

To Venice

in the thick of it. A perceptible tenseness in the atmosphere warned us that this was no loyal display—that the crowd was a bad and wicked one, up to no good. Moreover, a number of armed military pickets posted about the square confirmed this impression. We did not know their language, but the crowd was obviously under a restraint, a fast dissolving restraint, whose bonds they momentarily threatened to break. Suddenly a daring spirit shouted the beginning of an inflammatory song, then stopped abruptly amid an uneasy silence. Some one laughed hoarsely. He began the song again. Two or three others joined in, and again they stopped fearfully, this time amid yells of encouragement. Then a band blared out, and as one man the whole mass burst into the song to the stirring strains of the Marseillaise.

Taft, recognising the air, began to bellow as lustily as any of them, but I had caught the words "Serbie" and "Heregovina" and knew very well that though the melody was the Marseillaise the words were something very different, and so with commendable promptitude and vigour I winded him with my elbow. This violent measure was instantly justified, for no sooner had Taft doubled up in his agony than there was a furious onrush of the pickets and