

Henty George Alfred

Out with Garibaldi: A story of the liberation of Italy



George Henty

**Out with Garibaldi: A story
of the liberation of Italy**

«Public Domain»

Henty G.

Out with Garibaldi: A story of the liberation of Italy / G. Henty —
«Public Domain»,

Содержание

PREFACE	5
CHAPTER I.	6
CHAPTER II.	14
CHAPTER III.	22
CHAPTER IV.	28
CHAPTER V	36
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	39

G. A. Henty

Out with Garibaldi: A story of the liberation of Italy

PREFACE

THE invasion of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies by Garibaldi with a force of but a thousand irregular troops is one of the most romantic episodes ever recorded in military history. In many respects it rivals the conquest of Mexico by Cortez. The latter won, not by the greater bravery of his troops, but by their immense superiority in weapons and defensive armour. Upon the contrary, Garibaldi's force were ill-armed and practically without artillery, and were opposed by an army of a hundred and twenty thousand men carrying the best weapons of the time, and possessing numerous and powerful artillery. In both cases the invaders were supported by a portion of the population who had been reduced to a state of servitude, and who joined them against their oppressors. There is another point of resemblance between these remarkable expeditions, inasmuch as the leaders of both were treated with the grossest ingratitude by the monarchs for whom they had gained such large acquisitions of territory. For the leading incidents in the campaign I have relied chiefly upon Garibaldi's Autobiography and the personal narrative of the campaign by Captain Forbes, R.N.

G. A. HENTY.

CHAPTER I. AWAITING THE ATTACK

ON April 29th, 1849, two men were seated in a room whose open windows commanded a view down the Tiber. A sound of confused uproar rose from the city.

"I am afraid, Leonard," the elder of the two men said, "that the crisis is at hand. The news that the French are landing to-day at Civita Vecchia is ominous indeed. It is true that Oudinot has sent a message saying that the flag he has hoisted is that of peace and order. The people will not believe that he comes as an enemy; but, for my part, I have no doubt of it."

"Nor have I," the other replied. "It was bad enough that we had Austria against us, Sardinia powerless, and all the princelings of Italy hostile; but that France, having proclaimed herself a republic, should now interfere to crush us and to put the Pope back upon his throne is nothing short of monstrous. I feared that it would be so, but Mazzini had so much faith in his influence with members of the French Assembly that he has buoyed up the hopes of the populace, and even now the people generally believe that the French come as friends."

"It is doubtless the influence of their new president, Napoleon, that has turned the scale against us," the other said gloomily. "I do not suppose that he cares about the Pope one way or the other, but it is his interest to pose as his champion. By so doing he will gain the good opinion of Austria, of Naples, and the ducal rulers of the Italian states. Even Prussia, protestant as she is, would view with satisfaction the suppression of a rising like ours, for her throne well-nigh tottered in last year's explosion. Russia, too, which perhaps more than any other power has reason to fear a popular rising, would feel grateful to Napoleon for undertaking to crush free thought in Rome. It is evident that the French President's move is a politic one. Do you think that we shall fight, Leonard?"

"I fancy so. I have no belief in Mazzini's courage, president though he may be. Garibaldi is the popular hero, and I know him well enough to be sure that if he has but a handful of men to back him he will fight till the end. We had the odds as heavily against us when we were comrades-in-arms at Rio, with but the Susie and a merchantman with three or four guns against the whole Brazilian navy, or when, with the Italian volunteers, two hundred strong, we several times withstood the assault of five times our number. You will see we shall fight; but there can be no question what the end must be. We may repulse Oudinot's attack; but France could send any amount of reinforcements to him, while we have no friends to go to. It is well that your wife, Muriel, and the boy were sent off a month since to Leghorn, where, if we escape from what must happen here, we can join them and take ship for England."

"I am sorry that you should be involved in this affair, Leonard."

"I am not sorry," the other said. "In the first place, after being here more than ten years, I have come to hate the tyranny and oppression, I don't say of the Pope himself, but of his underlings, as much as you do. In the second place, I would fight by the side of Garibaldi in almost any quarrel. I do not agree with him in his love for republics, but he has infected me with his hatred of tyrants and his burning patriotism. He is a glorious man; and after having been his comrade, I may almost say his brother, in adventures, hardships, and battles for two years, it would be strange indeed if I hesitated to join him in his crusade to rid Italy of her tyrants. I am a soldier, and I own to a fondness for fighting when convinced that the cause is a just one. I know your opinions on the subject; but I suppose you do not propose to fight yourself?"

"I do indeed, Leonard. I do not say that I should be a match for a strong and active man in a bout with swords, though of course I learned the use of the rapier when a student, but at fifty I can at least use a musket as well as a younger man, and if Rome fights I fight with her. Ah, here comes Garibaldi!"

The door opened, and a man entered, whose appearance, even had he not been dressed in a red shirt, blue trousers of rough cloth, and a soft, broad-brimmed wide-awake, would have been remarked wherever he went. Of middle height, he was exceptionally wide across the shoulders and deep in the chest; he wore his hair and beard long – both were of a golden yellow, giving a remarkably leonine look to his face; his eyes were blue, and the general expression of his face, when not angered, was pleasant and good-tempered, although marked also by resolution and firmness. At that time his name was comparatively little known in Europe, although the extraordinary bravery and enterprise that he had shown at Rio and Monte Video had marked him as a leader of guerilla warfare, possessing many characteristics that recalled the exploits of Lord Cochrane. It was only when, after his services had been declined by Carlo Alberto, King of Sardinia, he was, with a few hundred followers, making his way to aid in the defence of Venice against the Austrians, that, on hearing that Rome had risen, he hurried to aid the movement, and on his arrival there was greeted with enthusiasm by the populace, who had been informed by Mazzini of his exploits.

“You have heard the news?” he said as he entered.

“Yes; we were just talking it over,” Leonard Percival said, “and conclude, as I suppose you do, that the French come as enemies.”

“There can be no doubt about it, my friend,” Garibaldi said. “If they had said that they came as enemies I might have doubted them; but after the evasive answer their general gave to the deputation Mazzini sent them this morning, I have no question whatever that they will attack us to-morrow.”

“And you will fight?”

“Of course. We shall beat them, I think; in the end Rome must fall, but our resistance will not have been in vain. The stand we shall make against tyranny will touch every heart throughout Italy. It will show that, ground down as the people have been for centuries, the old fire of the Romans is not extinct. This will be but the beginning. When it is seen that the despots cannot maintain their authority save by the aid of foreign powers, there will be revolt after revolt until Italy is free. There were some grand lines you once told me as we sat round a camp fire, Percival, that exactly express my thoughts.”

“I know what you mean,” the Englishman said. “They were Byron’s:

For freedom’s battle once begun,
Bequeath’d by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won.”

“They are splendid and true,” Garibaldi said enthusiastically. “So shall it be with us. This is our first battle – we cannot hope to win it; but our guns will tell Italy and Europe that we have awoken at last, that, after being slaves so long that we had come to be looked upon as a people content to be ruled by despots, we are still men, and that, having once begun the fight for freedom, we will maintain it until freedom is won.”

“And now, what are your plans for to-morrow?”

“As soon as the French are seen approaching the city the church bells will ring and the alarm be beaten in the streets. The word has been passed round that all are to assemble instantly. The troops that have been organised will first pour out; the rest will follow with such arms as they have. We shall simply rush upon the French. In such a fight there is no need for manœuvring; and it is well that it is so, for there the French would be our superiors. We shall simply attack and drive them back. We may take it for granted that, being boastful creatures and believing that they have but to show themselves and we shall lay down our arms and implore their mercy, they will be wholly taken by surprise and disconcerted by our onslaught. Can you recommend anything better, my friend?”

“No. With such a force as yours, newly raised and wholly unused to discipline, it is probable that at the first engagement, and with the advantage of surprise, they will, as you say, drive back the French; but you will have to adopt different tactics afterwards: to stand on the defensive and prevent

their entering the city as long as possible, and to defend every street and lane, as the Spaniards did at Saragossa. They may take the city at last, but at so terrible a cost of blood that we may be sure that when you rise again the French people will not allow another expedition to be undertaken for a cause in which they have no concern, and which would entail such heavy sacrifices.”

“Will you have a separate command, Percival? You have but to choose one, and it is yours.”

“I will fight by your side,” the Englishman said briefly. “I know that I shall get my full share of the work then.”

“And you, professor?”

“I shall go out with the rest. The students have elected me their captain, and I shall, of course, lead them. It is a simple matter. I see the enemy in front, and I go at them. Even I, a man of peace all my life, understand that. I shall have with me at least a dozen of my colleagues, and if I am shot they can direct our boys as well as I can.”

“Good!” Garibaldi said. “If I thought that you could keep the students in hand, and then dash into the thick of it if you see our men wavering anywhere, I should say do so; but I know that it would be impossible. They will long to be in the front rank and to set an example to others, and I shall feel confident that, wherever they may be, there will be no faltering. Your chief difficulty will be in restraining their ardour. Well, my friends, I have many things to arrange, so must be going. You will find me in my quarters at nine o’clock this evening, Percival. The officers and the heads of the various quarters of the town are to meet me there at that hour, to arrange where the assembling-places are to be when the alarm is given, and the streets through which they must move when we see at which point the French are going to attack us.”

“I will come down with him,” the professor said. “I will send word to my colleagues where to meet me an hour later, so that I can inform them of the arrangements.”

And with a nod Garibaldi, who had been unanimously elected general of the Roman forces, strolled away.

Leonard Percival had been a captain in the British army, but having become tired of garrison life during the long peace, had sold out in 1837, and sailed for South America, where there were always opportunities for a man of action to distinguish himself. He took part in the struggle of Rio Grande for separation from Brazil. Here he first made the acquaintance of Garibaldi, and shared with him in the many perilous adventures and desperate fights of that war. Becoming disgusted with the factions and intrigues that were rampant at Rio, he left the service of the little republic and returned to England.

He was the second son of a wealthy English gentleman, who had viewed with much disapproval his leaving the army and undertaking the life of a soldier of fortune when there was no occasion for his doing so, as he had an allowance amply sufficient for him to live upon. His father was not much surprised when, after staying for a month at home, Leonard told him that, having a taste for art, he had made up his mind to adopt it as a profession, and should go out to Rome to study. This seemed to him better than wandering about the world fighting in quarrels in which he had no concern, and he had no valid reply to his son when the latter said, —

“You see, father, you cannot expect me to spend my life in absolute laziness. I must be doing something. The life of a club lounge is the last I should choose. I have no liking for a country life — if I had I would go out to Australia or Canada and settle; but I know that in a few months I should be home again, for I could not stand a life of solitude. If you can suggest anything better I shall be ready, as far as possible, to be guided by your wishes.”

“You may as well have your own way, Leonard. I suppose it will come to that in the end, and therefore you may as well do it first as last; and at any rate, a few months in Rome will be a change for you, and I shall not be expecting by every post a communication saying that you have been killed.”

So Captain Percival went to Rome, without any idea of staying there more than a year. His plans, however, were changed when he met and fell in love with Muriel, the only child of Professor

Forli, a man of almost European reputation for his learning and attainments. His wooing had been an uneventful one. His income was amply sufficient, in the professor's eyes, to keep his daughter in comfort, and, moreover, the master under whom Leonard was studying gave an excellent account of his ability and industry, and in 1842 the marriage took place. Previous to this Leonard had obtained his father's consent to his intended marriage, although not his approval.

"I consider that it is one more piece of folly," he wrote. "There was no reason in the world why you should not have settled at home and made a good marriage. I had specially hoped that this would have been the case, as Tom still remains a bachelor. However, there are some redeeming points in the matter. I have, through a friend, who is a member of the Athenæum, learned that Professor Forli's name is well known, and that he is considered one of the most learned men in Italy. In the next place, the young lady's mother is, as you have told me, an Englishwoman of good family, and her daughter is therefore only half an Italian. From your description of her, allowing for the usual exaggeration in such cases, she takes after her mother, and might pass anywhere as of unmixed English blood, so I may hope that I shall not have black-haired, swarthy little grandchildren running about. I shall add a couple of hundred a year to your allowance, as I always intended to do when you married."

A year later Captain Percival brought his wife home to England, and stayed there for some time; and here a son was born, who was christened Frank, after his grandfather. Whatever objections the latter might at first have felt to his son's marriage, they were altogether removed by this visit; neither in appearance nor in speech did his wife betray her foreign origin, for her mother had always conversed with her in English, and she spoke it without the slightest accent. She was now twenty, was strikingly handsome, and very graceful in her movements. He would gladly have kept her and his son with him; but when they had consented to her marriage, her parents had bargained that she should, at any rate, spend a large portion of her time with them, as they had no other children. Moreover, her husband was now devoted to art, and although he had only been working for two years, his pictures were already beginning to attract attention.

Mr. Percival was, therefore, obliged to content himself with the promise that they would come over every year for at least four months. The arrangement, however, was not carried out, for, a few months after their return to Italy, Mr. Percival died suddenly. His death made no difference pecuniarily to his son, as he had settled upon him a sum sufficient to produce an income equal to that which he had before been allowed. His elder brother came out a year later, and stayed for a few weeks with him.

"You must send this little chap over to England to be educated, Leonard," he had said, "if you will persist in sticking in this rotten old city. I don't suppose I shall ever marry; and if not, of course some day he will come in for the property."

"But why on earth shouldn't you marry, Tom? You know what a trouble it was to our father that you did not do so – it was a real grievance to him."

"Well, I should really have been glad to oblige him; but somehow or other I never saw any girl whom I earnestly desired to make my wife, or, as I suppose you would call it, fell in love with. I very much prefer knocking about in my yacht, or travelling, to settling down. Of course I always spent a month or two, twice a year, at my father's, and was in town three months in the season – that is to say, when I did not get sick of it. Then I either went up the Mediterranean or to the West Indies, or knocked about round England for three or four months, and finished the year with a run up the Nile, or out to India or China. Now I feel even less inclined to marry than I did before, for if I did, it would simply mean eight months in the year down in the country, and four in London. Of course, if I ever do fall in love – and at forty it is hardly likely – I shall marry; I don't bind myself in any way to remain single. Anyhow, I am glad that you are married, and that, when I go, there will be another Frank Percival, who we must hope will be of a more settled disposition than either of us, to reign in the old place."

So things had gone on quietly until, in 1848, the revolution in Paris was followed by an upheaval all over Europe. The ascent of Pius IX. to the papal chair was hailed by the liberal party in Italy as the commencement of a new era. He was accredited, and not unjustly, with liberal views, and it was believed that he would introduce reforms into the Papal States, and act as a centre round which patriots could rally. Unfortunately, the party of reform in Italy was divided into two classes; of one of these the Marquis d'Azeglio was the leading spirit; he was a moderate reformer, and looked to a union of Italy under a constitutional monarch. Carlo Alberto, the King of Sardinia, seemed to him the only man who could assume that position, and for years d'Azeglio had worked quietly to this end.

A more violent spirit was however working with as much zeal and energy in another direction. Mazzini was an extreme republican of the narrowest kind; he was in communication with men of the same type in France, and had formed secret societies all over Italy. He and those with him were anxious to obtain the countenance and prestige which a Pope of advanced liberal opinions would give to their party, and Pius IX. was received with enthusiastic acclamations by the republican party of Rome. But, liberally inclined as he was, he shrank from committing himself wholly to the reformers. He was a weak man; and although his vanity was gratified by his reception, and although he had sincerely desired to introduce broad reforms, he hesitated when called upon to carry those reforms into action. The King of Sardinia had been pushed forward by the Mazzinians, until he compromised himself, and made advances to the Pope, when in 1847 Austria violated the Papal territories at Ferrara. But the Pope hesitated. His army was already near the frontier; but he declared that he had no intention of making war, and desired only to protect his territory.

The news of the movement had reached Monte Video; and Garibaldi, believing that the Pope would stand forth as the champion for the freedom of Italy, wrote, offering his services and those of his followers, the greater part of whom were Italians who had been exiled for their political opinions. No answer was received from him; and Garibaldi took the matter into his own hands, and with eighty-five Italians sailed for Europe. On arriving at Alicante he learned that a revolution had broken out in Paris, that Carlo Alberto had given his people a constitution, that Lombardy and Venice had risen, that the Milanese had driven the Austrians out of the city, that there were insurrections in Vienna and Berlin, that Tuscany and Rome were sending thousands of volunteers to fight in the national cause, and that even Ferdinand of Naples had promised his people a constitution. Garibaldi was unavoidably detained for some time at Nice, his native town, and before he was able to move a change had set in.

The Lombards and Venetians had both quarrelled among themselves. Mazzini's party were struggling against those who would have made Carlo Alberto King of Italy. The Piedmontese, after brilliant successes at first, were obliged to retreat. The Roman volunteers had been forced to capitulate. Garibaldi went to see the king, and offer to act with his volunteers in his service; but his application was slighted, and this threw him into the hands of the revolutionary party. It was a grievous mistake on the part of the king; but the latter could not forget that Garibaldi had been a rebel against him, nor could Garibaldi forget that it was the king who had sentenced him to death and had sent him into exile. He therefore hurried to Milan, where he was received with enthusiasm. The king moved to the aid of Milan, against which the Austrians were advancing; but in that city the party of Mazzini was predominant, and they refused to open the gates to him; and early in August the king came to terms with the Austrians, and Milan surrendered.

For a time Garibaldi's following alone maintained the war. Carrying on a guerilla warfare, he, with fifteen hundred men, was surrounded by five thousand Austrians, but he effected a marvellous retreat, and retired into Switzerland. Here he was taken ill, and was forced to rest for some months. He then went to Genoa. The extraordinary skill and bravery which he had shown during the campaign induced the King of Sardinia to offer him the rank of general in his army, that being the grade that he had held in Monte Video. But Garibaldi refused, and with two hundred and fifty volunteers started for Venice, which was besieged by the Austrians. On hearing, however, of the rising in Rome and the flight of the Pope – who had now abandoned his liberal professions, and had thrown himself into the

hands of Austria – Garibaldi changed his course, and his ranks being swollen as he marched along, he arrived at Rome at the head of fifteen hundred men. Here he met his comrade in the struggle at Rio and Monte Video.

During his six years' residence in Rome Captain Percival had imbibed that hatred of the Austrians and detestation of the despotisms under which the Italian States groaned, that was felt by all with whom he came in contact, his father-in-law, Professor Forli, being one of the leaders of the liberal party in Rome. His wife, too, was an enthusiast in the cause; and although he felt no sympathy whatever with Mazzini and the revolutionary party, he was, even before the arrival of Garibaldi, resolved to take up arms should Rome be attacked. The presence of Garibaldi still further confirmed this resolution; but as soon as he heard that a French expedition had set sail, he had insisted that his wife and child should leave the city, for he by no means shared the general belief that the French were coming as allies. Her mother accompanied her to Leghorn, for the professor was as anxious as Percival that his wife and daughter should be in a place of safety.

They were most reluctant to go, and only yielded when Signor Forli and Captain Percival declared that their presence in Rome would hamper their movements and render it impossible for them to make their escape if the city should be taken, which both foresaw would be the case. They promised that when they found all was lost they would leave the city and join them at Leghorn. Madame Forli was to take her maiden name again; and as two English ladies staying at an hotel at Leghorn they would be safe from annoyance even if a French or Austrian army marched through the town. The professor spoke English well, and once out of the city he and Leonard would be able to pass as two English tourists travelling from Naples to Florence.

Had the Pope sought refuge in Capua or Malta, events might have taken a very different turn; but he threw himself into the hands of the King of Naples, and went the length of pronouncing him to be a model monarch, a pattern to the rest of Europe, and this at a time when the disclosures that had been made respecting the horrible dungeons into which all Neapolitans suspected of entertaining liberal views were thrown, were filling Europe with horror.

This change of front extinguished the hopes of those who had imagined that the Pope would become the centre of liberal thought in Italy, rendered the people of the papal dominions desperate, and vastly increased the party of Mazzini and the extreme republicans. On February 9th a constituent assembly was held in Rome, and the republic was proclaimed. Garibaldi was appointed to defend the frontier. Volunteers poured in from all parts of Italy, and as the King of Sardinia had again taken up arms, a force was moving forward to support him, when the news came of his defeat at Novara, followed by his abdication and the succession of Victor Emmanuel to the throne. Austria, Naples, and Spain were now eager to crush the revolution in Rome; but the resolution of the Romans was unshaken, and they still hoped to be able to maintain themselves with, as they expected, the aid of France.

The terrible blow that had been inflicted on finding that the French were coming as enemies, instead of as friends, did not shake their determination, although it was now with a courage of despair rather than of hope that they prepared for the conflict. Rome must fall; but at least it would prove itself worthy of its best traditions, and set an example that would not be lost upon the peoples of Italy. Anything, they felt, would be better than the reign of a pope in close alliance with the tyrant of Naples; and the evening after the French landing saw Rome tranquil and grimly determined. Doubtless many of those who were resolved to fight till the last were buoyed up with the hope that in any case they would be able to make their escape when the action was over. Rome covered a great extent of ground, and the French army was not of sufficient strength to form a cordon round it.

Captain Percival had, a fortnight before, sent his finished and unfinished canvases and all his most valuable belongings down to Civita Vecchia, and had shipped them for England. He knew the reckless destruction carried out by an army after a successful assault, and that possibly, if it came to street to street fighting, a considerable portion of the city might be burnt. The professor had similarly

sent away his very valuable collection of coins, books, and manuscripts. At nine o'clock they went down to the mansion that Garibaldi occupied. A long discussion took place, and routes were decided upon for the various contingents to follow when the alarm was given. News had been brought in from time to time during the day as to the movements of the French, and the point at which they would probably assault was therefore now known. It would be either at the Porta Cavalleggieri or at the Porta San Pancrazio.

Captain Percival and the professor returned to the former's house, where the professor had taken up his residence since his wife had gone to Leghorn, and sat talking until a late hour. They were roused early the next morning by the ringing of the great bells of the cathedral, which were joined almost immediately by those of all the other churches in the city. Captain Percival had lain down fully dressed, and springing to his feet, he buckled on a sword, placed a brace of pistols in his belt, and then ran down to the Porta San Pancrazio, where, as he knew, Garibaldi would take up his post. The general, indeed, had not slept at all, but, fearful that the French might attempt an assault under cover of darkness, kept watch round the western wall, along which he had posted the men he could most depend upon. Even before the Englishman joined Garibaldi the roar of the guns on the wall told that the French were already advancing.

"It is like old times, comrade," Garibaldi said, with a strong grip of his hand, "only it is on a larger scale than we were accustomed to in South America. Oudinot is beginning with a blunder, for he is making for the Porta Cavalleggieri, which is flanked by the walls of the Vatican. He is over-confident, and I do not imagine that he expects anything like a serious resistance. I think we shall certainly beat him back there, and that then he will attack us here. Will you go to the other gate? All my old comrades know you, and, indeed, all the volunteers, as you have assisted to drill them."

Oudinot, indeed, had believed that the force of regular troops he had with him would easily brush aside the resistance of a half-armed mob.

Captain Percival hurried away. The volunteers were already gathered on the walls, and in every street the townspeople were hurrying out, armed with weapons of all kinds. On the roofs and at the windows of the houses women were clustered thickly, waving their handkerchiefs and scarves, and shouting words of encouragement and applause to the men. To the roar of cannon was now added the rattle of musketry. When he reached the gate he found a heavy column of volunteers drawn up there, while behind them was a dense crowd of excited citizens. From the wall he saw the French advancing; the leading regiment was but a few hundred yards away. They were moving steadily forward, apparently heedless of the cannon that thundered on their flank and face. The musketry they could afford to despise, for they were beyond the distance at which any accurate shooting was possible; and, indeed, the firing was of the wildest description, as comparatively few of the men had ever handled a gun until a few weeks previously. Captain Percival went up to the officer who was in command, and with whom he was well acquainted. Although the massive walls still stood, the gates had long since disappeared, their places being occupied simply by barriers, where the duty on provisions and goods coming into the city was collected.

"The men are clamouring to be let out," he said. "What do you think, Captain Percival?"

"I should let them go soon. They are full of dash and enthusiasm at present, and would fight far better on the offensive than they would if they are kept stationary. I should keep them in hand till the French are within seventy or eighty yards of the gate. By that time they will be answering the fire from the walls, and even those in the front lines, whose muskets are still loaded, will only have time for one shot before our men are upon them. I should place three or four hundred of your steadiest men on the wall here, so that if the sortie is repulsed, they can cover the retreat by their fire."

"I think that is good advice," the other said. "Will you come down with me, and tell them that they shall go, but that they must not move till I give the order, and that no man is to fire until he is within ten yards of the enemy's line."

It was difficult to make their voices heard above the crack of musketry and the shouts of the excited crowd; however, their words were passed from man to man, and so back among the people behind. Now that they knew that they were to have their way, and that the critical movement was at hand, the shouting abated, and a stern look of determination settled on their faces. Leonard Percival joined a group of officers who were at the head of the volunteers, and the officer in command resumed his place on the wall, as it was all-important that, if the sortie were repulsed, he should lead his men down and oppose the entrance of the enemy until the retiring force had rallied.

It was not long before a roll of musketry broke out, showing that the assailants were now returning the fire of the Garibaldians on the wall. It grew louder and louder; and then, when the head of the French column was some eighty yards away, the officer on the wall gave the order, and the volunteers followed by the citizens poured out with a mighty shout. The French halted for a moment in surprise, not having dreamt that the defenders of the town would venture upon sallying out to attack them. Then there was a scattered fire of musketry; but most of the barrels were already empty, and few of the balls took effect. Without replying, the volunteers rushed forward, opening out as they ran to something like order. When within ten yards of the French bayonets every man delivered his fire, and then hurled himself upon the broken ranks. The struggle was a short one. The weight and impetuosity of the attack, supported as it was by a surging crowd of excited citizens, was irresistible, and the regiment broke and fled hastily to the shelter of the troops following it, leaving the ground strewn with dead and wounded. Then the bugles at the gate rang out the order to the exulting crowd to retire. The officers threw themselves in front of the men, and with great difficulty checked the pursuit, and caused them to withdraw to their original position behind the wall.

CHAPTER II. A DESPERATE DEFENCE

AFTER a short halt the French, having re-formed, changed their course and marched along parallel to the fortifications. Captain Percival had, on returning from the sortie, joined the officer on the wall, and watched alternately the movements of the French and the scene in the city. This was one of wild excitement – the men cheering and shouting, shaking each other by the hand, placing their hats on their bayonets, and waving them in answer to the wild applause of the women on the housetops. Some, however, were not content at being called back, instead of being allowed to complete what they considered their partial victory; forgetting that they would have been met in a very different manner by the troops in support, who would have been prepared for the attack and would have reserved their fire until the last moment. As soon as it became evident that the French intended to make their next move against the gate of San Pancrazio, the greater portion of the volunteers marched in that direction, Captain Percival accompanying them.

“You have done well so far,” Garibaldi said, as he joined them. “Now it will be our turn, and we shall have tougher work than you had, for they will be prepared. I suppose your loss was not heavy?”

“Very trifling indeed; there were but three dead brought in, and there were some ten or twelve wounded.”

“It was just the sort of action to raise the spirits of the men, and they are all in the humour for fighting. I shall therefore lead them out here. But we cannot hope to succeed with a rush as you did – they will be prepared for us this time; the best men would be killed before we reached them, and the mass behind, but few of whom have guns, would be simply massacred.”

The volunteers, who had undergone a rough sort of drill, were assembled before the French had concluded their preparations for an assault. Garibaldi appointed Captain Percival to take charge of the gate, having with him two hundred of the volunteers, behind whom were the armed citizens. These clamoured to go out as before; but Garibaldi raised his hand for silence, and then told them that he would not lead them to a useless massacre against an army of well-armed soldiers.

“Your duty,” he said, “is to remain here. If we have to fall back, you will open to let us pass. We shall be ready to do our share when necessary; but the defence of the gate will be for a while entrusted to you. If the enemy force an entrance, fall upon them as you would upon wild beasts; their discipline and their arms would be of no great advantage in a hand-to-hand fight. Each man must fight as he would were he protecting his family from a band of wolves – hatchet and pike must meet musket and bayonet, those who have knives must dive among the throng and use them fearlessly. It is a great charge that we entrust to you: we go out to fight; you will guard the city and all you hold dear.”

A loud cheer showed that he had struck the right chord, and the mob drew back as he led out some five thousand volunteers. These advanced to within musket-shot of the enemy, and then scattering, took shelter behind houses and cottages, walls and ruins. The French cannon opened fire as the movement was going on. These were answered by the guns on the walls, and as the French advanced a murderous fire was opened by their hidden foes. The battle raged for several hours. Sometimes the French advanced close up to the position held by the Garibaldians, but as soon as they did so, they were exposed also to the fire from the men on the walls; and in spite of Captain Percival's efforts, groups of men made their way down the road and joined the firing line, lying down until the moment should come when they could spring like wild cats upon the French.

Once or twice, when the assailants pressed back the Garibaldians in spite of their efforts, they found themselves presently opposed by a crowd that seemed to leap from the ground, and who, with wild shouts, rushed upon them so furiously that they recoiled almost panic-struck before so unaccustomed an enemy. Men were pulled down, and as Garibaldi had given strict orders that no

French soldier should be killed except when fighting, these were carried back triumphantly into the city. At last General Oudinot, seeing that his troops were making no progress, and that, even if they could force their way into the city, they would suffer terribly in street-fighting with such assailants, gave the order for his men to retire. This they did sullenly, while a roar of triumphant shouting rose from the volunteers, the men on the walls, and the crowd that covered every house and vantage-ground, from which a view of what was passing outside could be obtained.

The Italian loss was only about a hundred men killed and wounded, whereas the French lost three hundred killed and wounded and five hundred prisoners. So unprepared was the French general for such a resistance, that he had to undergo the humiliation of sending in to Garibaldi to ask him to supply him with surgeons to dress the wounds of the French soldiers. During the fighting the French artillery had done far more injury to works of art in Rome than they had inflicted upon the defenders, as the artillery played principally upon the dome of St. Peter's and the Vatican, both of which buildings were much damaged.

The joy caused in Rome by this victory was prodigious. Fires blazed that night on all the hills, every house was illuminated, the people thronged the streets, shouting and cheering. They had, indeed, much to be proud of: five thousand almost undrilled volunteers had defeated seven thousand of the best troops of France.

The French retired at once to Palo, on the road to Civita Vecchia. Garibaldi gave his troops a few hours' rest, and then moved out to attack the French, and took up a most advantageous position. His troops were flushed with victory, while the French were cowed and dispirited; and he was on the point of attacking, when General Oudinot sent a messenger to treat for an armistice, and as a proof of his sincerity offered to give up Ugo Bassi, a priest who had remained by the side of a wounded man when the Garibaldians had for a moment retired. Garibaldi would peremptorily have refused the request, for he was confident that he should defeat and capture the whole of the French. Mazzini, however, with his two associates in the triumvirate, still clung to the hope that the French would aid them, and determined to accept the armistice, fearing that were the whole French army destroyed, the national feeling would be so embittered that there would no longer be any hope whatever of an alliance. Garibaldi protested, declaring that the armistice would but enable the French reinforcements to arrive. Mazzini, however, persisted in the decision, and actually released the five hundred prisoners in exchange for the priest.

The folly of this violent democrat sealed the fate of Rome. Had Garibaldi been permitted to carry out his plans, the French army would have been destroyed or made prisoners to a man, and the enthusiasm that such a glorious victory would have excited throughout all Italy would have aroused the whole population to burst their bonds. Furious at this act of folly, Garibaldi and his troops re-entered Rome. He was greeted with enthusiasm by the people, but disliking such ovations, he slipped away with Captain Percival to the latter's house. Professor Forli had taken no part in the fighting outside the walls, but stationing himself with the troops that manned them, had kept up a vigorous fire whenever the enemy were within gunshot. After the repulse of the second attack he had returned home.

"The stupidity of these people is incredible," Garibaldi, who had scarcely spoken a word since he had turned back towards Rome, burst out, waving aside the chair that the professor offered him, and walking up and down the room like a caged lion. "We held the French in the palms of our hands, and they have allowed them to escape. A fortnight, and we shall have three times their number to face, and you know what the result will be. I regard the cause as lost, thrown away by Mazzini – a man who has never taken part in a battle, who kept himself shut up in the capital when the fighting was going on, a man of the tongue and not of action. It is too disgusting. I am a republican; but if a republic is to be in the hands of men like these, they will drive me to become a monarchist again. Carlo Alberto was weak, but he was at least a man; he staked his throne for the cause, and when it was lost, retired. Mazzini stakes nothing, for he has a safe-conduct; if he loses, he will set to to intrigue again, careless who may fall or what may come to Italy, if his own wild ideas cannot prevail;

he desires a republic, but it is a republic that he himself shall manipulate. Well, if it must be, it must. I am no statesman, but simply a fighting man. I shall fight till the last; and the failure must rest upon the head of him who has brought it about.”

“It is a bad business,” Captain Percival said quietly. “I thoroughly agree with you, Garibaldi, in all you say; but as you know of old, I am not much given to words. I began this thing, and shall go through with it. I think, as you do, the cause is lost; but every blow we strike will find an echo in Italy, and a harvest will grow from the seeds some day. As to Mazzini and his two companions, I am not surprised. When you stir up muddy water, the scum will at first rise to the top. So it was in the first throes of the French Revolution, so it is here; the mob orators, the schemers, come to power, and there they remain until overthrown by men of heart and action. After Robespierre and Marat came Napoleon, a great man whom I acknowledge I admire heartily, enemy though he was of England; after Mazzini Italy may find her great men. I know you do not like Cavour; I admire him immensely. He is obliged to be prudent and cautious now; but when the time comes he will be regarded as the champion of free Italy; and from what I have heard of him, the young King Victor Emmanuel will be a sovereign worthy of him.”

“I hope it may prove so,” Garibaldi said shortly; “at present the prospect does not seem to me a fair one. And you, professor?”

“I shall carry out my plans, and when Rome falls, as fall it doubtless will, I shall, if I escape, join my wife at Leghorn, and go and establish myself in England. I have friends and correspondents there, and I have my son-in-law, who has promised me a home. Here I could not stay – I am a marked man; and the day that the Pope enters in triumph I should be consigned to a dungeon under St. Angelo.”

“There should be no difficulty in escaping,” Garibaldi said. “With fifteen miles of wall it would need fifty thousand men to surround them; and the French will want all their strength at the point where they attack us.”

It was evident that some time must elapse before there would be any change in the situation at Rome. Mazzini was sending despatches to Ledru Rollin and the French Assembly, imploring them to abstain from interference that would lead to the destruction of the Roman Republic; and until these could be acted upon, or, on the other hand, fresh troops arrived from France, matters would be at a standstill. In the meantime, danger threatened from another quarter; for the King of Naples was preparing to move with ten thousand men to reinstate the Pope. This force, with twenty pieces of cannon, had advanced as far as Albano. Three days after the battle, Garibaldi told Captain Percival that he was about to start that evening with four thousand men to meet the Neapolitan army, and asked him to accompany him.

“The troops will not be warned till an hour before we set out. It is important that no whisper shall reach the enemy as to our intentions or strength.”

“I shall be glad to go with you,” the Englishman said. “After the way your men fought against the French, I have no doubt that they will make short work of the Neapolitans, however great the odds against them. Bomba is hated by his own subjects; and it is hardly likely that they will fight with any zeal in his cause. They are very different foes from the French.”

Accordingly, at eight o'clock on the evening of May 4th, Captain Percival mounted and joined Garibaldi and his staff, and they rode to Tivoli, halting among the ruins of Adrian's Villa.

The next morning scouts were sent off towards Albano, and returned in the evening with the news that the Neapolitans were still there, and showed no signs of any intention to advance, the news of the defeat of the French having, no doubt, greatly quenched King Ferdinand's ardour.

On the 8th the Garibaldians moved to Palestrina, and the general despatched a body of men to drive back the scattered parties of Neapolitans who were raiding the country. This was done with little loss, the Neapolitans in all cases retiring hastily when approached. Garibaldi had information that evening that orders had been given for the main body of the enemy to advance and attack him on the following day. The information proved correct; and before noon the Neapolitan force was seen

approaching, seven thousand strong. Garibaldi had no cannon with him, having set out in the lightest marching order. He distributed a portion of his force as skirmishers, keeping the rest in hand for the decisive moment. The Neapolitan artillery opened fire, and the main body advanced in good order; but as soon as a heavy fire was opened by the skirmishers, much confusion was observed in their ranks. Two other parties were at once sent out; and these, taking every advantage of cover, soon joined in the fray, opening a galling fire upon each flank.

Several times the Neapolitans attempted to advance, urged on by their officers; but the skirmishing line in their front was strengthened from the reserves whenever they did so, until the whole of the Garibaldians, with the exception of a thousand of the steadiest troops, were engaged, and an incessant fire was maintained against the heavy ranks of the enemy, whose artillery produced but little effect against their almost unseen foes. For three hours the conflict continued; then, as the Garibaldian reserve advanced, the confusion among the enemy reached a point at which it could no longer be controlled, and Ferdinand's army fled like a flock of sheep. Garibaldi and his staff had exposed themselves recklessly during the fight, riding about among their troops, encouraging them, and warning them not to be carried away by their impetuosity into making an attack, until the enemy were thoroughly shaken and the orders issued for a general charge.

A heavy fire was maintained upon the staff by the Neapolitans; and it seemed to them that Garibaldi had a charmed life, for although several of the staff fell, he continued to ride up and down as if altogether oblivious of the rain of bullets. He did not, however, escape unscathed, being wounded both in the hand and foot. The fugitives did not halt until they had crossed the frontier into Neapolitan territory. The Garibaldians remained for two or three days at Palestrina; and seeing that the Neapolitans showed no signs of an intention to advance again, returned by a rapid march to Rome.

Mazzini's efforts had been to some extent successful. The French Assembly declared that for France to aid in suppressing a people determined to obtain their freedom was altogether in contradiction with the condition on which the republic had been instituted, and sent M. de Lesseps as an envoy to Rome. Napoleon, however, was of opinion that the reverse to the French arms must be wiped out, and on his own authority despatched large reinforcements to Oudinot.

To the indignation of Garibaldi's friends and of the greater part of the population of Rome, it was found, on the return of the force to the capital, that, in spite of the brilliant successes that had been gained, Mazzini and the demagogues had superseded him in his command, and had appointed Colonel Roselli over his head. This step was the result of their jealousy of the popularity that Garibaldi had gained. His friends advised him not to submit to so extraordinary a slight; but the general simply replied that a question of this kind had never troubled him, and that he was ready to serve, even as a common soldier, under any one who would give him a chance of fighting the enemy of his country. On the 14th the Neapolitan army again advanced and occupied Palestrina; and the Roman army, now ten thousand strong, marched out on the 16th. Garibaldi, with two thousand men, moved in advance. Although Roselli was nominally in command of the army, he was conscious of Garibaldi's greater abilities, and deferred, on all points, to the opinion of the man who was regarded by all as being still their Commander-in-chief.

When within two miles of Velletri Garibaldi met a strong column of Neapolitans; these, however, after but a slight resistance, took to flight, and shut themselves up in the town. Garibaldi sent back for reinforcements, but none arrived until too late in the day for the attack to be made; and in the morning it was found that the enemy had evacuated the place, the soldiers being so cowed by their superstitious fear of Garibaldi that the officers in vain attempted to rally them, and they fled in a disorderly mob. The panic reached the other portion of the army, and before morning the whole had again crossed the frontier. Garibaldi, at the head of his division, followed them up; and receiving authority to carry the war into the enemy's country, was marching upon Naples, when he was recalled in all haste to aid in the defence of Rome, Oudinot having given notice, in spite of a treaty agreed

upon between M. de Lesseps, on the part of the French Assembly, and Mazzini, that he would attack Rome on Monday, June 4th.

Oudinot was, however, guilty of an act of gross treachery, for, relying upon his intimation, the city was lulled into a sense of security that no attack would be made until the day named, whereas before daybreak on the 3rd his troops stole up and took possession of the buildings just outside the gate of San Pancrazio, and, before the Roman troops could assemble, captured the Porta Molle, after a desperate resistance by a few men who had gathered together on the alarm being given. The firing was the first intimation that Rome received of the treacherous manœuvre of Oudinot. Again the church bells pealed out, and the populace rushed to defend their walls. Garibaldi felt that the occupation by the enemy of two great villas, a short distance from the wall, would enable them to place their batteries in such close proximity to the San Pancrazio gate that it was necessary at all hazards to recapture them; and, with his brave Lombard volunteers, he sallied out and attacked the French desperately.

All day long the fight continued, both parties being strongly reinforced from time to time; but in fighting of this kind the discipline of the French soldiers, and the military knowledge of their officers, gave them a great advantage over the Italians, who fought with desperate bravery, but without that order and community of effort essential in such a struggle. In vain did Garibaldi and Colonel Medici, the best of his officers, expose themselves recklessly in their endeavours to get their men to attack in military order and to concentrate their efforts at the given point; in vain did the soldiers show a contempt for death beyond all praise. When night fell the French still held possession of the outposts they had gained, and the Italians fell back within the walls.

That night Garibaldi held a council of war, at which Captain Percival was present. The latter and Colonel Medici were strongly of opinion that a renewal of the fighting of that day would be disastrous. The loss had already been very great, and it had been proved that, however valiantly they fought, the volunteers were unable to wrest the strong positions held by a superior force of well-disciplined men; for the French army now numbered forty thousand, while that of the defenders was but twelve thousand, and of these more than half had joined within the last three weeks. A series of such failures as those they had encountered would very quickly break the spirit of the young troops, and would but precipitate the end. These opinions prevailed, and it was decided that for the present they should remain on the defensive, maintaining a heavy cannonade from the walls, and making occasional sorties to harass the besiegers. In the meantime, the bridge across the Tiber should be destroyed, and, if possible, mines should be driven to blow up the batteries that would be erected by the French under cover of the positions they held.

These tactics were followed out. The French engaged upon the erection of the batteries were harassed by a continuous cannonade. Sorties were frequently made, but these were ere long abandoned; the loss suffered on each occasion being so heavy that the troops no longer fought with the courage and enthusiasm that had so animated them during the first day's fighting. The attempt to blow up the bridge across the river by means of a barge loaded with explosives failed, and none of the defenders possessed the knowledge that would have enabled them to blow in the centres of the arches. The mines were equally unsuccessful, as the French countermined, and by letting in the water formed a streamlet that ran into the Tiber, filled the Italian works, and compelled the defenders to desist from their labours. Nevertheless, the progress of the siege was hindered; and although it was certain that the city, if unaided, must fall ere long, Mazzini still clung to the hope that the treaty made by Lesseps and carried by him to Paris would be recognised. This last hope was crushed by the arrival of a French envoy with the declaration that the French Government disavowed any participation in the Convention signed by M. de Lesseps.

Even Garibaldi now admitted that further resistance would only bring disaster upon the city, and cause an absolutely useless loss of life. Mazzini and his two colleagues persisted in their resolution to defend the town to the last, even if the French laid it in ashes, and they even reproached Garibaldi

with cowardice. On the night of the 21st the French gained possession of the San Pancrazio gate, having driven a passage up to it unnoticed by the defenders. They at once seized the wall and captured two bastions, after a desperate defence by Garibaldi. They then planted cannon upon these and began to bombard the city. Twelve guns were also planted in a breach that had been effected in the wall, and terrible havoc was made among the villas and palaces in the western part of the city.

Roselli proposed that the whole defending force should join in an attack on the French batteries; but to that Garibaldi would not consent, on the grounds that these could not be carried without immense loss, and that, even if captured, they could not be held against the force the French would bring up to retake them. Gradually the assailants pushed their way forward, encountering a determined resistance at the capture of the Villa Savorelli. On the evening of the 27th no fewer than four hundred of its defenders fell by bayonet wounds, showing how desperately they had contested every foot of the advance. On the morning of the 30th three heavy columns of French advanced simultaneously, and carried the barricades the Romans had erected. Garibaldi, with the most determined of his men, flung himself upon the enemy; and for a time the desperation with which they fought arrested the advance. But it was a last effort, and Garibaldi sent to Mazzini to say that further resistance was impossible.

He was summoned before the triumvirate, and there stated that, unless they were resolved to make Rome a second Saragossa, there was no possible course but to surrender. In the end the triumvirate resigned, issuing a proclamation that the republic gave up a defence which had become impossible. The assembly then appointed Garibaldi as dictator, and he opened negotiations with the French. So enthusiastic were the citizens that, in spite of the disasters that had befallen them, many were still in favour of erecting barricades in every street and defending every house. The majority, however, acquiesced in Garibaldi's decision that further resistance would be a crime, since it would only entail immense loss of life and the destruction of the city. For three days negotiations were carried on, and then Garibaldi, with four thousand men, left the city and marched for Tuscany, while the French occupied Rome. But in Tuscany the patriots met with but a poor reception, for the people, though favourable, dared not receive them. The French had followed in hot pursuit; the Austrians in Tuscany were on the look-out for them; and at last, exhausted and starving, they took refuge in the little republic of San Marino. Here they were kindly received; but an Austrian army was advancing, and the authorities of the republic were constrained to petition that the Garibaldians, now reduced to but fifteen hundred men, should be allowed to capitulate, and that they themselves should not be punished for having given them refuge.

These terms were granted, but the Archduke insisted upon Garibaldi himself surrendering. The general, however, effected his escape with his wife and twelve followers, embarking on board a fishing-boat, and they reached the mouth of the Po; the rest of the band were permitted by the Austrians to return to their homes. Garibaldi, alone, with his dying wife, was able to conceal himself among some bushes near the river; his companions were all taken by the Austrians and shot. Nine other boats, laden with his followers, could not get off before the pursuing Austrians arrived; and a heavy fire being directed upon them, they were forced to surrender. Garibaldi's faithful wife, who had been his companion throughout all his trials, died a few days later. The Austrian pursuit was so hot that he was forced to leave her body; and after many dangers, he reached Genoa. He was not allowed to remain in Sardinia; and from thence took ship to Liverpool, and there embarked for New York.

Fortunately for Captain Percival, he and Professor Forli had, when on June 27th Garibaldi himself recognised that all further resistance was useless, determined to leave the city. When he stated his decision to Garibaldi, the latter warmly approved.

"You have done all that could be done, comrade," he said; "it would be worse than folly for you to remain here, and throw away your life. Would that all my countrymen had fought as nobly for freedom as you have done, for a cause that is not yours!"

"I have a right to consider it so, having made Rome my home for years, and being married to the daughter of a Roman. However, we may again fight side by side, for assuredly this will not be the

last time that an attempt will be made to drive out the despots; and I feel sure that Italy will yet be free. I trust that you do not mean to stay here until it is too late to retire. You must remember that your life is of the greatest value to the cause, and that it is your duty, above all things, to preserve it for your country.”

“I mean to do so,” Garibaldi said. “As soon as all see that further resistance is useless, I shall leave Rome. If I find that any spark of life yet remains in the movement, I shall try to fan it into flame; if not, I shall again cross the Atlantic until my country calls for me.”

That evening Captain Percival and the professor left the town. There was no difficulty in doing so, as the whole French force was concentrated at the point of attack. The professor had exchanged his ordinary clothes for some of his companion’s, and their appearance was that of two English tourists, when in the morning they entered Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, by the road leading from Albano. As many fugitives from Rome had, during the past month, embarked from the little port, and it was no unusual thing for English tourists to find their way down there, they had no difficulty in chartering a fishing-craft to take them to Leghorn, it being agreed that they should be landed a mile or two from the town, so that they could walk into it without attracting any attention, as they would assuredly be asked for passports were they to land at the port.

The voyage was altogether unattended by incident; and on landing they made a detour and entered the town from the west, sauntering quietly along, as if they had merely been taking a walk in the country. Ten minutes later they entered the lodging that Madame Forli had taken, after staying for a few days at an hotel. Great indeed was the joy which their arrival excited. The two ladies had been suffering terrible anxiety since the fighting began at Rome, and especially since it was known that the French had obtained possession of one of the gates, and that a fierce struggle was going on. They were sure their husbands would keep their promise to leave the city when the situation became desperate; but it was too likely that Captain Percival might have fallen, for it was certain that he would be in the thick of the fighting by the side of Garibaldi. It was, then, with rapturous delight that they were greeted, and it was found that both were unharmed.

It was at once decided to start by a steamer that would leave the next day. Both the ladies possessed passports: Muriel that which had been made out for her husband and herself on their return from their visit to England; while her mother had one which the professor had obtained for both of them when the troubles first began, and he foresaw that it was probable he might have to leave the country. Therefore no difficulty was experienced on this score; and when the party went on board the next day the documents were stamped without any questions being asked. Not the least delighted among them to quit Leghorn was Frank, who was now four years old. He had found it dull indeed in their quiet lodging at Leghorn, and missed his father greatly, and his grandfather also, for the professor was almost as fond of the child as its parents.

There were but few passengers besides themselves, for in the disturbed state of Italy, and, indeed, of all Europe, there were very few English tourists in 1848; and even those who permanently resided in Italy had for the most part left. The passengers, therefore, were, with the exception of the two ladies and Captain Percival, all Italians, who were, like Signor Forli, leaving because they feared that the liberal opinions they had ventured to express – when it seemed that with the accession of a liberal pontiff to the papal chair better times were dawning for Italy – would bring them into trouble now it was but too evident that the reign of despotism was more firmly established than ever.

The steamer touched at Genoa, and here the greater portion of her passengers left, among them Professor Forli’s party. They took train to Milan, where they stopped for a few days, crossed the Alps by the St. Gothard’s Pass, spent a fortnight in Switzerland, and then journeyed through Bâle, down the Rhine to Cologne, and thence to England. They were in no hurry, for time was no object to any of them, as they were well supplied with money; and after the excitement and trouble of the last few months, the quiet and absence of all cause for uneasiness was very pleasant to them. On their arrival

at Tom Percival's town residence in Cadogan Place sad news awaited them. Only a fortnight before, his yacht had been run down at sea, and he and the greater part of the crew had perished.

CHAPTER III. TROUBLES

THE death of Tom Percival naturally made a great difference to his brother's position. He was now a large land-owner, with a fine place in the country and a house in town. The next nine years of his life were unmarked by any particular incident. Signor Forli and his wife were permanently established in Cadogan Place. The professor had never been accustomed to a country life, and in London he was able to indulge in all his former pursuits. He had always laid by a certain amount of his income, and could have lived in some comfort in London, as until the troubles began he had received, in addition to his modest salary as a professor, the rents of a property he possessed near Naples, of which place he was a native. But neither Captain Percival nor his wife would hear of his setting up an establishment of his own.

“We shall not be up in town above three months of the year at the outside,” the former said; “and of course Muriel will always want to have you with us for that time, for I know very well that you will seldom tear yourself from your work and come down and stay with us in the country. It will be far better for us that the house shall be always used, instead of being left for nine months in the year to caretakers. You can fit up the library with cases for your coins and manuscripts. You have already made the acquaintance of many of the scientific and learned men you formerly corresponded with, and will soon get a very pleasant society of your own. It will be better in all respects. You can shut up the rooms you don't use, while the servants whom I keep to look after the house must in any case be told to consider you as their master; and you can, if you choose, get a couple of Italian servants as your own special domestics.” And so, after much argument, it was settled, and for some years things went on to the satisfaction of all.

When ten years old Frank was sent to a preparatory school for Harrow, and three years later to the great school itself. Just at this time the professor determined to pay a visit to Italy. Since the fall of Rome everything had gone on quietly there; and although persons suspected of liberal ideas had been seized and thrown into prison without any public inquiry, he considered that now that he had been settled in England for years, and had become a naturalised British subject, he could without any risk go over to make an effort to obtain a reversal of the confiscation of his property in the Neapolitan territory. Before starting he had called upon the official representative of the Neapolitan government, and had been assured by him that his passport as a British subject would be respected, and that if he refrained from taking any part in politics he could travel in King Ferdinand's territories without any fear of his movements being in any way interfered with.

Up to this time Captain Percival and his wife had been strongly against the proposed visit, but after the professor had received this official assurance they believed with him that he could in perfect safety undertake the journey. He wrote on his arrival at Naples, stating that he had, as soon as he landed, called upon one of the ministers, and reported to him the assurance that the envoy in London had given him, and had been told that, while expressing no opinion upon the probability of his obtaining a reversal of the confiscation of his estate, there could be no objection whatever to his endeavouring to do so, but that he did not think the government would authorise his establishing himself permanently in the kingdom, as his well-known political opinions would naturally render him obnoxious. He had given his assurance that he had no intention whatever of remaining beyond the time necessary for the purpose for which he had come; that he had now permanently settled in England, and had only come over for the purpose that he had specified; and that on no account would he hold any political discussions with such personal friends as he had in Italy, or give any expression whatever of his own views. He wrote that, as he had said before starting, he did not intend to call

upon any of his former acquaintances, as, if he did so, it might bring them into discredit with the government.

No other letter was received from him. After waiting for three weeks, Captain Percival wrote to the proprietor of the hotel from which the previous letter was dated, asking if he was still there, and if not, if he was aware of his present address. The answer was received in due time, saying that Professor Forli had gone out one morning, a week after his arrival, with the intention, he believed, of visiting his former estate, but that he had not returned. Two days later a person had arrived bearing a letter from him, saying that he had changed his plans and should not return to Naples, and requesting that his luggage and all personal effects should be handed over to the bearer, who would discharge the amount owing for his bill. He had complied with the request, and had since received no communication from Professor Forli. Captain Percival went at once to call upon the minister for foreign affairs, stated the whole circumstances to him, and the assurance that the professor had received from the Neapolitan envoy before starting, and said that he felt sure that, in spite of his assurance and the protection of his passport as a British subject, his father-in-law had been seized and thrown into prison.

“If that is the case, a serious wrong has been committed,” the minister said. “But we cannot assume that without some proof. He may have been seized by some brigands, who by a ruse have obtained possession of his effects; possibly the person now in possession of the estate, fearing that he might be ousted from it, has taken these means for suppressing a claimant who might be dangerous. However, what you have told me is sufficient for me to commence action, by making a complaint to the Neapolitan government that a British subject, duly furnished with a passport, is missing, and requesting that measures shall at once be taken to ascertain what has become of him.”

Correspondence went on for three or four months, the Neapolitan government protesting that they had made inquiries in every direction, but had obtained no clue whatever as to Professor Forli’s movements from the time when he left his hotel, and disclaiming any knowledge whatever of him. It was now January 1858, and Lord Palmerston, who was then prime minister, took the case up warmly, and Captain Percival had several interviews with him.

“I quite agree with you, sir,” the minister said, “that he is probably in a Neapolitan dungeon; but at present we have no absolute proof of it; if we had I should summon Ferdinand to release him under a threat of war.”

“I am quite ready to go out, sir, to make personal inquiries; and if you could obtain for me an order to visit the various jails and fortresses in the Neapolitan territories, I may succeed in finding him.”

“I will obtain for you such an order,” Lord Palmerston said decidedly. “If they refuse my request, I shall be forced to the conclusion that they are afraid of your finding him there – not that I think it is likely you will do so. Indeed I regard it as certain that he would be removed from any prison before you arrived there, or if still there, that his dungeon would not be shown to you. At the same time, you would be doing good work. Already there have been some terrible disclosures as to the state of the Neapolitan prisons. These, however, have chiefly been made by men who have been confined there, and have been denounced as calumnies by the Neapolitan government; but coming from you, armed with the authority of our foreign office, they could not but make a profound impression. They might force the authorities to ameliorate the present state of things, and would certainly enlist the sympathy of the British public with the cause with which Professor Forli was associated, and for which I am aware you yourself fought.”

A fortnight later Captain Percival was again sent for by the foreign minister.

“Here,” the latter said, “is a royal order from the King of Naples for you to view any or all the prisons in his dominions without let or hindrance, in order to assure yourself that Professor Forli is not an inmate of any of them.”

Two days later Captain Percival started. On arriving at Naples, he first called upon the Neapolitan minister, who expressed himself with some indignation on the fact that the assurance of

the government that they knew nothing of Professor Forli's disappearance had been doubted; but stated that they were ready to offer him any facility in his search. Before commencing this, Captain Percival went out to the professor's estate, near Capua, and saw the proprietor, who assured him that he had neither seen nor heard anything of its late owner; and although his assertions would have weighed but little if unsupported, Captain Percival's investigations in the town and of several persons upon the estate all tended to show that the professor had not been seen there. His appearance was familiar to many, and he could hardly have visited the place without being recognised. Captain Percival went to see several of Signor Forli's old friends, upon whom he would almost certainly have called before going to the estate, and from whom, indeed, he would have received far more information as to its condition than he would have obtained by direct application to a man who could not but have regarded him with hostility; none of them, however, had heard of his return to Italy.

After stopping two or three days there, he returned to Naples and began his inspection of the prisons. The Royal order being presented, he was everywhere received courteously, allowed to inspect them from the lowest dungeons to the attics under the roofs, and also to hold conversations with the prisoners. He had no idea that he would actually find the professor; his great hope was that he should learn from prisoners that he had been confined there, as this would enable the British government to demand his instant release. Terrible as had been the descriptions he had heard of the treatment of the prisoners and the state of the jails, they fell far short of the reality; and he not only sent detailed reports to the government, but also to *The Times*, which published them in full. They were copied into every paper in the kingdom, and created a general feeling of indignation and disgust.

Failing to obtain the smallest information as to the professor at Naples, Captain Percival then went down to Salerno, and left there with the intention of visiting the prisons in Calabria and at Reggio, and afterwards of crossing into Sicily and trying the gaols there. Four days after he left Salerno, the servant he had engaged in Naples returned to the town with the news that the carriage had been attacked by brigands, and that his master, who always carried a brace of pistols, had offered a desperate resistance, but had been killed. The horses had been taken out of the carriage, and they and Captain Percival's luggage had been carried off to the hills. He himself had been allowed to return. The Governor of Salerno at once sent the man to Naples; the news was officially communicated to the British envoy, who telegraphed at once to London. A message was returned, saying that an official communication would be addressed to the government, and in the meantime he was to send down one of the officers of the embassy to inquire into the whole matter. He was to request the Neapolitan government to furnish an escort from Salerno, and was also to demand that steps should be taken to pursue and bring the brigands to justice.

The secretary of the legation had no difficulty in obtaining the order for an escort; and taking with him the servant who had brought the news, proceeded to the place where the affair had occurred. The carriage was found overthrown by the roadside. There were two or three bullet-holes in it; there was a dark patch evidently caused by blood in the road close by; and a few yards away was a bloodstained cap, which the servant recognised as being that of Captain Percival. Following up a track which led off the main road from here, they came upon some fragments of letters, among them one on which were the words, "Your loving wife, Muriel." For two or three days the hills on each side of the track were searched, but no sign whatever was found of Captain Percival's body. In the meantime, a strong force of carabinieri searched the mountains, and three weeks after the return to Naples of the search party from the legation, came the news that they had surprised and killed a notorious brigand leader with three of his followers, and had taken prisoner a fourth. This man was sent to Naples, and there questioned by a judicial official in the presence of the secretary of the legation.

He acknowledged that he had been one of the party, consisting of their leader and seven followers, who had attacked the Englishman's carriage. They had not intended to kill him, but to carry him off for ransom; he, however, resisted so desperately that he was shot. Although very seriously wounded, they had carried him up to the mountains, believing that he would recover, and that they

might still make money out of him. The man himself had been sent down to Salerno to ascertain whether the authorities were taking any steps to hunt down his capturers. As soon as he learned that a strong force of carabinieri had been ordered out in pursuit, he had returned to the hut occupied by his chief. He found that during his absence the prisoner had died. He had never asked where he had been buried, for it was a matter that did not concern him. The contents of the portmanteau had been divided among the party; he was himself now wearing the boots and one of the shirts of the dead man. That was all he knew.

The captain of the carabinieri testified that he had found an English portmanteau and many articles, some of which bore the initials "L. P." upon them; there was a brace of handsome pistols of English make, which were used by the chief of the brigands in the fight; and in a cupboard among other things was the royal order for Captain Percival to visit his majesty's prisons. A diligent search had been made in the neighbourhood of the hut, but the grave of the English gentleman had not been discovered. In due time the brigand was placed on trial, and was sentenced to imprisonment for life; and so the matter ended, save for the two widowed women and Frank.

It had been a heavy blow indeed for the lad, who was passionately attached to his father, and had also loved the professor, who had always been extremely fond of him. He was at home for Easter when the terrible news arrived. Neither his mother nor grandmother expressed a doubt that his father had been murdered; and when the news of the confession of one of the band and the discovery of Captain Percival's belongings in the hut of the brigands arrived, they gave up all hope of ever seeing him again.

Madame Forli, however, while not doubting that Captain Percival had been killed, believed that the Neapolitan government were at the bottom of the matter. "I know what the methods of the Neapolitans are," she said; "and the sensation caused by Leonard's letters to the papers here may have decided them to put an end by any method to further revelations, and they may very well have employed these brigands to carry out their purpose. Every one knows that in many cases these men are in alliance with the officers of the police; and the latter are well paid to wink at their doings, and even to furnish them with information of the persons worth robbing, and to put them on their guard when, as occasionally happens, a raid is made by the carabinieri in the mountains. A capture is hardly ever effected; and while there is little chance of a political prisoner once shut up in their dungeons making his escape, notorious brigands frequently succeed in doing so. Nobody dares to speak of their suspicions; but there can be little doubt that the prison officials are bribed to connive at their escape, knowing well enough that the government will not trouble over the matter, while on the other hand the escape of a political prisoner brings disgrace and punishment upon all the prison officials."

"I cannot think – I will not think so, mother," Muriel exclaimed; "for were it so, the same treatment might be given to him that has, we have no doubt, befallen my father. A thousand times better that Leonard should have been killed, than that he should drag out his existence in such utter misery as that which he has described as being the lot of prisoners in the dungeons of Bomba. The brigands may have been set on by their government. That is possible – I can believe that iniquitous government to be guilty of anything – but whether Leonard was attacked merely for plunder, or for ransom, or by the connivance of the government, I cannot and will not doubt that he is dead; the story of one of the band can leave no doubt of this, and it is confirmed by his servant, who saw him fall. Never try to shake my confidence in that, mother. It was almost more than I could bear to think of my father as confined in one of those dungeons; if I thought for a moment that Leonard could be there too, I believe that I should lose my reason."

Frank returned to school after the short holidays. His mother thought that it would be better so, as the routine of work and play would give him little time for moping over his loss. He worked harder than he had ever done at school before; but obtained leave off cricket, and spent his time out of school in long walks with one or other of his chums. After the summer holiday he was himself again. He was quieter than he had been, and held aloof from fun and mischief, but joined in the sports

vigorously, and regained the ground he had lost, and came to be regarded as likely some day to be one of the representatives of the school.

When it seemed that the search for the body of Captain Percival had failed, Mrs. Percival wrote to the secretary of the legation in Naples, saying that she would be glad if her husband's courier would come over to see her.

"I naturally wish to know," she said, "as much as I can of the last movements of my husband from the only person who was with him; and I would willingly bear the expenses of his journey both ways, and pay him fifty pounds. I did not receive any letter from my husband during the fortnight preceding his death, and want to learn as much as possible about him."

The secretary, on receiving the letter, sent the note to the chief of the police, in whose charge the man had been while the investigations were proceeding; an answer was returned saying that the man Beppo Paracini was not now in his charge, but that perhaps he could find him in the course of a few hours, and would, on doing so, send him to the legation at once.

Instead of seeing the man himself, however, the officer went to the director of the secret police. "As this affair has been in your department rather than in mine, signor, I thought it best to bring you this note I have just received from the British legation before taking any steps in the matter."

The official read the note through. "You have done quite right," he said. "The affair has been a very troublesome one, and now that it has practically come to an end, it would not do to take any false step in the matter. You shall hear from me in the course of the day."

He sat thinking deeply for some minutes after the other had left him, then he touched a bell.

"Luigi," he said, when a man entered, "go and fetch Beppo Paracini; if he is not in, find where he has gone and follow him."

Half an hour later the courier entered. When before the court he had been dressed in the fashion affected by his class; now he was in dark, quiet clothes, and might have been taken for an advocate or notary.

"Beppo," he said, "I thought that we had finished with that troublesome affair of the Englishman; but there is again occasion for your services in the same direction. Here is a letter from the secretary of the British legation saying that he wishes to see you, for that the Signora Percival has written to him to say that she is anxious to learn more of the last days of her husband, and is willing to pay your expenses to England and to give you fifty pounds for your services, if you would be willing to go to her for a few days. I regard this as a fortunate circumstance. The woman's husband and her father have been constant enemies of the kingdom. Percival was a bosom friend of Garibaldi; her father was also his friend, though not to the same degree. Ever since they established themselves in England his family, who are unfortunately rich, have befriended Italian exiles.

"Forli was acquainted with all his compatriots in London, who, like himself, were men of education and position, and had escaped from justice. In that house any plot that was on foot, especially if Garibaldi was a leading spirit in it, would certainly be known. No doubt the loss of her husband will make this woman more inveterate against us than ever. I have often wished that I could establish an agent in her house, to keep me informed of what was going on there, who visited it, whether any meetings and consultations were held there, from whom they received letters, and the purport of them, but I have never before seen my way to it. The woman Forli is herself English, and consequently since her husband's death no Italian servants have been kept in the house. This letter gives me the opportunity I have desired. I wish you to go to the British legation, and to express your willingness to accept the offer that is made, and if possible to obtain a situation in the house.

"You could represent that you were anxious to obtain a place of any kind in England, for that, owing to the part that you have taken in the search for Percival's body – a search which brought about the death of the brigand Rapini and the breaking up of his band – your life was no longer safe there from the vengeance of his associates. You can say that before you became a courier you were in the service of several noble families – of course you will be provided with excellent testimonials – and

as it was your zeal in her late husband's behalf that had brought you into this strait, it is quite possible that she may offer you a post in the household. You can declare that you do not desire high wages, but simply a shelter. You will, of course, report yourself on arriving in London to the head of our secret agents there, and will act generally under his directions. I need not say that you will be well paid."

"I will gladly accept the mission, signor, for, to say the truth, I am not without some apprehensions such as you suggest. I have changed my appearance a good deal; still, I cannot flatter myself that I could not be detected by any one on the search for me, and I do think that some of Rapini's band, knowing that I was with the carabinieri, may have vowed vengeance on me; and, as you know, signor, a man so threatened cannot calculate on a very long life."

"That is so, Beppo. Then we may consider the matter settled. If you cannot succeed in obtaining a position in the house of this family, I shall instruct my agent in London to utilise your services there, at any rate for the next six months. After that time you may return without much risk, for when it is found that you have disappeared from all your former haunts, the search for you is not likely to last long. At any rate, you might as well mention to those who have known you as a courier, that you intend to establish yourself either in Paris or Berlin. For as you speak both French and German as well as English, that would in any case be the course that a prudent man would adopt, after being mixed up in an affair that ended badly for the brigands. Well, in the first place, you had better go at once to the legation and accept their terms. Come here at eleven o'clock to-morrow, and I will give you further instructions."

Thus it happened that when Frank came home next time from school, he was surprised at having the door opened to him by a grave-looking servant in plain clothes, who said in English, with a very slight foreign accent: "The Signora Percival is in the drawing-room, sir. I will see to your baggage and settle with the cabman."

"Whom have you got hold of now, mother?" he said, after the first greeting – "an Italian? Isn't he a fearfully respectable-looking man? Looks like a clergyman got up as a valet."

"He was your dear father's courier, Frank. I sent for him to come over here, as I wished to learn all about your father's last days. The poor fellow was in fear of his life, owing to the evidence that he had given against the brigands. William had given me notice that he was going to leave only the day before; and as Beppo had served in several noble families, who had given him splendid testimonials, and was afraid to return to Italy, I was very glad to take him in William's place, especially as he only asked the same wages I paid before. I congratulate myself on the change, for he is quite the beau-ideal of a servant – very quiet in the house, ready to do anything, gets on well with the other servants, and is able to talk in their own language to any of his countrymen who come here, either as visitors or as exiles in need of assistance. He has, indeed, saved me more than once from impostors; he has listened to their stories, and having been a courier, and knowing every town in Italy, on questioning them he found out that their whole story was a lie."

"That is all right, mother; if you like him, that is everything. I own that I liked William; I am sorry that he has gone. I shall be some time getting accustomed to this chap, for he certainly is fearfully grave and respectable."

CHAPTER IV. A SUDDEN SUMMONS

ONE Saturday early in March, 1860, Frank, now sixteen years of age, on starting for the football ground, was told that the house-master wished to see him, and he at once went into his study.

“Percival, I have received a note from your mother, asking me to let you out till Monday morning. She says that she particularly wants to see you, and will be glad if you will start at once. Of course I will do so; you had better catch the next train, if you can.”

“What in the world can the mater want to see me in such a hurry for?” Frank said to himself in a rather discontented tone as he left the master’s study. “It is a frightful nuisance missing the match this afternoon! I don’t know what Hawtrey will say when I tell him that I cannot play. Ah! here he is.”

“What is up, Percival?”

“I am awfully sorry to say that I have just received a message from my mater calling me up to town at once. I have no idea what it is about; but it must be something particular, for I told her when I wrote to her last that this was going to be the toughest match of the season; still, of course I must go.”

“I see that, Percival. It is a terrible nuisance; you are certainly the third best in the house, and now I shall have to put Fincham in, I suppose, and I am afraid that will mean the loss of the match.”

“He is as strong as I am, Hawtrey.”

“Yes; he is strong enough and heavy enough, but he is desperately slow. However, I must make the best of him.”

Frank hurried upstairs, and in ten minutes came down again, dressed. He ran the greater part of the way to the station, and just caught the up train. The disappointment over the football match was forgotten now. Thinking it over, he had come to the conclusion that either his mother or grandmother must have been taken seriously ill. It could hardly be his mother, for it was she who had written; still, she might have managed to do that, even if she had met with some sort of accident, if it was not too serious. If not she, it must be the signora, as he generally called her, and as he was very fond of her, he felt that her loss would be a heavy one indeed. His anxiety increased as he neared London; and as soon as the train stopped at Euston he jumped out, seized the first hansom, and told the cabman to drive fast to Cadogan Place. He leaped out, handed his fare to the cabman, ran up the steps, and knocked at the door.

“Is every one well, Beppo?” he asked breathlessly, as the servant opened it.

“Yes, sir,” the footman replied, in his usual calm and even voice.

“Thank God for that!” he exclaimed. “Where is my mother?”

“In the dining-room, sir, with the signora.”

Frank ran upstairs. “Mother, you have given me quite a fright,” he said. “From your message I thought that some one must have been suddenly taken ill, or you would never have sent for me when you knew that we played in the final ties for the house championship to-day. I have been worrying horribly all the way up to town.”

“I forgot all about your match, Frank,” his mother said. “I have had a letter that put it out of my head entirely.”

“A letter, mother?”

“Yes, Frank; from your hero, Garibaldi.”

“What is it about, mother?” Frank exclaimed excitedly, for he had heard so much of the Italian patriot from his father, and of their doings together in South America and the siege of Rome, that his admiration for him was unbounded.

“Sit down, Frank, and I will tell you all about it. The letter was addressed to your dear father. Garibaldi, being in Caprera, probably has but little news of what is passing at Naples. He had heard of my father’s disappearance, but was apparently in ignorance of what has happened since.”

She took out the letter and read:

“My dear Comrade and Friend, —

“When I last wrote to you it was to condole with you on the disappearance of that true patriot and my good friend, Professor Forli. I hope that long ere this he has been restored to you; but if, as I fear, he has fallen into the clutches of the rascally government of Naples, I am afraid that you will never hear of him again. Several times, when you have written to me, you have told me that you were prepared to join me when I again raised the flag of Italian independence, though you held aloof when France joined us against Austria. You did rightly, for we were betrayed by the French as we were at Rome, and my birthplace, Nice, has been handed over to them. You also said that you would help us with money; and, as you know, money is one of our chief requisites. The time has come. I am convinced that the population of the Neapolitan territories are now reduced to such a state of despair by the tyranny of their government that they will be ready to hail us as deliverers.

“My plan is this: I am sure a thousand or so of the men who fought with me in the Alps will flock to my standard, and with these I intend to effect a landing in Sicily. If I capture Palermo and Messina I think I can rely upon being joined by no small number of men there, and by volunteers from all parts of Italy; five thousand men in all will be sufficient, I think – at any rate, that number collected, I shall cross to the mainland and march upon Naples. You may think that the adventure is a desperate one, but that is by no means my opinion; you know how easily we defeated the Neapolitan troops in 1848. I believe that we shall do so still more easily now, for certainly very many of them must share in the general hatred of the tyrant. Come, dear friend, and join us; the meeting-place is called the Villa Spinola, which is a few miles from Genoa.

“I do not anticipate any great interference from Cavour; he will run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, as your proverb has it. He dare not stop us; for I am convinced that such is the state of public opinion in Italy, that it might cost his master his crown were he to do so. On the other hand, he would be obliged to assume an attitude of hostility, or he would incur the anger of Austria, of the Papacy, and possibly of France; therefore I think that he will remain neutral, although professing to do all in his power to prevent our moving. I am promised some assistance in money, but I am sure that this will fall short of the needs. We must buy arms not only for ourselves, but to arm those who join us; we must charter or buy steamers to carry us to Sicily. Once there, I regard the rest as certain. Come to me with empty hands, and you will receive the heartiest welcome as my dear friend and comrade; but if you can aid us also with money, not only I, but all Italy, will be grateful to you. I know that you need no inducement, for your heart is wholly with us, and all the more so from this disappearance of madame’s father, doubtless the work of the tyrants. Need I say that our first step in every town and fortress we capture will be to release all political prisoners confined there? – and it may be that among these we will find Professor Forli. Turr will be with me, Baron Stocco of Calabria, Bixio, and Tuckory; and Madame Carroli has written to tell me that she places her three sons at my disposal in the place of their brave brother, and will, moreover, supply me with money to the utmost of her power. Come, then, dear friend, aid me with your arm and counsel, and let us again fight side by side in the cause of liberty.”

Frank leapt to his feet. “You will let me go in my father’s place, mother, will you not? Many of those who will follow Garibaldi will be no older than myself, and probably not half so strong; none can hate the tyranny of Naples more than I do. It is the cause for which my father and grandfather fought; and we now have greater wrongs than they had to avenge.”

“That is what I thought you would say, Frank,” his mother said sadly. “Tis hard indeed to part with a son after having lost father and husband; but my father was an Italian patriot, my husband fought for Italy; in giving you up I give up my all; yet I will not say you nay. So fierce is the indignation

in England at the horrors of the tyrants' prisons that I doubt not many English will, when they hear of Garibaldi's landing in Sicily, go out to join him; and if they are ready in the cause only of humanity to risk their lives, surely we cannot grudge you in the cause not only of humanity, but of the land of our birth."

"I feel sure that father would have taken me, had he been here," Frank said earnestly.

"I believe he would, Frank. I know that he shared to the full my father's hatred of the despots who grind Italy under their heel; and besides the feeling that animated him, one cannot but cherish the hope that my father may still be found alive in one of those ghastly prisons. Of course my mother and I have talked the matter over. We both lament that your studies should be interrupted; but it can be for a few months only, and probably you will be able to return to Harrow when the school meets again after the long holiday – so that, in fact, you will only lose three months or so."

"That makes no odds one way or another, mother. In any case, I am not likely to be a shining light in the way of learning."

"No – I suppose not, Frank; and with a fine estate awaiting you, there is no occasion that you should be, though of course you will go through Oxford or Cambridge. However, we need not think of that now."

"And will you be sending him any money, mother?"

"Certainly. Your father put by a certain sum every year in order that he might assist Garibaldi when the latter again raised the flag of freedom in Italy – a cause which was sacred in his eyes. At the time he left England, this fund amounted to £10,000; and as he never knew when the summons from Garibaldi might arrive, he transferred it to my name, so that he need not come back to England, should a rising occur before his return. So you will not go empty-handed."

"That will be a splendid gift, mother. I suppose I shall not go back to school before I start?"

"No, Frank. Since you are to go on this expedition, the sooner you start the better. I shall write to your headmaster, and tell him that I am most reluctantly obliged to take you away from school for a few months; but that it is a matter of the greatest importance, and that I hope he will retain your name on the books and permit you to return when you come back to England."

"If he won't, mother, it will not matter very much. Of course I should like to go back again; but if they won't let me, I shall only have to go to a coach for a year or two."

"That is of little consequence," his mother agreed; "and perhaps, after going through such an exciting time, you will not yourself care about returning to school again. You must not look upon this matter as a mere adventure, Frank; it is a very, very perilous enterprise, in which your life will be risked daily. Were we differently situated, I should not have dreamt of allowing you to go out; but we have identified ourselves with the cause of freedom in Italy. Your grandfather lost everything – his home, his country, and maybe his life; and your father, living as he did in Rome, and married to the daughter of an Italian, felt as burning a hatred for the oppression he saw everywhere round him as did the Italians themselves; perhaps more so, for being accustomed to the freedom Englishmen enjoy, these things appeared to him a good deal more monstrous than they did to those who had been used to them all their lives. He risked death a score of times in the defence of Rome; and he finally lost his life while endeavouring to discover whether my father was a prisoner in one of the tyrants' dungeons. Thus, although in all other respects an English boy – or Italian only through your grandfather – you have been constantly hearing of Italy and its wrongs, and on that point feel as keenly and strongly as the son of an Italian patriot would do. I consider that it is a holy war in which you are about to take part – a war that, if successful, will open the doors of dungeons in which thousands, among whom may be my father, are lingering out their lives for no other cause than that they dared to think, and will free a noble people who have for centuries been under the yoke of foreigners. Therefore, as, if this country were in danger, I should not baulk your desire to enter the army, so now I say to you, join Garibaldi; and even should you be taken from me, I shall at least have the consolation of feeling that it was in a noble cause you fell, and that I sent you, knowing that my happiness as well as your

life hung upon the issue. I want you to view the matter then, my boy, not in the light of an exciting adventure, but in the spirit in which the Crusaders went out to free the Holy Sepulchre, in which the Huguenots of France fought and died for their religion.”

“I will try to do so, mother,” Frank said gravely; “at any rate, if the cause was good enough for my father and grandfather to risk their lives for, it is good enough for me. But you know, mother,” he went on, in a changed voice, “you can’t put an old head on to young shoulders; and though I shall try to regard it as you say, I am afraid that I shan’t be able to help enjoying it as a splendid adventure.”

His mother smiled faintly. “I suppose that is boy nature. At any rate, I am sure that you will do your duty, and there is certainly no occasion for your doing it with a sad face; and bear in mind always, Frank, that you are going out not so much to fight, as to search every prison and fortress that may be captured, to question every prisoner whether he has heard or known any one answering the description of your grandfather, or – or – ” and her lip quivered, and her voice broke.

“Or, mother?” – and he stood surprised as Mrs. Percival burst suddenly into tears, and the signora, rising from her seat, went hastily to her, and put her arm round her neck. It was a minute or two before Mrs. Percival took her hands from her face, and went on, —

“I was going to say, Frank, or of your father.”

Frank started, as if he had been suddenly struck. “My father,” he repeated, in a low tone. “Do you think, mother – do you think it possible? I thought there was no doubt as to how he was killed.”

“I have never let myself doubt,” Mrs. Percival went on. “Whenever the thought has come into my mind during the past two years I have resolutely put it aside. It would have been an agony more than I could bear to think it possible that he could be alive and lingering in a dungeon beyond human aid. Never have I spoken on the subject, except to my mother, when she first suggested the possibility; but now that there is a chance of the prison doors being opened, I may let myself not hope – it can hardly be that – but pray that in God’s mercy I may yet see him again.” And as she again broke down altogether, Frank, with a sudden cry, threw himself on his knees beside her, and buried his face in his arms on her lap, his whole figure shaken by deep sobs.

Mrs. Percival was the first to recover her composure, and gently stroked his hair, saying: “You must not permit yourself to hope, my boy; you must shut that out from your mind as I have done, thinking of it only as a vague, a very vague and distant possibility.”

“But how, mother, could it be?” he asked presently, raising his head. “Did we not hear all about his being killed, how Beppo saw him shot, and how one of the band testified that he was dead and buried?”

“So it seemed to me, Frank, when my mother first pointed out to me that all this might be false, and that just as the government of Naples declared they were absolutely ignorant as to your grandfather’s disappearance when it appeared to us a certainty that it was due to their own act, so they would not hesitate a moment to get rid of your father, whose letters as to the state of their prisons were exciting an intense feeling against them in every free country. She said it would be easy for them to bribe or threaten his servant into telling any tale they thought fit; he or some other agent might have informed the banditti that a rich Englishman would be passing along the road at a certain time, and that the government would be ready to pay for his capture and delivery to them. The prisoner taken may have been promised a large sum to repeat the story of the Englishman having died and been buried. It was all possible, and though I was determined not to think of him as a prisoner, my mother, who knew more of these things than I did, and how matters like this were managed in Italy, thought that it was so. Still to my mind there were, and still are, reasons against hope, for surely the Neapolitan government would have preferred that the brigands should kill him, rather than that they themselves should have the trouble of keeping him in prison.”

“Possibly they would have preferred that,” Signora Forli said, speaking for the first time. “They knew that he was an Englishman, and doubtless learned that he carried loaded pistols, and may have

reckoned confidently upon his resisting and being killed, and may have been disappointed because the brigands, hoping for a large ransom, carried him off wounded.”

“But even then,” Mrs. Percival said, “they could have sent up their agents to the brigands and paid them to finish their work.”

“Yes, possibly that is what they did do; but though I have never spoken to you on the subject since you told me not to, I have thought it over many and many times, and it seems to me that they would scarcely do so, for they might thus put themselves into the power of these bandits. Any one of the band might make his way to Naples, go to the British legation, and under the promise of a large sum of money and protection denounce the whole plot. It seems to me more likely that they would send an agent to the chief brigand, and pay him a sum of money to deliver the captive up to men who would meet him at a certain place. It is probable that the chief would, on some excuse or other, get rid of all his band but two or three, hand over the prisoner, and share the money only with those with him, and when the others returned, tell them that the prisoner had died and that they had buried him. Then the carabinieri would use every effort to kill those who were in the secret, and being in earnest for once, they probably did kill the chief and those with him.

“Probably the man who gave his evidence was not one of the party at all, but some prisoner charged with a minor offence, who was promised his liberty as the price of telling the story that he was taught. If Leonard had been killed and buried, as they stated, his grave must surely have been found – the earth must still have been fresh; and, indeed, nothing is more unlikely than that the brigands should have taken any extraordinary trouble to hide the body, as they could not have anticipated that any vigorous search would be made for it. For these reasons I have all along believed that Leonard did not come to his end as was supposed. He may have been killed afterwards by those into whose hands he was delivered; but even this does not seem likely, for one of them might betray the secret for a large reward. He may have died in a dungeon, as so many thousands have done; but I believe firmly that he did not, as reported, die in the brigands’ hut. I have never since spoken on the subject to your mother, Frank, for I agreed with what she said, that it would be better to think of him as dead than in a dungeon, from which, as was shown in the case of your grandfather, there was no chance of releasing him. Now, however, if Garibaldi is successful, as every prison will be searched, and every political prisoner freed, there is a prospect that, if he is still alive, he may be restored to us.”

Frank, with the natural hope of youth, at once adopted the signora’s view; but his mother, although she admitted that it might possibly be true, still insisted that she would not permit herself to hope.

“It may be that God in His mercy will send him back to me; but, though I shall pray night and day that He will do so, it will be almost without hope that my prayer will be granted, – were I to hope, it would be like losing him again if he were not found. Now let us talk of other matters. The sooner you start the better, Frank; you will not have many preparations to make. The Garibaldian outfit is a simple one – a red shirt, trousers of any colour, but generally blue, a pair of gaiters and one of thick, serviceable boots, a wide-awake, or, in fact, any sort of cap with perhaps a red feather, a well-made blanket wound up and strapped over one shoulder like a scarf, a red sash for the waist, a cloak or great-coat strapped up and worn like a knapsack, and a spare shirt and a pair of trousers are all the outfit that you require. You had better take a good rifle with you, and of course a pair of pistols. All the clothes you can buy out there, and also a sword, for no doubt Garibaldi will put you on his staff.”

“In that case I shall not want the rifle, mother.”

“No; and if you do you can buy one there. In a town like Genoa there are sure to be shops where English rifles can be bought, and you might have difficulty in passing one through the customs – luggage is rigorously examined on the frontier and at the ports. A brace of pistols, however, would be natural enough, as any English traveller might take them for protection against brigands if he intended to go at all out of beaten tracks. As to the money, I shall go to the bank on Monday, and request them to give me bills on some firm in Genoa or Turin. Garibaldi will find no difficulty in getting them

cashied. I should say that your best course will be to go through Paris and as far as the railway is made, then on by diligence over Mont Cenis to Turin, and after that by railway to Genoa. In that way you will get there in three or four days, whereas it would take you a fortnight by sea.”

“Then it seems to me, mother, that there is nothing at all for me to get before I start, except a brace of pistols; but of course I must have my clothes up from Harrow.”

“I will write for them at once, Frank. It would be better that you should not go down – you would find it difficult to answer questions put to you as to why you are leaving; and of course this enterprise of Garibaldi must be kept a profound secret. One cannot be too prudent in a case like this, for if a whisper got abroad the Italian government would be compelled to stop him.”

“You will not see Beppo here when you come back,” Mrs. Percival said to Frank on Monday evening. “I gave him notice this afternoon.”

“What for, mother? Anyhow, I am not sorry, for I have never liked him.”

“I know that you have not, Frank, and I begin to think that you were right. My maid said to me this morning that, though she did not like to speak against a fellow-servant, she thought it right to tell me that when I am out of the house and before I get up of a morning he is often in the drawing-room and dining-room, in neither of which he has any business; and that when she went up yesterday evening – you know that she is a very quiet walker – she came upon him standing outside the drawing-room door when we were chatting together, and she thought, though of this she was not quite sure, that he had his ear at the keyhole. He knocked and came in the instant he saw her, as if he had only that moment arrived there; but she had caught sight of him before he saw her, and was certain that he was listening.

“Of course, she might have been mistaken; but thinking it over, it seems to me that she was probably right, for once or twice since he has been here, it has struck me that the papers in my cabinet were not in precisely the same order as I had left them. You know that I am very methodical about such matters; still, I might each time, when I took them out, have omitted to return them in exactly the same order as before, though I do not think it likely that I could have done so. However, I thought nothing of it at the time; but now that I hear that he has been spying about the rooms and listening at the door, I cannot but connect the two things together, and it may be that the man has been acting as an agent for the Neapolitan government. You know, when we were talking the matter over on Saturday, my mother suggested that it was possible that the courier had been in league with the brigands. Possibly he may also be an agent of the government; and there was so great a stir made at that time that I cannot regard it as impossible, knowing how she and I are heart and soul with the Italian patriots, that he was sent over to watch us.”

“I think it not only possible but probable,” Signora Forli put in. “I know that in Italy the police have spies in every household where they suspect the owner of holding liberal opinions; and knowing that our house was frequented by so many exiles, they may have very well placed this man here. I regret now that at the time this man came over at your mother’s request, we listened to his plausible tale and took him into our service, but I had not at that time any strong suspicions that the attack on your father was a preconcerted one, and I should hardly have mentioned the idea to your mother had it occurred to me. However, it is of no use thinking over that now; the great point is to consider how it will affect your plan.”

“In what way, signora?” Frank asked in surprise; and Mrs. Percival added, “I don’t see what you mean, mother.”

“I mean this, dear: if this man is a spy, you may be quite sure that he has had false keys made, by which he can open your cabinet, your drawers, and your writing-desk. It is quite probable that he knows Garibaldi’s handwriting, for, knowing that the general was a great friend of your father, he would almost certainly be furnished with a specimen of it; and, if that was the case, we may take it for granted that wherever you put any letter from Garibaldi, he would get at it and read it. That in itself can do comparatively little harm, for rumours of the general’s proposed expedition are already

current. But he will know that, immediately on receipt of that letter, you sent for Frank. Doubtless there are other Neapolitan spies over here, and every movement you have made since will, in that case, have been watched, and you will have been seen to go to the bank to-day. It is not likely that they would know how much we have drawn out, for your conversation was with the manager in his private room; but knowing your devotion to Garibaldi's cause, they might well suppose that the amount would be a considerable one. We have made no secret of the fact that Frank will start the day after to-morrow to travel in Italy for a time; and he will guess that Frank is the bearer of this money to Garibaldi – possibly, as it seems that he listened at the doors, he may even have heard you tell Frank how much you were going to send. Yesterday evening we were talking over how the bills had best be concealed, and he may have heard that also; if he did, you may be pretty sure that they will never reach Garibaldi, unless our plans for their concealment are changed.”

“You frighten me, mother.”

“I don't know that there is anything to be frightened about,” the signora said. “I do not for a moment suppose that he contemplates any actual attack upon Frank; though he will, I am convinced, try to get the money – partly, no doubt, for its own sake, partly because its loss would be a serious blow to Garibaldi. After the disappearance of his grandfather, and the commotion there was over the death or disappearance of his father, an attack upon Frank would appear to be a sequel of these affairs, and would cause such general indignation that the ministry would take the matter up in earnest, and the result would be far more disastrous for the government of Naples than could be caused by any amount of money reaching Garibaldi, whom they must regard as an adventurer who could give them some trouble, but who could not hope for success. Therefore, I do not think that there is any danger whatever of personal injury to Frank; but I do think there is grave fear that the money will be stolen on the way. If our suspicions are well founded as to Beppo, no doubt two or three of these agents will travel with him. If he stops to sleep at an hotel, his room would be entered and his coat carried off; he may be chloroformed when in a train and searched from head to foot; his baggage may be stolen on the way, but that would only be the case if they do not find the bills on his person or where we agreed last night to hide them.”

“I dare not let him go,” Mrs. Percival said, in a trembling voice.

“Why, mother,” Frank said almost indignantly, “you don't suppose, now that I am warned, I shall be fool enough to let these fellows get the best of me? I will carry a loaded pistol in each pocket; I will not sleep in an hotel from the time I start till I have handed the bills to Garibaldi, and will take care always to get into a carriage with several other passengers. If I hadn't had fair warning, I dare say I should have been robbed; but I have no fear whatever on the subject now that we have a suspicion of what may occur. But if you think it would be safer, I do not see why you could not send the bills by post to an hotel at Genoa.”

Signora Forli shook her head. “That would not do,” she said. “You do not know what these Neapolitan spies are capable of. If they find that you have not the money with you, they would follow you to your hotel at Genoa, bribe the concierge there to hand over any letter that came addressed to you, or steal it from the rack where it would be placed, while his attention was turned elsewhere. However, I have an old friend at Genoa, the Countess of Mongolfiere; we exchange letters two or three times a year. She is, of course, a patriot. I will, if your mother agrees with me, enclose the bills in an envelope addressed to you, put that in another with a letter saying that you will call at her house when you arrive at Genoa, and request her to hand the letter to you. I will say that it vitally concerns the cause, and beg her to place it under lock and key in some safe receptacle until you arrive.”

“That is an excellent idea, mother,” Mrs. Percival said, “and would seem to meet the difficulty.”

Frank rose from his seat quietly, stepped noiselessly to the door, and suddenly threw it open. To his surprise his mother's maid was sitting in a chair against it, knitting.

“It is all right, Hannah,” he said, as she started to her feet. “I did not know you were there. I thought that fellow might be listening again,” and he closed the door.

“I asked her to sit there this evening, Frank,” Mrs. Percival said. “I knew that we should be talking this matter over, and thought it better to take the precaution to ensure our not being overheard.”

“Quite right, mother; I am glad you did so. Then you think that that plan will answer?”

“Yes, I think so; but you must be sure and take care of yourself, just as if you had the money about you.”

“That I will, mother; you can rely upon that.”

“And above all,” Signora Forli said, “you must beware, when you go to the Countess for the money, that you take every possible precaution. Call in the daytime, go in a carriage and drive straight from her place to the Villa Spinola; better still, go first to Garibaldi, tell him where the money is, and ask him to send three of his officers to your hotel on the following morning. Then take a carriage, drive to the Countess’s, and take it to the general with four of you in the carriage. They would not dare to attack you in broad daylight.”

“That is an excellent plan,” Mrs. Percival said, in a tone of great relief. “Certainly, if they do manage to search him on the way, and find that he has not got the bills upon him, they will watch him closely at Genoa, where, no doubt, they will get the assistance of some of Francisco’s agents. There are sure to be plenty of them in Genoa at present; but however many of them there may be, they would not venture to attack in daylight four men driving along what is no doubt a frequented road, more especially as they would know that three of them were Garibaldi’s men, which is as much as to say desperate fellows, and who would, no doubt, like yourself, be armed with pistols.”

“We had better take one more precaution,” Signora Forli said. “It is believed that you are going to start on Thursday morning. Your packing can be done in five minutes; and I think that it would be a good plan for you to have everything ready to-night, and send Mary out for a hansom to-morrow morning, so that you could, when it comes up to the door, go straight down, get into it, and drive to the station. I don’t say that they might not be prepared for any sudden change of our plans; but at least it would give you a chance of getting a start of them that they can never recover – at any rate, not until you get to Paris.”

“How could they catch me there?” Frank said.

“Francisco’s agents here might telegraph to his agents in Paris, and they might be on the look-out for you when you arrived, and take the matter up. You were going *viâ* Calais. Let me look at the Bradshaw.”

“Yes,” she said, after examining its pages; “the train for the tidal boat leaves at the same time as the Dover train. If, when you get into the cab, you say out loud, ‘Victoria,’ so that Beppo may hear it, you can then, when once on your way, tell the cabman to take you to Charing Cross. In that way, if there is any one on the look-out when the Calais train comes in, they will be thrown altogether off the scent.”

“It seems ridiculous, all these precautions,” Frank said, with a laugh.

“My dear, no precautions are ridiculous when you have Francisco’s agents to deal with. Now, I will write my letter to the Countess at once, so that she may get it before your arrival there. You will, of course, go out and post it yourself.”

CHAPTER V ON THE WAY

AFTER posting the letter, Frank made several small purchases, and was more than an hour away. On his return he saw a cab standing at the door. As he approached, Beppo came out with a portmanteau, handed it up to the driver, jumped in, and was driven off.

“So Beppo has gone, mother,” he said, as he joined her in the drawing-room.

“Yes. He came in directly you had left. He said that his feelings had been outraged by a servant being placed at the door. He could not say why she was there, but thought it seemed as if he was doubted. He could not but entertain a suspicion that she was placed there to prevent any one listening at the keyhole; after such an insult as that he could not remain any longer in the house. I said that he was at liberty to leave instantly, as his wages had been paid only three days ago. He made no reply, but bowed and left. Mary came up and told me ten minutes later that he had brought his portmanteau down, left it in the hall, and gone out, she supposed, to fetch a cab. I heard the vehicle drive up just now, and the front door closed half a minute ago.”

Signora Forli came into the room as she was speaking. “Mary tells me that Beppo has gone. It is a comfort that he is out of the house. When you once begin to suspect a man, the sooner he is away the better. At the same time, Frank, there can be no doubt that his going will not increase your chances of reaching Genoa without being searched. I should say that he had made up his mind to leave before you did, and he was glad that the fact of Mary being at the door gave him a pretext for his sudden departure. In the first place, he could conduct the affair better than any one else could do, as he knows your face and figure so well. Then, too, he would naturally wish to get the credit of the matter himself, after being so long engaged in it. Of course, you may as well carry out the plan we arranged, to start in the morning; but you may feel absolutely certain that, whatever you may do, you will not throw him off your track. He must know now that he is suspected of being a Neapolitan agent, and that you will very likely change your route and your time of starting.

“I regard it as certain that the house will be watched night and day, beginning from to-morrow morning, an hour or so before the trains leave. There will be a vehicle with a fast horse close at hand, possibly two, so that one will follow your cab, and the other drive at once to some place where Beppo is waiting. As likely as not he will go *viâ* Calais. If you go that way, so much the better; if not, he will only have to post himself at the station at Paris. It is likely enough that during the last day or two he has had one or two men hanging about here to watch you going in and out, and so to get to know you well, and will have one at each of the railway stations. He may also have written to the agents in Paris to have a look-out kept for you there.”

“But how could they know me?”

“He would describe you closely enough for that; possibly he may have sent them over a photograph.”

Frank got up and went to a side table, on which a framed photograph that had been taken when he was at home at Christmas, usually stood. “You are right,” he said; “it has gone.” Then he opened an album. “The one here has gone, too, mother. Are there any more of them about?”

“There is one in my bedroom; you know where it hangs. It was there this morning.”

“That has gone, too, mother,” he said, when he returned to the room.

“So you see, Muriel, I was right. The one from the album may have been taken yesterday, and a dozen copies made of it; so that, even if you give them the slip here, Frank, you will be recognised as soon as you reach Paris.”

“Well, mother, it is of no use bothering any more about it. I have only to travel in carriages with other people, and they cannot molest me; at worst they can but search me, and they will find nothing.

They cannot even feel sure that I have anything on me; for now that Beppo knows he is suspected of listening at doors, he will consider it possible that we may have changed our plans about where we shall hide the money. It is not as if they wanted to put me out of the way, you know; you and the signora agreed that that is certainly the last thing they would do, because there would be a tremendous row about it, and they would gain no advantage by it; so I should not worry any further, mother. I do not think there is the slightest occasion for uneasiness. I will just go by Calais, as I had intended, and by the train I had fixed on; that in itself will shake Beppo's belief that I have the money with me, for he would think that if I had it I should naturally try some other way."

"At any rate," Mrs. Percival said, "you shall not go by the line that we had intended. You would be obliged to travel by diligence from Dole to Geneva, thence to Chambéry, and again by the same method over the Alps to Susa. You shall go straight from Paris to Marseilles; boats go from there every two or three days to Genoa."

"Very well, mother; I don't care which it is. Certainly there are far fewer changes by that line; and to make your mind easy, I will promise you that at Marseilles, if I have to stop there a night, I will keep my bedroom door locked, and shove something heavy against it; in that way I can't be caught asleep."

"Well, I shall certainly feel more comfortable, my dear boy, than I should if you were going over the Alps. Of course, the diligence stops sometimes and the people get out, and there would be many opportunities for your being suddenly seized and gagged and carried off."

"They would have to be very sudden about it," Frank laughed. "I do think, mother, that you have been building mountains out of molehills. Beppo may not be a spy, after all; he may have heard you talking of this ten thousand pounds, and the temptation of trying to get it may be too much for him. He will know now that I shall be on my guard, and that, even if I have the money on my person, his chance of getting it is small indeed. I believe that you and the signora have talked the matter over till you have frightened yourselves, and built up a wonderful story, based only on the fact that Mary thought that she caught Beppo listening at the door."

"How about the photographs?" Mrs. Percival asked.

"Possibly he has a hidden affection for me," Frank laughed, "and has taken these as mementos of his stay here. Well, don't say anything more about it, mother; I am not in the least nervous, and with a brace of loaded pistols in my pocket and the fair warning that I have had, I do not think I need be afraid of two or three of these miserable Neapolitan spies."

Accordingly, Frank started by the morning mail, as they had arranged. The carriage was full to Dover; and at Calais he waited on the platform until he saw an English gentleman with two ladies enter a compartment, and in this he took a vacant corner seat. On his arrival at Paris he drove across at once to the terminus of the railway to Marseilles, breakfasted there, and sat in the waiting-room reading till the door on to the platform opened, and an official shouted, "Passengers for Melun, Sens, Dijon, Macon, Lyons, and Marseilles." There was a general movement among those in the waiting-room. Frank found that there was no fear of his being in a compartment by himself, for only one carriage door was opened at a time, and not until the compartment was full was the next unlocked. He waited until he saw his opportunity, and was the first to enter and secure a corner seat. In a short time it filled up.

He had slept most of the way between Calais and Paris, feeling absolutely certain that he would not be interfered with in a carriage with three English fellow-passengers. It was twelve o'clock now, and he would not arrive at Marseilles until seven the next morning, and he wondered where all his fellow-passengers, who were packed as closely as possible, were going, for although he did not wish to be alone, it was not a pleasant prospect to be for eighteen hours wedged in so tightly that he could scarcely move. Then he wondered whether any of the men who might be following were also in the train. He had quite come to the conclusion that his mother and grandmother had frightened themselves most unnecessarily; but he admitted that this was natural enough, after the losses they had

had. At Dijon several passengers got out, but others took their places; and so the journey continued throughout the day. The carriage was generally full, though once or twice there were for a time but five besides himself. He read most of the way, for although he spoke Italian as fluently as English, he could not converse in French. When tired of reading he had several times dozed off to sleep, though he had determined that he would keep awake all night.

At ten o'clock in the evening the train arrived at Lyons. Here there was a stop of twenty minutes, and he got out and ate a hearty meal, and drank two or three cups of strong coffee. He was not surprised to find, on returning to his carriage, that all the passengers with two exceptions had left it. These had got in at Macon, and were evidently men of good circumstances and intimate with each other; he had no suspicions whatever of them, for it was certain that men who had any intention of attacking him would appear as strangers to each other. At Vienne both left the carriage. Frank was not sorry to see them do so.

"If there are really fellows watching me," he said to himself, "the sooner they show themselves and get it over the better; it is a nuisance to keep on expecting something to take place when as likely as not nothing will happen at all." He examined his pistols. They were loaded but not capped, and he now put caps on the nipples, and replaced them in his pocket.

Just before they had left Vienne a man had come to the window as if intending to enter, but after glancing in for a moment had gone to another carriage.

"That is rather queer," Frank thought. "As I am alone here, there was plenty of room for him. Perhaps he had made a mistake in the carriage. At any rate, they won't catch me napping."

The strong coffee that he had taken at Lyons had sharpened his faculties, and he never felt more awake than he did after leaving Vienne. He sat with his eyes apparently closed, as if asleep, with a warm rug wrapped round his legs. An hour later he saw a face appear at the opposite window. At first it was but for an instant; a few seconds later it appeared again and watched him steadily; then the man moved along to the door and another joined him. Frank without moving cocked the pistol in his right-hand pocket, and took a firm hold of the butt with his finger on the trigger. The door opened noiselessly, and the second man thrust in an arm holding a pistol; so it remained for half a minute. Frank was convinced that there was no intention of shooting if it could be avoided, and remained perfectly still; then the arm was withdrawn, and another man, holding a knife in one hand and a roll of something in the other, entered. In a moment Frank's right arm flew up and his pistol cracked out: his assailant fell back and disappeared through the open door. Frank sprang to his feet as he fired, and stood with his pistol levelled towards the window, where the head of the second man had disappeared as his comrade fell backwards.

"He knows I have the best of him now," Frank muttered to himself; "I don't think that he will have another try."

Advancing cautiously, he pulled the door to, lowered the window, and putting a hand out without exposing his head, turned the handle, and then drew up the window again. His foot struck against something as he backed to his seat in the corner. As he still kept his eyes fixed on the window, he paid no attention to this for a minute or two; then he became conscious of a faint odour.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.