

Miscellaneous Prose

George Meredith

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INTRODUCTION TO W. M. THACKERAY'S "THE FOUR GEORGES"

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY was born at Calcutta, July 18, 1811, the only child of Richmond and Anne Thackeray. He received the main part of his education at the Charterhouse, as we know to our profit. Thence he passed to Cambridge, remaining there from February 1829 to sometime in 1830. To judge by quotations and allusions, his favourite of the classics was Horace, the chosen of the eighteenth century, and generally the voice of its philosophy in a prosperous country. His voyage from India gave him sight of Napoleon on the rocky island. In his young manhood he made his bow reverentially to Goethe of Weimar; which did not check his hand from setting its mark on the sickness of Werther.

He was built of an extremely impressionable nature and a commanding good sense. He was in addition a calm observer, having 'the harvest of a quiet eye.' Of this combination with the flood of subjects brought up to judgement in his mind, came the prevalent humour, the enforced disposition to satire, the singular critical drollery, notable in his works. His parodies, even those pushed to burlesque, are an expression of criticism and are more effective than the serious method, while they rarely overstep the line of justness. The Novels by Eminent Hands do not pervert the originals they exaggerate. 'Sieyes an abbe, now a ferocious lifeguardsman,' stretches the face of the rollicking Irish novelist without disfiguring him; and the mysterious visitor to the palatial mansion in Holywell Street indicates possibilities in the Oriental imagination of the eminent statesman who stooped to conquer fact through fiction. Thackeray's attitude in his great novels is that of the composedly urbane lecturer, on a level with a select audience, assured of interesting, above requirements to excite. The slow movement of the narrative has a grace of style to charm like the dance of the Minuet de la Cour: it is the limpidity of Addison flavoured with salt of a racy vernacular; and such is the veri-similitude and the dialogue that they might seem to be heard from the mouths of living speakers. When in this way the characters of Vanity Fair had come to growth, their author was rightly appreciated as one of the creators in our literature, he took at once the place he will retain. With this great book and with Esmond and The Newcomes, he gave a name eminent, singular, and beloved to English fiction.

Charges of cynicism are common against all satirists, Thackeray had to bear with them. The social world he looked at did not show him heroes, only here and there a plain good soul to whom he was affectionate in the unhysterical way of an English father patting a son on the head. He described his world as an accurate observer saw it, he could not be dishonest. Not a page of his books reveals malevolence or a sneer at humanity. He was

driven to the satirical task by the scenes about him. There must be the moralist in the satirist if satire is to strike. The stroke is weakened and art violated when he comes to the front. But he will always be pressing forward, and Thackeray restrained him as much as could be done, in the manner of a good-humoured constable. Thackeray may have appeared cynical to the devout by keeping him from a station in the pulpit among congregations of the many convicted sinners. That the moralist would have occupied it and thundered had he presented us with the Fourth of the Georges we see when we read of his rejecting the solicitations of so seductive a personage for the satiric rod.

Himself one of the manliest, the kindest of human creatures, it was the love of his art that exposed him to misinterpretation. He did stout service in his day. If the bad manners he scourged are now lessened to some degree we pay a debt in remembering that we owe much to him, and if what appears incurable remains with us, a continued reading of his works will at least help to combat it.

A PAUSE IN THE STRIFE; 1886

Our 'Eriniad,' or ballad epic of the enfranchisement of the sister island is closing its first fytte for the singer, and with such result as those Englishmen who have some knowledge of their fellows foresaw. There are sufficient reasons why the Tories should always be able to keep together, but let them have the credit of cohesiveness and subordination to control. Though working for their own ends, they won the esteem of their allies, which will count for them in the struggles to follow. Their leaders appear to have seen what has not been distinctly perceptible to the opposite party that the break up of the Liberals means the defection of the old Whigs in permanence, heralding the establishment of a powerful force against Radicalism, with a capital cry to the country. They have tactical astuteness. If they seem rather too proud of their victory, it is merely because, as becomes them, they do not look ahead. To rejoice in the gaining of a day, without having clear views of the morrow, is puerile enough. Any Tory victory, it may be said, is little more than a pause in the strife, unless when the Radical game is played 'to dish the Whigs,' and the Tories are now fast bound down by their incorporation of the latter to abstain from the violent springs and right-about-facings of the Derby-Disraeli period. They are so heavily weighted by the new combination that their Jack-in-the-box, Lord Randolph, will have to stand like an ordinary sentinel on duty, and take the measurement of his natural size. They must, on the supposition of their entry into office, even to satisfy their own constituents, produce a scheme. Their majority in the House will command it.

To this extent, then, Mr. Gladstone has not been defeated. The question set on fire by him will never be extinguished until the combustible matter has gone to ashes. But personally he meets a sharp rebuff. The Tories may well raise hurrahs over that. Radicals have to admit it, and point to the grounds of it. Between a man's enemies and his friends there comes out a rough painting of his character, not without a resemblance to the final summary, albeit wanting in the justly delicate historical touch to particular features. On the one side he is abused as 'the one-man power'; lauded on the other for his marvellous intuition of the popular will. One can believe that he scarcely wishes to march dictatorially, and full surely his Egyptian policy was from step to step a misreading of the will of the English people. He went forth on this campaign, with the finger of Egypt not ineffectively levelled against him a second time. Nevertheless he does read his English; he has, too, the fatal tendency to the bringing forth of Bills in the manner of Jove big with Minerva. He perceived the necessity, and the issue of the necessity; clearly defined what must come, and, with a higher motive than the vanity with which his enemies charge him, though not with such high counsel as Wisdom at his ear, fell to work on it alone, produced the whole Bill alone, and then handed it to his Cabinet to digest, too much in love with the thing he had laid and incubated to permit of any serious dismemberment of its frame. Hence the disruption. He worked for the future, produced a Bill for the future, and is wrecked in the present. Probably he can work in no other way than from the impulse of his enthusiasm, solitarily. It is a way of making men overweeningly in love with their creations. The consequence is likely to be that Ireland will get her full measure of justice to appease her cravings earlier than she would have had as much from the United Liberal Cabinet, but at a cost both to her and to England. Meanwhile we are to have a House of Commons incapable of conducting public business; the tradesmen to whom the Times addressed

pathetic condolences on the loss of their season will lose more than one; and we shall be made sensible that we have an enemy in our midst, until a people, slow to think, have taken counsel of their native generosity to put trust in the most generous race on earth.

CONCESSION TO THE CELT;886

Things are quiet outside an ant-hill until the stick has been thrust into it. Mr. Gladstone's Bill for helping to the wiser government of Ireland has brought forth our busy citizens on the top-rubble in traversing counterswarms, and whatever may be said against a Bill that deals roughly with many sensitive interests, one asks whether anything less violently impressive would have roused industrious England to take this question at last into the mind, as a matter for settlement. The Liberal leader has driven it home; and wantonly, in the way of a pedestrian demagogue, some think; certainly to the discomposure of the comfortable and the myopely busy, who prefer to live on with a disease in the frame rather than at all be stirred. They can, we see, pronounce a positive electoral negative; yet even they, after the eighty and odd years of our domestic perplexity, in the presence of the eighty and odd members pledged for Home Rule, have been moved to excited inquiries regarding measures short of the obnoxious Bill. How much we suffer from sniffing the vain incense of that word practical, is contempt of prevision! Many of the measures now being proposed responsively to the fretful cry for them, as a better alternative to correction by force of arms, are sound and just. Ten years back, or at a more recent period before Mr. Parnell's triumph in the number of his followers, they would have formed a basis for the appeasement of the troubled land. The institution of county boards, the abolition of the detested Castle, something like the establishment of a Royal residence in Dublin, would have begun the work well. Materially and sentimentally, they were the right steps to take. They are now proposed too late. They are regarded as petty concessions, insufficient and vexatious. The lower and the higher elements in the population are fused by the enthusiasm of men who find themselves marching in full body on a road, under a flag, at the heels of a trusted leader; and they will no longer be fed with sops. Petty concessions are signs of weakness to the unsatisfied; they prick an appetite, they do not close breaches. If our object is, as we hear it said, to appease the Irish, we shall have to give them the Parliament their leader demands. It might once have been much less; it may be worried into a raving, perhaps a desperate wrestling, for still more. Nations pay Sibylline prices for want of forethought. Mr. Parnell's terms are embodied in Mr. Gladstone's Bill, to which he and his band have subscribed. The one point for him is the statutory Parliament, so that Ireland may civilly govern herself; and standing before the world as representative of his country, he addresses an applausive audience when he cites the total failure of England to do that business of government, as at least a logical reason for the claim. England has confessedly failed; the world says it, the country admits it. We have failed, and not because the so-called Saxon is incapable of understanding the Celt, but owing to our system, suitable enough to us, of rule by Party, which puts perpetually a shifting hand upon the reins, and invites the clamour it has to allay. The Irish the English too in some degree have been taught that roaring; in its various forms, is the trick to open the ears of Ministers. We have encouraged by irritating them to practise it, until it has become a habit, an hereditary profession with them. Ministers in turn have defensively adopted the arts of beguilement, varied by an exercise of the police. We grew accustomed to periods of Irish fever. The exhaustion ensuing we named tranquillity, and hoped that it would bear fruit. But we did not plant. The Party in office directed its attention to what was uppermost and urgent to that which kicked them. Although we were living, by common consent; with a disease in the frame, eruptive at intervals, a national disfigurement always a danger, the Ministerial idea of arresting it for the purpose of healing was confined, before the passing of Mr. Gladstone's well-meant Land Bill, to the occasional despatch of commissions; and, in fine, we behold through History the Irish malady treated as a form of British constitutional gout. Parliament touched on the Irish only when the Irish were active as a virus. Our later alternations of cajolery and repression bear painful resemblance to the nervous fit of rickety riders compounding with their destinations that they may keep their seats. The cajolery was foolish, if an end was in view; the repression inefficient. To repress efficiently we have to stifle a conscience accusing us of old injustice, and forget that we are sworn to freedom. The cries that we have been hearing for Cromwell or for Bismarck prove the existence of an impatient faction in our midst fitter to wear the collars of those masters whom they invoke than to drop a vote into the ballot-box. As for the prominent politicians who have displaced their

rivals partly on the strength of an implied approbation of those cries, we shall see how they illumine the councils of a governing people. They are wiser than the barking dogs. Cromwell and Bismarck are great names; but the harrying of Ireland did not settle it, and to Germanize a Posen and call it peace will find echo only in the German tongue. Posen is the error of a master-mind too much given to hammer at obstacles. He has, however, the hammer. Can it be imagined in English hands? The braver exemplar for grappling with monstrous political tasks is Cavour, and he would not have hinted at the iron method or the bayonet for a pacification. Cavour challenged debate; he had faith in the active intellect, and that is the thing to be prayed for by statesmen who would register permanent successes. The Irish, it is true, do not conduct an argument coolly. Mr. Parnell and his eighty-five have not met the Conservative leader and his following in the Commons with the gravity of platonic disputants. But they have a logical position, equivalent to the best of arguments. They are representatives, they would say, of a country admittedly ill-governed by us; and they have accepted the Bill of the defeated Minister as final. Its provisions are their terms of peace. They offer in return for that boon to take the burden we have groaned under off our hands. If we answer that we think them insincere, we accuse these thrice accredited representatives of the Irish people of being hypocrites and crafty conspirators; and numbers in England, affected by the weapons they have used to get to their present strength, do think it; forgetful that our obtuseness to their constant appeals forced them into the extremer shifts of agitation. Yet it will hardly be denied that these men love Ireland; and they have not shown themselves by their acts to be insane. To suppose them conspiring for separation indicates a suspicion that they have neither hearts nor heads. For Ireland, separation is immediate ruin. It would prove a very short sail for these conspirators before the ship went down. The vital necessity of the Union for both, countries, obviously for the weaker of the two, is known to them; and unless we resume our exasperation of the wild fellow the Celt can be made by such a process, we have not rational grounds for treating him, or treating with him, as a Bedlamite. He has besides his passions shrewd sense; and his passions may be rightly directed by benevolent attraction. This is language derided by the victorious enemy; it speaks nevertheless what the world, and even troubled America, thinks of the Irish Celt. More of it now on our side of the Channel would be serviceable. The notion that he hates the English comes of his fevered chafing against the harness of England, and when subject to his fevers, he is unrestrained in his cries and deeds. That pertains to the nature of him. Of course, if we have no belief in the virtues of friendliness and confidence none in regard to the Irishman we show him his footing, and we challenge the issue. For the sole alternative is distinct antagonism, a form of war. Mr. Gladstone's Bill has brought us to that definite line. Ireland having given her adhesion to it, swearing that she does so in good faith, and will not accept a smaller quantity, peace is only to be had by our placing trust in the Irish; we trust them or we crush them. Intermediate ways are but the prosecution of our ugly flounderings in Bogland; and dubious as we see the choice on either side, a decisive step to right or left will not show us to the world so bemired, to ourselves so miserably inefficient, as we appear in this session of a new Parliament. With his eighty-five, apart from external operations lawful or not, Mr. Parnell can act as a sort of lumbricus in the House. Let journalists watch and chronicle events: if Mr. Gladstone has humour, they will yet note a peculiar smile on his closed mouth from time to time when the alien body within the House, from which, for the sake of its dignity and ability to conduct its affairs, he would have relieved it till the day of a warmer intelligence between Irish and English, paralyzes our machinery business. An ably-handled coherent body in the midst of the liquid groups will make it felt that Ireland is a nation, naturally dependent though she must be. We have to do with forces in politics, and the great majority of the Irish Nationalists in Ireland has made them a force.

No doubt Mr. Matthew Arnold is correct in his apprehensions of the dangers we may fear from a Dublin House of Commons. The declarations and novel or ultra theories might almost be written down beforehand. I should, for my part, anticipate a greater danger in the familiar attitude of the English metropolitan Press and public toward an experiment they dislike and incline to dread: the cynical comments, the quotations between inverted commas, the commiserating shrug, cold irony, raw banter, growl of menace, sharp snap, rounds of laughter. Frenchmen of the Young Republic, not presently appreciated as offensive, have had some of these careless trifles translated for them, and have been stung. We favoured Germany with them now and then, before Germany became the first power in Europe. Before America had displayed herself as greatest among the giants that do not go to pieces, she had, as Americans forgivingly remember, without mentioning, a series of flicks of the whip. It is well to learn manners without having them imposed on us. There are various ways for tripping the experiment. Nevertheless,

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when the experiment is tried, considering that our welfare is involved in its not failing, as we have failed, we should prepare to start it cordially, cordially assist it. Thoughtful political minds regard the measure as a backward step; yet conceiving but a prospect that a measure accepted by Home Rulers will possibly enable the Irish and English to step together, it seems better worth the venture than to pursue a course of prospectless discord! Whatever we do or abstain from doing has now its evident dangers, and this being imminent may appear the larger of them; but if a weighing of the conditions dictates it, and conscience approves, the wiser proceeding is to make trial of the untried. Our outlook was preternaturally black, with enormous increase of dangers when the originator of our species venturesomely arose from the posture of the 'quatre pattes'. We consider that we have not lost by his temerity. In states of dubitation under impelling elements, the instinct pointing to courageous action is, besides the manlier, conjecturably the right one.

LESLIE STEPHEN;904

When that noble body of scholarly and cheerful pedestrians, the Sunday Tramps, were on the march, with Leslie Stephen to lead them, there was conversation which would have made the presence of a shorthand writer a benefaction to the country. A pause to it came at the examination of the leader's watch and Ordnance map under the western sun, and void was given for the strike across country to catch the tail of a train offering dinner in London, at the cost of a run through hedges, over ditches and fellows, past proclamation against trespassers, under suspicion of being taken for more serious depredators in flight. The chief of the Tramps had a wonderful calculating eye in the observation of distances and the nature of the land, as he proved by his discovery of untried passes in the higher Alps, and he had no mercy for porsy followers. I have often said of this life-long student and philosophical head that he had in him the making of a great military captain. He would not have been opposed to the profession of arms if he had been captured early for the service, notwithstanding his abomination of bloodshed. He had a high, calm courage, was unperturbed in a dubious position, and would confidently take the way out of it which he conceived to be the better. We have not to deplore that he was diverted from the ways of a soldier, though England, as the country has been learning of late, cannot boast of many in uniform who have capacity for leadership. His work in literature will be reviewed by his lieutenant of Tramps, one of the ablest of writers! [Frederic W. Maitland.] The memory of it remains with us, as being the profoundest and the most sober criticism we have had in our time. The only sting in it was an inoffensive humorous irony that now and then stole out for a roll over, like a furry cub, or the occasional ripple on a lake in grey weather. We have nothing left that is like it.

One might easily fall into the pit of panegyric by an enumeration of his qualities, personal and literary. It would not be out of harmony with the temper and characteristics of a mind so equable. He, the equable, whether in condemnation or eulogy. Our loss of such a man is great, for work was in his brain, and the hand was active till close upon the time when his breathing ceased. The loss to his friends can be replaced only by an imagination that conjures him up beside them. That will be no task to those who have known him well enough to see his view of things as they are, and revive his expression of it. With them he will live despite the word farewell.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE SEAT OF WAR IN ITALY

LETTERS WRITTEN TO THE MORNING POST FROM THE SEAT OF WAR IN ITALY FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

FERRARA, June 22, 1866.

Before this letter reaches London the guns will have awakened both the echo of the old river Po and the classical Mincio. The whole of the troops, about 110,000 men, with which Cialdini intends to force the passage of the first-named river are already massed along the right bank of the Po, anxiously waiting that the last hour of to-morrow should strike, and that the order for action should be given. The telegraph will have already informed

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your readers that, according to the intimation sent by General Lamarmora on Tuesday evening to the Austrian headquarters, the three days fixed by the general's message before beginning hostilities will expire at twelve p.m. of the 23rd of June.

Cialdini's headquarters have been established in this city since Wednesday morning, and the famous general, in whom the fourth corps he commands, and the whole of the nation, has so much confidence, has concentrated the whole of his forces within a comparatively narrow compass, and is ready for action. I believe therefore that by to-morrow the right bank of the Po will be connected with the mainland of the Polesine by several pontoon bridges, which will enable Cialdini's corps d'armee to cross the river, and, as everybody here hopes, to cross it in spite of any defence the Austrians may make.

On my way to this ancient city last evening I met General Cadogan and two superior Prussian officers, who by this time must have joined Victor Emmanuel's headquarters at Cremona; if not, they have been by this time transferred elsewhere, more on the front, towards the line of the Mincio, on which, according to appearance, the first, second, and third Italian corps d'armee seem destined to operate. The English general and the two Prussian officers above mentioned are to follow the king's staff, the first as English commissioner, the superior in rank of the two others in the same capacity.

I have been told here that, before leaving Bologna, Cialdini held a general council of the commanders of the seven divisions of which his powerful corps d'armee is formed, and that he told them that, in spite of the forces the enemy has massed on the left bank of the Po, between the point which faces Stellata and Rovigo, the river must be crossed by his troops, whatever might be the sacrifice this important operation requires. Cialdini is a man who knows how to keep his word, and, for this reason, I have no doubt he will do what he has already made up his mind to accomplish. I am therefore confident that before two or three days have elapsed, these 110,000 Italian troops, or a great part of them, will have trod, for the Italians, the sacred land of Venetia.

Once the river Po crossed by Cialdini's corps d'armee, he will boldly enter the Polesine and make himself master of the road which leads by Rovigo towards Este and Padua. A glance at the map will show your readers how, at about twenty or thirty miles from the first-mentioned town, a chain of hills, called the Colli Euganei, stretches itself from the last spur of the Julian Alps, in the vicinity of Vicenza, gently sloping down towards the sea. As this line affords good positions for contesting the advance of an army crossing the Po at Lago Scuro, or at any other point not far from it, it is to be supposed that the Austrians will make a stand there, and I should not be surprised at all that Cialdini's first battle, if accepted by the enemy, should take place within that comparatively narrow ground which is within Montagnana, Este, Terradura, Abano, and Padua. It is impossible to suppose that Cialdini's corps d'armee, being so large, is destined to cross the Po only at one point of the river below its course: it is extremely likely that part of it should cross it at some point above, between Revere and Stellata, where the river is in two or three instances only 450 metres wide. Were the Italian general to be successfully protected as he will be by the tremendous fire of the powerful artillery he disposes of in these twofold operations, the Austrians defending the line of the Colli Euganei could be easily outflanked by the Italian troops, who would have crossed the river below Lago Scuro. Of course these are mere suppositions, for nobody, as you may imagine, except the king, Cialdini himself, Lamarmora, Pettiti, and Menabrea, is acquainted with the plan of the forthcoming campaign. There was a rumour at Cialdini's headquarters to-day that the Austrians had gathered in great numbers in the Polesine, and especially at Rovigo, a small town which they have strongly fortified of late, with an apparent design to oppose the crossing of the Po, were Cialdini to attempt it at or near Lago Scuro. There are about Rovigo large tracts of marshes and fields cut by ditches and brooks, which, though owing to the dryness of the season [they] cannot be, as it was generally believed two weeks ago, easily inundated, yet might well aid the operations the Austrians may undertake in order to check the advance of the Italian fourth corps d'armee. The resistance to the undertaking of Cialdini may be, on the part of the Austrians, very stout, but I am almost certain that it will be overcome by the ardour of Italian troops, and by the skill of their illustrious leader.

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As I told you above, the declaration of war was handed over to an Austrian major for transmission to Count Stancowick, the Austrian governor of Mantua, on the evening of the 19th, by Colonel Bariola, sous-chef of the general staff, who was accompanied by the Duke Luigi of Sant' Arpino, the husband of the amiable widow of Lord Burghersh. The duke is the eldest son of Prince San Teodoro, one of the wealthiest noblemen of Naples. In spite of his high position and of his family ties, the Duke of Sant' Arpino, who is well known in London fashionable society, entered as a volunteer in the Italian army, and was appointed orderly officer to General Lamarmora. The choice of such a gentleman for the mission I am speaking of was apparently made with intention, in order to show the Austrians, that the Neapolitan nobility is as much interested in the national movement as the middle and lower classes of the Kingdom, once so fearfully misruled by the Bourbons. The Duke of Sant' Arpino is not the only Neapolitan nobleman who has enlisted in the Italian army since the war with Austria broke out. In order to show you the importance which must be given to this pronunciamiento of the Neapolitan noblemen, allow me to give you here a short list of the names of those of them who have enlisted as private soldiers in the cavalry regiments of the regular army: The Duke of Policastro; the Count of Savignano Guevara, the eldest son of the Duke of Bovino; the Duke d'Ozia d'Angri, who had emigrated in 1860, and returned to Naples six months ago; Marquis Rivadebro Serra; Marquis Pисicelli, whose family had left Naples in 1860 out of devotion to Francis II.; two Carraciolos, of the historical family from which sprung the unfortunate Neapolitan admiral of this name, whose head Lord Nelson would have done better not to have sacrificed to the cruelty of Queen Caroline; Prince Carini, the representative of an illustrious family of Sicily, a nephew of the Marquis del Vasto; and Pescara, a descendant of that great general of Charles V., to whom the proud Francis I. of France was obliged to surrender and give up his sword at the battle of Pavia. Besides these Neapolitan noblemen who have enlisted of late as privates, the Italian army now encamped on the banks of the Po and of the Mincio may boast of two Colonnas, a prince of Somma, two Barons Renzi, an Acquaviva, of the Duke of Atri, two Capece, two Princes Buttera, etc. To return to the mission of Colonel Bariola and the Duke of Sant' Arpino, I will add some details which were told me this morning by a gentleman who left Cremona yesterday evening, and who had them from a reliable source. The messenger of General Lamarmora had been directed to proceed from Cremona to the small village of Le Grazie, which, on the line of the Mincio, marks the Austrian and Italian frontier.

On the right bank of the Lake of Mantua, in the year 1340, stood a small chapel containing a miraculous painting of the Madonna, called by the people of the locality 'Santa Maria delle Grazie.' The boatmen and fishermen of the Mincio, who had been, as they said, often saved from certain death by the Madonna as famous in those days as the modern Lady of Rimini, celebrated for the startling feat of winking her eyes determined to erect for her a more worthy abode.

Hence arose the Santuario delle Grazie. Here, as at Loretto and other holy localities of Italy, a fair is held, in which, amongst a great number of worldly things, rosaries, holy images, and other miraculous objects are sold, and astounding boons are said to be secured at the most trifling expense. The Santuario della Madonna delle Grazie enjoying a far-spread reputation, the dumb, deaf, blind, and halt—in short, people afflicted with all sorts of infirmities flock thither during the fair, and are not wanting even on the other days of the year. The church of Le Grazie is one of the most curious of Italy. Not that there is anything remarkable in its architecture, for it is an Italian Gothic structure of the simplest style. But the ornamental part of the interior is most peculiar. The walls of the building are covered with a double row of wax statues, of life size, representing a host of warriors, cardinals, bishops, kings, and popes, who as the story runs pretended to have received some wonderful grace during their earthly existence. Amongst the grand array of illustrious personages, there are not a few humbler individuals whose history is faithfully told (if you choose to credit it) by the painted inscriptions below. There is even a convict, who, at the moment of being hanged, implored succour of the all-powerful Madonna, whereupon the beam of the gibbet instantly broke, and the worthy individual was restored to society a very doubtful benefit after all. On Colonel Bariola and the Duke of Sant' Arpino arriving at this place, which is only five miles distant from Mantua, their carriage was naturally stopped by the commissaire of the Austrian police, whose duty was to watch the frontier. Having told him that they had a despatch to deliver either to the military governor of Mantua or to some officer sent by him to receive it, the commissaire at once despatched a mounted gendarme to Mantua. Two hours had scarcely elapsed when a carriage drove into the village of Le Grazie, from which an Austrian major of

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infantry alighted and hastened to a wooden hut where the two Italian officers were waiting. Colonel Bariola, who was trained in the Austrian military school of Viller Nashstad, and regularly left the Austrian service in 1848, acquainted the newly-arrived major with his mission, which was that of delivering the sealed despatch to the general in command of Mantua and receiving for it a regular receipt. The despatch was addressed to the Archduke Albert, commander-in-chief of the Austrian army of the South, care of the governor of Mantua. After the major had delivered the receipt, the three messengers entered into a courteous conversation, during which Colonel Bariola seized an opportunity of presenting the duke, purposely laying stress on the fact of his belonging to one of the most illustrious families of Naples. It happened that the Austrian major had also been trained in the same school where Colonel Bariola was brought up a circumstance of which he was reminded by the Austrian officer himself. Three hours had scarcely elapsed from the arrival of the two Italian messengers of war at Le Grazie, on the Austrian frontier, when they were already on their way back to the headquarters of Cremona, where during the night the rumour was current that a telegram had been received by Lamarmora from Verona, in which Archduke Albert accepted the challenge. Victor Emmanuel, whom I saw at Bologna yesterday, arrived at Cremona in the morning at two o'clock, but by this time his Majesty's headquarters must have removed more towards the front, in the direction of the Oglio. I should not be at all surprised were the Italian headquarters to be established by to-morrow either at Piubega or Gazzoldo, if not actually at Goito, a village, as you know, which marks the Italian-Austrian frontier on the Mincio. The whole of the first, second, and third Italian corps d'armee are by this time concentrated within that comparatively narrow space which lies between the position of Castiglione, Delle Stiviere, Lorrato, and Desenzano, on the Lake of Garda, and Solferino on one side; Piubega, Gazzoldo, Sacca, Goito, and Castellucchio on the other. Are these three corps d'armee to attack when they hear the roar of Cialdini's artillery on the right bank of the Po? Are they destined to force the passage of the Mincio either at Goito or at Borghetto? or are they destined to invest Verona, storm Peschiera, and lay siege to Mantua? This is more than I can tell you, for, I repeat it, the intentions of the Italian leaders are enveloped in a veil which nobody the Austrians included has as yet been able to penetrate. One thing, however, is certain, and it is this, that as the clock of Victor Emmanuel marks the last minute of the seventy-second hour fixed by the declaration delivered at Le Grazie on Wednesday by Colonel Bariola to the Austrian major, the fair land where Virgil was born and Tasso was imprisoned will be enveloped by a thick cloud of the smoke of hundreds and hundreds of cannon. Let us hope that God will be in favour of right and justice, which, in this imminent and fierce struggle, is undoubtedly on the Italian side.

CREMONA, June 30, 1866.

The telegraph will have already informed you of the concentration of the Italian army, whose headquarters have since Tuesday been removed from Redondesco to Piadena, the king having chosen the adjacent villa of Cigognolo for his residence. The concentrating movements of the royal army began on the morning of the 27th, i.e., three days after the bloody fait d'armes of the 24th, which, narrated and commented on in different manners according to the interests and passions of the narrators, still remains for many people a mystery. At the end of this letter you will see that I quote a short phrase with which an Austrian major, now prisoner of war, portrayed the results of the fierce struggle fought beyond the Mincio. This officer is one of the few survivors of a regiment of Austrian volunteers, uhlands, two squadrons of which he himself commanded. The declaration made by this officer was thoroughly explicit, and conveys the exact idea of the valour displayed by the Italians in that terrible fight. Those who incline to overrate the advantages obtained by the Austrians on Sunday last must not forget that if Lamarmora had thought proper to persist in holding the positions of Valeggio, Volta, and Goito, the Austrians could not have prevented him. It seems the Austrian general-in-chief shared this opinion, for, after his army had carried with terrible sacrifices the positions of Monte Vento and Custozza, it did not appear, nor indeed did the Austrians then give any signs, that they intended to adopt a more active system of warfare. It is the business of a commander to see that after a victory the fruit of it should not be lost, and for this reason the enemy is pursued and molested, and time is not left him for reorganization. Nothing of this happened after the 24th nothing has been done by the Austrians to secure such results. The frontier which separates the two dominions is now the same as it was on the eve of the declaration of war. At Goito, at Monzambano, and in the other villages of the extreme frontier, the Italian authorities are still discharging their duties. Nothing is changed in those places, were

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we to except that now and then an Austrian cavalry party suddenly makes its appearance, with the only object of watching the movements of the Italian army. One of these parties, formed by four squadrons of the Wurtemberg hussar regiment, having advanced at six o'clock this morning on the right bank of the Mincio, met the fourth squadron of the Italian lancers of Foggia and were beaten back, and compelled to retire in disorder towards Goito and Rivolta. In this unequal encounter the Italian lancers distinguished themselves very much, made some Austrian hussars prisoners, and killed a few more, amongst whom was an officer. The same state of thing, prevails at Rivottella, a small village on the shores of the Lake of Garda, about four miles distant from the most advanced fortifications of Peschiera. There, as elsewhere, some Austrian parties advanced with the object of watching the movements of the Garibaldians, who occupy the hilly ground, which from Castiglione, Eseuta, and Cartel Venzago stretches to Lonato, Salo, and Desenzano, and to the mountain passes of Caffaro. In the last-named place the Garibaldians came to blows with the Austrians on the morning of the 28th, and the former got the best of the fray. Had the *fait d'armes* of the 24th, or the battle of Custozza, as Archduke Albrecht calls it, been a great victory for the Austrians, why should the imperial army remain in such inaction? The only conclusion we must come to is simply this, that the Austrian losses have been such as to induce the commander-in-chief of the army to act prudently on the defensive. We are now informed that the charges of cavalry which the Austrian lancers and the Hungarian hussars had to sustain near Villafranca on the 24th with the Italian horsemen of the Aorta and Alessandria regiments have been so fatal to the former that a whole division of the Kaiser cavalry must be reorganised before it can be brought into the field main.

The regiment of Haller hussars and two of volunteer uhlans were almost destroyed in that terrible charge. To give you an idea of this cavalry encounter, it is sufficient to say that Colonel Vandoni, at the head of the Aorta regiment he commands, charged fourteen times during the short period of four hours. The volunteer uhlans of the Kaiser regiment had already given up the idea of breaking through the square formed by the battalion, in the centre of which stood Prince Humbert of Savoy, when they were suddenly charged and literally cut to pieces by the Alessandria light cavalry, in spite of the long lances they carried. This weapon and the loose uniform they wear makes them resemble the Cossacks of the Don. There is one circumstance, which, if I am not mistaken, has not as yet been published by the newspapers, and it is this. There was a fight on the 25th on a place at the north of Roverbella, between the Italian regiment of Novara cavalry and a regiment of Hungarian hussars, whose name is not known. This regiment was so thoroughly routed by the Italians that it was pursued as far as Villafranca, and had two squadrons put hors de combat, whilst the Novara regiment only lost twenty-four mounted men. I think it right to mention this, for it proves that, the day after the bloody affair of the 24th, the Italian army had still a regiment of cavalry operating at Villafranca, a village which lay at a distance of fifteen kilometres from the Italian frontier. A report, which is much accredited here, explains how the Italian army did not derive the advantages it might have derived from the action of the 24th. It appears that the orders issued from the Italian headquarters during the previous night, and especially the verbal instructions given by Lamarmora and Pettiti to the staff officers of the different army corps, were either forgotten or misunderstood by those officers. Those sent to Durando, the commander of the first corps, seem to have been as follows: That he should have marched in the direction of Castelnuovo, without, however, taking part in the action. Durando, it is generally stated, had strictly adhered to the orders sent from the headquarters, but it seems that General Cerale understood them too literally. Having been ordered to march on Castelnuovo, and finding the village strongly held by the Austrians, who received his division with a tremendous fire, he at once engaged in the action instead of falling back on the reserve of the first corps and waiting new instructions. If such was really the case, it is evident that Cerale thought that the order to march which he had received implied that he was to attack and get possession of Castelnuovo, had this village, as it really was, already been occupied by the enemy. In mentioning this fact I feel bound to observe that I write it under the most complete reserve, for I should be sorry indeed to charge General Cerale with having misunderstood such an important order.

I see that one of your leading contemporaries believes that it would be impossible for the king or Lamarmora to say what result they expected from their ill-conceived and worse-executed attempt. The result they expected is, I think, clear enough; they wanted to break through the quadrilateral and make their junction with Cialdini, who was ready to cross the Po during the night of the 24th. That the attempt was ill-conceived and worse-executed,

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neither your contemporary nor the public at large has, for the present, the right to conclude, for no one knows as yet but imperfectly the details of the terrible fight. What is certain, however, is that General Durando, perceiving that the Cerale division was lost, did all that he could to help it. Failing in this he turned to his two aides-de-camp and coolly said to them:

'Now, gentlemen, it is time for you to retire, for I have a duty to perform which is a strictly personal one the duty of dying.' On saying these words he galloped to the front and placed himself at about twenty paces from a battalion of Austrian sharpshooters which were ascending the hill. In less than five minutes his horse was killed under him, and he was wounded in the right hand. I scarcely need add that his aides-de-camp did not flinch from sharing Durando's fate. They bravely followed their general, and one, the Marquis Corbetta, was wounded in the leg; the other, Count Esengrini, had his horse shot under him. I called on Durando, who is now at Milan, the day before yesterday. Though a stranger to him, he received me at once, and, speaking of the action of the 24th, he only said: 'I have the satisfaction of having done my duty. I wait tranquilly the judgement of history.'

Assuming, for argument's sake, that General Cerale misunderstood the orders he had received, and that, by precipitating his movement, he dragged into the same mistake the whole of Durando's corps assuming, I say, this to be the right version, you can easily explain the fact that neither of the two contending parties are as yet in a position clearly to describe the action of the 24th. Why did neither the one nor the other display and bring into action the whole forces they could have had at their disposal? Why so many partial engagements at a great distance one from the other? In a word, why that want of unity, which, in my opinion, constituted the paramount characteristic of that bloody struggle? I may be greatly mistaken, but I am of opinion that neither the Italian general-in-chief nor the Austrian Archduke entertained on the night of the 23rd the idea of delivering a battle on the 24th. There, and only there, lies the whole mystery of the affair. The total want of unity of action on the part of the Italians assured to the Austrians, not the victory, but the chance of rendering impossible Lamarmora's attempt to break through the quadrilateral. This no one can deny; but, on the other hand, if the Italian army failed in attaining its object, the failure—owing to the bravery displayed both by the soldiers and by the generals—was far from being a disastrous or irreparable one. The Italians fought from three o'clock in the morning until nine in the evening like lions, showing to their enemies and to Europe that they know how to defend their country, and that they are worthy of the noble enterprise they have undertaken.

But let me now register one of the striking episodes of that memorable day. It was five o'clock p.m. when General Bixio, whose division held an elevated position not far from Villafranca, was attacked by three strong Austrian brigades, which had debouched at the same time from three different roads, supported with numerous artillery. An officer of the Austrian staff, waving a white handkerchief, was seen galloping towards the front of Bixio's position, and, once in the presence of this general, bade him surrender. Those who are not personally acquainted with Bixio cannot form an idea of the impression this bold demand must have made on him. I have been told that, on hearing the word 'surrender,' his face turned suddenly pale, then flushed like purple, and darting at the Austrian messenger, said, 'Major, if you dare to pronounce once more the word surrender in my presence, I tell you and Bixio always keeps his word that I will have you shot at once.' The Austrian officer had scarcely reached the general who had sent him, than Bixio, rapidly moving his division, fell with such impetuosity on the Austrian column, which were ascending the hill, that they were thrown pellmell in the valley, causing the greatest confusion amongst their reserve. Bixio himself led his men, and with his aides-de-camp, Cavaliere Filippo Fermi, Count Martini, and Colonel Malenchini, all Tuscans, actually charged the enemy. I have been told that, on hearing this episode, Garibaldi said, 'I am not at all surprised, for Bixio is the best general I have made.' Once the enemy was repulsed, Bixio was ordered to manoeuvre so as to cover the backward movement of the army, which was orderly and slowly retiring on the Mincio. Assisted by the co-operation of the heavy cavalry, commanded by General Count de Sonnaz, Bixio covered the retreat, and during the night occupied Goito, a position which he held till the evening of the 27th.

In consequence of the concentrating movement of the Italian army which I have mentioned at the beginning of this letter, the fourth army corps (Cialdini's) still holds the line of the Po. If I am rightly informed, the decree for

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the formation of the fourth army corps was signed by the king yesterday. This corps is that of Garibaldi, and is about 40,000 strong. An officer who has just returned from Milan told me this morning that he had had an opportunity of speaking with the Austrian prisoners sent from Milan to the fortress of Finestrelle in Piedmont. Amongst them was an officer of a uhlan regiment, who had all the appearance of belonging to some aristocratic family of Austrian Poland. Having been asked if he thought Austria had really gained the battle on the 24th, he answered: 'I do not know if the illusions of the Austrian army go so far as to induce it to believe it has obtained a victory I do not believe it. He who loves Austria cannot, however, wish she should obtain such victories, for they are the victories of Pyrrhus!

There is at Verona some element in the Austrian councils of war which we don't understand, but which gives to their operations in this present phase of the campaign just as uncertain and as vacillating a character as it possessed during the campaign of 1859. On Friday they are still beyond the Mincio, and on Saturday their small fleet on the Lake of Garda steams up to Desenzano, and opens fire against this defenceless city and her railway station, whilst two battalions of Tyrolese sharp-shooters occupy the building. On Sunday they retire, but early yesterday they cross the Mincio, at Goito and Monzambano, and begin to throw two bridges over the same river, between the last-named place and the mills of Volta. At the same time they erect batteries at Goito, Torriane, and Valeggio, pushing their reconnoitring parties of hussars as far as Medole, Castiglione delle Stiviere, and Montechiara, this last-named place being only at a distance of twenty miles from Brescia. Before this news reached me here this morning I was rather inclined to believe that they were playing at hide-and-seek, in the hope that the leaders of the Italian army should be tempted by the game and repeat, for the second time, the too hasty attack on the quadrilateral. This news, which I have from a reliable source, has, however, changed my former opinion, and I begin to believe that the Austrian Archduke has really made up his mind to come out from the strongholds of the quadrilateral, and intends actually to begin war on the very battlefields where his imperial cousin was beaten on the 24th June 1859. It may be that the partial disasters sustained by Benedek in Germany have determined the Austrian Government to order a more active system of war against Italy, or, as is generally believed here, that the organisation of the commissariat was not perfect enough with the army Archduke Albert commands to afford a more active and offensive action. Be that as it may, the fact is that the news received here from several parts of Upper Lombardy seems to indicate, on the part of the Austrians, the intention of attacking their adversaries.

Yesterday whilst the peaceable village of Gazzoldo five Italian miles from Goito was still buried in the silence of night it was occupied by 400 hussars, to the great consternation of the people who were roused from their sleep by the galloping of their unexpected visitors. The sindaco, or mayor of the village, who is the chemist of the place, was, I hear, forcibly taken from his house and compelled to escort the Austrians on the road leading to Piubega and Redondesco. This worthy magistrate, who was not apparently endowed with sufficient courage to make at least half a hero, was so much frightened that he was taken ill, and still is in a very precarious condition. These inroads are not always accomplished with impunity, for last night, not far from Guidizzuolo, two squadrons of Italian light cavalry Cavalleggieri di Lucca, if I am rightly informed at a sudden turn of the road leading from the last-named village to Cerlongo, found themselves almost face to face with four squadrons of uhlands. The Italians, without numbering their foes, set spurs to their horses and fell like thunder on the Austrians, who, after a fight which lasted more than half an hour, were put to flight, leaving on the ground fifteen men hors de combat, besides twelve prisoners.

Whilst skirmishing of this kind is going on in the flat ground of Lombardy which lies between the Mincio and the Chiese, a more decisive action has been adopted by the Austrian corps which is quartered in the Italian Tyrol and Valtellina. A few days ago it was generally believed that the mission of this corps was only to oppose Garibaldi should he try to force those Alpine passes. But now we suddenly hear that the Austrians are already masters of Caffaro, Bagolino, Riccomassino, and Turano, which points they are fortifying. This fact explains the last movements made by Garibaldi towards that direction. But whilst the Austrians are massing their troops on the Tyrolese Alps the revolution is spreading fast in the more southern mountains of the Friuli and Cadorre, thus threatening the flank and rear of their army in Venetia. This revolutionary movement may not have as yet

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assumed great proportions, but as it is the effect of a plan proposed beforehand it might become really imposing, more so as the ranks of those Italian patriots are daily swollen by numerous deserters and refractory men of the Venetian regiments of the Austrian army.

Although the main body of the Austrians seems to be still concentrated between Peschiera and Verona, I should not wonder if they crossed the Mincio either to-day or to-morrow, with the object of occupying the heights of Volta, Cavriana, and Solferino, which, both by their position and by the nature of the ground, are in themselves so many fortresses. Supposing that the Italian army should decide for action and there is every reason to believe that such will be the case it is not unlikely that, as we had already a second battle at Custoza, we may have a second one at Solferino.

That at the Italian headquarters something has been decided upon which may hasten the forward movement of the army, I infer from the fact that the foreign military commissioners at the Italian headquarters, who, after the 24th June had gone to pass the leisure of their camp life at Cremona, have suddenly made their appearance at Torre Malamberti, a villa belonging to the Marquis Araldi, where Lamarmora's staff is quartered. A still more important event is the presence of Baron Ricasoli, whom I met yesterday evening on coming here. The President of the Council was coming from Florence, and, after stopping a few hours at the villa of Cicognolo, where Victor Emmanuel and the royal household are staying, he drove to Torre Malamberti to confer with General Lamarmora and Count Pettiti. The presence of the baron at headquarters is too important an incident to be overlooked by people whose business is that of watching the course of events in this country. And it should be borne in mind that on his way to headquarters Baron Ricasoli stopped a few hours at Bologna, where he had a long interview with Cialdini. Nor is this all; for the most important fact I have to report to-day is, that whilst I am writing (five o'clock a.m.) three corps of the Italian army are crossing the Oglio at different points all three acting together and ready for any occurrence. This reconnaissance en force may, as you see, be turned into a regular battle should the Austrians have crossed the Mincio with the main body of their army during the course of last night. You see that the air around me smells enough of powder to justify the expectation of events which are likely to exercise a great influence over the cause of right and justice the cause of Italy.

MARCARIA, July 3, Evening.

Murray's guide will save me the trouble of telling you what this little and dirty hole of Marcaria is like. The river Oglio runs due south, not far from the village, and cuts the road which from Bozzolo leads to Mantua. It is about seven miles from Castellucchio, a town which, since the peace of Villafranca, marked the Italian frontier in Lower Lombardy. Towards this last-named place marched this morning the eleventh division of the Italians under the command of General Angioletti, only a month ago Minister of the Marine in Lamarmora's Cabinet. Angioletti's division of the second corps was, in the case of an attack, to be supported by the fourth and eighth, which had crossed the Oglio at Gazzuolo four hours before the eleventh had started from the place from which I am now writing. Two other divisions also moved in an oblique line from the upper course of the above-mentioned river, crossed it on a pontoon bridge, and were directed to maintain their communications with Angioletti's on the left, whilst the eighth and fourth would have formed its right. These five divisions were the avant garde of the main body of the Italian army. I am not in a position to tell you the exact line the army thus advancing from the Oglio has followed, but I have been told that, in order to avoid the possibility of repeating the errors which occurred in the action of the 24th, the three corps d'armee have been directed to march in such a manner as to enable them to present a compact mass should they meet the enemy. Contrary to all expectations, Angioletti's division was allowed to enter and occupy Castellucchio without firing a shot. As its vanguard reached the hamlet of Ospedaletto it was informed that the Austrians had left Castellucchio during the night, leaving a few hussars, who, in their turn, retired on Mantua as soon as they saw the cavalry Angioletti had sent to reconnoitre both the country and the borough of Castellucchio.

News has just arrived here that General Angioletti has been able to push his outposts as far as Rivolta on his left, and still farther forward on his front towards Curtalone. Although the distance from Rivolta to Goito is only five

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miles, Angioletti, I have been told, could not ascertain whether the Austrians had crossed the Mincio in force.

What part both Cialdini and Garibaldi will play in the great struggle nobody can tell. It is certain, however, that these two popular leaders will not be idle, and that a battle, if fought, will assume the proportions of an almost unheard of slaughter.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE ITALIAN ARMY, TORRE MALIMBERTI, July 7, 1866.

Whilst the Austrian emperor throws himself at the feet of the ruler of France I was almost going to write the arbiter of Europe Italy and its brave army seem to reject disdainfully the idea of getting Venetia as a gift of a neutral power. There cannot be any doubt as to the feeling in existence since the announcement of the Austrian proposal by the *Moniteur* being one of astonishment, and even indignation so far as Italy herself is concerned. One hears nothing but expressions of this kind in whatever Italian town he may be, and the Italian army is naturally anxious that she should not be said to relinquish her task when Austrians speak of having beaten her, without proving that she can beat them too. There are high considerations of honour which no soldier or general would ever think of putting aside for humanitarian or political reasons, and with these considerations the Italian army is fully in accord since the 24th June. The way, too, in which the Kaiser chose to give up the long-contested point, by ignoring Italy and recognising France as a party to the Venetian question, created great indignation amongst the Italians, whose papers declare, one and all, that a fresh insult has been offered to the country. This is the state of public opinion here, and unless the greatest advantages are obtained by a premature armistice and a hurried treaty of peace, it is likely to continue the same, not to the entire security of public order in Italy. As a matter of course, all eyes are turned towards Villa Pallavicini, two miles from here, where the king is to decide upon either accepting or rejecting the French emperor's advice, both of which decisions are fraught with considerable difficulties and no little danger. The king will have sought the advice of his ministers, besides which that of Prussia will have been asked and probably given. The matter may be decided one way or the other in a very short time, or may linger on for days to give time for public anxiety and fears to be allayed and to calm down. In the meantime, it looks as if the king and his generals had made up their mind not to accept the gift. An attack on the Borgoforte *tete-de-pont* on the right side of the Po, began on 5th at half-past three in the morning, under the immediate direction of General Cialdini. The attacking corps was the Duke of Mignano's. All the day yesterday the gun was heard at Torre Malamberti, as it was also this morning between ten and eleven o'clock. Borgoforte is a fortress on the left side of the Po, throwing a bridge across this river, the right end of which is headed by a strong *tete-de-pont*, the object of the present attack. This work may be said to belong to the quadrilateral, as it is only an advanced part of the fortress of Mantua, which, resting upon its rear, is connected to Borgoforte by a military road supported on the Mantua side by the Pietolo fortress. The distance between Mantua and Borgoforte is only eleven kilometres. The *fete-de-poet* is thrown upon the Po; its structure is of recent date, and it consists of a central part and of two wings, called Rocchetta and Bocca di Ganda respectively. The lock here existing is enclosed in the Rocchetta work.

Since I wrote you my last letter Garibaldi has been obliged to desist from the idea of getting possession of Bagolino, Sant' Antonio, and Monte Suello, after a fight which lasted four hours, seeing that he had to deal with an entire Austrian brigade, supported by uhlans, sharpshooters (almost a battalion) and twelve pieces of artillery. These positions were subsequently abandoned by the enemy, and occupied by Garibaldi's volunteers. In this affair the general received a slight wound in his left leg, the nature of which, however, is so very trifling, that a few days will be enough to enable him to resume active duties. It seems that the arms of the Austrians proved to be much superior to those of the Garibaldians, whose guns did very bad service. The loss of the latter amounted to about 100 killed and 200 wounded, figures in which the officers appear in great proportion, owing to their having been always at the head of their men, fighting, charging, and encouraging their comrades throughout. Captain Adjutant-Major Battino, formerly of the regular army, died, struck by three bullets, while rushing on the Austrians with the first regiment. On abandoning the Caffaro line, which they had reoccupied after the Lodrone encounter in consequence of which the Garibaldians had to fall back because of the concentration following the battle of Custoza the Austrians have retired to the Lardara fortress, between the Stabolfes and Tenara

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mountains, covering the route to Tione and Trento, in the Italian Tyrol. The third regiment of volunteers suffered most, as two of their companies had to bear the brunt of the terrible Austrian fire kept up from formidable positions. Another fight was taking place almost at the same time in the Val Camonico, i.e., north of the Caffaro, and of Rocca d'Anfo, Garibaldi's point d'appui. This encounter was sustained in the same proportions, the Italians losing one of their bravest and best officers in the person of Major Castellini, a Milanese, commander of the second battalion of Lombardian bersaglieri. Although these and Major Caldesi's battalion had to fall back from Vezza, a strong position was taken near Edalo, while in the rear a regiment kept Breno safe.

Although still at headquarters only two days ago, Baron Ricasoli has been suddenly summoned by telegram from Florence, and, as I hear, has just arrived. This is undoubtedly brought about by the new complications, especially as, at a council of ministers presided over by the baron, a vote, the nature of which is as yet unknown, was taken on the present state of affairs. As you know very well in England, Italy has great confidence in Ricasoli, whose conduct, always far from obsequious to the French emperor, has pleased the nation. He is thought to be at this moment the right man in the right place, and with the great acquaintance he possesses of Italy and the Italians, and with the co-operation of such an honest man as General Lamarmora, Italy may be pronounced safe, both against friends and enemies.

From what I saw this morning, coming back from the front, I presume that something, and that something new perhaps, will be attempted to-morrow. So far, the proposed armistice has had no effect upon the dispositions at general headquarters, and did not stay the cannon's voice. In the middle of rumours, of hopes and fears, Italy's wish to push on with the war has as yet been adhered to by her trusted leaders.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE FIRST ARMY CORPS, PIADENA, July 8, 1866.

As I begin writing you, no doubt can be entertained that some movement is not only in contemplation at headquarters, but is actually provided to take place to-day, and that it will probably prove to be against the Austrian positions at Borgoforte, on the left bank of the Po. Up to this time the *tete-de-pout* on the right side of the river had only been attacked by General the Duke of Mignano's guns. It would now, on the contrary, be a matter of cutting the communications between Borgoforte and Mantua, by occupying the lower part of the country around the latter fortress, advancing upon the Valli Veronesi, and getting round the quadrilateral into Venetia. While, then, waiting for further news to tell us whether this plan has been carried into execution, and whether it will be pursued, mindless of the existence of Mantua and Borgoforte on its flanks, one great fact is already ascertained, that the armistice proposed by the Emperor Napoleon has not been accepted, and that the war is to be continued. The Austrians may shut themselves up in their strongholds, or may even be so obliging as to leave the king the uncontested possession of them by retreating in the same line as their opponents advance; the pursuit, if not the struggle, the war, if not the battle, will be carried on by the Italians. At Torre Malamberti, where the general headquarters are, no end of general officers were to be seen yesterday hurrying in all directions. I met the king, Generals Brignone, Gavone, Valfre, and Menabrea within a few minutes of one another, and Prince Amadeus, who has entirely recovered from his wound, had been telegraphed for, and will arrive in Cremona to-day. No precise information is to be obtained respecting the intentions of the Austrians, but it is to be hoped for the Italian army, and for the credit of its generals, that more will be known about them now than was known on the eve of the famous 24th of June, and on its very morning. The heroism of the Italians on that memorable day surpasses any possible idea that can be formed, as it did also surpass all expectations of the country. Let me relate you a few out of many heroic facts which only come to light when an occasion is had of speaking with those who have been eyewitnesses of them, as they are no object of magnified regimental orders or, as yet, of well-deserved honours. Italian soldiers seem to think that the army only did its duty, and that, wherever Italians may fight, they will always show equal valour and firmness. Captain Biraghi, of Milan, belonging to the general staff, having in the midst of the battle received an order from General Lamarmora for General Durando, was proceeding with all possible speed towards the first army corps, which was slowly retreating before the superior forces of the enemy and before the greatly superior number of his guns, when, while under a perfect shower of grape and canister, he was all of a sudden confronted by, an Austrian officer of cavalry who had been lying in

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wait for the Italian orderly. The Austrian fires his revolver at Biraghi; and wounds him in the arm. Nothing daunted, Biraghi assails him and makes him turn tail; then, following in pursuit, unsaddles him, but has his own horse shot down under him. Biraghi disentangles himself, kills his antagonist, and jumps upon the latter's horse. This, however, is thrown down also in a moment by a cannon ball, so that the gallant captain has to go back on foot, bleeding, and almost unable to walk. Talking of heroism, of inimitable endurance, and strength of soul, what do you think of a man who has his arm entirely carried away by a grenade, and yet keeps on his horse, firm as a rock, and still directs his battery until hemorrhage and hemorrhage alone strikes him down at last, dead! Such was the case with a Neapolitan Major Abate, of the artillery and his name is worth the glory of a whole army, of a whole war; and may only find a fit companion in that of an officer of the eighteenth battalion of bersaglieri, who, dashing at an Austrian flag-bearer, wrenches the standard out of his hands with his left one, has it clean cut away by an Austrian officer standing near, and immediately grapples it with his right, until his own soldiers carry him away with his trophy! Does not this sound like Greek history repeated does it not look as if the brave men of old had been born again, and the old facts renewed to tell of Italian heroism? Another bersagliere a Tuscan, by name Orlandi Matteo, belonging to that heroic fifth battalion which fought against entire brigades, regiments, and battalions, losing 11 out of its 16 officers, and about 300 out of its 600 men Orlandi, was wounded already, when, perceiving an Austrian flag, he makes a great effort, dashes at the officer, kills him, takes the flag, and, almost dying, gives it over to his lieutenant. He is now in a ward of the San Domenico Hospital in Brescia, and all who have learnt of his bravery will earnestly hope that he may survive to be pointed out as one of the many who covered themselves with fame on that day. If it is sad to read of death encountered in the field by so many a patriotic and brave soldiers, it is sadder still to learn that not a few of them were barbarously killed by the enemy, and killed, too, when they were harmless, for they lay wounded on the ground. The Sicilian colonel, Stalella, a son-in-law of Senator Castagnetto, and a courageous man amongst the most courageous of men; was struck in the leg by a bullet, and thrown down from his horse while exciting his men to repulse the Austrians, which in great masses were pressing on his thinned column. Although retreating, the regiment sent some of his men to take him away, but as soon as he had been put on a stretcher [he] had to be put down, as ten or twelve uhlands were galloping down, obliging the men to hide themselves in a bush. When the uhlands got near the colonel, and when they had seen him lying down in agony, they all planted their lances in his body.

Is not this wanton cruelty cruelty even unheard of cruelty that no savage possesses? Still these are facts, and no one will ever dare to deny them from Verona and Vienna, for they are known as much as it was known and seen that the uhlands and many of the Austrian soldiers were drunk when they began fighting, and that alighting from the trains they were provided with their rations and with rum, and that they fought without their haversacks. This is the truth, and nothing beyond it has to the honour of the Italians been asserted, whether to the disgrace or credit of their enemies; so that while denying that they ill-treat Austrian prisoners, they are ready to state that theirs are well treated in Verona, without thinking of slandering and calumniating as the Vienna papers have done.

This morning Prince Amadeus arrived in Cremona, where a most spontaneous and hearty reception was given him by the population and the National Guard. He proceeded at once by the shortest way to the headquarters, so that his wish to be again at the front when something should be done has been accomplished. This brave young man, and his worthy brother, Prince Humbert, have won the applause of all Italy, which is justly proud of counting her king and her princes amongst the foremost in the field.

I have just learned from a most reliable source that the Austrians have mined the bridge of Borghetto on the Mincio, so that, should it be blown up, the only two, those of Goito and Borghetto, would be destroyed, and the Italians obliged to make provisional ones instead. I also hear that the Venetian towns are without any garrison, and that most probably all the forces are massed on two lines, one from Peschiera to Custozza and the other behind the Adige.

You will probably know by this time that the garrison of Vienna had on the 3rd been directed to Prague. The news we receive from Prussia is on the whole encouraging, inasmuch as the greatly feared armistice has been repulsed by King William. Some people here think that France will not be too hard upon Italy for keeping her word with

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her ally, and that the brunt of French anger or disapproval will have to be borne by Prussia. This is the least she can expect, as you know!

It is probable that by to-morrow I shall be able to write you more about the Italo-Austrian war of 1866.

GONZAGA, July 9, 1866.

I write you from a villa, only a mile distant from Gonzaga, belonging to the family of the Counts Arrivabene of Mantua. The owners have never reentered it since 1848, and it is only the fortune of war which has brought them to see their beautiful seat of the Aldegatta, never, it is to be hoped for them, to be abandoned again. It is, as you see, 'Mutatum ab illo.' Onward have gone, then, the exiled patriots! onward will go the nation that owns them! The wish of every one who is compelled to remain behind is that the army, that the volunteers, that the fleet, should all cooperate, and that they should, one and all, land on Venetian ground, to seek for a great battle, to give the army back the fame it deserves, and to the country the honour it possesses. The king is called upon to maintain the word nobly given to avenge Novara, and with it the new Austrian insulting proposal. All, it is said, is ready. The army has been said to be numerous; if to be numerous and brave, means to deserve victory, let the Italian generals prove what Italian soldiers are worthy of. If they will fight, the country will support them with the boldest of resolutions the country will accept a discussion whenever the Government, having dispersed all fears, will proclaim that the war is to be continued till victory is inscribed on Italy's shield.

As I am not far from Borgoforte, I am able to learn more than the mere cannon's voice can tell me, and so will give you some details of the action against the *tete-de-pont*, which began, as I told you in one of my former letters, on the 4th. In Gorgoforte there were about 1500 Austrians, and, on the night from the 5th to the 6th, they kept up from their four fortified works a sufficiently well-sustained fire, the object of which was to prevent the enemy from posting his guns. This fire, however, did not cause any damage, and the Italians were able to plant their batteries. Early on the 6th, the firing began all along the line, the Italian 16-pounders having been the first to open fire. The Italian right was commanded by Colonel Mattei, the left by Colonel Bangoni, who did excellent work, while the other wing was not so successful. The heaviest guns had not yet arrived owing to one of those incidents always sure to happen when least expected, so that the 40-pounders could not be brought to bear against the forts until later in the day. The damage done to the works was not great for the moment, but still the advantage had been gained of feeling the strength of the enemy's positions and finding the right way to attack them. The artillerymen worked with great vigour, and were only obliged to desist by an unexpected order which arrived about two p.m. from General Cialdini. The attack was, however, resumed on the following day, and the condition of the Monteggiana and Rochetta forts may be pronounced precarious. As a sign of the times, and more especially of the just impatience which prevails in Italy about the general direction of the army movements, it may not be without importance to notice that the Italian press has begun to cry out against the darkness in which everything is enveloped, while the time already passed since the 24th June tells plainly of inaction. It is remarked that the bitter gift made by Austria of the Venetian provinces, and the suspicious offer of mediation by France, ought to have found Italy in greatly different condition, both as regards her political and military position. Italy is, on the contrary, in exactly the same state as when the Archduke Albert telegraphed to Vienna that a great success had been obtained over the Italian army. These are facts, and, however strong and worthy of respect may be the reasons, there is no doubt that an extraordinary delay in the resumption of hostilities has occurred, and that at the present moment operations projected are perfectly mysterious. Something is let out from time to time which only serves to make the subsequent absence of news more and more puzzling. For the present the first official relation of the unhappy fight of the 24th June is published, and is accordingly anxiously scanned and closely studied. It is a matter of general remark that no great military knowledge is required to perceive that too great a reliance was placed upon supposed facts, and that the indulgence of speculations and ideas caused the waste of so much precious blood. The prudence characterising the subsequent moves of the Austrians may have been caused by the effects of their opponents' arrangements, but the Italian commanders ought to have avoided the responsibility of giving the enemy the option to move.

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It is clear that to mend things the utterance of generous and patriotic cries is not sufficient, and that it must be shown that the vigour of the body is not at all surpassed by the vigour of the mind. It is also clear that many lives might have been spared if there had been greater proofs of intelligence on the part of those who directed the movement.

The situation is still very serious. Such an armistice as General von Gablenz could humiliate himself enough to ask from the Prussians has been refused, but another which the Emperor of the French has advised them to accept might ultimately become a fact. For Italy, the purely Venetian question could then also be settled, while the Italian, the national question, the question of right and honour which the army prizes so much, would still remain to be solved.

GONZAGA, July 12, 1866.

Travelling is generally said to be troublesome, but travelling with and through brigades, divisions, and army corps, I can certify to be more so than is usually agreeable. It is not that Italian officers or Italian soldiers are in any way disposed to throw obstacles in your way; but they, unhappily for you, have with them the inevitable cars with the inevitable carmen, both of which are enough to make your blood freeze, though the barometer stands very high. What with their indolence, what with their number and the dust they made, I really thought they would drive me mad before I should reach Casalmaggiore on my way from Torre Malamberti. I started from the former place at three a.m., with beautiful weather, which, true to tradition, accompanied me all through my journey. Passing through San Giovanni in Croce, to which the headquarters of General Pianell had been transferred, I turned to the right in the direction of the Po, and began to have an idea of the wearisome sort of journey which I would have to make up to Casalmaggiore. On both sides of the way some regiments belonging to the rear division were still camped, and as I passed it was most interesting to see how busy they were cooking their 'rancio,' polishing their arms, and making the best of their time. The officers stood leisurely about gazing and staring at me, supposing, as I thought, that I was travelling with some part in the destiny of their country. Here and there some soldiers who had just left the hospitals of Brescia and Milan made their way to their corps and shook hands with their comrades, from whom only illness or the fortune of war had made them part. They seemed glad to see their old tent, their old drum, their old colour-sergeant, and also the flag they had carried to the battle and had not at any price allowed to be taken. I may state here, en passant, that as many as six flags were taken from the enemy in the first part of the day of Custozza, and were subsequently abandoned in the retreat, while of the Italians only one was lost to a regiment for a few minutes, when it was quickly retaken. This fact ought to be sufficient by itself to establish the bravery with which the soldiers fought on the 24th, and the bravery with which they will fight if, as they ardently wish; a new occasion is given to them.

As long as I had only met troops, either marching or camping on the road, all went well, but I soon found myself mixed with an interminable line of cars and the like, forming the military and the civil train of the moving army. Then it was that it needed as much patience to keep from jumping out of one's carriage and from chastising the carrettieri, as they would persist in not making room for one, and being as dumb to one's entreaties as a stone. When you had finished with one you had to deal with another, and you find them all as obstinate and as egotistical as they are from one end of the world to the other, whether it be on the Casalmaggiore road or in High Holborn. From time to time things seemed to proceed all right, and you thought yourself free from further trouble, but you soon found out your mistake, as an enormous ammunition car went smack into your path, as one wheel got entangled with another, and as imperturbable Signor Carrettiere evidently took delight at a fresh opportunity for stoppage, inaction, indolence, and sleep. I soon came to the conclusion that Italy would not be free when the Austrians had been driven away, for that another and a more formidable foe an enemy to society and comfort, to men and horses, to mankind in general would have still to be beaten, expelled, annihilated, in the shape of the carrettiere. If you employ him, he robs you fifty times over; if you want him to drive quickly, he is sure to keep the animal from going at all; if, worse than all, you never think of him, or have just been plundered by him, he will not move an inch to oblige you. Surely the cholera is not the only pestilence a country may be visited with; and, should Cialdini ever go to Vienna, he might revenge Novara and the Spielberg by taking with him the

carrettieri of the whole army.

At last Casalmaggiore hove in sight, and, when good fortune and the carmen permitted, I reached it. It was time! No iron-plated Jacob could ever have resisted another two miles' journey in such company. At Casalmaggiore I branched off. There were, happily, two roads, and not the slightest reason or smallest argument were needed to make me choose that which my cauchemar had not chosen. They were passing the river at Casalmaggiore. I went, of course, for the same purpose, somewhere else. Any place was good enough so I thought, at least, then. New adventures, new miseries awaited me some carrettiere, or other, guessing that I was no friend of his, nor of the whole set of them, had thrown the jattatura on me.

I alighted at the Colombina, after four hours' ride, to give the horses time to rest a little. The Albergo della Colombina was a great disappointment, for there was nothing there that could be eaten. I decided upon waiting most patiently, but most unlike a few cavalry officers, who, all covered with dust, and evidently as hungry and as thirsty as they could be, began to swear to their hearts' content. In an hour some eggs and some salame, a kind of sausage, were brought up, and quickly disposed of. A young lieutenant of the thirtieth infantry regiment of the Pisa brigade took his place opposite, and we were soon engaged in conversation. He had been in the midst and worst part of the battle of Custoza, and had escaped being taken prisoner by what seemed a miracle. He told me how, when his regiment advanced on the Monte Croce position, which he practically described to me as having the form of an English pudding, they were fired upon by batteries both on their flanks and front. The lieutenant added, however, rather contemptuously, that they did not even bow before them, as the custom appears to be that is, to lie down, as the Austrians were firing very badly. The cross-fire got, however, so tremendous that an order had to be given to keep down by the road to avoid being annihilated. The assault was given, the whole range of positions was taken, and kept too for hours, until the infallible rule of three to one, backed by batteries, grape, and canister, compelled them to retreat, which they did slowly and in order. It was then that their brigade commander, Major General Rey de Villarey, who, though a native of Mentone, had preferred remaining with his king from going over to the French after the cession, turning to his son, who was also his aide-de-camp, said in his dialect, 'Now, my son, we must die both of us,' and with a touch of the spurs was soon in front of the line and on the hill, where three bullets struck him almost at once dead. The horse of his son falling while following, his life was spared. My lieutenant at this moment was so overcome with hunger and fatigue that he fell down, and was thought to be dead. He was not so, however, and had enough life to hear, after the fight was over, the Austrian Jagers pass by, and again retire to their original positions, where their infantry was lying down, not dreaming for one moment of pursuing the Italians. Four of his soldiers all Neapolitans he heard coming in search of him, while the bullets still hissed all round; and, as soon as he made a sign to them, they approached, and took him on their shoulders back to where was what remained of the regiment. It is highly creditable to Italian unity to hear an old Piedmontese officer praise the levies of the new provinces, and the lieutenant took delight in relating that another Neapolitan was in the fight standing by him, and firing as fast as he could, when a shell having burst near him, he disdainfully gave it a look, and did not even seek to save himself from the jattatura.

The gallant lieutenant had unfortunately to leave at last, and I was deprived of many an interesting tale and of a brave man's company. I started, therefore, for Viadana, where I purposed passing the Po, the left bank of which the road was now following parallel with the stream. At Viadana, however, I found no bridge, as the military had demolished what existed only the day before, and so had to look out for information. As I was going about under the porticoes which one meets in almost all the villages in this neighbourhood, I was struck by the sight of an ancient and beautiful piece of art for so it was a Venetian mirror of Murano. It hung on the wall inside the village draper's shop, and was readily shown me by the owner, who did not conceal the pride he had in possessing it. It was one of those mirrors one rarely meets with now, which were once so abundant in the old princes' castles and palaces. It looked so deep and true, and the gilt frame was so light, and of such a purity and elegance, that it needed all my resolution to keep from buying it, though a bargain would not have been effected very easily. The mirror, however, had to be abandoned, as Dosalo, the nearest point for crossing the Po, was still seven miles distant. By this time the sun was out in all its force, and the heat was by no means agreeable. Then there was dust, too, as if the carrettieri had been passing in hundreds, so that the heat was almost unbearable. At last the Dosalo

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ferry was reached, the road leading to it was entered, and the carriage was, I thought, to be at once embarked, when a drove of oxen were discovered to have the precedence; and so I had to wait. This under such a sun, on a shadeless beach, and with the prospect of having to stay there for two hours at least, was by no means pleasant. It took three-quarters of an hour to put the oxen in the boat, it took half an hour to get them on the other shore, and another hour to have the ferry boat back. The panorama from the beach was splendid, the Po appeared in all the mighty power of his waters, and as you looked with the glass at oxen and trees on the other shore, they appeared to be clothed in all the colours of the rainbow, and as if belonging to another world. Several peasants were waiting for the boat near me, talking about the war and the Austrians, and swearing they would, if possible, annihilate some of the latter. I gave them the glass to look with, and I imagined that they had never seen one before, for they thought it highly wonderful to make out what the time was at the Luzzara Tower, three miles in a straight line on the other side. The revolver, too, was a subject of great admiration, and they kept turning, feeling, and staring at it, as if they could not make out which way the cartridges were put in. One of these peasants, however, was doing the grand with the others, and once on the subject of history related to all who would hear how he had been to St. Helena, which was right in the middle of Moscow, where it was so very cold that his nose had got to be as large as his head. The poor man was evidently mixing one night's tale with that of the next one, a tale probably heard from the old Sindaco, who is at the same time the schoolmaster, the notary, and the highest municipal authority in the place.

I started in the ferry boat with them at last. While crossing they got to speak of the priests, and were all agreed, to put it in the mildest way, in thinking extremely little of them, and only differed as to what punishment they should like them to suffer.

On the side where we landed lay heaps of ammunition casks for the corps besieging Borgoforte. Others were conveyed upon cars by my friends the carrettieri, of whom it was decreed I should not be quit for some time to come. Entering Guastalla I found only a few artillery officers, evidently in charge of what we had seen carried along the route. Guastalla is a neat little town very proud of its statue of Duke Ferrante Gonzaga, and the Croce Rossa is a neat little inn, which may be proud of a smart young waiter, who actually discovered that, as I wanted to proceed to Luzzara, a few miles on, I had better stop till next morning, I did not take his advice, and was soon under the gate of Luzzara, a very neat little place, once one of the many possessions where the Gonzagas had a court, a palace, and a castle. The arms over the archway may still be seen, and would not be worth any notice but for a remarkable work of terracotta representing a crown of pines and pine leaves in a wonderful state of preservation. The whole is so artistically arranged and so natural, that one might believe it to be one of Luca della Robbia's works. Luzzara has also a great tower, which I had seen in the distance from Dosalo, and the only albergo in the place gives you an excellent Italian dinner. The wine might please one of the greatest admirers of sherry, and if you are not given feather beds, the beds are at least clean like the rooms themselves. Here, as it was getting too dark, I decided upon stopping, a decision which gave me occasion to see one of the finest sunsets I ever saw. As I looked from the albergo I could see a gradation of colours, from the purple red to the deepest of sea blue, rising like an immense tent from the dark green of the trees and the fields, here and there dotted with little white houses, with their red roofs, while in front the Luzzara Tower rose majestically in the twilight. As the hour got later the colours deepened, and the lower end of the immense curtain gradually disappeared, while the stars and the planets began shining high above. A peasant was singing in a field near by, and the bells of a church were chiming in the distance. Both seemed to harmonise wonderfully. It was a scene of great loveliness.

At four a.m. I was up, and soon after on the road to Reggiolo, and then to Gonzaga. Here the vegetation gets to be more luxuriant, and every inch of ground contributes to the immense vastness of the whole. Nature is here in full perfection, and as even the telegraphic wire hangs leisurely down from tree to tree, instead of being stuck upon poles, you feel that the romantic aspect of the place is too beautiful to be encroached upon. All is peace, beauty, and happiness, all reveals to you that you are in Italy.

In Gonzaga, which only a few days ago belonged to the Austrians, the Italian tricolour is out of every window. As the former masters retired the new advanced; and when a detachment of Monferrato lancers entered the old castle

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town the joy of the inhabitants seemed to be almost bordering on delirium. The lancers soon left, however. The flag only remains.

July 11.

Cialdini began passing the Po on the 8th, and crossed at three points, i.e., Carbonara, Carbonarola, and Follonica. Beginning at three o'clock in the morning, he had finished crossing upon the two first pontoon bridges towards midnight on the 9th. The bridge thrown up at Follonica was still intact up to seven in the morning on the 10th, but the troops and the military and the civil train that remained followed the Po without crossing to Stellata, in the supposed direction of Ponte Lagoscura.

Yesterday guns were heard here at seven o'clock in the morning, and up to eleven o'clock, in the direction of Legnano, towards, I think, the Adige. The firing was lively, and of such a nature as to make one surmise that battle had been given. Perhaps the Austrians have awaited Cialdini under Legnano, or they have disputed the crossing of the Adige. Rovigo was abandoned by the Austrians in the night of the 9th and 10th. They have blown up the Rovigo and Boara fortresses, have destroyed the *tete-de-pont* on the Adige, and burnt all bridges. They may now seek to keep by the left side of this river up to Legnano, so as to get under the protection of the quadrilateral, in which case, if Cialdini can cross the river in time, the shock would be almost inevitable, and would be a reason for yesterday's firing. They may also go by rail to Padua, when they would have Cialdini between them and the quadrilateral. In any case, if this general is quick, or if they are not too quick for him, according to possible instructions, a collision is difficult to be avoided.

Baron Ricasoli has left Florence for the camp, and all sorts of rumours are afloat as to the present state of negotiations as they appear unmistakably to exist. The opinions are, I think, divided in the high councils of the Crown, and the country is still anxious to know the result of this state of affairs. A splendid victory by Cialdini might at this moment solve many a difficulty. As it is, the war is prosecuted everywhere except by sea, for Garibaldi's forces are slowly advancing in the Italian Tyrol, while the Austrians wait for them behind the walls of Landaro and Ampola. The Garibaldians' advanced posts were, by the latest news, near Darso.

The news from Prussia is still contradictory; while the Italian press is unanimous in asking with the country that Cialdini should advance, meet the enemy, fight him, and rout him if possible. Italy's wishes are entirely with him.

NOALE, NEAR TREVISO, July 17, 1866.

From Lusia I followed General Medici's division to Motta, where I left it, not without regret, however, as better companions could not easily be found, so kind were the officers and jovial the men. They are now encamped around Padua, and will to-morrow march on Treviso, where the Italian Light Horse have already arrived, if I judge so from their having left Noale on the 15th. From the right I hear that the advanced posts have proceeded as far as Mira on the Brenta, twenty kilometres from Venice itself, and that the first army corps is to concentrate opposite Chioggia. This corps has marched from Ferrara straight on to Rovigo, which the forward movement of the fourth, or Cialdini's corps d'armee, had left empty of soldiers. General Pianell has still charge of it, and Major-General Cadalini, formerly at the head of the Siena brigade, replaces him in the command of his former division. General Pianell has under him the gallant Prince Amadeus, who has entirely recovered from his chest wound, and of whom the brigade of Lombardian grenadiers is as proud as ever. They could not wish for a more skilled commander, a better superior officer, and a more valiant soldier. Thus the troops who fought on the 24th June are kept in the second line, while the still fresh divisions under Cialdini march first, as fast as they can. This, however, is of no avail. The Italian outposts on the Piave have not yet crossed it, for the reason that they must keep distances with their regiments, but will do so as soon as these get nearer to the river. If it was not that this is always done in regular warfare, they could beat the country beyond the Piave for a good many miles without even seeing the shadow of an Austrian. To the simple private, who does not know of diplomatic imbroglios and of political considerations, this sudden retreat means an almost as sudden retracing of steps, because he remembers

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that this manoeuvre preceded both the attacks on Solferino and on Custozza by the Austrians. To the officer, however, it means nothing else than a fixed desire not to face the Italian army any more, and so it is to him a source of disappointment and despondency. He cannot bear to think that another battle is improbable, and may be excused if he is not in the best of humour when on this subject. This is the case not only with the officers but with the volunteers, who have left their homes and the comfort of their domestic life, not to be paraded at reviews, but to be sent against the enemy. There are hundreds of these in the regular army—in the cavalry especially, and the Aosta Lancers and the regiment of Guides are half composed of them. If you listen to them, there ought not to be the slightest doubt or hesitation as to crossing the Isongo and marching upon Vienna. May Heaven see their wishes accomplished, for, unless crushed by sheer force, Italy is quite decided to carry war into the enemy's country.

The decisions of the French government are looked for here with great anxiety, and not a few men are found who predict them to be unfavourable to Italy. Still, it is hard for every one to believe that the French emperor will carry things to extremities, and increase the many difficulties Europe has already to contend with.

To-day there was a rumour at the mess table that the Austrians had abandoned Legnano, one of the four fortresses of the quadrilateral. I do not put much faith in it at present, but it is not improbable, as we may expect many strange things from the Vienna government. It would have been much better for them, since Archduke Albert spoke in eulogistic terms of the king, of his sons, and of his soldiers, while relating the action of the 24th, to have treated with Italy direct, thus securing peace, and perhaps friendship, from her. But the men who have ruled so despotically for years over Italian subjects cannot reconcile themselves to the idea that Italy has at last risen to be a nation, and they even take slyly an opportunity to throw new insult into her face. You can easily see that the old spirit is still struggling for empire; that the old contempt is still trying to make light of Italians; and that the old Metternich ideas are still fondly clung to. Does not this deserve another lesson? Does not this need another Sadowa to quiet down for ever? Yes; and it devolves upon Italy to do it. If so, let only Cialdini's army alone, and the day may be nigh at hand when the king may tell the country that the task has been accomplished.

A talk on the present state of political affairs, and on the peculiar position of Italy, is the only subject worth notice in a letter from the camp. Everything else is at a standstill, and the movements of the fine army Cialdini now disposes of, about 150,000 men, are no longer full of interest. They may, perhaps, have some as regards an attack on Venice, because Austrian soldiers are still garrisoning it, and will be obliged to fight if they are assailed. It is hoped, if such is the case, that the beautiful queen of the Adriatic will be spared a scene of devastation, and that no new Haynau will be found to renew the deeds of Brescia and Vicenza.

The king has not yet arrived, and it seems probable he will not come for some time, until indeed the day comes for Italian troops to make their triumphal entry into the city of the Doges.

The heat continues intense, and this explains the slowness in advancing. As yet no sickness has appeared, and it must be hoped that the troops will be healthy, as sickness tries the morale much more than half-a-dozen Custozzas.

P.S. I had finished writing when an officer came rushing into the inn where I am staying and told me that he had just heard that an Italian patrol had met an Austrian one on the road out of the village, and routed it. This may or may not be true, but it was most curious to see how delighted every one was at the idea that they had found 'them' at last. They did not care much about the result of the engagement, which, as I said, was reported to have been favourable. All that they cared about was that they were close to the enemy. One cannot despair of an army which is animated with such spirits. You would think, from the joy which brightens the face of the soldiers you meet now about, that a victory had been announced for the Italian arms.

DOLO, NEAR VENICE, July 20, 1866.

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I returned from Noale to Padua last evening, and late in the night I received the intimation at my quarters that cannon was heard in the direction of Venice. It was then black as in Dante's hell, and raining and blowing with violence one of those Italian storms which seem to awake all the earthly and heavenly elements of creation. There was no choice for it but to take to the saddle, and try to make for the front. No one who has not tried it can fancy what work it is to find one's way along a road on which a whole corps d'armee is marching with an enormous materiel of war in a pitch dark night. This, however, is what your special correspondent was obliged to do. Fortunately enough, I had scarcely proceeded as far as Ponte di Brenta when I fell in with an officer of Cialdini's staff, who was bound to the same destination, namely, Dolo. As we proceeded along the road under a continuous shower of rain, our eyes now and then dazzled by the bright serpent-like flashes of the lightning, we fell in with some battalion or squadron, which advanced carefully, as it was impossible for them as well as for us to discriminate between the road and the ditches which flank it, for all the landmarks, so familiar to our guides in the daytime, were in one dead level of blackness. So it was that my companion and myself, after stumbling into ditches and out of them, after knocking our horses' heads against an ammunition car, or a party of soldiers sheltered under some big tree, found ourselves, after three hours' ride, in this village of Dolo. By this time the storm had greatly abated in its violence, and the thunder was but faintly heard now and then at such a distance as to enable us distinctly to hear the roar of the guns. Our horses could scarcely get through the sticky black mud, into which the white suffocating dust of the previous days had been turned by one night's rain. We, however, made our way to the parsonage of the village, for we had already made up our minds to ascend the steeple of the church to get a view of the surrounding country and a better hearing of the guns if possible. After a few words exchanged with the sexton a staunch Italian, as he told us he was we went up the ladder of the church spire. Once on the wooden platform, we could hear more distinctly the boom of the guns, which sounded like the broadsides of a big vessel. Were they the guns of Persano's long inactive fleet attacking some of Brondolo's or Chioggia's advanced forts? Were the guns those of some Austrian man-of-war which had engaged an Italian ironclad; or were they the 'Affondatore,' which left the Thames only a month ago, pitching into Trieste? To tell the truth, although we patiently waited two long hours on Dolo church spire, when both I and my companion descended we were not in a position to solve either of these problems. We, however, thought then, and still think, they were the guns of the Italian fleet which had attacked an Austrian fort.

CIVITA VECCHIA, July 22, 1866.

Since the departure from this port of the old hospital ship 'Gregeois' about a year ago, no French ship of war had been stationed at Civita Vecchia; but on Wednesday morning the steam-sloop 'Catinat,' 180 men, cast anchor in the harbour, and the commandant immediately on disembarking took the train for Rome and placed himself in communication with the French ambassador. I am not aware whether the Pontifical government had applied for this vessel, or whether the sending it was a spontaneous attention on the part of the French emperor, but, at any rate, its arrival has proved a source of pleasure to His Holiness, as there is no knowing what may happen in troublous times like the present, and it is always good to have a retreat insured.

Yesterday it was notified in this port, as well as at Naples, that arrivals from Marseilles would be, until further notice, subjected to a quarantine of fifteen days in consequence of cholera having made its appearance at the latter place. A sailing vessel which arrived from Marseilles in the course of the day had to disembark the merchandise it brought for Civita Vecchia into barges off the lazaretto, where the yellow flag was hoisted over them. This vessel left Marseilles five days before the announcement of the quarantine, while the 'Prince Napoleon' of Valery's Company, passenger and merchandise steamer, which left Marseilles only one day before its announcement, was admitted this morning to free pratique. Few travellers will come here by sea now.

MARSEILLES, July 24.

Accustomed as we have been of late in Italy to almost hourly bulletins of the progress of hostilities, it is a trying condition to be suddenly debarred of all intelligence by finding oneself on board a steamer for thirty-six hours without touching at any port, as was my case in coming here from Civita Vecchia on board the 'Prince Napoleon.'

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But, although telegrams were wanting, discussions on the course of events were rife on board among the passengers who had embarked at Naples and Civita Vecchia, comprising a strong batch of French and Belgian priests returning from a pilgrimage to Rome, well supplied with rosaries and chaplets blessed by the Pope and facsimiles of the chains of St. Peter. Not much sympathy for the Italian cause was shown by these gentlemen or the few French and German travellers who, with three or four Neapolitans, formed the quarterdeck society; and our Corsican captain took no pains to hide his contempt at the dilatory proceedings of the Italian fleet at Ancona. We know that the Prussian minister, M. d'Usedom, has been recently making strenuous remonstrances at Ferrara against the slowness with which the Italian naval and military forces were proceeding, while their allies, the Prussians, were already near the gates of Vienna; and the conversation of a Prussian gentleman on board our steamer, who was connected with that embassy, plainly indicated the disappointment felt at Berlin at the rather inefficacious nature of the diversion made in Venetia, and on the coast of Istria by the army and navy of Victor Emmanuel. He even attributed to his minister an expression not very flattering either to the future prospects of Italy as resulting from her alliance with Prussia, or to the fidelity of the latter in carrying out the terms of it. I do not know whether this gentleman intended his anecdote to be taken cum grano salis, but I certainly understood him to say that he had deplored to the minister the want of vigour and the absence of success accompanying the operations of the Italian allies of Prussia, when His Excellency replied: 'C'est bien vrai. Ils nous ont trompés; mais que voulez-vous y faire maintenant? Nous aurons le temps de les faire égorger après.'

It is difficult to suppose that there should exist a preconceived intention on the part of Prussia to repay the sacrifices hitherto made, although without a very brilliant accompaniment of success, by the Italian government in support of the alliance, by making her own separate terms with Austria and leaving Italy subsequently exposed to the vengeance of the latter, but such would certainly be the inference to be drawn from the conversation just quoted.

It was only on arriving in the port of Marseilles, however, that the full enmity of most of my travelling companions towards Italy and the Italians was manifested. A sailor, the first man who came on board before we disembarked, was immediately pounced upon for news, and he gave it as indeed nothing less than the destruction, more or less complete, of the Italian fleet by that of the Austrians. At this astounding intelligence the Prussian burst into a yell of indignation. 'Fools! blockheads! miserables! Beaten at sea by an inferior force! Is that the way they mean to reconquer Venice by dint of arms? If ever they do regain Venetia it will be through the blood of our Brandenburgers and Pomeranians, and not their own.' During this tirade a little old Belgian in black, with the chain of St. Peter at his buttonhole by way of watchguard, capered off to communicate the grateful news to a group of his ecclesiastical fellow-travellers, shrieking out in ecstasy:

'Rosses, Messieurs! Ces blagueurs d'Italiens ont été rossés par mer, comme ils avaient été rossés par terre.' Whereupon the reverend gentlemen congratulated each other with nods, and winks, and smiles, and sundry fervent squeezes of the hand. The same demonstrations would doubtless have been made by the Neapolitan passengers had they belonged to the Bourbonic faction, but they happened to be honest traders with cases of coral and lava for the Paris market, and therefore they merely stood silent and aghast at the fatal news, with their eyes and mouths as wide open as possible. I had no sooner got to my hotel than I inquired for the latest Paris journal, when the France was handed me, and I obtained confirmation in a certain degree of the disaster to the Italian fleet narrated by the sailor, although not quite in the same formidable proportions.

Before quitting the subject of my fellow-passengers on board the 'Prince Napoleon' I must mention an anecdote related to me, respecting the state of brigandage, by a Russian or German gentleman, who told me he was established at Naples. He was complaining of the dangers he had occasionally encountered in crossing in a diligence from Naples to Foggia on business; and then, speaking of the audacity of brigands in general, he told me that last year he saw with his own eyes; in broad daylight, two brigands walking about the streets of Naples with messages from captured individuals to their relations, mentioning the sums which had been demanded for their ransoms. They were unarmed, and in the common peasants' dresses, and whenever they arrived at one of the houses to which they were addressed for this purpose, they stopped and opened a handkerchief which one of them

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carried in his hand, and took out an ear, examining whether the ticket on it corresponded with the address of the house or the name of the resident. There were six ears, all ticketed with the names of the original owners in the handkerchief, which were gradually dispensed to their families in Naples to stimulate: prompt payment of the required ransoms. On my inquiring how it was that the police took no notice of such barefaced operations, my informant told me that, previous to the arrival of these brigand emissaries in town, the chief always wrote to the police authorities warning them against interfering with them, as the messengers were always followed by spies in plain clothes belonging to the band who would immediately report any molestation they might encounter in the discharge of their delicate mission, and the infallible result of such molestation would be first the putting to death of all the hostages held for ransom; and next, the summary execution of several members of gendarmery and police force captured in various skirmishes by the brigands, and held as prisoners of war.

Such audacity would seem incredible if we had not heard and read of so many similar instances of late.