast for that which greeted him on the twenty-second of September, 1798.

But, like the other, this festival was to have its ghost—more awful, fatal and funereal than a representative of the French Republic—the king of the eternal realm of perfect equality: Death.

Around the lighted ship spectators with music circled in boats. These orchestras repeated the airs played by the ship’s band. The gulf under the out-dazzled, though magnificent moon, was a sheet of harmony.

Naples was verily this night the ancient Parthenope, that siren who drowned herself because she failed to ensnare Ulysses.

At midnight, a rocket which mounted aloft and burst in the deep azure of that world’s envied sky, gave the signal for the banquet. The dancing ceased without the

music doing so, and the guests went down into the gun-deck, where sentinels prevented entrance.

The grim man-of-war had "made itself handsome" for the revels.

The table extended from the foredeck to the poop, the vast distance centupled by enormous mirrors being set at each end. On each side of the stern looking-glasses, a door opened to give a view of the admiral's cabin, an elegant gallery.

On the board was an encumbering set-out of English cut crystal, the decanters colored with the choicest wines and cordials, giving tones of precious stones from the diamond's limpidity to the ruby's carmine. Roast venison and pheasants, a swan, peacocks with their tails unsmirched, and fish of stupefying size, with flowers and fruit in full bloom and out of season, for which famous English hothouses had been ransacked—these tantalized while promising raptures.

The countless candles glittered on trophies of arms, bunched between each two portholes, muskets, cutlasses, boarding-pikes and axes, oft stained with French blood, small firearms and flags—these seemed stars of steel rays.

Habituated as Ferdinando was to luxurious display, he could not refrain from a cry of admiration. He took his place at the table, having Lady Hamilton on his right, Nelson on his left, and Sir William opposite him. The others took places according to court usage.

He may have missed the cardinal, but as he had said, with his mocking smile after his flight from Rome: "It is better at Caserta than on the Albano road!" he now said: "This beats the sea-road to Palermo!" in allusion to the stormy passage.

Nelson's sickly cheek and pallid brow turned red, for this reminded him of how Caracciolo had carried the

prince royal more speedily and less painfully over the same waters. But his sole eye flashed and a smile curled his lips, for his vengeance was glutted. The pilot had sailed on the ocean which has no harbor of refuge!

At the end of the supper, the band played “God Save the King!” and Nelson, with the implacable native pride which bows to no outside rules, rose and without thinking of the royal guest, or that there was another sovereign, proposed the health of his king. The hearty cheers of the English officers, echoed by those of the sailors manning the yards, hailed this toast; the guns of the second battery saluted.

Beneath his careless mien, King Ferdinando hid a strong subjection to etiquette; this rudeness caused him to bite his lip.

Five minutes afterward, Sir William proposed “The Guest of the Evening!” but although the same cheers arose and the like salute was fired, Ferdinando thought the order of the toasts should have been reversed. So galled, and noticing that the crowds in the boats had taken up the hurrahing and pressed closely, he considered that they should be given a share in his gratitude. So he nodded his thanks to Hamilton, drank off his glass and, stepping to the gallery, stood on it, where he had heard the waiters for the crumbs at the banquet. At sight of him, the *vivas* and huzzas redoubled. The roar of “Long live the king!” seemed to be exhaled out of the depths.

He bowed and was carrying his glass to his lips when his hand suddenly was stayed. His gaze was fixed; his eyes dilating horribly; and a hoarse exclamation, painting at once terror and astonishment, rattled in his gorge and tore its way forth.

At the same time a great confusion arose among the boats, which flew asunder like pearl fishers when the

shark rises among them. They left a broad open space. In its midst rose a more terrible thing; lifted up out to the waist, a human cadaver "trod water," so to say. Spite of the seaweed mingled with the hair, the beard standing on end, and the livid flesh, the face might be recognized as Admiral Caracciolo's!

Those shouts of "Long live the king!" would seem to have drawn him from the bottom of the sea, where he had dwelt thirteen days, in order that he should come and cross with his call for vengeance the bravo! of cowardice and flattery.

At the first glance, the king had known him, and so had everybody else. That was why he had been petrified, his arm held up and his look fixed, while in his throat rattled the gasp of awe. That was why the boats fled in fright, with a movement hurried and unanimous.

For a space Ferdinando wished to doubt this apparition; but uselessly. Following the undulations, the corpse fell and rose, as if saluting the monarch who stared mute and motionless with fear. But, gradually, the cramped nerves of the spellbound gazer relaxed, his hand trembled and let the glass drop to shiver on the rail, and he came in, white, frightened, panting, hiding his face in his hands, and croaking:

"What does he want? what does he want of me?"

At the voice, and his visible dread, painted on his countenance, all the guests sprang up also alarmed, and ran out into the gallery to see what there had so appalled him.

At that same instant, through all bosoms, passed those words like the electric shock, and out of all mouths was groaned:

"It's the admiral! It is Caracciolo!"

The king had fallen into a chair, still muttering:

"What does he want of me?"

“Pardon for his treason,” insinuated Sir William, who was the courtier even before a corpse and an awe-struck monarch.

“No! he asks something else,” contradicted the king.

“Christian burial!” said the ship’s chaplain.

“You are right, reverence! and he shall have it!” responded the other.

Rising, staggering against the stair banisters, striking against the door jams, he precipitated himself toward his rooms, where he closed the door behind him.

“Hardy, get out a boat and fetch that carcass in!” ordered Nelson, in the same voice as he would have used to bid the recovery of a stray hencoop washed overboard.

But his feats had finished like Athalia’s dream, by a thunderclap.

Lady Hamilton had tried at the start to stand firm against the shocking sight; but the “send” of the waves from the southeastern breeze, so visibly pushed the flotsam toward the battleship that she retired backward and fell swooning in an armchair.

It was then that Nelson, unshakeable in his fearlessness as pitiless in his enmity, gave the order for the hideous waif to be removed.

The order had been instantly executed; a boat had been let down, into which six men and a coxswain dropped, and Captain Hardy had followed them.

Like a flight of birds among which had swooped a sparrow-hawk, all the boats had glanced aloof from the corpse and were gliding away with the lights extinguished and the music hushed; at each stroke of the nimble oars, a spot of sparks marked the retreat.

Those parted from the shore by the horror made a large circuit and rowed the faster as they had the greater space to cover.

On shipboard, all the guests had recoiled as far as possible and called for their boats. The English officers, collected in the gallery, looked out upon the dead body and jeered it more or less coarsely while Hardy's cutter was nearing it with stout pulling.

On getting up to it, but seeing that his crew hesitated about handling it, the captain himself grabbed it by the hair and sought to lift it up out of the water. But it would seem that an invisible power detained it, so heavy had it become, and the grisly locks were left in his hand. Uttering an oath, in which disgust dominated, he washed his hands in the sea, and ordered two men to catch hold of the rope, still sunk into the swollen neck, and haul it aboard.

But the neck could no longer support the weight of the trunk, and the detached head solely obeyed the effort and bounced into the boat.

Hardy stamped.

"Ha! devil's block!" he growled; "you may resist your best, but you shall come away with us, though it shall be by joint and limb!"

By a new order, the men slewed the rope around the body and hauled; but though the removal out of the water lessened all by a third in weight, the four men united only managed with the greatest difficulty to get the mass within the gunwale.

"Well done, Hardy, sir!" shouted the English officers, clapping their hands with many a burst of laughter.

The boat returned and was fastened on under the bow. Curious to understand the phenomenon of the flotation, the officers ran forward, while the guests were quitting furtively by either way down, spurred on to have no more of a sight diabolical, or supernatural, to most minds.

Sir William had sagely recalled that, after a certain

time, dead bodies evolve gases which must cause a rising; but what was astonishing, extraordinary, and miraculous was that the admiral's remains should ascend to daunt the king when it had had two heavy cannon balls tied to the feet. Captain Hardy affirms, in his report, that they weighed two hundred and fifty pounds.

As the king had recommended Christian burial for the castaway, the chaplain went down into the boat and began to say the offices of the dead. Aid came to him from an unexpected quarter. Through the midst of the swarm of boats making for the land, one boat came contrawise. It was propelled by two rowers and contained a monk, a strapping Franciscan, who stood up and yielded to the motion more like a sailor than anything else.

In a word, it was that Father Pacifico who had led the natives against the French and the revolutionists with a skill which would be remarkable in any priest, but ceased to astound when one learned that he had been a man-of-war's-man. What explained his putting off to seek the admiral's body was his having been a seaman under his orders.

His boat running alongside the British one, his men hooked on to it and he exchanged a few words with the chaplain. As the latter had but to repeat that the king had acceded to his suggestion that the body should be interred properly, he might renounce his charge to the Franciscan. So the monk, with the admiral's remains, pushed off and his rowers bore the boat with its new load to St. Lucia. This was Prince Caracciolo's parish.

Though this was essentially an aristocratic ward, Caracciolo had been so kind that he was beloved. Besides, the navy drew its best sailors from this same part. All those who, like Fra Pacifico himself, had served under him, had preserved a lively memory of those three

qualities endearing a man to his inferiors—bravery, kindness and fair play. Caracciolo united these parts in a high degree.

It follows that at the first words exchanged with the fishers, who came running up, and the rumor spreading that the admiral was seeking to be laid to rest among his old neighbors and shipmates, all the district sprang into life, and the monk had only to pit his choice on any house to have it as the chapel to lay the body out in state. He chose the nearest.

Twenty hands offered to carry the dead; but, as before, the monk took up in his arms his old captain, and put it on a couch, after which he returned to get the head, which he carried as piously as though it were a saint's relic.

Pacifico called for a sheet. In five minutes, twenty women were hurrying out of their houses, vociferating: "Take mine for the martyr! that will bring our house good luck!"

The monk chose the whitest, finest and best, and wrapped up the remains together with the head, placed properly and not, as a criminal's usually is when beheaded, between his knees.

In the next house, hammer and nails were heard; it was a joiner's and he was making the coffin as his grief offering. When it was brought, the monk put in it his old commander. All the women brought each some token, be it of green bough or a flower or two, so that the bier disappeared under the garlands.

By this time, the church bells at little St. Lucia's tolled, and the clergy came to relieve the friar of the Cordeliers.

The coffin was nailed up; six old sailors, formerly in the navy, were the pallbearers and took the coffin on

their shoulders. The monk walked on behind. All the population of Santa Lucia followed him.

Exaggerated in all, the Neapolitans, who had very likely clapped applause at the admiral hanging, now melted into tears and burst into sobbing as the priests entoned the funeral hymns. The women tore their faces and the men beat their breasts.

A looker-on would think it a public woe or universal calamity.

The coffin was put in a vault, but not the family one; it was sealed up, and when the crowd departed none was left but the sailor-monk praying for his old captain.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SHADOW FALLS.

One evening the royal family of Sicily were gathered in the rooms where they were seen by us playing cards, embroidering banners for the Holy Faith army, talking politics and archæology, and Lady Hamilton holding the faro bank. Nothing was changed now; the king was still playing Reversino; Emma strewing gold over her table while chatting with Nelson in an undertone; and the royal mother and her brood working, not a war flag, but a banner for some saint to whom she attributed the clearing of the kingdom of revolutionists and traitors.

But things had changed elsewhere.

The vanquished and exiled monarch was conquering and triumphant, thanks to Ruffo, Fra Diavolo and Mam-mone, the miller.

But the tables were turned; General Brune had beaten the English at Almaker, and Massena, the Russians at Zurich. Yet nothing much had happened in Italy near here. The slight fluctuations "left a man enough to eat and drink," to use Ferdinando's plain speech. With his devil-may-care air, he added another vulgarism, applied at Naples to moral matters:

"What does not choke, will fatten!"

So the king was joking as he played cards, when the Prince of Castelcicala was called aside by the prince royal entering briskly, and spoken to. No sooner was this short colloquy over than Castelcicala, as animatedly as might pass in a royal room, went over to the queen and conferred with her. She had quickly lifted up her head.

"Notify Nelson," she said, "and let him join us and the prince royal in my study!"

When the admiral was with them, the queen said:

"Francesco, tell his lordship the pretty fiction you related to Castelcicala!"

"Madam," replied the heir to the crown, with the awe in which he stood of his mother, whom he felt did not love him, "the captain of an American vessel reports that he met, off Malta, two French ships-of-war, on one of which was General Bonaparte."

"What do you think of this intelligence?" demanded the queen, anxiously, of the admiral.

"It is grave, but one must not be immeasurably disquieted. I will see about it. Meanwhile, return to your needle and let the king go on with his cards. Supposing General Bonaparte does land in Europe, it is only a man the more."

The king, on this being repeated to him, was not so unmoved as the Englishman. His mind galloped on with the consequences of this "man the more" on the checkerboard of Europe.

"Faith! this Bonaparte will cut through Lord Keith's fleet as he did through Sir Sydney Smith's, and, if he lands, he will, in three weeks, be in Paris! It is your turn to 'cut'—as 'Boney' will the Austrians in the next game!"

This pun having delighted him, he went on playing as if what he heard was not worth stopping his game for.

The execution of the hapless Caracciolo was the last one of any consequence at Naples.

Ferdinando was correct; Bonaparte did deceive Lord Keith, and landed at Frejus. On the ninth of November following, he executed that stroke of active politics called "the eighteenth Brumaire;" on the fourteenth of

June, he won the battle of Marengo, and, in signing the peace with Austria and the Two Sicilies, he exacted from Ferdinando the end of the executions, the opening of the prisons and the return of the banished.

The House of the Bourbons in Naples has ceased to exist; the crimes of the fathers had fallen on the children to the third and fourth generation.

* * * * * * *

In 1805, a Saturday, October 19th, the companion-day in England's proud days to Waterloo, the battle of Trafalgar was fought.

On going into this tremendous action, the united fleets of France and Spain not ten miles off, Nelson wrote that he left Lady Hamilton—Sir William was dead—"as a legacy to his country," as she had procured royal letters to serve the British Government, and had, by her sway over the Queen of Naples, wrung permission for the English fleet to be supplied at Syracuse, whereby "we went to Egypt and destroyed the French fleet."

By the same document, he left "to the beneficence of his country his daughter, Horatia."

It was hard to believe at the time, and it is next to incredible now, that "the Mistress of the Seas" suffered the lovely lady, to whom she was indebted for the victory of the Nile, to die in abject poverty and obscurity. Was the cup of such ingratitude full by this? Not so. Horatia Nelson died also, at an advanced age, in all but as supreme misery as her mother—whose extraordinary loveliness lives on the unfading canvas of Romney.

Monarchies, like republics, can be ungrateful!

THE END.

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