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THE DOUBLE SACRIFICE, OR THE PONTIFICAL ZOUAVES.

A TALE OF CASTELFIDARCO.

Translated from the Flemish of the Rev. S. Dims Canon Regular of the Order of Premonstratensians. (Abbe of Tongerlo, Belgium.)

CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED.

'Then he spoke a few words about our country, for which he said he had a great affection. At last he ventured to make known to him our most earnest desire. Holy Father, I said, there is a very great favor which we wish to ask of your Holiness; it is that we may receive Holy Communion from your hands, and thus obtain the blessing of our Lord upon our undertaking. Assuredly, was the reply; come to my chapel to-morrow. How can I deny anything to my dear Zouaves? Holy Father, we said, we are deeply thankful to your goodness to us, and we trust by God's grace to serve you as become true Belgians—that is to say, as loyal and Christian soldiers. Then he blessed us again, and also some rosaries and medals which we had with us; he allowed us once more to kiss his ring, and we took our leave. But no; he suddenly recalled me alone. Oh! mother, his loving eye had pierced through my soul, he had read my secret—that secret which I imparted to you in the summer house. His eyes were moist, and he spoke with a voice of emotion which sounded prophetically in my ear. Go, my son, in this your strength, the Lord is with you; you will conquer! Mother, the words echo continually in my heart. Was not this the voice of the Lord speaking through the voice of His Vicar? It is impossible to express the joy and consolation which we received from our interview with the Pope. Martin, the simplest amongst us, expressed his feelings in the sublimest way. On our way to the Vatican, as we admired the beauties of nature and art, he answered: The only thing that I desire is to see the Holy Father, to receive his blessing and Communion from his hand, and then to die for him. I hope that it will please God then to take me to Heaven. He was right; and now we have not only seen the dear Pío Nono, but have spoken with him as children with their father; and to-morrow we shall receive from his fatherly hand the Body and Blood of our Lord. Will the wish of our comrade be further fulfilled? God knows. But I hope, mother, that you are ready to be the mother of a martyr as you promised me. And now farewell, dear mother; I must prepare to unite myself with my Redeemer heart to heart. My most fervent prayers shall rise to-morrow, for you and for my father. That night Victor fell into a peaceful sleep with his thoughts full of the great happiness which awaited him on the morrow, but a terrible dream soon came to torture his heart. He saw a boundless ocean, whose wild waves, lashed by the fury of a fearful storm, rose seething and roaring to heaven, and threatened all around with death and destruction. A multitude of rocks raised their naked tops above the water, cruel birds of prey swept over the waves, and horrible monsters raised their necks out of the water, threatening to tear and swallow up the drowning wretches who should fall into their power. Amid the fury of the storm, a noble ship moved in majestic tranquility over the water. Despite of winds and waves it pursued its even path through the threatening rocks as on a summer sea. The crew seemed to slumber, so peacefully did it move amid the storm, which was howling all around. The helmsman stood watching at his post; he was a venerable old man, and Victor seemed to recognize in his countenance the features of the beloved Father of the Faithful, which had made so indelible an impression on him yesterday. Victor seemed to himself to be on board, with his mother and others of his friends. But, alas! casting a glance upon the raging waves, he saw a drowning man struggling with the water, now thrown upwards by the force of the waves and then engulfed in them again; and the monsters which surrounded him were already opening their jaws to devour the miserable man. God of Heaven! It is his father. Victor uttered a cry, and instantly plunged into the roaring waves to rescue that beloved being. He fought with the waves, the winds, and sea-monsters. The birds of prey screeched

hoarsely above his head; yet he pressed on. He was near him when an indescribable anguish seized upon him; the monsters of the deep were tearing his body; still he pressed onward. But one more effort, and he would reach his father. Alas! another fearful wave hurled him backward—his strength gave way; he feels the icy cold of death freezing his veins—but he must conquer or die. Forward! forward! Ah! he has seized hold of his father; but the unhappy man struggled against him. His leaden weight dragged the poor youth with him into the gulf. Victor! Victor! must you fall in your enterprise of love? No; the brave son casts an eye on the bark, and there his mother and the helmsman sign to him to be of good comfort. At last he utters a cry imploring help from Heaven, makes a last desperate effort, and bears his father up above the heads of the horrible sea monsters, which are crowding round to tear him to pieces. He has reached the boat; he has laid the drowning man upon the bosom of his mother, and he himself falls his in death agony at the feet of the helmsman, who gives him a last blessing. His father is saved. And, like fleeting clouds, the images of his dream vanish in a calm and peaceful slumber. Poor Victor, was it a play of your sanguine imagination which thus came to break your rest? CHAPTER VII.—THE CARBONARO If you ascend the Janiculum, leaving the Trastevere towards the western side of Rome, you come, not far from the Gate of S. Pancratius, to the Pauline Fountain, called by the Romans Fontane di S. Pietro in Montorio. It is the largest and most abundant fountain in Rome. Paul V., after whom it is named, caused it to be erected by G. Fontana and S. Madero, 1612, out of materials taken from the Forum of Nerva. It is adorned with six Ionic columns of red granite, supporting a pediment bearing an inscription surmounted by the arms of Pope Paul V. Between the columns are five niches or arches, two small and three very large, from the last flow three streams of water, in the two others are dragons (which form a portion of the armorial bearing of Paul V.), pouring water from their mouths into a great basin. This water, says Nibbey, is the old water of Trajan, who brought it into Rome for the use of the inhabitants of the Trastevere. The fountain has exchanged its heathen name, as we said before, for that of Paul V. who restored and increased it by waters from the lake of Bracciano. Not long afterwards it was further augmented by water from the lake of Martignano. Still ascending the Janiculum, you come to the Gate of S. Pancratius, from whence Garibaldi in the spring of 1849, directed his murderous fire on the French besiegers, who made their entrance from this side into the Eternal City by the end of the following July. On the evening of a hot summer's day, a number of the young girls of the Trastevere were assembled round the Pauline Fountain to draw water. They seemed to be in no great hurry to finish their work, for they were laughing and chatting together. Who could make haste in such weather. The girls were amusing themselves by throwing water into each other's faces; the foremost of them in all this sport was a maiden with dark brown eyes which bespoke a strong courageous character. She could not have numbered more than fifteen summers, and her companions called her Nunziata. The other girls, meanwhile, were exchanging the news of the day; and chatted together like so many swallows. Have you heard of Pietro Marmi? said the eldest, whose name was Giannina. No, no, Nina, let us hear, answered several voices. You know him well, began Giannina, the good simple man. Well, a few days ago his horse died, and he knew not how to do without his beast to carry on his trade. O, yes, poor man! answered a young girl called Carlotta, I remember him well. He is a man who goes about in his cart selling sand. Poor man! do you say? answered Nina, but listen a little farther. Pietro, as well as his wife, was quite down-hearted about the loss, when all at once he stood up and struck his head with his fist, and said to his wife, Truly, Madalena, I am a fool. She looked at him with astonishment. I tell you I am a fool, said Pietro; there we have the Holy Father; he is our neighbor, and he has horses enough. Why should he not give me some old head if I ask him? Come, give me my best clothes. He is so good, people say. I will go and see him at once, and you may be sure I will bring a horse back with me.

'And did he go, indeed?' asked Ursula, another girl. 'Did he go, indeed?' Pietro went straight to the Vatican; but there, as you may easily suppose, he was soon stopped. Still, he did not lose courage. 'I must speak to the Holy Father,' said he, 'I must speak to him myself, and on matters of importance.' Meanwhile a Monsignore came by, whose attention was attracted by Pietro's words and his open countenance. He asked him why he came to the Vatican. 'I'll tell you,' he said, 'with all my heart; and he told him the whole story at once, and how he trusted to the Holy Father to help him. Very good,' said the ecclesiastic, 'I will carry your request, to His Holiness and speak for you to the best of my power. Come again to-morrow, and I doubt not you will receive satisfaction.' Pietro did not wait to be told twice, and the next morning was at his post full of hope and joy; and indeed the good Pío Nono, touched by the confidence of his neighbor, as Peter called himself, sent him a horse out of his stable, and a good round sum of money into the bargain. 'I leave you to judge whether Pietro was happy or not; he sprang upon the Pontifical horse and rode right round the Trastevere in triumph, shouting at the top of his voice: 'Evviva Pío Nono! he has given me a horse out of his own stable.' (This historical fact took place a few years earlier; the reader will forgive the little anachronism.) 'Indeed,' observed a Trasteverine named Julia, 'the Holy Father is very good; especially to poor people. One day he was walking beyond the city in company with one of his prelates when he met a good countryman who was going along biting a great bunch of bread which he held fast in both his hands. Good day, my son,' said the Holy Father, pleased with the simple appearance of the countryman. He, with his mouth full, contented himself with nodding his head, and went on his way. Suddenly, at a turn of the road, he caught sight of a carriage and a number of people waiting. That must be the Pope, he said to himself, and falling on his knees, he called to him:—Hi! hi! if you are the Holy Father, your blessing! your blessing! And Pío IX., hearing the good man's hst. turned and blessed him most graciously. While the story was going on, Nunziata had slipped behind the narrator; at its close she stopped over the basin, filled both her hands with water and threw it into Julia's face, crying, with a burst of merry laughter, 'And I bless you most graciously.' Julia was startled for moment, but was soon ready to return the joke, and threatened to denounce her from head to foot. The rest all clapped their hands at the unexpected fun, when Ursula suddenly exclaimed, 'See, see, there's a Zouave walking with a gentleman; see what a fine looking soldier and how brave he looks.' The cry quieted Julia; and Nunziata turned at the same moment exclaiming aloud— 'Long live the Zouaves, our Good Father's brave defenders.' But no sooner had she cast a glance upon the Zouaves and his companion, than without speaking another word, without taking leave of her companions, or even stopping to take her pitcher with her she set off at full speed, and soon vanished in one of the side streets of the Trastevere. The two passers-by were Victor and Maso di Rocchabianca. They came from the direction of the Lungara, and were going towards the gate of S. Pancratius. The girls at the fountain remained for a few moments looking after them; and when they were out of sight resumed their merry chat. 'But,' inquired Carlotta, 'where is Nunziata gone in such a hurry? See she has even left her water pitcher behind her.' Who knows, answered Giannina, 'what she has got into her head? She is a strange child, that Nunziata; now laughing and playing and in another moment serious, thoughtful, and even sad. I do not understand her.' Strange, indeed, said Julia. She is as good and tender-hearted as an angel, and on the other hand as fearless and unmanageable—I may say—as a devil. Do you remember how, at the last fire in the Trastevere, she rushed into the ruins amid the flames, where even men were afraid to venture, and, at the peril of her life, saved a poor child whose parents had perished in the fire? And how she pressed the poor little weeping thing to her bosom, with a mother's tenderness? 'Do I remember it?' interrupted Carlotta. 'I saw the child with her last Sunday. She has placed it in the Orphanage of the Immaculate Conception, and maintains it at her own expense. The poor child calls her mother; and Nunziata dances with delight at the sound of the sweet name.'

At that moment a man passed the Fountain at full speed in the direction of the Gate of S. Pancratius. 'See,' said Julia to her companions, 'there goes Stefano, Nunziata's brother. What can he have to do outside Rome, that he is going at such a rate? You would think that he was running for his life.' Meanwhile Victor and his companion had passed the Gate, and were proceeding in earnest conversation towards the old Vitellian Way.—Maso had met the Pontifical Volunteer in the Lungara and shaken hands with him most warmly; he had just arrived from Belgium, he said, being anxious to visit his country once more, whose dearest interests were now so deeply at stake. He did not say he had been searching Rome for two days past, to trace Victor out. With a great show of kindness and sympathy, he gave Victor information concerning his country and his friends. 'And whither,' asked he, 'are you bound now?' 'I had intended to visit the church of S. Pancratius.' 'So much the better,' answered Maso. 'It is a delightful walk, and I will gladly accompany you. On the way I can show you the Vascello, and the Villa Corsini, whence the French entered Rome in 1849; and meanwhile we can talk of everything you would wish to hear of your home.' Victor, though he felt very little pleasure in Maso's company, answered in a friendly tone. 'And my father?' he asked, after a few minutes, 'how is he?' 'Well—very well,' was the answer; 'but he is inconsolable at your departure. See, Victor,' continued Maso, after a pause, and with great apparent hesitation, 'he gave me a message for you, but I don't know whether you would wish me to deliver it.' 'Why not? speak freely.' 'Then don't be angry, but believe that I am actuated only by regard for your father and yourself. Your father was at last induced to give you half permission to enter the Papal service, but after your departure he considered the thing more maturely, and he begged me before I left Belgium, to spare no pains to persuade you to give up your intention.' 'The liar! He had not exchanged a single word after Victor's departure with Morren, who went to Schrambeck immediately afterwards. Victor seemed to have some suspicion of the fact, for he answered—'My dear di Rocchabianca, I can hardly believe that my father would recall his pledged word; it is out of keeping with his character. Moreover, I should render myself unworthy of his esteem were I dishonorably to break my engagement. No, Maso, I shall not flinch from my duty, nor can my father possibly desire that I should do so; therefore, spare yourself the trouble of speaking further on the subject.' 'But my good friend,' replied Maso, whose only end was, if possible, to bring an angel to perdition, or, in case of failure, to wreak a diabolical revenge on him in that solitary place,—'but my friend, how can you be bound by a decision made in haste and without knowledge of the cause you have embraced? for that cause which you have undertaken to defend, is, as I have shown you, most unworthy of defence.—You must know that our enlightened age will no longer endure the tyranny which the sceptre of bigotry has too long exercised over the ancient city of the free born Romans.' 'Listen,' said Victor, and the fire of indignation mantled in his cheek; 'these are things, Maso, of which we cannot speak together; these are words which desecrate the hallowed earth on which we tread. The cause which I defend is the cause of my conscience, the cause of the whole Catholic world, the cause of God.' 'A glorious cause, forsooth,' answered Maso, mockingly. 'The cause of a superannuated old man—of a few priests and monks and bigoted women. But, Victor, what honor can you gain by dying for it; what honor even should it prove—as it never will prove—victorious? Ah! the cause of Italy! that is a glorious cause! It is the cause of a noble people rising mightily to break their fetters; the one is the cause of slavery, the other of deliverance. Come with me, Victor; join the noble bands who on all sides are starting from their slumbers to fly to their country's aid; cast away the idols of your old forefathers; break the fetters of superstition in which your bigoted training has entangled you. You have a noble soul—a soul which should glow at the sublimity of our mission! Come, cast away all this mummery; hasten with me to join the forces of true Italy!' 'Enough,' said Victor, with an authoritative motion of his hand; 'enough, Rocchabianca; I estimate Garibaldi's bands at their true value, and believe me, I account it a grievous insult—though you, perhaps, mean it not as such—to

propose to me to join a company of bandits—to ask me to make one of a company of freebooters, a horde of barbarous monsters, is enough to call a burning blush of shame to my face! 'The carbonaro' bit his lip with rage till the blood started. For a moment his right hand seemed to clutch at something within his bosom; but the place was, probably, not lonely enough, and with apparent calmness he continued: 'Well, Mynheer Morren, do not disturb yourself. It was far from my intention to offend you. Have I not told you that it was simply my regard for you which induced me to place before you the folly of your enterprise? 'And as to what you said just now about honor,' said Victor, 'do you imagine that it was this vain earthly glory, empty and transitory as smoke, which I have set before me as my end. Ah, doubtless more brilliant careers were open to me, which would not have claimed from me the sacrifice of my blood and of my life. No, Maso, for the holy cause for which I have taken up arms I have offered all; and if it must be so, I would be content to receive what the world calls shame and only shame for my gerdoun. My faith and my conscience—these are the only judges before whose high tribunal I submissively bow.' A few moments of silence followed. Victor's eyes were fixed on the ground, and he seemed to be absorbed in deep thought. Maso's brows were knitted together, his eyes shot fire from beneath them. The stillness of death was around. Not a breath stirred the leaves; not a bird twittered in the braches; not a cricket chirped in the grass. It was a fearful stillness, which seemed to forebode some approaching evil. The two companions had already passed the Villa Corsini and Vascello; they had left the highway, and struck into a little side path.—Victor had not observed it. Maso well knew why. They drew near to a thicket of underwood. Suddenly a light breeze stirred the branches, like the shudder of a dying man; it lasted but for a moment, and all was still again. 'But think,' resumed Maso, in words which bore a cruel double sense; 'think again, Victor; you have nothing but defeat and death to expect on the path you have chosen. Blind dupe! continued he contemptuously, 'who have left father and fatherland to die in this our country a dishonored death for a dishonorable cause.' 'Maso, Maso!' cried Victor indignantly, 'be silent; you blaspheme God and make my heart bleed with your words. And as to the death with which you threaten me, know that it has no terrors for me, that I have set it daily before me ever since God inspired me with this resolution; that I should receive it as a welcome friend come to bestow on me a crown of victory, more glorious than that of any earthly triumph. No, no; I fear not death in the cause of God and of God's Holy Church.' 'Well,' thundered Maso, 'here then is the friend you long for; he will not keep you long waiting, cowardly fool! this is your hour and the hour of my revenge.' And before Victor had time to place himself in a posture of defence, the carbonaro's strong arm was cast around him like an iron girdle. 'There was surprise, but no fear on the countenance of the brave young man; it was pale but calm, and he raised his eyes to Heaven, as if to commend his sacrifice to God. 'Ah!' muttered the carbonaro, 'I have not returned in vain to this (to me) accursed place. I have come hither to accomplish my revenge. Die, then, coward, and may the same lot befall all the enemies of Italy.' And he raised his dagger above his victim's head. He was suddenly interrupted by a loud cry behind him. 'Gennaro, Gennaro!' was heard from some unseen mouth. A shudder passed over the carbonaro's frame, and his uplifted arm fell, as if broken, by his side. 'Who names my name here,' said he hoarsely. 'Who is there here who knows Gennaro?' And, as if in answer, there started from the coppice a man with flashing eyes like the genius of retribution, and stood before him. It was Stefano, Nunziata's brother. The carbonaro looked as if a lightning flash had struck him. 'Stefano!' stammered he, 'Stefano! you here?' 'Ah, Gennaro,' was the thrilling answer, 'you know me again! Yes, I am here; and in good time, as you see, to save you from a new crime. Gennaro, is that stain of blood which cleaves to your hands washed out, that you fear not to soil them with a second murder?' Maso, or Gennaro—which we now know to be his real name—seemed to be crushed by the voice of his opponent; he kept his eyes for a