

THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO.

THIRD ARTICLE.

(Continued from page 538.)

And now each fleet was in order of battle, in the form of a half-moon with its horns in advance. On the right of the Christians was the famous *Doria*, with some sixty Sicilian Genoese, and Maltese galleys; on the left the *proveditore* Barbarigo, with a like number of Venetians, while the centre, or *battle*, as it was then called, composed of eighty of "the best vessels that had ever been built," was led by Don Juan himself with the great Colonna on his right, and the veteran Veniero on his left, who notwithstanding his disagreement with his commander-in-chief, seconded him, on this occasion, loyally and well, thus setting the seal of honor upon a long life devoted to the service of his country. The reserve of thirty-six vessels was conducted by the chivalric Don Alvaro de Bazan, marquis of Santa Cruz; and just astern of the *Real*—the designation then given to the ship of a Spanish admiral in-chief—was Don Juan's old preceptor in the art of war, Don Luis de Requesens, commander of Corsica.

The battle of the Turkish fleet consisted of ninety-six vessels, of which the right centre was led by Ali, the left centre by the Bushan Perten. The right wing was intrusted to Mehemet Sirocco, Viceroy of Alexandria; the left to the Calabrian renegade Uluch Ali, Dey of Algiers. In rear of the battle was a strong reserve, commanded by Amurath Dragut, an officer of approved capacity, experience, and valor.

When the two fleets had approached within a mile of each other, they ceased rowing, in mutual admiration, for the day was bright and beautiful. Not a cloud disturbed the repose of the blue sky above, nor a solitary ripple that of the placid waters below, and the mid-day sun shone with resplendent lustre upon lance, and shield, and helmet—upon glittering breast-plates and helmets of burnished steel. The great banner of the League, with its piteous crucifix, at the foot of which were to be seen the arms of Venice, Spain, and the Pope, bound together by a circular chain, was not more conspicuous than the green standard of the Prophet, all covered with verses from the Koran, in letters of silver and gold. The red flag of the corsairs of Algiers, with its hateful device, the head of the fierce Hali, son-in-law of Mohammed and the dreadful enemy of all the Christians of his day, was well met by that of the knights of Saint John, whose presence on the battle-field was ever a terror to their foes. And along the whole infidel line the ancient Byzantine crescent, now appropriated by the Turk, and suggestive of devastation and death, was nobly opposed by the pure, white cross inscribed on every banner in its front, teaching the story of the life to come.

A gun was fired by Ali, and, as if aroused from slumber by its report, the Christian fleet began its move, and opening from the wings and centre, unmasked its six leviathans—for such the Venetian galleasses must have appeared to the eyes of the astounded moslim—*which*, passing through the gaps left for them, now rowed slowly and majestically forward until they had got a half-mile in advance, when they lay on their oars, while the vessels that had made way for them resumed their stations, and the line was closed as before.

Then a deafening cheer arose from the whole Christian front, followed by cries of

bitter reproach and insult to the Moslem; yet not for this did the Turks, who were already in motion, cease for a moment in their career. On the contrary, brandishing their weapons and striking their shields together, after the manner of their remote ancestors when engaging in battle, they replied to the taunts of their enemies with loud shouts of *God is great! Mohammed is his Prophet!* and urging their galleys to their utmost speed, advanced steadily and in splendid order to the encounter.

Their extreme right, piloted by a Genoese renegade, who knew the soundings of every foot of the gulf of Lepanto as an astronomer knows the stars, boldly dashed through a narrow and intricate passage between two coral reefs over which the sea was even then breaking, and assailed the Venetians in flank while Uluch Ali rapidly extending toward the left, endeavoured to turn the Christian right. Foiled in this by his adversary, the descendant of a long line of distinguished admirals, and himself the most experienced of the Christian commanders, the redoubtable corsair, who well deserved the name afterward bestowed upon him by the Sultan, of *Al Kilich*, or the Scimitar, made directly for the Maltese galleys, which during the manœuvring necessary to prevent the right flank from being turned, had become widely separated from their consorts, and sinking some of them and disabling others, carried off their largest vessels in triumph. Then passing through the line and attacking it in rear, he forced Don Alvaro de Bazan, with all his strength, to hasten to the relief of the outnumbered and overpowered Genoese, whose vessels, sorely beset on all sides by the Algerines, were fast falling into infidel hands.

While such was the success of the Turks on the left, on the right, where they had commenced the fight under such favourable auspices, fortune was preparing to set her face against them; for the *proveditore*, far from being dismayed at the approach of his enemies through a channel which his own pilots had told him was impracticable, ordered his flanking squadron to make a half-wheel to the left, in readiness to receive them; while he himself, with his remaining squadrons, advanced, in unbroken line, to attack Mehemet Sirocco, who had opened a tremendous fire on his front. For three long hours the battle was carried on, in this quarter, in the most vindictive spirit by both parties, while the old lion of St Mark, restlessly impelled by the breeze to and fro, above Barbarigo's head glared fiercely down upon the crocodile, whose distended jaws served as a beak for the Egyptian viceroy's riddle. The fight between the flagships was sustained with equal valor on both sides, and each admiral was gallantly supported by all the vessels of his command; but Barbarigo, falling to the deck, pierced through the eye by an arrow, the crews of his vessels became disheartened, and, disregarding the remonstrances and threats of their officers, prepare to strike flags to the Egyptians. The cry for a surrender has passed from ship to ship, and in a few moments, on the left, on the extreme right, the cross will cease to fly in presence of the crescent. What hope then of saving the Christian centre? "Christ will descend to save his people!" cries an Italian friar, who, holding aloft the crucifix, oppose his single person to the hosts of Egyptians now pouring aboard their fancied prize—the Venetian flag-ship. A hundred arquebuses are levelled at his breast, and a hundred scimitars flash above his head; but lo! unscathed, he still remains, erect, wav-

ing the holy symbol high in air. Encouraged by the *miracle*, the Christians now furiously turned upon their assailants, while the Turks, seized with mortal terror, first waver, then fly! Sirocco and his chief captains nobly endeavouring to rally them, are either slain or desperately wounded, and victory at last declares in favor of the Venetians.

The centre vessels of the Turks, opening to the right and left, and pulling at full speed by the galleasses, whose broadside batteries made sad havoc among them as they passed, now formed in close order, and steered for the Christian centre, from which, when the infidel drew near, a single galley, having carved upon its bow the armorial bearings of the House of Austria, rowed forth, and, in token of defiance, fired a blank cartridge in the air, as in the late rebellion of the Moors of Granada, which Don Juan had brought to a termination so glorious for himself and his country, when hostile forces met, a solitary Spanish volunteer was wont to ride to the front of his command to dare to single combat the Moorish knight who appeared as the leader of the opposite party. Stung to the quick by the *bravado*, the impetuous Ali bore up at once for Don Juan, and, as his vessel was under full headway when she struck the *real*, the bow of the latter was severely injured by the collision and Don Juan, who was standing on the fore-castle at the time, must have been crushed thereby had not an old seaman picked him up and carried him in his arms as far aft as the fifth bench of rowers. Ali's galley felt the shock from stem to stern, and his officers and men suffered fearfully from the fire of the *real*, whose defenders were fast falling under the deadly aim of the Turks. To right and left now, along the whole line the battle raged with terrific fury. The roar of the artillery was incessant, and heard for many miles, and volley after volley of small arms sounded the death-knell of hundreds of gallant soldiers and seamen both of the Turks and of the Christians. The Marquis of Santa Cruz, occupied, as we have seen, with Uluch Ali, could render no assistance to Don Juan; while the Turkish reserve was fully engaged, it appears probable, in preventing the galleasses from falling upon Ali's rear; for upon no other hypotheses can we account for our not hearing anything of it at this most important juncture when the addition of a few fine ships to the Turkish centre must inevitably have turned the scale against the Christians, and caused the defeat of that portion of their fleet upon which the safety of the whole depended; for the battle had now become a *melee* wherein everything hung upon the number and strength of the contending vessels and the courage, endurance, and discipline of their crews. In such a conflict the great point was to keep the head of one's galley ever pointed towards the foe and its crew well in hand, in readiness to board or to repel boarders, as opportunity might offer or occasion require. If a vessel became disabled in her motive or steering power, straightway she was *rammed* by several enemies at once, and went to the bottom with all on board; or firebrands or burning darts were thrown at her from every direction, and in an instant she was all ablaze, her men either perishing miserably in the flames or jumping overboard to be despatched by the sweeps of some hostile galley. Here was seen a Christian vessel, her decks covered with the dead and the dying, whose flag was being lowered by unchristian hands; there a Turkish galleon,