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Title: The Dodge Club; Or, Italy in MDCCCLIX

Author: James De Mille

Release date: October 29, 2008 [eBook #27086]

Most recently updated: January 4, 2021

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Marlo Dianne

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DODGE CLUB; OR, ITALY IN MDCCCLIX ***

THE DODGE CLUB, OR, ITALY IN MDCCCLIX.

by

James De Mille

Author of "Cord and Creese; or, the Brandon Mystery," etc., etc

With One Hundred Illustrations

New York:

Harper & Brothers Publishers,

Franklin Square

1872.

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DICK!

[Illustration: Dick!]

CHAPTER I

PARIS.--THE DODGE CLUB.--HOW TO SPEAK FRENCH.--HOW TO RAISE A CROWD.

It is a glorious day in Paris. The whole city is out in the public places, watching the departure of the army of Italy. Every imaginable uniform, on foot and on horseback, enlivens the scene. Zouaves are everywhere. Cent Gardes hurry to and fro, looking ferocious. Imperial Gardes look magnificent. Innumerable little red-legged soldiers of the line dance about, gesticulating vehemently. Grisettes hang about the necks of departing braves. A great many tears are shed, and a great deal of bombast uttered. For the invincible soldiers of France are off to fight for an idea; and doesn't every one of them carry a marshal's baton in his knapsack?

A troop of Cent Gardes comes thundering down in a cloud of dust, dashing the people right and left. Loud cheers arise: "Vive l'Empereur!" The hoarse voices of myriads prolong the yell. It is Louis Napoleon. He touches his hat gracefully to the crowd.

A chasseur leaps into a cab.

"Where shall I take you?"

"To Glory!" shouts the soldier.

The crowd applaud. The cabman drives off and don't want any further direction. Here a big-bearded Zouave kisses his big-bearded brother in a blouse.

"Adieu, mon frère; write me."

"Where shall I write?"

"Direct to Vienna--_poste restante_."

Every body laughs at every thing, and the crowd are quite wild at this.

A young man is perched upon a pillar near the garden wall of the Tuileries. He enjoys the scene immensely. After a while he takes a clay pipe from his pocket and slowly fills it. Having completed this business he draws a match along the stone and is just about lighting his pipe.

"Halloo!"

Down drops the lighted match on the neck of an ouvrier. It burns. The man scowls up; but seeing the cause, smiles and waves his hand forgivingly.

"Dick!"

At this a young man in the midst of the crowd stops and looks around. He is a short young man, in whose face there is a strange mixture of innocence and shrewdness. He is pulling a baby-carriage, containing a small specimen of French nationality, and behind him walks a majestic female.

The young man Dick takes a quick survey and recognizes the person who has called him. Down drops the pole of the carriage, and, to the horror of the majestic female, he darts off, and, springing up the pillar, grasps first the foot and then the hand of his friend.

"Buttons!" he cried; "what, you! you here in Paris!"

"I believe I am."

"Why, when did you come?"

"About a month ago."

"I had no idea of it. I didn't know you were here."

"And I didn't know that you were. I thought by this time that you were in Italy. What has kept you here so long?"

Dick looked confused.

"Why the fact is, I am studying German."

"German! in Paris! French, you mean."

"No, German."

"You're crazy; who with?"

Dick nodded his head toward his late companion.

"What, that woman? How she is scowling at us!"

"Is she?" said Dick, with some trepidation.

"Yes. But don't look. Have you been with her all the time?"

"Yes, seven months."

"Studying German!" cried Buttons, with a laugh. "Who is she?"

"Madame Bang."



HERE I INVITE MY FRIENDS.

[Illustration: Here I Invite My Friends.]

"Bang? Well, Madame Bang must look out for another lodger. You must come with me, young man. You need a guardian. It's well that I came in time to rescue you. Let's be off!"

And the two youths descended and were soon lost in the crowd.

"Three flights of steps are bad enough; but great Heavens! what do you mean by taking a fellow up to the eighth story?"

Such was the exclamation of Dick as he fell exhausted into a seat in a little room at the top of one of the tallest houses in Paris.

"Economy, my dear boy."

"Ehem!"

"Paris is overflowing, and I could get no other place without paying an enormous price. Now I am trying to husband my means."

"I should think so."

"I sleep here--"

"And have plenty of bedfellows."

"I eat here--"

"The powers of the human stomach are astounding."

"And here I invite my friends."

"Friends only. I should think. Nothing but the truest friendship could make a man hold out in such an ascent."

"But come. What are your plans?"

"I have none."

"Then you must league yourself with me."

"I shall be delighted."

"And I'm going to Italy."

"Then I'm afraid our league is already at an end."

"Why?"

"I haven't money enough."

"How much have you?"

"Only five hundred dollars; I've spent all the rest of my allowance."

"Five hundred? Why, man, I have only four hundred."

"What! and you're going to Italy?"

"Certainly."

"Then I'll go too and run the risk. But is this the style?" and Dick looked dolefully around.

"By no means--not always. But you must practice economy."

"Have you any acquaintances?"

"Yes, two. We three have formed ourselves into a society for the purpose of going to Italy. We call ourselves the Dodge Club."

"The Dodge Club?"

"Yes. Because our principle is to dodge all humbugs and swindles, which make travelling so expensive generally. We have gained much experience already, and hope to gain more. One of my friends is a doctor from Philadelphia, Doctor Snakeroot, and the other is Senator Jones from Massachusetts. Neither the Doctor nor the Senator understands a word of any language but the American. That is the reason why I became acquainted with them.

"First as to the Doctor, I picked him up at Dunkirk. It was in a café. I was getting my modest breakfast when I saw him come in. He sat down and boldly asked for coffee. After the usual delay the garçon brought him a small cup filled with what looked like ink. On the waiter was a cup of *eau de vie*, and a little plate containing several enormous lumps of loaf-sugar. Never shall I forget the Doctor's face of amazement. He looked at each article in succession. What was the ink for? what the brandy? what the sugar? He did not know that the two first when mixed makes the best drink in the world, and that the last is intended for the pocket of the guest by force of a custom dear to every Frenchman. To make a long story short, I explained to him the mysteries of French coffee, and we became sworn friends.

"My meeting with the Senator was under slightly different circumstances. It was early in the morning. It was chilly. I was walking briskly out of town. Suddenly I turned a corner and came upon a crowd. They surrounded a tall man. He was an American, and appeared to be insane. First he made gestures like a man hewing or chopping. Then he drew his hand across his throat. Then he staggered forward and pretended to fall. Then he groaned heavily. After which he raised himself up and looked at the crowd with an air of mild inquiry. They did not laugh. They did not even smile. They listened respectfully, for they knew that the strange gentleman wished to express something. On the whole, I think if I hadn't come up that the Senator would have been arrested by a stiff gendarme who was just then coming along the street. As it was, I arrived just in time to learn that he was anxious to see the French mode of killing cattle, and was trying to find his way to the abattoirs. The Senator is a fine man, but eminently practical. He used to think the French language an accomplishment only. He has changed his mind since his arrival here. He has one little peculiarity, and that is, to bawl broken English at the top of his voice when he wants to communicate with foreigners."



THE CLUB.

[Illustration: The Club.]

Not long afterward the Dodge Club received a new member in the person of Mr. Dick Whiffletree. The introduction took place in a modest café, where a dinner of six courses was supplied for the ridiculous sum of one franc--soup, a roast, a fry, a bake, a fish, a pie, bread at discretion, and a glass of vinegar generously thrown in.

At one end of the table sat the Senator, a very large and muscular man, with iron-gray hair, and features that were very strongly marked and very strongly American. He appeared to be about fifty years of age. At the other sat the Doctor, a slender young man in black. On one side sat Buttons, and opposite to him was Dick.

"Buttons," said the Senator, "were you out yesterday?"

"I was."

"It was a powerful crowd."

"Rather large."

"It was immense. I never before had any idea of the population of Paris. New York isn't to be compared to it."

"As to crowds, that is nothing uncommon in Paris. Set a rat loose in the Champs Elysées, and I bet ten thousand people will be after it in five minutes."

"Sho!"

"Any thing will raise a crowd in Paris."

"It will be a small one, then."

"My dear Senator, in an hour from this I'll engage myself to raise as large a crowd as the one you saw yesterday."

"My dear Buttons, you look like it."

"Will you bet?"

"Bet? Are you in earnest?"

"Never more so."

"But there is an immense crowd outside already."

"Then let the scene of my trial be in a less crowded place--the Place Vendôme, for instance."

"Name the conditions."

"In an hour from this I engage to fill the Place Vendôme with people. Whoever fails forfeits a dinner to the Club."

The eyes of Dick and the Doctor sparkled.

"Done!" said the Senator.

"All that you have to do," said Buttons, "is to go to the top of the Colonne Vendôme and wave your hat three times when you want me to begin."

"I'll do that. But it's wrong," said the Senator. "It's taking money from you. You must lose."

"Oh, don't be alarmed," said Buttons, cheerfully.

The Dodge Club left for the Place Vendôme, and the Senator, separating himself from his companions, began the ascent. Buttons left his friends at a corner to see the result, and walked quickly down a neighboring street.



THE PLACE VENDÔME.

[Illustration: The Place Vendôme.]

Dick noticed that every one whom he met stopped, stared, and then walked quickly forward, looking up at the column. These people accosted others, who did the same. In a few minutes many hundreds of people were looking up and exchanging glances with one another.

In a short time Buttons had completed the circuit of the block, and re-entered the Place by another street. He was running at a quick pace, and, at a moderate calculation, about two thousand *gamins de Paris* ran before, beside, and behind him. Gens d'armes caught the excitement, and rushed frantically about. Soldiers called to one another, and tore across the square gesticulating and shouting. Carriages stopped; the occupants stared up at the column; horsemen drew up their rearing horses; dogs barked; children screamed; up flew a thousand windows, out of which five thousand heads were thrust.

At the end of twenty minutes, after a very laborious journey, the Senator reached the top of the column. He looked down. A cry of amazement burst from him. The immense Place Vendôme was crammed with human beings. Innumerable upturned faces were staring at the startled Senator. All around, the lofty houses sent all their inmates to the open window, through which they looked up. The very house-tops were crowded. Away down all the streets which led to the Place crowds of human beings poured along.

"Well," muttered the Senator, "it's evident that Buttons understands these Frenchmen. However, I must perform my part, so here goes."

And the Senator, majestically removing his hat, waved it slowly around his head seven times. At the seventh whirl his fingers slipped, and a great gust of wind caught the hat and blew it far out into the air.

It fell.

A deep groan of horror burst forth from the multitude, so deep, so long, so terrible that the Senator turned pale.

A hundred thousand heads upturned; two hundred thousand arms waved furiously in the air. The tide of new-comers flowing up the other streets filled the Place to overflowing; and the vast host of people swayed to and fro, agitated by a thousand passions. All this was the work of but a short time.

"Come," said the Senator, "this is getting beyond a joke."

There was a sudden movement among the people at the foot of the column. The Senator leaned over to see what it was.

At once a great cry came up, like the thunder of a cataract, warningly, imperiously, terribly. The Senator drew back confounded.

Suddenly he advanced again. He shook his head deprecatingly, and waved his arms as if to disclaim any evil motives which they might impute to him. But they did not comprehend him. Scores of stiff gens d'armes, hundreds of little soldiers, stopped in their rush to the foot of the column to shake their fists and scream at him.

"Now if I only understood their doosid lingo," thought the Senator. "But"--after a pause--"it wouldn't be of no account up here. And what an awkward fix," he added, "for the father of a family to stand hatless on the top of a pillory like this! Sho!"

There came a deep rumble from the hollow stairway beneath him, which grew nearer and louder every moment.

"Somebody's coming," said the Senator. "Wa'al, I'm glad. Misery loves company. Perhaps I can purchase a hat."

In five minutes more the heads of twenty gens d'armes shot up through the opening in the top of the pillar, one after another, and reminded the Senator of the "Jump-up-Johnnies" in children's toys. Six of them seized him and made him

prisoner.

The indignant Senator remonstrated, and informed them that he was an American citizen.

His remark made no impression. They did not understand English.

The Senator's wrath made his hair fairly bristle. He contented himself, however, with drawing up the programme of an immediate war between France and the Great Republic.

It took an hour for the column to get emptied. It was choked with people rushing up. Seven gentlemen fainted, and three escaped with badly sprained limbs. During this time the Senator remained in the custody of his captors.

At last the column was cleared.

The prisoner was taken down and placed in a cab. He saw the dense crowd and heard the mighty murmurs of the people.

He was driven away for an immense distance. It seemed miles.

At last the black walls of a huge edifice rose before him. The cab drove under a dark archway. The Senator thought of the dungeons of the Inquisition, and other Old World horrors of which he had heard in his boyhood.

So the Senator had to give the dinner. The Club enjoyed it amazingly.

Almost at the moment of his entrance Buttons had arrived, arm in arm with the American minister, whose representations and explanations procured the Senator's release.

"I wouldn't have minded it so much," said the Senator, from whose manly bosom the last trace of vexation had fled, "if it hadn't been for that darned policeman that collared me first. What a Providence it was that I didn't knock him down! Who do you think he was?"

"Who?"

"The very man that was going to arrest me the other day when I was trying to find my way to the slaughter-house. That man is my evil genius. I will leave Paris before another day."

"The loss of your hat completed my plans," said Buttons. "Was that done on purpose? Did you throw it down for the sake of saying 'Take my hat?'"

"No. It was the wind," said the Senator, innocently. "But how did you manage to raise the crowd? You haven't told us that yet."

"How? In the simplest way possible. I told every soul I met that a crazy man was going up the Colonne Vendôme to throw himself down."

A light burst in upon the Senator's soul. He raised his new hat from a chair, and placing it before Buttons, said fervently and with unction:

"Keep it, Buttons!"



KEEP IT, BUTTONS!

[Illustration: Keep It Buttons!]



THAT'S A HOTEL BILL.

[Illustration: That's A Hotel Bill.]

CHAPTER II

ORLEANS.--HOW TO QUELL A LANDLORD.--HOW TO FIGHT OFF HUMBUGS; AND HOW TO TRAVEL WITHOUT BAGGAGE.

A tremendous uproar in the hall of a hotel at Orleans awaked every member of the Dodge Club from the sound and refreshing slumber into which they had fallen after a fatiguing journey from Paris.

Filing out into the hall one after another they beheld a singular spectacle.

It was a fat man, bald-headed, middle-aged, with a well-to-do look, that burst upon their sight.

He was standing in the hall with flushed face and stocking feet, swearing most frightfully. A crowd of waiters stood around shrugging their shoulders, and trying to soothe him. As the fat man spoke English, and the waiters French, there was a little misapprehension.

"There, gentlemen," cried the fat man, as he caught sight of our four friends, "look at that! What do you call that?"

"That?" said Buttons, taking a paper which the fat man thrust in his face, "why, that's a hotel bill."

"A hotel bill? Why it's an imposition!" cried the other excitedly.

"Perhaps it is," said Buttons, coolly.

"Of course it is! Read it out loud, and let these gentlemen see what they think of it."

"I'll read it in English," said Buttons, "for the benefit of the Club:"

Mister Blank,

To the Hotel du Roi:

One dinner.....3 francs.

Six porters.....6 francs.

One cab.....2 francs.

One do.....2 francs.

One information.....5 francs.

Wine.....5 francs.

Tobacco..... 2 francs.

One bed.....5 francs.

One boots.....1 francs.

One candle.....1 francs.

One candle.....1 francs.

One candle.....1 francs.

One candle.....1 francs.

=====

35 francs.

"By Jove! Thirty-five francs! My dear Sir. I quite agree with you. It's an imposition."

A deep sigh expressed the relief of the fat man at this mark of sympathy.

"There's no redress," said Buttons. "You'll have to grin and bear it. For you must know that in these inland towns hotel-keepers are in league, offensive and defensive, with all the cab-drivers, omnibus-drivers, postillions, truckmen, hostlers, porters, errand-boys, café-keepers, cicerones, tradesmen, lawyers, chambermaids, doctors, priests, soldiers, gens d'armes, magistrates, etc., etc., etc. In short, the whole community is a joint-stock company organized to plunder the unsuspecting traveller."

"And must I stand here and be swindled without a word?" cried the other.

"By no means. Row like fury. Call up the whole household one by one, and swear at them in broad Saxon. That's the way to strike terror into the soul of a Frenchman."

The fat man stared for a moment at Buttons, and then plunging his hands deep into his trowsers pockets he walked up and down the hall.

At last he turned to the others: "Gentlemen, is this endurable?"

"Horrible!" cried Dick.

"Abominable!" the Doctor.

"Infamous!" the Senator.

"By jingo! I've a great mind to go home. If I've got to be plundered, I'd a durned sight rather have my money go to support our own great and glorious institutions."

There is no doubt that the unfortunate man would have had to pay up if it had not been for the energetic action of

Buttons.

He summoned the hotel-keeper before him, and closing the door, asked his friends to sit down.

Then Buttons, standing up, began to repeat to the hotel-keeper, smilingly, but with extraordinary volubility, Daniel Webster's oration against Hayne. The polite Frenchman would not interrupt him, but listened with a bland though somewhat dubious smile.

The Dodge Club did infinite credit to themselves by listening without a smile to the words of their leader.

Buttons then went through the proposition about the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle, and appended the words of a few negro songs.

Here the worthy landlord interrupted him, begging his pardon, and telling him that he did not understand English very well, and could his Excellency speak French?

His Excellency, with equal politeness, regretted his want of complete familiarity with French. He was forced when he felt deeply on any subject to express himself in English.

Then followed Cicero's oration against Verres, and he was just beginning a speech of Chatham's when the landlord surrendered at discretion.

When, after the lapse of three hours and twenty-five minutes, the fat man held his bill toward him, and Buttons offered five francs, he did not even remonstrate, but took the money, and hastily receipting the bill with his pencil, darted from the room.

"Well," exclaimed the Senator, when he had recovered from the effects of the scene--"I never before realized the truth of a story I once heard."

"What was the story?"

"Oh, it was about a bet between a Yankee and a Frenchman, who could talk the longest. The two were shut up in a room. They remained there three days. At the end of that time their friends broke open the door and entered, and what do you think they found there?"

"Nobody?" suggested the fat man.

"No," said the Senator, with a glow of patriotic pride on his fine face. "But they found the Frenchman lying dead upon the floor, and the Yankee whispering in his ear the beginning of the second part of the Higgins story."

"And what is the Higgins story?"

"For Heaven's sake," gasped the Doctor, starting up, "don't ask him now--wait till next week!"

As they passed over the Mountains of Auvergne a new member was added to the Dodge Club.

It was the fat man.

He was President of a Western bank.

His name was Figgs.

It was a damp, dull, dreary, drenching night, when the lumbering diligence bore the Dodge Club through the streets of Lyons and up to the door of their hotel. Seventeen men and five small boys stood bowing ready to receive them.

The Senator, Buttons, and Dick took the small valises which contained their travelling apparel, and dashed through the line of servitors into the house. The Doctor walked after, serenely and majestically. He had no baggage. Mr. Figgs descended from the roof with considerable difficulty. Slipping from the wheel, he fell into the outstretched arms of three waiters. They put him on his feet.

His luggage was soon ready.

Mr. Figgs had two trunks and various other articles. Of these trunks seven waiters took one, and four the other. Then

Waiter No. 12 took hat-box;

Waiter No. 13 took travelling desk;

Waiter No. 14 took Scotch plaid;

Waiter No. 15 took over-coat;

Waiter No. 16 took umbrella;

Waiter No. 17 took rubber coat;

Boy No. 1 took cane;

Boy No. 2 took muffler;

Boy No. 3 took one of his mittens;

Boy No. 4 took the other;

Boy No. 5 took cigar-case.

After a long and laborious dinner they rose and smoked.



CICERO AGAINST VERRES.

[Illustration: Cicero Against Verres.]



SAC-E-E-EE!

[Illustration: Sac-r-r-r-ré.]

The head waiter informed Mr. Figgs that with his permission a deputation would wait on him. Mr. Figgs was surprised but graciously invited the deputation to walk in. They accordingly walked in. Seventeen men and five boys.

"What did they want?"

"Oh, only a _pourboire_ with which to drink his Excellency's noble health."

"Really they did his Excellency too much honor. Were they not mistaken in their man?"

"Oh no. They had carried his luggage into the hotel."

Upon this Mr. Figgs gave strong proof of poor moral training, by breaking out into a volley of Western oaths, which shocked one half of the deputation, and made the other half grin.

Still they continued respectful but firm, and reiterated their demand.

Mr. Figgs called for the landlord. That gentleman was in bed. For his wife. She did not attend to the business. For the head waiter. The spokesman of the deputation, with a polite bow, informed him that the head waiter stood before him and was quite at his service.

The scene was ended by the sudden entrance of Buttons, who, motioning to Mr. Figgs, proceeded to give each waiter a *douceur*. One after another took the proffered coin, and without looking at it, thanked the generous donor with a profusion of bows.

Five minutes after the retreating form of Buttons had vanished through the door, twenty-persons, consisting of men and boys, stood staring at one another in blank amazement.

Anger followed; then sac-r-r-r-r_r-r-r_-R-R-R-_R-Ré_!

He had given each one a _centime_.

But the customs of the hotel were not to be changed by the shabby conduct of one mean-minded person. When the Club prepared to retire for the night they were taken to some rooms opening in to each other. Five waiters led the way; one waiter to each man, and each carried a pair of tall wax-candles. Mr. Figgs's waiter took him to his room, laid down the lights, and departed.

The doors which connected the rooms were all opened, and Mr. Figgs walked through to see about something. He saw the Doctor, the Senator, Buttons, and Dick, each draw the short, well-used stump of a wax-candle from his coat pocket and gravely light it. Then letting the melted wax fall on the mantle-pieces they stuck their candles there, and in a short time the rooms were brilliantly illuminated.

The waiters were thunderstruck. Such a procedure had never come within the compass of their experience of the ways of travellers.

"Bonsoir," said Buttons. "Don't let us detain you."

They went out stupefied.

"What's the idea now?" inquired Mr. Figgs.

"Oh. They charge a franc apiece for each candle, and that is a swindle which we will not submit to."

"And will I have to be humbugged again?"

"Certainly."

"Botheration."

"My dear Sir, the swindle of bougies is the curse of the Continental traveller. None of us are particularly prudent, but we are all on the watch against small swindles, and of them all this is the most frequent and most insidious, the most constantly and ever recurrent. Beware, my dear President, of bougies--that's what we call candles."

Mr. Figgs said nothing, but leaned against the wall for a moment in a meditative mood, as if debating what he should do next.

He happened to be in the Doctor's room. He had already noticed that this gentleman had no perceptible baggage, and didn't understand it.

But now he saw it all.

The Doctor began gravely to make preparations for the night.

Before taking off his over-coat he drew various articles from the pockets, among which were:

A hair-brush,

A tooth-brush,

A shoe-brush,

A pot of blacking,

A night-shirt,

A clothes-brush,

A pipe,

A pouch of tobacco,

A razor,

A shaving-brush,

A piece of soap,

A night-cap,

A bottle of hair-oil,

A pistol,

A guide-book,

A cigar-case,

A bowie-knife,

A piece of cord,

A handkerchief,

A case of surgical instruments,

Some bits of candles.

Mr. Figgs rushed from the room.



CHAPTER III

THE RHONE IN A RAIN.--THE MAD FRENCHMAN.--SUICIDE A CAPITAL CRIME IN FRANCE.

The steamboats that run on the Rhone are very remarkable contrivances. Their builders have only aimed at combining a maximum of length with a minimum of other qualities, so that each boat displays an incredible extent of deck with no particular breadth at all. Five gentlemen took refuge in the cabin of the *Etoile*, from the drenching rain which fell during half of their voyage. This was an absurd vessel, that made trips between Lyons and Avignon. Her accommodations resembled those of a canal boat, and she was propelled by a couple of paddle-wheels driven by a Lilliputian engine. It was easy enough for her to go down the river, as the current took the responsibility of moving her along; but how she could ever get back it was difficult to tell.

They were borne onward through some of the fairest scenes on earth. Ruined towers, ivy-covered castles, thunder-blasted heights, fertile valleys, luxuriant orchards, terraced slopes, trellised vineyards, broad plains, bounded by distant mountains, whose summits were lost in the clouds; such were the successive charms of the region through which they were passing. Yet though they were most eloquently described in the letters which Buttons wrote home to his friends, it must be confessed that they made but little impression at the time, and indeed were scarcely seen at all through the vapor-covered cabin windows.

Avignon did not excite their enthusiasm. In vain the guide-book told them about Petrarch and Laura. The usual raptures were not forthcoming. In vain the cicerone led them through the old papal palace. Its sombre walls awakened no emotion. The only effect produced was on the Senator, who whiled away the hours of early bed-time by pointing out the superiority of American institutions to those which reared the prisons which they had visited.

Arles was much more satisfactory. There are more pretty women in Arles than in any other town of the same size on the Continent. The Club created an unusual excitement in this peaceful town by walking slowly through it in Indian file, narrowly scrutinizing every thing. They wondered much at the numbers of people that filled the cathedral, all gayly dressed. It was not until after a long calculation that they found out that it was Sunday. Buttons kept his memorandum-book in his hand all day, and took account of all the pretty women whom he saw. The number rose as high as 729. He would have raised it higher, but unfortunately an indignant citizen put a stop to it by charging him with impertinence to his wife.

On the railroad to Marseilles is a famous tunnel. At the last station before entering the tunnel a gentleman got in. As they passed through the long and gloomy place there suddenly arose a most outrageous noise in the car.

It was the new passenger.

Occasionally the light shining in would disclose him, dancing, stamping, tearing his hair, rolling his eyes, gnashing his teeth, and cursing.

"Is he crazy?" said Dick.

"Or drunk?" said Buttons.

Lo and behold! just as the train emerged from the tunnel the passenger made a frantic dash at the window, flung it open, and before any body could speak or move he was half out.

To spring over half a dozen seats, to land behind him, to seize his outstretched leg, to jerk him in again, was but the work of a moment. It was Buttons who did this, and who banged down the window again.

"Sac-r-r-R-R-Ré!" cried the Frenchman.

"Is it that you are mad?" said Buttons.

"Sacré Bleu!" cried the other. "Who are you that lays hands on me?"

"I saved you from destruction."

"Then, Sir, you have no thanks. Behold me, I'm a desperate man!"

In truth he looked like one. His clothes were all disordered. His lips were bleeding, and most of his hair was torn out. By this time the guard had come to the spot. All those in the car had gathered round. It was a long car, second-class, like the American.

"M'sieu, how is this? What is it that I see? You endeavor to kill yourself?"

"Leave me. I am desperate."

"But no. M'sieu, what is it?"

"Listen. I enter the train thinking to go to Avignon. I have important business there, most important. Suddenly I am struck by a thought. I find I have mistaken. I am carried to Marseilles. It is the express train, and I must go all the way. Horror! Despair! Life is of no use! It is time to resign, it! I die! Accordingly I attempt to leap from the window, when this gentleman seizes me by the leg and pulls me in. Behold all."

"M'sieu," said the guard, slowly, and with emphasis, "you have committed a grave offense. Suicide is a capital crime."

"A capital crime!" exclaimed the Frenchman, turning pale. "Great Heaven!"

"Yes, Sir. If you leap from the car I shall put you in irons, and hand you over to the police when we stop."

The Frenchman's pale face grew paler. He became humble. He entreated the guard's compassion. He begged Buttons to intercede. He had a family. Moreover he had fought in the wars of his country. He had warred in Africa. He appealed to the Senator, the Doctor, to Figgs, to Dick. Finally he became calm, and the train shortly after arrived at Marseilles.

The last that was seen of him he was rushing frantically about looking for the return train.



HORROR! DESPAIR!

[Illustration: Horror! Despair!]

CHAPTER IV

MARSEILLES.

Old Massilia wears her years well. To look at her now as she appears, full of life and joy and gayety, no one would imagine that thirty centuries or more had passed over her head.

Here is the first glimpse of the glorious South, with all its sunshine and luxury and voluptuous beauty. Here the Mediterranean rolls its waters of deepest blue, through the clear air the landscape appears with astonishing distinctness, and the sharply-defined lines of distinct objects surprise the Northern eye. Marseilles is always a picturesque city. No commercial town in the world can compare with it in this respect. On the water float the Mediterranean craft, rakish boats, with enormous latteen sails; long, low, sharp, black vessels, with a suspicious air redolent of smuggling and piracy. No tides rise and fall--advance and retreat. The waters are always the same.

All the Mediterranean nations are represented in Marseilles. Three-quarters of the world send their people here. Europe, Asia, Africa. In the streets the Syrian jostles the Spaniard; the Italian the Arab; the Moor jokes with the Jew; the Greek chaffers with the Algerine; the Turk scowls at the Corsican; the Russian from Odessa pokes the Maltese in the ribs. There is no want of variety here. Human nature is seen under a thousand aspects. Marseilles is the most cosmopolitan of cities, and represents not only many races but many ages.

Moreover it is a fast city. New York is not more ambitious; Chicago not more aspiring; San Francisco not more confident in its future. Amazing sight! Here is a city which, at the end of three thousand years, looks forward to a longer and grander life in the future.

And why?

Why, because she expects yet to be the arbiter of Eastern commerce. Through her the gold, the spices, and the gems of India will yet be conveyed over the European world. For the Suez Canal, which will once more turn the tide of this mighty traffic through its ancient Mediterranean channel, will raise Marseilles to the foremost rank among cities.

So, at least, the Marseillaise believe. When our travellers arrived there the city was crammed with soldiers. The harbor was packed with steamships. Guns were thundering, bands playing, fifes screaming, muskets rattling, regiments tramping, cavalry galloping. Confusion reigned supreme. Every thing was out of order. No one spoke or thought of any thing but the coming war in Lombardy.

Excitable little red-legged French soldiers danced about everywhere. Every one was beside himself. None could use the plain language of every-day life. All were intoxicated with hope and enthusiasm.

The travellers admired immensely the exciting scene, but their admiration was changed to disgust when they found that on account of the rush of soldiers to Italy their own prospects of getting there were extremely slight.

At length they found that a steamer was going. It was a propeller. Its name was the Prince. The enterprising company that owned her had patriotically chartered every boat on their line to the Government at an enormous profit, and had placed the Prince on the line for the use of travellers.



THOSE ITALIANS.

[Illustration: Those Italians.]

CHAPTER V

THE RETIRED ORGAN-GRINDER.--THE SENATOR PHILOSOPHIZES.--EVILS OF NOT HAVING A PASSPORT.

The Mediterranean is the most glorious of seas. The dark-blue waves; the skies of darker blue; the distant hills of purple, with their crowns of everlasting snow; and the beetling precipice, where the vexed waters forever throw up their foaming spray; the frequent hamlets that nestle among them, the castles and towers that crown the lofty heights; and the road that winds tortuously along the shore--all these form a scene in which beauty more romantic than that of the Rhine is contrasted with all the grandeur of the ocean.

Buttons, with his usual flexible and easy disposition, made the acquaintance of a couple of Italians who had been away from Italy and were now returning. They were travelling second-class.

Buttons supposed they were glad to get back.

"Glad? Did he doubt it? Why, they were Italians."

"Are Italians fonder of their country than others?"

"Without doubt. Had they not the best reason to be?"

"Why?"

"They had the garden and pride of the world for their country. Mention any other in the same breath with Italy."

"If they love it so much why can they not keep it for themselves?"

"How can you ask that? If you know the history of the country you will see that it has been impossible. No other was ever so beset. It is split up into different States. It is surrounded by powerful enemies who take advantage of this. It would not be so bad if there were only one foreign foe; but there are many, and if one were driven out another would step in."

"There will be a chance for them now to show what they can do."

"True; and you will see what they will do. They only want the French to open the way. We Italians can do the rest ourselves. It is a good time to go to Italy. You will see devotion and patriotism such as you never saw before. There is no country so beloved as Italy."

"I think other nations are as patriotic."

"Other nations! What nations? Do you know that the Italians can not leave Italy? It is this love that keeps them home. French, Germans, Spaniards, Portuguese, English--all others leave their homes, and go all over the world to live."

Italians can not and do not."

"I have seen Italians in America."

"You have seen Italian exiles, not emigrants. Or you have seen them staying there for a few years so as to earn a little money to go back with. They are only travellers on business. They are always unhappy, and are always cheered by the prospect of getting home at last."

These Italians were brothers, and from experience in the world had grown very intelligent. One had been in the hand-organ business, the other in the image-making line. Italians can do nothing else in the bustling communities of foreign nations. Buttons looked with respect upon those men who thus had carried their lore for their dear Art for years through strange lands and uncongenial climes.

"If I were an Italian I too would be an organ-grinder!" he at length exclaimed.

The Italians did not reply, but evidently thought that Buttons could not be in a better business.

"These _I_talians," said the Senator, to whom Buttons had told the conversation--"these _I_talians," said he, after they had gone, "air a singular people. They're deficient. They're wanting in the leading element of the age. They haven't got any idee of the principle of pro-gress. They don't understand trade. There's where they miss it. What's the use of hand-organs? What's the use of dancers? What's the use of statoos, whether plaster images or marble sculptoor? Can they clear forests or build up States? No, Sir; and therefore I say that this _I_talian nation will never be wuth a cuss until they are inoculated with the spirit of Seventy-six, the principles of the Pilgrim Fathers, and the doctrines of the Revolution. Boney knows it" --he added, sententiously--"bless you, Boney knows it."

After a sound sleep, which lasted until late in the following day, they went out on deck.

There lay Genoa.

Glorious sight! As they stood looking at the superb city the sun poured down upon the scene his brightest rays. The city rose in successive terraces on the side of a semicircular slope crowned with massive edifices; moles projected into the harbor terminated by lofty towers; the inner basin was crowded with shipping, prominent among which were countless French ships of war and transports. The yells of fifes, the throbbing of drums, the bang of muskets, the thunder of cannon, and the strains of martial music filled die air. Boats crowded with soldiers constantly passed from the ship to the stone quays, where thousands more waited to receive them--soldiers being mixed up with guns, cannons, wheels, muskets, drums, baggage, sails, beams, timbers, camps, mattresses, casks, boxes, irons, in infinite confusion.

"We must go ashore here," said Buttons. "Does any body know how long the steamer will remain here?"

"A day."

"A day! That will be magnificent! We will be able to see the whole city in that time. Let's go and order a boat off."

The Captain received them politely.

"What did Messieurs want? To go ashore? With the utmost pleasure. Had they their passports? Of course they had them _viséd_ in Marseilles for Genoa."

Buttons looked blank, and feebly inquired:

"Why?"

"It's the law, Monsieur. We are prohibited from permitting passengers to go ashore unless their passports are all right. It's a mere form."

"A mere form!" cried Buttons. "Why, ours are _viséd_ for Naples."

"Naples!" cried the Captain, with a shrug; "you are unfortunate, Messieurs. That will not pass you to Genoa."

"My dear Sir, you don't mean to tell me that, on account of this little informality, you will keep us prisoners on board of this vessel? Consider--"

"Monsieur," said the Captain, courteously, "I did not make these laws. It is the law; I can not change it. I should be most happy to oblige you, but I ask you, how is it possible?"

The Captain was right. He could do nothing. The travellers would have to swallow their rage.



GENOA, THE SUPERB.

[Illustration: Genoa, The Superb.]

Imagine them looking all day at the loveliest of Italian scenes-- the glorious city of Genoa, with all its historic associations!-- the city of the Dorias, the home of Columbus, even now the scene of events upon which the eyes of all the world were fastened.

Imagine them looking upon all this, and only looking, unable to go near; seeing all the preparations for war, but unable to mingle with the warriors. To pace up and down all day; to shake their fists at the scene; to fret, and fume, and chafe with irrepressible impatience; to scold, to rave, to swear--this was the lot of the unhappy tourists.

High in the startled heavens rose the thunder of preparations for the war in Lombardy. They heard the sounds, but could not watch the scene near at hand.

The day was as long as an ordinary week, but at length it came to an end. On the following morning steam was got up, and they went to Leghorn.

"I suppose they will play the same game on us at Leghorn," said Dick, mournfully.

"Without doubt," said Buttons. "But I don't mind; the bitterness of Death is past. I can stand any thing now."

Again the same tantalizing view of a great city from afar. Leghorn lay inviting them, but the unlucky passport kept them on board of the vessel. The Senator grew impatient, Mr. Figgs and the Doctor were testy; Dick and Buttons alone were calm. It was the calmness of despair.

After watching Leghorn for hours they were taken to Civita Vecchia. Here they rushed down below, and during the short period of their stay remained invisible.

At last their voyage ended, and they entered the harbor of Naples. Glorious Naples! Naples the captivating!

"_Vede Napoli_, _e poi mori_!"

There was the Bay of Naples--the matchless, the peerless, the indescribable! There the rock of Ischia, the Isle of Capri, there the slopes of Sorrento, where never-ending spring abides; there the long sweep of Naples and her sister cities; there Vesuvius, with its thin volume of smoke floating like a pennon in the air!



[Illustration: Their Noble Excellencies.]

CHAPTER VI

LAZARONI AND MACARONI.

About forty or fifty lazaroni surrounded the Dodge Club when they landed, but to their intense disgust the latter ignored them altogether, and carried their own umbrellas and carpet-bags. But the lazaroni revenged themselves. As the Doctor stooped to pick up his cane, which had fallen, a number of articles dropped from his breast-pocket, and among them was a revolver, a thing which was tabooed in Naples. A ragged rascal eagerly snatched it and handed it to a gendarme, and it was only after paying a piastre that the Doctor was permitted to retain it.

Even after the travellers had started on foot in search of lodgings the lazaroni did not desert them. Ten of them followed everywhere. At intervals they respectfully offered to carry their baggage, or show them to a hotel, whichever was most agreeable to their Noble Excellencies.

Their Noble Excellencies were in despair. At length, stumbling upon The Café dell' Europa, they rushed in and passed three hours over their breakfast. This done, they congratulated themselves on. Having got rid of their followers.

In vain!

Scarcely had they emerged from the café than Dick uttered a cry of horror. From behind a corner advanced their ten friends, with the same calm demeanor, the game unruffled and even cheerful patience, and the same respectful offer of their humble services.

In despair they separated. Buttons and Dick obtained lodgings in the Strada di San Bartolomeo. The Senator and the other two engaged pleasant rooms on the Strada Nuova, which overlooked the Bay.

Certainly Naples is a very curious place. There are magnificent edifices--palaces, monuments, castles, fortresses, churches, and cathedrals. There are majestic rows of buildings; gay shops, splendidly decorated; stately colonnades, and gardens like Paradise. There are streets unrivalled for gayety, forever filled to overflowing with the busy, the laughing, the jolly; dashing officers, noisy soldiers, ragged lazaroni, proud nobles, sickly beggars, lovely ladies; troops of cavalry galloping up and down; ten thousand caleches dashing to and fro. There is variety enough everywhere.

All the trades are divided, and arranged in different parts of the city. Here are the locksmiths, there the cabinet-makers; here the builders, there the armorers; in this place the basket-weavers, in that the cork-makers.

And most amusing of all is the street most favored of the lazaroni. Here they live, and move, and have their being; here they are born, they grow, they wed, they rear families, they eat, and drink, and die. A long array of furnaces extends up the street; over each is a stew-pan, and behind each a cook armed with an enormous ladle. At all hours of the day the cook serves up macaroni to customers. This is the diet of the people.

In the cellars behind those lines of stew-pans are the eating-houses of the vulgar--low, grimy places, floors incrustured with mud, tables of thick deal worn by a thousand horny hands, slippery with ten thousand upset dishes of macaroni. Here the pewter plates, and the iron knives, forks, and spoons are chained to the massive tables. How utter must the destitution be when it is thought necessary to chain up such worthless trash!

Into one of these places went Buttons and Dick in their study of human nature. They sat at the table. A huge dish of macaroni was served up. Fifty guests stopped to look at the new-comers. The waiters winked at the customers of the house, and thrust their tongues in their cheeks.



LAZARONI AND MACARONI.

[Illustration: Lazaroni And Macaroni.]

Dick could not eat, but the more philosophical Buttons made an extremely hearty meal, and pronounced the macaroni delicious.

On landing in a city which swarmed with beggars the first thought of our tourists was, How the mischief do they all live? There are sixty thousand lazaroni in this gay city. The average amount of clothing to each man is about one-third of a pair of trowsers and a woolen cap. But after spending a day or two the question changed its form, and became, How the mischief can they all help living? Food may be picked up in the streets. Handfuls of oranges and other fruits sell for next to nothing; strings of figs cost about a cent.

The consequence is that these sixty thousand people, fellow-creatures of ours, who are known as the lazaroni of Naples, whom we half pity and altogether despise, and look upon as lowest members of the Caucasian race, are not altogether very miserable. On the contrary, taken as a whole, they form the oiliest, fattest, drollest, noisiest, sleekest, dirtiest, ignorantest, prejudicedest, narrow-mindedest, shirtlessest, clotheslessest, idlest, carelessest, jolliest, absurdest, rascaliest--but still, all that, perhaps--taken all in all--the happiest community on the face of the earth.



YANKEE DOODLE.

[Illustration: Yankee Doodle.]

CHAPTER VII

DOLORES.--AN ITALIAN MAID LEARNS ENGLISH.--A ROMANTIC ADVENTURE.--A MASQUERADE, AND WHAT BEFELL THE SENATOR.--A CHARMING DOMINO.--A MOONLIGHT WALK, AND AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY.

The lodgings of Buttons and Dick were in a remarkably central part of Naples. The landlord was a true Neapolitan; a handsome, gay, witty, noisy, lively, rascally, covetous, ungrateful, deceitful, cunning, good-hearted old scoundrel, who took advantage of his guests in a thousand ways, and never spoke to them without trying to humbug them. He was the father of a pretty daughter who had all her parent's nature somewhat toned down, and expanded in a feminine mould.

Buttons had a chivalrous soul, and so had Dick; the vivacity of this very friendly young lady was like an oasis in the wilderness of travel. In the evening they loved to sit in the sunshine of her smile. She was singularly unconventional, this landlord's daughter, and made many informal calls on her two lodgers in their apartment.

An innocent, sprightly little maid--name Dolores--age seventeen-- complexion olive--hair jet black--eyes like stars, large, luminous, and at the same time twinkling--was anxious to learn English, especially to sing English songs; and so used to bring her guitar and sing for the Americans. Would they teach her their national song? "Oh yes happy beyond expression to do so."

The result, after ten lessons, was something like this:

"Anty Dooda tumma towna

By his sef a po-ne

Stacca fadda inna sat

Kalla Macaroni."

She used to sing this in the most charming manner, especially the last word in the last line. Not the least charm in her manner was her evident conviction that she had mastered the English language.

"Was it not an astonishing thing for so young a Signorina to know English?"

"Oh, it was indeed!" said Buttons, who knew Italian very well, and had the lion's share of the conversation always.

"And they said her accent was fine?"

"Oh, most beautiful!"

"Bellissima! Bellissima!" repeated little Dolores, and she would laugh until her eyes overflowed with delighted vanity.

"Could any Signorina Americana learn Italian in so short a time?"

"No, not one. They had not the spirit. They could never equal her most beautiful accent."

"Ah! you say all the time that my accent is most beautiful."

One day she picked up a likeness of a young lady which was lying on the table.

"Who is this?" she asked, abruptly, of Buttons.

"A Signorina."

"Oh yes! I know; but is she a relative?"

"No."

"Are you married?"

"No."

"Is this your affianced?"

"Yes."

"Ah, how strange! What will you bet?--a soldier or an advocate?"

"Neither. I will be a priest."

"A priest! Signor, what is it that you tell me? How can this be your affianced lady?"

"Oh! in our country the priests all marry, and live in beautiful little cottages, with a garden in front."

This Dolores treated with the most contemptuous incredulity. Who ever heard of such a thing? Impossible! Moreover, it was so absurd. Buttons told her that he was affianced five years ago.

"An eternity!" exclaimed Dolores. "How can you wait? But you must have been very young."

"Young? Yes, only sixteen."

"Blessed and most venerable Virgin! Only sixteen! And is she the most beautiful girl you know?"

"No."

"Where have you seen one more so?"

"In Naples."

"Who is she?"

"An Italian."

"What is her name?"

"Dolores."

"That's me."

"I mean you."

This was pretty direct; but Dolores was frank, and required frankness from others. Some young ladies would have considered this too coarse and open to be acceptable. But Dolores had so high an opinion of herself that she took it for sincere homage. So she half closed her eyes, leaned back in her chair, looked languishingly at Buttons, and then burst into a merry peal of musical laughter.

"I think I am the most beautiful girl you ever saw."

It was Buttons's turn to laugh. He told Dolores that she was quite right, and repeated her favorite word, "Belissima!"

One evening when Dick was alone in the room a knock came to the door.

"Was he disengaged?"

"Oh, quite."

"The Signora in the room next--"

"Yes."

"Would be happy to see him."

"Now?"

"Yes, as soon as he liked."



[Illustration: I Kiss Hands.]

The Signora did not have to wait long. In less time than it takes to tell this Dick stood with his best bow before her. How he congratulated himself on having studied Italian! The lady reclined on a sofa. She was about thirty, and undeniably pretty. A guitar lay at her feet. Books were scattered around--French novels, and manuals of devotion. Intelligence beamed from her large, expressive eyes. How delightful! Here was an adventure, perhaps a fair conquest.

"Good-evening, Signor!"

"I kiss the hands to your ladyship," said Dick, mustering a sentence from Ollendorff.

"Pardon me for this liberty."

"I assure you it gives me the greatest happiness, and I am wholly at your service."

"I have understood that you are an American."

"I am, Signora."

"And this is your first visit to Naples?"

"My first, Signora."

"How does Naples please you?"

"Exceedingly. The beautiful city, the crowded streets, the delightful views--above all, the most charming ladies."

A bow--a slight flush passed over the lady's face, and Dick whispered to himself--

"Well put, Dick, my boy--deuced well put for a beginner."

"To come to the point," said the lady, with sigh.--("Ah, here we have it!" thought Dick--the point--blessed moment!--)"I would not have ventured to trouble you for any slight cause, Signor, but this nearly concerns myself."--(Keep down--our heart, murmured Dick--cool, you dog--cool!--)"My happiness and my tenderest feelings--"(Dick's suffused eyes expressed deep sympathy.)--"I thought of you--"

"Ah, Signora!"

"And not being acquainted with you--"(What a shame!--_aside_)--I concluded to waive all formality"--(Social forms are generally a nuisance to ardent souls--_aside_)--"and to communicate at once with you."

"Signora, let me assure you that this is the happiest moment in my life."

The Signora looked surprised, but went on in a sort of preoccupied way:

"I want to know if you can tell me any thing about my brother."

"Brother!"

"Who is now in America."

Dick opened his eyes.

"I thought that perhaps you could tell me how he is. I have not heard from him for two years, and feel very anxious."

Dick sat for a moment surprised at this unexpected turn. The lady's anxiety about her brother he could see was not feigned. So he concealed his disappointment, and in his most engaging manner informed her that he had not seen her brother; but if she could tell him his name, and the place where he was living, he might be able to tell something about him.



THE YOUNG HUSSAR.

[Illustration: The Young Hussar.]

"His name," sighed the lady, "is Giulio Fanti."

"And the place?"

"Rio Janeiro."

"Rio Janeiro?"

"Yes," said the lady, slowly.

Dick was in despair. Not to know any thing of her brother would make her think him stupid. So he attempted to explain:

"America," he began, "is a very large country--larger, in fact, than the whole Kingdom of Naples. It is principally inhabited by savages, who are very hostile to the whites. The whites have a few cities, however. In the North the whites all speak English. In the South they all speak Spanish. The South Americans are good Catholics, and respect the Holy Father; but the English in the North are all heretics. Consequently there is scarcely any communication between the two districts."

The lady had heard somewhere that in the American wars they employed the savages to assist them. Dick acknowledged the truth of this with candor, but with pain. She would see by this why he was unable to tell her any thing about her brother. His not knowing that brother was now the chief sorrow of his life. The lady earnestly hoped that Rio Janeiro was well protected from the savages.

"Oh, perfectly so. The fortifications of that city are impregnable."

Dick thus endeavored to give the lady an idea of America. The conversation gradually tapered down until the entrance of a gentleman brought it to a close. Dick bowed himself out.

"At any rate," he murmured, "if the lady wanted to inspect me she had a chance, and if she wanted to pump me she ought to be satisfied."

One evening Buttons and Dick came in and found a stranger chatting familiarly with the landlord and a young hussar. The stranger was dressed like a cavalry officer, and was the most astounding fop that the two Americans had ever seen. He paced up and down, head erect, chest thrown out, sabre clanking, spurs jingling, eyes sparkling, ineffable smile. He strode up to the two youths, spun round on one heel, bowed to the ground, waved his hand patronizingly, and welcomed them in.

"A charming night, gallant gentlemen. A bewitching night. All Naples is alive. All the world is going. Are you?"

The young men stared, and coldly asked where?

"Ha, ha, ha!" A merry peal of laughter rang out. "Absolutely--if the young Americans are not stupid. They don't know me!"

"Dolores!" exclaimed Buttons.

"Yes," exclaimed the other. "How do you like me? Am I natural?--eh? military? Do I look terrible?"

And Dolores skipped up and down with a strut beyond description, breathing hard and frowning.

"If you look so fierce you will frighten us away," said Buttons.

"How do I look, now?" she said, standing full before him with folded arms, *à la* Napoleon at St. Helena.

"Bellissima! Bellissima!" said Buttons, in unfeigned admiration.

"Ah!" ejaculated Dolores, smacking her lips, and puffing out her little dimpled cheeks. "Oh!" and her eyes sparkled more brightly with perfect joy and self-contentment.

"And what is all this for?"

"Is it possible that you do not know?"

"I have no idea."

"Then listen. It is at the Royal Opera-house. It will be the greatest masquerade ball ever given."

"Oh--a masquerade ball!--and you?"

"I? I go as a handsome young officer to break the hearts of the ladies, and have such rare sport. My brave cousin, yonder gallant soldier, goes with me."

The brave cousin, who was a big, heavy-headed fellow, grinned in acknowledgment, but said nothing.

The Royal Opera-house at Naples is the largest, the grandest, and the most capacious in the world. An immense stage, an enormous pit all thrown into one vast room, surrounded by innumerable boxes, all rising, tier above tier--myriads of dancers, myriads of masks, myriads of spectators--so the scene appeared. Moreover, the Neapolitan is a born buffoon. Nowhere is he so natural as at a masquerade. The music, the crowd, the brilliant lights, the incessant motion are all intoxication to this impressible being.

The Senator lent the countenance of his presence--not from curiosity, but from benevolent desire to keep his young friends out of trouble. He narrowly escaped being prohibited from entering by making an outrageous fuss at the door about some paltry change. He actually imagined that it was possible to get the right change for a large coin in Naples.

The multitudes of moving forms made the new-comers dizzy. There were all kinds of fantastic figures. Lions polked with sylphs, crocodiles chased serpents, giants walked arm in arm with dwarfs, elephants on two legs ran nimbly about, beating every body with hope probosces of inflated India rubber. Pretty girls in dominos abounded; every body whose face was visible was on the broad grin. All classes were represented. The wealthier nobles entered into the spirit of the scene with as great gusto as the humblest artisan who treated his obscure sweet-heart with an entrance ticket.



A PERPLEXED SENATOR.

[Illustration: A Perplexed Senator.]

Our friends all wore black dominos, "just for the fun of the thing." Every body knew that they were English or American, which is just the same; for Englishmen and Americans are universally recognizable by the rigidity of their muscles.

A bevy of masked beauties were attracted by the colossal form of the Senator. To say that he was bewildered would express his sensations but faintly. He was distracted. He looked for Buttons. Buttons was chatting with a little domino. He turned to Dick. Dick was walking off with a rhinoceros. To Figgs and the Doctor. Figgs and the Doctor were exchanging glances with a couple of lady codfishes and trying to look amiable. The Senator gave a sickly smile.

"What'n thunder'll I do?" he muttered.

Two dominos took either arm. A third stood smilingly before him. A fourth tried to appropriate his left hand.

"Will your Excellency dance with one of us at a time," said No. 4, with a Tuscan accent, "or will you dance with all of us at once?"

The Senator looked helplessly at her.

"He does not know how," said No. 1. "He has passed his life among the stars."

"Begone, irreverent ones!" said No. 3. "This is an American prince. He said I should be his partner."

"Boh! malidetta!" cried No. 2. "He told me the same; but he said he was a Milor Inglese."

No. 4 thereupon gave a smart pull at the Senator's hand to draw him off. Whereupon No. 2 did the same. No. 3 began singing "Come e bello!" and No. 1 stood coaxing him to "Fly with her." A crowd of idlers gathered grinningly around.

"My goodness!" groaned the Senator. "Me! The--the representative of a respectable constituency; the elder of a Presbyterian church; the president of a temperance society; the deliverer of that famous Fourth of July oration; the father of a family--me! to be treated thus! Who air these females? Air they countesses? Is this the way the foreign nobility treat an American citizen?"

But the ladies pulled and the crowd grinned. The Senator endeavored to remonstrate. Then he tried to pull his arms away; but finding that impossible he looked in a piteous manner, first at one, and then at the other.



EXIT SENATOR.

[Illustration: Exit Senator.]

"He wants, I tell you, to be my partner," said No. 1.

"Bah!" cried No. 2, derisively; "he intends to be mine. I understand the national dance of his country--the famous jeeg Irlandese."

"MRS.!!!"

The Senator shouted this one word in a stentorian voice. The ladies dropped his arms and started.

"I say, Mrs.!" cried the Senator. "Look here. Me no speeky _I_ talian--me American. Me come just see zee fun, you know--zee spaort--you und-stand? Ha? Hum!"

The ladies clapped their hands, and cried "Bravo!"

Quite a crowd gathered around them. The Senator, impressed with the idea that, to make foreigners understand, it was only necessary to yell loud enough, bawled so loudly that ever so many dancers stopped. Among these Buttons came near with the little Domino. Little Domino stopped, laughed, clapped her hands, and pointed to the Senator.

The Senator was yelling vehemently in broken English to a large crowd of masks. He told them that he had a large family; that he owned a factory; that he was a man of weight, character, influence, popularity, wealth; that he came here merely to study their manners and customs. He disclaimed any intention to participate in their amusements just then, or to make acquaintances.--He would be proud to visit them all at their houses, or see them at his apartments, or--or--in short, would be happy to do any thing if they would only let him go in peace.

The crowd laughed, chattered, and shouted "Bravo!" at every pause. The Senator was covered with shame and perspiration. What would have become of him finally it is impossible to guess; but, fortunately, at this extremity he caught sight of Buttons. To dash away from the charming ladies, to burst through the crowd, and to seize the arm of Buttons was but the work of a moment.

"Buttons! Buttons! Buttons! Help me! These confounded _I_ talian wimmin! Take them away. Tell them to leave me be. Tell them I don't know them--don't want to have them hanging round me. Tell them _I'm your father_!" cried the Senator, his voice rising to a shout in his distraction and alarm.

About 970 people were around him by this time.

"Goodness!" said Buttons; "you are in a fix. Why did you make yourself so agreeable? and to so many? Why, it's too bad. One at a time!"

"Buttons," said the Senator, solemnly, "is this the time for joking? For Heaven's sake get me away."

"Come then; you must run for it."

He seized the Senator's right arm. The little Domino clung to the other. Away they started. It was a full run. A shout arose. So arises the shout in Rome along the bellowing Corso when the horses are starting for the Carnival races. It was a long, loud shout, gathering and growing and deepening as it rose, till it burst on high in one grand thunder-clap of sound.

Away the Senator went like the wind. The dense crowd parted on either side with a rush. The Opera-house is several hundred feet in length. Down this entire distance the Senator ran, accompanied by Buttons and the little Domino. Crowds cheered him as he passed. Behind him the passage-way closed up, and a long trail of screaming maskers pressed after him. The louder they shouted the faster the Senator ran. At length they reached the other end.

"Do you see that box?" asked Buttons, pointing to one on the topmost tier.

"Yes, yes."

"Fly! Run for your life! It's your only hope. Get in there and hide till we go."

The Senator vanished. Scarcely had his coat-tails disappeared through the door when the pursuing crowd arrived there. Six thousand two hundred and twenty-seven human beings, dressed in every variety of costume, on finding that the runner had vanished, gave vent to their excited feelings by a loud cheer for the interesting American who had contributed so greatly to the evening's enjoyment.

Unlucky Senator! Will it be believed that even in the topmost box his pursuers followed him? It was even so. About an hour afterward Buttons, on coming near the entrance, encountered him. His face was pale but resolute, his dress disordered. He muttered a few words about "durned I talian countesses," and hurried out.

Buttons kept company with the little Domino. Never in his life had he passed so agreeable an evening. He took good care to let his companion know this. At length the crowd began to separate. The Domino would go. Buttons would go with her. Had she a carriage? No, she walked. Then he would walk with her.

Buttons tried hard to get a carriage, but all were engaged. But a walk would not be unpleasant in such company. The Domino did not complain. She was vivacious, brilliant, delightful, bewitching. Buttons had been trying all evening to find out who she was. In vain.

"Who in the world is she? I must find out, so that I may see her again." This was his one thought.

They approached the Strada Nuova.

"She is not one of the nobility at any rate, or she would not live here."

They turned up a familiar street.

"How exceedingly jolly! She can't live far away from my lodgings."

They entered the Strada di San Bartolomeo.

"Hanged if she don't live on the same street!"

A strange thought occurred. It was soon confirmed. They stopped in front of Buttons's own lodgings. A light gleamed over the door. Another flashed into the soul of Buttons. That face, dimpled, smiling, bewitching; flashing, sparking eyes; little mouth with its rosy lips!

"_Delores_!"

"Blessed Saints and Holy Virgin! Is it possible that you never suspected?"

"Never. How could I when I thought you were dressed like a dragoon?"

"And you never passed so happy an evening; and never had so fascinating and charming a partner; and you never heard

such a voice of music as mine; and you can never forget me through all life; and you never can hope to find any one equal to me!" said Dolores, in her usual laughing volubility.

"Never!" cried Buttons.

"Oh dear! I think you must love me very much."

And a merry peal of laughter rang up the stairs as Dolores, evading Buttons's arm, which that young man had tried to pass about her waist, dashed away into the darkness and out of sight.

CHAPTER VIII

ADVENTURES AND MISADVENTURES.--A WET GROTTO AND A BOILING LAKE.--THE TWO FAIR SPANIARDS, AND THE DONKEY RIDE.

The Grotto of Posilippo is a most remarkable place, and, in the opinion of every intelligent traveller, is more astonishing than even the Hoosac Tunnel, which nobody will deny except the benighted Bostonian.

The city of Pozzuoli is celebrated for two things; first, because St. Paul once landed there, and no doubt hurried away as fast as he could; and, secondly, on account of the immense number of beggars that throng around the unhappy one who enters its streets.

The Dodge Club contributed liberally. The Doctor gave a cork-screw; the Senator, a bladeless knife; Dick, an old lottery ticket; Buttons, a candle-stump; Mr. Figgs, a wild-cat banknote. After which they all hurried away on donkeys as fast as possible.

The donkey is in his glory here. Nowhere else does he develop such a variety of forms--nowhere attain such an infinity of sizes--nowhere emit so impressive a bray. It is the Bray of Naples. "It is like the thunder of the night when the cloud bursts o'er Cona, and a thousand ghosts shriek at once in the hollow wind."

There is a locality in this region which the ancient named after a certain warm region which no reined person ever permits himself to mention in our day. Whatever it may have been when some Roman Tityrus walked pipe in mouth along its shore, its present condition renders its name singularly appropriate and felicitous. Here the party amused themselves with a lunch of figs and oranges, which they gathered indiscriminately from orchards and gardens on the road-side.

There was the Lake Lucrine. Averno and the Elysian Fields were there. The ruins of Caligula's Bridge dotted the surface of the sea. Yet the charms of all these classic scenes were eclipsed in the tourists' eyes by those of a number of pretty peasants girls who stood washing clothes in the limpid waters of the lake.

It was in this neighborhood that they found the Grotto of the Cumaean Sibyl. They followed the intelligent cicerone, armed with torches, into a gloomy tunnel. The intelligent cicerone walked before them with the air of one who had something to show. Seven stout peasants followed after. The cavern was as dark as possible, and extended apparently for an endless distance.

After walking a distance of about two miles, according to the Senator's calculation, they came to the centre of interest. It was a hole in the wall of the tunnel. The Americans were given to understand that they must enter here.

"But how?"

"How? Why on the broad backs of the stout peasants, who all stood politely offering their humble services." The guide went first. Buttons, without more ado, got on the back of the nearest Italian and followed. Dick came next; then the Doctor. Mr. Figgs and the Senator followed in the same dignified manner.

They descended for some distance, and finally came to water about three feet deep. As the roof was low, and only rose three feet above the water, the party had some difficulty, not only in keeping their feet out of the water, but also in breathing. At length they came to a chamber about twelve feet square. From this they passed on to another of the same size. Thence to another. And so on.

Arriving at the last, Bearer No. 1 quietly deposited Buttons on a raised stone platform, which fortunately arose about half an inch above the water. Three other bearers did the same. Mr. Figgs looked forlornly about him, and, being a fat man, seemed to grow somewhat apoplectic. Dick beguiled the time by lighting his pipe.

"So this is the Grotto of the Cumaean Sibyl, is it?" said Buttons. "Then all I can say is that--"

What he was going to say was lost by a loud cry which interrupted him and startled all. It came from the other chamber.

"The Senator!" said Dick.

It was indeed his well-known voice. There was a splash and a groan. Immediately afterward a man staggered into the room. He was deathly pale, and tottered feebly under the tremendous weight of the Senator. The latter looked as anxious as his trembling bearer.

"Darn it! I say," he cried. "Darn it! Don't! Don't!"

"Diavo-lo!" muttered the Italian.

And in the next instant plump went the Senator into the water. A scene then followed that baffles description. The Senator, rising from his unexpected bath, foaming and sputtering, the Italian praying for forgiveness, the loud voices of all the others shouting, calling, and laughing.

The end of it was that they all left as soon as possible, and the Senator indignantly waded back through the water himself. A furious row with the unfortunate bearer, whom the Senator refused to pay, formed a beautifully appropriate termination to their visit to this classic spot. The Senator was so disturbed by this misadventure that his wrath did not subside until his trowsers were thoroughly dried. This, however, was accomplished at last, under the warm sun, and then he looked around him with his usual complacency.

The next spot of interest which attracted them was the Hall of the Subterranean Lake. In this place there is a cavern in the centre of a hill, which is approached by a passage of some considerable length, and in the subterranean cavern a pool of water boils and bubbles. The usual crowd of obliging peasantry surrounded them as they entered the vestibule of this interesting place. It was a dingy-looking chamber, out of which two narrow subterranean passages ran. A grimy, sooty, blackened figure stood before them with torches.



DARN IT!--DON'T.

[Illustration: Darn it!--Don't.]

"Follow!"

This was all that he condescended to say, after lighting his torches and distributing them to his visitors. He stalked off, and stooping down, darted into the low passage-way. The cicerone followed, then Buttons, then Dick, then the Senator, then the Doctor, then Mr. Figgs. The air was intensely hot, and the passage-way grew lower. Moreover, the smoke from the torches filled the air, blinding and choking them.

Mr. Figgs faltered. Fat, and not by any means nimble, he came to a pause about twenty feet from the entrance, and, making a sudden turn, darted out. The Doctor was tall and unaccustomed to bend his perpendicular form. Half choked and panting heavily he too gave up, and turning about rushed out after Mr. Figgs.

The other three went on bravely. Buttons and Dick, because they had long since made up their minds to see every thing that presented itself, and the Senator, because when he started on an enterprise he was incapable of turning back.

After a time the passage went sloping steeply down. At the bottom of the declivity was a pond of water bubbling and steaming. Down this they ran. Now the stone was extremely slippery, and the subterranean chamber was but faintly illuminated by the torches. And so it came to pass that, as the Senator ran down after the others, they had barely

reached the bottom when

Thump!

At once all turned round with a start.

Not too quickly; for there lay the Senator, on his back, sliding, in an oblique direction, straight toward the pool. His booted feet were already in the seething waves; his nails were dug into the slippery soil; he was shouting for help.

To grasp his hand, his collar, his leg--to jerk him away and place him upright, was the work of a shorter time than is taken to tell it.

The guide now wanted them to wait till he boiled an egg. The Senator remonstrated, stating that he had already nearly boiled a leg. The Senator's opposition overpowered the wishes of the others, and the party proceeded to return. Pale, grimy with soot, panting, covered with huge drops of perspiration, they burst into the chamber where the others were waiting--first Buttons, then Dick, then the Senator covered with mud and slime.

The latter gentleman did not answer much to the eager inquiries of his friends, but maintained a solemn silence. The two former loudly and volubly descanted on the accumulated horrors of the subterranean way, the narrow passage, the sulphurous air, the lake of boiling floods.

In this outer chamber their attention was directed to a number of ancient relics. These are offered for sale in such abundance that they may be considered stable articles of commerce in this country.



THUMP!

[Illustration: Thump!]

So skillful are the manufacturers that they can produce unlimited supplies of the following articles, and many others too numerous to mention:

Cumaeian and Oscan coins;

Ditto and ditto statuettes;

Ditto and ditto rings;

Ditto and ditto bracelets;

Ditto and ditto images;

Ditto and ditto toilet articles;

Ditto and ditto vases;

Ditto and ditto flasks;

Relics of Parthenope;

Ditto of Baiae;

Ditto of Misenum;

Ditto of Paestum;

Ditto of Herculaneum;

Ditto of Pompeii;

Ditto of Capraea;

Ditto of Capua;

Ditto of Cumae--

And other places too numerous to mention; all supplied to order; all of which are eaten by rust, and warranted to be covered by the canker and the mould of antiquity.

The good guide earnestly pressed some interesting relics upon their attention, but without marked success. And now, as the hour of dinner approached, they made the best of their way to a neighboring inn, which commanded a fine view of the bay. Emerging from the chamber the guide followed them, offering his wares.

"Tell me," he cried, in a sonorous voice, "oh most noble Americans! how much will you give for this most ancient vase?"

"Un' mezzo carlino," said Dick,

"Un' mezzo carlino!!!"

The man's hand, which had been uplifted to display the vase, fell downward as he said this. His tall figure grew less and less distinct as they went further away; but long after he was out of sight the phantom of his reproachful face haunted their minds.

After dinner they went out on the piazza in front of the hotel. Two Spanish ladies were there, whose dark eyes produced an instantaneous effect upon the impressible heart of Buttons.

They sat side by side, leaning against the stone balustrade. They were smoking cigarettes, and the effect produced by waving their pretty hands as they took the cigarettes from their mouths was, to say the least, bewildering.

Buttons awaited his opportunity, and did not have to wait long. Whether it was that they were willing to give the young American a chance, or whether it was really unavoidable, can not be said, but certainly one of the fair Spaniards found that her cigarette had gone out. A pretty look of despair, and an equally pretty gesture of vexation, showed at once the state of things. Upon which Buttons stepped up, and with a bow that would have done honor to Chesterfield, produced a box of scented allumettes, and lighting one, gravely held it forward. The fair Spaniard smiled bewitchingly, and bending forward without hesitation to light her cigarette, brought her rosy lips into bewildering proximity to Buttons's hand.

It was a trying moment.

The amiable expression of the ladies' faces, combined with the softly-spoken thanks of the lady whom Buttons first addressed, encouraged him. The consequence was, that in about five minutes more he was occupying a seat opposite them, chatting as familiarly as though he were an old playmate. Dick looked on with admiration; the others with envy.

"How in the world does it happen," asked the Senator, "that Buttons knows the lingo of every body he meets?"



A TRYING MOMENT.

[Illustration: A Trying Moment.]

"He can't help it," said Dick. "These Continental languages are all alike; know one, and you've got the key to the others--that is with French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese."

"And look at him now!" cried the Senator, his eye beaming with cordial admiration.

"You may well look at him!" sighed Dick. "Two such pretty girls as these won't turn up again in a hurry. Spaniards too; I always admired them." And he walked down to the shore humming to himself something about "the girls of Cadiz."

The ladies informed Buttons that they were travelling with their brother, and had been through Russia, Germany, England, France, and were now traversing Italy; did not like the three first-mentioned countries, but were charmed with Italy.

Their *naïveté* was delightful. Buttons found out that the name of one was Lucia, and the other Ida. For the life of him he did not know which he admired most; but, on the whole, rather inclined to the one to whom he had offered the light--Ida.

He was equally frank, and let them know his name, his country, his Creed. They were shocked at his creed, pleased with his country and amused at his name, which they pronounced, "Señor Bo-to-nes."

After about an hour their brother came. He was a small man, very active, and full of vivacity. Instead of looking fiercely at the stranger, he shook hands with him very cordially. Before doing this, however, he took one short, quick survey of his entire person, from felt hat down to his Congress boots. The consequence was that Buttons deserted his companions, and went off with the ladies.

Dick took the lead of the party on the return home. They viewed the conduct of Buttons with displeasure. The Senator did not show his usual serenity. The party were all riding on donkeys. To do this on the minute animals which the Neapolitans furnish it is necessary to seat one's self on the stern of the animal, and draw the legs well up, so that they may not trail on the ground. The appearance of the rider from behind is that of a Satyr dressed in the fashion of the nineteenth century. Nothing can be more ridiculous than the sight of a figure dressed in a frock-coat and beaver hat, and terminated by the legs and tail of a donkey.

As it was getting late the party hurried. The donkeys were put on the full gallop. First rode the guide, then the others, last of whom was the Senator, whose great weight was a sore trial to the little donkey.

They neared Pozzuoli, when suddenly the Senator gave his little beast a smart whack to hasten his steps. The donkey lost all patience. With a jump he leaped forward. Away he went, far ahead of the others. The saddle whose girth was rather old, slipped off. The Senator held on tightly. In vain! Just as he rounded a corner formed by a projecting sandbank the donkey slipped. Down went the rider; down went the donkey also--rider and beast floundering in the dusty road.

A merry peal of ill-suppressed laughter came from the road-side as he rolled into view. It came from a carriage. In the carriage were the Spaniards--there, too, was Buttons.



SENATOR AND DONKEY.

[Illustration: Senator And Donkey.]

CHAPTER IX

A DRIVE INTO THE COUNTRY.--A FIGHT WITH A VETTURINO.--THE EFFECT OF EATING "HARD BOILED EGGS."--WHAT THEY SAW AT PAESTUM.--FIVE TEMPLES AND ONE "MILL."

To hire a carriage in Naples for any length of time is by no means an easy thing. It is necessary to hold long commune with the proprietor, to exert all the wiles of masterly diplomacy to circumvent cunning by cunning, to exert patience, skill, and eloquence. After a decision has been reached, there is but one way in which you can hold your vetturino to his bargain, and that is to bind him to it by securing his name to a contract. Every vetturino has a printed form all ready. If he can't write his name, he does something equally binding and far simpler. He dips his thumb in the ink-bottle and stamps it on the paper. If that is not his signature, what else is it?

"Thus," said one, "Signor Adam signed the marriage-contract with Signora Eva."

After incredible difficulties a contract had been drawn up and signed by the horny thumb of a certain big vetturino, who went by the name of "Il Piccolo." It was to the effect that, for a certain specified sum, Il Piccolo should take the party to Paestum and back with a detour to Sorrento.

It was a most delightful morning. All were in the best of spirits. So they started. On for miles through interminable streets of houses that bordered the circular shore, through crowds of sheep, droves of cattle, dense masses of human beings, through which innumerable caleches darted like meteors amid the stars of heaven. Here came the oxen of Southern Italy, stately, solemn, long-horned, cream-colored; there marched great droves of Sorrento hogs--the hog of hogs--a strange but not ill-favored animal, thick in hide, leaden in color, hairless as a hippopotamus. The flesh of the Sorrento hog bears the same relation to common pork that "Lubin's Extrait" bears to the coarse scent of a country grocery. A pork-chop from the Sorrento animal comes to the palate with the force of a new revelation; it is the highest possibility of pork--the apotheosis of the pig! Long lines of macaroni-cooks doing an enormous business; armies of dealers in anisette; crowds of water-carriers; throngs of fishermen, carrying nets and singing merry songs--"Ecco mi!" "Ecco la!"--possible Massaniellos every man of them, I assure you, Sir. And--enveloping all, mingling with all, jostling all, busy with the busiest, idle with the idlest, noisy with the noisest, jolly with the jolliest, the fat, oily, swarthy, rosy--(etc., for further epithets see preceding pages)--_Lazaroni_!

Every moment produces new effects in the ever-shifting scenes of Naples. Here is the reverse of monotony; if any thing becomes wearisome, it is the variety. Here is the monotony of incessant change. The whole city, with all its vast

suburbs, lives on the streets.

The Senator wiped his fevered brow. He thought that for crowds, noise, tumult, dash, hurry-scurry, gayety, life, laughter, joyance, and all that incites to mirth, and all that stirs the soul, even New York couldn't hold a candle to Naples.

Rabelais ought to have been a Neapolitan.

Then, as the city gradually faded into the country, the winding road opened up before them with avenues of majestic trees--overhanging, arching midway--forming long aisles of shade. Myrtles, that grew up into trees, scented the air. Interminable groves of figs and oranges spread away up the hill, intermingled with the darker foliage of the olive or cypress.

The mountains come lovingly down to bathe their feet in the sea. The road winds among them. There is a deep valley around which rise lofty hills topped with white villages or ancient towers, or dotted with villas which peep forth from amid dense groves. As far as the eye can reach the vineyards spread away. Not as in France or Germany, miserable sandy fields with naked poles or stunted bushes; but vast extents of trees, among which the vines leap in wild luxuriance, hanging in long festoons from branch to branch, or intertwining with the foliage.

"I don't know how it is," said the Senator, "but I'm cussed if I feel as if this here country was ground into the dust. If it is, it is no bad thing to go through the mill. I don't much wonder that these Italians don't emigrate. If I owned a farm in this neighborhood I'd stand a good deal of squeezin' before I'd sell out and go anywheres else."

At evening they reached Salerno, a watering-place the sea-coast, and Naples in miniature.

There is no town in Italy without its opera-house or theatre, and among the most vivid and most precious of scenic delights the pantomime commends itself to the Italian bosom. Of course there was a pantomime at Salerno. It was a mite of a house; on a rough calculation thirty feet by twenty; a double tier of boxes; a parquette about twelve feet square; and a stage of about two-thirds that size.

Yet behold what the ingenuity of man can accomplish! On that stage there were performed all the usual exhibitions of human passion, and they even went into the production of great scenic displays, among which a great storm in the forest was most prominent.

Polichinello was in his glory! On this occasion the joke of the evening was an English traveller. The ideal Englishman on the Continent is a never-failing source of merriment. The presence of five Americans gave additional piquancy to the show. The corpulent, double-chinned, red-nosed Englishman, with knee-breeches, shoe-buckles, and absurd coat, stamped, swore, frowned, doubled up his fists, knocked down waiters, scattered gold right and left, was arrested, was tried, was fined; but came forth unterrified from every persecution, to rave, to storm, to fight, to lavish money as before.

How vivid were the flashes of lightning produced by touching off some cotton-wool soaked in alcohol! How terrific the peals of thunder produced by the vibrations of a piece of sheet-iron! Whatever was deficient in mechanical apparatus was readily supplied by the powerful imagination of the Italians, who, though they had often seen all this before, were not at all weary of looking at it, but enjoyed the thousandth repetition as much as the first.

Those merry Italians!

There is an old, old game played by every vetturino.

When our travellers had returned to the hotel, and were enjoying themselves in general conversation, the vetturino bowed himself in. He was a good deal exercised in his mind. With a great preamble he came to his point. As they intended to start early in the morning, he supposed they would not object to settle their little bill now.

"_What_!" shouted Buttons, jumping up. "What bill? Settle a bill? _We_ settle a bill? Are you mad?"

"Your excellencies intend to settle the bill, of course," said the vetturino, with much phlegm.

"Our excellencies never dreamed of any such thing."

"Not pay? Ha! ha! You jest, Signor."

"Do you see this?" said Buttons, solemnly producing the contract.

"Well?" responded Il Piccolo.

"What is this?"

"Our contract."

"Do you know what it is that you have engaged to do?"

"To take you to Paestum."

"Yes; to Paestum and back, with a detour to Sorrento. Moreover, you engage to supply us with three meals a day and lodgings, to all of which we engage to pay a certain sum. What, then," cried Buttons, elevating his voice, "in the name of all the blessed saints and apostles, do you mean by coming to us about hotel bills?"

"Signor," said the vetturino, meekly, "when I made that contract I fear I was too sanguine."

"Too sanguine!"

"And I have changed my mind since."

"Indeed?"

"I find that I am a poor man."

"Did you just find that out?"

"And that if I carry out this it will ruin me."

"Well?"

"So you'll have to pay for the hotel expenses yourselves," said Il Piccolo, with desperation.

"I will forgive this insufferable insolence," said Buttons, majestically, "on condition that it never occurs again. Do you see that?" he cried, in louder tones.

And he unfolded the contract, which he had been holding in his hand, and sternly pointed to the big blotch of ink that was supposed to be Il Piccolo's signature.

"_Do you see that_!" he cried, in a voice of thunder.

The Italian did not speak.

"And _that_?" he cried, pointing to the signature of the witness.

The Italian opened his month to speak, but was evidently nonplused.

"You are in my power!" said Buttons, in a fine melodramatic tone, and with a vivacity of gesture that was not without its effect on the Italian. He folded the contract, replaced it in his breast-pocket, and slapped it with fearful emphasis. Every slap seemed to go to the heart of Il Piccolo.



[Illustration: Do You See That?]

"If you dare to try to back out of this agreement I'll have you up before the police. I'll enforce the awful penalty that punishes the non-performance of a solemn engagement. I'll have you arrested by the Royal Guards in the name of His Majesty the King, and cause you to be incarcerated in the lowest dungeons of St. Elmo. Besides, I won't pay you for the ride thus far."

With this last remark Buttons walked to the door, and without another word opened it, and motioned to Il Piccolo to leave. The vetturino departed in silence.

On the following morning he made his appearance as pleasant as though nothing had happened.

The carriage rolled away from Salerno. Broad fields stretched away on every side. Troops of villagers marched forth to their labor. As they went on they saw women working in the fields, and men lolling on the fences.

"Do you call that the stuff for a free country?" cried the Senator, whose whole soul rose up in arms against such a sight. "Air these things men? or can such slaves as these women seem to be give birth to any thing but slaves?"

"Bravo!" cried Buttons.

The Senator was too indignant to say more, and so fell into a fit of musing.

"Dick," said Buttons, after a long pause, "you are as pale as a ghost. I believe you must be beginning to feel the miasma from these plains."

"Oh no," said Dick, dolefully; "something worse."

"What's the matter?"

"Do you remember the eggs we had for dinner last evening?"

"Yes."

"That's what's the matter," said Dick, with a groan. "I can't explain; but this, perhaps, will tell thee all I feel."

He took from his pocket a paper and handed it to Buttons. Around the margin were drawn etchings of countless fantastic figures, illustrating the following lines:

A NIGHTMARE.

"_Gorgons, and hydras, and chimeras dire_."

BY A VICTIM.

Eggs! Eggs!! Eggs!!!

Hard boiled eggs for tea!

And oh! the horrible nightmare dream

They brought to luckless me!

The hippopotamus came;

He sat upon my chest:

The hippopotamus roared "I'll spot him!" as

He trampled upon my breast.

The big iguanodon hunched

And rooted in under me:

The big iguanodon raised by that pan o' done

Overdone eggs for tea.

The ichthyosaurus tried

To roll me up in a ball;

While all the three were grinning at me,

And pounding me, bed and all.

Hip! hip! hurrah!

It was a little black pig,

And a big bull-frog, and a bobtailed dog--

All of them dancing a jig.

And oh, the snakes! the snakes!

And the boa constrictor too!

And the cobra capello--a terrible fellow--

Came to my horrified view.

Snakes and horrible beasts,

Frog, pig, and dog

Hustled me, pushed me, tickled me, crushed me,

Rolled me about like a log.

The little blue devils came on;

They rode on a needle's point;

And the big giraffe, with asthmatic laugh,

And legs all out of joint.

Bats crawled into my ears,

Hopping about in my brain;

And grizzly bears rode up on mares,

And then rode down again.

An antediluvian roared,

In the form of a Brahmin bull;

And a Patagonian squeezed an onion,

Filling my aching eyes full.

The three blue bottles that sat

Upon the historical stones

Sang, "Hey diddle diddle"--two on a fiddle,

The other one on the bones.

"Whoo! whoo! whoo!

Get up, get up, you beauty!

Here come the shaved monkeys, a-ridlng on donkeys,

Fresh from Bobberty Shooty."

They raised me up in the air,

Bed, body, and all,

And carried me soon to the man in the moon,

At the siege of Sebastopol.

Down, down, down,

Round, round, round,

A whirlpool hurled me out of the world,

And on, no bottom I found.

Down, down, down,

Whirl, whirl, whirl,

And the Florentine boar was pacing the shore,

His tail all out of curl.

He smoked my favorite pipe,

He blew a cloud of smoke,

He pulled me out with his porcine snout,

And hugging him, I awoke.

"Why, Dick," cried the Senator, "what precious nonsense!"

"It was intended to be so," said Dick.

"Well, but you might as well put on an idee. It must have some meaning."

"Not a bit of it. It has no meaning; that is, no more than a dream or a nightmare."

The Senator now began to discuss the nature of poetry, but was suddenly interrupted by a shout--

"The Temples!"

The country about Paestum is one of the most beautiful in the world. Between the mountains and the sea lies a luxuriant plain, and in the middle of it is the ruined city. The outlines of walls and remnants of gates are there. Above all rise five ancient edifices. They strolled carelessly around. The marble floors of a good many private houses are yet visible, but the stupendous temples are the chief attractions here; above all, the majestic shrine of Neptune.

It was while standing with head thrown back, eyes and mouth opened wide, and thoughts all taken up with a deep calculation, that the Senator was startled by a sudden noise.

Turning hastily he saw something that made him run with the speed of the wind toward the place where the noise arose. Buttons and Dick were surrounded by a crowd of fierce-looking men, who were making very threatening demonstrations. There were at least fifteen. As the Senator ran up from one direction, so came up Mr. Figgs and the Doctor from another.

"What is this?" cried the Senator, bursting in upon the crowd.

A huge Italian was shaking his fist in Buttons's face, and stamping and gesticulating violently.

"These men say we must pay five piastres each to them for strolling about their ground, and Buttons has told this big fellow that he will give them five kicks each. There'll be some kind of a fight. They belong to the Camorra." Dick said all this in a hurried under-tone.

"Camorry, what's that--brigands?"

"All the same."

"They're not armed, anyhow."

Just at this moment Buttons said something which seemed to sting the Italians to the soul, for with a wild shout they rushed forward. The Doctor drew out his revolver. Instantly Dick snatched it from him, and rushing forward, drove back the foremost. None of them were armed.

"Stand off!" he cried, in Italian. "The fight is between this big fellow and my friend. If any one of you interferes I'll put a bullet through him."

The Italians fell back cursing. Buttons instantly divested himself of his coat, vest, and collar. The Italian waited with a grim smile.

At one end were the Senator, the Doctor, Mr. Figgs; at the other the Italian ruffians. In the middle Buttons and his big antagonist. Near them Dick with his pistol.

The scene that followed had better be described in Dick's own words, as he pencilled them in his memorandum-book, from time to time, keeping a sharp lookout with his pistol also. Afterward the description was retouched:

Great mill at Paestum, between E. BUTTONS, Esq., Gentleman, and Italian party called BEPPO.

1st Round .--Beppo defiant, no attitude at all. Buttons assumed an elegant pose. Beppo made a succession of wild strokes without any aim, which were parried without effort. After which Buttons landed four blows, one on each peeper, one on the smeller, and one on the mug.

First blood for Buttons . Beppo considerably surprised. Rushed furiously at Buttons, arms flying everywhere, struck over Buttons's head. Buttons lightly made obeisance, and then fired a hundred-pounder on Beppo's left auricular, which had the effect of bringing him to the grass. _First knock down for Buttons_.

2nd Round .--Foreign population quite dumbfounded. Americans amused but not excited. One hundred to one on Buttons eagerly offered, but no takers. Beppo jumped to his feet like a wild cat. Eyes encircled with ebon aurioles, olfactory quite demolished. Made a rush at Buttons, who, being a member of the Dodge Club, dodged him, and landed a rattler on the jugular, which again sent foreign party to grass.

3d Round .--Nimble to the scratch. Beppo badly mashed and raving. Buttons unscathed and laughing; Beppo more cautious made a faint attempt to get into Buttons. No go. Tried a little sparing, which was summarily ended by a cannonade from Buttons directly in his countenance.

4th Round .--Foreigners wild. Yelling to their man to go in. Don't understand a single one of the rules of the P.R. Very benighted. Need missionaries. Evinced strong determination to go in themselves, but were checked by attitude of referee, who threatened to blow out brains of first man that interfered. Beppo's face magnified considerably. Appearance not at all prepossessing. Much distressed but furious. Made a bound at Buttons, who calmly, and without any apparent effort, met him with a terrific upper cut, which made the Italian's gigantic frame tremble like a ship under the stroke of a big wave. He tottered, and swung his arms, trying to regain his balance, when another annihilator most cleanly administered by Buttons laid him low. A great tumult rose among the foreigners. Beppo lay panting with no determination to come to the scratch. At the expiration of usual time, opponent not appearing. Buttons was proclaimed victor. Beppo very much mashed. Foreigners very greatly cowed. After waiting a short time Buttons resumed his garments and walked off with his friends.



[Illustration: The Mill At Paestum.]

After the victory the travellers left Paestum on their return.

The road that turns off to Sorrento is the most beautiful in the world. It winds along the shore with innumerable turnings, climbing hills, descending into valleys, twining around precipices. There are scores of the prettiest villages under the sun, ivy-covered ruins, frowning fortresses, lofty towers, and elegant villas.

At last Sorrento smiles out from a valley which is proverbial for beauty, where, within its shelter of hills, neither the hot blast of midsummer nor the cold winds of winter can ever disturb its repose. This is the valley of perpetual spring, where fruits forever grow, and the seasons all blend together, so that the same orchard shows trees in blossom and bearing fruit.

CHAPTER X

ON THE WATER, WHERE BUTTONS SEES A LOST IDEA AND GIVES CHASE TO IT, TOGETHER WITH THE HEART-SICKENING RESULTS THEREOF.

On the following morning Buttons and Dick went a little way out of town, and down the steep cliff toward the shore.

It was a classic spot. Here was no less a place than the cave of Polyphemus, where Homer, at least, may have stood, if Ulysses didn't. And here is the identical stone with which the giant was wont to block up the entrance to his cavern.

The sea rolled before. Away down to the right was Vesuvius, starting from which the eye took in the whole wide sweep of the shore, lined with white cities, with a background of mountains, till the land terminated in bold promontories.

Opposite was the Isle of Capri.

Myriads of white sails flashed across the sea. One of these arrested the attention of Buttons, and so absorbed him that he stared fixedly at it for half an hour without moving.

At length an exclamation burst from him:

"By Jove! It is! It is!"

"What is? What is?"

"The Spaniards!"

"Where?"

"In that boat."

"Ah!" said Dick, coolly, looking at the object pointed out by Buttons.

It was an English sail-boat, with a small cabin and an immense sail. In the stern were a gentleman and two ladies. Buttons was confident that they were the Spaniards.



THE SPANIARDS.

[Illustration: The Spaniards.]

"Well," said Dick, "what's the use of getting so excited about it?"

"Why, I'm going back to Naples by water!"

"Are you? Then I'll go too. Shall we leave the others?"

"Certainly not, if they want to come with us."

Upon inquiry they found that the others had a strong objection to going by sea. Mr. Figgs preferred the ease of the carriage. The Doctor thought the sea air injurious. The Senator had the honesty to confess that he was afraid of seasickness. They would not listen to persuasion, but were all resolutely bent on keeping to the carriage.

Buttons exhibited a feverish haste in searching after a boat. There was but little to choose from among a crowd of odd-looking fishing-boats that crowded the shore. However, they selected the cleanest from among them, and soon the boat, with her broad sail spread, was darting over the sea.

The boat of which they went in pursuit was far away over near the other shore, taking long tacks across the bay. Buttons headed his boat so as to meet the other on its return tack.

It was a magnificent scene. After exhausting every shore view of Naples, there is nothing like taking to the water. Every thing then appears in a new light. The far, winding cities that surround the shore, the white villages, the purple Apennines, the rocky isles, the frowning volcano.

This is what makes Naples supreme in beauty. The peculiar combinations of scenery that are found there make rivalry impossible. For if you find elsewhere an equally beautiful bay, you will not have so liquid an atmosphere; if you have a shore with equal beauty of outline, and equal grace in its long sweep of towering headland and retreating slope, you will not have so deep a purple on the distant hills. Above all, nowhere else on earth has Nature placed in the very centre of so divine a scene the contrasted terrors of the black volcano.

Watching a chase is exciting; but taking part in it is much more so. Buttons had made the most scientific arrangements. He had calculated that at a certain point on the opposite shore the other boat would turn on a new tack, and that if he steered to his boat to a point about half-way over, he would meet them, without appearing to be in pursuit. He accordingly felt so elated at the idea that he burst forth into song.

The other boat at length had passed well over under the shadow of the land. It did not turn. Further and further over, and still it did not change its course. Buttons still kept the course which he had first chosen; but finding that he was getting far out of the way of the other boat, he was forced to turn the head of his boat closer to the wind, and sail slowly, watching the others.

There was an island immediately ahead of the other boat. What was his dismay at seeing it gracefully pass beyond the outer edge of the island, turn behind it, and vanish. He struck the taffrail furiously with his clenched hand. However, there was no help for it; so, changing his course, he steered in a straight line after the other, to where it had disappeared.

Now that the boat was out of sight Dick did not feel himself called on to watch. So he went forward into the bow, and made himself a snug berth, where he laid down; and lighting his pipe, looked dreamily out through a cloud of smoke upon the charming scene. The tossing of the boat and the lazy flapping of the sails had a soothing influence. His nerves owned the lulling power. His eyelids grew heavy and gently descended.

The wind and waves and islands and sea and sky, all mingled together in a confused mass, came before his mind. He was sailing on clouds, and chasing Spanish ladies through the sky. The drifting currents of the air bore them resistlessly along in wide and never-ending curves upward in spiral movements towards the zenith; and then off in ever-increasing speed, with ever-widening gyrations, toward the sunset, where the clouds grew red, and lazaroni grinned from behind--

A sudden bang of the huge sail struck by the wind, a wild creaking of the boom, and a smart dash of spray over the bows and into his face waked him from his slumber. He started up, half blinded, to look around. Buttons sat gazing over the waters with an expression of bitter vexation. They had passed the outer point of the island, and had caught a swift current, a chopping sea, and a brisk breeze. The other boat was nowhere to be seen. Buttons had already headed back again.

"I don't see the other boat," said Dick. Buttons without a word pointed to the left. There she was. She had gone quietly around the island, and had taken the channel between it and the shore. All the time that she had been hidden she was steadily increasing the distance between them.

"There's no help for it," said Dick, "but to keep straight after them."

Buttons did not reply, but leaned back with a sweet expression of patience. The two boats kept on in this way for a long time; but the one in which our friends had embarked was no match at all for the one they were pursuing. At every new tack this fact became more painfully evident. The only hope for Buttons was to regain by his superior nautical skill what he might lose. Those in the other boat had but little skill in sailing. These as length became aware that they were followed, and regarded their pursuers with earnest attention. It did not seem to have any effect.

"They know we are after them at last!" said Dick.

"I wonder if they can recognize us?"

"If they do they have sharp eyes. I'll be hanged if I can recognize them. I don't see how you can."

"Instinct, Dick--instinct!" said Buttons, with animation.

"What's that flashing in their boat?"

"That?" said Buttons. "It's a spy-glass. I didn't notice it before."

"I've seen it for the last half-hour."

"Then they most recognize us. How strange that they don't slacken a little! Perhaps we are not in full view. I will sit a little more out the shade of the sail, so that they can recognize me."

Accordingly Buttons moved out to a more conspicuous place, and Dick allowed himself to be more visible. Again the flashing brass was seen in the boat, and they could plainly perceive that it was passed from one to the other, while each took a long survey.

"They must be able to see us if they have any kind of a glass at all."

"I should think so," said Buttons, dolefully.

"Are you sure they are the Spaniards?"

"Oh! quite."

"Then I must say they might be a little more civil, and not keep us racing after them forever!"

"Oh, I don't know; I suppose they wouldn't like to sail close up to us."

"They needn't sail up to us, but they might give us a chance to hail them."

"I don't think the man they have with them looks like Señor Francia."

"Francia? Is that his name? He certainly looks larger. He is larger."

"Look!"

As Buttons spoke the boat ahead fell rapidly to leeward. The wind had fallen, and a current which they had struck upon bore them away. In the effort to escape from the current the boat headed toward Buttons, and when the wind again arose she continued to sail toward them. As they came nearer Buttons's face exhibited a strange variety of expressions.



[Illustration: A Thousand Pardons!]

They met.

In the other boat sat two English ladies and a tall gentleman, who eyed the two young men fixedly, with a "stony British stare."

"A thousand pardons!" said Buttons, rising and bowing. "I mistook you for some acquaintances."

Whereupon the others smiled in a friendly way, bowed, and said something. A few commonplaces were interchanged, and the boats drifted away out of hearing.

CHAPTER XI

THE SENATOR HAS SUCH A FANCY FOR SEEKING USEFUL INFORMATION!--CURIOUS POSITION OF A WISE, AND WELL-KNOWN, AND DESERVEDLY-POPULAR LEGISLATOR, AND UNDIGNIFIED MODE OF HIS ESCAPE.

It was not much after ten in the morning when Buttons and Dick returned. On reaching the hotel they found Mr. Figgs and the Doctor, who asked them if they had seen the Senator. To which they replied by putting the same question to their questioners.

He had not been seen since they had all been together last. Where was he?

Of course there was no anxiety felt about him, but still they all wished to have him near at hand, as it was about time for them to leave the town. The vetturino was already grumbling, and it required a pretty strong remonstrance from Buttons to silence him.

They had nothing to do but to wait patiently. Mr. Figgs and the Doctor lounged about the sofas. Buttons and Dick strolled about the town. Hearing strains of music as they passed the cathedral, they turned in there to listen to the service. Why there should be service, and full service too, they could not imagine.

"Can it be Sunday, Dick?" said Buttons, gravely.

"Who can tell?" exclaimed Dick, lost in wonder.

The cathedral was a small one, with nave and transept as usual, and in the Italian Gothic style. At the end of the nave stood the high altar, which was now illuminated with wax-candles, while priests officiated before it. At the right extremity of the transept was the organ-loft, a somewhat unusual position; while at the opposite end of the transept was a smaller door. The church was moderately filled. Probably there were as many people there as it ever had. They knelt on the floor with their faces toward the altar, finding the nave somewhat crowded, Buttons and Dick went around to the door at the end of the transept, and entered there. A large space was empty as far as the junction with the nave. Into this the two young men entered, very reverently, and on coming near to the place where the other worshipers were they knelt down in the midst of them.

While looking before him, with his mind full of thoughts called up by the occasion, and while the grand music of one of Mozart's masses was filling his soul, Buttons suddenly felt his arm twitched. He turned. It was Dick.

Buttons was horrified. In the midst of this solemn scene the young man was convulsed with laughter. His features were working, his lips moving, as he tried to whisper something which his laughter prevented him from saying, and tears were in his eyes. At last he stuck his handkerchief in his mouth and bowed down very low, while his whole frame shook. Some of the worshipers near by looked scandalized, others shocked, others angry. Buttons felt vexed. At last Dick raised his face and rolled his eyes toward the organ-loft, and instantly bowed his head again. Buttons looked up mechanically, following the direction of Dick's glance. The next instant he too fell forward, tore his handkerchief out of his pocket, while his whole frame shook with the most painful convulsion of laughter.

And how dreadful is such a convulsion in a solemn place! In a church, amid worshipers; perhaps especially amid worshipers of another creed, for then one is suspected of offering deliberate insult. So it was here. People near saw the two young men, and darted angry looks at them.

Now what was it that had so excited two young men, who were by no means inclined to offer insult to any one, especially in religious matters?

It was this: As they looked up to the organ-loft they saw a figure there.

The organ projected from the wall about six feet; on the left side was the handle worked by the man who blew it, and a space for the choir. On the right was a small narrow space not more than about three feet wide, and it was in this space that they saw the figure which produced such an effect on them.

It was the Senator. He stood there erect, bare-headed of course, with confusion in his face and vexation and bewilderment. The sight of him was enough--the astonishing position of the man, in such a place at such a time. But the Senator was looking eagerly for help. And he had seen them enter, and all his soul was in his eyes, and all his eyes were fixed on those two.

As Dick looked up startled and confounded at the sight, the Senator projected his head as far forward as he dared, frowned, nodded, and then began working his lips violently as certain deaf and dumb people do, who converse by such movements, and can understand what words are said by the shape of the mouth in uttering them. But the effect was to make the Senator look like a man who was making grimaces, to waver, like those in Victor Hugo's "Notre Dame." As such the apparition was so over-powering that neither Buttons nor Dick dared to look up for some time. What made it worse, each was conscious that the other was laughing, so that self-control was all the more difficult. Worse still, each knew that this figure in the organ-loft was watching them with his hungry glance, ready the moment that they looked up to begin his grimaces once more.

"That poor Senator!" thought Buttons; "how did he get there? Oh, how did he get there?"

Yet how could he be rescued? Could he be? No. He must wait till the service should be over.

Meanwhile the young men mustered sufficient courage to look up again, and after a mighty struggle to gaze upon the Senator for a few seconds at a time at least. There he stood, projecting forward his anxious face, making faces as each one looked up.



THE SENATOR.

[Illustration: The Senator.]

Now the people in the immediate vicinity of the two young men had noticed their agitation as has already been stated, and, moreover, they had looked up to see the cause of it. They too saw the Senator. Others again, seeing their neighbors looking up, did the same, until at last all in the transept were staring up at the odd-looking stranger.

As Buttons and Dick looked up, which they could not help doing often, the Senator would repeat his mouthings, and nods, and becks, and looks of entreaty. The consequence was, that the people thought the stranger was making faces at them. Three hundred and forty-seven honest people of Sorrento thus found themselves shamefully insulted in their own church by a barbarous foreigner, probably an Englishman, no doubt a heretic. The other four hundred and thirty-six who knelt in the nave knew nothing about it. They could not see the organ-loft at all. The priests at the high altar could not see it, so that they were uninterrupted in their duties. The singers in the organ-loft saw nothing, for the Senator was concealed from their view. Those therefore who saw him were the people in the transept, who now kept staring fixedly, and with angry eyes, at the man in the loft.

There was no chance of getting him out of that before the service was over, and Buttons saw that there might be a serious tumult when the Senator came down among that wrathful crowd. Every moment made it worse. Those in the nave saw the agitation of those in the transept, and got some idea of the cause.

At last the service was ended; the singers departed, the priests retired, but the congregation remained. Seven hundred and eighty-three human beings waiting to take vengeance on the miscreant who had thrown ridicule on the Holy Father by making faces at the faithful as they knelt in prayer. Already a murmur arose on every side.

"A heretic! A heretic! A blasphemer! He has insulted us!"

Buttons saw that a bold stroke alone could save them. He burst into the midst of the throng followed by Dick.

"Fly!" he cried. "Fly for your lives! _It is a madman_! Fly! Fly!"

A loud cry of terror arose. Instantaneous conviction flashed on the minds of all. A madman! Yes. He could be nothing else.

A panic arose. The people recoiled from before that terrible madman. Buttons sprang up to the loft. He seized the Senator's arm and dragged him down. The people fled in horror. As the Senator emerged he saw seven hundred and eighty-three good people of Sorrento scampering away like the wind across the square in front of the cathedral.

On reaching the hotel he told his story. He had been peering about in search of useful information, and had entered the cathedral. After going through every part he went up into the organ-loft. Just then the singers came. Instead of going out like a man, he dodged them from some absurd cause or other, with a half idea that he would get into trouble for intruding. The longer he stayed the worse it was for him. At last he saw Buttons and Dick enter, and tried to make signals.

"Well," said Buttons, "we had better leave. The Sorrentonians will be around here soon to see the maniac. They will find out all about him, and make us acquainted with Lynch law."

In a quarter of an hour more they were on their way back to Naples.

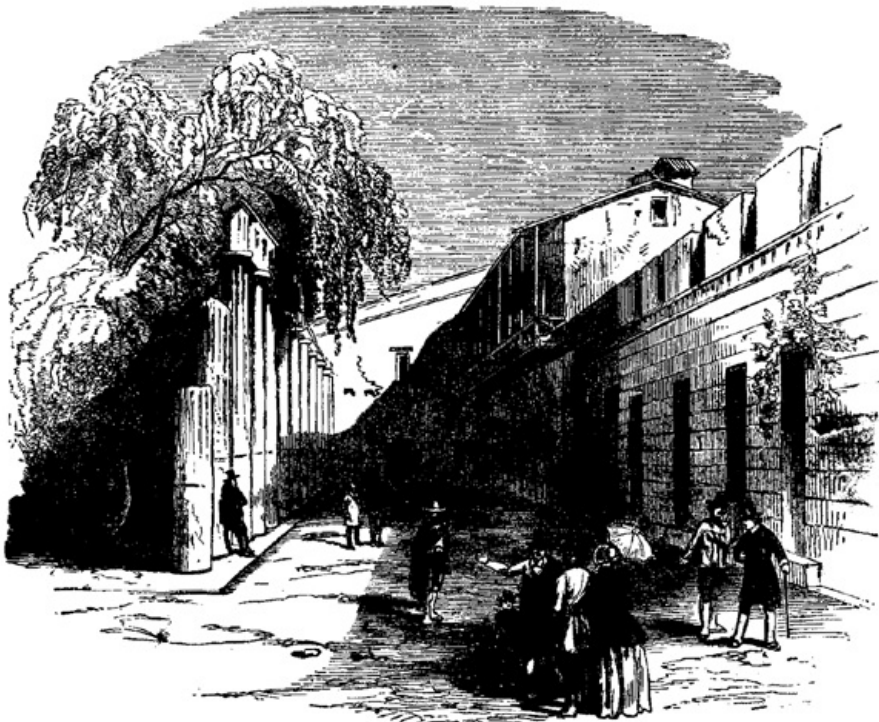
CHAPTER XII

HERCULANEUM AND POMPEII, AND ALL THAT THE SIGHT OF THOSE FAMOUS PLACES PRODUCED ON THE MINDS OF THE DODGE CLUB.

They had already visited Herculaneum, but the only feeling which had been awakened by the sight of that ill-fated city was one of unmitigated disgust. As honesty was the chief characteristic of the whole party, they did not hesitate to express themselves with the utmost freedom on this subject. They hoped for better things from Pompeii. At any rate Pompeii was above ground; what might be there would be visible. No fuss with torches. No humbugging with lanterns. No wandering through long black passages. No mountains bringing forth mice.

Their expectations were encouraged as they walked up the street of Tombs leading to the Herculaneum Gate. Tombs were all around, any quantity, all sizes, little black vaults full of pigeon-holes. These they narrowly examined, and when the guide wasn't looking they filled their pockets with the ashes of the dead.

"Strange," quoth the Senator, musingly, "that these ancient Pompey fellers should pick out this kind of a way of getting buried. This must be the reason why people speak of urns and ashes when they speak of dead people."



VILLA OF DIOMEDES.

[Illustration: Villa Of Diomedes.]

They walked through the Villa of Diomedes. They were somewhat disappointed. From guide-books, and especially from the remarkably well-got-up Pompeian court at Sydenham Palace, Buttons had been led to expect something far grander. But in this, the largest house in the city, what did he find? Mites of rooms, in fact closets, in which even a humble modern would find himself rather crowded. There was scarcely a decent-sized apartment in the whole establishment, as they all indignantly declared. The cellars were more striking. A number of earthen vessels of enormous size were in one corner.

"What are these?" asked the Senator.

"Wine jars."

"What?"

"Wine jars. They didn't use wooden casks."

"The more fools they. Now do you mean to say that wooden casks are not infinitely more convenient than these things that can't stand up without they are leaned against the wall? Pho!"

At one corner the guide stopped, and pointing down, said something.

"What does he say?" asked the Senator.

"He says if you want to know how the Pompeians got choked, stoop down and smell that. Every body who comes here is expected to smell this particular spot, or he can't say that he has seen Pompeii."



PHEW :

[Illustration: Phew!]

So down went the five on their knees, and up again faster than they went down. With one universal shout of: "Phew-w-w-w-h-h-h!"

It was a torrent of sulphurous vapor that they inhaled.

"Now, I suppose," said the Senator, as soon as he could speak, "that that there comes direct in a bee-line through a subterranean tunnel right straight from old Vesuvius."

"Yes, and it was this that suggested the famous scheme for extinguishing the volcano."

"How? What famous scheme?"

"Why, an English stock-broker came here last year, and smelled this place, as every one must do. An idea struck him.

He started up. He ran off without a word. He went straight to London. There he organized a company. They propose to dig a tunnel from the sea to the interior of the mountain. When all is ready they will let in the water. There will be a tremendous hiss. The volcano will belch out steam for about six weeks; but the result will be that the fires will be put out forever."

From the Villa of Diomedes they went to the gate where the guard-house is seen. Buttons told the story of the sentinel who died there on duty, embellishing it with a few new features of an original character.

"Now that may be all very well," said the Senator, "but don't ask me to admire that chap, or the Roman army, or the system. It was all hollow. Why, don't you see the man was a blockhead? He hadn't sense enough to see that when the whole place was going to the dogs, it was no good stopping to guard it. He'd much better have cleared out and saved his precious life for the good of his country. Do you suppose a Yankee would act that way?"

"I should suppose not."

"That man, Sir, was a machine, and nothing more. A soldier must know something else than merely obeying orders."

By this time they had passed through the gate and stood inside. The street opened before them for a considerable distance with houses on each side. Including the sidewalks it might have been almost twelve feet wide. As only the lower part of the walls of the houses was standing, the show that they made was not imposing. There was no splendor in the architecture or the material, for the style of the buildings was extremely simple, and they were made with brick covered with stucco.

After wandering silently through the streets the Senator at length burst forth:

"I say it's an enormous imposition!"

"What?" inquired Buttons, faintly.

"Why, the whole system of Cyclopedias, Panoramas, Books of Travel, Woodbridge's Geography, Sunday-school Books--"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean the descriptions they give of this place. The fellows who write about it get into the heroics, and what with their descriptions, and pictures, and moralizing, you believe it is a second Babylon. It don't seem possible for any of them to tell the truth. Why, there isn't a single decent-sized house in the place. Oh, it's small! it's small!"

"It certainly might be larger."

"I know," continued the Senator, with a majestic wave of his hand--"I know that I'm expected to find this here scene very impressive; but I'll be hanged if I'm satisfied. Why, in the name of Heaven, when they give us pictures of the place, can't they make things of the right size? Why, I've seen a hundred pictures of that gate. They make it look like a triumphant arch; and now that I'm here, durn me if I can't touch the top of it when I stand on tiptoe."

In all his walk the Senator found only one thing that pleased him. This was the celebrated Pompeian institution of a shop under the dwelling-house.

"Whenever I see any signs of any thing like trade among these ancients," said he, "I respect them. And what is more satisfactory than to see a bake-shop or an eating-saloon in the lower story of a palace?"

Their walk was terminated by the theatre and amphitheatre. The sight of these were more satisfactory to the Senator.

"Didn't these fellows come it uncommon strong though in the matter of shows?" he asked, with considerable enthusiasm. "Hey? Why, we haven't got a single travelling circus, menagerie and all, that could come any way near to this. After all, this town might have looked well enough when it was all bran-new and painted up. It might have looked so then; but, by thunder! it looks any thing but that now. What makes me mad is to see every traveller pretend to get into raptures about it now. Raptures be hanged! I ask you, as a sensible man, is there any thing here equal to any town of the same population in Massachusetts?"



A STREET IN POMPEII.

[Illustration: A Street In Pompeii.]

Although the expectations which he had formed were not quite realized, yet Buttons found much to excite interest after the first disappointment had passed away. Dick excited the Senator's disgust by exhibiting those raptures which the latter had condemned.

The Doctor went by the Guide-book altogether, and regulated his emotions accordingly. Having seen the various places enumerated there, he wished no more. As Buttons and Dick wished to stroll further among the houses, the other three waited for them in the amphitheatre, where the Senator beguiled the time by giving his "idee" of an ancient show.

It was the close of day before the party left. At the outer barrier an official politely examined them. The result of the examination was that the party was compelled to disgorge a number of highly interesting souvenirs, consisting of lava, mosaic stones, ashes, plaster, marble chips, pebbles, bricks, a bronze hinge, a piece of bone, a small rag, a stick, etc.

The official apologized with touching politeness: "It was only a form," he said. "Yet we must do it. For look you, Signori," and here he shrugged up his shoulders, rolled his eyes, and puffed out his lips in a way that was possible to none but an Italian, "were it not thus the entire city would be carried away piecemeal!"

CHAPTER XIII

VESUVIUS.--WONDERFUL ASCENT OF THE CONE.--WONDERFUL DESCENT INTO THE CRATER.--AND MOST WONDERFUL DISAPPEARANCE OF MR. FIGGS, AFTER WHOM ALL HIS FRIENDS GO, WITH THEIR LIVES IN THEIR HANDS.--GREAT SENSATION AMONG SPECTATORS.

To every visitor to Naples the most prominent object is Vesuvius. The huge form of the volcano forever stands before him. The long pennon of smoke from its crater forever floats out triumphantly in the air. Not in the landscape only, but in all the picture-shops. In these establishments they really seem to deal in nothing but prints and paintings of Vesuvius.

It was a lovely morning when a carriage, filled with Americans, drew up on an inn near the foot of the mountain. There were guides without number waiting, like beasts of prey, to fall on them; and all the horses of the country--a wonderful lot--an amazing lot--a lean, cranky, raw-boned, ill-fed, wall-eyed, ill-natured, sneaking, ungainly, half-foundered, half-starved lot; afflicted with all the diseases that horse-flesh is heir to. There were no others, so but little time was wasted. All were on an equal footing. To have a preference was out of the question, so they amused themselves with picking out the ugliest.

When the horses were first brought out Mr. Figgs looked uneasy, and made some mysterious remarks about walking. He thought such nags were an imposition. He vowed they could go faster on foot. On foot! The others scouted the idea. Absurd! Perhaps he wasn't used to such beasts. Never mind. He mustn't be proud. Mr. Figgs, however, seemed to have reasons which were strictly private, and announced his intention of walking. But the others would not hear of such a thing. They insisted. They forced him to mount. This Mr. Figgs at length accomplished, though he got up on the wrong side, and nearly pulled his horse over backward by pulling at the curb-rein, shouting all the time, in tones of agony, "Who-a!"

At length they all set out, and, with few interruptions, arrived at a place half-way up the mountain called The Hermitage. Here they rested, and leaving their horses behind, walked on over a barren region to the foot of the cone. All around was the abomination of desolation. Craggy rocks, huge, disjointed masses of shattered lava-blocks, cooled off into the most grotesque shapes, mixed with ashes, scoriae, and pumice-stones. The cone towered frowningly above their heads. Looking up, the aspect was not enticing. A steep slope ran up for an immense distance till it touched the smoky canopy.

On one side it was covered with loose sand, but in other places it was all overlaid with masses of lava fragments. The undertaking seemed prodigious.

The Senator looked up with a weary smile, but did not falter; the Doctor thought they would not be able to get up to the top, and proposed returning; the others declined; whereupon the Doctor slowly sauntered back to the Hermitage. Mr. Figgs, whom the ride had considerably shaken, expressed a desire to ascend but felt doubtful about his wind. Dick assured him that he would find plenty when he got to the top. The guides also came to his relief. Did he want to go? Behold them. They had chairs to carry him up or straps to pull him. Their straps were so made that they could envelop the traveller and allow him to be pulled comfortably up. So Mr. Figgs gracefully resigned himself to the guides, who in a

short time had adjusted their straps, and led him to the foot of the cone.

Now for the ascent.



THE ASCENT OF VESUVIUS.

[Illustration: The Ascent Of Vesuvius.]

Buttons went first. Like a young chamois this youth bounded up, leaping from rock to rock, and steering in a straight line for the summit. Next the Senator, who mounted slowly and perseveringly, as though he had a solemn duty to perform, and was determined to do it thoroughly. Then came Dick. More fitful. A few steps upward: then a rest; then a fresh start; followed by another rest. At length he sat down about one-third of the way up and took a smoke. Behind him Mr. Figgs toiled up, pulled by the panting guides. Three stout men in front--two others boosting from behind.

A long description might be given of this remarkable ascent. How Mr. Figgs aggravated the guides almost beyond endurance by mere force of inertia. Having committed himself to them he did it thoroughly, and not by one single act of exertion did he lessen their labor. They pulled, pushed, and shouted; then they rested; then they rose again to pull, to push, to shout, and to rest as before; then they implored him in the most moving terms to do something to help them, to put one foot before the other, to brace himself firmly--in short, to do any thing.

In vain. Mr. Figgs didn't understand a word. He was unmovable. Then they threatened to drop him and leave him half-way. The threat was disregarded. Mr. Figgs sat on a stone while they rested and smiled benignantly at them. At last, maddened by his impassibility, they screamed at him and at one another with furious gesticulations, and then tearing off the straps, they hurried up the slope, leaving him on the middle of the mount to take care of himself.

It might be told how the Senator toiled up slowly but surely, never stopping till he had gained the summit; or how Buttons, who arrived there first, spent the time in exploring the mysteries of this elevated region; or how Dick stopped every twenty paces to rest and smoke; how he consumed much time and much tobacco; and how he did not gain the summit until twenty minutes after the serene face of the Senator had confronted the terrors of the crater.

Before these three there was a wonderful scene. Below them lay the steep sides of the cone, a waste of hideous ruin--

"Rocks, crags, and mounds confusedly hurled,

The fragments of a ruined world."

Before them was the crater, a vast abyss, the bottom of which was hidden from sight by dense clouds of sulphurous smoke which forever ascended. Far away on the other side rose the opposite wall of abyss-black, rocky cliffs that rose precipitously upward. The side on which they stood sloped down at a steep angle for a few hundred feet, and then went abruptly downward. A mighty wind was blowing and carried all the smoke away to the opposite side of the crater, so that by getting down into the shelter of a rock they were quite comfortable.

The view of the country that lay beneath was superb. There lay Naples with its suburbs, extending for miles along the shore, with Portici, Castellamare, and the vale of Sorrento. There rose the hills of Baiae, the rock of Ischia, and the Isle of Capri. There lay countless vineyards, fields forever green, groves of orange and fig-trees, clusters of palms and cypresses. Mountains ascended all around, with many heights crowned with castles or villages. There lay the glorious Bay of Naples, the type of perfect beauty. Hundreds of white sails dotted the intense blue of its surface. Ships were there at anchor, and in full sail. Over all was a sky such as is seen only in Italy, with a depth of blue, which, when seen in paintings, seems to the inexperienced eye like an exaggeration.

The guides drew their attention from all this beauty to a solid fact. This was the cooking of an egg by merely burying it in the hot sand for a few minutes.

Buttons now proposed to go down into the crater. The guides looked aghast.

"Why not?"

"Impossible, Signor. It's death."

"Death? Nonsense! come along and show us the way."

"The way? There is no way. No one ever dares to go down. Where can we go to? Do you not see that beyond that point where the rock projects it is all a precipice?"

"That point? Well, that is the very spot I wish to go to. Come along."

"Never, Signor."

"Then I'll go."

"Don't. For the sake of Heaven, and in the name of the most Holy Mother, of St. Peter in chains, of all the blessed Apostles and Martyrs, the glorious Saints and--"

"Blessed Botheration," cried Buttons, abruptly turning his back and preparing to descend.

"Are you in earnest, Buttons?" asked Dick. "Are you really going down?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, then I'll go too."

Upon this the others warned, rebuked, threatened, remonstrated, and begged. In vain. The Senator interposed the authority of years and wisdom. But to no purpose. With much anxiety he sat on the edge of the crater, looking for the result and expecting a tragedy.

The slope down which they ventured was covered with loose sand. At each step the treacherous soil slid beneath them. It was a mad and highly reprehensible undertaking. Nevertheless down they went--further and further. The kind heart of the Senator felt a pang at every step. His voice sounded mournfully through the rolling smoke that burst through a million crevices, and at times hid the adventurers from view. But down they went. Sometimes they slid fearfully. Then

they would wait and cautiously look around. Sometimes the vapors covered them with such dense folds that they had to cover their faces.

"If they ain't dashed to pieces they'll be suffocated--sure!" cried the Senator, starting up, and unable to control his feelings. "I can't stand this," he muttered, and he too stepped down.

The guides looked on in horror. "Your blood will be on your own heads!" they cried.

As the Senator descended the smoke entered his eyes, month, and nostrils, making him cough and sneeze fearfully. The sand slid; the heat under the surface pained his feet; every step made it worse. However, he kept on bravely. At length he reached the spot where the others were standing.



THE DESCENT OF VESUVIUS.

[Illustration: The Descent Of Vesuvius.]

At the foot of the declivity was an angular rock which jugged out for about twelve feet. It was about six feet wide. Its sides went down precipitously. The Senator walked painfully to where they were standing. It was a fearful scene. All around arose the sides of the crater, black and rocky, perpendicular on all sides, except the small slope down which

they had just descended--a vast and gloomy circumference. But the most terrific sight lay beneath.

The sides of the crater went sheer down to a great depth enclosing a black abyss which in the first excitement of the scene the startled fancy might well imagine extending to the bowels of the earth from which there came rolling up vast clouds dense black sulphurous which at times completely encircled them shutting out every thing from view filling eyes nose mouth with fumes of brimstone forcing them to hold the tails of their coats or the skirts it's all the same over their faces so as not to be altogether suffocated while again after a while a fierce blast of wind driving downward would hurl the smoke away and dashing it against the other side of the crater gather it up in dense volumes of blackest smoke in thick clouds which rolled up the flinty cliffs and reaching the summit bounded fiercely out into the sky to pass on and be seen from afar as that dread pennant of Vesuvius which is the sign and symbol of its mastery over the earth around it and the inhabitants thereof ever changing and in all its changes watched with awe by fearful men who read in those changes their own fate now taking heart as they see it more tenuous in its consistency anon shuddering as they see it gathering in denser folds and finally awe-stricken and all overcome as they see the thick black cloud rise proudly up to heaven in a long straight column at whose upper termination the colossal pillar spreads itself out and shows to the startled gaze the dread symbol of the cypress tree the herald of earthquakes eruptions and--

--There--I flatter myself that in the way of description it would not be easy to beat the above. I just throw it off as my friend Tit-marsh, poor fellow, once said, to show what I could do if I tried. I have decided not to put punctuation marks there, but rather to let each reader supply them for himself. They are often in the way, particularly to the writer, when he has to stop in the full flow of a description and insert them--

But--

We left our friends down in the crater of Vesuvius. Of course they hurried out as soon as they could, and mounting the treacherous steep they soon regained the summit, where the guides had stood bawling piteously all the time.

Then came the descent. It was not over the lava blocks, but in another place, which was covered with loose sliding sand. Away they started.

Buttons ahead, went with immense strides down the slope. At every step the sliding sand carried him about ten feet further, so that each step was equal to about twenty feet. It was like flying. But it was attended by so many falls that the descent of Buttons and Dick was accomplished as much by sliding and rolling as by walking.

The Senator was more cautious. Having fallen once or twice, he tried to correct this tendency by walking backward. Whenever he found himself falling he would let himself go, and thus, on his hands and knees, would let himself slide for a considerable distance. This plan gave him immense satisfaction.

"It's quite like coasting," said he, after he had reached the bottom; "only it does come a little hard on the trowsers."

On their arrival at the Hermitage to their surprise they saw nothing of Mr. Figgs. The Doctor had been sleeping all the time, but the landlord said he had not been that way. As they knew that the neighborhood of Vesuvius was not always the safest in the world, they all went back at once to search after him.



WHERE'S FIGGS?

[Illustration: Where's Figgs?]

Arriving at the foot of the cone they went everywhere shouting his name. There was no response. They skirted the base of the cone. They walked up to where he had been. They saw nothing. The guides who had thus far been with them now said they had to go. So they received their pay and departed.

"Of all the mean, useless, chicken-hearted dolts that ever I see," said the Senator, "they are the wust!"

But meanwhile there was no Figgs. They began to feel anxious. At last Buttons, who had been up to where Mr. Figgs was left, thought he saw traces of footsteps in the sand that was nearest. He followed these for some time, and at last shouted to the others. The others went to where he was. They saw an Italian with him--an ill-looking, low-browed rascal, with villain stamped on every feature.

"This fellow says he saw a man who answers the description of Figgs go over in that direction," said Buttons, pointing toward the part of the mountain which is furthest from the sea.

"There? What for?"

"I don't know."

"Is there any danger?"

"I think so--Figgs may have had to go--who knows?"

"Well," said the Senator, "we must go after him."

"What arms have you?" said the Doctor. "Don't show it before this rascal."

"I have a bowie-knife," said Buttons.

"So have I," said Dick.

"And I," said the Senator, "am sorry to say that I have nothing at all."

"Well, I suppose we must go," said the Doctor. "My revolver is something. It is a double revolver, of peculiar shape."

Without any other thought they at once prepared to venture into a district that for all they knew might swarm with robbers. They had only one thought, and that was to save Figgs.

"Can this man lead us?" asked Dick.

"He says he can take us along where he saw Figgs go, and perhaps we may see some people who can tell us about him."

"Perhaps we can," said the Senator, grimly.

They then started off with the Italian at their head. The sun was by this time within an hour's distance from the horizon, and they had no time to lose. So they walked rapidly. Soon they entered among hills and rocks of lava, where the desolation of the surrounding country began to be modified by vegetation. It was quite difficult to keep their reckoning, so as to know in what direction they were going, but they kept on nevertheless.

All of them knew that the errand was a dangerous one. All of them knew that it would be better if they were armed. But no one said any thing of the kind. In fact, they felt such confidence in their own pluck and resolution that they had no doubt of success.

At length they came to a place where trees were on each side of the rough path. At an opening here three men stood. Buttons at once accosted them and told his errand. They looked at the Americans with a sinister smile.

"Don't be afraid of us," said Buttons, quietly. "We're armed with revolvers, but we won't hurt you. Just show us where our friend is, for we're afraid he has lost his way."

At this strange salutation the Italians looked puzzled. They looked at their guns, and then at the Americans. Two or three other men came out from the woods at the same time, and stood in their rear. At length as many as ten men stood around them.

"What are you staring at?" said Buttons again. "You needn't look so frightened. Americans only use their revolvers against thieves."

The Doctor at this, apparently by accident, took out his revolver. Standing a little on one side, he fired at a large crow on the top of a tree. The bird fell dead. He then fired five other shots just by way of amusement, laughing all the time with the Senator.

"You see," said he--"ha, ha--we're in a fix--ha, ha--and I want to show them what a revolver is?"

"But you're wasting all your shot."

"Not a bit of it. See?" And saying this he drew a second chamber from his pocket, and taking the first out of the pistol inserted the other. He then fired another shot. All this was the work of a few moments. He then took some cartridges and filled the spare chamber once more.

The Italians looked on this display in great astonishment, exchanging significant glances, particularly when the Doctor changed the chambers. The Americans, on the contrary, took good care to manifest complete indifference. The Italians evidently thought they were all armed like the Doctor. Naturally enough, too, for if not, why should they venture here and talk so loftily to them? So they were puzzled, and in doubt. After a time one who appeared to be their leader stepped aside with two or three of the men, and talked in a low voice, after which he came to Buttons and said:

"Come, then, and we will show you."

"Go on."

The Captain beckoned to his men. Six of them went to the rear. Buttons saw the manoeuvre, and burst into roars of laughter. The Italians looked more puzzled than ever.

"Is that to keep us from getting away?" he cried--"ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Well, well!"

"He's putting a guard behind us. Laugh like fury, boys," said Buttons, in English.

Whereupon they all roared, the tremendous laughter of the Senator coming in with fearful effect.

"There's nothing to laugh at," said the man who appeared to be Captain, very sulkily.

"It's evident that you Italians don't understand late improvements," said Buttons. "But come, hurry on."

The Captain turned and walked ahead sullenly.

"It's all very well to laugh," said the Doctor, in a cheerful tone; "but suppose those devils behind us shoot us."

"I think if they intended to do that the Captain would not walk in front. No, they want to take us alive, and make us pay a heavy ransom."

After this the Club kept up an incessant chatter. They talked over their situation, but could as yet decide upon nothing. It grew dark at length. The sun went down. The usual rapid twilight came on.

"Dick," said the Doctor, "when it gets dark enough I'll give you my pistol, so that you may show off with it as if it were yours."

"All right, my son," said Dick. Shortly after, when it was quite dark, the Doctor slipped the pistol into the side-pocket of Dick's coat. At length a light appeared before them. It was an old ruin which stood upon an eminence. Where they were not a soul of them could tell. Dick declared that he smelt salt water.

The light which they saw came from the broken windows of a dilapidated hall belonging to the building. They went up some crumbling steps, and the Captain gave a peculiar knock at the door. A woman opened it. A bright light streamed out. Dick paused for a moment, and took the Doctor's pistol, from his pocket. He held it up and pretended to arrange the chamber. Then he carelessly put it in his pocket again.

"You haven't bound them?" said the woman who opened the door to the Captain.

"Meaning us, my joy?" said Buttons, in Italian. "Not just yet, I believe, and not for some time. But how do you all do?"

The woman stared hard at Buttons, and then at the Captain. There were eight or ten women here. It was a large hall, the roof still entire, but with the plaster all gone. A bright fire burned at one end. Torches burned around. On a stool near the fire was a familiar form--a portly, well-fed form--with a merry face--a twinkle in his eye--a pipe in his mouth--calmly smoking--apparently quite at home though his feet were tied--in short, Mr. Figgs.

"Figgs, my boy!"

One universal shout and the Club surrounded their companion. In an instant Buttons cut his bonds.

"Bless you--bless you, my children!" cried Figgs. "But how the (Principal of Evil) did you get here? These are brigands. I've just been calculating how heavy a bill I would have to foot."

The brigands saw the release of Figgs, and stood looking gloomily at the singular prisoners, not quite knowing whether they were prisoners or not, not knowing what to do. Each member of the Club took the most comfortable seat he could find near the fire, and began talking vehemently. Suddenly Buttons jumped up.

"A thousand pardons--I really forgot that there were ladies present. Will you not sit here and give us the honor of your company?"

He made a profound bow and looked at several of them. They looked puzzled, then pleased; then they all began to titter.

"Signor makes himself very much at home," said one, at length.

"And where could there be a pleasanter place? This old hall, this jolly old fire, and this delightful company!"

Another bow. The Captain looked very sullen still. He was evidently in deep perplexity.

"Come, cheer up there!" said Buttons. "We won't do you any harm; we won't even complain to the authorities that we found our friend here. Cheer up! Have you any thing to eat, most noble Captain?"

The Captain turned away.

Meanwhile Figgs had told the story of his capture. After resting for a while on the slope he prepared to descend, but seeing sand further away he went over toward it and descended there. Finding it very dangerous or difficult to go down straight he made the descent obliquely, so that when he reached the foot of the cone he was far away from the point at which he had started to make the ascent. Arriving there, he sat down to rest after his exertions. Some men came toward him, but he did not think much about it. Suddenly, before he knew what was up, he found himself a prisoner. He had a weary march, and was just getting comfortable as they came in.



MR. FIGGS.

[Illustration: Mr Figgs.]

As they sat round the fire they found it very comfortable. Like many evenings in Italy, it was damp and quite chilly. They laughed and talked, and appeared to be any thing but captives in a robber's hold. The Captain had been out for some time, and at length returned. He was now very cheerful. He came laughingly up to the fire.

"Well, Signori Americani, what do you think of your accommodation?"

"Delightful! Charming!" cried Buttons and Dick.

"If the ladies would only deign to smile on us--"

"Aha! You are a great man for the ladies," said the Captain.

"Who is not?" said Buttons, sententiously.

After a few pleasant words the Captain left again.

"He has some scheme in his villainous head," said Buttons.

"To drug us," said the Doctor.

"To send for others," said Dick.

"To wait till we sleep, and then fall on us," said Mr. Figgs.

"Well, gentlemen," said the Senator, drawing himself up, "we're more than a match for them. Why, what are these

brigands? Is there a man of them who isn't a poor, miserable, cowardly cuss? Not one. If we are captured by such as these we deserve to be captives all our lives."



THE LADIES.

[Illustration: The Ladies.]

"If we don't get off soon we'll have a good round sum to pay," said Mr. Figgs.

"And that I object to," said Buttons; "for I promised my Governor solemnly that I wouldn't spend more than a certain sum in Europe, and I won't."

"For my part," said the Doctor, "I can't afford it."

"And I would rather use the amount which they would ask in some other way," said Dick.

"That's it, boys! You're plucky. Go in! We'll fix their flints. The American eagle is soaring, gentlemen--let him ascend to the zenith. Go it! But mind now--don't be too hasty. Let's wait for a time to see further developments."

"Richard, my boy, will you occupy the time by singing a hymn?" continued the Senator. "I see a guitar there."

Dick quietly got up, took the guitar, and, tuning it, began to sing. The brigands were still in a state of wonder. The women looked shy. Most of the spectators, however, were grinning at the eccentric Americans. Dick played and sang a great quantity of songs, all of a comic character.

The Italians were fond of music, of course. Dick had a good voice. Most of his songs had choruses, and the whole Club joined in. The Italians admired most the nigger songs. "Oh, Susannah!" was greeted with great applause. So was "Doo-dah;" and the Italians themselves joined energetically in the chorus. But the song that they loved best was "Ole Virginny Shore." This they called for over and over, and as they had quick ears they readily caught the tune; so that, finally, when Dick, at their earnest request, sang it for the seventh time, they whistled the air all through, and joined in with a thundering chorus. The Captain came in at the midst of it, and listened with great delight. After Dick had laid down his instrument he approached the Americans.

"Well, ole hoss," said the Senator, "won't you take an arm-chair?"

"What is it?" said the Captain to Buttons.

"He wants to know if your Excellency will honor him by sitting near him."

The Captain's eye sparkled. Evidently it met his wishes. The Americans saw his delight.

"I should feel honored by sitting beside the illustrious stranger," said he. "It was what I came to ask. And will you allow the rest of these noble gentlemen to sit here and participate in your amusement?"

"The very thing," said Buttons, "which we have been trying to get them to do, but they won't. Now we are as anxious as ever, but still more anxious for the ladies."

"Oh, the ladies!" said the Captain; "they are timid."

Saying this he made a gesture, and five of his men came up. The whole six then sat with the five Americans. The Senator insisted that the Captain should sit by his side. Yet it was singular. Each one of the men still kept his gun. No notice was taken of this, however. The policy of the Americans was to go in for utter jollity. They sat thus:

The Captain.

The Senator.

Bandit Number 1.

Mr. Figgs.

Bandit Number 2.

The Doctor.

Bandit Number 3.

Dick.

Bandit Number 4.

Buttons.

Bandit Number 5.

Five members of the Club. Six bandits. In addition to these, four others stood armed at the door. The women were at a distance.

But the sequel must be left to another chapter.

CHAPTER XIV

MAGNIFICENT ATTITUDE OF THE SENATOR; BRILLIANCY OF BUTTONS; AND PLUCK OF THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CLUB: BY ALL OF WHICH THE GREATEST EFFECTS ARE PRODUCED.

"Boys," said the Senator, assuming a gay tone, "it's evident these rascals have planned this arrangement to attack us; but I've got a plan by which we can turn the tables. Now laugh, all of you." A roar of laughter arose. "I'll tell it in a minute. Whenever I stop, you all laugh, so that they may not think that we are plotting." Another roar of laughter. "Buttons, talk Italian as hard as you can; pretend to translate what I am saying; make up something funny, so as to get

them laughing; but take good care to listen to what I say."

"All right," said Buttons.

"Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!" said the others.

Now the Senator began to divulge his plan, and Buttons began to talk Italian, pretending to translate what the Senator said. To do this required much quickness, and a vivid imagination, with a sense of the ridiculous, and many other qualities too numerous to mention. Fortunately Buttons had all these, or else the Club would not have acted precisely as it did act; and perhaps it might not have been able to move along in the capacity of a Club any longer, in which case it would, of course, have had no further adventures; and then this history would not have been written; and whether the world would have been better off or worse is more than I can say, I'm sure.

[What the Senator said.]

"Boys, look at these devils, one on each side of us. They have arranged some signal, and when it is given they will spring at us. Look sharp for your lives, and be ready to do what I say. Buttons, listen, and when you don't hear look at me, and I'll repeat it."

[_Club_--"Ha! hal ha! ha! ha!"]

[What Buttons said he said.]

"He says, most noble Captain, and gentlemen, that he is desperately hungry; that he can't get what he wants to eat. He generally eats dried snakes, and the supply he brought from the Great American desert is exhausted; he wants more, and will have it."

[Sensation among bandits.]

[What the Senator said.]

"My idea is to turn the tables on these varmints. They put themselves in our power. What they have arranged for themselves will do for us just as well as if we planned it all. In fact, if we had tried we could not have adjusted the present company better."

[_Club_--"Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"]

[What Buttons said he said.]

"He says he wouldn't have come out here to-day, but had a little difficulty just before he joined our party. He was landing from the American ship of war, and on stepping on shore a man trod on his foot, whereupon he put him into the water, and held him there till he was drowned."

[Bandits looking more respectfully.]

[What the Senator said.]

"Listen now, Buttons. We will arrange a signal, and at a certain word we will fall on our neighbors and do with them as they propose doing with us. But first let us arrange carefully about the signal; for every thing depends on that."

[_Club_--"Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"]

[What Buttons said he said.]

"It makes him feel amused, he says, when he thinks how odd that guide looked at him when he made him go down into the crater of Vesuvius; gave him five minutes to say his prayers, and then lifted him up in the air and pitched him down to the bottom. He thinks he is falling still."

[Bandits exchange glances.]

[What the Senator said.]

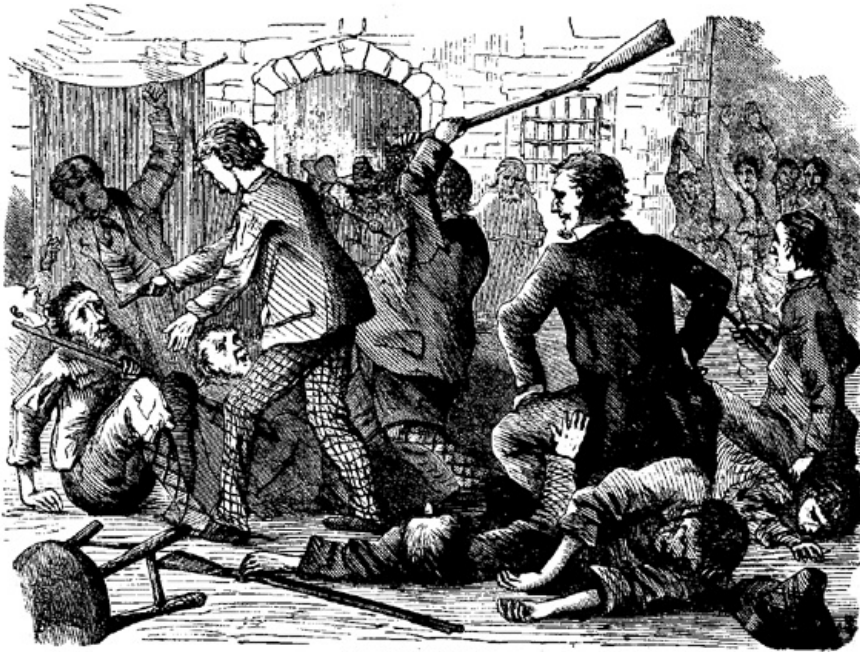
"First, we must keep up our uproar and merriment to as great an extent as we can, but not very long. Let it be wild, mad, boisterous, but short. It will distract these vagabonds, and throw them off their guard. The first thing on the programme, then, is merriment. Laugh as loud and long as you can."

[_ Club _.--"Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"]

[What Buttons said he said.]

"He doesn't know but what he'll have a little trouble about a priest he killed last night. He was in a church, and was walking about whistling, when a priest came up and ordered him out; whereupon he drew his revolver, and put all six of the bullets in the priest's head."

[Bandits cross themselves, and look serious.]



[Illustration: The Bandits Captured.]

[What the Senator said.]

"The next thing is, to have some singing. They seem to like our glorious national songs. Give them some of them. Let the first one be 'Old Virginny.'"

[_Club_--"Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"]

[What Buttons said he said.]

"He heard that the priest was not dead. As he always makes sure work, he intends to look in the morning, and if he's alive, he'll cut his throat, and make all his attendants dance to the tune of 'Old Virginny.'"

Buttons had to work on that word "Old Virginny," for the quick ears of the Italians had caught it. Bandits cross themselves again.

Captain--"I don't believe a word of it. It's impossible."

Bandit No. 6--"He looks like it, any way."

In fact, the Senator did look like it. His hair tinged to an unnatural hue by the sulphur of Vesuvius, his square, determined jaw, his heavy, overhanging brow, marked him as one who was capable of any desperate enterprise.

[What the Senator said.]

"Next and last, Dick, you are to sing 'Yankee Doodle.' You know the words about 'coming to town riding on a pony.' You know that verse ends with an Italian word. I am particular about this, for you might sing the wrong verse. Do you understand, all of you? If so, wink your eyes twice."

[The Club all winked twice. Then, as usual: "Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"]

[What Buttons said he said.]

"He says there is no danger for him, however, for foreigners are in terror of the tune of 'Yankee Doodle.' If he were arrested by the Government, the American Admiral would at once send ashore a file of marines with an 'ultimatum,' a 'Columbiad,' a 'spanker boom,' a 'Webster's Unabridged,' and a 'brachycatalectic,' to demand his surrender at the cannon's mouth."

[Great sensation among the bandits at the formidable arms of American marines.]

[What the Senator said.]

"Look at me. There are six. I will take two; each of you take one--the man on your right, remember. As Dick, in singing, comes to that word, each of you go at your man. Buttons, you hear, of course."

[_Club_--"Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"]

[What Buttons said he said.]

"They think in town that he is the Devil, because he has killed seven men in duels since he came, and has never been wounded. People don't know the great American invention, worn next the skin, which makes the body impervious to bullets."

[_Captain_, sneering--"I don't believe it."]

Bandit No. 3.--"I don't know. They invented the revolver. If only I had one."]

[What the Senator said.]

"Boys, arrange to your minds what to do. Grab the gun, and put your man down backward. I'm almost ashamed of the game, it's so easy. Look at these boobies by me. They are like children. No muscle. The fellows at the end won't dare to shoot for fear of wounding their own man."

[_ Club _.--"Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"]

[What Buttons said he said.]

"He's made up his mind to go and take part in the war in Lombardy. He will raise a band of Americans, all clothed in the great shot-proof shirt, and armed with revolvers like ours, that shoot twelve times, and have bullets like bomb-shells, that burst inside of a man and blow him to pieces."

_ Captain _ , coldly,--"That crow didn't blow up."

_ Buttons _.--"Oh yes it did. It was dark, and you didn't notice. Go get it to-morrow, examine it, and you will find traces of the exploded shell."

_ Bandit No. 4 _.--"Santa Maria! What lies this giant tells his friends! and they all laugh. They don't believe him."

_ Bandit No. 3 _ . "Well, that revolver is enough for me; and they all have them."

The above conversation was all carried on very rapidly, and did not take up much time.

At once the Club proceeded to carry out the Senator's plan. First they talked nonsense, and roared and laughed, and perfected their plan, and thus passed about ten minutes. Then Buttons asked the Italians if they wished more music.

"Answer, gallant Captain of these Kings of the Road. Will you hear our foreign songs?"

"Most gladly," said the gallant Captain. "There will yet be time before we get our supper."

A sinister gleam in his eye as he said this about the supper did not escape the notice of Buttons. Thereupon he handed the guitar to Dick, and the latter began to sing once more the strains of "Ole Virginny." The Italians showed the same delight, and joined in a roaring chorus. Even the men by the door stood yelling or whistling as Dick sang.

Lastly, Dick struck up the final song. The hour had come!

"Yankee Doodle came to town

To buy himself a pony,

Stuck a feather in his hat

And called it--_Maccaroni_!"

As the song began each man had quietly braced himself for one grand effort. At the sound of the last word the effect was tremendous.

The Senator threw his mighty arms round the Captain and the other bandit. They were both small men, as indeed Italians are generally, and beside his colossal frame they were like boys to a grown man. He held them as if a vice, and grasping their hands, twisted them back till their guns fell from their grasp. As he hurled the affrighted ruffians to the floor, the guns crashed on the stone pavement, one of them exploding in its fall. He then by sheer strength jerked the Captain over on his face, and threw the other man on him face downward. This done he sat on them, and turned to see what the others were doing.

Buttons had darted at No. 5 who was on his right, seized his gun and thrown him backward. He was holding him down now while the fellow was roaring for help.

Dick had done about the same thing, but had not yet obtained possession of the gun. He was holding the Doctor's pistol to the bandit's head, and telling him in choice Italian to drop his gun, or he would send him out of the world with twelve bullets.

The Doctor was all right. He was calmly seated on Bandit No. 3, with one hand holding the bandit's gun pointed toward the door, and the other grasping the ruffian's throat in a death like clutch. The man's face was black, and he did not move.

Mr. Figgs had not been so successful. Being fat, he had not been quick enough. He was holding the bandit's gun, and aiming blows at his face.

"Doctor," said the Senator, "your man's all right. Give it to Figgs's man."

The Doctor sprang up, seized Figgs's man by throat, just as he staggered back, and brought him down.

The whole thing had been done in an incredibly short time. The robbers had been taken by complete surprise. In strength they were far inferior to their assailants. Attacked as they were so unexpectedly the success of the Americans was not very wonderful. The uproar was tremendous. The women were most noisy. At first all were paralyzed. Then wild shrieks rang through the hall. They yelled, they shouted, they wrung their hands.

The four bandits at the end of the hall stood for a moment horror-struck. Then they raised their guns. But they dared not fire. They might shoot their own men. Suddenly Dick, who had got the gun which he wished, looked at the door, and seeing the guns levelled he fired the revolver. A loud scream followed. One of the men fell. The women rushed to take care of him. The other three ran off.

"Doctor," said the Senator, "have you a rope? Tie that man's hands behind him."

The Doctor took his handkerchief, twisted it, and tied the man's hands as neatly and as firmly as though they were in handcuffs. He then went to Buttons, got a handkerchief from him, and tied up his man in the same way. Then Dick's man was bound. At that moment a bullet fired through one of the windows grazed the head of Mr. Figgs.

"Dick," said the Senator, "go out and keep guard."

Dick at once obeyed. The women screamed and ran as he came along.

Then the two men whom the Senator had captured were bound. After a while some pieces of rope and leather straps were found by Buttons. With these all the bandits were secured more firmly. The men whom the Senator had captured were almost lifeless from the tremendous weight of his manly form. They made their captives squat down in one corner, while the others possessed themselves of their guns and watched them. The wretches looked frightened out of their wits. They were Neapolitans and peasants, weak, feeble, nerveless.

"It's nothing to boast of," said the Senator, contemptuously, as he looked at the slight figures. "They're a poor lot--small, no muscle, no spirit, no nothing."

The poor wretches now began to whine and cry.

"Oh, Signore," they cried, appealing to Buttons. "Spare our lives!"

At that the whole crowd of women came moaning and screaming.

"Back!" said Buttons.

"Oh, Signori, for the sake of Heaven spare them, spare our husbands!"

"Back, all of you! We won't hurt any one if you all keep quiet."

The women went sobbing back again. The Doctor then went to look at the wounded man by the door. The fellow was trembling and weeping. All Italians weep easily.

The Doctor examined him and found it was only a flesh wound. The women were full of gratitude as the Doctor bound up his arm after probing the wound, and lifted the man on a rude couch. From time to time Dick would look in at the door to see how things were going on. The field was won.

"Well," said the Senator, "the other three have probably run for it. They may bring others back. At any rate we had better hurry off. We are armed now, and can be safe. But what ought we to do with these fellows?"

"Nothing," said Buttons.

"Nothing?"

"No. They probably belong to the 'Camorra,' a sort of legalized brigandage, and if had them all put in prison they would be let out the next day."

"Well, I must say I'd rather not. They're a mean lot, but I don't wish them any harm. Suppose we make them take us out

to the road within sight of the city, and then let them go?"

"Well."

The others all agreed to this.

"We had better start at once then."

"For my part," said Mr. Figgs, "I think we had much better get some thing to eat before we go--"

"Pooh! We can get a good dinner in Naples. We may have the whole country around us if we wait, and though I don't care for myself, yet I wouldn't like to see one of you fall, boys."

So it was decided to go at once. One man still was senseless. He was left to the care of the women after being resuscitated by the Doctor. The Captain and four bandits were taken away.

"Attend," said Buttons, sternly. "You must show us the nearest way to Naples. If you deceive us you die. If you show us our way we may perhaps let you go."

The women all crowded around their husbands, screaming and yelling. In Vain. Buttons told them there was no danger. At last he said--

"You come along too, and make them show us the way. You will then return here with them. The sooner the better. Haste!"

The women gladly assented to this.

Accordingly they all started, each one of the Americans carrying a gun in one hand, and holding the arm of a bandit with the other. The women went ahead of their own accord, eager to put an end to their fears by getting rid of such dangerous guests. After a walk of about half an hour they came to the public road which ran near to the sea.

"I thought I smelt the sea-air," said Dick.

They had gone by the other side of Vesuvius.

"This is the road to Naples, Signori," said the women.

"Ah! And you won't feel safe till you get the men away. Very well, you may go. We can probably take care of ourselves now."

The women poured forth a torrent of thanks and blessings. The men were then allowed to go, and instantly vanished into the darkness. At first it was quite dark, but after a while the moon arose and they walked merrily along, though very hungry.

Before they reached their hotel it was about one o'clock. Buttons and Dick stared there. As they were all sitting over the repast which they forced the landlord to get for them, Dick suddenly struck his hand on the table.

"Sold!" he cried.

"What?"

"They've got our handkerchiefs."

"Handkerchiefs!" cried Mr. Figgs, ruefully, "why, I forgot to get back my purse."



SOLD.

[Illustration: Sold.]

"Your purse! Well, let's go out to-morrow--"

"Pooh! It's no matter. There were only three piastres in it. I keep my circular bill and larger money elsewhere."

"Well they made something of us after all. Three piastres and five handkerchiefs."

The Senator frowned. "I've a precious good mind to go out there to-morrow and make them disgorge," said he. "I'll think it over."

DOLORES ONCE MORE.--A PLEASANT CONVERSATION.--BUTTONS LEARNS MORE OF HIS YOUNG FRIEND.--AFFECTING FAREWELL.

As the Club intended to leave for Rome almost immediately, the two young men in the Strado di San Bartollo were prepared to settle with their landlord.

When Buttons and Dick packed up their modest valises there was a general excitement in the house; and when they called for their little bill it appeared, and the whole family along with it. The landlord presented it with a neat bow. Behind him stood his wife, his left the big dragoon. And on his right Dolores.

Such was the position which the enemy took up.

Buttons took up the paper and glanced at it.

"What is this?"

"Your bill."

"My bill?"

"Yes, Signore."

"Yes," repeated Dolores, waving her little hand at Buttons.

Something menacing appeared in the attitude and tone of Dolores. Had she changed? Had she joined the enemy? What did all this mean?

"What did you say you would ask for this room when I came here?" Buttons at length asked.

"I don't recollect naming any price," said the landlord, evasively.

"I recollect," said Dolores, decidedly. "He didn't name any price at all."

"Good Heavens!" cried Buttons, aghast, and totally unprepared for this on the part of Dolores, though nothing on the part of the landlord could have astonished him. In the brief space of three weeks that worthy had been in the habit of telling him on an average about four hundred and seventy-seven downright lies per day.

"You told me," said Buttons, with admirable calmness, "that it would be two piastres a week."

"Two piastres! Two for both of you! Impossible! You might as well say I was insane."

"Two piastres!" echoed Dolores, in indignant tones--"only think! And for this magnificent apartment! the best in the house--elegantly furnished, and two gentlemen! Why, what is this that he means?"

"Et tu Brute!" sighed Buttons.

"Signore!" said Dolores.

"Didn't he, Dick?"

"He did," said Dick; "of course he did."

"Oh, that uomicciuolo will say any thing," said Dolores, contemptuously snapping her fingers in Dick's face.

"Why, Signore. Look you. How is it possible? Think what accommodations! Gaze upon that bed! Gaze upon that furniture! Contemplate that prospect of the busy street!"

"Why, it's the most wretched room in town," cried Buttons. "I've been ashamed to ask my friends here."

"Ah, wretch!" cried Dolores, with flashing eyes. "You well know that you were never so well lodged at home. This miserable! This a room to be ashamed of! Away, American savage! And your friends, who are they? Do you lodge with the lazaroni?"

"You said that you would charge two piastres. I will pay no more; no, not half a carline. How dare you send me a bill for eighteen piastres? I will pay you six piastres for the three weeks. Your bill for eighteen is a cheat. I throw it away. Behold!"

And Buttons, tearing the paper into twenty fragments, scattered them over the floor.

"Ah!" cried Dolores, standing before him, with her arms folded, and her face all aglow with beautiful anger; "you call it a cheat, do you? You would like, would you not, to run off and pay nothing? That is the custom, I suppose, in America. But you can not do that in this honest country."

"Signore, you may tear up fifty bills, but you must pay," said the landlord, politely.

"If you come to travel you should bring money enough to take you along," said Dolores.

"Then I would not have to take lodgings fit only for a Sorrento beggar," said Buttons, somewhat rudely.

"They are too good for an American beggar," rejoined Dolores, taking a step nearer to him, and slapping her little hands together by way of emphasis.

"Is this the maid," thought Buttons, "that hung so tenderly on my arm at the masquerade? the sweet girl who has charmed so many evenings with her innocent mirth. Is this the fair young creature who--"

"Are you going to pay, or do you think you can keep us waiting forever?" cried the fair young creature, impatiently and sharply.

"No more than six piastres," replied Buttons.

"Be reasonable, Signore. Be reasonable," said the landlord, with a conciliatory smile; "and above all, be calm--be calm. Let us have no contention. I feel that these honorable American gentlemen have no wish but to act justly," and he looked benignantly at his family.

"I wish I could feel the same about these Italians," said Buttons.

"You will soon feel that these Italians are determined to have their due," said Dolores.

"They shall have their due and no more."

"Come, Buttons," said Dick, in Italian, "let us leave this old rascal."

"Old rascal?" hissed Dolores, rushing up toward Dick as though she would tear his eyes out, and stamping her little foot. "Old rascal! Ah, piccolo Di-a-vo-lo!"

"Come," said the landlord; "I have affection for you. I wish to satisfy you. I have always tried to satisfy and please you."

"The ungrateful ones!" said Dolores. "Have we not all been as friendly to them as we never were before? And now they try like vipers to sting us."

"Peace, Dolores," said the landlord, majestically. "Let us all be very friendly. Come, good American gentlemen, let us have peace. What now will you pay?"

"Stop!" cried Dolores. "Do you bargain? Why, they will try and make you take a half a carline for the whole three weeks. I am ashamed of you. I will not consent."



TWO PIASTRES!

[Illustration: Two Piastres!]

"How much will you give?" said the landlord, once more, without heeding his daughter.

"Six piastres," said Buttons.

"Impossible!"

"When I came here I took good care to have it understood. You distinctly said two piastres per week. You may find it very convenient to forget. I find it equally convenient to remember."

"Try--try hard, and perhaps you will remember that we offered to take nothing. Oh yes, nothing--absolutely nothing. Couldn't think of it," said Dolores, with a multitude of ridiculous but extremely pretty gestures, that made the little witch charming even in her rascality.--"Oh yes, nothing"--a shrug of the shoulders --"we felt so honored"--spreading out her hands and bowing.--"A great American!--a noble foreigner!--folding her arms, and strutting up and down.--"Too much happiness!--here her voice assumed a tone of most absurd sarcasm.--"We wanted to entertain them all the rest of our lives for nothing"--a ridiculous grimace--"or perhaps your sweet conversation has been sufficient pay--ha?" and she pointed her little rosy taper finger at Buttons as though she would transfix him.

Buttons sighed. "Dolores!" said he, "I always thought you were my friend. I didn't think that you would turn against me."

"Ah, infamous one! and foolish too! Did you think that I could ever help you to cheat my poor parents? Was this the reason why you sought me? Dishonest one! I am only an innocent girl, but I can understand your villainy."

"I think you understand a great many things," said Buttons, mournfully.

"And to think that one would seek my friendship to save his money!"

Buttons turned away. "Suppose I stayed here three weeks longer, how much would you charge?" he asked the landlord.

That worthy opened his eyes. His face brightened.

"Three weeks longer? Ah--I--Well--Perhaps--"

"Stop!" cried Dolores, placing her hand over her father's mouth--"not a word. Don't you understand? He don't want to stay three minutes longer. He wants to get you into a new bargain, and cheat you."

"Ah!" said the landlord, with a knowing wink. "But, my child, you are really too harsh. You must not mind her, gentlemen. She's only a willful young girl--a spoiled child--a spoiled child."

"Her language is a little strong," said Buttons, "but I don't mind what she says."

"You may deceive my poor, kind, simple, honest, unsuspecting father," said she, "but you can't deceive me."

"Probably not."

"Buttons, hadn't we better go?" said Dick; "squabbling here won't benefit us."

"Well," said Buttons, slowly, and with a lingering look at Dolores.

But as Dolores saw them stoop to take their valises she sprang to the door-way.

"They're going! They're going!" she cried. "And they will rob us. Stop them."

"Signore," said Buttons, "here are six piastres. I leave them on the table. You will get no more. If you give me any trouble I will summon you before the police for conspiracy against a traveller. You can't cheat me. You need not try."

So saying, he quietly placed the six piastres on the table, and advanced toward the door.

"Signore! Signore!" cried the landlord, and he put himself in his way. At a sign from Dolores the big dragoon came also, and put himself behind her.

"You shall not go," she cried. "You shall never pass through this door till you pay."

"Who is going to stop us?" said Buttons.

"My father, and this brave soldier who is armed," said Dolores, in a voice to which she tried to give a terrific emphasis.

"Then I beg leave to say this much," said Buttons; and he looked with blazing eyes full in the face of the "brave soldier." "I am not a 'brave soldier,' and I am not armed; but my friend and I have paid our bills, and we are going through that door. If you dare to lay so much as the weight of your finger on me I'll show you how a man can use his fists."

Now the Continentals have a great and a wholesome dread of the English fist, and consider the American the same flesh and blood. They believe that "le bogues" is a necessary, part of the education of the whole Anglo-Saxon race, careful parents among that people being intent upon three things for their children, to wit:

(1.) To eat _Rosbif_ and _Bifiek_, but especially the former.

(2.) To use certain profane expressions, by which the Continental can always tell the Anglo-Saxon.

(3.) TO STRIKE FROM THE SHOULDER!!!

Consequently, when Buttons, followed by Dick, advanced to the door, the landlord and the "brave soldier" slipped aside, and actually allowed them to pass.

Not so Dolores.

She tried to hound her relatives on; she stormed; she taunted them; she called them cowards; she even went so far as to run after Buttons and seize his valise. Whereupon that young gentleman patiently waited without a word till she let go her hold. He then went on his way.

Arriving at the foot of the stairway he looked back. There was the slender form of the young girl quivering with rage.

"Addio, Dolores!" in the most mournful of voices.

"Scelerato!" was the response, hissed out from the prettiest of lips.

The next morning the Dodge Club left Naples.



THE BRAVE SOLDIER.

[Illustration: The Brave Soldier.]

CHAPTER XVI

DICK RELATES A FAMILY LEGEND.

"Dick," said the Senator, as they rolled over the road, "spin a yarn to beguile the time."

Dick looked modest.

The rest added their entreaties.

"Oh, well," said Dick, "since you're so very urgent it would be unbecoming to refuse. A story? Well, what? I will tell you about my maternal grandfather.

"My maternal grandfather, then, was once out in Hong Kong, and had saved up a little money. As the climate did not agree with him he thought he would come home; and at length an American ship touched there, on board of which he went, and he saw a man in the galley; so my grandfather stepped up to him and asked him:

"'Are you the mate?'

"'No. I'm the man that boils the _mate_,' said the other, who was also an Irishman.

"So he had to go to the cabin, where he found the Captain and mate writing out clearance papers for the custom-house.

"'Say, captain, will you cross the sea to plow the raging main?' asked my grandfather.

"'Oh, the ship it is ready and the wind is fair to plow the raging main!' said the captain. Of course my grandfather at once paid his fare without asking credit, and the amount was three hundred and twenty-seven dollars thirty-nine cents.

"Well, they set sail, and after going ever so many thousand miles, or hundred--I forget which, but it don't matter--a great storm arose, a typhoon or simoon, perhaps both; and after slowly gathering up its energies for the space of twenty-nine days, seven hours, and twenty-three minutes, without counting the seconds, it burst upon them at exactly forty-two minutes past five, on the sixth day of the week. Need I say that day was Friday? Now my grandfather saw all the time how it was going to end; and while the rest were praying and shrieking he had cut the lashings of the ship's long-boat and stayed there all the time, having put on board the nautical instruments, two or three fish-hooks, a gross of lucifer matches, and a sauce-pan. At last the storm struck the ship, as I have stated, and at the first crack away went the vessel to the bottom, leaving my grandfather floating alone on the surface of the ocean.

"My grandfather navigated the long-boat fifty-two days, three hours, and twenty minutes by the ship's chronometer; caught plenty of fish with his fish-hooks; boiled sea-water in his sauce-pan, and boiled all the salt away, making his fire in the bottom of the boat, which is a very good place, for the fire can't burn through without touching the water, which it can't burn; and finding plenty of fuel in the boat, which he gradually dismantled, taking first the thole-pins, then the seats, then the taffrail, and so on. This sort of thing, though, could not last forever, and at last, just in the nick of time, he came across a dead whale.

"It was floating bottom upward, covered with barnacles of very large size indeed; and where his fins projected there were two little coves, one on each side. Into the one on the lee-side he ran his boat, of which there was nothing left but the stem and stern and two side planks.

"My grandfather looked upon the whale as an island. It was a very nice country to one who had been so long in a boat, though a little monotonous. The first thing that he did was to erect the banner of his country, of which he happened to have a copy on his pocket-handkerchief; which he did by putting it at the end of an oar and sticking it in the ground, or the flesh, whichever you please to call it. He then took an observation, and proceeded to make himself a house, which he did by whittling up the remains of the long-boat, and had enough left to make a table, a chair, and a boot-jack. So here he stayed, quite comfortable, for forty-three days and a half, taking observations all the time with great accuracy; and at the end of that time all his house was gone, for he had to cut it up for fuel to cook his meals, and nothing was left but half of the boot-jack and the oar which served to uphold the banner of his country. At the end of this time a ship came up.

"The men of the ship did not know what on earth to make of this appearance on the water, where the American flag was flying. So they bore straight down toward it.

"I see a sight across the sea, hi ho cheerly men!" remarked the captain to the mate, in a confidential manner.

"Methinks it is my own countrie, hi ho cheerly men!" rejoined the other, quietly.

"It rises grandly o'er the brine, hi ho cheerly men!" said the captain.

"And bears aloft our own ensign, hi ho cheerly men!" said the mate.

"As the ship came up my grandfather placed both hands to his mouth in the shape of a speaking-trumpet, and cried out: 'Ship ahoy across the wave, with a way-ay-ay-ay! Storm along!'

"To which the captain of the ship responded through his trumpet: 'Tis I, my messmate bold and brave, with a way-ay-ay-ay! Storm along."

"At this my grandfather inquired; 'What vessel are you gliding on? Pray tell to me its name.'

"And the captain replied: 'Our bark it is a whaler bold, and Jones the captain's name.'

"Thereupon the captain came on board the whale, or on shore, whichever you like--I don't know which, nor does it matter--he came, at any rate. My grandfather shook hands with him and asked him to sit down. But the captain declined, saying he preferred standing.

"Well,' said my grandfather, 'I called on you to see if you would like to buy a whale.'



[Illustration: Buying A Whale.]

"Wa'al, yes, I don't mind. I'm in that line myself.'

"What'll you give for it?'

"What'll you take for it?'

"What'll you give?'

"What'll you take?'

"What'll you give?'

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

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"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"Twenty-five minutes were taken up in the repetition of this question, for neither wished to commit himself.

"Have you had any offers for it yet?" asked Captain Jones at last.

"Wa'al, no; can't say that I have."

"I'll give as much as any body."

"How much?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

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"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"Then my grandfather, after a long deliberation, took the captain by the arm and led him all around, showing him the country, as one may say, enlarging upon the fine points, and doing as all good traders are bound to do when they find themselves face to face with a customer.

"To which the end was:

"Wa'al, what'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"What'll you take?"

"What'll you give?"

"Well," said my grandfather, "I don't know as I care about trading after all. I think I'll wait till the whaling fleet comes along. I've been waiting for them for some time, and they ought to be here soon."

"You're not in the right track," said Captain Jones.

"Yes, I am."

"Excuse me."

"'Ex-cuse me_', said my grandfather. 'I took an observation just before you came in sight, and I am in lat. 47° 22' 20", long. 150° 15' 55".'

"Captain Jones's face fell. My grandfather poked him in the ribs and smiled.

"'I'll tell you what I'll do, as I don't care, after all, about waiting here. It's a little damp, and I'm subject to rheumatics. I'll let you have the whole thing if you give me twenty-five per cent. of the oil after it's barreled, barrels and all.'

"The captain thought for a moment.

"'You drive a close bargain.'

"'Of course.'

"'Well, it'll save a voyage, and that's something.'

"'Something! Bless your heart! ain't that every thing?'

"'Well, I'll agree. Come on board, and we'll make out the papers.'

"So my grandfather went on board, and they made out the papers; and the ship hauled up alongside of the whale, and they went to work cutting, and slashing, and hoisting, and burning, and boiling, and at last, after ever so long a time--I don't remember exactly how long--the oil was all secured, and my grandfather, in a few months afterward, when he landed at Nantucket and made inquiries, sold his share of the oil for three thousand nine hundred and fifty-six dollars fifty-six cents, which he at once invested in business in New Bedford, and started off to Pennsylvania to visit his mother. The old lady didn't know him at all, he was so changed by sun, wind, storm, hardship, sickness, fatigue, want, exposure, and other things of that kind. She looked coldly on him.

"'Who are you?'

"'Don't you know?'

"No.'

"Think.'

"_Have you a strawberry on your arm_?'

"No.'

"Then--you are--_you are_--YOU ARE--my own--my long--lost son!'



THE LONG-LOST SON.

[Illustration: The Long-Lost Son.]

"And she caught him in her arms.

"Here endeth the first part of my grandfather's adventures, but he had many more, good and bad; for he was a remarkable man, though I say it; and if any of you ever want to hear more about him, which I doubt, all you've got to do is to say so. But perhaps it's just as well to let the old gentleman drop, for his adventures were rather strange; but the narration of them is not very profitable, not that I go in for the utilitarian theory of conversation; but I think, on the whole, that, in story-telling, fiction should be preferred to dull facts like these, and so the next time I tell a story I will make one up."

The Club had listened to the story with the gravity which should be manifested toward one who is relating family matters. At its close the Senator prepared to speak. He cleared his throat:

"Ahem! Gentlemen of the Club! our adventures, thus far, have not been altogether contemptible. We have a President and a Secretary; ought we not also to have a Recording Secretary--a Historian?"

"Ay!" said all, very earnestly.

"Who, then, shall it be?"

All looked at Dick.

"I see there is but one feeling among us all," said the Senator. "Yes, Richard, you are the man. Your gift of language, your fancy, your modesty, your fluency--But I spare you. From this time forth you know your duty."

Overcome by this honor, Dick was compelled to bow his thanks in silence and hide his blushing face.

"And now," said Mr. Figgs, eagerly, "I want to hear the Higgins Story."

The Doctor turned frightfully pale. Dick began to fill his pipe. The Senator looked earnestly out of the window. Buttons looked at the ceiling.

"What's the matter?" said Mr. Figgs.

"What?" asked Buttons.

"The Higgins Story?"

The Doctor started to his feet. His excitement was wonderful. He clenched his fist.

"I'll quit! I'm going back. I'll join you at Rome by another route. I'll--"

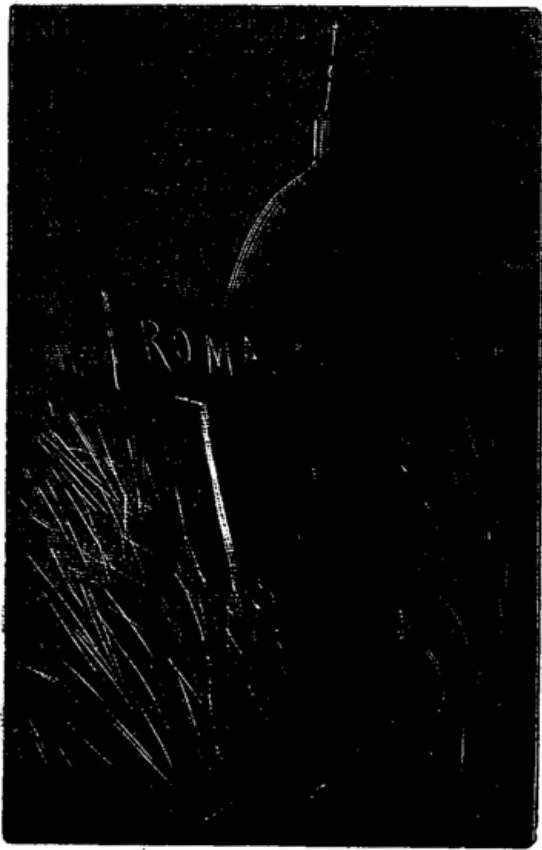
"No, you won't!" said Buttons; "for on a journey like this it would be absurd to begin the Higgins Story."

"Pooh!" said Dick, "it would require nineteen days at least to get through the introductory part."

"When, then, can I hear it?" asked Mr. Figgs, in perplexity.

CHAPTER XVII

NIGHT ON THE ROAD.--THE CLUB ASLEEP.--THEY ENTER ROME.--THOUGHTS ON APPROACHING AND ENTERING
"THE ETERNAL CITY."



TO ROME.

[Illustration: To Rome.]

CHAPTER XVIII

A LETTER BY DICK, AND CRITICISMS OF HIS FRIENDS.

They took lodgings near the Piazza di Spagna. This is the best part of Rome to live in, which every traveller will acknowledge. Among other advantages, it is perhaps the only clean spot in the Capital of Christendom.

Their lodgings were peculiar. Description is quite unnecessary. They were not discovered without toil, and not secured without warfare. Once in possession they had no reason to complain. True, the conveniences of civilized life do not exist there--but who dreams of convenience in Rome?

On the evening of their arrival they were sitting in the Senator's room, which was used as the general rendezvous. Dick was diligently writing.

"Dick," said the Senator, "what are you about?"

"Well," said Dick, "the fact is, I just happened to remember that when I left home the editor of the village paper wished me to write occasionally. I promised, and he at once published the fact in enormous capitals. I never thought of it till this evening, when I happened to find a scrap of the last issue of his paper in my valise. I recollected my promise, and I thought I might as well drop a line."

"Read what you have written."

Dick blushed and hesitated.

"Nonsense! Go ahead, my boy!" said Buttons.

Whereupon Dick cleared his throat and began:

"ROME, May 30, 1859.

MR. EDITOR,--Rome is a subject which is neither uninteresting nor alien to the present age."

"That's a fact, or you wouldn't be here writing it," remarked Buttons.

"In looking over the past, our view is too often hounded by the Middle Ages. We consider that period as the chaos of the modern world, when it lay covered with darkness, until the Reform came and said. 'Let there be light!'"

"Hang it, Dick! be original or be nothing."

"Yet, if the life of the world began anywhere, it was in Rome. Assyria is nothing to me. Egypt is but a spectacle!"

"If you only had enough funds to carry you there you'd change your tune. But go on."

"But Rome arises before me as the parent of the latter time. By her the old battles between Freedom and Despotism were fought long ago, and the forms and principles of Liberty came forth, to pass, amid many vicissitudes, down to a new-born day."

"There! I'm coming to the point now!"

"About time, I imagine. The editor will get into despair."

"There is but one fitting approach to Rome. By any other road the majesty of the Old Capital is lost in the lesser grandeur of the Medieval City. Whoever goes there let him come up from Naples and enter by the Jerusalem Gate."

"Jerusalem fiddlesticks! Why, there's no such gate!"

"There the very spirit of Antiquity sits enthroned to welcome the traveller, and all the solemn Past sheds her influences over his soul--"

"Excuse me; there is a Jerusalem Gate."

"Perhaps so--in Joppa."

"There the Imperial City lies in the sublimity of ruin. It is the Rome of our dreams--the ghost of a dead and buried Empire hovering over its own neglected grave!"

"Dick, it's not fair to work off an old college essay as European correspondence."

"Nothing may be seen but desolation. The waste Campagna stretches its arid surface away to the Alban mountains, uninhabited, and forsaken of man and beast. For the dust and the works and the monuments of millions lie here, mingled in the common corruption of the tomb, and the life of the present age shrinks away in terror. Long lines of lofty aqueducts come slowly down from the Alban hills, but these crumbled stones and broken arches tell a story more eloquent than human voice.

"The walls arise before us, but there is no city beyond. The desolation that reigns in the Campagna has entered here. The palace of the noble, the haunts of pleasure, the resorts of the multitude, the garrison of the soldier, have crumbled to dust, and mingled together in one common ruin. The soil on which we tread, which gives birth to trees, shrubs, and wild flowers without number, is but an assemblage of the disintegrated atoms of stones and mortar that once arose on high in the form of palace, pyramid, or temple."

"Dick, I advise you to write all your letters before you see the places you speak of. You've no idea how eloquent you can be!"

"Now if we pass on in this direction, we soon come to a spot which is the centre of the world--the place where most of all we must look when we search for the source of much that is valuable in our age.

"It is in a rude and a neglected spot. At one end rises a rock crowned with houses; on one side are a few mean edifices, mingled with masses of tottering ruins; on the other a hill formed altogether of crumbled atoms of bricks, mortar, and precious marbles. In the midst are a few rough columns blackened by time and exposure. The soil is deep, and in places there are pits where excavations have been made. Rubbish lies around; bits of straw, and grass, and hay, and decayed leather, and broken bottles, and old bones. A few dirty shepherds pass along, driving lean and miserable sheep. Further up is a cluster of wine-carts, with still more curious horses and drivers.

"What is this place?--what those ruins, these fallen monuments, these hoary arches, these ivy-covered walls? What? This is--

"The field of freedom, faction, fame, and blood;

Here a proud people's passions were exhaled,

From the first hour of Empire in the bud

To that when further worlds to conquer failed;

The Forum where the immortal accents glow,

And still the eloquent air breathes, burns with Cicero!

"Yet if you go up to one of those people and ask this Question, he will answer you and tell you the only name, he knows--
The Cow Market!"

"Is that all?" inquired Buttons, as Dick laid down his paper.

"That's all I've written as yet."

Whereupon Buttons clapped his hands to express applause, and all the others laughingly followed his example.

"Dick," said the Senator, after a pause, "what you have written sounds pretty. But look at the facts. Here you are writing a description of Rome before you've seen any thing of the place at all. All that you have put in that letter is what you have read in books of travel. I mention this not from blame, but merely to show what a wrong principle travellers go on. They don't notice real live facts. Now I've promised the editor of our paper a letter. As soon as I write it I'll read it for you. The style won't be equal to yours. But, if I write, I'll be bound to tell something new. Sentiment," pursued the Senator, thoughtfully, "is playing the dickens with the present age. What we ought to look at is not old ruins or pictures, but men--men--live men. I'd rather visit the cottage of an Italian peasant than any church in the country. I'd rather see the working of the political constitution of this 'ere benighted land than any painting you can show. Horse-shoes before ancient stones, and macaroni before statues, say I! For these little things show me all the life of the people. If I only understood their cursed lingo," said the Senator, with a tinge of regret, "I'd rather stand and hear them talk by the hour, particularly the women, than listen to the pootiest music they can scare up!"

"I tried that game," said Mr. Figgs, ruefully, "in Naples. I went into a broker's shop to change a Napoleon. I thought I'd like to see their financial system. I saw enough of it; for the scoundrel gave me a lot of little bits of coin that only passed for a few cents apiece in Naples, with difficulty at that, and won't pass here at all!"

The Senator laughed. "Well, you shouldn't complain. You lost your Napoleon, but gained experience. You have a new wrinkle. I gained a new wrinkle too when I gave a half-Napoleon, by mistake, to a wretched looking beggar, blind of one eye. I intended to give him a centime."

"Your principle," said Buttons, "does well enough for you as a traveller. But you don't look at all the points of the subject. The point is to write a letter for a newspaper. Now what is the most successful kind of letter? The readers of a family paper are notoriously women and young men, or lads. Older men only look at the advertisements or the news. What do women and lads care for horse-shoes and macaroni? Of course, if one were to write about these things in a humorous style they would take; but, as a general thing, they prefer to read about old ruins, and statues, and cities, and processions. But the best kind of a correspondence is that which deals altogether in adventures. That's what takes the mind! Incidents of travel, fights with ruffians, quarrels with landlords, shipwrecks, robbery, odd scrapes, laughable scenes; and Dick, my boy! when you write again be sure to fill your letter with events of this sort."

"But suppose," suggested Dick, meekly, "that we meet with no ruffians, and there are no adventures to relate?"

"Then use a traveller's privilege and invent them. What was imagination given for if not to use?"

"It will not do--it will not do," said the Senator, decidedly. "You must hold on to facts. Information, not amusement, should be your aim."

"But information is dull by itself. Amusement perhaps is useless. Now how much better to combine the utility of solid information with the lighter graces of amusement, fun, and fancy. Your pill, Doctor, is hard to take, though its effects are good. Coat it with sugar and it's easy."

"What!" exclaimed the Doctor, suddenly starting up. "I'm not asleep! Did you speak to me?"

The Doctor blinked and rubbed his eyes, and wondered what the company were laughing at. In a few minutes, however, he concluded to resume his broken slumber in his bed. He accordingly retired; and the company followed his example.

CHAPTER XIX

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ST. PETER'S!--THE TRAGIC STORY OF THE FAT MAN IN THE BALL.--HOW ANOTHER TRAGEDY NEARLY HAPPENED.--THE WOES OF MEINHERR SCHATT.

Two stately fountains, a colonnade which in spite of faults possesses unequalled majesty, a vast piazza, enclosing many acres, in whose immense area puny man dwindles to a dwarf, and in the distance the unapproachable glories of the greatest of earthly temples--such is the first view of St. Peter's.

Our party of friends entered the lordly vestibule, and lifting the heavy mat that hung over the door-way they passed through. There came a soft air laden with the odor of incense; and strains of music from one of the side chapels came echoing dreamily down one of the side aisles. A glare of sunlight flashed in on polished marbles of a thousand colors that covered pillars, walls, and pavement. The vaulted ceiling blazed with gold. People strolled to and fro without any apparent object. They seemed to be promenading. In different places some peasant women were kneeling.

They walked up the nave. The size of the immense edifice increased with every step. Arriving under the dome they stood looking up with boundless astonishment.

They walked round and round. They saw statues which were masterpieces of genius; sculptures that glowed with immortal beauty; pictures which had consumed a life-time as they grew up beneath the patient toil of the mosaic worker. There were altars containing gems equal to a king's ransom; curious pillars that came down from immemorial ages; lamps that burn forever.

"This," said the Senator, "is about the first place that has really come up to my idee of foreign parts. In fact it goes clean beyond it. I acknowledge its superiority to any thing that America can produce. But what's the good of it all? If this Government really cared for the good of the people it would sell out the hull concern, and devote the proceeds to railways and factories. Then Italy would go ahead as Providence intended."

"My dear Sir, the people of this country would rise and annihilate any Government that dared to touch it."

"Shows how debased they have grown. There's no utility in all this. There couldn't be any really good Gospel preaching here.

"Different people require different modes of worship," said Buttons, sententiously.

"But it's immense," said the Senator, as they stood at the furthest end and looked toward the entrance. "I've been calc'latin' that you could range along this middle aisle about eighteen good-sized Protestant churches, and eighteen more along the side aisles. You could pile them up three tiers high. You could stow away twenty-four more in the cross aisle. After that you could pile up twenty more in the dome. That would make room here for one hundred and fifty-two, good-sized Protestant churches, and room enough would be left to stow away all their spires."

And to show the truth of his calculation he exhibited a piece of paper on which he had pencilled it all.

If the interior is imposing the ascent to the roof is equally so. There is a winding path so arranged that mules can go up carrying loads. Up this they went and reached the roof. Six or seven acres of territory snatched from the air spread around; statues rose from the edge; all around cupolas and pillars rose. In the center the huge dome itself towered on high. There was a long low building filled with people who lived up here. They were workmen whose duty it was to attend to the repairs of the vast structure. Two fountains poured forth a never-ceasing supply of water. It was difficult to conceive that this was a roof of a building.

Entering the base of the central cupola a stairway leads up. There is a door which leads to the interior, where one can walk around a gallery on the inside of the dome and look down. Further up where the arch springs there is another. Finally at the apex of the dome there is a third opening. Looking down through this the sensation is terrific.

Upon the summit of the vast dome stands an edifice of large size, which is called the lantern, and appears insignificant in comparison with the mighty structure beneath. Up this the stairway goes until at length the opening into the ball is reached.

The whole five climbed up into the ball. They found to their surprise that it would hold twice as many more. The Senator reached up his hand. He could not touch the top. They looked through the slits in the side. The view was boundless; the wide Campagna, the purple Apennines, the blue Mediterranean, appeared from different sides.

"I feel," said the Senator, "that the conceit is taken out of me. What is Boston State House to this; or Bunker Hill monument! I used to see pictures of this place in Woodbridge's Geography; but I never had a realizing sense of architecture until now."

"This ball," said Buttons, "has its history, its associations. It has been the scene of suffering. Once a stoutish man came up here. The guides warned him, but to no purpose. He was a willful Englishman. You may see, gentlemen, that the opening is narrow. How the Englishman managed to get up does not appear; but it is certain that when he tried to get down he found it impossible. He tried for hours to squeeze through. No use. Hundreds of people came up to help him. They couldn't. The whole city got into a state of wild excitement. Some of the churches had prayers offered up for him though he was a heretic. At the end of three days he tried again. Fasting and anxiety had come to his relief, and he slipped through without difficulty."

"He must have been a London swell," said Dick.

"I don't believe a word of it," said Mr. Figgs, looking with an expression of horror, first at the opening, and then at his own rotundity. Then springing forward he hurriedly began to descend.

Happy Mr. Figgs! There was no danger for him. But in his eagerness to get down he did not think of looking below to see if the way was clear. And so it happened, that as he descended quickly and with excited haste, he stepped with all his weight upon the hand of a man who was coming up. The stranger shouted. Mr. Figgs jumped. His foot slipped. His hand loosened, and down he fell plump to the bottom. Had he fallen on the floor there is no doubt that he would have sustained severe injury. Fortunately for himself he fell upon the stranger and nearly crushed his life out.

The stranger writhed and rolled till he had got rid of his heavy burden. The two men simultaneously started to their feet. The stranger was a short stout man with an unmistakable German face. He had bright blue eyes, red hair, and a forked red beard. He stared with all his might, stroked his forked red beard piteously, and then ejaculated most gutturally, in tones that seemed to come from his boots--

"Gh-h-h-r-r-r-r-r-acious me!"

Mr. Figgs overwhelmed him with apologies, assured him that it was quite unintentional, hoped that he wasn't hurt, begged his pardon; but the stranger only panted, and still he stroked his forked red beard, and still ejaculated--

"Gh-h-h-r-r-r-r-r-acious me!"

Four heads peered through the opening above; but seeing no accident their owners, one by one, descended, and all with much sympathy asked the stranger if he was much hurt. But the stranger, who seemed quite bewildered, still panted and stroked his beard, and ejaculated--

"Gh-h-h-r-r-r-r-r-acious me!"

At length he seemed to recover his faculties, and discovered that he was not hurt. Upon this he assured Mr. Figgs, in heavy guttural English, that it was nothing. He had often been knocked down before. If Mr. Figgs was a Frenchman, he would feel angry. But as he was an American he was glad to make his acquaintance. He himself had once lived in America, in Cincinnati, where he had edited a German paper. His name was Meinherr Schatt.

Meinherr Schatt showed no further disposition to go up; but descended with the others down as far as the roof, when they went to the front and stood looking down on the piazza. In the course of conversation Meinherr Schatt informed them that he belonged to the Duchy of Saxe Meiningen, that he had been living in Rome about two years, and liked it about as well as any place that he had seen.

He went every autumn to Paris to speculate on the Bourse, and generally made enough to keep him for a year. He was acquainted with all the artists in Rome. Would they like to be introduced to some of them?



[Illustration: Gracious Me!]

Buttons would be most charmed. He would rather become acquainted with artists than with any class of people.

Meinherr Schatt lamented deeply the present state of things arising from the war in Lombardy. A peaceful German traveller was scarcely safe now. Little boys made faces at him in the street, and shouted after him, "Mudedetto Tedescho!"

Just at this moment the eye of Buttons was attracted by a carriage that rolled away from under the front of the cathedral down the piazza. In it were two ladies and a gentleman. Buttons stared eagerly for a few moments, and then gave a jump.

"What's the matter?" cried Dick.

"It is! By Jove! It is!"

"What? Who?"

"I see her face! I'm off!"

"Confound it! Whose face?"

But Buttons gave no answer. He was off like the wind, and before the others could recover from their surprise had vanished down the descent.

"What upon airth has possessed Buttons now?" asked the Senator.

"It must be the Spanish girl," said Dick.

"Again? Hasn't his mad chase at sea given him a lesson? Spanish girl! What is he after? If he wants a girl, why can't he wait and pick out a regular thorough-bred out and outer of Yankee stock? These Spaniards are not the right sort."

In an incredible short space of time the figure of Buttons was seen dashing down the piazza, in the direction which the carriage had taken. But the carriage was far ahead, and even as he left the church it had already crossed the Ponte di S. Angelo. The others then descended. Buttons was not seen till the end of the day.

He then made his appearance with a dejected air.

"What luck?" asked Dick, as he came in.

"None at all," said Buttons, gloomily.

"Wrong ones again?"

"No, indeed. I'm not mistaken this time. But I couldn't catch them. They got out of sight, and kept out too. I've been to every hotel in the place, but couldn't find them. It's too bad."

"Buttons," said the Senator, gravely, "I'm sorry to see a young man like you so infatuated. Beware--Buttons--beware of wimmin! Take the advice of an older and more experienced man. Beware of wimmin. Whenever you see one coming--dodge! It's your only hope. If it hadn't been for wimmin"--and the Senator seemed to speak half to himself, while his face assumed a pensive air--"if it hadn't been for wimmin, I'd been haranguing the Legislatoor now, instead of wearying my bones in this benighted and enslaved country."

CHAPTER XX

THE GLORY, GRANDEUR, BEAUTY, AND INFINITE VARIETY OF THE PINCIAN HILL; NARRATED AND DETAILED NOT COLUMNARILY BUT EXHAUSTIVELY, AND AFTER THE MANNER OF RABELAIS.

Oh, the Pincian Hill!--Does the memory of that place affect all alike? Whether it does or not matters little to the chronicler of this veracious history. To him it is the crown and glory of modern Rome; the centre around which all Rome clusters. Delightful walks! Views without a parallel! Place on earth to which no place else can hold a candle!

Pooh--what's the use of talking? Contemplate, O Reader, from the Pincian Hill the following:

The Tiber, The Campagna, The Aqueducts, Trajan's Column, Antonine's Pillar, The Piazza del Popolo, The Torre del Capitoglio, The Hoar Capitoline, The Palatine, The Quirinal, The Viminal, The Esquiline, The Caelian, The Aventine, The Vatican, The Janiculum, St. Peter's, The Lateran, The Stands for Roast Chestnuts, The New York *Times*, the Hurdy-gurdys, The London *Times*, The Raree-shows, The Obelisk of Mosaic Pharaoh, The Wine-carts, Harper's Weekly, Roman Beggars, Cardinals, Monks, Artists, Nuns, The New York *Tribune*, French soldiers, Swiss Guards, Dutchmen, Mosaic-workers, Plane-trees, Cypress-trees, Irishmen, Propaganda Students, Goats, Fleas, Men from Bosting, Patent Medicines, Swells Lager, Meerschaum-pipes, The New York *Herald*, Crosses, Rustic Seats, Dark-eyed Maids, Babel, Terrapins, Marble Pavements, Spiders, Dreamy Haze, Jews, Cossacks, Hens, All the Past, Rags, The original Barrel-organ, The original Organ-grinder, Bourbon Whisky, Civita Vecchia Olives, Hadrian's Mausoleum, *Harper's Magazine*, The Laurel Shade, Murray's Hand-book, Cicerones, Englishmen, Dogcarts, Youth, Hope, Beauty, Conversation Kenge, Bluebottle Flies, Gnats, *Galignani*, Statues, Peasants, Cockneys, Gas-lamps, Dundreary, Michiganders, Paper-collars, Pavilions, Mosaic Brooches, Little Dogs, Small Boys, Lizards, Snakes, Golden Sunsets, Turks, Purple Hills, Placards, Shin-plasters, Monkeys, Old Boots, Coffee-roasters, Pale Ale, The Dust of Ages, The Ghost of Rome, Ice Cream, Memories, Soda-Water, Harper's Guide-Book.

CHAPTER XXI

HARMONY ON THE PINCIAN HILL.--MUSIC HATH CHARMS.--AMERICAN MELODIES. --THE GLORY, THE POWER,

The Senator loved the Pincian Hill, for there he saw what he loved best; more than ruins, more than churches, more than pictures and statues, more than music. He saw man and human nature.

He had a smile for all; of superiority for the bloated aristocrat; of friendliness for the humble, yet perchance worthy mendicant. He longed every day more and more to be able to talk the language of the people.

On one occasion the Club was walking on the Pincian Hill, when suddenly they were arrested by familiar sounds which came from some place not very far away. It was a barrel-organ; a soft and musical organ; but it was playing "Sweet Home."

"A Yankee tune," said the Senator. "Let us go and patronize domestic manufacture. That is my idee of political economy."

Reaching the spot they saw a pale, intellectual-looking Italian working away at his instrument.

"It's not bad, though that there may not be the highest kind of musical instrument."

"No," said Buttons; "but I wonder that you, an elder of a church, can stand here and listen to it."

"Why, what has the church to do with a barrel-organ?"

"Don't you believe the Bible?"

"Of course," said the Senator, looking mystified.

"Don't you know what it says on the subject?"

"What the Bible says? Why no, of course not. It says nothing."

"I beg your pardon. It says, 'The sound of the grinding is low.' See Ecclesiastes, twelfth, fourth."

The Senator looked mystified, but said nothing. But suddenly the organ-grinder struck up another tune.

"Well, I do declare," cried the Senator, delighted, "if it isn't another domestic melody!"

It was "Independence Day."

"Why, it warms my heart," he said, as a flush spread over his fine countenance.

The organ-grinder received any quantity of baiocchi, which so encouraged him that he tried another--"Old Virginny."

"That's better yet," said the Senator. "But how on airth did this man manage to get hold of these tunes?"

Then came others. They were all American: "Old Folks at Home," "Nelly Ely," "Suwannee Ribber," "Jordan," "Dan Tucker," "Jim Crow."

The Senator was certainly most demonstrative, but all the others were equally affected.

Those native airs; the dashing, the reckless, the roaringly-humorous, the obstreperously jolly--they show one part of the many-sided American character.

Not yet has justice been done to the nigger song. It is not a nigger song. It is an American melody. Leaving out those which have been stolen from Italian Operas, how many there are which are truly American in their extravagance, their broad humor, their glorious and uproarious jollity! The words are trash. The melodies are every thing.

These melodies touched the hearts of the listeners. American life rose before them as they listened.--American life--free, boundless, exuberant, broadly-developing, self-asserting, gaining its characteristics from the boundless extent of its home--a continental life of limitless variety. As mournful as the Scotch; as reckless as the Irish; as solemnly patriotic as the English.

"Listen!" cried the Senator, in wild excitement.

It was "Hail Columbia."

"The Pincian Hill," said the Senator, with deep solemnity, "is glorified from this time forth and for evermore. It has gained a new charm. The Voice of Freedom hath made itself heard!"

The others, though less demonstrative, were no less delighted. Then came another, better yet. "The Star-Spangled Banner."

"There!" cried the Senator, "is our true national anthem--the commemoration of national triumph; the grand upsoaring of the victorious American Eagle as it wings its everlasting flight through the blue empyrean away up to the eternal stars!"

He burst into tears; the others respected his emotion.

Then he wiped his eyes and looked ashamed of himself--quite uselessly--for it is a mistake to suppose that tears are unmanly. Unmanly! The manliest of men may sometimes shed tears out of his very manhood.

At last there arose a magic strain that produced an effect to which the former was nothing. It was "Yankee Doodle!"

The Senator did not speak. He could not find words. He turned his eyes first upon one, and then another of his companions; eyes beaming with joy and triumph--eyes that showed emotion arising straight from a patriot's heart--eyes which seemed to say: Is there any sound on earth or above the earth that can equal this?



OLD VIRGINNY.

[Illustration: Old Virginy.]

Yankee Doodle has never, received justice. It is a tune without words. What are the recognized words? Nonsense unutterable--the sneer of a British officer. But the tune!--ah that is quite another thing!

The tune was from the very first taken to the national heart, and has never ceased to be cherished there. The Republic has grown to be a very different thing from that weak beginning, but its national air is as popular as ever. The people do not merely love it. They glory in it. And yet apologies are sometimes made for it. By whom? By the soulless dilettante. The people know better:--the farmers, the mechanics, the fishermen, the dry-goods clerks, the newsboys, the railway stokers, the butchers, the bakers, the candlestick-makers, the tinkers, the tailors, the soldiers, the sailors. Why? Because this music has a voice of its own, more expressive than words; the language of the soul, which speaks forth in certain melodies which form an utterance of unutterable passion.

The name was perhaps given in ridicule. It was accepted with pride. The air is rash, reckless, gay, triumphant, noisy, boisterous, careless, heedless, rampant, raging, roaring, rattle, brainish, devil-may-care-ish, plague-take-the-hindmost-ish; but! solemn, stern, hopeful, resolute, fierce, menacing, strong, cantankerous (cantankerous is entirely an American idea), bold, daring--

Words fail.

Yankee Doodle has not yet received its Doo!

The Senator had smiled, laughed, sighed, wept, gone through many variations of feeling.

He had thrown baiocchi till his pockets were exhausted, and then handed forth silver. He had shaken hands with all his companions ten times over. They themselves went not quite as far in feeling as he, but yet to a certain extent they went in.

And yet Americans are thought to be practical, and not ideal. Yet here was a true American who was intoxicated--drunk! By what? By sound, notes, harmony. By music!

"Buttons," said he, as the music ceased and the Italian prepared to make his bow and quit the scene, "I must make that gentleman's acquaintance."

Buttons walked up to the organ-grinder.

"Be my interpreter," said the Senator. "Introduce me."

"What's your name?" asked Buttons.

"Maffeo Cloto."

"From where?"

"Urbino."

"Were you ever in America?"

"No, Signore."

"What does he say?" asked the Senator, impatiently.

"He says his name is Mr. Cloto, and he was never in America."

"How did you get these tunes?"

"Out of my organ," said the Italian, grinning.

"Of course; but how did you happen to get an organ with such tunes?"

"I bought it."

"Oh yes; but how did you happen to buy one with these tunes?"

"For you illustrious American Signore. You all like to hear them."

"Do you know any thing about the tunes?"

"Signore?"

"Do you know what the words are?"

"Oh no. I am an Italian."

"I suppose you make money out of them."

"I make more in a day with these than I could in a week with other tunes."

"You lay up money, I suppose."

"Oh yes. In two years I will retire and let my younger brother play here."

"These tunes?"

"Yes, Signore."

"To Americans?"

"Yes, Signore."

"What is it all?" asked the Senator.

"He says that he finds he makes money by playing American tunes to Americans."

"Hm," said the Senator, with some displeasure; "and he has no soul then to see the--the beauty, the sentiment, the grandeur of his vocation!"

"Not a bit--he only goes in for money."

The Senator turned away in disgust. "Yankee Doodle," he murmured, "ought of itself to have a refining and converting influence on the European mind; but it is too debased--yes--yes--too debased."

HOW A BARGAIN IS MADE.--THE WILES OF THE ITALIAN TRADESMAN.--THE NAKED SULKY BEGGAR, AND THE JOVIAL WELL-CLAD BEGGAR.--WHO IS THE KING OF BEGGARS?

"What are you thinking about, Buttons?"

"Well, Dick, to tell the truth, I have been thinking that if I do find the Spaniards they won't have reason to be particularly proud of me as a companion. Look at me."

"I look, and to be frank, my dear boy, I must say that you look more shabby-genteel than otherwise."

"That's the result of travelling on one suit of clothes--without considering fighting. I give up my theory."

"Give it up, then, and come out as a butterfly."

"Friend of my soul, the die is cast. Come forth with me and seek a clothing-store."

It was not difficult to find one. They entered the first one that they saw. The polite Roman overwhelmed them with attention.

"Show me a coat, Signore."

Signore sprang nimbly at the shelves and brought down every coat in his store. Buttons picked out one that suited his fancy, and tried it on.

"What is the price?"

With a profusion of explanation and description the Roman informed him: "Forty piastres."

"I'll give you twelve," said Buttons, quietly.

The Italian smiled, put his head on one side, drew down the corners of his mouth, and threw up his shoulders. This is the shrug. The shrug requires special attention. The shrug is a gesture used by the Latin race for expressing a multitude of things, both objectively and subjectively. It is a language of itself. It is, as circumstances require, a noun, adverb, pronoun, verb, adjective, preposition, interjection, conjunction. Yet it does not supersede the spoken language. It comes in rather when spoken words are useless, to convey intensity of meaning or delicacy. It is not taught, but it is learned.

The coarser, or at least blunter, Teutonic race have not cordially adopted this mode of human intercommunication. The advantage of the shrug is that in one slight gesture it contains an amount of meaning which otherwise would require many words. A good shrugger in Italy is admired, just as a good conversationist is in England, or a good stump orator in America. When the merchant shrugged, Buttons understood him and said:

"You refuse? Then I go. Behold me!"

"Ah, Signore, how can you thus endeavor to take advantage of the necessities of the poor?"

"Signore, I must buy according to my ability."

The Italian laughed long and quietly. The idea of an Englishman or American not having much money was an exquisite piece of humor.

"Go not, Signore. Wait a little. Let me unfold more garments. Behold this, and this. You shall have many of my goods for twelve piastres."



THE SHRUG.

[Illustration: The Shrug.]

"No, Signore; I must have this, or I will have none."

"You are very hard, Signore. Think of my necessities. Think of the pressure of this present war, which we poor miserable tradesmen feel most of all."

"Then addio, Signore; I must depart."

They went out and walked six paces.

"P-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-t!" (Another little idea of the Latin race. It is a much more penetrating sound than a loud Hallo! Ladies can use it. Children too. This would be worth importing to America.)

"P-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-t!"

Buttons and Dick turned. The Italian stood smiling and bowing and beckoning.

"Take it for twenty-four piastres."

"No, Signore; I can only pay twelve."

With a gesture of ruffled dignity the shopkeeper withdrew. Again they turned away. They had scarcely gone ten paces before the shop-keeper was after them:

"A thousand pardons. But I have concluded to take twenty."

"No; twelve, and no more."

"But think, Signore; only think."

"I do think, my friend; I do think."

"Say eighteen."

"No, Signore."

"Seventeen."

"Twelve."

"Here. Come back with me."

They obeyed. The Italian folded the coat neatly, tied it carefully, stroked the parcel tenderly, and with a meek yet sad smile handed it to Buttons.

"There--only sixteen piastres."

Buttons had taken out his purse. At this he hurriedly replaced it, with an air of vexation.

"I can only give twelve."

"Oh, Signore, be generous. Think of my struggles, my expenses, my family. You will not force me to lose."

"I would scorn to force you to any thing, and therefore I will depart."

"Stop, Signore," cried the Italian, detaining them at the door. "I consent. You may take it for fourteen."

"For Heaven's sake, Buttons, take it," said Dick, whose patience was now completely exhausted. "Take it."

"Twelve," said Buttons.

"Let me pay the extra two dollars, for my own peace of mind," said Dick.

"Nonsense, Dick. It's the principle of the thing. As a member of the Dodge Club, too, I could not give more."

"Thirteen, good Signore mine," said the Italian piteously.

"My friend, I have given my word that I would pay only twelve."

"Your word? Your pardon, but to whom?"

"To you."

"Oh, then, how gladly I release you from your word!"

"Twelve, Signore, or I go."

"I can not."

Buttons turned away. They walked along the street, and at length arrived at another clothier's. Just as they stepped in a hand was laid on Buttons's shoulder, and a voice cried out--

"Take it! Take it, Signore!"

"Ah! I thought so. Twelve?"

"Twelve."

Buttons paid the money and directed where it should be sent. He found out afterward that the price which an Italian gentleman would pay was about ten piastres.

There is no greater wonder than the patient waiting of an Italian tradesman, in pursuit of a bargain. The flexibility of the Italian conscience and imagination under such circumstances is truly astonishing.

Dress makes a difference. The very expression of the face changes when one has passed from shabbiness into elegance. After Buttons had dressed himself in his gay attire his next thought was what to do with his old clothes.

"Come and let us dispose of them."

"Dispose of them!"

"Oh, I mean get rid of them. I saw a man crouching in a corner nearly naked as I came up. Let us go and see if we can find him. I'd like to try the effect."

They went to the place where the man had been seen. He was there still. A young man, in excellent health, brown, muscular, lithe. He had an old coverlet around his loins--that was all. He looked up sulkily.

"Are you not cold?"

"No," he blurted out, and turned away.

"A boor," said Dick. "Don't throw away your charity on him."

"Look here."

The man looked up lazily.

"Do you want some clothes?"

No reply.

"I've got some here, and perhaps will give them to you."

The man scrambled to his feet.

"Confound the fellow!" said Dick. "If he don't want them let's find some one who does."

"Look here," said Buttons.

He unfolded his parcel. The fellow looked indifferently at the things.

"Here, take this," and he offered the pantaloons.

The Italian took them and slowly put them on. This done, he stretched himself and yawned.

"Take this."

It was his vest.

The man took the vest and put it on with equal *_sang froid_*. Again he yawned and stretched himself.

"Here's a coat."

Buttons held it out to the Italian. The fellow took it, surveyed it closely, felt in the pockets, and examined very critically the stiffening of the collar. Finally he put it on. He buttoned it closely around him, and passed his fingers through his matted hair. Then he felt the pockets once more. After which he yawned long and solemnly. This done, he looked earnestly at Buttons and Dick. He saw that they had nothing more. Upon which he turned on his heel, and without saying a word, good or bad, walked off with immense strides, turned a corner, and was out of sight. The two philanthropists were left staring at one another. At last they laughed.

"That man is an original," said Dick.

"Yes, and there is another," said Buttons.

As he spoke he pointed to the flight of stone steps that goes up from the Piazza di Spagna. Dick looked up. There sat The Beggar!

ANTONIO!

Legless, hatless, but not by any means penniless, king of Roman beggars, with a European reputation, unequalled, in his own profession--there sat the most scientific beggar that the world has ever seen.

He had watched the recent proceedings, and caught the glance of the young men.

As they looked up his voice came clear and sonorous through the air:

"O most generous--O most noble--O most illustrious youths--Draw near --Look in pity upon the abject--Behold legless, armless, helpless, the beggar Antonio forsaken of Heaven--For the love of the Virgin--For the sake of the saints--In the name of humanity--Date me uno mezzo baioccho--Sono poooooovero--Miseraaaaaaaabile--Desperrrraaaaaado!"

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MANIFOLD LIFE OF THE CAFÉ NUOVO, AND HOW THEY RECEIVED THE NEWS ABOUT MAGENTA.--
EXCITEMENT.--ENTHUSIASM.--TEARS.--EMBRACES.

All modern Rome lives in the Café Nuovo. It was once a palace. Lofty ceilings, glittering walls, marble pavements, countless tables, luxurious couches, immense mirrors, all dazzle the eye. The hubbub is immense, the confusion overpowering.

The European mode of life is not bad. Lodgings in roomy apartments, where one sleeps and attends to one's private affairs; meals altogether at the café. There one invites one's friends. No delay with dinner; no badly-cooked dishes; no stale or sour bread; no timid, overworn wife trembling for the result of new experiments in housekeeping. On the contrary, one has: prompt meals; exquisite food; delicious bread; polite waiters; and happy wife, with plenty of leisure at home to improve mind and adorn body.

The first visit which the Club paid to the Café Nuovo was an eventful one. News had just been received of the great strife at Magenta. Every one was wild. The two Galignani's had been appropriated by two Italians, who were surrounded by forty-seven frenzied Englishmen, all eager to get hold of the papers. The Italians obligingly tried to read the news. The wretched mangle which they made of the language, the impatience, the excitement, and the perplexity of the audience, combined with the splendid self-complacency of the readers, formed a striking scene.

The Italians gathered in a vast crowd in one of the billiard-rooms, where one of their number, mounted on a table, was reading with terrific volubility, and still more terrific gesticulations, a private letter from a friend at Milan.

"Bravo!" cried all present.

In pronouncing which word the Italians rolled the "r" so tumultuously that the only audible sound was--

B-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-f-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-ah! Like the letter B in a railway train.

The best of all was to see the French. They were packed in a dense mass at the furthest extremity of the Grand Saloon. Every one was talking. Every one was describing to his neighbor the minute particulars of the tremendous contest. Old soldiers, hoarse with excitement, emulated the volubility of younger ones. A thousand arms waved energetically in the air. Every one was too much interested in his own description to heed his neighbor. They were all talkers, no listeners.

A few Germans were there, but they sat forsaken and neglected. Even the waiters forsook them. So they smoked the cigars of sweet and bitter fancy, occasionally conversing in thick gutturals. It was evident that they considered the present occasion as a combined crow of the whole Latin race over the German. So they looked on with impassive faces.



NEWS OF MAGENTA!

[Illustration: News Of Magenta!]

Perhaps the most stolid of all was Meinheer Schatt, who smoked and sipped coffee alternately, stopping after each sip to look around with mild surprise, to stroke his forked beard, and to ejaculate--

"Gr-r-r-r-r-acious me!"

Him the Senator saw and accosted, who, making room for the Senator, conversed with much animation. After a time the others took seats near them, and formed a neutral party. At this moment a small-sized gentleman with black twinkling eyes came rushing past, and burst into the thick of the crowd of Frenchmen. At the sight of him Buttons leaped up, and cried:

"There's Francia! I'll catch him now!"

Francia shouted a few words which set the Frenchmen wild.

"The Allies have entered Milan! A dispatch has just arrived!"

There burst a shrill yell of triumph from the insane Frenchmen. There was a wild rushing to and fro, and the crowd swayed backward and forward. The Italians came pouring in from the other room. One word was sufficient to tell them all. It was a great sight to see. On each individual the news produced a different effect. Some stood still as though petrified; others flung up their arms and yelled; others cheered; others upset tables, not knowing what they were doing; others threw themselves into one another's arms, and embraced and kissed; others wept for joy:--these last were Milanese.

Buttons was trying to find Francia. The rush of the excited crowd bore him away, and his efforts were fruitless. In fact, when he arrived at the place where that gentleman had been, he was gone. The Germans began to look more uncomfortable than ever. At length Meinheer Schatt proposed that they should all go in a body to the Café Scacchi. So they all left.

CHECKMATE!

The Café Scacchi, as its name implies, is devoted to chess. Germans patronize it to a great extent. Politics do not enter into the precincts sacred to Caissa.

After they had been seated about an hour Buttons entered. He had not been able to find Francia. To divert his melancholy he proposed that Meinheer Schatt should play a game of chess with the Senator. Now, chess was the Senator's hobby. He claimed to be the best player in his State. With a patronizing smile he consented to play with a tyro like Meinheer Schatt. At the end of one game Meinheer Schatt stroked his beard and meekly said--

"Gr-r-r-acious me!"

The Senator frowned and bit his lips. He was checkmated.

Another game. Meinheer Schatt played in a calm, and some might say a stupid, manner.

"Gr-r-r-acious me!"

It was a drawn game.

Another: this was a very long game. The Senator played laboriously. It was no use. Slowly and steadily Meinheer Schatt won the game.

When he uttered his usual exclamation the Senator felt strongly inclined to throw the board at his head. However, he restrained himself, and they commenced another game. Much to delight the Senator beat. He now began to explain to Buttons exactly why it was that he had not beaten before.

Another game followed. The Senator lost woefully. His defeat was in fact disgraceful. When Meinheer Schatt said the ominous word the Senator rose, and was so overcome with vexation he had not the courtesy to say Good-night.

As they passed out Meinheer Schatt was seen staring after them with his large blue eyes, stroking his beard, and whispering to himself--

"Gr-r-r-acious me!"



[Illustration: Before And After.]

CHAPTER XXV

BUTTONS A MAN OF ONE IDEA.--DICK AND HIS MEASURING TAPE.--DARK EYES. --SUSCEPTIBLE HEART.--YOUNG MAIDEN WHO LIVES OUT OF TOWN.--GRAND COLLISION OF TWO ABSTRACTED LOVERS IN THE PUBLIC STREETS.

Too much blame can not be given to Buttons for his behavior at this period. He acted as though the whole motive of his existence was to find the Francias. To this he devoted his days, and of this he dreamed at night. He deserted his friends. Left to themselves, without his moral influence to keep them together and give aim to their efforts, each one followed his own inclination.

Mr. Figgs spent the whole of his time in the Café Nuovo, drawing out plans of dinners for each successive day. The Doctor, after sleeping till noon, lounged on the Pincian Hill till evening, when he joined Mr. Figgs at dinner. The Senator explored every nook and corner of Rome. At first Dick accompanied him, but gradually they diverged from one another in different paths. The Senator visited every place in the city, peered into dirty houses, examined pavements, investigated fountains, stared hard at the beggars, and looked curiously at the Swiss Guard in the Pope's Palace. He soon became known to the lower classes, who recognized with a grin the tall foreigner that shouted queer foreign words and made funny gestures.

Dick lived among churches, palaces, and ruins. Tired at length of wandering, he attached himself to some artists, in whose studios he passed the greater part of his afternoons. He became personally acquainted with nearly every member of the fraternity, to whom he endeared himself by the excellence of his tobacco, and his great capacity for listening. Your talkative people bore artists more than any others.

"What a lovely girl! What a look she gave!"

Such was the thought that burst upon the soul of Dick, after a little visit to a little church that goes by the name of Saint Somebody *_ai quattri fontani_*. He had visited it simply because he had heard that its dimensions exactly correspond with those of each of the chief piers that support the dome of Saint Peter's. As he wished to be accurate, he had taken a tape-line, and began stretching it from the altar to the door. The astonished priests at first stood paralyzed by his sacrilegious impudence, but finally, after a consultation, they came to him and ordered him to be gone. Dick looked up with mild wonder. They indignantly repeated the order.

Dick was extremely sorry that he had given offense. Wouldn't they overlook it? He was a stranger, and did not know that they would be unwilling. However, since he had begun, he supposed they would kindly permit him to finish.

--"They would kindly do no such thing," remarked one of the priests, brusquely. "Was their church a common stable or a wine-shop that he should presume to molest them at their services? If he had no religion, could he not have courtesy; or, if he had no faith himself, could he not respect the faith of others?"

Dick felt abashed. The eyes of all the worshipers were on him, and it was while rolling up his tape that his eyes met the glance of a beautiful Italian girl, who was kneeling opposite. The noise had disturbed her devotions, and she had turned to see what it was. It was a thrilling glance from deep black lustrous orbs, in which there was a soft and melting languor which he could not resist. He went out dazzled, and so completely bewildered that he did not think of waiting. After he had gone a few blocks he hurried back. She had gone. However, the impression of her face remained.

He went so often to the little church that the priests noticed him; but finding that he was quiet and orderly they were not offended. One of them seemed to think that his rebuke had awakened the young foreigner to a sense of higher things; so he one day accosted him with much politeness. The priest delicately brought forward the claims of religion. Dick listened meekly. At length he asked the priest if he recollected a certain young girl with beautiful face, wonderful eyes, and marvellous appearance that was worshipping there on the day that he came to measure the church.

"Yes," said the priest, coldly.

Could he tell her name and where she lived?

"Sir," said the priest, "I had hoped that you came here from a higher motive. It will do you no good to know, and I therefore decline telling you."

Dick begged most humbly, but the priest was inexorable. At last Dick remembered having heard that an Italian was constitutionally unable to resist a bribe. He thought he might try. True, the priest was a gentleman; but perhaps an Italian gentleman was different from an English or American; so he put his hand in his pocket and blushing violently, brought forth a gold piece of about twenty dollars value. He held it out. The priest stared at him with a look that was appalling.

"If you know--" faltered Dick--"any one--of course I don't mean yourself--far from it--but--that is--"

"Sir," cried the priest, "who are you? Are there no bounds to your impudence? Have you come to insult me because I am a priest, and therefore can not revenge myself? Away!"

The priest choked with rage. Dick walked out. Bitterly he cursed his wretched stupidity that had led him to this. His very ears tingled with shame as he saw the full extent of the insult that he had offered to a priest and a gentleman. He concluded to leave Rome at once.

But at the very moment when he had made this desperate resolve he saw some one coming. A sharp thrill went through his heart.

It was SHE! She looked at him and glanced modestly away. Dick at once walked up to her.

"Signorina," said he, not thinking what a serious thing it was to address an Italian maiden in the streets. But this one did not resent it. She looked up and smiled. "What a smile!" thought Dick.

"Signorina," he said again, and then stopped, not knowing what to say. His voice was very tremulous, and the expression of his face tender and beseeching. His eyes told all.

"Signore," said the girl, with a sweet smile. The smile encouraged Dick.

"Ehem--I have lost my way. I--I--could you tell me how I could get to Piazza del Popolo? I think I might find my way home from there."

The girl's eyes beamed with a mischievous light.

"Oh yes, most easily. You go down that street; when you pass four side-streets you turn; to the left--the left--remember, and then you keep on till you come to a large church with a fountain before it, then you turn round that, and you see the obelisk of the Piazza del Popolo."

Her voice was the sweetest that Dick had ever heard. He listened as he would listen to music, and did not hear a single word that he comprehended.

"Pardon me," said he, "but would you please to tell me again. I can not remember all. Three streets?"

The girl laughed and repeated it

Dick sighed.

"I'm a stranger here, and am afraid that I can not find my way. I left my map at home. If I could find some one who would go with me and show me."

He looked earnestly at her, but she modestly made a movement to go.

"Are you in a great hurry?" said he.

"No, Signore," replied the girl, softly.

"Could you--a--a--would you be willing--to--to--walk a little part of the way with me, and--show me a very little part of the way--only a very little?"



[Illustration: Away!]

The girl seemed half to consent, but modestly hesitated, and a faint flush stole over her face.

"Ah do!" said Dick. He was desperate.

"It's my only chance," thought he.

The girl softly assented and walked on with him.

"I am very much obliged to you for your kindness," said Dick. "It's very hard for a stranger to find his way in Rome."

"But, Signore, by this time you ought to know the whole of our city."

"What? How?"

"Why, you have been here three weeks at least."

"How do you know?" and the young man blushed to his eyes. He had been telling lies, and she knew it all the time.

"Oh, I saw you once in the church, and I have seen you with that tall man. Is he your father?"

"No, only a friend."

"I saw you," and she shook her little head triumphantly, and her eyes beamed with fun and laughter.

"Any way," thought Dick, "she ought to understand."

"And did you see me when I was in that little church with a measuring line?"

The young girl looked up at him, her large eyes reading his very soul.

"Did I look at you? Why, I was praying."

"You looked at me, and I have never forgotten it."

Another glance as though to assure herself of Dick's meaning. The next moment her eyes sank and her face flushed crimson. Dick's heart beat so fast that he could not speak for some time.

"Signore," said the young girl at last, "when you turn that corner you will see the Piazza del Popolo."

"Will you not walk as far as that corner?" said Dick.

"Ah, Signore, I am afraid I will not have time."

"Will I never see you again?" asked he, mournfully.

"I do not know, Signore. You ought to know."

A pause. Both had stopped, and Dick was looking earnestly at her, but she was looking at the ground.

"How can I know when I do not know even your name? Let me know that, so that I may think about it."

"Ah, how you try to flatter! My name is Pepita Gianti."

"And do you live far from here?"

"Yes. I live close by the Basilica di San Paolo fuori le mure."

"A long distance. I was out there once."

"I saw you."

Dick exulted.

"How many times have you seen me? I have only seen you once before."

"Oh, seven or eight times."

"And will this be the last?" said Dick, beseechingly.

"Signore, if I wait any longer the gates will be shut."

"Oh, then, before you go, tell me where I can find you to-morrow. If I walk out on that road will I see you? Will you come in to-morrow? or will you stay out there and shall I go there? Which of the houses do you live in? or where can I find you? If you lived over on the Alban Hills I would walk every day to find you."

Dick spoke with ardor and impetuosity. The deep feeling which he showed, and the mingled eagerness and delicacy which he exhibited, seemed not offensive to his companion. She looked up timidly.

"When to-morrow comes you will be thinking of something else--or perhaps away on those Alban mountains. You will forget all about me. What is the use of telling you? I ought to go now."

"I'll never forget!" burst forth Dick. "Never--never. Believe me. On my soul; and oh, Signorina, it is not much to ask!"



PEPITA.

[Illustration: Pepita.]

His ardor carried him away. In the broad street he actually made a gesture as though he would take her hand. The young girl drew back blushing deeply. She looked at him with a reproachful glance.

"You forget--"

Whereupon Dick interrupted her with innumerable apologies.

"You do not deserve forgiveness. But I will forgive you if you leave me now. Did I not tell you that I was in a hurry?"

"Will you not tell me where I can see you again?"

"I suppose I will be walking out about this time to-morrow."

"Oh, Signorina! and I will be at the gate."

"If you don't forget."

"Would you be angry if you saw me at the gate this evening?"

"Yes; for friends are going out with me. Addio, Signore."

The young girl departed, leaving Dick rooted to the spot. After a while he went on to the Piazza del Popolo. A thousand feelings agitated him. Joy, triumph, perfect bliss, were mingled with countless tender recollections of the glance, the smile, the tone, and the blushes of Pepita. He walked on with new life. So abstracted was his mind in all kinds of delicious anticipations that he ran full against a man who was hurrying at full speed and in equal abstraction in the opposite direction. There was a recoil. Both fell. Both began to make apologies. But suddenly:

"Why, Buttons!"

"Why, Dick!"

"Where in the world did you come from?"

"Where in the world did you come from?"

"What are you after, Buttons?"

"Did you see a carriage passing beyond that corner?"

"No, none."

"You must have seen it."

"Well, I didn't."

"Why, it must have just passed you."

"I saw none."

"Confound it!"

Buttons hurriedly left, and ran all the way to the corner, round which he passed.

CHAPTER XXVI

CONSEQUENCES OF BEING GALLANT IN ITALY, WHERE THERE ARE LOVERS, HUSBANDS, BROTHERS, FATHERS, COUSINS, AND INNUMERABLE OTHER RELATIVES AND CONNECTIONS, ALL READY WITH THE STILETTO.

After his meeting with Pepita, Dick found it extremely difficult to restrain his impatience until the following evening. He was at the gate long before the time, waiting with trembling eagerness.

It was nearly sundown before she came; but she did come at last. Dick watched her with strange emotions, murmuring to himself all those peculiar epithets which are commonly used by people in his situation. The young girl was unmistakably lovely, and her grace and beauty might have affected a sterner heart than Dick's.

"Now I wonder if she knows how perfectly and radiantly lovely she is," thought he, as she looked at him and smiled.

He joined her a little way from the gate.

"So you do not forget."

"_I_ forget! Before I spoke to you I thought of you without ceasing, and now I can never forget you."

"Do your friends know where you are?" she asked, timidly.

"Do you think I would tell them?"

"Are you going to stay long in Rome?"

"I will not go away for a long time."

"You are an American."

"Yes."

"America is very far away."

"But it is easy to get there."

"How long will you be in Rome?"

"I don't know. A very long time."

"Not in the summer?"

"Yes, in the summer."

"But the malaria. Are you not afraid of that? Will your friends stay?"

"I do not care whether my friends do or not."

"But you will be left alone."

"I suppose so."

"But what will you do for company? It will be very lonely."

"I will think of you all day, and at evening come to the gate."

"Oh, Signore! You jest now!"

"How can I jest with you?"

"You don't mean what you say."

"Pepita!"

Pepita blushed and looked embarrassed. Dick had called her by her Christian name; but she did not appear to resent it.

"You don't know who I am," she said at last. "Why do you pretend to be so friendly?"

"I know that you are Pepita, and I don't want to know any thing more, except one thing, which I am afraid to ask."

Pepita quickened her pace.

"Do not walk so fast, Pepita," said Dick, beseechingly. "Let the walk be as long as you can."

"But if I walked so slowly you would never let me get home."

"I wish I could make the walk so slow that we could spend a life-time on the road."

Pepita laughed. "That would be a long time."

It was getting late. The sun was half-way below the horizon. The sky was flaming with golden light, which glanced dreamily through the hazy atmosphere. Every thing was toned down to soft beauty. Of course it was the season for lovers and lovers' vows. Pepita walked a little more slowly to oblige Dick. She uttered an occasional murmur at their slow progress, but still did not seem eager to quicken her pace. Every step was taken unwillingly by Dick, who wanted to prolong the happy time.

Pepita's voice was the sweetest in the world, and her soft Italian sounded more musically than that language had ever sounded before. She seemed happy, and by many little signs showed that her companion was not indifferent to her. At length Dick ventured to offer his arm. She rested her hand on it very gently, and Dick tremulously took it in his. The little hand fluttered for a few minutes, and then sank to rest.

The sun had now set. Evening in Italy is far different from what it is in northern latitudes. There it comes on gently and slowly, sometimes prolonging its presence for hours, and the light will be visible until very late. In Italy, however, it is short and abrupt. Almost as soon as the sun disappears the thick shadows come swiftly on and cover every thing. It was so at this time. It seemed but a moment after sunset, and yet every thing was growing indistinct. The clumps of trees grew black; the houses and walls of the city behind all faded into a mass of gloom. The stars shone faintly. There was no moon.

"I will be very late to-night," said Pepita, timidly.

"But are you much later than usual?"

"Oh, very much!"

"There is no danger, is there? But if there is you are safe. I can protect you. Can you trust me?"

"Yes," said Pepita, in a low voice.

It was too dark to see the swiftly-changing color of Pepita's face as Dick murmured some words in her ear. But her hand trembled violently as Dick held it. She did not say a word in response. Dick stood still for a moment and begged her to answer him. She made an effort and whispered some indistinct syllables. Whereupon Dick called her by every endearing name that he could think of, and--Hasty footsteps! Exclamations! Shouts! They were surrounded! Twelve men or more-- stout, strong fellows, magnified by the gloom. Pepita shrieked.

"Who are you?" cried Dick. "Away, or I'll shoot you all. I'm armed."

"Boh!" said one of the men, contemptuously. "Off!" cried Dick, as the fellow drew near. He put himself before Pepita to protect her, and thrust his right hand in the breast-pocket of his coat.

"Who is that with you?" said a voice. At the sound of the voice Pepita uttered a cry. Darting from behind Dick she rushed up to him.

"It is Pepita, Luigi!"

"Pepita! Sister! What do you mean by this?" said the man hoarsely. "Why are you so late? Who is this man?"

"An American gentleman who walked out as far as this to protect me," said Pepita, bursting into tears.

"An American gentleman!" said Luigi, with a bitter sneer. "He came to protect you, did he? Well; we will show him in a few minutes how grateful we are."

Dick stood with folded arms awaiting the result of all this.

"Luigi! dearest brother!" cried Pepita, with a shudder, "on my soul --in the name of the Holy Mother--he is an honorable American gentleman, and he came to protect me."

"Oh! we know, and we will reward him."

"Luigi! Luigi!" moaned Pepita, "if you hurt him I will die!"

"Ah! Has it come to that?" said Luigi, bitterly. "A half-hour's acquaintance, and you talk of dying. Here, Pepita; go home with Ricardo."

"I will not. I will not go a step unless you let him go."

"Oh, we will let him go!"

"Promise me you will not hurt him."

"Pepita, go home!" cried her brother, sternly.

"I will not unless you promise."

"Foolish girl! Do you suppose we are going to break the laws and get into trouble? No, no. Come, go home with Ricardo. I'm going to the city."

Ricardo came forward, and Pepita allowed herself to be led away.

When she was out of sight and hearing Luigi approached Dick. Amid the gloom Dick did not see the wrath and hate that might have been on his face, but the tone of his voice was passionate and menacing. He prepared for the worst. "That is my sister.--Wretch! what did you mean?"

"I swear--"

"Peace! We will give you cause to remember her."

Dick saw that words and excuses were useless. He thought his hour had come. He resolved to die game. He hadn't a pistol. His manoeuvre of putting his hand in his pocket was merely intended to deceive. The Italians thought that if he had one he would have done more than mention it. He would at least have shown it. He had stationed himself under a tree. The men were before him. Luigi rushed at him like a wild beast. Dick gave him a tremendous blow between his eyes that knocked him headlong.

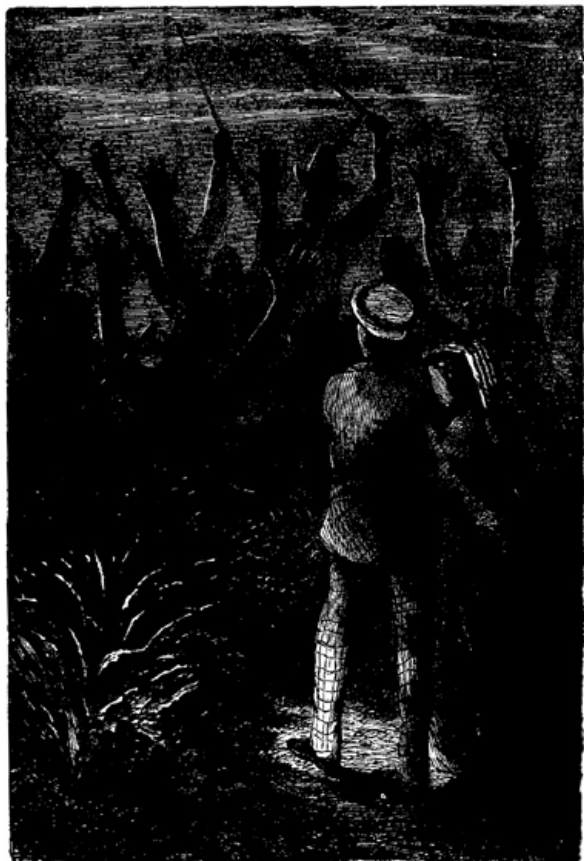
"You can kill me," he shouted, "but you'll find it hard work!"

Up jumped Luigi, full of fury; half a dozen others rushed simultaneously at Dick. He struck out two vigorous blows, which crashed against the faces of two of them. The next moment he was on the ground. On the ground, but striking well-aimed blows and kicking vigorously. He kicked one fellow completely over. The brutal Italians struck and kicked him in return. At last a tremendous blow descended on his head. He sank senseless.

When he revived it was intensely dark. He was covered with painful bruises. His head ached violently. He could see nothing. He arose and tried to walk, but soon fell exhausted. So he crawled closer to the trunk of the tree, and groaned there in his pain. At last he fell into a light sleep, that was much interrupted by his suffering.

He awoke at early twilight. He was stiff and sore, but very much refreshed. His head did not pain so excessively. He heard the trickling of water near, and saw a brook. There he went and washed himself. The water revived him greatly. Fortunately his clothes were only slightly torn. After washing the blood from his face, and buttoning his coat over his bloodstained shirt, and brushing the dirt from his clothes, he ventured to return to the city.

He crawled rather than walked, often stopping to rest, and once almost fainting from utter weakness. But at last he reached the city, and managed to find a wine-cart, the only vehicle that he could see, which took him to his lodgings. He reached his room before any of the others were up, and went to bed.



AN INTERRUPTION.

[Illustration: An Interruption.]

CHAPTER XXVII

DICK ON THE SICK LIST.--RAPTURE OF BUTTONS AT MAKING AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

Great was the surprise of all on the following morning at finding that Dick was confined to his bed. All were very anxious, and even Buttons showed considerable feeling. For as much as a quarter of an hour he ceased thinking about the Spaniards. Poor Dick! What on earth was the matter? Had he fever? No. Perhaps it was the damp night-air. He should not have been out so late. Where was he? A confounded pity! The Doctor felt his pulse. There was no fever. The patient was very pale, and evidently in great pain. His complaint was a mystery. However, the Doctor recommended perfect quiet, and hoped that a few days would restore him. Dick said not a word about the events of the evening. He thought it would do no good to tell them. He was in great pain. His body was black with frightful bruises, and the depression of his mind was as deep as the pain of his body.

The others went out at their usual hour.

The kind-hearted Senator remained at home all day, and sat by Dick's bedside, sometimes talking, sometimes reading. Dick begged him not to put himself to so much inconvenience on his account; but such language was distasteful to the Senator.

"My boy," he said, "I know that you would do as much for me. Besides, it is a far greater pleasure to do any thing for you than to walk about merely to gratify myself. Don't apologize, or tell me that I am troubling myself. Leave me to do as I please."

Dick's grateful look expressed more than words.

In a few days his pain had diminished, and it was evident that he would be out in a fortnight or so. The kind attentions of his friends affected him greatly. They all spent more time than ever in his room, and never came there without bringing some little trifle, such as grapes, oranges, or other fruit. The Senator hunted all over Rome for a book, and found Victor Hugo's works, which he bought on a venture, and had the gratification of seeing that it was acceptable.

All suspected something. The Doctor had contended from the first that Dick had met with an accident. They had too much delicacy to question him, but made many conjectures amongst themselves. The Doctor thought that he had been among some ruins, and met with a fall. Mr. Figgs suggested that he might have been run over. The Senator thought it was some Italian epidemic. Buttons was incapable of thinking rationally about any thing just then. He was the victim of a monomania: the Spaniards!

About a week after Dick's adventure Buttons was strolling about on his usual quest, when he was attracted by a large crowd around the Chiesa di Gesu. The splendid equipages of the cardinals were crowded about the principal entrance, and from the interior sounds of music came floating magnificently down. Buttons went in to see what was going on. A vast crowd filled the church. Priests in gorgeous vestments officiated at the high altar, which was all ablaze with the light of enormous wax-candles. The gloom of the interior was heightened by the clouds of incense that rolled on high far within the vaulted ceiling.



POOR DICK!

[Illustration: Poor Dick!]

The Pope was there. In one of the adjoining chambers he was performing a ceremony which sometimes takes place in this church. Guided by instinct, Buttons pressed his way into the chamber. A number of people filled it. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation.

Just as His Holiness was rising to leave, Buttons saw the group that had filled his thoughts for weeks.

The Spaniards! No mistake this time. And he had been right all along. All his efforts had, after all, been based on something tangible. Not in vain had he had so many walks, runnings, chasings, searchings, strolls, so many hopes, fears, desires, discouragements. He was right! Joy, rapture, bliss, ecstasy, delight! There they were: the little Don--**THE DONNA--IDA!**

Buttons, lost for a while in the crowd, and pressed away, never lost sight of the Spaniards. They did not see him, however, until, as they slowly moved out, they were stopped and greeted with astonishing eagerness. The Don shook hands cordially. The Donna--that is, the elder sister--smiled sweetly. Ida blushed and cast down her eyes.

Nothing could be more gratifying than this reception. Where had he been? How long in Rome? Why had they not met before? Strange that they had not seen him about the city. And had he really been here three weeks? Buttons informed them that he had seen them several times, but at a distance. He had been at all the hotels, but had not seen their names.

Hotels! Oh, they lived in lodgings in the Palazzo Concini, not far from the Piazza del Popolo. And how much longer did he intend to stay?--Oh, no particular time. His friends enjoyed themselves here very much. He did not know exactly when they would leave. How long would they remain?--They intended to leave for Florence on the following week.--Ah!

He was thinking of leaving for the same place at about the same time. Whereupon the Don expressed a polite hope that they might see one another on the journey.

By this time the crowd had diminished. They looked on while the Pope entered his state-coach, and with strains of music, and prancing of horses, and array of dragoons, drove magnificently away.

The Don turned to Buttons: Would he not accompany them to their lodgings? They were just about returning to dinner. If he were disengaged they should be most happy to have the honor of his company.

Buttons tried very hard to look as though he were not mad with eagerness to accept the invitation, but not very successfully. The carriage drove off rapidly. The Don and Buttons on one seat, the ladies on the other.

Then the face of Ida as she sat opposite! Such a face! Such a smile! Such witchery in her expression! Such music in her laugh!

At any rate so it seemed to Buttons, and that is all that is needed.

On through the streets of Rome; past the post-office, round the column of Antoninus, up the Corso, until at last they stopped in front of an immense edifice which had once been a palace. The descendants of the family lived in a remote corner, and their poverty compelled them to let out all the remainder as lodgings. This is no uncommon thing in Italy. Indeed, there are so many ruined nobles in the country that those are fortunate who have a shelter over their heads. Buttons remarked this to the Don, who told some stories of these fallen nobles. He informed him that in Naples their laundress was said to be the last scion of one of the most ancient families in the kingdom. She was a countess in her own right, but had to work at menial labor. Moreover, many had sunk down to the grade of peasantry, and lived in squalor on lands which were once the estates of their ancestors.

Buttons spent the evening there. The rooms were elegant. Books lay around which showed a cultivated taste. The young man felt himself in a realm of enchantment. The joy of meeting was heightened by their unusual complaisance. During the evening he found out all about them. They lived in Cadiz, where the Don was a merchant. This was their first visit to Italy.

They all had fine perceptions for the beautiful in art or nature, and, besides, a keen sense of the ludicrous. So, when Buttons, growing communicative, told them about Mr. Figgs's adventure in the ball of St. Peter's, they were greatly amused. He told about the adventures of all his friends. He told of himself: all about the chase in Naples Bay, and his pursuit of their carriage from St. Peter's. He did not tell them that he had done this more than once. Ida was amused; but Buttons felt gratified at seeing a little confusion on her face, as though she was conscious of the real cause of such a persevering pursuit. She modestly evaded his glance, and sat at a little distance from the others. Indeed, she said but little during the whole evening.

When Buttons left he felt like a spiritual being. He was not conscious of treading on any material earth, but seemed to float along through enchanted air over the streets into his lodgings, and so on into the realm of dreams.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WHAT KIND OF A LETTER THE SENATOR WROTE FOR THE "NEW ENGLAND PATRIOT," WHICH SHOWS A TRITE, LIBERAL, UNBIASED, PLAIN, UNVARNISHED VIEW OF ROME.

"Dick," said the Senator, as he sat with him in his room, "I've been thinking over your tone of mind, more particularly as it appears in those letters which you write home, such as you read the other day. It is a surprising thing to me how a young man with your usual good sense, keenness of perception, and fine education, can allow yourself to be so completely carried away by a mawkish sentiment. What is the use of all these memories and fancies and hysterical emotions that you talk about? In one place you call yourself by the absurd name of 'A Pensive Traveller.' Why not be honest? Be a sensible American, exhibiting in your thoughts and in all your actions the effect of democratic principles and stiff republican institutions. Now I'll read you what I have written. I think the matter is a little nearer the mark than your flights of fancy. But perhaps you don't care just now about hearing it?"

"Indeed I do; so read on," said Dick.

"As I have travelled considerable in Italy," said the Senator, reading from a paper which he drew from his pocket, "with my eyes wide open, I have some idea of the country and of the general condition of the farming class."

The Senator stopped. "I forgot to say that this is for the New England Patriot, published in our village, you know."

Dick nodded. The Senator resumed:

"The soil is remarkably rich. Even where there are mountains they are well wooded. So if the fields look well it is not surprising. What is surprising is the cultivation. I saw ploughs such as Adam might have used when forced for the first time to turn up the ground outside the locality of Eden; harrows which were probably invented by Numa Pompey, an old Roman that people talk about.

"They haven't any idea of draining clear. For here is a place called the Pontine Marsh, beautiful soil, surrounded by a settled country, and yet they let it go to waste almost entirely.

"The Italians are lazy. The secret of their bad farming lies in this. For the men loll and smoke on the fences, leaving the poor women to toil in the fields. A woman ploughing! And yet these people want to be free.

"They wear leather leggins, short breeches, and jackets. Many of them wear wooden shifts. The women of the south use a queer kind of outlandish head-dress, which if they spent less time in fixing it would be better for their own worldly prosperity.

"The cattle are fine: very broad in the chest, with splendid action. I don't believe any other country can show such cattle. The pigs are certainly the best I ever saw by a long chalk. Their chops beat all creation. A friend of mine has made some sketches, which I will give to the Lyceum on my return. They exhibit the Sorrento pig in various attitudes.



SKETCHES BY A FRIEND.

[Illustration: Sketches By A Friend.]

"The horses, on the contrary, are poor affairs. I have yet to see the first decent horse. The animals employed by travellers generally are the lowest of their species. The shoes which the horses wear are of a singular shape. I can't describe them in writing, but they look more like a flat-iron than any thing else.

"I paid a visit to Pompeii, and on coming back I saw some of the carts of the country. They gave one a deplorable idea of

the state of the useful arts in this place. Scientific farming is out of the question. If fine plantations are seen it's Nature does it.

"Vineyards abound everywhere. Wine is a great staple of the country. Yet they don't export much after all. In fact the foreign commerce is comparatively trifling. Chestnuts and olives are raised in immense quantities. The chestnut is as essential to the Italian as the potato is to the Irishman. A failure in the crop is attended with the same disastrous consequences. They dry the nuts, grind them into a kind of flour, and make them into cakes. I tasted one and found it abominable. Yet these people eat it with garlic, and grow fat on it. Chestnut bread, oil instead of butter, wine instead of tea, and you have an Italian meal.

"It's a fine country for fruit. I found Gaeta surrounded by orange groves. The fig is an important article in the economy of an Italian household.

"I have been in Rome three weeks. Many people take much interest in this place, though quite unnecessarily. I do not think it is at all equal to Boston. Yet I have taken great pains to examine the place. The streets are narrow and crooked, like those of Boston. They are extremely dirty. There are no sidewalks. The gutter is in the middle of the street. The people empty their slops from their windows. The pavements are bad and very slippery. The accumulation of filth about the streets is immense. The drainage is not good. They actually use one old drain which, they tell me, was made three thousand years ago.

"Gas has only been recently introduced. I understand that a year or two ago the streets were lighted by miserable contrivances, consisting of a mean oil lamp swung from the middle of a rope stretched across the street.

"The shops are not worth mentioning. There are no magnificent Dry-goods Stores, such as I have seen by the hundred in Boston; no Hardware Stores; no palatial Patent Medicine Edifices; no signs of enterprise, in fact, at all.

"The houses are very uncomfortable. They are large, and built in the form of a square. People live on separate flats. If it is cold they have to grin and bear it. There are no stoves. I have suffered more from the cold on some evenings since I have been here than ever I did in-doors at home. I have asked for a fire, but all they could give me was a poisonous fire of charcoal in an earthen thing like a basket.

"Some of their public buildings are good, but that can't make the population comfortable. In fact, the people generally are ill-cared for. Here are the wretched Jews, who live in a filthy quarter of the city crowded together like pigs.

"The people pass the most of their time in coffee-houses. They are an idle set--have nothing in the world to do. It is still a mystery to me how they live.

"The fact is, there are too many soldiers and priests. Now it is evident that these gentry, being non-producers, must be supported directly or indirectly by the producers. This is the cause, I suppose, of the poverty of a great part of the population.

"Begging is reduced to a science. In this I confess the Italian beats the American all to pieces. The American eye has not seen, nor ear heard, the devices of an Italian beggar to get along.

"I have seen them in great crowds waiting outside of a monastery for their dinner, which consists of huge bowls of porridge given by the monks. Can any thing be more ruinous to a people?

"The only trade that I could discover after a long and patient search was the trade in brooches and toys which are bought as curiosities by travellers.

"There are nothing but churches and palaces wherever you go. Some of these palaces are queer-looking concerns. There isn't one in the whole lot equal to some of the Fifth Avenue houses in New York in point of real genuine style.

"There has been too much money spent in churches, and too little on houses. If it amounted to any thing it would not be so bad, but the only effect has been to promote an idle fondness for music and pictures and such like. If they tore down nine-tenths of their churches and turned them into school-houses on the New England system, it would not be bad for the rising generation.

"The newspapers which they have are miserable things-wretched little sheets, full of lies--no advertisements, no news, no nothing. I got a friend to translate what pretended to be the latest American news. It was a collection of murders, duels, railway accidents, and steamboat explosions.

"I don't see what hope there is for this unfortunate country; I don't really. The people have gone on so long in their present course that they are now about incorrigible. If the entire population were to emigrate to the Western States, and mix up with the people there, it might be possible for their descendants in the course of time to amount to something.

"I don't see any hope except perhaps in one plan, which would be no doubt impossible for these lazy and dreamy Italians to carry out. It is this: Let this poor, brokendown, bankrupt Government make an inventory of its whole stock of jewels, gold, gems, pictures, and statues. I understand that the nobility throughout Europe would be willing to pay immense sums of money for these ornaments. If they are fools enough to do so, then in Heaven's name let them have the chance. Clear out the whole stock of rubbish, and let the hard cash come in to replace it. That would be a good beginning, with something tangible to start from. I am told that the ornaments of St. Peter's Cathedral cost ever so many millions of dollars. In the name of goodness why not sell out the stock and realize instead of issuing those ragged notes for twenty-five cents, which circulate among the people here at a discount of about seventy-five per cent?

"Then let them run a railroad north to Florence and south to Naples. It would open up a fine tract of county which is capable of growing grain; it would tap the great olive-growing districts, and originate a vast trade of oil, wine, and dried fruits.

"The country around Rome is uninhabited, but not barren. It is sickly in summer-time, but if there was a population on it who would cultivate it property I calculate the malaria would vanish, just as the fever and ague do from many Western

districts in our country by the same agencies. I calculate that region could be made one of the most fertile on this round earth if occupied by an industrious class of emigrants.

"But there is a large space inside the walls of the city which could be turned to the best of purposes.

"The place which used to be the Roman Forum is exactly calculated to be the terminus of the railroad which I have suggested. A commodious depot could be made, and the door-way might be worked up out of the arch of Titus, which now stands blocking up the way, and is of no earthly use.

"The amount of crumbling stones and old mined walls that they leave about this quarter of the city is astonishing. It ought not to be so.

"What the Government ought to do after being put in funds by the process mentioned above is this:

"The Government ought to tear down all those unsightly heaps of stone and erect factories and industrial schools. There is plenty of material to do it with. For instance, take the old ruin called the Coliseum. It is a fact, arrived at by elaborate calculation, that the entire contents of that concern are amply sufficient to construct no less than one hundred and fifty handsome factories, each two hundred feet by seventy-five.

"The factories being built, they could be devoted to the production of the finer tissues. Silks and velvets could be produced here. Glass-ware of all kinds could be made. There is a fine Italian clay that makes nice cups and crocks.

"I could also suggest the famous Roman cement as an additional article of export. The Catacombs under the city could be put to some direct practical use.

"I have hastily put out these few ideas to show what a liberal and enlightened policy might effect even in such an unpromising place as Rome. It is not probable, however, that my scheme would meet with favor here. The leading classes in this city are such an incurable get of old fogies that, I verily believe, rather than do what I have suggested, they would choose to have the earth open beneath them and swallow them up forever--city, churches, statues, pictures, museums, palaces, ruins and all.

"I've got a few other ideas, some of which will work some day. Suppose Russia should sell us her part of America. Spain sell us Cuba, Italy give us Rome, Turkey an island or two--then what? But I'll keep this for another letter."

"That's all," said the Senator.

Dick's face was drawn up into the strangest expression. He did not say any thing, however. The Senator calmly folded up his paper, and with a thoughtful air took up his hat.

"I'm going to that Coliseum again to measure a place I forgot," said he.

Upon which he retired, leaving Dick alone.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE LONELY ONE AND HIS COMFORTER.--THE TRUE MEDICINE FOR A SICK MAN.

Dick was alone in his chamber. Confinement to his room was bad enough, but what was that in comparison with the desolation of soul that afflicted him? Pepita was always in his thoughts. The bright moment was alone remembered, and the black sequel could not efface her image. Yet his misadventure showed him that his chances of seeing her again were extremely faint. But how could he give her up? They would soon be leaving for Florence. How could he leave never to see her again--the lovely, the sweet, the tender, the--

A faint knock at the door.

"Come in," said Dick, without rising from his chair.

A female entered. She was dressed in black. A thick veil hid her features, but her bent figure denoted age and weariness. She slowly closed the door.

"Is it here where a young American lives with this name?"

She held out a card. It was his name, his card. He had only given it to one person in Rome, and that one was Pepita.

"Oh!" cried Dick, rising, his whole expression changing from sadness to eager and beseeching hope, "oh, if you know where she is--where I may find her--"

The female raised her form, then with a hand that trembled excessively she slowly lifted her veil. It was a face not old and wrinkled but young and lovely, with tearful eyes downcast, and cheeks suffused with blushes.

With an eager cry Dick bounded from his chair and caught her in his arms. Not a word was spoken. He held her in a strong embrace as though he would not let her go. At last he drew her to a seat beside him, still holding her in his arms.

"I could not stay away. I led you into misfortune. Oh, how you have suffered. You are thin and wan. What a wretch am I! When you see me no more will you forgive me?"

"Forgive!" and Dick replied in a more emphatic way than words afford.

"They would not let me leave the house for ten days. They told me if I ever dared to see you again they would kill you. So I knew you were not dead. But I did not know how they had beaten you till one day Ricardo told me all. To think of you unarmed fighting so gallantly. Four of them were so bruised that they have not yet recovered. To-day Luigi went to Civita Vecchia. He told me that if I dared to go to Rome he would send me to a convent. But I disobeyed him. I could not rest. I had to come and see how you were, and to--bid--adieu--"

"Adieu! bid adieu?--never. I will not let you."

"Ah, now you talk wildly," said Pepita, mournfully, "for you know we must part."

"We shall not part."

"I will have to go home, and you can not follow me."

"Oh, Pepita, I can not give you up. You shall be mine--now--my wife --and come with me home--to America. And we shall never again have to part."

"Impossible," said Pepita, as big tear-drops fell from her eyes. "Impossible!"

"Why impossible?"

"Luigi would track us to the end of the world."

"Track us! I would like to see him try it!" cried Dick in a fury. "I have an account to settle with him which will not be pleasant for him to pay. Who is he to dare to stand between me and you? As to following me--Well, I have already given him a specimen of what I am. I would give a year of my life to have him alone for about half an hour."

"You wrong him," cried Pepita, earnestly. "You wrong him. You must not talk so. He is not a bravo. He is my brother. He has been like a father to me. He loves me dearly, and my good name is dearer to him than life. He is so good and so noble, dear Luigi! It was his love for me that blinded him and made him furious. He thought you were deceiving us all, and would not listen to you."

"But if he were so noble would he have attacked one unarmed man, and he at the head of a dozen?"

"I tell you," cried Pepita, "you do not know him. He was so blinded by passion that he had no mercy. Oh, I owe every thing to him! And I know how good and noble he is!"

"Pepita, for your sake I will forgive him every thing."

"I can not stay longer," said Pepita, making an effort to rise.

"Oh, Pepita! you can not leave me forever."

Pepita fell weeping into his arms, her slender form convulsed with emotion.

"You shall not."

"I must--there is no help."

"Why must you? Can you not fly with me? What prevents you from being mine? Let us go and be united in the little church where I saw you first."

"Impossible!" moaned Pepita.

"Why?"

"Because I could not do you such injustice. You have your father far away in America. You might offend him."

"Bother my father!" cried Dick.

Pepita looked shocked.

"I mean--he would allow me to do any thing I liked, and glory in it, because I did it. He would chuckle over it for a month."

"Luigi--"

"Pepita, do you love him better than me?"

"No, but if I leave him so it would break his heart. He will think I am ruined. He will declare a vendetta against you, and follow you to the end of the world."

"Is there no hope?"

"No--not now."

"Not now? And when will there be? Can it be possible that you would give me up? Then I would not give you up! If you do not love me I must love you."

"Cruel!" murmured Pepita.

"Forgive," said Dick, penitently. "Perhaps I am too sudden. If I come back again in two or three months will you be as hardhearted as you are now?"

"Hard-hearted!" sighed Pepita, tearfully. "You should not reproach me. My troubles are more than I can bear. It is no slight thing that you ask."

"Will waiting soften you? Will it make any difference? If I came for you--"

"You must not leave me so," said Pepita, reproachfully. "I will tell you all. You will understand me better. Listen. My family is noble."

"Noble!" cried Dick, thunderstruck. He had certainly always thought her astonishingly lady--like for a peasant girl, but attributed this to the superior refinement of the Italian race.

"Yes, noble," said Pepita, proudly. "We seem now only poor peasants. Yet once we were rich and powerful. My grandfather lost all in the wars in the time of Napoleon, and only left his descendants an honorable name. Alas! honor and titles are worth but little when one is poor. My brother Luigi is the Count di Gianti."

"And you are the Countess di Gianti."

"Yes," said Pepita, smiling at last, and happy at the change that showed itself in Dick. "I am the Countess Pepita di Gianti. Can you understand now my dear Luigi's high sense of honor and the fury that he felt when he thought that you intended an insult? Our poverty, which we can not escape, chafes him sorely. If I were to desert him thus suddenly it would kill him."

"Oh, Pepita! if waiting will win you I will wait for years. Is there any hope?"

"When will you leave Rome?"

"In a few days my friends leave."

"Then do not stay behind. If you do you can not see me."

"But if I come again in two or three months? What then? Can I see you?"

"Perhaps," said Pepita, timidly.

"And you will apt refuse? No, no! You can not! How can I find you?"

"Alas! you will by that time forget all about me."

"Cruel Pepita! How can you say I will forget? Would I not die for you? How can I find you?"

"The Padre Lignori."

"Who?"

"Padre Lignori, at the little church. The tall priest--the one who spoke to you."

"But he will refuse. He hates me."

"He is a good man. If he thinks you are honorable he will be your friend. He is a true friend to me."

"I will see him before I leave and tell him all."

There were voices below.

Pepita started.

"They come. I must go," said she, dropping her veil.

"Confound them!" cried Dick.

"_Addio_!" sighed Pepita.

Dick caught her in his arms. She tore herself away with sobs.

She was gone.

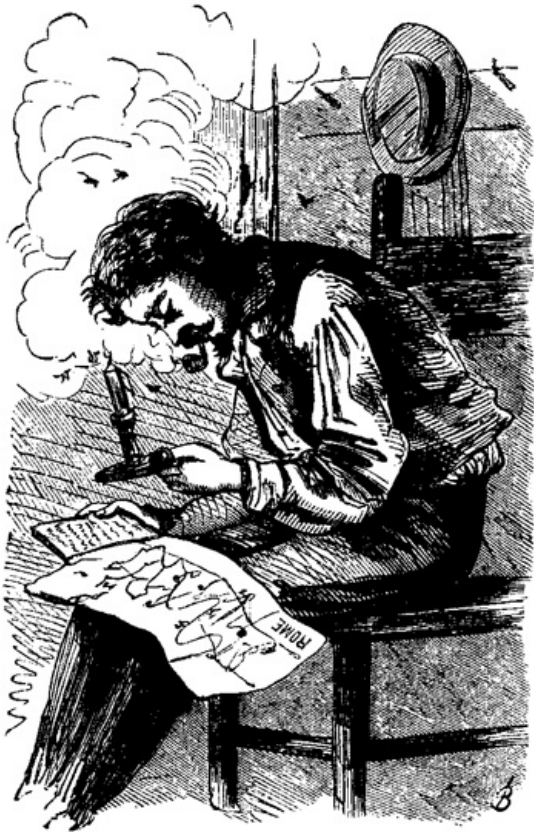
Dick sank back in his chair, with his eyes fixed hungrily on the door.

"Hallo!" burst the Doctor's voice on his ears. "Who's that old girl? Hey? Why, Dick, how pale you are! You're worse. Hang it! you'll have a relapse if you don't look out. You must make a total change in your diet--more stimulating drink and generous food. However, the drive to Florence will set you all right again."

CHAPTER XXX

OCCUPATIONS AND PEREGRINATIONS OF BUTTONS.

If Buttons had spent little time in his room before he now spent less. He was exploring the ruins of Rome, the churches, the picture galleries, and the palaces under new auspices. He knew the name of every palace and church in the place. He acquired this knowledge by means of superhuman application to "Murray's Hand-book" on the evenings after leaving his companions. They were enthusiastic, particularly the ladies. They were perfectly familiar with all the Spanish painters and many of the Italian. Buttons felt himself far inferior to them in real familiarity with Art, but he made amends by brilliant criticisms of a transcendental nature.



BUTTONS AND MURRAY.

[Illustration: Buttons and Murray.]

It was certainly a pleasant occupation for youth, sprightliness, and beauty. To wander all day long through that central world from which forever emanate all that is fairest and most enticing in Art, Antiquity, and Religion; to have a soul open to the reception of all these influences, and to have all things glorified by Almighty love; in short, to be in love in Rome.

Rome is an inexhaustible store-house of attractions. For the lovers of gayety there are the drives of the Pincian Hill, or the Villa Borghese. For the student, ruins whose very dust is eloquent. For the artist, treasures beyond price. For the devotee, religion. How fortunate, thought Buttons, that in addition to all this there is, for the lovers of the beautiful, beauty!

Day after day they visited new scenes. Upon the whole, perhaps, the best way to see the city, when one can not spend one's life there, is to take Murray's Hand-book, and, armed with that red necessity, dash energetically at the work; see every thing that is mentioned; hurry it up in the orthodox manner; then throw the book away, and go over the ground anew, wandering easily wherever fancy leads.

CHAPTER XXXI

BUTTONS ACTS THE GOOD SAMARITAN, AND LITERALLY UNEARTHES A MOST UNEXPECTED VICTIM OF AN ATROCIOUS ROBBERY.--GR-R-R-A-CIOUS ME!

To these, once wandering idly down the Appian Way, the ancient tower of Metella rose invitingly. The carriage stopped, and ascending, they walked up to the entrance. They marvelled at the enormous blocks of travertine of which the edifice was built, the noble simplicity of the style, the venerable garment of ivy which hid the ravages of time.

The door was open, and they walked in. Buttons first; the ladies timidly following; and the Don bringing up the rear. Suddenly a low groan startled them. It seemed to come from the very depths of the earth. The ladies gave a shriek, and dashing past their brother, ran out. The Don paused. Buttons of course advanced. He never felt so extensive in his life before. What a splendid opportunity to give an exhibition of manly courage! So he walked on, and shouted:

"Who's there?"

A groan!

Further in yet, till he came to the inner chamber. It was dark there, the only light coming in through the passages. Through the gloom he saw the figure of a man lying on the floor so tied that he could not move.

"Who are you? What's the matter?"

"Let me loose, for God's sake!" said a voice, in thick Italian, with a heavy German accent. "I'm a traveller. I've been robbed by brigands."

To snatch his knife from his pocket, to cut the cords that bound the man, to lift him to his feet, and then to start back with a cry of astonishment, were all the work of an instant. By this time the others had entered.

The man was a German, unmistakably. He stood blinking and staring. Then he stretched his several limbs and rubbed

himself. Then he took a long survey of the new-comers. Then he stroked a long, red, forked beard, and, in tones expressive of the most profound bewilderment, slowly ejaculated--

"Gr-r-r-acious me!"

"Meinheer Schatt!" cried Buttons, grasping his hand. "How in the name of wonder did you get here? What has happened to you? Who tied you up? Were you robbed? Were you beaten? Are you hurt? But come out of this dark hole to the sunshine."

Meinheer Schatt walked slowly out, saying nothing to these rapid inquiries of Buttons. The German intellect is profound, but slow; and so Meinheer Schatt took a long time to collect his scattered ideas. Buttons found that he was quite faint; so producing a flask from his pocket he made him drink a little precious cordial, which revived him greatly. After a long pull he heaved a heavy sigh, and looked with a piteous expression at the new-comers. The kind-hearted Spaniards insisted on taking him to their carriage. He was too weak to walk. They would drive him. They would listen to no refusal. So Meinheer Schatt was safely deposited in the carriage, and told his story.

He had come out very early in the morning to visit the Catacombs. He chose the early part of the day so as to be back before it got hot. Arriving at the Church of St. Sebastian he found to his disappointment that it was not open yet. So he thought he would beguile the time by walking about. So he strolled off to the tomb of Caecilia Metella, which was the most striking object in view. He walked around it, and broke off a few pieces of stone. He took also a few pieces of ivy. These he intended to carry away as relics. At last he ventured to enter and examine the interior. Scarce had he got inside than he heard footsteps without. The door was blocked up by a number of ill-looking men, who came in and caught him.

Meinheer Schatt confessed that he was completely overcome by terror.

However, he at last mustered sufficient strength to ask what they wanted.

"You are our prisoner."

"Why? Who are you?"

"We are the secret body-guard of His Holiness, appointed by the Sacred Council of the Refectory," said one of the men, in a mocking tone.

Then Meinheer Schatt knew that they were robbers. Still he indignantly protested he was an unoffending traveller.

"It's false! You have been mutilating the sacred sepulchre of the dead, and violating the sanctity of their repose!"

And the fellow, thrusting his hands in the prisoner's pockets, brought forth the stones and ivy. The others looked into his other pockets, examined his hat, made him strip, shook his clothes, pried into his boots--in short, gave him a thorough overhaul.

They found nothing, except, as Meinheer acknowledged, with a faint smile, a piece of the value of three half-cents American, which he had brought as a fee to the guide through the Catacombs. It was that bit of money that caused his bonds. It maddened them. They danced around him in perfect fury, and asked what he meant by daring to come out and give them so much trouble with only that bit of impure silver about him.

"Dog of a Tedesco! Your nation has trampled upon our liberties; but Italy shall be avenged! Dog! scoundrel! villain! Tedesco! Tedes-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-s-cho!"

The end of it was that Meinheer Schatt was tied in a singularly uncomfortable position and left there. He thought he had been there about five hours. He was faint and hungry.

They took him home.

CHAPTER XXXII

ANOTHER DISCOVERY MADE BY BUTTONS.

On the evening after this adventure the Don turned the conversation into a new channel. They all grew communicative. Buttons told them that his father was an extensive merchant and ship-owner in Boston. His business extended over many parts of the world. He thought he might have done something in Cadiz.

"Your father a ship-owner in Boston! I thought you belonged to New York," said the Don, in surprise.

"Oh," said Buttons, "I said I came from there. The fact is, I lived there four years at college, and will live there when I return."

"And your father lives in Boston," said the Don, with an interest that surprised Buttons.

"Yes."

"Is his name Hiram Buttons?"

"Yes," cried Buttons, eagerly. "How do you know?"

"My dear Sir," cried the Don, "Hiram Buttons and I are not only old business correspondents, but I hope I can add personal friends."

The Don rose and grasped Buttons cordially by the hand. The young man was overcome by surprise, delight, and triumph.

"I liked you from the first," said the Don. "You bear your character in your face. I was happy to receive you into our society. But now I feel a still higher pleasure, for I find you are the son of a man for whom I assure you I entertain an infinite respect."

The sisters were evidently delighted at the scene. As to Buttons, he was overcome.

Thus far he often felt delicacy about his position among them, and fears of intruding occasionally interfered with his enjoyment. His footing now was totally different; and the most punctilious Spaniard could find no fault with his continued intimacy.

"Hurrah for that abominable old office, and that horrible business to which the old gentleman tried to bring me! It has turned out the best thing for me. What a capital idea it was for the governor to trade with Cadiz!"

Such were the thoughts of Buttons as he went home.

CHAPTER XXXIII

[Transcriber's Note: Transliteration of Greek.] Brekekek koax koax koax. [TN: /end Greek.]

In his explorations of the nooks and corners of Rome the Senator was compelled for some time to make his journeys alone. He sometimes felt regret that he had not some interpreter with him on these occasions; but on the whole he thought he was well paid for his trouble, and he stored up in his memory an incredible number of those items which are usually known as "useful facts."

On one of these occasions he entered a very common café near one of the gates, and as he felt hungry he determined to get his dinner. He had long felt a desire to taste those "frogs" of which he had heard so much, and which to his great surprise he had never yet seen. On coming to France he of course felt confident that he would find frogs as common as potatoes on every dinner-table. To his amazement he had not yet seen one.

He determined to have some now. But how could he get them? How ask for them?

"Pooh! easy enough!" said the Senator to himself, with a smile of superiority. "I wish I could ask for every thing else as easily."

So he took his seat at one of the tables, and gave a thundering rap to summon the waiter. All the café had been startled by the advent of the large foreigner. And evidently a rich man, for he was an Englishman, as they thought. So up came the waiter with a very low bow, and a very dirty jacket; and all the rest of the people in the café looked at the Senator out of the corner of their eyes, and stopped talking. The Senator gazed with a calm, serene face and steady eye upon the waiter.

"Signore?" said the waiter, interrogatively.

"_Gunk_! _gung_!" said the Senator, solemnly, without moving a muscle.

The waiter stared.

"_Che vuol ella_?" he repeated, in a faint voice.

"_Gunk! _gung_!" said the Senator, as solemnly as before.

"Non capisco."

"_Gunk gung! _gunkety gunk gung_!"

The waiter shrugged his shoulders till they reached the upper part of his ears. The Senator looked for a moment at him, and saw that he did not understand him. He looked at the floor involved in deep thought. At last he raised his eyes once more to meet those of the waiter, which still were fixed upon him, and placing the palms of his hands on his hips, threw back his head, and with his eyes still fixed steadfastly upon the waiter he gave utterance to a long shrill gurgle such as he thought the frogs might give:

[Transcriber's Note: Transliteration of Greek.] Brekekekek koax koax, Brekekekek koax koax. [TN: /end Greek.]



BREKEKEKEK KOAX KOAX!

[Illustration: Brekekekek koax koax!]

(Recurrence must be made to Aristophanes, who alone of articulate speaking men has written down the utterance of the common frog.)

The waiter started back. All the men in the café jumped to their feet.

"[Transcriber's Note: Transliteration of Greek.] Brekekekek koax koax [TN: /end Greek.]," continued the Senator, quite patiently. The waiter looked frightened.

"Will you give me some or not?" cried the Senator, indignantly.

"Signore," faltered the waiter. Then he ran for the café-keeper.

The café-keeper came. The Senator repeated the words mentioned above, though somewhat angrily. The keeper brought forward every customer in the house to see if any one could understand the language.

"It's German," said one.

"It's English," said another.

"Bah!" said a third. "It's Russian."

"No," said a fourth, "it's Bohemian; for Carolo Quinto said that Bohemian was the language of the devil." And Number Four, who was rather an intelligent-looking man, eyed the Senator compassionately.

"_Gunk gung, gunkety gung_!" cried the Senator, frowning, for his patience had at last deserted him.

The others looked at him helplessly, and some, thinking of the devil, piously crossed themselves. Whereupon the

Senator rose in majestic wrath, and shaking his purse in the face of the café-keeper, shouted:

"You're worse than a nigger!" and stalked grandly out of the place.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE SENATOR PURSUES HIS INVESTIGATIONS.--AN INTELLIGENT ROMAN TOUCHES A CHORD IN THE SENATOR'S HEART THAT VIBRATES.--RESULTS OF THE VIBRATION.--A VISIT FROM THE ROMAN POLICE; AND THE GREAT RACE DOWN THE CORSO BETWEEN THE SENATOR AND A ROMAN SPY.--GLEE OF THE POPULACE!--HI! HI!

He did not ask for frogs again; but still he did not falter in his examination into the life of the people. Still he sauntered through the remoter corners of Rome, wandering over to the other side of the Tiber, or through the Ghetto, or among the crooked streets at the end of the Corso. Few have learned so much of Rome in so short a time.

On one occasion he was sitting in a café, where he had supplied his wants in the following way:

"Hi! coffee! coffee!" and again, "Hi! cigar! cigar!" when his eye was attracted by a man at the next table who was reading a copy of the London Times, which he had spread out very ostentatiously. After a brief survey the Senator walked over to his table and, with a beaming smile, said--

"Good-day, Sir."

The other man looked up and returned a very friendly smile.

"And how do you do, Sir?"

"Very well, I thank you," said the other, with a strong Italian accent.

"Do you keep your health?"

"Thank you, yes," said the other, evidently quite pleased at the advances of the Senator.

"Nothing gives me so much pleasure," said the Senator, "as to come across an Italian who understands English. You, Sir, are a Roman, I presume."

"Sir, I am."

The man to whom the Senator spoke was not one who would have attracted any notice from him if it had not been for his knowledge of English. He was a narrow-headed, mean-looking man, with very seedy clothes, and a servile but cunning expression.

"How do you like Rome?" he asked of the Senator.

The Senator at once poured forth all that had been in his mind since his arrival. He gave his opinion about the site, the architecture, the drains, the municipal government, the beggars, and the commerce of the place; then the soldiers, the nobles, the priests, monks, and nuns.

Then he criticised the Government, its form, its mode of administration, enlarged upon its tyranny, condemned vehemently its police system, and indeed its whole administration of every thing, civil, political, and ecclesiastical.

Waxing warmer with the sound of his own eloquence, he found himself suddenly but naturally reminded of a country where all this is reversed. So he went on to speak about Freedom, Republicanism, the Rights of Man, and the Ballot-Box. Unable to talk with sufficient fluency while in a sitting posture he rose to his feet, and as he looked around, seeing that all present were staring at him, he made up his mind to improve the occasion. So he harangued the crowd generally, not because he thought any of them could understand him, but it was so long since he had made a speech that the present opportunity was irresistible. Besides, as he afterward remarked, he felt that it was a crisis, and who could tell but that a word spoken in season might produce some beneficial effects.

He shook hands very warmly with his new friend after it all was over, and on leaving him made him promise to come and see him at his lodgings, where he would show him statistics, etc. The Senator then returned.

That evening he received a visit. The Senator heard a rap at his door and called out "Come in." Two men entered--ill-looking, or rather malignant-looking, clothed in black.

Dick was in his room, Buttons out, Figgs and the Doctor had not returned from the café.

"His Excellency," said he, pointing to the other, "wishes to speak to you on official business."

"Happy to hear it," said the Senator.

"His Excellency is the Chief of the Police, and I am the Interpreter."

Whereupon the Senator shook hands with both of them again.

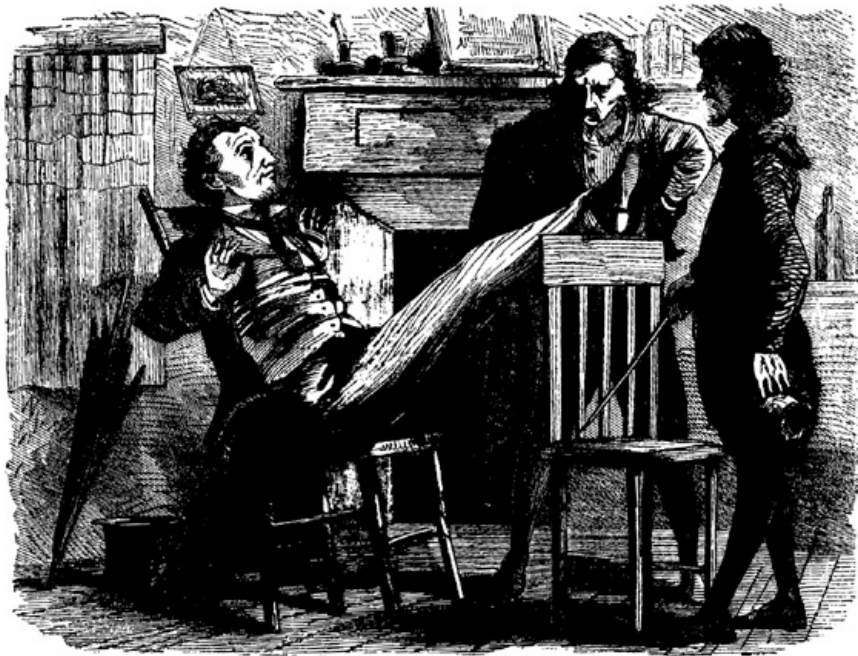
"Proud to make your acquaintance," said he. "I am personally acquainted with the Chief of the Boston _po_lice, and also of the Chief of the New York _po_lice, and my opinion is that they can stand more liquor than any men I ever met with. Will you liquor?"

The interpreter did not understand. The Senator made an expressive sign. The interpreter mentioned the request to the Chief, who shook his head coldly.

"This is formal," said the Interpreter-"not social."

The Senator's face flushed. He frowned.

"Give him my compliments then, and tell him the next time he refuses a gentleman's offer he had better do it like a gentleman. For my part, if I chose to be uncivil, I might say that I consider your Roman police very small potatoes."



GOT YOU THERE!

[Illustration: Got You There!]

The Interpreter translated this literally, and though the final expression was not very intelligible, yet it seemed to imply contempt.

So the Chief of Police made his communication as sternly as possible. Grave reports had been made about His American Excellency. The Senator looked surprised.

"What about?"

That he was haranguing the people, going about secretly, plotting, and trying to instill revolutionary sentiments into the public mind.

"Pooh!" said the Senator.

The Chief of Police bade him be careful. He would not be permitted to stir up an excitable populace. This was to give him warning.

"Pooh!" said the Senator again.

And if he neglected this warning it would be the worse for him. And the Chief of Police looked unutterable things. The Senator gazed at him sternly and somewhat contemptuously for a few minutes.

"You're no great shakes anyhow," said he.

"Signore?" said the Interpreter.

"Doesn't it strike you that you are talking infernal nonsense?" asked the Senator in a slightly argumentative tone of voice, throwing one leg over another, tilting back his chair, and folding his arms.

"Your language is disrespectful," was the indignant reply.

"Yours strikes me as something of the same kind, too; but more --it is absurd."

"What do you mean?"

"You say I stir up the people."

"Yes. Do you deny it?"

"Pooh! How can a man stir up the people when he can't speak a word of the language?"

The Chief of Police did not reply for a moment.

"I rather think I've got you there," said the Senator, dryly. "Hey? old Hoss?"

("Old Hoss" was an epithet which he used when he was in a good humor.) He felt that he had the best of it here, and his anger was gone. He therefore tilted his chair back farther, and placed his feet upon the back of a chair that was in front of him.

"There are Italians in Rome who speak English," was at length the rejoinder.

"I wish I could find some then," said the Senator. "It's worse than looking for a needle in a hay-stack, they're so precious few."

"You have met one."

"And I can't say feel over-proud of the acquaintance," said the Senator, in his former dry tone, looking hard at the Interpreter.

"At the Café Cenacci, I mean."

"The what? Where's that?"

"Where you were this morning."

"Oh ho! that's it--ah? And was my friend there one of your friends too?" asked the Senator, as light burst in upon him.

"He was sufficiently patriotic to give warning."

"Oh--patriotic?--he was, was he?" said the Senator, slowly, while his eyes showed a dangerous light.

"Yes--patriotic. He has watched you for some time."

"Watched me!" and the Senator frowned wrathfully.

"Yes, all over Rome, wherever you went."

"Watched me! dogged me! tracked me! Aha?"

"So you are known."

"Then the man is a spy."

"He is a patriot."

"Why the mean concern sat next me, attracted my attention by reading English, and encouraged me to speak as I did. Why don't you arrest him?"

"He did it to test you."

"To test me! How would he like me to test him?"

"The Government looks on your offense with lenient eyes."

"Ah!"

"And content themselves this time with giving you warning."

"Very much obliged; but tell your Government not to be alarmed. I won't hurt them."

Upon this the two visitors took their leave.



WALKING SPANISH.

[Illustration: Walking Spanish.]

The Senator informed his two friends about the visit, and thought very lightly about it; but the recollection of one thing rankled in his mind.

That spy! The fellow had humbugged him. He had dogged him, tracked him, perhaps for weeks, had drawn him into conversation, asked leading questions, and then given information. If there was any thing on earth that the Senator loathed it was this.

But how could such a man be punished! That was the thought. Punishment could only come from one. The law could do nothing. But there was one who could do something, and that one was himself. Lynch law!

"My fayther was from Bosting,

My uncle was Judge Lynch,

So, darn your fire and roasting,

You can not make me flinch."

The Senator hummed the above elegant words all that evening.

He thought he could find the man yet. He was sure he would know him. He would devote himself to this on the next day. The next day he went about the city, and at length in the afternoon he came to Pincian Hill. There was a great crowd there as usual. The Senator placed himself in a favorable position, in which he could only be seen from one point, and then watched with the eye of a hawk.

He watched for about an hour. At the end of that time he saw a face. It belonged to a man who had been leaning against a post with his back turned toward the Senator all this time. It was the face! The fellow happened to turn it far enough round to let the Senator see him. He was evidently watching him yet. The Senator walked rapidly toward him. The man saw him and began to move as rapidly away. The Senator increased his pace. So did the man. The Senator walked still faster. So did the man. The Senator took long strides. The man took short, quick ones. It is said that the fastest pedestrians are those who take short, quick steps. The Senator did not gain on the other.

By this time a vast number of idlers had been attracted by the sight of these two men walking as if for a wager. At last the Senator began to run. So did the man!

The whole thing was plain. One man was chasing the other. At once all the idlers of the Pincian Hill stopped all their avocations and turned to look. The road winds down the Pincian Hill to the Piazza del Popolo, and those on the upper part can look down and see the whole extent. What a place for a race! The quick-eyed Romans saw it all.

"A spy! yes, a Government spy!"

"Chased by an eccentric Englishman!"

A loud shout burst from the Roman crowd. But a number of English and Americans thought differently. They saw a little man chased by a big one. Some cried "Shame!" Others, thinking it a case of pocket-picking, cried "Stop thief!" Others cried "Go it, little fellow! Two to one on the small chap!"

Every body on the Pincian Hill rushed to the edge of the winding road to look down, or to the paved walk that overlooks the Piazza. Carriages stopped and the occupants looked down. French soldiers, dragoons, guards, officers--all staring.

And away went the Senator. And away ran the terrified spy. Down the long way, and at length they came to the Piazza del Popolo. A loud shout came from all the people. Above and on all sides they watched the race. The spy darted down

the Corso. The Senator after him.

The Romans in the street applauded vociferously. Hundreds of people stopped, and then turned and ran after the Senator. All the windows were crowded with heads. All the balconies were filled with people.

Down along the Corso. Past the column of Antonine. Into a street on the left. The Senator was gaining! At last they came to a square. A great fountain of vast waters bursts forth there. The spy ran to the other side of the square, and just as he was darting into a side alley the Senator's hand clutched his coat-tails!

The Senator took the spy in that way by which one is enabled to make any other do what is called "Walking Spanish," and propelled him rapidly toward the reservoir of the fountain.

The Senator raised the spy from the ground and pitched him into the pool.

The air was rent with acclamations and cries of delight.

As the spy emerged, half-drowned, the crowd came forward and would have prolonged the delightful sensation.

Not often did they have a spy in their hands.



DICK THINKS IT OVER.

[Illustration: Dick Thinks It Over.]

CHAPTER XXXV

DICK MAKES ANOTHER EFFORT, AND BEGINS TO FEEL ENCOURAGED.

Pepita's little visit was beneficial to Dick. It showed him that he was not altogether cut off from her. Before that he had grown to think of her as almost inaccessible; now she seemed to have a will, and, what is better, a heart of her own, which would lead her to do her share toward meeting him again. Would it not be better now to comply with her evident desire, and leave Rome for a little while? He could return again. But how could he tear himself away? Would, it not be far better to remain and seek her? He could not decide. He thought of Padre Liguori. He had grossly insulted that gentleman, and the thought of meeting him again made him feel blank. Yet he was in some way or other a protector of Pepita, a guardian, perhaps, and as such had influence over her fortunes. If he could only disarm hostility from Padre Liguori it would be undoubtedly for his benefit. Perhaps Padre Liguori would become his friend, and try to influence Pepita's family in his favor. So he decided on going to see Padre Liguori.

The new turn which had been given to his feelings by Pepita's visit had benefited him in mind and body. He was quite

strong enough for a long walk. Arriving at the church he had no difficulty in finding Liguori. The priest advanced with a look of surprise.

"Before mentioning the object of my visit," said Dick, bowing courteously, "I owe you an humble apology for a gross insult. I hope you will forgive me."

The priest bowed.

"After I left here I succeeded in my object," continued Dick.

"I heard so," said Liguori, coldly.

"And you have heard also that I met with a terrible punishment for my presumption, or whatever else you may choose to call it."

"I heard of that also," said the priest, sternly. "And do you complain of it? Tell me. Was it not deserved?"

"If their suspicions and yours had been correct, then the punishment would have been well deserved. But you all wrong me. I entreat you to believe me. I am no adventurer. I am honest and sincere."

"We have only your word for this," said Liguori, coldly.

"What will make you believe that I am sincere, then?" said Dick. "What proof can I give?"

"You are safe in offering to give proofs in a case where none can be given."

"I am frank with you. Will you not be so with me? I come to you to try to convince you of my honesty, Padre Liguori. I love Pepita as truly and as honorably as it is possible for man to love. It was that feeling that so bewildered me that I was led to insult you. I went out in the midst of danger, and would have died for her. With these feelings I can not give her up."

"I have heard sentiment like this often before. What is your meaning?"

"I am rich and of good family in my own country; and I am determined to have Pepita for my wife."

"Your wife!"

"Yes," said Dick, resolutely. "I am honorable and open about it. My story is short. I love her, and wish to make her my wife."

The expression of Liguori changed entirely.

"Ah! this makes the whole matter different altogether. I did not know this before. Nor did the Count. But he is excusable. A sudden passion blinded him, and he attacked you. I will tell you"--and at each word the priest's manner grew more friendly--"I will tell you how it is, Signore. The Giantis were once a powerful family, and still have their title. I consider myself as a kind of appanage to the family, for my ancestors for several generations were their maggiordomos. Poverty at last stripped them of every thing, and I, the last of the family dependents, entered the Church. But I still preserve my respect and love for them. You can understand how bitterly I would resent and avenge any base act or any wrong done to them. You can understand Luigi's vengeance also."

"I thought as much," said Dick. "I thought you were a kind of guardian, and so I came here to tell you frankly how it is. I love her. I can make her rich and happy. To do so is the desire of my heart. Why should I be turned away? Or if there be any objection, what is it?"

"There is no objection--none whatever, if Pepita is willing, and you sincerely love her. I think that Luigi would give his consent."

"Then what would prevent me from marrying her at once?"

"At once!"

"Certainly."

"You show much ardor; but still an immediate marriage is impossible. There are various reasons for this. In the first place, we love Pepita too dearly to let her go so suddenly to some one who merely feels a kind of impulse. We should like to know that there is some prospect of her being happy. We have cherished her carefully thus far, and will not let her go without having some security about her happiness."

"Then I will wait as long as you like, or send for my friends to give you every information you desire to have; or if you want me to give any proofs, in any way, about any thing, I'm ready."

"There is another thing," said Lignori, "which I hope you will take kindly. You are young and in a foreign country. This sudden impulse may be a whim. If you were to marry now you might bitterly repent it before three months were over. Under such circumstances it would be misery for you and her. If this happened in your native country you could be betrothed and wait. There is also another reason why waiting is absolutely necessary. It will take some time to gain her brother's consent. Now her brother is poor, but he might have been rich. He is a Liberal, and belongs to the National party. He hates the present system here most bitterly. He took part in the Roman Republican movement a few years ago, and was imprisoned after the return of the Pope, and lost the last vestige of his property by confiscation. He now dresses coarsely, and declines to associate with any Romans, except a few who are members of a secret society with him. He is very closely watched by the Government, so that he has to be quiet. But he expects to rise to eminence and power, and even wealth, before very long. So you see he does not look upon his sister as a mere common every-day match. He expects to elevate her to the highest rank, where she can find the best in the country around her. For my own part I think this is doubtful; and if you are in earnest I should do what I could to further your interest. But it will take some time to persuade the Count."

"Then, situated as I am, what can I do to gain her?" asked Dick.

"Are your friends thinking of leaving Rome soon?"

"Yes, pretty soon."

"Do not leave them. Go with them. Pursue the course you originally intended, just as though nothing had happened. If after your tour is finished you find that your feelings are as strong as ever, and that she is as dear to you as you say, then you may return here."

"And you?"

"I think all objections may be removed."

"It will take some weeks to finish our tour."

"Some weeks! Oh, do not return under three months at least."

"Three months! that is very long!"

"Not too long. The time will soon pass away. If you do not really love her you will be glad at having escaped; if you do you will rejoice at having proved your sincerity."

Some further conversation passed, after which Dick, finding the priest inflexible, ceased to persuade, and acceded to his proposal.

CHAPTER XXXVI

SHOWING HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO GET A LAUNDRESS, FOR THE SENATOR WANTED ONE, AND NOT KNOWING THE LANGUAGE GOT INTO A SCRAPE, NOT BY HIS OWN FAULT, FOR HE WAS CAREFUL ABOUT COMMITTING HIMSELF WITH THE LADIES; BUT PRAY, WAS IT HIS FAULT IF THE LADIES WOULD TAKE A FANCY TO HIM?

Signora Mirandolina Rocca, who was the landlady of the house where the Club were lodging, was a widow, of about forty years of age, still fresh and blooming, with a merry dark eye, and much animation of features. Sitting usually in the small room which they passed on the way to their apartments, they had to stop to get their keys, or to leave them when they went out, and Buttons and Dick frequently stopped to have a little conversation. The rest, not being able to speak Italian, contented themselves with smiles; the Senator particularly, who gave the most beaming of smiles both on going and on returning. Sometimes he even tried to talk to her in his usual adaptation of broken English, spoken in loud tones to the benighted but fascinating foreigner. Her attention to Dick during his sickness increased the Senator's admiration, and he thought her one of the best, one of the most kind-hearted and sympathetic of beings.

One day, toward the close of their stay in Rome, the Senator was in a fix. He had not had any washing done since he came to the city. He had ran through all his clean linen, and came to a dead stand. Before leaving for another place it was absolutely necessary to attend to this. But how? Buttons was off with the Spaniards; Dick had gone out on a drive. No one could help him, so he tried it himself. In fact, he had never lost confidence in his powers of making himself understood. It was still a fixed conviction of his that in cases of necessity any intelligent man could make his wants known to intelligent foreigners. If not, there is stupidity somewhere. Had he not done so in Paris and in other places?

So he rang and managed to make the servant understand that he wished to see the landlady. The landlady had always shown a great admiration for the manly, not to say gigantic charms of the Senator. Upon him she bestowed her brightest smile, and the quick flush on her face and heaving breast told that the Senator had made wild work with her too susceptible heart.

So now when she learned that the Senator wished to see her, she at once imagined the cause to be any thing and every thing except the real one. Why take that particular time, when all the rest were out? she thought. Evidently for some tender purpose. Why send for her? Why not come down to see her? Evidently because he did not like the publicity of her room at the Conciergerie.



THE SENATOR IN A BAD FIX.

[Illustration: The Senator In A Bad Fix.]

She arrayed herself, therefore, in her brightest and her best charms; gave an additional flourish to her dark hair that hung wavingly and luxuriantly, and still without a trace of gray over her forehead; looked at herself with her dark eyes in the glass to see if she appeared to the best advantage; and finally, in some agitation, but with great eagerness, she went to obey the summons.

Meantime the Senator had been deliberating how to begin. He felt that he could not show his bundle of clothes to so fair and fine a creature as this, whose manners were so soft and whose smile so pleasant. He would do any thing first. He would try a roundabout way of making known his wishes, trusting to his own powers and the intelligence of the lady for a full and complete understanding. Just as he had come to this conclusion there was a timid knock at the door.

"Come in," said the Senator, who began to feel a little awkward already.

"_Epermeso_?" said a soft sweet voice, "_se puo entrare_?" and Signora Mirandolina Rocca advanced into the room, giving one look at the Senator, and then casting down her eyes.

"_Umilissia serva di Lei, Signore, mi comandi_."

But the Senator was in a quandary. What could he do? How begin? What gesture would be the most fitting for a beginning?

The pause began to be embarrassing. The lady, however, as yet was calm--calmer, in fact, than when she entered.

So she spoke once more.

"_Di che ha Ella bisogna, Illustris simo_?"

The Senator was dreadfully embarrassed. The lady was so fair in his eyes. Was this a woman who could contemplate the fact of soiled linen? Never.

"Ehem!" said he.

Then he paused.

"_Servo, devota_," said Signora Mirandolina. "_Che c'e, Signore_."

Then looking up, she saw the face of the Senator all rosy red, turned toward her, with a strange confusion and embarrassment in his eye, yet it was a kind eye--a soft, kind eye.

"_Egli e forse innamorato di me_," murmured the lady, gathering new courage as she saw the timidity of the other. "_Che grandezza_!" she continued, loud enough for the Senator to hear, yet speaking as if to herself. "_Che bellezza_! _un galantuomo, certamente--e quest' e molto piacevole_."

She glanced at the manly figure of the Senator with a tender admiration in her eye which she could not repress, and which was so intelligible to the Senator that he blushed more violently than ever, and looked helplessly around him.

"_E innamorato di me, senza dubbio_," said the Signora, "_vergogna non vuol che si sapesse_."

The Senator at length found voice. Advancing toward the lady he looked at her very earnestly and as she thought very piteously--held out both his hands, then smiled, then spread his hands apart, then nodded and smiled again, and said--

"Me--me--want--ha--hum--ah! You know--me--gentleman--hum--me --Confound the luck," he added, in profound vexation.

"_Signore_," said Mirandolina, "_la di Lei gentelezza me confonde_."

The Senator turned his eyes all around, everywhere, in a desperate half-conscious search for escape from an embarrassing situation.

"_Signore noi ci siamo sole, nessuno ci senti_," remarked the Signora, encouragingly.

"Me want to tell you this!" burst forth the Senator. "Clothes--you know--washy--washy." Whereupon he elevated his eyebrows, smiled, and brought the tips of his fingers together.

"_Io non so che cosa vuol dir mi. Illustrissimo_," said the Signora, in bewilderment.

"You--you--you know. Ah? Washy? Hey? No, no," shaking his head, "not washy, but _get_ washy."

The landlady smiled. The Senator, encouraged by this, came a step nearer.

"_Che cosa? Il cuor me palpita. Io tremo_," murmured La Rocca.

She retreated a step. Whereupon the Senator at once fell back again in great confusion.

"Washy, washy," he repeated, mechanically, as his mind was utterly vague and distrait.

"_Uassi-Uuassi_?" repeated the other, interrogatively.

"Me--"

"_Tu_" said she, with tender emphasis.

"Wee mounseer," said he, with utter desperation.

The Signora shook her head. "_Non capisco. Ma quelle, balordaggini ed intormentimente, che sono si non segni manifesti d'amore_?"

"I don't understand, marm, a single word of that."

The Signora smiled. The Senator took courage again.

"The fact is this, marm," said he, firmly; "I want to get my clothes washed somewhere. Of course you don't do it, but you can tell me, you know. Hm?"

"_Non capisco_."

"Madame," said he, feeling confident that she would understand that word at least, and thinking, too, that it might perhaps serve as a key to explain any other words which he might append to it. "My clothes--I want to get them washed--laundress--washy--soap and water--clean 'em all up--iron 'em--hang 'em out to dry. Ha?"

While saying this he indulged in an expressive pantomime. When alluding to his clothes he placed his hands against his chest, when mentioning the drying of them he waved them in the air. The landlady comprehended this. How not? When a gentleman places his hand on his heart, what is his meaning?

"_O sottigliezza d'amore_!" murmured she. "_Che cosa cerca_," she continued, looking up timidly but invitingly.

The Senator felt doubtful at this, and in fact a little frightened. Again he placed his hands on his chest to indicate his clothes; he struck that manly chest forcibly several times, looking at her all the time. Then he wrung his hands.



THE SENATOR IN A WORSE FIX.

[Illustration: The Senator In A Worse Fix.]

"_Ah, Signore_," said La Rocca, with a melting glance, "_non e d'uopo di disperazione_."

"Washy, washy--"

"_Eppure, se Ella vuol sposarmi, non ce difficolta_," returned the other, with true Italian frankness.

"Soap and water--"

"_Non ho il coraggio di dir di no_."

The Senator had his arms outstretched to indicate the hanging-out process. Still, however, feeling doubtful if he were altogether understood, he thought he would try another form of pantomime. Suddenly he fell down on his knees, and began to imitate the action of a washer-woman over her tub, washing, wringing, pounding, rubbing.

"_O gran' cielo_!" cried the Signora, her pitying heart filled with tenderness at the sight of this noble being on his knees before her, and, as she thought, wringing his hands in despair. "_O gran' cielo! Egli e innamorato di me non puo dirmelo_."

Her warm heart prompted her, and she obeyed its impulse. What else could she do? She flung herself into his outstretched arms, as he raised himself to hang out imaginary clothes on an invisible line.

The Senator was thunderstruck, confounded, bewildered, shattered, overcome, crushed, stupefied, blasted, overwhelmed, horror-stricken, wonder-smitten, annihilated, amazed, horrified, shocked, frightened, terrified, nonplused, wilted, awe-struck, shivered, astounded, dumbfounded. He did not even struggle. He was paralyzed.

"_Ah, carissimo_," said a soft and tender voice in his ear, a low, sweet voice, "_se veramenta me me ami, sarò lo tua carissima sposa--_"

At that moment the door opened and Buttons walked in. In an instant he darted out. The Signora hurried away.

"_Addio, bellissima, carissima gioja_!" she sighed.

The Senator was still paralyzed,

After a time he went with a pale and anxious face to see Buttons. The young man promised secrecy, and when the Senator was telling his story tried hard to look serious and sympathetic. In vain. The thought of that scene, and the cause of it, and the blunder that had been made overwhelmed him. Laughter convulsed him. At last the Senator got up indignantly and left the room.

But what was he to do now? The thing could not be explained. How could he get out of the house? He would have to pass her as she sat at the door.

He had to call on Buttons again and implore his assistance. The difficulty was so repugnant, and the matter so very delicate, that Buttons declared he could not take the responsibility of settling it. It would have to be brought before the

Club.

The Club had a meeting about it, and many plans were proposed. The stricken Senator had one plan, and that prevailed. It was to leave Rome on the following day. For his part he had made up his mind to leave the house at once. He would slip out as though he intended to return, and the others could settle his bill and bring with them the clothes that had caused all this trouble. He would meet them in the morning outside the gate of the city.

This resolution was adopted by all, and the Senator, leaving money to settle for himself, went away. He passed hurriedly out of the door. He dared not look. He heard a soft voice pronounce the word "_Gioja_!" He fled.

Now that one who owned the soft voice afterward changed her feelings so much toward her "gioja" that opposite his name in her house-book she wrote the following epithets: _Birbone, Villano, Zolicacco, Burberone, Gaglioffo, Meschino, Briconaccio, Anemalaccio_.

CHAPTER XXXVII

ROME .-- ANCIENT HISTORY .--THE PREHISTORIC ERA.--CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF NIEBUHR AND HIS SCHOOL.--THE EARLY HISTORY OF ROME PLACED ON A RIGHT BASIS.--EXPLANATION OF HISTORY OF REPUBLIC. --NAPOLEON'S "CAESAR."--THE IMPERIAL REGIME.--THE NORTHERN BARBARIANS.--RISE OF THE PAPACY.-- MEDIAEVAL ROME.

TOPOGRAPHY .--TRUE ADJUSTMENT OF BOUNDS OF ANCIENT CITY.--ITS PROBABLE POPULATION.-- _GEOLOGY_ .--EXAMINATION OF FORMATION.--TUFA TRAVERTINE.--ROMAN CEMENT.--TERRA-COTTA. _SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OF ROMAN CATACOMBS_ .--BOSIO.--ARRINGHI.--CARDINAL WISEMAN.--RECENT EXPLORATIONS, INVESTIGATIONS, EXAMINATIONS, EXHUMATIONS, AND RESUSCITATIONS.--EARLY CHRISTIAN HISTORY SET ON A TRUE BASIS. --RELICS.--MARTYRS.--REAL ORIGIN OF CATACOMBS.--TRUE AND RELIABLE EXTENT (WITH MAPS).

REMARKS ON ART .--THE RENAISSANCE.--THE EARLY PAINTERS: CIMABUE, GIOTTO, PERUGINO, RAFAELLE SANZIO, MICHELANGELO BUONAROTTI.--THE TRANSFIGURATION.--THE MOSES OF MICHELANGELO.--BELLINI.-- SAINT PETER'S, AND MORE PARTICULARLY THE COLONNADE.--THE LAST JUDGMENT. --DANTE.--THE MEDIAEVAL SPIRIT.--EFFECT OF GOTHIC ART ON ITALY AND ITALIAN TASTE.--COMPARISON, OF LOMBARD WITH SICILIAN CHURCHES.--TO WHAT EXTENT ROME INFLUENCED THIS DEVELOPMENT.--THE FOSTERING SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH.--ALL MODERN ART CHRISTIAN.--WHY THIS WAS A NECESSITY. --FOLLIES OF MODERN CRITICS.-- REYNOLDS AND RUSKIN.--HOW FAR POPULAR TASTE IS WORTH ANY THING.--CONCLUDING REMARKS OF A MISCELLANEOUS DESCRIPTION.

[There! as a bill of fare I flatter myself that the above ought to take the eye. It was my intention, on the departure of the Club from Rome, to write a chapter of a thoroughly exhaustive character, as will be seen by the table of contents above; but afterward, finding that the chapter had already reached the dimensions of a good-sized book before a quarter of it was written, I thought that if it were inserted in this work it would be considered by some as too long; in fact, if it were admitted nothing more would ever be heard of the Dodge Club; which would be a great pity, as the best of their adventures did not take place until after this period; and as this is the real character of the present work, I have finally decided to enlarge the chapter into a book, which I will publish after I have given to the world my "History of the Micmacs," "Treatise on the Greek Particles," "Course of Twelve Lectures on Modern History," new edition of the "Agamemnonian Trilogy" of Aeschylus, with new readings, "Harmony of Greek Accent and Prosody," "Exercises in Sanscrit for Beginners, on the Ollendorf System," "The Odyssey of Homer translated into the Dublin Irish dialect," "Dissertation on the Symbolical Nature of the Mosaic Economy," "Elements of Logic," "Examination into the Law of Neutrals," "Life of General George Washington," "History of Patent Medicines," "Transactions of the 'Saco Association for the advancement of Human Learning, particularly Natural Science' (consisting of one article written by myself on 'The Toads of Maine')," and "Report of the 'Kennebunkport, Maine, United Congregational Ladies' Benevolent City Missionary and Mariners' Friend Society," which will all be out some of these days, I don't know exactly when; but after they come out this chapter will appear in book form. And if any of my readers prefer to wait till they read that chapter before reading any further, all I can say is, perhaps they'd better not, as after all it has no necessary connection with the fortunes of the Dodge Club.]

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ITALIAN TRAVEL, ROADS, INNS.--A GRAND BREAKDOWN.--AN ARMY OF BEGGARS.--SIX MEN HUNTING UP A CARRIAGE WHEEL; AND PLANS OF THE SENATOR FOR THE GOOD OF ITALY.

On the following morning the Senator was picked up at the gate, where he had waited patiently ever since the dawn of day. His seat was secured. His friends were around him. He was safe. They rolled on merrily all that day. And their carriage was ahead of that of the Spaniards. They stopped at the same inns. Buttons was happy.

The next day came. At nine o'clock A.M. on the next day there was a singular scene:

A vettura with the fore-wheel crushed into fragments; two horses madly plunging; five men thrown in different directions on a soft sand-bank; and a driver gazing upon the scene with a face of woe.

The Senator tried most energetically to brush the dust from his clothes with an enormous red silk handkerchief; the Doctor and Mr. Figgs looked aghast at huge rents in their nether garments; Buttons and Dick picked themselves up and hurried to the wreck.

The emotions of the former may be conceived. The wheel was an utter smash. No patching however thorough, no care however tender, could place it on its edge again a perfect wheel. A hill rose before them, behind which the Spaniards, hitherto their companions, had disappeared half an hour previously, and were now rolling on over the plain beyond that hill all ignorant of this disaster. Every moment separated them more widely from the despairing Buttons. Could he have metamorphosed himself into a wheel most gladly would he have done it. He had wild thoughts of setting off on foot and catching up to them before the next day. But, of course, further reflection showed him that walking was out of the question.

Dick looked on in silence. They were little more than a day's journey from Rome. Civita Castellana lay between; yet perhaps a wheel might not be got at Civita Castellana. In that case a return to Rome was inevitable. What a momentous thought! Back to Rome! Ever since he left he had felt a profound melancholy. The feeling of homesickness was on him. He had amused himself with keeping his eyes shut and fancying that he was moving to Rome instead of from it. He had repented leaving the city. Better, he thought, to have waited. He might then have seen Pepita. The others gradually came to survey the scene.

"Eh? Well, what's to be done now?" said Buttons, sharply, as the driver came along. "How long are you going to wait?"

"Signore makes no allowance for a poor man's confusion. Behold that wheel! What is there for me to do--unhappy? May the bitter curse of the ruined fall upon that miserable wheel!"



TRAVELLING IN ITALY.

[Illustration: Travelling In Italy.]

"The coach has already fallen on it," said Dick. "Surely that is enough."

"It infuriates me to find myself overthrown here."

"You could not wish for a better place, my Pietro."

"What will you do?" said Buttons. "We must not waste time here. Can we go on?"

"How is that possible?"

"We might get a wheel at the next town."

"We could not find one if we hunted all through the three next towns."

"Curse your Italian towns!" cried Buttons, in a rage.

"Certainly, Signore, curse them if you desire."

"Where can we get this one repaired then?"

"At Civita Castellana, I hope."

"Back there! What, go back!"

"I am not to blame," said Pietro, with resignation.

"We must not go back. We shall not."

"If we go forward every mile will make it worse. And how can we move with this load and this broken wheel up that hill?"

That was indeed a difficulty. The time that had lapsed since the lamentable break-down had been sufficient to bring upon the scene an inconceivable crowd. After satisfying their curiosity they betook themselves to business.

Ragged, dirty, evil-faced, wicked-eyed, slouching, whining, impudent--seventeen women, twenty-nine small boys, and thirty-one men, without counting curs and goats.

"Signo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o! in the name of the Ever Blessed, and for the love of Heaven." "Go to thunder." "For the love of." "We have nothing, nothing, NOTHING! Do you hear?" "Of the Virgin." "Away! Be off." "Give me." "Go to blazes!" "Me miserable." "Will you be off?" "Infirm, blind, and." "I'll break your skull!" "Altogether desperate." "If you torment us any more, I'll." "Only the smallest charity." "Smash your abominable bottle-nose!" "Oh, generous nobles!" "Don't press me, you filthy." "Illustrious cavaliers!" "Take that! and if you say any more I'll kick you harder." "I kneel before you, oppressed, wretched, starving. Let these tears." "I'll make you shed more of them if you don't clear out." "N-n-n-Sig-no-o-o-o-o!" "Away!" "Behold a wretched villager from the far distant Ticino!" "You be hanged! Keep off!" "Oh, Signo-o-o-o-o! Oh per l'amor di Dio! Carita! Carita-a-a-a --solamente un mezzo baroccho--oh, Signo-o-o!--datemi."

"Pietro! Pietro! for Heaven's sake get us out of this at once. Anywhere--anywhere, so that we can escape from these infernal Vagabonds."

The result was, that Pietro turned his carriage round. By piling the baggage well behind, and watching the fore-axle carefully, he contrived to move the vehicle along. Behind them followed the pertinacious beggars, filling the air with prayers, groans, sighs, cries, tears, lamentations, appeals, wailings, and entreaties. Thus situated they made their entry into Civita Castellana.

Others might have felt flattered at the reception that awaited them. They only felt annoyed. The entire city turned out. The main street up which they passed was quite full. The side-streets showed people hurrying up to the principal thoroughfare. They were the centre of all eyes. Through the windows of the café the round eyes of the citizens were visible on the broad stare. Even the dogs and cats had a general turn out.

Nor could they seek relief in the seclusion of the hotel. The anxiety which all felt to resume their journey did not allow them to rest. They at once explored the entire city.

Was there a carriage-maker in the place? A half-hour's search showed them that there was not one. The next thing then was to try and find a wheel. About this they felt a little hopeful. Strange, indeed, if so common a thing could not be obtained.

Yet strange as this might be it was even so. No wheel was forthcoming. They could not find a carriage even. There was nothing but two ancient caleches, whose wheels were not only rickety but utterly disproportioned to the size of the vettura, and any quantity of bullock carts, which moved on contrivances that could scarcely be called wheels at all.

Three hours were consumed in the tedious search. The entire body of the inhabitants became soon aware of the object of their desires, and showed how truly sympathetic is the Italian nature, by accompanying them wherever they went, and making observations that were more sprightly than agreeable.

At first the Club kept together, and made their search accompanied by Pietro; but after a time the crowd became so immense that they separated, and continued their search singly. This produced but slight improvement. The crowd followed their example. A large number followed the Senator: walking when he walked; stopping when he stopped; turning when he turned; strolling when he strolled; peering when he peered; commenting when he spoke, and making themselves generally very agreeable and delightful.

At every corner the tall form of the Senator might be seen as he walked swiftly with the long procession following like a tail of a comet; or as he stopped at times to look around in despair, when

"He above the rest

In shape and gesture proudly eminent

Stood like a tower. His form had not yet lost

All its original brightness;"

although, to tell the truth, his clothes had, and the traces of mud and dust somewhat dimmed the former lustre of his garments.

The appalling truth at last forced itself upon them that Civita Castellana could not furnish them either with a new wheel or a blacksmith who could repair the broken one. Whether the entire mechanical force of the town had gone off to the wars or not they did not stop to inquire. They believed that the citizens had combined to disappoint them, in hopes that their detention might bring in a little ready money and start it in circulation around the community.

It was at last seen that the only way to do the was to send Pietro back to Rome. To delay any longer would be only a waste of time. Slowly and sadly they took up their quarters at the hotel. Dick decided to go back so as to hasten Pietro, who might otherwise loiter on the way. So the dilapidated carriage had to set out on its journey backward.

Forced to endure the horrors of detention in one of the dullest of Italian towns, their situation was deplorable. Mr. Figgs was least unhappy, for he took to his bed and slept through the entire period, with the exception of certain little intervals which he devoted to meals. The Doctor sat quietly by an upper window playing the devil's tattoo on the ledge with inexhaustible patience.

The Senator strolled through the town. He found much to interest him. His busy brain was filled with schemes for the improvement of the town.

How town lots could be made valuable; how strangers could be attracted; how manufactures could be promoted; how hotels started; how shops supported; how trade increased; how the whole surrounding population enriched, especially by the factories.



THE SENATOR'S ESCORT.

[Illustration: The Senator's Escort.]

"Why, among these here hills," said he, confidentially, to Buttons --"among these very hills there is water-power and excellent location for, say--Silk-weaving mills, Fulling ditto, Grist ditto, Carding ditto, Sawing ditto, Plaster-crushing ditto, Planing ditto. --Now I would locate a cotton-mill over there."

"Where would you get your cotton?" mumbled Buttons.

"Where?" repeated the Senator. "Grow it on the Campagna, of course."

Buttons passed the time in a fever of impatience.

For far ahead the Spaniards were flying further and further away, no doubt wondering at every stage why he did not join them.

CHAPTER XXXIX

TRIUMPHANT PROGRESS OF DICK.--GENDARMES FOILED.--THE DODGE CLUB IS ATTACKED BY BRIGANDS, AND EVERY MAN OF IT COVERS HIMSELF WITH GLORY.--SCREAM OF THE AMERICAN EAGLE!

It was late on the evening of the following day before Dick made his appearance with Pietro. Another vettura had been obtained, and with cracks of a long whip that resounded through the whole town, summoning the citizens to the streets; with thunder of wheels over the pavements; with prancing and snorting of horses; Pietro drove up to the hotel. Most conspicuous in the turn-out was Dick, who was seated in the coupe, waving his hat triumphantly in the air.

The appearance of the carriage was the signal for three hearty cheers, which burst involuntarily from the three Americans on the courtyard, rousing Mr. Figgs from sleep and the inn-keeper from his usual lethargy. One look at the horses was enough to show that there was no chance of proceeding further that day. The poor beasts were covered with foam, and trembled excessively. However, they all felt infinite relief at the prospect of getting away, even though they would have to wait till the following morning.

Dick was dragged to the dining-room by his eager friends and fiercely interrogated. He had not much to tell.

The journey to Rome had been made without any difficulty, the carriage having tumbled forward on its front axle not more than one hundred and fifty-seven times. True, when it reached Rome it was a perfect wreck, the framework being completely wrenched to pieces; and the proprietor was bitterly enraged with Pietro for not leaving the carriage at Civita Castellana, and returning on horseback for a wheel; but Dick interceded for the poor devil of a driver, and the proprietor kindly consented to deduct the value of the coach from his wages piecemeal.

Their journey back was quick but uninteresting. Dick acknowledged that he had a faint idea of staying in Rome, but saw a friend who advised him not to. He had taken the reins and driven for a great part of the way, while Pietro had gone inside and slumbered the sleep of the just.

As it was a lonely country, with few inhabitants, he had beguiled the tedious hours of the journey by blowing patriotic airs on an enormous trombone, purchased by him from a miscellaneous dealer in Rome. The result had been in the highest degree pleasing to himself, though perhaps a little surprising to others. No one, however, interfered with him except a party of gendarmes who attempted to stop him. They thought that he was a Garibaldino trying to rouse the country. The trombone might have been the cause of that suspicion.

Fortunately the gendarmes, though armed to the teeth, were not mounted, and so it was that, when they attempted to arrest Dick, that young man lashed his horses to fury, and, loosening the reins at the same moment, burst through the line, and before they knew what he was about he was away.

They fired a volley. The echoes died away, mingled with gendarmerian curses. The only harm done was a hole made by a bullet through the coach. The only apparent effect was the waking of Pietro. That worthy, suddenly roused from slumber, jumped up to hear the last sounds of the rifles, to see the hole made by the bullet, the fading forms of the frantic officials, and the nimble figure of the gallant driver, who stood upright upon the seat waving his hat over his head, while the horses dashed on at a furious gallop.



DICK IN HIS GLORY.

[Illustration: Dick In His Glory.]

This was all. Nothing more occurred, for Pietro drove the remainder of the way, and Dick's trombone was tabooed.

On the following morning the welcome departure was made. To their inexpressible joy they found that the coach was this time a strong one, and no ordinary event of travel could delay them. They had lost two days, however, and that was no trifle. They now entered upon the second stage, and passed on without difficulty.

In fact, they didn't meet with a single incident worth mentioning till they came to Perugia. Perugia is one of the finest places in Italy, and really did not deserve to be overhauled so terrifically by the Papal troops. Every body remembers that affair. At the time when the Dodge Club arrived at this city they found the Papal party in the middle of a reaction. They actually began to fear that they had gone a little too far. They were making friendly overtures to the outraged citizens. But the latter were implacable, stiff!

What rankled most deeply was the maddening fact that these Swiss, who were made the ministers of vengeance, were part of that accursed, detested, hated, shunned, despised, abhorred, loathed, execrated, contemptible, stupid, thick-headed, brutal, gross, cruel, bestial, demoniacal, fiendish, and utterly abominable race-- I Tedeschi --whose very name, when hissed from an Italian month, expresses unutterable scorn and undying hate.

They left Perugia at early dawn. Jogging on easily over the hills, they were calculating the time when they would reach Florence.

In the disturbed state of Italy at this time, resulting from war and political excitement, and general expectation of universal change, the country was filled with disorder, and scoundrels infested the roads, particularly in the Papal territories. Here the Government, finding sufficient employment for all its energies in taking care of itself, could scarcely be expected to take care either of its own subjects or the traveller through its dominions. The Americans had heard several stories about brigands, but had given themselves no trouble whatever about them.

Now it came to pass that about five miles from Perugia they wound round a very thickly-wooded mountain, which ascended on the left, far above, and on the right descended quite abruptly into a gorge. Dick was outside; the others inside. Suddenly a loud shout, and a scream from Pietro. The carriage stopped.

The inside passengers could see the horses rearing and plunging, and Dick, snatching whip and reins from Pietro, lashing them with all his might. In a moment all inside was in an uproar.

"We are attacked!" cried Buttons.

"The devil!" cried the Senator, who, in his sudden excitement, used the first and only profane expression which his friends ever heard him utter.

Out came the Doctor's revolver.

Bang! bang! went two rifles outside, and a loud voice called on them to surrender.

"Andate al Diavolo !" pealed out Dick's voice as loud as a trumpet. His blows fell fast and furiously on the horses. Maddened by pain, the animals bounded forward for a few rods, and then swerving from the road-side, dashed against the precipitous hill, where the coach stuck, the horses rearing.

Through the doors which they had flung open in order to jump out the occupants of the carriage saw the reeling figures of armed men overthrown and cursing. In a moment they all were out.

Bang! and then--

Ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-bang! went half a dozen rifles.

Thank Heaven! not one of the Club, was struck. There were twenty scoundrels armed to the teeth.

The Doctor was as stiff as a rock. He aimed six times as calmly as though he were in a pistol-gallery. Nerve told. Six explosions roared. Six yells followed. Six men reeled.

"I'd give ten years of my life for such a pistol!" cried Buttons.

The Italians were staggered. Dick had a bowie-knife. The Senator grasped a ponderous beam that he had placed on the coach in case of another break-down. Mr. Figgs had a razor which he had grabbed from the storehouse in the Doctor's pocket. Buttons had nothing. But on the road lay three Italians writhing.

"Hurrah!" cried Buttons. "Load again, Doctor. Come; let's make a rush and get these devils on the road."

He rushed forward. The others all at his side. The Italians stood paralyzed at the effect of the revolver. As Buttons led the charge they fell back a few paces.

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" burst Buttons, the Senator, and Dick, as each snatched a rifle from the prostrate bandits, and hastily tore the cartridge-boxes from them.

"Load up! load up! Doctor!" cried Buttons.

"All right," said the Doctor, who never changed in his cool self-possession.

But now the Italians with curses and screams came back to the attack. It is absolutely stupefying to think how few shots hit the mark in the excitement of a fight. Here were a number of men firing from a distance of hardly more than forty paces, and not one took effect.

The next moment the whole crowd were upon them. Buttons snatched Mr. Figgs's razor from his grasp and used it vigorously. Dick plied his bowie-knife. The Senator wielded a clubbed rifle on high as though it were a wand, and dealt the blows of a giant upon the heads of his assailants. All the Italians were physically their inferiors--small, puny men. Mr. Figgs made a wild dash at the first man he saw and seized his rifle. The fight was spirited.

The rascally brigands were nearly three times as numerous, but the Americans surpassed them in bodily strength and spirit.

Crash--crash--fell the Senator's rifle, and down went two men. His strength was enormous--absorbed as it had been from the granite cliffs of the old Granite State. Two brawny fellows seized him from behind. A thrust of his elbow laid one low. Buttons slashed the wrist of the other. A fellow threw himself on Buttons. Dick's bowie-knife laid open his arm and thigh. The next moment Dick went down beneath the blows of several Italians. But Buttons rushed with his razor to rescue Dick. Three men glared at him with uplifted weapons. Down came the Senator's clubbed rifle like an avalanche, sweeping their weapons over the cliff. They turned simultaneously on the Senator, and grasped him in a threefold embrace. Buttons's razor again drank blood. Two turned upon him. Bang! went the Doctor's pistol, sending one of them shrieking to the ground. Bang! Once more, and a fellow who had nearly overpowered the breathless Figgs staggered back. Dick was writhing on the ground beneath the weight of a dead man and a fellow who was trying to suffocate him. Buttons was being throttled by three others who held him powerless, his razor being broken. A crack on Mr. Figgs's head laid him low. The Doctor stood off at a little distance hastily reloading.

The Senator alone was free; but six fierce fellows assailed him. It was now as in the old Homeric days, when the heroic soul, sustained by iron nerve and mighty muscle, came out particularly strong in the hour of conflict.

The Senator's form towered up like one of his own granite cliffs in the storm--as rugged, as unconquerable. His blood was up! The same blood it was that coursed through the veins of Cromwell's grim old "Ironsides," and afterward animated those sturdy backwoods-men who had planted themselves in American forests, and beaten back wild beasts and howling savages.

Buttons, prostrate on the ground, looked up, gasping through the smoke and dust, as he struggled with his assailants. He saw the Senator, his hair bristling out straight, his teeth set, his eye on fire, his whole expression sublimed by the ardor of battle. His clothes were torn to shreds; his coat was gone, his hat nowhere, his hands and face were covered with clots of blood and streaks from mud, dust, smoke, and powder.

The eye of Buttons took in all this in one glance. The next instant, with a wide sweep of his clubbed rifle the Senator put forth all his gigantic strength in one tremendous effort. The shock was irresistible. Down went the six bandits as though a cannon-ball had struck them. The Senator leaped away to relieve Dick, and seizing his assailant by neck and heel, flung him over the cliff. Then tearing away another from Mr. Figgs's prostrate and almost senseless form, he rushed

back upon the six men whom he had just levelled to the earth.

Dick sprang to the relief of Buttons, who was at his last extremity. But the Doctor was before him, as cool as ever. He grasped one fellow by the throat--a favorite trick of the Doctor's, in which his anatomical knowledge came very finely into play:

"Off!" rang the Doctor's voice.

The fellow gasped a curse. The next instant a roar burst through the air, and the wretch fell heavily forward, shot through the head, while his brains were splattered over the face of Buttons. The Doctor with a blow of his fist sent the other fellow reeling over.

Buttons sprang up gasping. The Italians were falling back. He called to the Senator. That man of might came up. Thank God they were all alive! Bruised, and wounded, and panting--but alive.

The scowling bandits drew off, leaving seven of their number on the road *_hors de combat_*. Some of the retreating ones had been badly treated, and limped and staggered. The Club proceeded to load their rifles.

The Doctor stepped forward. Deliberately aiming he fired his revolver five times in rapid succession. Before he had time to load again the bandits had darted into the woods.

"Every one of those bullets *_hit_*," said the Doctor with unusual emphasis.

"We must get under cover at once," said Dick. "They'll be back shortly with others!"

"Then we must fortify our position," said the Senator, "and wait for relief. As we were, though, it was lucky they tried a hand-to-hand fight first. This hill shelters us on one side. There are so many trees that they can't roll stones down, nor can they shoot us. We'll fix a barricade in front with our baggage. We'll have to fight behind a barricade this time; though, by the Eternal! I wish it were hand-to-hand again, for I don't remember of ever having had such a glorious time in all my born days!"

The Senator passed his hand over his gory brow, and walked to the coach.

"Where's Pietro?"

"Pietro! _Pietro_!"

No answer.

"PI-E-TRO!"

Still no answer.

"Pietro!" cried Dick, "if you don't come here I'll blow your--"

"Oh! is it you, Signori?" exclaimed Pietro's voice; and that worthy appeared among the trees a little way up the hill. He was deadly pale, and trembled so much that he could scarcely speak.

"Look here!" cried Buttons; "we are going to barricade ourselves."

"Barricade!"

"We can not carry our baggage away, and we are not going to leave it behind. We expect to have another battle."

Pietro's face grew livid.

"You can stay and help us if you wish."

Pietro's teeth chattered.

"Or you can help us far more, by running to the nearest town and letting the authorities know."

"Oh, Signore, trust me! I go."

"Make haste, then, or you may find us all murdered, and then how will you get your fares--eh?"

"I go--I go; I will run all the way!"

"Won't you take a gun to defend yourself with?"

"Oh no!" cried Pietro, with horror. "No, no!"

In a few minutes he had vanished among the thick woods.



PIETRO.

[Illustration: Pietro.]

After stripping the prostrate Italians the travellers found themselves in possession of seven rifles, with cartridges, and some other useful articles. Four of these men were stone-dead. They pulled their bodies in front of their place of shelter. The wounded men they drew inside, and the Doctor at once attended to them, while the others were strengthening the barricade.

"I don't like putting these here," said the Senator; "but it'll likely frighten the brigands, or make them delicate about firing at us. That's my idee."

The horses were secured fast. Then the baggage was piled all around, and made an excellent barricade. With this and the captured rifles they felt themselves able to encounter a small regiment.

"Now let them come on," cried the Senator, "just as soon as they damn please! We'll try first the European system of barricades; and if that don't work, then we can fall back, on the real original, national, patriotic, independent, manly, native American, true-blue, and altogether heroic style!"

"What is that?"

The Senator looked at the company, and held out his clenched fist:

"Why, from behind a tree, in the woods, like your glorious forefathers!"



THE BARRICADE.

[Illustration: The Barricade.]

CHAPTER XL

PLEASANT MEDIATIONS ABOUT THE WONDERS OF TOBACCO; AND THREE PLEASANT ANECDOTES BY AN ITALIAN BRIGAND.

A pull apiece at the brandy-flask restored strength and freshness to the beleaguered travellers, who now, intrenched behind their fortifications, awaited any attack which the Italians might choose to make.

"The Italians," said the Senator, "are not a powerful race. By no means. Feeble in body--no muscle--no brawn. Above all, no real pluck. Buttons, is there a word in their language that expresses the exact idee of pluck?"

"Or game?"

"No."

"Or even _spunk_?"

"No."

"I thought not," said the Senator, calmly. "They haven't the _idee_, and can't have the word. Now it would require a rather considerable crowd to demolish us at the present time."

"How long will we have to stay here?" asked Mr. Figgs abruptly.

"My dear Sir," said Buttons, with more sprightliness than he had shown for many days, "be thankful you are here at all. We'll get off at some time to-day. These fellows are watching us, and the moment we start they'll fire on us. We would be a good mark for them in the coach. No, we must wait a while."

Seated upon the turf, they gave themselves up to the pleasing influence that flows from the pipe. Is there any thing equal to it? How did the ancients contrive to while away the time without it? Had they known its effects how they would have cherished it! We should now be gazing on the ruins of venerable temples, reared by adoring votaries to the goddess Tabaca. Boys at school would have construed passages about her. Lempriere, Smith, Anthon, Drissler, and others would have done honor to her. Classic mythology would have been full of her presence. Olympian Jove would have been presented to us with this divinity as his constant attendant, and a nimbus around his immortal brows of her making. Bacchus would have had a rival, a superior!

Poets would have told how TABACA went over the world girt in that but set off the more her splendid radiance. We should have known how much Bacchus had to do with [Transcriber's Note: Greek Transliteration] ta bakcheia [/end Greek]; a chapter which will probably be a lost one in the History of Civilization. But that he who smokes should drink beer is quite indisputable. Whether the beer is to be X, XX, or XXX; or whether the brewer's name should begin with an A, as in Alsopp, and run through the whole alphabet, ending with V, as in Vassar, may be fairly left to individual consideration.

What noble poetry, what spirited odes, what eloquent words, has not the world lost by the ignorance of the Greek and Roman touching this plant?

The above remarks were made by Dick on this occasion. But Buttons was talking with the wounded Italians.

The Doctor had bound up their wounds and Buttons had favored them with a drop from his flask. Dick cut up some tobacco and filled a pipe for each. After all, the Italians were not fiends. They had attacked them not from malice, but

purely from professional motives.

Yet, had their enemies been Tedeschi, no amount of attention would have overcome their sullen hate. But being Americans, gay, easy, without malice, in fact kind and rather agreeable, they softened, yielded altogether, and finally chatted familiarly with Buttons and Dick. They were young, not worse in appearance than the majority of men; perhaps not bad fellows in their social relations; at any rate, rather inclined to be jolly in their present circumstances. They were quite free in their expressions of admiration for the bravery of their captors, and looked with awe upon the Doctor's revolver, which was the first they had ever seen.

In fact, the younger prisoner became quite communicative. Thus:

"I was born in Velletri. My age is twenty-four years. I have never shed blood except three times. The first time was in Narni--odd place, Narni. My employer was a vine-dresser. The season was dry; the brush caught fire, I don't know how, and in five minutes a third of the vineyard was consumed to ashes. My employer came cursing and raving at me, and swore he'd make me work for him till I made good the loss. Enraged, I struck him. He seized an axe. I drew my stiletto, and--of course I had to run away.

"The second time was in Naples. The affair was brought about by a woman. Signore, women are at the bottom of most crimes that men commit. I was in love with her. A friend of mine fell in love with her too. I informed him that if he interfered with me I would kill him. I told her that if she encouraged him I would kill him and her too. I suppose she was piqued. Women will get piqued sometimes. At any rate she gave him marked encouragement. I scolded and threatened. No use. She told me she was tired of me; that I was too tyrannical. In fact, she dared to turn me off and take the other fellow. Maffeo was a good fellow. I was sorry for him, but I had to keep my word.

"The third time was only a month ago. I robbed a Frenchman, out of pure patriotism--the French, you know, are our oppressors--and kept what I found about him to reward me for my gallant act. The Government, however, did not look upon it in a proper light. They sent out a detachment to arrest me. I was caught, and by good fortune brought to an inn. At night I was bound tightly and shut up in the same room with the soldiers. The innkeeper's daughter, a friend of mine, came in for something, and by mere chance dropped a knife behind me. I got it, cut my cords, and when they were all asleep I departed. Before going I left the knife behind; and where now, Signore, do you think I left it?"

"I have no idea."

"You would never guess. You never would have thought of it yourself."

"Where did you leave it?"

"In the heart of the Captain."

CHAPTER XLI

FINAL ATTACK OF REINFORCEMENTS OF BRIGANDS.--THE DODGE CLUB DEFIES THEM AND REPELS THEM.--HOW TO MAKE A BARRICADE.--FRATERNIZATION OF AMERICAN EAGLE AND GALLIC COCK.--THERE'S NOTHING LIKE LEATHER.

"It is certainly a singular position for an American citizen to be placed in," said the Senator. "To come from a cotton-mill to such a regular out-and-out piece of fighting as this. Yet it seems to me that fighting comes natural to the American blood."

"They've been very quiet for ever so long," said Mr. Figgs; "perhaps they've gone away."

"I don't believe they have, for two reasons. The first is, they are robbers, and want our money; the second, they are Italians, and want revenge. They won't let us off so easily after the drubbing we gave them."

Thus Buttons, and the others rather coincided in his opinion. For several miles further on the road ran through a dangerous place, where men might lurk in ambush, and pick them off like so many snipe. They rather enjoyed a good fight, but did not care about being regularly shot down. So they waited.

It was three in the afternoon. Fearfully hot, too, but not so bad as it might have been. High trees sheltered them. They could ruminate under the shade. The only difficulty was the want of food. What can a garrison do that is ill provided with eatables? The Doctor's little store of crackers and cheese was divided and eaten. A basket of figs and oranges followed. Still they were hungry.

"Well," said Dick, "there's one thing we can do if the worst comes to the worst."

"What's that?"

"Go through the forest in Indian file back to Perugia."

"That's all very well," said the Senator, stubbornly, "but we're not going back. No, Sir, not a step!"

"I'm tired of this," said Buttons, impatiently. "I'll go out as scout."

"I'll go too," said Dick.

"Don't go far, boys," said the Senator, in the tone of an anxious father.

"No, not very. That hill yonder will be a good lookout place."

"Yes, if you are not seen yourselves."

"We'll risk that. If we see any signs of these scoundrels, and find that they see us, we will fire to let you know. If we remain undiscovered we will come back quietly."

"Very well. But I don't like to let you go off alone, my boys; it's too much of an exposure."

"Nonsense."

"I have a great mind to go too."

"No, no, you had better stay to hold our place of retreat. We'll come back, you know."

"Very well, then."

The Senator sat himself down again, and Buttons and Dick vanished among the trees. An hour passed; the three in the barricade began to feel uneasy; the prisoners were asleep and snoring.

"Hang it," cried the Senator, "I wish I had gone with them!"

"Never fear," said the Doctor, "they are too nimble to be caught just yet. If they had been caught you'd have heard a little firing."

At that very moment the loud report of a rifle burst through the air, followed by a second; upon which a whole volley poured out. The three started to their feet.

"They are found!" cried the Senator. "It's about a mile away. Be ready."

Mr. Figgs had two rifles by his side, and sat looking at the distance with knitted brows. He had received some terrific bruises in the late *mêlée*, but was prepared to fight till he died. He had said but little through the day. He was not talkative. His courage was of a quiet order. He felt the solemnity of the occasion. It was a little different from sitting at the head of a Board of bank directors, or shaving notes in a private office. At the end of about ten minutes there was a crackling among the bushes. Buttons and Dick came tumbling down into the road.

"Get ready! Quick. They're here!"

"All ready."

"All loaded?"

"Yes."

"We saw them away down the road, behind a grove of trees. We couldn't resist, and so fired at them. The whole band leaped up raving, and saw us, and fired. They then set off up the road to this place, thinking that we are divided. They're only a few rods away."

"How many are there of them?"

"Fourteen."

"They must have got some more. There were only ten able-bodied, unwounded men when they left."

"Less," said the Doctor; "my pistol--"

"H'st!"

At this moment they heard the noise of footsteps. A band of armed men came in sight. Halting cautiously, they examined the barricade. Bang! It was the Doctor's revolver. Down went one fellow, yelling. The rest were frantic. Like fools, they made a rush at the barricade.

Bang! a second shot, another wounded. A volley was the answer. Like fools, the brigands fired against the barricade. No damage was done. The barricade was too strong.

The answer to this was a withering volley from the Americans. The bandits reeled, staggered, fell back, shrieking, groaning, and cursing. Two men lay dead on the road. The others took refuge in the woods.

For two hours an incessant fire was kept up between the bandits in the woods and the Americans in their retreat. No damage was done on either side.

"Those fellows try so hard they almost deserve to lick us," said the Senator dryly.

Suddenly there came from afar the piercing blast of a trumpet.

"Hark!" cried Buttons.

Again.

A cavalry trumpet!

"They are horsemen!" cried Dick, who was holding his ear to the ground; and then added:

"[Transcriber's Note: Greek Transliteration] ippon m okupodon amphi ktupos ouata ballei [/end Greek]."

"Hey?" cried the Senator; "water barley?"

Again the sound. A dead silence. All listening.

And now the tramp of horses was plainly heard. The firing had ceased altogether since the first blast of the trumpet. The bandits disappeared. The horsemen drew nearer, and were evidently quite numerous. At last they burst upon the scene, and the little garrison greeted them with a wild hurrah. They were French dragoons, about thirty in number. Prominent among them was Pietro, who at first stared wildly around, and then, seeing the Americans, gave a cry of joy.

The travellers now came out into the road, and quick and hurried greetings were interchanged. The commander of the troop, learning that the bandits had just left, sent off two-thirds of his men in pursuit, and remained with the rest behind.

Pietro had a long story to tell of his own doings. He had wandered through the forest till he came to Perugia. The commandant there listened to his story, but declined sending any of his men to the assistance of the travellers. Pietro was in despair. Fortunately a small detachment of French cavalry had just arrived at Perugia on their way to Rome and the captain was more merciful. The gallant fellow at once set out, and, led by Pietro, arrived at the place most opportunely.

It did not take long to get the coach ready again. One horse was found to be so badly wounded that it had to be killed. The others were slightly hurt. The baggage and trunks were riddled with bullets. These were once more piled up, the wounded prisoners placed inside, and the travellers, not being able to get in all together, took turns in walking.

At the next town the prisoners were delivered up to the authorities. The travellers celebrated their victory by a grand banquet, to which they invited the French officer and the soldiers, who came on with them to this town. Uproar prevailed. The Frenchmen were exuberant in compliments to the gallantry of their entertainers. Toasts followed.

"The Emperor and President!"

"America and France!"

"Tricolor and stars!"

"The two countries intertwined!"

"A song, Dick!" cried the Senator, who always liked to hear Dick sing. Dick looked modest.



[Illustration: An International Affair.]

"Strike up!"

"What?"

"The 'Scoodoo abscook!" cried Mr Figgs.

"No; 'The Old Cow!" cried Buttons.

"'The Pig by the Banks of the River!" said the Doctor.

"Dick, don't," said the Senator. "I'll tell you an appropriate song. These Frenchmen believe in France. We believe in America. Each one thinks there is nothing like Leather. Sing 'Leather,' then."

FIGGS. BUTTONS. THE DOCTOR.} "Yes, 'Leather!'"

"Then let it be 'Leather,'" said Dick; and he struck up the following (which may not be obtained of any of the music publishers), to a very peculiar tune:

I.

"Mercury! Patron of melody,

Father of Music and Lord,

Thine was the skill that invented

Music's harmonious chord.

Sweet were the sounds that arose,

Sweetly they blended together;

Thus, in the ages of old,

Music arose out of--LEATHER!

[_Full chorus by all the company_.]

"Then Leather! sing Leather! my lads!

Mercury! Music!! and Leather!!!

Of all the things under the sun,

Hurrah! there is nothing like _Leather_!

[_Extra Chorus, descriptive of a Cobbler hammering on his Lapstone_.]

"Then Rub a dub, dub!

Rub a dub, dub!

Rub a dub, dub!!! say we!

II.

"War is a wonderful science,

Mars was its patron, I'm told,

How did he used to accoutre

Armies in battles of old?

With casque, and with sling, and with shield,

With bow-string and breastplate together;

Thus, in the ages of old,

War was begun out of--LEATHER!

[_Chorus_.]

"Then Leather! sing Leather! my lads!

Mars and his weapons of Leather!!!

Of all the things under the sun,

Hurrah! there is nothing like _Leather_!

[_Extra Chorus_.]

"Then Rub a dub, dub!

Rub a dub, dub!

Rub a dub, dub!!! say we!

III.

"Love is a pleasing emotion,

All of us know it by heart;

Whence, can you tell me, arises

Love's overpowering smart?

Tipped with an adamant barb,

Gracefully tufted with feather,

Love's irresistible dart

Comes from a quiver of--LEATHER!

[_Chorus_.]

"Then Leather! sing Leather, my lads!

Darts! and Distraction!! and Leather!!!

Of all the things under the sun,

Hurrah! there is nothing like _Leather_!

[_Extra Chorus_.]

"Then Rub a dub, dub!

Rub a dub, dub!

Rub a dub, dub!!! say we!

IV.

"Orators wrote out their speeches,

Poets their verses recited,

Statesmen promulgated edicts,

Sages their maxims indited.

Parchment, my lads, was the article

All used to write on together;

Thus the Republic of Letters

Sprang into life out of--LEATHER!

[_Chorus_.]

"Then Leather! sing Leather, my lads!

Poetry! Science!! and Leather!!!

Of all the things under the sun,

Hurrah! there is nothing like _Leather_!

[_Extra Chorus_.]

"Then Rub a dub, dub!

Rub a dub, dub!

Rub a dub, dub!!! say we!"

CHAPTER XLII

FLORENCE.--DESPERATION OF BUTTONS, OF MR. FIGGS, AND OF THE DOCTOR.

Florence, the fair!--Certainly it is the fairest of cities. Beautiful for situation; the joy of the whole earth! It has a beauty that grows upon the heart. The Arno is the sweetest of rivers, its valley the loveliest of vales; luxuriant meadows; rich vineyards; groves of olive, of orange, and of chestnut; forests of cypress; long lines of mulberry; the dark purple of the distant Apennines; innumerable white villas peeping through the surrounding groves; the mysterious haze of the sunset, which throws a softer charm over the scene; the magnificent cattle; the fine horses; the bewitching girls, with their broad hats of Tuscan straw; the city itself, with its gloomy old palaces, iron-grated and massive walled, from the ancient holds of street-fighting nobles, long since passed away, to the severe Etruscan majesty of the Pitti Palace; behold Florence!

It is the abode of peace, gentleness, and kindly pleasure (or at any rate it was so when the Club was there). Every stone in its pavement has a charm. Other cities may please; Florence alone can win enduring love. It is one of the very few which a man can select as a permanent home, and never repent of his decision. In fact, it is probably the only city on earth which a stranger can live in and make for himself a true home, so pleasant as to make desire for any other simply impossible.

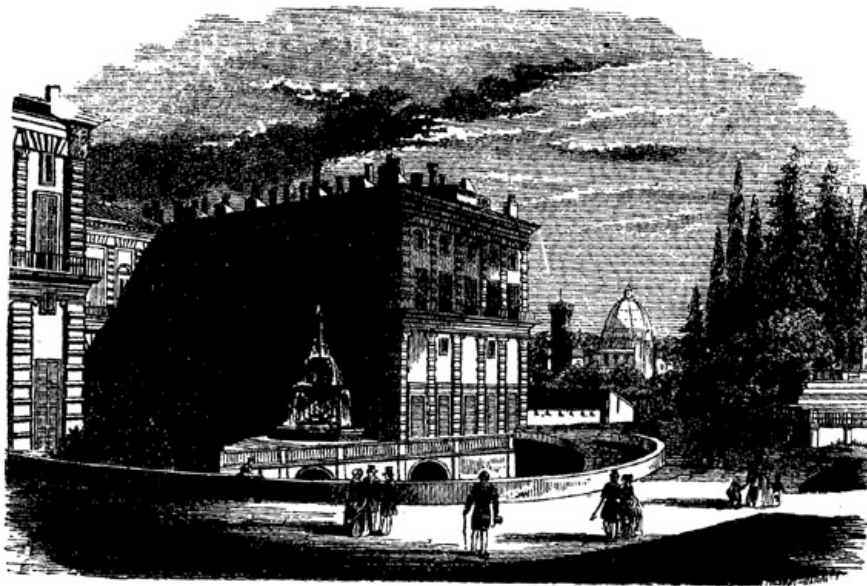


FLORENCE, FROM SAN MINIATO.

[Illustration: Florence From San Miniato.]

In Florence there is a large English population, drawn there by two powerful attractions. The first is the beauty of the place, with its healthy climate, its unrivalled collections of art, and its connection with the world at large. The second is the astonishing cheapness of living, though, alas! this is greatly changed from former times, since Florence has become the capital of Italy. Formerly a palace could be rented for a trifle, troops of servants for another trifle, and the table could be furnished from day to day with rarities and delicacies innumerable for another trifle. It is, therefore, a paradise for the respectable poor, the needy men of intelligence, and perhaps it may be added, for the shabby genteel. There is a glorious congregation of dilettante, literati, savans; a blessed brotherhood of artists and authors; here gather political philosophers of every grade. It was all this even under the Grand Duke of refreshing memory; hereafter it will be the same, only, perhaps, a little more so, under the new influences which it shall acquire and exert as the metropolis of a great kingdom.

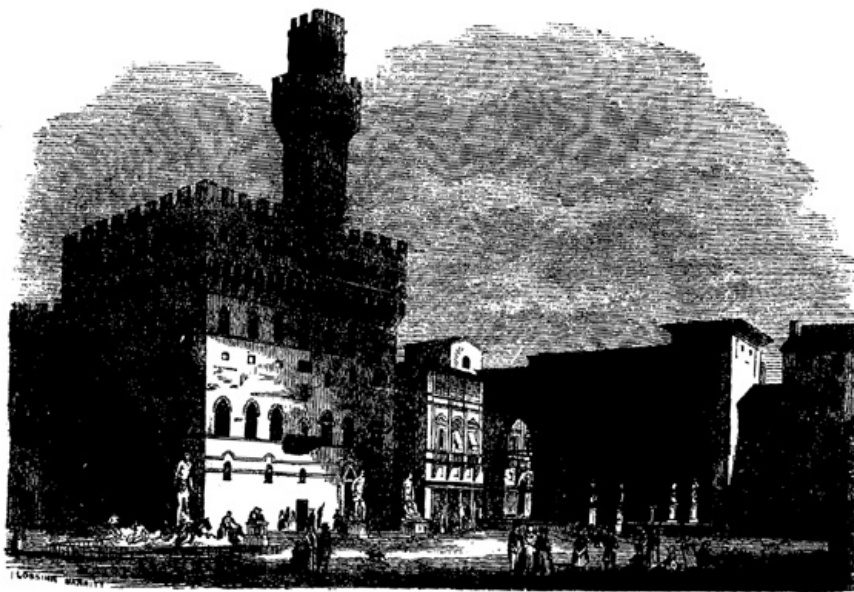
The Florentines are the most polished people under the sun. The Parisians claim this proud pre-eminence, but it can not be maintained. Amid the brilliancies of Parisian life there are fearful memories of bloody revolutions, brutal fights, and blood-thirsty cruelties. No such events as these mar the fair pages of later Florentine history. In fact, the forbearance and gentleness of the people have been perhaps to their disadvantage. Life in Florence is joy. The sensation of living is of itself a pleasure. Life in that delicious atmosphere becomes a higher state of being. It is the proper home for poets and artists. Those who pretend that there is any thing in America equal to Florence either in climate, landscape, or atmosphere, are simply humbugs. Florence is unique. It is the only Athens of the modern world.



PITTI PALACE.

[Illustration: Pitti Palace.]

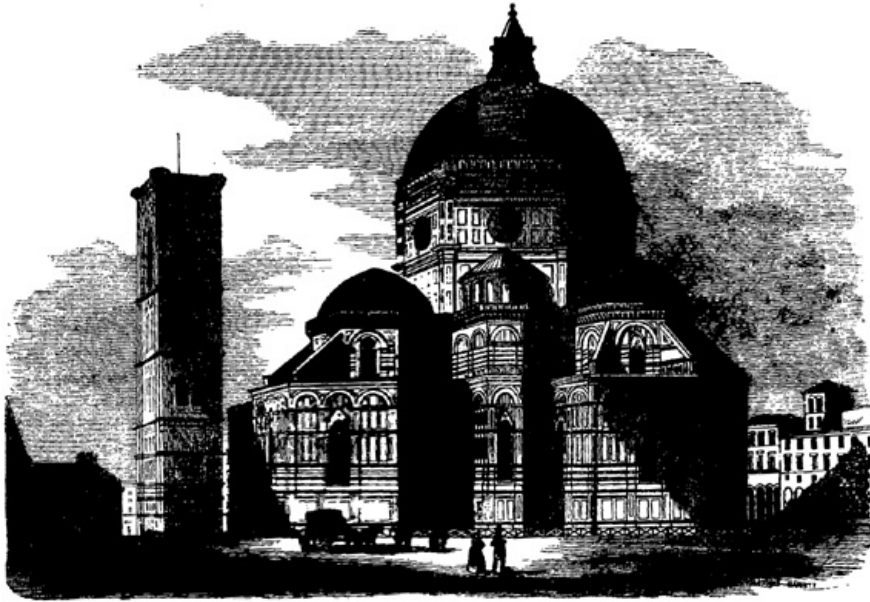
The streets are cool and delightful. The great bath houses keep off the rays of the sun. The people love to stroll away the greater part of their happy days. They loiter around the corners or under the porticoes gathering news and retailing the same. Hand-organs are generally discountenanced. Happy city!



FOUNTAIN OF NEPTUNE, PALAZZO VECCHIO.

[Illustration: Fountain Of Neptune, Palazzo Vecchio.]

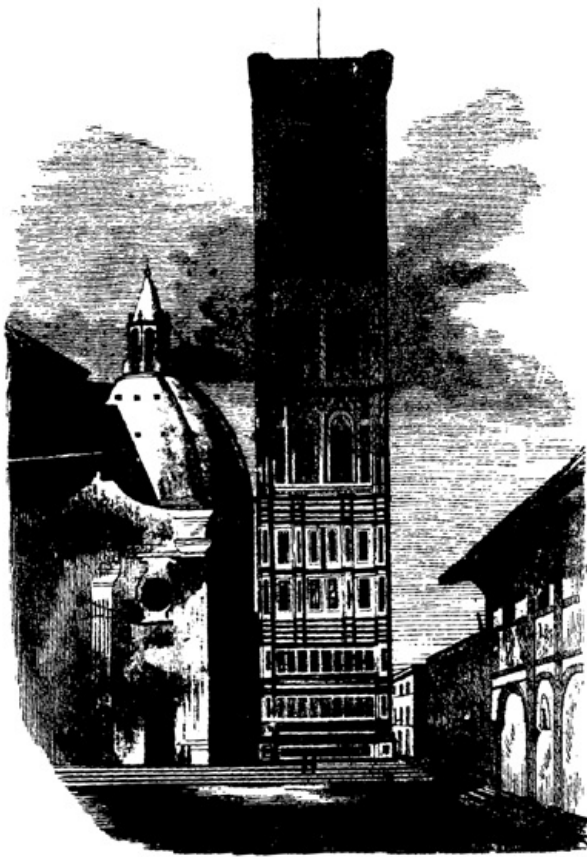
When it is too hot in the streets there is the vast cathedral--Il Duomo--dim, shadowy, magnificent, its gigantic dome surpassed only by that of St. Peter's. And yet in the twilight of this sacred interior, where there dwells so much of the mysterious gloom only found in the Gothic cathedrals of the north, many find greater delight than in all the dazzling splendor, the pomp, and glory, and majesty of the Roman temple. Beside it rises the Campanile, as fair as a dream, and in appearance almost as unsubstantial. Not far off is the Baptistery, with its gates of bronze--an assemblage of glory which might well suffice for one city.



THE DUOMO.

[Illustration: The Duomo.]

Around the piazza that incloses these sacred buildings they sell the best roasted chestnuts in the world. Is it any wonder that Florence is so attractive?

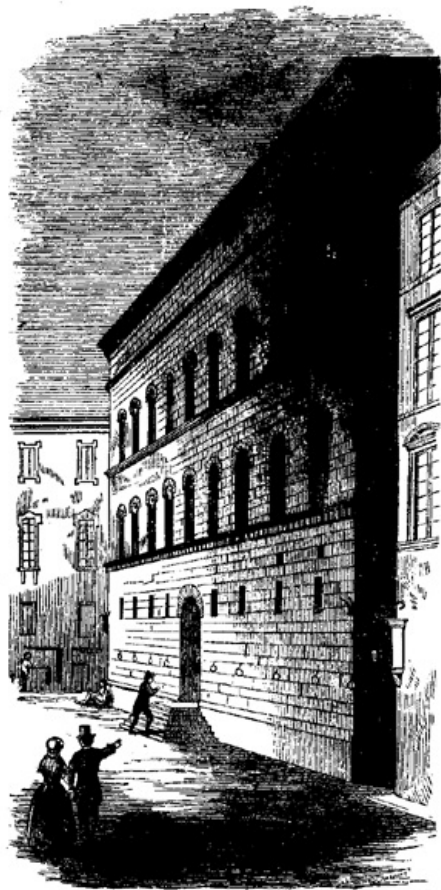


THE CAMPANILE.

[Illustration: The Campanile.]

The Dodge Club obtained furnished apartments in a fine large hotel that looked out on the Ponte della Trinita and on the Arno. Beneath was the principal promenade in the city. It was a highly agreeable residence.

No sooner had they arrived than Buttons set out in search of the Spaniards. Three days had been lost on the road. He was half afraid that those three days had lost him the Spaniards altogether. Three days! It was possible that they had seen Florence in that time and had already left. The thought of this made Buttons feel extremely nervous. He spent the first day in looking over all the hotels in the city. The second in searching through as many of the lodging-houses as were likely to be chosen by the Spaniards. The third he spent in meandering disconsolately through the cafés. Still there were no signs of them. Upon this Buttons fell into a profound melancholy. In fact it was a very hard case. There seemed nothing left for him to do. How could he find them out?



TROZZI PALACE.

[Illustration: Trozzi Palace.]

Dick noticed the disquietude of his friend, and sympathized with him deeply. So he lent his aid and searched through the city as industriously as possible. Yet in spite of every effort their arduous labors were defeated. So Buttons became hopeless.

The Senator, however, had met with friends. The American Minister at Turin happened at that time to be in Florence. Him the Senator recollected as an old acquaintance, and also as a tried companion in arms through many a political campaign. The Minister received him with the most exuberant delight. Dinner, wine, feast of reason, flow of soul, interchange of latest news, stories of recent adventures on both sides, laughter, compliments, speculations on future party prospects, made the hours of an entire afternoon fly like lightning. The American Eagle was never more convivial.

The Minister would not let him go. He made him put up at his hotel. He had the entree into the highest Florentine society. He would introduce the Senator everywhere. The Senator would have an opportunity of seeing Italian manners and customs such as was very rarely enjoyed. The Senator was delighted at the idea.

But Mr. Figgs and the Doctor began to show signs of weariness. The former walked with Dick through the Boboli gardens and confided all his soul to his young friend. What was the use of an elderly man like him putting himself to so much trouble? He had seen enough of Italy. He didn't want to see any more. He would much rather be safe at home. Besides, the members of the Club were all going down the broad road that leadeth to ruin. Buttons was infatuated about those Spaniards. The Doctor thought that he (Dick) was involved in some mysterious affair of a similar nature. Lastly, the Senator was making a plunge into society. It was too much. The ride over the Apennines to Bologna might be

interesting for two young fellows like him and Buttons, but was unfit for an elderly person. Moreover, he didn't care about going to the seat of war. He had seen enough of fighting. In short, he and the Doctor had made up their minds to go back to Paris via Leghorn and Marseilles.

Dick remonstrated, expostulated, coaxed. But Mr. Figgs was inflexible.



BUTTONS MELANCHOLY.

[Illustration: Buttons Melancholy.]

CHAPTER XLIII

THE SENATOR ENTRAPPED.--THE WILES AND WITCHERY OF A QUEEN OF SOCIETY. --HIS FATE DESTINED TO BE, AS HE THINKS, ITALIAN COUNTESSSES. --SENTIMENTAL CONVERSATION.--POETRY.--BEAUTY.--MOONLIGHT.--RAPTURE. --DISTRACTION.--BLISS!

The blandishments of Florentine society might have led captive a sterner soul than that of the Senator. Whether he wished it or not, he was overcome. His friend, the Minister, took him to the houses of the leaders of society, and introduced him as an eminent American statesman and member of the Senate.

Could any recommendation be equal to that? For, be it remembered, it was the Revolutionary time. Republicanism ran high. America was synonymous with the Promised Land. To be a statesman in America was as great a dignity as to be prince in any empire on earth. Besides, it was infinitely more honored, for it was popular. The eyes of the struggling people were turned to that country which showed them an example of republican freedom.

So if the Florentines received the Senator with boundless hospitality, it was because they admired his country, and revered his dignity. They liked to consider the presence of the American Minister and Senator as an expression of the good-will of the American Government. They looked upon him diplomatically. All that he said was listened to with the deepest respect, which was none the less when they did not comprehend a word. His pithy sentences, when translated into Italian, became the neatest epigrams in the world. His suggestions as to the best mode of elevating and enriching the country were considered by one set as the profoundest philosophy, and by another as the keenest satire. They were determined to lionize him. It was a new sensation to the Senator. He desired to prolong it. He recalled the lines of the good Watts:

"My willing soul would stay

In such a frame as this."

He thought of Dr. Franklin in Paris, of his severe republicanism amid the aristocratic influences around. How like his present situation was to that of the august philosopher!

The marked attention which the Minister paid to the Senator added greatly to the importance of the latter. The Florentines reasoned thus: A Minister is a great man. As a general thing his travelling countrymen pay respect to him. What then must be the position of that travelling fellow-countryman who receives attention instead of paying it? What would the position of an Englishman need to be in order to gain the attention of the British Ambassador? Ducal at least. Hence there is only one conclusion. An American Senator ranks with an English Duke.

Others went beyond this: Mark the massive forehead, the severe eye, the cool, self-possessed mien of this American. The air of one accustomed to rule. Listen to his philosophic conversation. One of America's greatest statesmen. No doubt he has a certain prospect of becoming President. President! It must be so; and that accounts for the attention paid by the American Ambassador. He, of course, wishes to be continued in his office under the next administration. After all, the Florentines were not so far out of the way. A much worse man than the Senator might be made President. In the chapter of accidents his name, or the name of one like him, might carry the votes of some roaring convention.

For two or three days the Senator was the subject of an eager contest among all the leaders of society. At length there

appeared upon, the scene the great Victrix in a thousand contests such as these. The others fell back discomfited, and the Senator became her prey.

The Countess di Nottinero was not exactly a Recamier, but she was a remarkably brilliant woman, and the acknowledged leader of the liberal part of Florentine society. Of course, the haughty aristocratic party held themselves grandly aloof, and knew nothing either of her or the society to which she belonged.

She was generally known as La Cica, a nickname given by her enemies, though what "Cica" meant no one could tell exactly. It was a sort of contraction made up from her Christian name, Cecilia, as some thought; others thought it was the Italian word cica given on account of some unknown incident. At any rate, as soon as she made her appearance driving down the Lung'h' Arno, with the massive form of the Senator by her side, his fame rose up to its zenith. He became more remarked than ever, and known among all classes as the illustrious American to whom belonged the certainty of being next President of the United States.

Rumor strengthened as it grew. Reports were circulated which would certainly have amazed the worthy Senator if he had heard them all. It was said that he was the special Plenipotentiary Extraordinary sent by the American Government as a mark of their deep sympathy with the Italian movement, and that he was empowered, at the first appearance of a new Government in Italy, to recognize it officially as a first-class Power, and thus give it the mighty sanction of the United States. What wonder that all eyes were turned admiringly toward him wherever he went. But he was too modest to notice it. He little knew that he was the chief object of interest to every house, hotel, and café in the city. Yet it was a fact.

His companions lost sight of him for some time. They heard the conversation going on about the sayings of the great American. They did not know at first who it was; but at length concluded that it referred to the Minister from Turin.

La Cica did her part marvellously well. All the dilettanti, the artists, authors, political philosophers, and beaux esprits of every grade followed the example of La Cica. And it is a fact that by the mere force of character, apart from any adventitious aids of refinement, the Senator held his own remarkably. Yet it must be confessed that he was at times extremely puzzled.

La Cica did not speak the best English in the world; yet that could not account for all the singular remarks which she made. Still less could it account for the tender interest of her manner. She had remarkably bright eyes. Why wandered those eyes so often to his, and why did they beam with such devotion--beaming for a moment only to fall in sweet innocent confusion? La Cica had the most fascinating manners, yet they were often perplexing to the Senator's soul. The little offices which she required of him did not appear in his matter-of-fact eyes as strictly prudent. The innate gallantry which he possessed carried him bravely along through much that was bewildering to his nerves. Yet he was often in danger of running away in terror.

"The Countess," he thought, "is a most remarkable fine woman; but she does use her eyes uncommon, and I do wish she wouldn't be quite so demonstrative."

The good Senator had never before encountered a thorough woman of the world, and was as ignorant as a child of the innumerable little harmless arts by which the power of such a one is extended and secured. At last the Senator came to this conclusion. La Cica was desperately in love with him.

She appeared to be a widow. At least she had no husband that he had ever seen; and therefore to the Senator's mind she must be a spinster or a widow. From the general style in which she was addressed he concluded that she was the latter. Now if the poor Cica was hopelessly in love, it must be stopped at once. For he was a married man, and his good lady still lived, with a very large family, most of the members of which had grown up.

La Cica ought to know this. She ought indeed. But let the knowledge be given delicately, not abruptly. He confided his little difficulty to his friend the Minister. The Minister only laughed heartily.

"But give me your opinion."

The Minister held his sides, and laughed more immoderately than ever.

"It's no laughing matter," said the Senator. "It's serious. I think you might give an opinion."

But the Minister declined. A broad grin wreathed his face during all the remainder of his stay at Florence. In fact, it is said that it has remained there ever since.

The Senator felt indignant, but his course was taken. On the following evening they walked on the balcony of La Cica's noble residence. She was sentimental, devoted, charming.

The conversation of a fascinating woman does not look so well when reported as it is when uttered. Her power is in her tone, her glance, her manner. Who can catch the evanescent beauty of her expression or the deep tenderness of her well-modulated voice? Who indeed?

"Does ze scene please you, my Senator?"

"Very much indeed."

"Youar countrymen haf tol me zey would like to stay here alloway."

"It is a beautiful place."

"Did you aiver see any thin moaire loafely?" And the Countess looked full in his face.

"Never," said the Senator, earnestly. The next instant he blushed. He had been betrayed into a compliment.

The Countess sighed.

"Helas! my Senator, that it is not pairmitted to moartals to sociate as zey would laiike."

"Your Senator," thought the gentleman thus addressed; "how fond, how tender--poor thing! poor thing!"

"I wish that Italy was nearer to the States," said he.

"How I adamiar youar style of mind, so differente from ze Italiana. You are so strong--so nobile. Yet would Maike to see moar of ze poetic in you."

"I always loved poetry, marm," said the Senator, desperately.

"Ah--good--nais--eccelente. I am plees at zat," cried the Countess, with much animation. "You would loafe it moar eef you knew Italiano. Your lingua ees not sufficiente musicale for poatry."

"It is not so soft a language as the _I_-talian."

"Ah--no--not so soft. Very well. And what theenka you of ze Italiano?"

"The sweetest language I ever heard in all my born days."

"Ah, now--you hev not heard much of ze Italiano, my Senator."

"I have heard you speak often," said the Senator, naively.

"Ah, you compliment! I sot you was aboove flattera."

And the Countess playfully tapped his arm with her little fan.

"What Ingelis poet do you loafe best?"

"Poet? English poet?" said the Senator, with some surprise. "Oh--why, marm, I think Watts is about the best of the lot!"

"Watt? Was he a poet? I did not know zat. He who invented ze stim-injaine? And yet if he was a poet it is natnrale zat you loafe him best."

"Steam-engine? Oh no! This one was a minister."

"A meeneestaire? Ah! an abbé? I know him not. Yet I haf read mos of all your poets."

"He made up hymns, marm, and psalms--for instance: 'Watts's Divine Hymns and Spiritual Songs.'"

"Songs? Spiritnelle? Ah, I mus at once procuaire ze works of Watt, which was favorit poet of my Senator."

"A lady of such intelligence as you would like the poet Watts," said the Senator, firmly.



LA CICA.

[Illustration: La Cica.]

"He is the best known by far of all our poets."

"What? better zan Sakespeare, Milton, Bairon? You much surprass me."

"Better known and better loved than the whole lot. Why, his poetry is known by heart through all England and America."

"Merciful Heaven! what you tell me! ees eet possbl! An yet he is not known here efen by name. It would ples me mooch, my Senator, to hajre you make one quotatione. Know you Watt? Tell to me some words of his which I may remembaire."

"I have a shocking bad memory."

"Bad raemora! Oh, but you remember somethin, zis mos beautiful charm nait--you haf a nobile soul--you mus be affecta by beauty--by ze ideal. Make for a me one quotatione."

And she rested her little hand on the Senator's arm, and looked up imploringly in his face.

The Senator looked foolish. He felt even more so. Here was a beautiful woman, by act and look showing a tender interest in him. Perplexing--but very flattering after all. So he replied:

"You will not let me refuse you any thing."

"Aha! you are vera willin to refuse. It is difficulty for me to excitare youar regards. You are fill with the grands ideas. But come--will you spik for me some from your favorit Watt?"

"Well, if you wish it so much," said the Senator, kindly, and he hesitated.

"Ah--I do wis it so much!"

"Ehem!"

"Begin," said the Countess. "Behold me. I listen. I hear every sin, and will remembaire it forava."

The only thing that the Senator could think of was the verse which had been running in his head for the last few days, its measured rhythm keeping time with every occupation:

"My willing soul would stay--"

"Stop one moment," said the Countess. "I weesh to learn it from you;" and she looked fondly and tenderly up, but instantly dropped her eyes.

"Ma willina sol wooda sta--"

"In such a frame as this," prompted the Senator.

"'Een socha framaz zees.' Wait--'Ma willina sol wooda sta in socha framaz zees.' Ah, appropriat! but could I hope zat you were true to zose lines, my Senator? Well?"

"And sit and sing herself away," said the Senator, in a faltering voice, and breaking out into a cold perspiration for fear of committing himself by such uncommonly strong language.

"'Ansit ansin hassaf awai,'" repeated the Countess, her face lighting up with a sweetly conscious expression.

The Senator paused.

"Well?"

"I--ehem! I forget."

"Forget? Impossible!"

"I do really."

"Ah now! Forget? I see by your face--you desave. Say on."

The Countess again gently touched his arm with both of her little hands, and held it as though she would clasp it.

"Have you fear? Ah, cruel!"

The Senator turned pale, but finding refusal impossible, boldly finished:

"To everlasting bliss'--there!"

"To affarlastin blees thar.' Stop. I repeat it all: 'My willina sol wooda sta in socha framas zees, ansit ansin hassaf awai to affarlastin blees thar.' Am I right?"

"Yes," said the Senator, meekly.

"I knew you war a poetic sola," said the Countess, confidingly. "You air honesto--true--you can not desave. When you spik I can beliv you. Ah, my Senator! an you can spik zis poetry!--at soch a taim! I nefare knew befoare zat you was so impassione!--an you air so artaful! You breeng ze confersazione to beauty--to poatry--to ze poet Watt--so you may spik verses mos impassione! Ah! What do you mean? Santissima madre! how I wish you spik Italiano."

The Countess drew nearer to him, but her approach only deepened his perplexity.

"How that poor thing does love me!" sighed the Senator. "Law bless it! she can't help it--can't help it nohow. She is a goner; and what can I do? I'll have to leave Florence. Oh, why did I quit Buttons! Oh, why--"

The Countess was standing close beside him in a tender mood waiting for him to break the silence. How could he? He had been uttering words which sounded to her like love; and she--"a widow! a widow! wretched man that I am!"

There was a pause. The longer it lasted the more awkward the Senator felt. What upon earth was he to do or say? What business had he to go and quote poetry to widows? What an old fool he must be! But the Countess was very far from feeling awkward. Assuming an elegant attitude she looked up, her face expressing the tenderest solicitude.

"What ails my Senator?"

"Why the fact is, marm--I feel sad--at leaving Florence. I must go shortly. My wife has written summoning me home. The children are down with the measles."

Oh, base fabrication! Oh, false Senator! There wasn't a word of truth in that remark. You spoke so because you wished La Cica to know that you had a wife and family. Yet it was very badly done.

La Cica changed neither her attitude nor her expression. Evidently the existence of his wife, and the melancholy situation of his unfortunate children, awaked no sympathy.

"But, my Senator--did you not say you wooda seeng yousellef away to affarlasteen belees?"

"Oh, marm, it was a quotation--only a quotation."

But at this critical juncture the conversation was broken up by the arrival of a number of ladies and gentlemen.

But could the Senator have known!

Could he but have known how and where those words would confront him again!

CHAPTER XLIV

"MORERE DIAGORA, NON ENIM IN COELUM ADSCENSURUS ES."--THE APOTHEOSIS OF THE SENATOR (NOTHING LESS--IT WAS A MOMENT IN WHICH A MAN MIGHT WISH TO DIE--THOUGH, OF COURSE, THE SENATOR DIDN'T DIE).

Strolling through the streets day by day Buttons and Dick beheld the triumph of the Senator. They gazed on it from afar, and in amazement saw their old companion suddenly lifted up to a position which they could not hope to gain. The companion of nobles--the associate of *beaux esprits*--the friend of the wealthy, the great, and the proud; what in the world was the cause of this sudden, this unparalleled leap forward to the very highest point of honor? Who, in the name of goodness, was that dashing woman with whom he was always driving about? Who were those fair ladies with whom he was forever promenading? Plainly the chief people of the land; but how the mischief did he get among them? They were bewildered even though the half of the truth had not begun to dawn upon their minds. They never saw him to ask him about it, and for some time only looked upon him from a distance.

"Do you give it up?" asked Buttons.

"I give it up."

"And I too."

"At any rate the United States might have many a worse representative."

"But I wonder how he can get along. How can he manage to hold his own among these refined, over-cultivated, fastidious Florentines?"

"Goodness knows!"

"A common school New England education can scarcely fit a man for intercourse with polished Italians. The granite hills of New Hampshire have never been famous for producing men of high breeding. That is not their specialty."

"Besides, our good friend can not speak a single word of any language but his own."

"And frequently fails in that."

"He hasn't the remotest glimmering of an idea about Art."

"Not of the Fine Arts, but in the useful arts he is immense."

"He looks upon Italy as he would upon a field of stumps--a place to be cleared, broken up, brought under cultivation, and made productive."

"Yes, productive in cotton factories and Yankee notions."

"What in the world can keep up his reputation among the most poetic and least utilitarian people in the world?"

"There's the mystery!"

"The beauty of it is he goes as much with the English as with the Italians. Can he keep up his vernacular among them and still preserve the charm?"

"Well, whatever is the secret. I glory in it. I believe in him. He is a man. A more noble-hearted, sincere, upright, guileless soul never lived. Besides, he knows thoroughly what he has gone over."

"He is as generous a soul as ever lived."

"Yes, a stiff utilitarian in theory, but in practice an impulsive sentimentalist."

"He would legislate according to the most narrow and selfish principles, but would lay down his life for his friend."

"Think of him at Perugia!"

"Yes; the man himself with his brave soul and invincible courage. Didn't he fight? Methinks he did!"

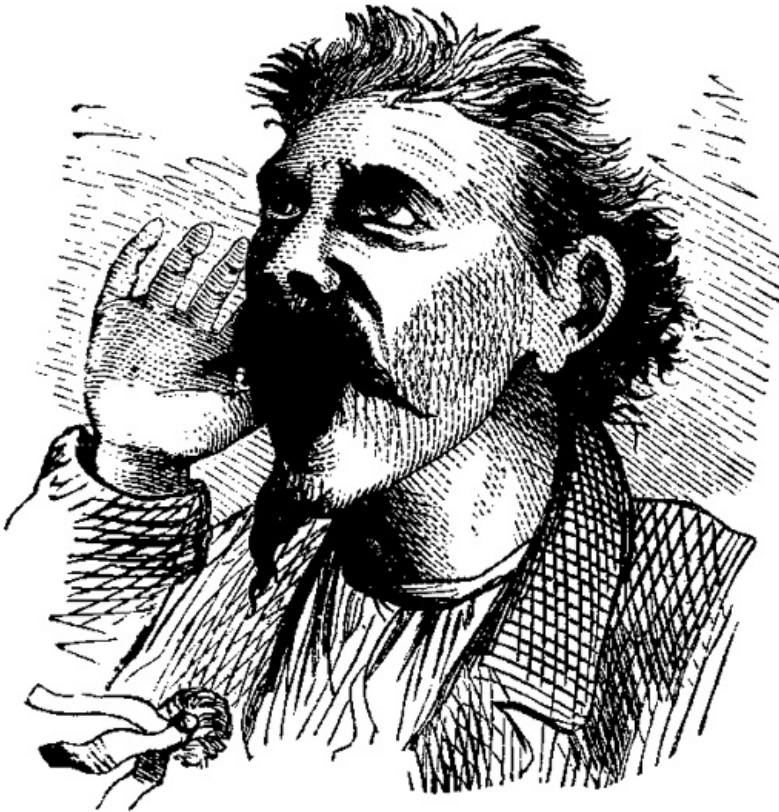
"If it hadn't been for him it is extremely probable that you and I would now have been--well, certainly not just here."

Talking thus, the two young men walked up toward the Palazzo Vecchio. They noticed that the busy street through which they passed was filled with an unusual multitude, who were all agitated with one general and profound excitement, and were all hurrying in one direction. The sight awakened their interest. They went on with the stream. At every step the crowd increased. At every street new throngs poured in to join the vast multitude.

Confused murmurs rose into the air. Hasty words passed from mouth to mouth. They were unintelligible. They could only distinguish broken sentences--words unknown--Cavriana--Mincio--Tedeschi --Napoleone--Spia d'Italia. What was it all about? They could not guess. Evidently some mighty national event had occurred, which was of overwhelming importance. For the entire city had turned out, and now, as they entered the great square in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, an astonishing sight burst upon their view. A vast multitude filled the square to overflowing. Loud cries arose. Shouts of a thousand kinds all blending together into one deafening roar, and rising on high like the thunder of a cataract:

"Vittoria!" "Vittoria!" "Cavriana!" "I Francesi!" "Viva l'Italia!" "Viva Vittore Emmanuele! il nostro Re!" "Viva!" "_ Viva _!" "VIVA!!!" Words like these rose all around, mingled with thousands of similar exclamations. At length there was distinguished one word. It was passed from man to man, more frequently uttered, gathering as it passed, adding new volumes of meaning to its own sonorous sound, till at last all other words were drowned in that one grand word, which to this rejoicing multitude was the lyre of glorious victory, the promise of endless triumphs for regenerated Italy:

"SOLFERINO!"



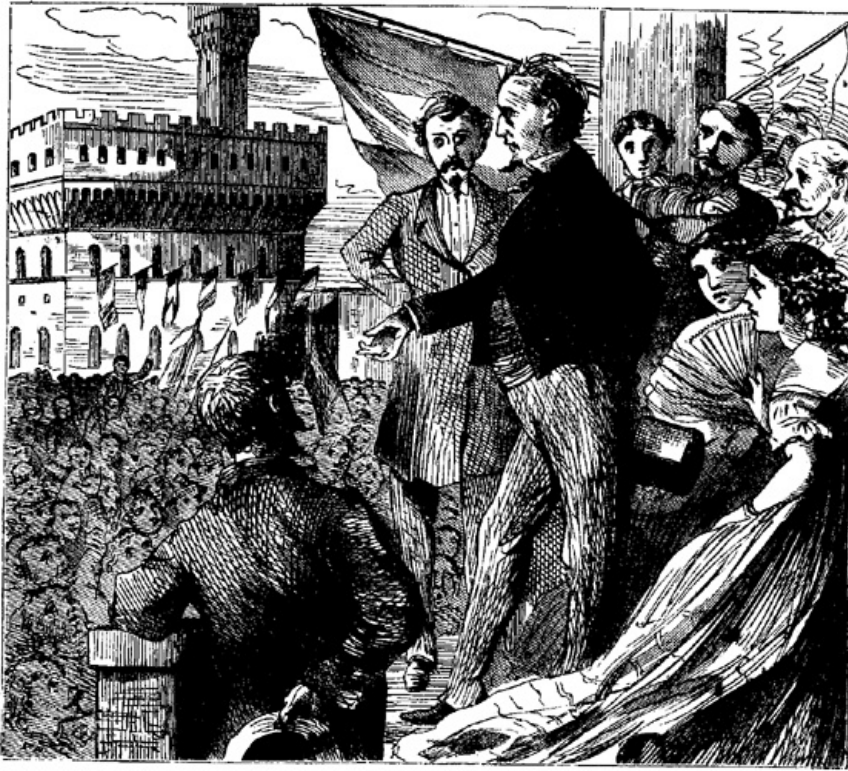
SOLFERINO!

[Illustration: Solferino!]

"_Solferino_!" They did not know then, as they listened, the full meaning of that eloquent word. But on mingling with the shouting crowd they soon learned it all: how the accursed Tedeschi had summoned all their energy to crush forever the array of liberty; how the Kaiser himself came from beyond the mountains to insure his triumph; how the allied armies had rushed upon their massive columns and beaten them back; how, hour after hour, the battle raged, till at last the plain for many a league was covered with the wounded and the dead: how the wrongs of ages were crowded together in the glorious vengeance of that day of days; how Victory hovered over the invincible banners of Italy; how the Tedeschi fled, routed, over the river, no more to cross it as masters; how the hopes of Italy arose immortal from that one day's terrific slaughter; how Liberty was now forever secured, and a Kingdom of Italy under an Italian King.

"Viva Italia!" "Viva Luigi Napoleone!" "Vira Garibaldi!" "Viva Vittore Eramanuele Re d'Italia!"

In great moments of popular excitement people do not talk to one another. They rhapsodize; and the Italians more than any other people. Hence the above.



THE SENATOR SPEAKS.

[Illustration: The Senator Speaks.]

Buttons and Dick clambered up to the recess of a window and contemplated the scene. There was the innumerable crowd; swaying, embracing, laughing, weeping, shouting, cheering. High in the air waved hundreds of banners; and the tri-color flaunted in ribbons, from thousands of breasts, or shone in rosettes, or gleamed in flowers. Ever and anon loud trumpet blasts arose triumphantly on high; in the distance victorious strains came swelling up front bands hurried there to express in thrilling music what words could never utter; while all around the whole air rang with the thunder of cannon that saluted the triumph of Solferino.

"Look there! Look! LOOK!" cried Dick.

He pointed to the large portico which is on the right of the Palazzo Vecchio. Buttons looked as he was directed.

He saw a great assemblage of ladies and gentlemen, the chief people of the Tuscan state. From this place those announcements had been made which had set the people wild with joy. There were beautiful ladies whose flashed faces and suffused eyes bore witness to their deep emotion. There were noble gentlemen whose arms still waved in the air as they cheered for Italy. And there, high above all others, rose a familiar figure--the massive shoulders, the calm, shrewd, square face, the benignant glance and smile, which could belong only to one person.

"_The Senator_!" cried Buttons.

Every body was looking in that direction. The impulsive crowd having celebrated abstract ideas, were now absolutely hungering for some tangible object upon which to expend something of the warmth of their feelings. A few who stood near the Senator and were impressed by his aspect, as soon as all the news had been made known, gave expression and direction to the feeling by shouting his name. As they shouted others took up the cry, louder, louder, and louder still, till his name burst forth in one sublime sound from thirty thousand lips.

No wonder that he started at such an appeal. He turned and looked upon the crowd. An ordinary man would have exhibited either confusion or wonder. The Senator, being an extraordinary man, exhibited neither. As he turned a vast roar burst from the multitude.

"Good Heavens!" cried Buttons; "what's in the wind now? Will this be a repetition of the scene in the Place Vendôme?"

"Hush!"

The crowd saw before them the man whose name and fame had been the subject of conjecture, wonder, applause, and hope for many days. They beheld in him the Representative of a mighty nation, sent to give them the right hand of fellowship, and welcome their country among the great powers of the earth. In him they saw the embodiment of America!

"Viva!" burst through the air. "The American Ambassador!" "Hurrah for the American Ambassador!" "The Plenipotentiary Extraordinary!" "He comes to crown our triumph!" "Hurrah for America!" "Free, generous America!" "The first nation to welcome Italy!" "Hurrah!" "This is the time!" "He will speak!" "Silence!" "Silence!" "He rises!" "Lo!" "He looks at us!" "Silence!" "Listen to the Most Illustrious Plenipotentiary Extraordinary!" "_Hush_! AMERICA SPEAKS!"

Such shouts and exclamations as these burst forth, with many others to the same effect. The crowd in front of the portico where the Senator stood--were almost uncontrollable in their excitement. The Senator rose to the greatness of the occasion. Here was a chance to Speak--to utter forth the deep sympathy of his countrymen with every down-trodden people striving for freedom. He turned to face them and held out his hand. At once the immense assemblage was hushed to silence.

The Senator took off his hat. Never before did he look as he looked now. The grandeur of the occasion had sublimed his usually rugged features into majesty. He looked like the incarnation of a strong, vigorous, invincible people.

The Senator spoke:

"Men of Italy!"

"In the name of the Great Republic!--I congratulate you on this glorious victory! It is a triumph of Liberty!--of the principles of '76!--of the immortal ideas!--for which our forefathers fought and died!--at Lexington!--at Bunker Hill!--and at a thousand other places in the great and glorious Revolution!"

The Senator paused. This was enough. It had been spoken in English. The Italians did not of course understand a word, yet they comprehended all his meaning. As he paused there burst forth a shout of joy such as is heard only once in a life-time; shout upon shout. The long peals of sound rose up and spread far away over the city. The vast crowd vibrated like one man to the impulse of the common enthusiasm.

It was too great to last. They rushed to the carriage of La Cica. They unharnessed the horses. They led the Senator to it and made him enter. They flung their tri-colors in. They threw flowers on his lap. They wound the flag of Italy around the carriage. A thousand marched before it. Thousands more walked beside and behind. They drew him up to his hotel in triumph, and the band struck up the thrilling strain of "Yankee Doodle!"

It would be unfair not to render justice to La Cica. She bore the scene admirably. Her beaming face, and lustrous eyes, and heaving bosom, and majestic air, showed that she appropriated to herself all the honor thus lavished upon the Senator. It was a proud moment for La Cica.

"Dick," said Buttons, as they descended from their perch.

"Well?"

"How do you feel now?"

"Obliterated. I do not exist. I was once a blot. I am expunged. There is no such thing as Dick."

"Who could have imagined this?"

"And how he bore it! The Senator is a great man. But come. Don't let us speak for an hour, for we are both unable to talk coherently."

From patriotic motives the two young men walked behind the Senator's carriage and cheered all the way.

Upon arriving at their lodgings in the evening they stationed themselves at the window and looked out upon the illuminated scene. Dick, finding his emotions too strong to be restrained, took his trombone and entertained a great crowd for hours with all the national airs he knew.

CHAPTER XLV

THE PRIVATE OPINION OF THE DOCTOR ABOUT FOREIGN TRAVEL.--BUTTONS STILL MEETS WITH AFFLICTIONS.

"The Italians, of at any rate the people of Florence, have just about as much cuteness as you will find anywhere."

Such was the dictum of the Senator in a conversation with his companions after rejoining them at the hotel. They had much to ask; he had much to tell. Never had he been more critical, more approbative. He felt now that he thoroughly understood the Italian question, and expressed himself in accordance with his consciousness.

"Nothing does a feller so much good," said he, "as mixing in all grades of society. It won't ever do to confine our observation to the lower class. We must mingle with the upper crust, who are the leaders of the people."

"Unfortunately," said Buttons, "we are not all Senators, so we have to do the best we can with our limited opportunities."

They had been in Florence long enough, and now the general desire was to go on. Mr. Figgs and the Doctor had greatly surprised the Senator by informing him that they did not intend to go any further.

And why not?

"Well, for my own part," said Mr. Figgs, "the discomforts of travel are altogether too great. It would not be so bad in the winter, but think how horribly hot it is. What is my condition? That of a man slowly suffocating. Think how fat I am. Even if I had the enthusiasm of Dick, or the fun of Buttons, my fat would force me to leave. Can you pretend to be a friend of mine and still urge me to go further? And suppose we passed over into Austrian territory. Perhaps we might be unmolested, but it is doubtful. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that we were arrested and detained. Imagine us--imagine me shut up in a room--or worse, a cell--in the month of July in midsummer, in the hottest part of this burning fiery furnace of a country! What would be left of me at the end of a week, or at the end of even one day? What? A grease

spot! A grease spot! Not a bit more, by Jingo!"



A GREASE SPOT.

[Illustration: A Grease Spot.]

After this speech, which was for him one of extraordinary length and vigor, Mr. Figgs fell exhausted into his chair.

"But you, Doctor," said the Senator, seeing that Mr. Figgs was beyond the reach of persuasion--"you--what reason is there for you to leave? You are young, strong, and certainly not fat."

"No, thank heaven! it is not the heat, or the fear of being suffocated in an Austrian dungeon that influences me."

"What, is the reason?"

"These confounded disturbances," said the Doctor languidly.

"Disturbances?"

"Yes. I hear that the road between this and Bologna swarms with vagabonds. Several diligences have been robbed. I heard a story which shows this state of things. A band of men entered the theatre of a small town along the road while the inhabitants were witnessing the play. At first the spectators thought it was part of the performance. They were soon undeceived. The men drew up in line in front of the stage and levelled their pieces. Then fastening the doors, they sent a number of men around through the house to plunder the whole audience. Not content with this they made the authorities of the town pay a heavy ransom."

"Some one has been humbugging you, Doctor," said Buttons.

"I had it from good authority," said the Doctor, calmly. "These fellows call themselves Revolutionists, and the peasantry sympathize with them."

"Well, if we meet with them there will be a little additional excitement."

"Yes, and the loss of our watches and money."

"We can carry our money where they won't find it, and our bills of exchange are all right, you know."

"I think none of you will accuse me of want of courage. If I met these fellows you know very well that I would go in for fighting them. But what I do object to is the infernal bother of being stopped, detained, or perhaps sent back. Then if any of us got wounded we would be laid up for a month or so. That's what I object to. If I had to do it it would be different, but I see no necessity."

"You surely want to see Lombardy?"

"No, I don't."

"Not Bologna?"

"No."

"Ferrara?"

"No."

"Do you mean to say that you don't want to see Venice and Milan?"

"Haven't the remotest desire to see either of the places. I merely wish to get back again to Paris. It's about the best place I've seen yet, except, of course, my native city, Philadelphia. That I think is without an equal. However, our minds are made up. We don't wish to change your plans--in fact, we never thought it possible. We are going to take the steamer at Leghorn for Marseilles, and go on to Paris."

"Well, Doctor," said Dick, "will you do me one favor before you go?"

"With pleasure. What is it?"

"Sell me your pistol."

"I can't sell it," said the Doctor. "It was a present to me. But I will be happy to lend it to you till we meet again in Paris. We will be sure to meet there in a couple of months at the furthest."

The Doctor took out his pistol and handed it to Dick, who thankfully received it.

"Oh, Buttons," said the Senator, suddenly, "I have good news for you. I ought to have told you before."

"Good news? what?"

"I saw the Spaniards."

"The Spaniards!" cried Buttons, eagerly, starting up. "Where did you see them? When? Where are they? I have scoured the whole town."

"I saw them at a very crowded assembly at the Countess's. There was such a scrouging that I could not get near them. The three were there. The little Don and his two sisters."

"And don't you know any thing about them?"

"Not a hooter, except something that the Countess told me. I think she said that they were staying at the villa of a friend of hers."

"A friend? Oh, confound it all! What shall I do?"

"The villa is out of town."

"That's the reason why I never could see them. Confound it all, what shall I do?"

"Buttons," said the Senator, gravely, "I am truly sorry to see a young man like you so infatuated about foreign women. Do not be offended, I mean it kindly. She may be a Jesuit in disguise; who knows? And why will you put yourself to grief about a little black-eyed gal that don't know a word of English? Believe me, New England is wide, and has ten thousand better gals than ever she began to be. If you will get in love wait till you get home and fall in love like a Christian, a Republican, and a Man."

But the Senator's words had no effect. Buttons sat for a few moments lost in thought. At length he rose and quietly left the room. It was about nine in the morning when he left. It was about nine in the evening when he returned. He looked dusty, fatigued, fagged, and dejected. He had a long story to tell and was quite communicative. The substance of it was this: On leaving the hotel he had gone at once to La Cica's residence, and had requested permission to see her. He could not till twelve. He wandered about and called again at that hour. She was very amiable, especially on learning that he was a friend of the Senator, after whom she asked with deep interest. Nothing could exceed her affability. She told him all that she knew about the Spaniards. They were stopping at the villa of a certain friend of hers whom she named. It was ten miles from the city. The friend had brought them to the assembly. It was but for a moment that she had seen them. She wished for his sake that she had learned more about them. She trusted that he would succeed in his earnest search. She should think that they might still be in Florence, and if he went out at once he might see them. Was this his first visit to Florence? How perfectly he had the Tuscan accent; and why had he not accompanied his friend the Senator to her salon? But it would be impossible to repeat all that La Cica said.



FAREWELL, FIGGS!

[Illustration: Farewell, Figgs!]

Buttons went out to the villa at once; but to his extreme disgust found that the Spaniards, had left on the preceding day for Bologna. He drove about the country for some distance, rested his horses, and took a long walk, after which he returned.

Their departure for Bologna on the following morning was a settled thing. The diligence started early. They had pity on the flesh of Figgs and the spirit of the Doctor. So they bade them good-bye on the evening before retiring.

CHAPTER XLVI

A MEMORABLE DRIVE.--NIGHT.--THE BRIGANDS ONCE MORE.--GARIBALDI'S NAME.--THE FIRE.--THE IRON BAR.--THE MAN FROM THE GRANITE STATE AND HIS TWO BOYS.

"The great beauty of this pistol is a little improvement that I have not seen before."

And Dick proceeded to explain.

"Here is the chamber with the six cavities loaded. Now, you see, when you wish, you touch this spring and out pops the butt."

"Well?"

"Very well. Here I have another chamber with six cartridges: It's loaded, the cartridges are covered with copper and have detonating powder at one end. As quick as lightning I put this on, and there you have the pistol ready to be fired again six times."

"So you have twelve shots?"

"Yes."

"And cartridges to spare?"

"The Doctor gave me all that he had, about sixty, I should think."

"You have enough to face a whole army--"

"Precisely--and in my coat-pocket."

This conversation took place in the banquette of the diligence that conveyed Dick, Buttons, and the Senator from Florence to Bologna. A long part of the journey had been passed over. They were among the mountains.

"Do you expect to use that?" asked the Senator, carelessly.

"I do."

"You believe these stories then?"

"Yes; don't you?"

"Certainly."

"So do I," said Buttons. "I could not get a pistol; but I got this from an acquaintance."

And he drew from his pocket an enormous bowie-knife.

"Bowie-knives are no good," said the Senator. "Perhaps they may do if you want to assassinate; but for nothing else. You can't defend yourself. I never liked it. It's not American. It's not the direct result of our free institutions."

"What have you then?"

"This," said the Senator.

And he lifted up a crow-bar from the front of the coach. Brandishing it in the air as easily as an ordinary man would swing a walking-stick. He looked calmly at his astonished companions.

"You see," said he, "there are several reasons why this is the best sort of weapon for me. A short knife is no use. A sword is no good, for I don't know the sword exercise. A gun is worthless; I would fire it off once and then have to use it as a club. It would then be apt to break. That would be disagreeable--especially in the middle of a fight. A stick or club of any kind would be open to the same objection. What, then, is the weapon for me? Look at me. I am big, strong, and active. I have no skill. I am brute strength. So a club is my only weapon--a club that won't break. Say iron, then. There you have it."

And the Senator swung the ponderous bar around in a way that showed the wisdom of his choice.

"You are about right," said Buttons. "I venture to say you'll do as much mischief with that as Dick will with his pistol. Perhaps more. As for me, I don't expect to do much. Still, if the worst comes, I'll try to do what I can."

"We may not have to use them," said the Senator. "Who are below?"

"Below?"

"In the coach?"

"Italians."

"Women?"

"No, all men. Two priests, three shop-keeper-looking persons, and a soldier."

"Ah! Why, we ought to be comparatively safe."

"Oh, our number is not any thing. The country is in a state of anarchy. Miserable devils of half-starved Italians swarm along the road, and they will try to make hay while the sun shines. I have no doubt we will be stopped half a dozen times before we get to Bologna."

"I should think," said the Senator, indignantly, "that if these chaps undertake to govern the country--these republican chaps--they had ought to govern it. What kind of a way is this to leave helpless travellers at the mercy of cut-throats and assassins?"

"They think," said Buttons, "that their first duty is to secure independence, and after that they will promote order."

"The Florentines are a fine people--a people of remarkable cuteness and penetration; but it seems to me that they are taking things easy as far as fighting is concerned. They don't send their soldiers to the war, do they?"

"Well, no, I suppose they think their army may be needed nearer home. The Grand Duke has long arms yet; and knows how to bribe."

By this time they were among the mountain forests where the scenery was grander, the air cooler, the sky darker, than before. It was late in the day, and every mile increased the wildness of the landscape and the thickness of the gloom. Further and further, on they went till at least they came to a winding-place where the road ended at a gully over which there was a bridge. On the bridge was a barricade. They did not see it until they had made a turn where the road wound, where at once the scene burst on their view.

The leaders reared, the postillions swore, the driver snapped his whip furiously. The passengers in "coupé," "rotonde," and "interieure" popped out their heads, the passengers on the "banquette" stared, until at last, just as the postillions were dismounting to reconnoitre, twelve figures rose up from behind the barricade, indistinct in the gloom, and bringing their rifles to their shoulders took aim.

The driver yelled, the postillions shouted, the passengers shrieked. The three men in the banquette prepared for a fight. Suddenly a loud voice was heard from behind. They looked. A number of men stood there, and several more were leaping out from the thick woods on the right. They were surrounded. At length one of the men came forward from behind.

"You are at our mercy," said he. "Whoever gives up his money may go free. Whoever resists dies. Do you hear?"

Meanwhile the three men in the banquette had piled some trunks around, and prepared to resist till the last extremity. Dick was to fire; Buttons to keep each spare butt loaded; the Senator to use his crow-bar on the heads of any assailants. They waited in silence. They heard the brigands rummaging through the coach below, the prayers of the passengers, their appeals for pity, their groans at being compelled to give up every thing.

"The cowards don't deserve pity!" cried the Senator. "There are enough to get up a good resistance. We'll show fight, anyhow!"



IN THE COACH.

[Illustration: In The Coach.]

Scarcely had he spoke when three or four heads appeared above the edge of the coach.

"Haste!--your money!" said one.

"Stop!" said Buttons. "This gentleman is the American Plenipotentiary Extraordinary, who has just come from Florence, and is on his way to communicate with Garibaldi."

"Garibaldi!" cried the man, in a tone of deep respect.

"Yes," said Buttons, who had not miscalculated the effect of that mighty name. "If you harm us or plunder us you will have to settle your account with Garibaldi--that's all!"

The man was silent. Then he leaped down, and in another moment another man came.

"Which is the American Plenipotentiary Extraordinary?"

"He," said Buttons, pointing to the Senator.

"Ah! I know him. It is the same. I saw him at his reception in Florence, and helped to pull his carriage."

The Senator calmly eyed the brigand, who had respectfully taken off his hat.

"So you are going to communicate with Garibaldi at once. Go in peace! Gentlemen every one of us fought under Garibaldi at Rome. Ten years ago he disbanded a large number of us among these mountains. I have the honor to inform you that ever since that time I have got my living out of the public, especially those in the service of the Government. You are different. I like you because you are Americans. I like you still better because you are friends of Garibaldi. Go in peace! When you see the General tell him Giuglio Malvi sends his respects."

And the man left them. In about a quarter of an hour the barricade was removed, and the passengers resumed their seats with lighter purses but heavier hearts. The diligence started, and once more went thundering along the mountain road.

"I don't believe we've seen the last of these scoundrels yet," said Buttons.

"Nor I," said Dick.

A general conversation followed. It was late, and but few things were visible along the road. About two hours passed away without any occurrence.

"Look!" cried Dick, suddenly.

They looked.

About a quarter of a mile ahead a deep red glow arose above the forest, illumining the sky. The windings of the road prevented them from seeing the cause of it. The driver was startled, but evidently thought it was no more dangerous to go on than to stop. So he lashed up his horses and set them off at a furious gallop. The rumble of the ponderous wheels shut out all other sounds. As they advanced the light grew more vivid.

"I shouldn't wonder," said the Senator, "if we have another barricade here. Be ready, boys! We won't get off so easily this time."

The other two said not a word. On, and on. The report of a gun suddenly roused all. The driver lashed his horses. The postillions took the butts of their riding-whips and pelted the animals. The road took a turn, and, passing this a strange scene burst upon their sight.

A wide, open space on the road-side, a collection of beams across the road, the shadowy forms of about thirty men, and the whole scene dimly lighted by a smouldering fire. As it blazed up a little the smoke rolled off and they saw as overturned carriage, two horses tied to a tree, and two men with their hands bound behind them lying on the ground.

A voice rang out through the stillness which for a moment followed the sudden stoppage of the coach at the barrier. There came a wail from the frightened passengers within--cries for mercy--piteous entreaties.

"Silence, fools!" roared the same voice, which seemed to be that of the leader.

"Wait! wait!" said the Senator to his companions. "Let me give the word."

A crowd of men advanced to the diligence, and as they left the fire Buttons saw three figures left behind--two women and a man. They did not move. But suddenly a loud shriek burst from one of the women. At the shriek Buttons trembled.

"The Spaniards! It is! I know the voice! My God!"

In an instant Buttons was down on the ground and in the midst of the crowd of brigands who surrounded the coach.

Bang! bang! bang! It was not the guns of the brigands, but Dick's pistol that now spoke, and its report was the signal of death to three men who rolled upon the ground in their last agonies. As the third report burst forth the Senator hurled himself down upon the heads of those below. The action of Buttons had broken up all their plans, rendered parley impossible, and left nothing for them to do but to follow him and save him. The brigands rushed at them with a yell of fury.

"Death to them! Death to them all! No quarter!"

"Help!" cried Buttons. "Passengers, we are armed! We can save ourselves!"

But the passengers, having already lost their money, now feared to lose their lives. Not one responded. All about the coach the scene became one of terrible confusion. Guns were fired, blows fell in every direction. The darkness, but

faintly illuminated by the fitful firelight, prevented the brigands from distinguishing their enemies very clearly--a circumstance which favored the little band of Americans.

The brigands fired at the coach, and tried to break open the doors. Inside the coach the passengers, frantic with fear, sought to make their voices heard amid the uproar. They begged for mercy; they declared they had no money; they had already been robbed; they would give all that was left; they would surrender if only their lives were spared.

"And, oh! good Americans, yield, yield, or we all die!"

"Americans?" screamed several passionate voices. "Death to the Americans! Death to all foreigners!"

These bandits were unlike the last.

Seated in the banquette Dick surveyed the scene, while himself concealed from view. Calmly he picked out man after man and fired. As they tried to climb up the diligence, or to force open the door, they fell back howling. One man had the door partly broken open by furious blows with the butt of his gun. Dick fired. The ball entered his arm. He shrieked with rage. With his other arm he seized his gun, and again his blows fell crashing. In another instant a ball passed into his brain.

"Two shots wasted on one man! Too much!" muttered Dick; and taking aim again he fired at a fellow who was just leaping up the other side. The wretch fell cursing.

Again! again! again! Swiftly Dick's shots flashed around. He had now but one left in his pistol. Hurriedly he filled the spare chamber with six cartridges, and taking out the other he filled it and placed it in again. He looked down.



A FREE FIGHT.

[Illustration: A Free Fight.]

There was the Senator. More than twenty men surrounded him, firing, swearing, striking, shrieking, rushing forward, trying to tear him from his post. For he had planted himself against the fore-part of the diligence, and the mighty arm whose strength had been so proved at Perugia was now descending again with irresistible force upon the heads of his assailants. All this was the work of but a few minutes. Buttons could not be seen. Dick's preparations were made. For a moment he waited for a favorable chance to get down. He could not stay up there any longer. He must stand by the Senator.

There stood the Senator, his giant form towering up amidst the *mêlée*, his muscular arms wielding the enormous iron bar, his astonishing strength increased tenfold by the excitement of the fight. He never spoke a word.

One after another the brigands went down before the awful descent of that iron bar. They clung together; they yelled in fury; they threw themselves *en masse* against the Senator. He met them as a rock meets a hundred waves. The remorseless iron bar fell only with redoubled fury. They raised their clubbed muskets in the air and struck at him. One sweep of the iron bar and the muskets were dashed out of their hands, broken or bent, to the ground. They fired, but from their wild excitement their aim was useless. In the darkness they struck at one another. One by one the number of his assailants lessened--they grew more furious but less bold. They fell back a little; but the Senator advanced as they retired, guarding his own retreat, but still swinging his iron bar with undiminished strength. The prostrate forms of a dozen men lay around. Again they rushed at him. The voice of their leader encouraged them and shamed their fears. He was a stoat, powerful man, armed with a knife and a gun.



DON'T SPEAK.

[Illustration: Don't Speak.]

"Cowards! kill this one! This is the one! All the rest will yield if we kill him. Forward!"

That moment Dick leaped to the ground. The next instant the brigands leaped upon them. The two were lost in the crowd. Twelve reports, one after the other, rang into the air. Dick did not fire till the muzzle of his pistol was against his enemy's breast. The darkness, now deeper than ever, prevented him from being distinctly seen by the furious crowd, who thought only of the Senator. But now the fire shooting up brightly at the sudden breath of a strong wind threw a lurid light upon the scene.

There stood Dick, his clothes torn, his face covered with blood, his last charge gone. There stood the Senator, his face blackened with smoke and dust, and red with blood, his colossal form erect, and still the ponderous bar swung on high to fall as terribly as ever. Before him were eight men. Dick saw it all in an instant. He screamed to the passengers in the diligence:

"There are only eight left! Come! Help us take them prisoners! Haste!"

The cowards in the diligence saw how things were. They plucked up courage, and at the call of Dick jumped out. The leader of the brigands was before Dick with uplifted rifle. Dick flung his pistol at his head. The brigand drew back and felled Dick senseless to the ground. The next moment the Senator's arm descended, and, with his head broken by the blow, the robber fell dead.

As though the fall of Dick had given him fresh fury, the Senator sprang after the others. Blow after blow fell. They were struck down helplessly as they ran. At this moment the passengers, snatching up the arms of the prostrate bandits,

assaulted those who yet remained. They fled. The Senator pursued--long enough to give each one a parting blow hard enough to make him remember it for a month. When he returned the passengers were gathering around the coach, with the driver and postillions, who had thus far hidden themselves, and were eagerly looking at the dead.

"Off!" cried the Senator, in an awful voice--"Off; you white-livered sneaks! Let me find my two boys!"

CHAPTER XLVII

BAD BRUISES, BUT GOOD MUSES.--THE HONORABLE SCABS OF DICK.--A KNOWLEDGE OF BONES.

The Senator searched long and anxiously among the fallen bandits for those whom he affectionately called his "boys." Dick was first found. He was senseless.

The Senator carried him to the fire. He saw two ladies and a gentleman standing there. Hurriedly he called on them and pointed to Dick. The gentleman raised his arms. They were bound tightly. The ladies also were secured in a similar manner. The Senator quickly cut the cords from the gentleman, who in his turn snatched the knife and freed the ladies, and then went to care for Dick.

The Senator then ran back to seek for Buttons.

The gentleman flung a quantity of dry brush on the fire, which at once blazed up and threw a bright light over the scene. Meanwhile the passengers were looking anxiously around as though they dreaded a new attack. Some of them had been wounded inside the coach and were groaning and cursing.

The Senator searched for a long time in vain. At last at the bottom of a heap of fallen brigands, whom the Senator had knocked over, he found Buttons. His face and clothes were covered with blood, his forehead was blackened as though by an explosion, his arm was broken and hung loosely as the Senator lifted him up. For a moment he thought that it was all over with him.

He carried him toward the fire. The appearance of the young man was terrible. He beckoned to one of the ladies. The lady approached. One look at the young man and the next instant, with a heart-rending moan, she flung herself on her knees by his side.

"The Spaniard!" said the Senator, recognizing her for the first time. "Ah! he'll be taken care of then."

There was a brook near by, and he hurried there for water. There was nothing to carry it in, so he took his beaver hat and filled it. Returning, he dashed it vigorously in Buttons's face. A faint sigh, a gasp, and the young man feebly opened his eyes. Intense pain forced a groan from him. In the hasty glance that he threw around he saw the face of Ida Francia as she bent over him bathing his brow, her face pale as death, her hand trembling, and her eyes filled with tears. The sight seemed to alleviate his pain. A faint smile crossed his lips. He half raised himself toward her.

"I've found you at last," he said, and that was all.

At this abrupt address a burning flush passed over the face and neck of the young girl. She bent down her head. Her tears flowed faster than ever.

"Don't speak," she said; "you are in too much pain."

She was right, for the next moment Buttons fell back exhausted.

The Senator drew a flask from his pocket and motioned to the young girl to give some to Buttons; and then, thinking that the attention of the Señorita would be far better than his, he hurried away to Dick.

So well had he been treated by the Don (whom the reader has of course already recognized) that he was now sitting up, leaning against the driver of the diligence, who was making amends for his cowardice during the fight by kind attention to Dick after it was over.

"My dear boy, I saw you had no bones broken," said the Senator, "and knew you were all right; so I devoted my first attention to Buttons. How do you feel?"

"Better," said Dick, pressing the honest hand which the Senator held out. "Better; but how is Buttons?"

"Recovering. But he is terribly bruised, and his arm is broken."

"His arm broken! Poor Buttons, what'll he do?"

"Well, my boy, I'll try what _I_ can do. I've set an arm before now. In our region a necessary part of a good education was settin' bones."

Dick was wounded in several places. Leaving the Don to attend to him the Senator took his knife and hurriedly made some splints. Then getting his valise, he tore up two or three of his shirts. Armed with these he returned to Buttons. The Señorita saw the preparations, and, weeping bitterly, she retired.

"Your arm is broken, my poor lad," said the Senator. "Will you let me fix it for you? I can do it."

"Can you? Oh, then, I am all right! I was afraid I would have to wait till I got to Bologna."

"It would be a pretty bad arm by the time you got there, I guess," said the Senator. "But come--no time must be lost."

His simple preparations were soon made. Buttons saw that he knew what he was about. A few moments of excessive pain, which forced ill-suppressed moans from the sufferer, and the work was done.

After taking a sip from the flask both Buttons and Dick felt very much stronger. On questioning the driver they found that Bologna was not more than twenty miles away. The passengers were busily engaged in removing the barricade. It was decided that an immediate departure was absolutely necessary. At the suggestion of Dick, the driver, postillions, and passengers armed themselves with guns of the fallen brigands.

The severest wound which Dick had was on his head, which had been almost laid open by a terrific blow from the gun of the robber chief. He had also wounds on different parts of his body. Buttons had more. These the Senator bound up with such skill that he declared himself ready to resume his journey. Upon this the Don insisted on taking him into his own carriage. Buttons did not refuse.

At length they all started, the diligence ahead, the Don following. On the way the Don told Buttons how he had fared on the road. He had left Florence in a hired carriage the day before the diligence had left. He had heard nothing of the dangers of the road, and suspected nothing. Shortly after entering the mountain district they had been stopped and robbed of all their money. Still he kept on, thinking that there was no further danger. To his horror they were stopped again at the bridge, where the brigands, vexed at not getting any money, took all their baggage and let them go. They went on fearfully, every moment dreading some new misadventure. At length their worst fears were realized. At the place where the fight had occurred they were stopped and dragged from their carriage. The brigands were savage at not getting any plunder, and swore they would hold them prisoners till they procured a ransom, which they fixed at three thousand piastres. This was about four in the afternoon. They overturned the coach, kindled a fire, and waited for the diligence. They knew the rest.

Buttons, seated next to Ida Francia, forgot his sufferings. Meanwhile Dick and the Senator resumed their old seats on the banquette. After a while the Senator relapsed into a fit of musing, and Dick fell asleep.

Morning dawned and found them on the plain once more, only a few miles from Bologna. Far ahead they saw the lofty Leaning Tower that forms so conspicuous an object in the fine old city. Dick awaked, and on looking at the Senator was shocked to see him very pale, with an expression of pain. He hurriedly asked the cause.

"Why the fact is, after the excitement of fightin' and slaughterin' and seein' to you chaps was over I found that I was covered with wounds. One of my fingers is broken. I have three bullet wounds in my left arm, one in my right, a stab of a dirk in my right thigh, and a terrible bruise on my left knee. I think that some fellow must have passed a dagger through my left foot, for there is a cut in the leather, my shoe is full of blood and it hurts dreadful. It's my opinion that the Dodge Club will be laid up in Bologny for a fortnight.--Hallo!"

The Senator had heard a cry behind, and looked out. Something startled him. Dick looked also.

The Don's carriage was in confusion. The two Señoritas were standing up in the carriage wringing their hands. The Don was supporting Buttons in his arms. He had fainted a second time.

CHAPTER XLVIII

SUFFERING AND SENTIMENT AT BOLOGNA.--MOONSHINE.--BEST BALM FOR WOUNDS.

They all put up at the same hotel. Buttons was carried in senseless, and it was long before he revived. The Senator and Dick were quite exhausted--stiff with fatigue, stiff with wounds.

There was one thing, however, which made their present situation more endurable. The war in Lombardy made farther progress impossible. They could not be permitted to pass the borders into Venetia. Even if they had been perfectly well they would have been compelled to wait there for a time.

The city was in a ferment. The delight which the citizens felt at their new-found freedom was mingled with a dash of anxiety about the result of the war. For, in spite of Solferino, it was probable that the tide of victory would be hurled back from the Quadrilateral. Still they kept up their spirits; and the joy of their hearts found vent in songs, music, processions. Roman candles, _Te Deums_, sky-rockets, volleys of cannon, masses, public meetings, patriotic songs, speeches, tri-colors, and Italian versions of "The Marseillaise."

In a short time the Senator was almost as well as ever. Not so Dick. After struggling heroically for the first day against his pain he succumbed, and on the morning of the second was unable to leave his bed.

The Senator would not leave him. The kind attention which he had once before shown in Rome was now repeated. He spent nearly all his time in Dick's room, talking to him when he was awake, and looking at him when asleep. Dick was touched to the heart.



USED UP.

[Illustration: Used Up.]

The Senator thought that, without exception, Bologna was the best Italian city that he had seen. It had a solid look. The people were not such everlasting fools as the Neapolitans, the Romans, and the Florentines, who thought that the highest end of life was to make pictures and listen to music. They devoted their energies to an article of nourishment which was calculated to benefit the world. He alluded to the famous Bologna Sausage, and he put it to Dick seriously, whether the manufacture of a sausage which was so eminently adapted to sustain life was not a far nobler thing than the production of useless pictures for the pampered tastes of a bloated aristocracy.

Meanwhile Buttons fared differently. If he had been more afflicted he was now more blessed. The Don seemed to think

that the sufferings of Buttons were caused by himself, or, at any rate, by the eagerness of the young man to come to the assistance of his sisters. He felt grateful accordingly, and spared no pain to give him assistance and relief. He procured the best medical advice in the city. For several days the poor fellow lay in a very dangerous condition, hovering between life and death. His wounds were numerous and severe, and the excitement afterward, with the fatigue of the ride, had made his situation worse. But a strong constitution was on his side, and he at length was able to leave his bed and his room.

He was as pale as death, and woefully emaciated. But the society of the ladies acted like a charm upon him; and from the moment when he left his room his strength came back rapidly.

He would have liked it still better if he had been able to see the younger sister alone; but that was impossible, for the sisters were inseparable. One evening, however, the Don offered to take them to the cathedral to see some ceremony. Ida declined, but the other eagerly accepted.

So Buttons for the first time in his life found himself alone with the maid of his heart. It was a solemn season.

Both were much embarrassed. Buttons looked as though he had something dreadful to tell; the Señorita as though she had something dreadful to hear. At length Buttons began to tell the story of his many searches, pursuits, wanderings, etc., in search of her, and particularly his last search at Florence, in which he had grown disheartened, and had made up his mind to follow her to Spain. At last he came to the time when he caught up to them on the road. He had seen them first. His heart told him that one of the ladies was Ida. Then he had lost all control of himself, and had leaped down to rescue her.

The Spanish nature is an impetuous, a demonstrative, a fiery nature. The Señorita was a Spaniard. As Buttons told all this in passionate words, to which his ardent love gave resistless eloquence, her whole manner showed that her heart responded. An uncontrollable excitement filled her being; her large, lustrous eyes, bright with the glow of the South, now beamed more luminously through her tears, and--in short: Buttons felt encouraged--and ventured nearer--and, almost before he knew it himself, somehow or other, his arm had got round a slender waist!

While the Señorita trembled--timidly drew back--and then all was still!--except, of course, whisperings--and broken sentences--and soft, sweet.....Well, all these were brought to an abrupt close by the return of the Don and his sister.

As they entered the room they saw Buttons at one end, and the Señorita at the other. The moonbeams stole in softly through the window.

"Why did you not call for a light?"

"Oh, it is so pleasant in the moonshine!"

At the end of a few weeks there came the great, the unlooked-for, the un hoped-for news--the Peace of Villafranca! So war was over. Moreover, the road was open. They could go wherever they wished.

Buttons was now strong enough to travel. Dick and the Senator were as well as ever. The news of the Peace was delightful to the travellers.

Not so, however, to the Bolognese. They railed at Napoleon. They forgot all that he had done, and taunted him with what he had neglected to do. They insulted him. They made caricatures of him. They spread scandalous reports about him. Such is the way of the world.

CHAPTER XLIX

CROSSING INTO THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY.--CONSTERNATION OF THE CUSTOM-HOUSE OFFICERS.

The journey was a pleasant one. The Spaniards were an agreeable addition to the party in the estimation of others than Buttons. The Senator devoted himself particularly to the elder sister. Indeed, his acquaintance with *La Cica*, as he afterward confessed, had given him a taste for foreign ladies. He carried on little conversations with the *Señorita* in broken English. The *Señorita's* English was pretty, but not very idiomatic. The Senator imitated her English remarkably well, and no doubt did it out of compliment. He also astonished the company by speaking at the very top of a voice whose ordinary tone was far stronger than common.



BUTTONS IN BLISS.

[Illustration: Buttons In Bliss.]

The journey from Bologna to Ferrara was not diversified by any incident. Buttons was rapidly regaining his gayety and his strength. He wore his arm in a sling, it is true, but thought it better to have a broken arm with the Señorita than a sound one without her. It must be confessed, however, that his happiness was visible not so much in lively conversation as in his flushed cheek, glistening eye, and general air of ecstasy. Moreover, Ida could not speak English much--a conversation in that language was difficult, and they would not be so rude to the Senator as to talk Spanish in his presence. The consequence was that the conversation flagged, and the Senator was by far the most talkative member of the company, and laid out all his strength in broken English.

Ferrara was reached at last, and they put up at a hotel which boasted of having entertained in its day any quantity of kings, emperors, and nobles of every European nation. It is an astonishing town. Vast squares, all desolate; great cathedrals, empty; proud palaces, neglected and ruinous; broad streets, grass-grown and empty; long rows of houses, without inhabitants; it presents the spectacle of a city dying without hope of recovery. The Senator walked through every street in Ferrara, looked carelessly at Tasso's dungeon, and seemed to feel relieved when they left the city.

On arriving at the Po. which forms the boundary between this district and Venetia, they underwent some examination from the authorities, but crossed without accident. But on the other side they found the Austrian officials far more particular. They asked a multiplicity of questions, opened every trunk, scanned the passports, and detained them long. The ladies were annoyed in a similar manner, and a number of Roman and Neapolitan trinkets which had passed the Italian doganas were now taken from them.

Dick had a valise, both compartments of which were strapped down carefully. Under a cairn exterior he concealed a throbbing heart, for in that valise was the Doctor's pistol, upon which he relied in anticipation of future dangers. The officials opened the valise. It was apparently a puzzle to them. They found but little clothing. On the contrary, a very extensive assortment of articles wrapped in paper and labelled very neatly. These they opened one by one in the first compartment, and found the following:

1, Six collars; 2, a brick; 3, lump of lime; 4, pebbles; 5, plaster; 6, ashes; 7, paper; 8, another brick; 9, a chip; 10, more plaster; 11, more ashes; 12, an ink bottle; 13, three pair stockings; 14, more ashes; 15, more ashes; 16, a neck-tie; 17, a bit of wood; 18, vial; 19, some grass; 20, bone; 21, rag; 22, stone; 23, another stone; 24, some more grass; 25, more pebbles; 26, more bones; 27, pot of blacking; 28, slippers; 29, more stones; 30, more stones.

The officials started up with an oath apiece. Their heavy German faces confronted Dick with wrath and indignation, and every separate hair of their warlike mustaches stood out. However, they swallowed their rage, and turned to the others. Dick drew a long breath of relief. The pistol was safe. It had been taken apart and each piece wrapped in paper and labelled. Had he carried it about with him it would have been taken.

The Senator thought it was better to have three battles with brigands than one encounter with custom-house officials. He had a little store of specimens of Italian manufactures, which were all taken from him. One thing struck him forcibly, and that was the general superiority of the Austrian over the Roman side.

There was more thrift neatness, and apparent prosperity. His sentiments on this subject were embodied in a letter home, which he wrote from Padua on a dreary evening which they spent there before starting for Venice:

"If this part of Italy is oppressed by Austria, then all I can say is, that the pressure has squeezed an immense amount of vegetation out of the soil. Passing from the Roman territories into the Austrian is like going from darkness into light, or from Canada into the United States. What kind of people are they who do better under foreign rule than Native? In my opinion, the territories of the Pope are worse than those of other rulers in Italy. A Spanish friend of mine tells me that it is because the thoughts of the Pope's subjects are set not on things below, but on things on high. He tells me that we've got to choose between two masters--Christianity on the one hand, and Mammon on the other. Whoever chooses the latter will be destitute of the former. He gives as examples of this France, England, and America, which countries, though possessed of the highest material blessings, are yet a prey to crime, scepticism, doubt, infidelity, heresy, false doctrine, and all manner of similar evils. Those nations which prefer religion to worldly prosperity present a different scene; and he points to Spain and Italy--poor in this world's goods, but rich in faith--the only evils which afflict them being the neighborhood of unbelieving nations."

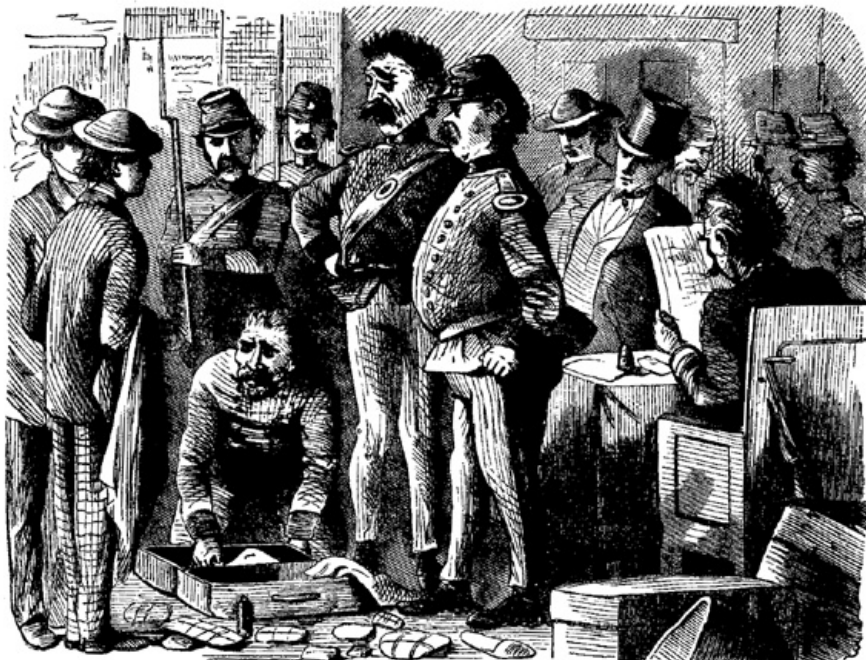
Few sensations are so singular as that which the traveller experiences on his first approach to Venice. The railway passes for miles through swamps, pools, ponds, and broken mud banks, till at length, bursting away altogether from the shore, it pushes directly out into the sea. Away goes the train of cars over the long viaduct, and the traveller within can scarcely understand the situation. The firm and even roll and the thunder of the wheels tell of solid ground beneath; but outside of the windows on either side there is nothing but a wide expanse of sea.

At length the city is reached. The train stops, and the passenger steps out into the station-house. But what a station-house! and what a city! There is the usual shouting from carriers and cabmen, but none of that deep roar of a large city which in every other place drones heavily into the traveller's ear.

Going out to what he thinks is a street, the traveller finds merely a canal. Where are the carriages, cabs, caliches, hand-carts, barouches, pony-carriages, carryalls, wagons, hansoms, hackneys, wheelbarrows, broughams, dog-carts, buggies? Where are the horses, mares, dogs, pigs, ponies, oxen, cows, cats, colts, calves, and livestock generally?

Nowhere. There's not a wheeled carriage in the place. It may be doubted if there is a dog. There certainly is not a cow. The people use goats' milk. The horse is as unknown as the pterodactyl, ichthyosaurus, dodo, iguanodon, mastodon, great awk. How do they go about? Where are the conveniences for moving to and fro?

Then, at the platform of the station, a score or two of light gondolas await you. The gondolier is the cabman. He waits for you, with his hand toward you, and the true "Keb, Sir!" tone and smile. A double-sized gondola is here called an "omnibus," and the name is painted on the side in huge letters. And these are the substitutes for wheeled vehicles.



DICK'S LUGGAGE.

[Illustration: Dick's Luggage.]

Now after entering one of these you go along smoothly and noiselessly. The first thing one notices in Venice is the absence of noise. As the boat goes along the only sound that is heard is the sharp cry from the boatman as he approaches a corner. At first the novelty interests the mind, afterward it affects the spirits. In three days most people leave the city in a kind of panic. The stillness is awful. A longer stay would reduce one to a state of melancholy madness. A few poets, however, have been able to endure, and even to love, the sepulchral stillness of the city. But to appreciate Venice one must be strongly poetical.

There are many things to be seen. First of all there is the city itself, one grand curiosity, unique, with nothing on earth that bears a distant approach to it. Its canals, gondolas, antique monuments, Byzantine architecture, bridges, mystery: its pretty women with black lace veils, the true glory of Venice--though Murray says nothing about them.

For Murray, in what was meant to be an exhaustive description of Venice, has omitted all mention of that which makes it what it is. Whereas if it had been Homer instead of Murray he would have rolled out the following epithets: [Transcriber's Note: Greek transliteration] euplokamoi, apalai, choroetheis, eukomoi, rodopechees, erateinai, kalliplokamoi, elkechitones, kuanopides, imeroessai, bathukolpoi, ligumolpoi: k. t. l. [/end Greek]

The travellers visited the whole round of sights. They remained in company and went about in the same gondola. The Senator admired what he saw as much as any of them, though it appeared to be out of his particular line. It was not the Cathedral of St. Mark's, however, nor the Doge's Palace, nor the Court of the Inquisition, nor the Bridge of Sighs, nor the Rialto, that interested him, but rather the spectacle of all these magnificent edifices around him, with all the massive masonry of a vast city, built up laboriously on the uncertain sand. He admired the Venetians who had done this. To such men, he thought, the commerce of the world might well have belonged. In discussing the causes of the decline of Venice he summed up the subject in a few words, and in the clearest possible manner.

"These Venetians, when they set up shop, were in the principal street of the world--the Mediterranean. They had the best stand in the street. They did work up their business uncommon well now, and no mistake. They made money hand over fist, and whatever advantage could be given by energy, capital, and a good location, they got. But the currents of traffic change in the world just as they do in a city. After a while it passed in another direction. Venice was thrown out altogether. She had no more chance than a New York shop would have after the business that it lived on had gone into another street. Hence," said the Senator--he always said "hence" when he was coming to a triumphant conclusion--"hence the downfall of Venice."

On arriving at their hotel a little circumstance occurred which made them look at Venice from a new and startling point of view. On going to their rooms after dinner they were followed by a file of Austrian soldiers. They wanted to see the passports. They requested this in a thick guttural tone, which made the Americans feel quite nervous. They showed the passports nevertheless.

On looking over them the Austrian soldiers arrested them. They were informed that if they went peaceably they would be well treated, but if they made any resistance they would all be bound.

The Americans remonstrated. No use. A thousand conjectures were made as to the cause of their arrest, but they were completely baffled. Before they could arrive at any conclusion they had arrived at the place of their destination, to which they had, of course, been taken in a gondola. It was too dark to distinguish the place, but it looked like a large and gloomy edifice. The soldiers took them to a room, where they locked them all in together. It was a comfortable apartment, with another larger one opening from it, in which were two beds and two couches. Evidently they were not neglected.



ARRESTED.

[Illustration: Arrested.]

After waiting for half the night in a kind of fever they retired to rest. They slept but little. They rose early, and at about seven o'clock breakfast was brought in to them, with a guard of soldiers following the waiters.

After breakfast they were visited again. This time it was a legal gentleman. They did not know who he was, but he gave them to understand that he was a person high in authority. He questioned them very closely as to their business in Venice, but did his questioning in a courteous manner. After about an hour he left.

Lunch was brought in at one o'clock. Their feelings at being treated in this mysterious manner can be imagined. Such neglect of the rights of man--such trifling with his time and patience--such utter disregard of habeas corpus, awaked indignation which words could not express.

Positively they were treated like dumb cattle; locked up, fed, deprived of liberty and fresh air; no communication with friends outside; and, worst of all, no idea in the world of the cause of their imprisonment. They came to the conclusion that they were mistaken for some other parties--for some Cacciatori degli Alpi; and Buttons insisted that the Senator was supposed to be Garibaldi himself. In these troublous times any idea, however absurd, might be acted upon.

At about three in the afternoon the door was thrown open, and a file of soldiers appeared. An officer approached and requested the prisoners to follow. They did so. They passed along many halls, and at length came to a large room. A long table extended nearly from one end to another. Soldiers were arranged down the sides of the apartment.

At the head of the table sat an elderly man, with a stern face, ferocious mustache, sharp eye, bushy gray eyebrows, and universal air of Mars. His uniform showed him to be a General. By his side was their visitor of the morning. Officials sat at the table.

"_Silence_!"



[Illustration: Silence!]

CHAPTER LI

THE AMERICAN EAGLE AND THE AUSTRIAN DOUBLE-HEADED DITTO.

At the command of the Austrian General every body became still. Thereupon he motioned to the prisoners to stand at the bottom of the table. They did so. The General took a long stare at the prisoners, particularly at the Senator. They bore it steadily. As for the Senator, he regarded the other with an expression which would have done honor to the Austrian General's own father.

"Who are you?"

The General spoke in German. The legal gentleman, at his side instantly interpreted it into English.

"Americans."

"Ah! dangerous characters--dangerous characters! What is your business?"

"Travellers."

"Travellers? Ah! But what are your occupations in America?"

"Our passports tell."

"Your passports say--'Gentlemen.'"

"Well, we _are_ gentlemen."

The Austrian looked blank. After a while he resumed; and as he directed his glance to the Senator the latter made all the replies, while the Interpreter served as a medium of communication.

"How long have you been in Italy?"

"Two or three months."

"You came here just about the commencement of these difficulties?"

"Yes--the beginning of the war."

"Where did you land?"

"At Naples."

"Naples? Ha! hm! Where did you go next?"

"To Rome. We stayed there a few weeks and then went to Florence; from Florence to Bologna, and thence through Ferrara and Padua to Venice."

"You went to Florence! How long ago did you leave?"

"About a month ago."

"A month! Ah, hm!"

And the General exchanged glances with the legal gentleman at his side.

"What were you doing in Florence?"

"Seeing the city."

"Did you place yourselves in connection with the Revolutionists?"

"No."

"Did you have any thing to do with the emissaries of Garibaldi?"

"Nothing."

"Take care how you deny."

"We say we know nothing at all either of the Revolutionists or Imperialists or Garibaldians or any other party. We are merely travellers."

"Hm--a strong disavowment," said the General to himself. "You have never in any way countenanced the rebels."

"No."

"Think before you speak."

"We are free Americans. Perhaps you know that the citizens of that country say what they think and do what they like. We have gone on that rule in Italy. What I say is, that we do not know any thing about rebels or any political parties in the country."

"Do you know La Cica?" asked the General, with the air of a man who was putting a home-thrust, and speaking with uncommon fierceness.

"I do," said the Senator, mildly.

"You know her well? You are one of her intimate friends?"

"Am I?"

"Are you not?"

"I am friendly with her. She is an estimable woman, with much feeling and penetration"--and a fond regret exhibited itself in the face of the speaker.

"Well, Sir, you may as well confess. We know you, Sir. We know you. You are one of the chosen associates of that infamous Garibaldian plotter and assassin, whose hotel is the hot-bed of conspiracy and revolution. We know you. Do you dare to come here and deny it?"

"I did not come here; I was brought. I do not deny that you know me, though I haven't the pleasure of knowing you. But I do deny that I am the associate of conspirators."

"Are you not the American whom La Cica so particularly distinguished with her favor?"

"I have reason to believe that she was partial to me--somewhat."

"He confesses!" said the General. "You came from her to this place, communicating on the way with her emissaries."

"I communicated on the way with none but brigands among the mountains. If they were her emissaries I wish her joy of them. My means of communication," said the Senator, while a grim smile passed over his face, "was an iron crow-bar, and my remarks left some deep impression on them, I do believe."

"Tell me now--and tell me truly," said the General after a pause, in which he seemed trying to make out whether the Senator was joking or not. "To whom are you sent in this city?"

"To no one."

"Sir! I warn you that I will not be trifled with."

"I tell you," said the Senator, with no apparent excitement, "I tell you that I have come here to no one. What more can I say?"

"You must confess."

"I have nothing to confess."

"Sir! you have much to confess," cried the General, angrily, "and I swear to you I will wring it out of you. Beware how you trifle with my patience. If you wish to regain your liberty confess at once, and you may escape your just punishment. But if you refuse, then, by the immortal gods, I'll shut you up in a dungeon for ten years!"

"You will do no such thing."

"What!" roared the General. "Won't I?"

"You will not. On the contrary, you will have to make apologies for these insults."

"I!--Apologies! Insults!"

The General gnawed his mustache, and his eyes blazed in fury.

"You have arrested us on a false charge, based on some slanderous or stupid information of some of your infernal spies," said the Senator. "What right have you to pry into the private affairs of an American traveller? We have nothing to do with you."

"You are associated with conspirators. You are charged with treasonable correspondence with rebels. You

countenanced revolution in Florence. You openly took part with Republicans. You are a notorious friend of _La Cica_. And you came here with the intention of fomenting treason in Venice!"

"Whoever told you that," replied the Senator, "told infernal lies--most infernal lies. I am no emissary of any party. I am a private traveller."

"Sir, we have correspondents in Florence on whom we can rely better than on you. They watched you."

"Then the best thing you can do is to dismiss those correspondents and get rogues who have half an idea."

"Sir, I tell you that they watched you well. You had better confess all. Your antecedents in Florence are known. You are in a position of imminent danger. I tell you--_beware_."

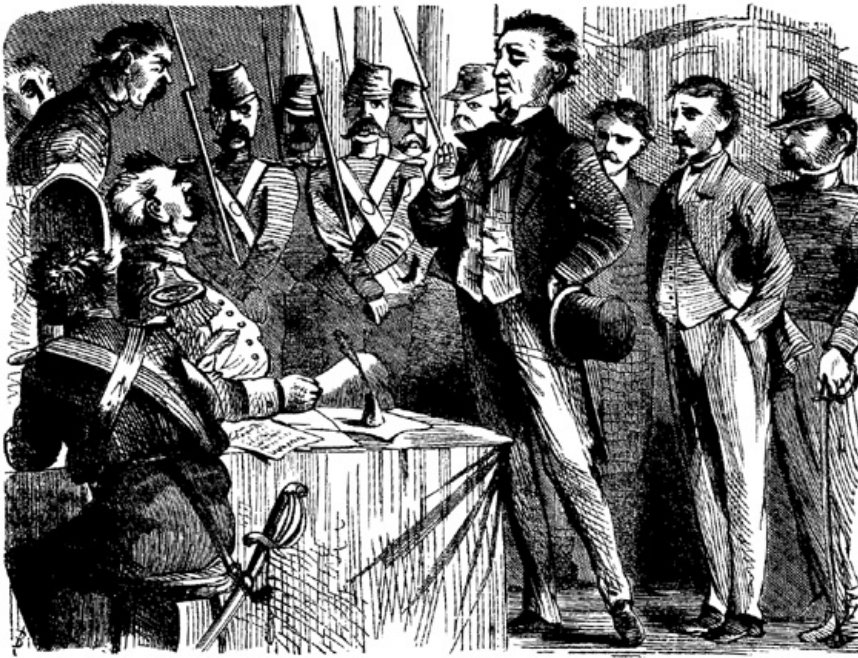
The General said this in an awful voice, which was meant to strike terror into the soul of his captive. The Senator looked back into his eyes with an expression of calm scorn. His form seemed to grow larger, and his eyes dilated as he spoke:

"Then you, General, I tell you--_beware_! Do you know who you've got hold of?--No conspirator; no infernal Italian bandit, or Dutch-man either; but an American citizen. Your Government has already tried the temper of Americans on one or two remarkable occasions. Don't try it on a third time, and don't try it on with me. Since you want to know who I am I'll tell you. I, Sir, am an American Senator. I take an active and prominent part in the government of that great and glorious country. I represent a constituency of several hundred thousand. You tell me to _beware_. I tell you--BEWARE! for, by the Eternal! if you don't let me go, I swear to you that you'll have to give me up at the cannon's mouth. I swear to you if you don't let me off by evening I won't go at all till I am delivered up with humble and ample apologies, both to us and to our country, whom you have insulted in our persons."

"Sir, you are bold!"

"Bold! Send for the American Consul of this city and see if he don't corroborate this. But you had better make haste, for if you subject me to further disgrace it will be the worse for your Government, and particularly for _you_, my friend. You'll have the town battered down about your ears. Don't get another nation down on you, and, above all, don't let that nation be the American. What I tell you is the solemn truth, and if you don't mind it you will know it some day to your sorrow."

Whatever the cause may have been the company present, including even the General, were impressed by the Senator's words. The announcement of his dignity; the venerable title of Senator; the mention of his "constituency," a word the more formidable from not being at all understood--all combined to fill them with respect and even awe.



"DON'T TRY IT ON WITH ME!"

[Illustration: Don't Try It On With Me.]

So at his proposal to send for the American Consul the General gave orders to a messenger who went off at once in search of that functionary.

CHAPTER LII

THE SENATOR STILL ENGAGED IN FACING DOWN THE AUSTRIAN.--THE AMERICAN CONSUL.--UNEXPECTED RE-APPEARANCE OF FORGOTTEN THINGS.--COLLAPSE OF THE COURT.

The American Consul soon made his appearance. Not having had any thing to do for months, the prospect of business gave wings to his feet. Moreover, he felt a very natural desire to help a countryman in trouble. Upon entering the hall he cast a rapid look around, and seemed surprised at so august a tribunal. For in the General's martial form he saw no less a person than the Austrian Commandant.

The Consul bowed and then looked at the prisoners. As his eye fell upon the Senator it lighted up, and his face assumed an expression of the most friendly interest. Evidently a recognition. The Austrian Commandant addressed the Consul directly in German.

"Do you know the prisoners?"

"I know one of them."

"He is here under a very heavy accusation. I have well-substantiated charges by which he is implicated in treason and conspiracy. He has been connected with Revolutionists of the worst stamp in Florence, and there is strong proof that he has come here to communicate with Revolutionists in this city."

"Who accuses him of this? Are they here?"

"No, but they have written from Florence warning me of his journey here."

"Does the prisoner confess?"

"Of course not. He denies. He requested me to send for you. I don't want to be unjust, so if you have any thing to say, say on."

"These charges are impossible."

"Impossible?"

"He is altogether a different man from what you suppose. He is an eminent member of the American Senate. Any charges made against one like him will have to be well substantiated; and any injury done to him will be dangerous in the highest degree. Unless you have undeniable proofs of his guilt it will be best to free him at once--or else--"

"Or else what?"

"Or else there will be very grave complications."

The Commandant looked doubtful. The others impassive. Buttons and Dick interested. The Senator calm. Again the Commandant turned to the Senator, his remarks being interpreted as before.

"How does it happen that you were so particularly intimate with all the Revolutionists in Florence, and an habitu  of _La Cica_'s salon? that your mission was well known throughout the city? That you publicly acknowledged the Florentine rebellion in a speech? that the people carried you home in triumph? and that immediately before leaving you received private instructions from _La Cica_?"

"To your questions," said the Senator, with unabated dignity, "I will reply in brief: _First_, I am a free and independent citizen of the great and glorious American Republic. If I associated with Revolutionists in Florence, I did so because I am accustomed to choose my own society, and not to recognize any law or any master that can forbid my doing so. I deny, however, that I was in any way connected with plots, rebellions, or conspiracies. _Secondly_, I was friendly with the Countess because I considered her a most remarkably fine woman, and because she showed a disposition to be friendly with me--a stranger in a strange land. _Thirdly_, I have no mission of any kind whatever. I am a traveller for self-improvement. I have no business political or commercial. So that my mission could not have been known. If people talked about me they talked nonsense. _Fourthly_, I confess I made a speech, but what of that? It's not the first time, by a long chalk. I don't know what you mean by 'acknowledging.' As a private citizen I congratulated them on their success, and would do so again. If a crowd calls on me for a speech, I'm thar! The people of Florence dragged me home in a carriage. Well, I don't know why they did so. I can't help it if people will take possession of me and pull me about. _Fifthly_, and lastly, I had an interview with the Countess, had I? Well, is it wrong for a man to bid good-bye to a friend? I ask you, what upon earth do you mean by such a charge as that? Do you take me for a puling infant?"

"On that occasion," said the Commandant, "she taught you some mysterious words which were to be repeated among the Revolutionists here."

"Never did any thing of the kind. That's a complete full-blown fiction."

"I have the very words."

"That's impossible. You've got hold of the wrong man I see."

"I will have them read," said the General, solemnly.

And he beckoned to the Interpreter. Whereupon the Interpreter gravely took out a formidable roll of papers from his breast, and opened it. Every gesture was made as though his hand was heavy with the weight of crushing proof. At last a paper was produced. The Interpreter took one look at the prisoner, then glanced triumphantly at the Consul, and said:

"It is a mysterious language with no apparent meaning, nor have I been able to find the key to it in any way. It is very skillfully made, for all the usual tests of cipher writing fail in this. The person who procured it did not get near enough

till the latter part of the interview, so that he gained no explanation whatever from the conversation."

"Read," said the Commandant. The Senator waited, wonderingly. The Interpreter read:

"_Ma ouillina sola ouda ste ensoce fremas dis ansit ansin assalef a oue lu affa lastinna belis_."

Scarcely had the first words been uttered in the Italian voice of the reader than the Senator started as though a shot had struck him. His face flushed. Finally a broad grin spread itself over his countenance, and down his neck, and over his chest, and over his form, and into his boots, till at last his whole colossal frame shook with an earthquake of laughter.

The Commandant stared and looked uneasy, All looked at the Senator --all with amazement--the General, the Interpreter, the Officials, the Guards, Buttons, Dick, and the American Consul.

"Oh dear! Oh _de-ar_! Oh DEEE-AR!" cried the Senator, in the intervals of his outrageous peals of laughter. "OH!" and a new peal followed.

What did all this mean? Was he crazy? Had misfortunes turned his brain?

But at last the Senator, who was always remarkable for his self-control, recovered himself. He asked the Commandant if he might be permitted to explain.

"Certainly," said the Commandant, dolefully. He was afraid that the thing would take a ridiculous turn, and nothing is so terrible as that to an Austrian official.

"Will you allow me to look at the paper?" asked the Senator. "I will not injure it at all."

The Interpreter politely carried it to him as the Commandant nodded. The Senator beckoned to the Consul. They then walked up to the Commandant. All four looked at the paper.

"You see, gentlemen," said the Senator, drawing a lead pencil from his pocket, "the Florence correspondent has been too sharp. I can explain all this at once. I was with the Countess, and we got talking of poetry. Now, I don't know any

more about poetry than a horse."

"Well?"

"Well, she insisted on my making a quotation. I had to give in. The only one I could think of was a line or two from Watts."

"_Watts_? Ah! I don't know him," said the Interpreter.

"He was a minister--a parson."

"Ah!"

"So I said it to her, and she repeated it. These friends of yours, General, have taken it down, but their spellin' is a little unusual," said the Senator, with a tremendous grin that threatened a new outburst.

"Look. Here is the true-key which this gentleman tried so hard to find."

And taking his pencil the Senator wrote under the strange words the true meaning:

"My willing soul would stay

In such a frame as this,

And sit and sing herself away

To everlasting bliss."

The Interpreter saw it all. He looked profoundly foolish. The whole thing was clear. The Senator's innocence was plain. He turned to explain to the Commandant. The Consul's face exhibited a variety of expressions, over which a broad grimace finally predominated, like sunshine over an April sky. In a few words the whole was made plain to the

Commandant. He looked annoyed, glared angrily at the Interpreter, tossed the papers on the floor, and rose to his feet.



WATTS MIS-SPELLED.

[Illustration: Watts Mis-spelled.]

"Give these gentlemen our apologies," said he to the Interpreter. "In times of trouble, when States have to be held subject to martial law, proceedings are abrupt. Their own good sense will, I trust, enable them to appreciate the difficulty of our position. They are at liberty."

At liberty! No sooner were the words spoken than the prisoners bowed and left, in company with the Consul, who eagerly shook hands with all three--particularly the Senator, who, as they were leaving, was heard to whisper something in which these words were audible:

"Wa'al, old hoss! The American eagle showed it claws, anyhow."

A MYSTERIOUS FLIGHT.--DESPAIR OF BUTTONS.--PURSUIT.--HISTORIC GROUND, AND HISTORIC CITIES.

It was about seven o'clock in the evening when they reached their hotel. Every thing was as they had left it. Some trifles had occurred, such as a general overhaul of the baggage, in which the Doctor's pistol had again miraculously escaped seizure. Buttons went immediately to call on the Spaniards, but their apartment was closed. Supposing that they were out about the town, he returned to his friends.

During their memorable captivity they had eaten but little, and now nothing was more welcome than a dinner. So they ordered the very best that the hotel could supply, and made the American Consul stay. Buttons did not give himself up so completely as the rest to the hilarity of the occasion. Something was on his mind. So he took advantage of a conversation in which the Senator was giving the Consul an animated description of the fight with the brigands, and the pluck of his two "boys," and stole out of the room. Whereupon the Senator stopped and remarked--

"Hang these fellows that are in love!"

"Certainly," said Dick. "They often hang themselves, or feel like it."

"Of course Buttons is on his usual errand."

"Of course."

"It seems to me that his foreign travel has become nothing but one long chase after that gal. He is certainly most uncommon devoted."

Scarce had these words been spoken when the door was flung open, and Buttons made his appearance, much agitated.

"What's the matter?" cried Dick. "The Spaniards!" "Well?" "They're off!" "Off?" "Gone!" "Where?" "Away from Venice." "When?" "I don't know." "Why?" "I don't know."

"What sent them? It looks as though they were running away from you on purpose."

"They're off, at any rate!" cried Buttons. "I went to their room. It was open. The servants were fixing it up. I asked why. They said the Spaniards had left Venice early this morning. They did not know any thing more."

"Strange!"

"Strange, of course. It's so sudden. Their plans were laid out for a week in Venice."

"Perhaps they were frightened at our adventure."

Buttons sprung to the bell and pulled it vigorously. Then he rushed to the door and flung it open. Five or six waiters came tumbling in. They had all been listening at the key-hole.

"Where's the chief waiter?"

"Here," said that functionary, approaching.

"Come here. You may retire," said Buttons to the others. They went out reluctantly.

"Now, my friend," said he, putting some piastres in the hand of the chief waiter. "Think, and answer me right. Where are the Spaniards --a gentleman and two ladies--who came here with us?"

"They have left the city."

"When?"

"At six this morning, by the first train."

"Why did they leave?"

"A hint came from the Commandant."

"From him. Ah! What about?"

"Why--you know--your Excellencies were to waited on by a deputation."

"We were arrested. Well?"

"Well, these Spaniards were friends yours."

"Yes."

"That connection made them suspected."

"Diavolo!"

"Such is the melancholy fact. There was no cause strong enough to lead to their arrest. It would have been inconvenient. So the Commandant sent a message, immediately after your Excellency's lamentable arrest, to warn them--"

"What of?"

"That they had better leave the country at once."

"Yes, but that didn't force them to go."

"Ah, Signore! Do you not know what such a warning is? There is no refusal."

"And so they left."

"At six by the train."

"Where to?"

"Signore, they had their passports made out for Milan."

"Milan!"

"Certainly. It was necessary for them not only to leave Venice, but Venetia."

"Very well. When does the next train leave?"

"Not till to-morrow morning at six."

"You must call us then at five, for we are going. Here, take our passports and get them viséd;" and having explained matters to the Senator, Buttons found no need of persuasion to induce them to quit the city, so the passports were handed over to the waiter.

So at six the next morning they went flying over the sea, over the lagoons, over the marshes, over the plains, away toward Lombardy.



FORMALITIES.

[Illustration: Formalities.]

They had to stop for a while at Verona, waiting to comply with "some formalities." They had time to walk about the town and see the Roman ruins and the fortifications. Of all these much might be said, if it were not to be found already in Guide-books, Letters of Correspondents, Books of Travel, Gazetteers, and Illustrated Newspapers. Our travellers saw enough of the mighty military works, in a brief survey, to make them thoroughly comprehend the Peace of Villafranca. In the neighborhood of Solferino they left the train to inspect the scene of battle. Only a month had passed since the terrific contest, and the traces remained visible on every side. The peasants had made two trenches of enormous size. In one of these the bodies of the Austrians had been buried, in the other those of the French and Italians. In one place there was a vast heap of arms, which had been gathered from off the field. There was no piece among them which was not bent or broken. All were of the best construction and latest pattern, but had seen their day. Shattered trees, battered walls, crumbling houses, deep ruts in the earth, appeared on every side to show where the battle had raged; yet already the grass, in its swift growth, had obliterated the chief marks of the tremendous conflict.

At length they arrived at Milan. The city presented a most imposing appearance. Its natural situation, its magnificent works of architecture, its stately arches and majestic avenues presented an appearance which was now heightened by the presence of victory. It was as though the entire population had given themselves up to rejoicing. The evil spirit had been cast out, and the house thoroughly swept and garnished. The streets were filled with gay multitudes; the avenues resounded with the thrilling strains of the Marseillaise, repeated everywhere; every window displayed the portrait of Napoleon, Victor Emanuel, or Garibaldi, and from every house-top flaunted the tri-color. The heavy weight imposed by the military rule--the iron hand, the cruelty, the bands of spies, the innumerable soldiers sent forth by Austria--had been lifted off, and in the first reaction of perfect liberty the whole population rushed into the wildest demonstrations of joy and gayety. The churches were all marked by the perpetual presence of the emblems of Holy Peace, and Heavenly Faith, and Immortal Hope. The sublime Cathedral, from all its marble population of sculptured saints and from all its thousands of pinnacles, sent up one constant song. Through the streets marched soldiers--regular, irregular, horse, foot, and dragoons; cannon thundered at intervals through every day; volunteer militia companies sprang up like butterflies to flash their gay uniforms in the sun.

It was not the season for theatres. La Scala had opened for a few nights when Napoleon and Victor Emanuel were here, but had closed again. Not so the smaller theatres. Less dignified, they could burst forth unrestrained. Especially the Day Theatres, places formed somewhat on the ancient model, with open roofs. In these the spectators can smoke. Here the performance begins at five or six and ends at dark. All the theatres on this season, day or night alike, burst forth into joy. The war was the universal subject. Cannon, fighting, soldiers, gunpowder, saltpetre, sulphur, fury, explosions, wounds, bombardments, grenadiers, artillery, drum, gun, trumpet, blunderbuss, and thunder! Just at that time the piece which was having the greatest run was THE VICTORY OF SOLFERINO!

Two theatres exhibited this piece with all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war. Another put out in a pantomime "The Battle of Malegnano!"

Another, "The Fight at Magenta!" But perhaps the most popular of all was "GARIBALDI IN VARESE, od I CACCIATORI DEGLI ALPI!"

CHAPTER LIV

DICK MEETS AN OLD FRIEND.--THE EMOTIONAL NATURE OF THE ITALIAN. --THE SENATOR OVERCOME AND DUMBFOUNDED.

The day of their arrival at Milan was distinguished by a pleasing circumstance. Buttons found the Spaniards, and was happy. And by another circumstance, scarcely less pleasing, Dick found an old acquaintance.

On this wise:

Finding himself in Milan he suddenly called to mind an old friend with whom he had been intimate in Boston. He had been exiled from Italy on account of his connection with the movements of 1848. He had fled to America, and had taken with him barely enough to live on. For five years he had lived in Boston under the plain name of Hugh Airey. Then Dick met with him, and had been attracted by the polished manners, melancholy air, and high spirit of the unfortunate exile. In the course of time their acquaintance ripened into intimate friendship. Dick introduced him to all his friends, and did all in his power to make his life pleasant. From him he had learned Italian, and under his guidance formed a wide and deep acquaintance with Italian literature. In 1858 Mr. Airey decided to return to Italy and live in Turin till the return of better days. Before leaving he confided to Dick the fact that he belonged to one of the oldest families in Lombardy, and that he was the Count Ugo di Gonfiloniere. The exile bade Dick and all his friends good-bye and departed. Since then Dick had heard from him but once. The Count was happy, and hopeful of a speedy return of better days for his country. His hopes had been realized, as the world knows.



THE COUNT UGO.

[Illustration: The Count Ugo.]

Dick had no difficulty in finding out where he lived, and went to call on him. It was a magnificent palace. Throngs of servants were around the entrance. Dick sent up his name, and was conducted by a servant to an ante-chamber. Scarcely had he finished a hasty survey of the apartment when hurried footsteps were heard. He turned. The Count came rushing into the room, flushed and trembling, and without a word threw himself into Dick's arms, embraced him, and kissed him. It was a trying moment for Dick. Nothing is so frightful to a man of the Anglo-Saxon race as to be hugged and kissed by a man. However, Dick, felt deeply touched at the emotion of his friend and his grateful remembrance of himself.

"This is a circumstance most unexpected!" cried the Count. "Why did you not write and tell me that you were coming, my dearest friend? I did not know that you were in Italy. But perhaps you wished to give me a surprise?" And then the Count asked after all the friends in America, for whom he still evinced the tenderest attachment.

On being questioned he related his own subsequent adventures. After leaving America he went at once to Turin. Though proscribed in Lombardy he was free in Piedmont. He managed to communicate secretly with his relatives in Milan, and lived comfortably. At length he became aware of the great movement on foot which ended in the Italian war. He had thrown himself altogether in the good cause, and, without being at all disheartened by his former misfortunes, he embarked energetically in the current of events. He was at once recognized by the Sardinian Government as a powerful recruit, and appointed to an important military command. Finally war was declared. The French came, the Count had taken a conspicuous part in the events of the war, had been present at every battle, and had been promoted for his gallant conduct. Fortunately he had not once been wounded. On the occupation of Milan by the Allies he had regained

all his rights, titles, privileges, and estates. He was a happy man. His ten years of exile had given him a higher capacity for enjoyment. He looked forward to a life of honor and usefulness. He had found joy harder to endure than grief; the reunion with all his old friends and relations, the presence of all the familiar scenes of his native land had all well-nigh overcome him. Yet he assured Dick that no friend with whom he had met was more welcome to his sight than he, and the joy that he felt at seeing him had only been exceeded once in his life--that one time having been on the occasion of the entrance of the Allies into Milan.

And now that he was here, where was his luggage? Did he come without it? There was certainly only one place in the city where he could stop. He must remain nowhere else but here. Dick modestly excused himself. He was scarcely prepared. He was travelling in company with friends, and would hardly like to leave them. The Count looked reproachfully at him. Did he hesitate about that? Why, his friends also must come. He would have no refusal. They all must come. They would be as welcome as himself. He would go with Dick to his hotel in person and bring his friends there.

In a short time the Count and Dick had driven to the hotel, where the former pressed upon the Senator and Buttons an invitation to his house. They were not allowed to refuse, but were taken away, and before they fairly understood the unexpected occurrence they were all installed in magnificent apartments in the Palazzo Gonfaloniere.

Buttons's acquaintance with the language, literature, manners, and customs of Italy made him appreciate his advantages; the friendship of the Count prevented Dick from feeling otherwise than perfectly at home; and as for the Senator, if it had been possible for him to feel otherwise, his experience of high life at Florence would have enabled him to bear himself serenely here. His complete self-possession, his unfaltering gaze, his calm countenance, were never for a moment disturbed.

The Count had been long enough in America to appreciate a man of the stamp of the Senator; he therefore from the very first treated him with marked respect, which was heightened when Dick told him of the Senator's achievements during the past few weeks. The brilliant society which surrounded the Count was quite different from that which the Senator had found in Florence. The people were equally cultivated, but more serious. They had less excitability, but more deep feeling. Milan, indeed, had borne her burden far differently from Florence. Both hated the foreigner; but the latter could be gay, and smiling, and trifling even under her chains; this the former could never be. The thoughtful, earnest, and somewhat pensive Milanese was more to the Senator's taste than the brilliant and giddy Florentine. These, thought he, may well be a free people.

Moreover, the Senator visited the Grand Cathedral, and ascended to the summit. Arriving there his thoughts were not taken up by the innumerable statues of snow-white marble, or the countless pinnacles of exquisite sculpture that extended all around like a sacred forest filled with saints and angels, but rather to the scene that lay beyond.

There spread away a prospect which was superior in his eyes to any thing that he had ever seen before, nor had it ever entered his mind to conceive such a matchless scene. The wide plains of Lombardy, green, glorious, golden with the richest and most inexhaustible fertility; vast oceans of grain and rice, with islands of dark-green trees that bore untold wealth of all manner of fruit; white villas, little hamlets, close-packed villages, dotted the wide expanse, with the larger forms of many a populous town. He looked to the north and to the west. The plain spread away for many a league, till the purple mountains arose as a barrier, rising up till they touched the everlasting ice. He looked to the east and south. There the plains stretched away to the horizon in illimitable extent.

"What a country! All cleared too! Every acre! And the villages! Why, there are thousands if there is one! Dear! dear! dear! How can I have the heart to blow about New England or Boston after that there! Buttons, why don't somebody tell about all this to the folks at home and stop their everlasting bragging? But"--after a long pause--"I'll do it! I'll do it!--this very night. I'll write about it to our paper!"

CHAPTER LV

IN WHICH BUTTONS WRITES A LETTER; AND IN WHICH THE CLUB LOSES AN IMPORTANT MEMBER.--SMALL BY DEGREES AND BEAUTIFULLY LESS.

But all things, however pleasant, must have an end, so their stay in Milan soon approached its termination.

Buttons and the Senator were both quite willing to leave. The departure of the Spaniards had taken away the charm of Milan. They had already returned to Spain, and had urged Buttons very strongly to accompany them. It cost him a great struggle to decline, but he did so from certain conscientious motives, and promised to do so after going to Paris. So there was an agonizing separation, and all that. At his room Buttons unbosomed himself to his friends.

"I'll begin at the beginning," said he, directing his remarks more particularly to the Senator.

"My father is a rich man, though you may not think I live very much like a rich man's son. The fact is, he is dreadfully afraid that I will turn out a spendthrift. So he gave me only a moderate sum on which to travel on through Europe. So far I have succeeded very well. Excuse my blushes while I make the sweet confession. The Señorita whom we all admire will, some of these days, I trust, exchange the musical name of Francia for the plainer one of Buttons."

The Senator smiled with mild and paternal approbation, and shook Buttons by the hand.

"It's all arranged," continued Buttons, with sweet confusion. "Now, under the circumstances, you might think it natural that I should go back with them to Spain."

"I should certainly. Why don't you?"

"For two reasons. The first is, I have barely enough tin left to take me to Paris."

At once both the Senator and Dick offered to make unlimited advances. Buttons made a deprecatory gesture.

"I know well that I could look to you for any help in any way. But that is not the reason why I don't go to Spain. I have money enough for my wants if I don't go there."

"What is the real reason, then?"

"Well, I thought that in an affair of this kind it would be just as well to get the Governor's concurrence, and so I thought I'd drop a line to him. I've just got the letter written, and I'll put it in the mail this evening."

"You have done right, my boy," said the Senator, paternally. "There are many excellent reasons for getting your father's consent in an affair like this."

"I don't mind reading you what I have written," said Buttons, "if you care about hearing it."

"Oh, if you have no objection, we should like to hear very much," said Dick.

Whereupon Buttons, taking a letter from his pocket, read as follows:

"DEAR FATHER,--I have endeavored to follow out your instructions and be as economical as possible.

"During my tour through Italy, have made the acquaintance of the senior member of the house of Francia, in Cadiz, a gentleman with whom you are acquainted. He was travelling with his two sisters. The younger one is very amiable. As I know you would like to see me settled I have requested her hand in marriage.

"As I wish to be married before my return I thought I would let you know. Of course in allying myself to a member of so wealthy a family I will need to do it in good style. Whatever you can send me will therefore be quite acceptable.

"Please reply immediately on receipt of this, addressing me at Paris as before.

"And very much oblige

E. BUTTONS."

"Well," said the Senator, "that's a sensible letter. It's to the point. I'm glad to see that you are not so foolish as most lads in your situation. Why should not a man talk as wisely about a partnership of this kind as of any other? I do declare that these rhapsodies, this highblown, high-flown, sentimental twaddle is nauseating."

"You see, Dick," said Buttons, "I must write a letter which will have weight with the old gentleman. He likes the terse business style. I think that little hint about her fortune is well managed too. That's a great deal better than boring him with the state of my affections. Isn't it?"

"There's nothing like adapting your style to the disposition of the person you address," said Dick.

"Well," said the Senator, "you propose to start to-morrow, do you?"

"Yes," said Buttons.

"I'm agreed then I was just beginning to get used up myself. I'm an active man, and when I've squeezed all the juice out of a place I want to throw it away and go to another. What do you say, Dick? You are silent."

"Well, to tell the truth," said Dick, "I don't care about leaving just yet. Gonfaloniere expects me to stay longer, and he would feel hurt if I hurried off, I am very sorry that you are both going. It would be capital if you could only wait here a month or so."

"A month!" cried Buttons. "I couldn't stand it another day. Will nothing induce you to come? What can we do without you?"

"What can I do without you?" said Dick, with some emotion.

"Well, Dick," said the Senator, "I'm really pained. I feel something like a sense of bereavement at the very idea. I thought, of course, we would keep together till our feet touched the sacred soil once more. But Heaven seems to have ordained it otherwise. I felt bad when Figgs and the Doctor left us at Florence, but now I feel worse by a long chalk. Can't you manage to come along nohow?"

"No," said Dick. "I really can not. I really must stay."

"What! must!"

"Yes, must!"

The Senator sighed.

CHAPTER LVI

THE FAITHFUL ONE!--DARTS, DISTRACTION, LOVE'S VOWS, OVERPOWERING SCENE AT THE MEETING OF TWO FOND ONES.--COMPLETE BREAK-DOWN OF THE HISTORIAN.

About a month after the departure of the Senator and Buttons from Milan, Dick reappeared upon the scene at Rome, in front of the little church which had borne so prominent a part in his fortunes; true to his love, to his hopes, to his promises, with undiminished ardor and unabated resolution. He found the Padre Liguori there, who at once took him to his room in a building adjoining the church.

"Welcome!" said he, in a tone of the deepest pleasure. "Welcome! It has been more than a passing fancy, then."

"It is the only real purpose of my life, I assure you."

"I must believe you," said Liguori, pressing his hand once more.

"And now, where is Pepita?"

"She is in Rome."

"May I see her at once?"

"How at once?"

"Well, to-day."

"No, not to-day. Her brother wishes to see you first. I must go and let them both know that you are here. But she is well and has been so."

Dick looked relieved. After some conversation Liguori told Dick to return in an hour, and he could see the Count. After waiting most impatiently Dick came back again in an hour. On entering he found Luigi. He was dressed as a gentleman this time. He was a strongly knit, well-made man of about thirty, with strikingly handsome and aristocratic features.

"Let me make my peace with you at once," said he, with the utmost courtesy. "You are a brave man, and must be generous. I have done you wrongs for which I shall never forgive myself," and taking Dick's outstretched hand, he pressed it heartily.

"Say nothing about it, I beg," said Dick; "you were justified in what you did, though you may have been a little hasty."

"Had I not been blinded by passion I would have been incapable of such a piece of cowardice. But I have had much to endure, and I was always afraid about her."

With the utmost frankness the two men received each other's explanations, and the greatest cordiality arose at once. Dick insisted on Luigi's taking dinner with him, and Luigi, laughingly declaring that it would be a sign of peace to eat bread and salt together, went with Dick to his hotel.

As they entered Dick's apartments Gonfaloniere was lounging near the window. He had accompanied Dick to Rome. He started at the sight of Luigi.

"God in Heaven!" he cried, bounding to his feet.

"Ugo!" exclaimed the other.

"Luigi!"

And the two men, in true Italian fashion, sprang into one another's arms.

"And is my best friend, and oldest friend, the brother of your betrothed?" asked Gonfaloniere of Dick.

But Dick only nodded. He was quite mystified by all this. An explanation, however, was soon made. The two had been educated together, and had fought side by side in the great movements of '48, under Garibaldi, and in Lombardy.

For full an hour these two friends asked one another a torrent of questions. Luigi asked Gonfaloniere about his exile in America; whereupon the other described that exile in glowing terms--how he landed in Boston, how Dick, then little more than a lad, became acquainted with him, and how true a friend he had been in his misery. The animated words of Gonfaloniere produced a striking effect. Luigi swore eternal friendship with Dick, and finally declared that he must come and see Pepita that very day.

So, leaving Gonfaloniere with the promise of seeing him again, Luigi walked with Dick out to the place where he lived. The reason why he had not wanted him to see Pepita that day was because he was ashamed of their lodgings. But that had passed, and as he understood Dick better he saw there was no reason for such shame. It was a house within a few rods of the church.

Dick's heart throbbed violently as he entered the door after Luigi and ascended the steps inside the court-yard. Luigi pointed to a door and drew back.



THE DOOR.

[Illustration: The Door.]

Dick knocked.

The door opened.

"Pepita!"

To describe such a meeting is simply out of the question.

"I knew you would come," said she, after about one solid hour, in which not a single intelligible word was uttered.

"And for you! Oh, Pepita!"

"You do not think now that I was cruel?" and a warm flush overspread the lovely face of the young girl.

"Cruel!" (and Dick makes her see that he positively does not think so).

"I could not do otherwise."

"I love you too well to doubt it."

"My brother hated you so. It would have been impossible. And I could not wound his feelings."

"He's a splendid fellow, and you were right."

"Padre Liguori showed him what you were, and I tried to explain a little," added Pepita, shyly.

"Heaven bless Padre Liguori! As for you--you--"

"Don't."

"Well, your brother understands me at last. He knows that I love you so well that I would die for you."

Tears came into Pepita's eyes as the sudden recollection arose of Dick's misadventure on the road.

"Do you remember," asked Dick, softly, after about three hours and twenty minutes--"do you remember how I once wished that I was walking with you on a road that would go on forever?"

"Yes."

"Well, we're on that track now."

[The Historian of these adventures feels most keenly his utter inadequacy to the requirements of this scene. Need he say that the above description is a complete _fiasco_? Reader, your imagination, if you please.]

CHAPTER LVII

THE DODGE CLUB IN PARIS ONCE MORE.--BUTTONS'S "JOLLY GOOD HEALTH."

Not very long after the events alluded to in the last chapter a brilliant dinner was given in Paris at the "Hotel de Lille et d'Albion." On the arrival of the Senator and Buttons at Paris they had found Mr. Figgs and the Doctor without any trouble. The meeting was a rapturous one. The Dodge Club was again an entity, although an important member was not there. On this occasion the one who gave the dinner was BUTTONS!



"HE'S A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW!"

[Illustration: He's A Jolly Good Fellow.]

All the delicacies of the season. In fact, a banquet. Mr. Figgs shone resplendently. If a factory was the sphere of the Senator, a supper-table was the place for Mr. Figgs. The others felt that they had never before known fully all the depth of feeling, of fancy, and of sentiment that lurked under that placid, smooth, and rosy exterior. The Doctor was epigrammatic; the Senator sententious; Buttons uproarious.

Dick's health was drunk in bumpers with all the honors:

"For he's a jolly good fe-e-e-e-e-llow!

For he's a jolly good fe-e-e-e-e-llow!!

For he's a jolly good FE-E-E-E-E-LLOW!!!

Which nobody can deny!"

All this time Buttons was more joyous, more radiant, and altogether more extravagant than usual. The others asked themselves, "Why?" In the course of the evening it became known. Taking advantage of a short pause in the conversation he communicated the startling fact that he had that day received a letter from his father.

"Shall I read it?"

"AYE!!!" unanimously, in tones of thunder.

Buttons opened it and read:

DEAR SON.--Your esteemed favor, 15th ult., I have recd.

"I beg leave hereby to express my concurrence with your design.

"My connection with the house of Francia has been of the most satisfactory kind. I have no doubt that yours will be equally so.

"I inclose you draft on Mess. Dupont Geraud, et Cie of Paris, for \$5000--say five thousand dollars--rect of which please acknowledge. If this sum is insufficient you are at liberty to draw for what may be required.

"I remain, HIRAM BUTTONS."

Thunders of applause arose as Buttons folded the letter.

A speech from the Senator proposed health of Buttons Senior.

Another from the Doctor.

Another from Mr. Figgs.

Acknowledgment by Buttons.

Announcement by Buttons of immediate departure for Cadiz.

Wild cheers! Buttons's jolly good health!

"For he's a jolly good fe-e-e-e-e-llow!

For he's a jolly good fe-e-e-e-f-e-llow!!

For he's a jolly good FE-E-E-E-E-LLOW!!!

Which nobody can deny!"

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DODGE CLUB; OR, ITALY IN MDCCCLIX ***

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