

## REAL BRIGANDS.

WE stated in a late number that Mr. Moens, the English gentleman who was taken prisoner by the Italian brigands, was about to publish an account of his adventures. The book has appeared, and we extract the following notice of it from an English publication:

There never was a book which took all the romance out of a thing more completely than this dashing and unaffected narrative of the English traveller who went down to Pæstum, and fell among thieves by the way. From the first page to the last there is not a single trait of heroism to enliven the prosaic brutality of the men. Nothing but hardship, selfishness, and fear. Like the savage, whose mode of living he affects, the brigand's whole existence is one of suspicion and terror. He is afraid of everything—of sickness, of death, of the peasants, of the soldiers, of his kinsfolk, of his wife. At every turn some peril, beyond the usual peril of human life, meets him face to face; and familiarity, far from producing contempt of danger, only serves to sharpen his faculties in the perception of it, and to keep his fears for ever alive. Even in the ordinary danger of their trade they are cowards. When the soldiers were once close to some of them, "Pavoni's teeth were all chattering, and he was as white as a sheet; Scope was the same, and lying on the ground; and Antonio was in such a state of fear and shaking, that he kept striking his gun against the rocky sides of the cave, and making a great noise, to the dismay of all. I sat down on a stone, and to reassure them, said 'Courage, courage; eat a little; and, to set the example, took some bread and meat out of my pocket, and began eating it. My doing so enraged them to a great extent, and they said, 'What a fool you are to begin to eat when you will be dead in two minutes!'"

"All the time I was in their hands," says Mr. Moens, "I used to inquire the prices of various articles of food in the towns, and got a very accurate idea of what the brigands paid for them; a pezzo, their term for a ducat, equal to three shillings and fourpence, was the peasants' ordinary price for a loaf weighing two rotoli (equal to about three and a half pounds English); this costs from threepence to sixpence in the towns, according to whether it was made of rye, maize, or wheat, but it made no difference in the price paid by the brigands. A coarse cotton shirt cost them two and a half ducats, or eight shillings and fourpence; and washing one, a ducat, or three shillings and fourpence; each cartridge for a revolver cost the same, and everything else in proportion. From a calculation I made when with them, I do not think that a band consisting of from twenty-five to thirty men would spend less than four thousand pounds a year for absolute necessities, and the rest of their spoils would be lent out among their friends in the country at ten per cent interest. I recommended them to try Italian five per cent stock, as being safer than landing money on personal security. But they said they never lost any, and they feared the stock being confiscated by government."

Thus, the peasant is the great supporter and the great gainer by brigandage; though on the other hand it may be said that the risk he runs in carrying on any correspondence with the brigands renders it absolutely necessary that he should be well paid to make it worth his while. Indeed, between the authorities on the one side, with fine and imprisonment, or even death, as the punishment for collusion with the brigands—and the brigands on the other; with a vendetta carried out to the last extreme should any information be given to the authorities, and irreparable damage done to standing crops, to whole villages, and to individuals should there be persistent refusal to forward supplies—the poor peasant has a difficult time of it. Very wary walking between his two hard task-masters is necessary to keep his place in life.

Mr. Moens says but little concerning the presumed political connexion between the brigands and Rome, and the ex-king. Certainly no part of his ransom, he believes, went either to Rome, or to any part of the province of Salerno. He

saw it himself paid and distributed, each man present at the time of the capture getting his share, and a certain per-centage kept back for the general expenses of the band. But he was told by them that Apulia was the head-quarters of brigandage, and that there they had a general named Crocco, who they said was in communication with Rome. He asked how many men this Crocco had under him, and was answered, "A thousand men and many captains, as well as six hundred men in the Basilicata." They also told him that, in 1861, Spanish generals came to lead those fighting for Francis the Second against Victor Emmanuel, and that one of them named Borjès had an enormous black beard, which they said he always held in his left hand when he drank milk, of which he was very fond. Their sympathies go decidedly with Bomda, in preference to Il Rè Galantuomo; for once when the conversation was becoming dangerously personal concerning Mr. Moens's ears, and "his beard with his chin attached," to turn the subject he asked Manzo, the captain, what they would do with Victor Emmanuel if they caught him? "They all chuckled at such an idea, and Manzo declared that he would have ten millions of ducats and then kill him. To Francis the Second, if they caught him, they said they would give a good dinner and then release him."

As a rule, Mr. Moens was treated tolerably well by the brigands, as has been said; but he had two tormentors, Pepino and Scope, and when left under their charge, fared ill enough. Manzo was the captain of the whole force, and was a bandit of somewhat more likeness to the popular ideal than the rest. He was handsome, fairly good tempered, prompt, and, in his own way, generous; always kind to his captives when not half maddened by disappointments respecting the arrival of the money, when there would be highly unpleasant scenes, and threats of ears and head, and the like, which did not tend to reassure the Englishman; though he generally answered, "As you please," and took the thing with perfect coolness. Manzo was not a man to be trifled with, either by his prisoners or his men. Indeed, from his men he exacted an obedience that left no question of a divided command.

One day "Guange, who had been a soldier in the Italian army, and who had become a brigand merely for having been away from his regiment one day without leave, was having an altercation with one of his comrades, and, like these people, wished to have the last word. Manzo told him to be quiet, and just because he did not obey at once, he rushed at him, knocked him down, and kept hitting him and rubbing his face on the stones. Still Guange would not be quiet, until Manzo had pounded his face into a jelly, it being quite bruised, and bleeding freely. Even his gums were cut badly from the grinding against the ground. Manzo looked a perfect demon when excited; he curled up his lips, and showed all his teeth, and roared at his victim, jerking out his words. The implicit obedience generally shown to him by the members of his band was extraordinary. They loved him on account of his unselfishness as regards food, he being always willing to give away his own share, and they feared him because he had shown on one or two occasions that he did not scruple to shoot any of them on the spot if they refused to obey orders."

When the "order of release" came for the prisoner in the shape of the last instalment of ransom, Manzo sent round the hat, in order that Mr. Moens should "go to Naples like a gentleman," and made up a sum of seventeen and a half napoleons, besides rings and other keepsakes. But this was not a very large percentage on a ransom of thirty thousand ducats; and the Englishman took all he could get, and asked for more, getting some things he wanted, but not others. He got Generoso's ring and knife—the knife that had already taken the lives of two men—giving in exchange the small penknife with which he had whittled out a spoon, and carved a cross, and made many other little matters, to the intense admiration and amazement of the brigands; but he just missed by an accident a very thick and long gold chain, for which he asked Manzo, and which he would have had, but that the gentleman was called away while he was taking it off

to present to him. He got five rings in all, which Manzo's mother made him show two peasants after he was free; and which she evidently considered reflected great dignity on her as the mother of one who had shown such princely generosity.

But if times were more tolerable when Manzo was with his band, they were very intolerable when Mr. Moens was left with only a guard, while the captain was off, either on a foraging expedition, or looking after those eternal instalments which, though paid, could not be "lifted" because of the soldiery. When with Pepino's band especially, things went hard with him. As they were to have no share in his expected ransom, they looked upon him as a nuisance, and grudged every morsel of food they were obliged to give him. Pepino stole his drinking-cup, his capuce or hood, in fact all he could lay his hands on; and they half starved him; making a point of speaking to him with the utmost brutality, and constantly threatening his life with their pistols, guns, and knives. One great game in which they indulged, was thrusting their knives quickly between his body and his arms. Their captive says, "I never allowed myself to show the slightest fear, and always told them that it was nothing to die, it was soon over, and that the next world was far better. They all have the most abject fear of death, and I always tried to impress them with the idea that Englishmen never fear to die, and that, if they wished it, they were perfectly welcome to take my life, as it would save me and my friends so much trouble. I felt sure that in a short time they would discontinue trying to frighten me, when they found out that I only laughed at their attempts, and ridiculed them for their fear of death."

It was the only thing to make them respect him, though another time it was a chance whether the English spirit would lead to good or evil for him. They were going up a very steep ascent, when Generoso, who was immediately behind Mr. Moens, "kept hitting and poking me with the barrel of his gun, because I did not ascend as quickly as he wished, though I was close behind the man before me. At last I turned round in a pretended rage, and with my stick in both hands, raised it over his head. He shrank back and brought his gun up to his shoulder with an oath. Two or three ran up. I caught hold of him, but at the same time they abused me, and seemed quite taken aback at the idea of a ricattato threatening one of themselves. I told them I walked as well as they did, and I would not be bullied, so it was no use attempting it—that they might kill me if they wished, and the sooner the better. I found this answer capitally, and I was never touched again while on the march, and it was from this moment that they began to respect me a little for my apparent disregard of death; and when we arrived at the camp-fire, it was immediately narrated how I had threatened to kill a companion, this being the term they always use when speaking of each other."

One of the causes which lengthened the captivity of Mr. Moens, was the belief of the brigands that he was a highly influential personage, related to Lord Palmerston, and of such importance that the Italian government would pay his ransom, whatever the amount asked. Wherefore, they fixed it originally at a hundred thousand ducats for himself and Mr. Aynsley, equal to seventeen thousand pounds; then after a few minutes' conversation with Sentonio, "a tall clumsy ruffian with black eyes, hair, and beard," it was reduced to half, namely, fifty thousand ducats; but finally they accepted thirty thousand, which was a considerable reduction from the first demand. Many and great were the difficulties, not about raising the sum, but about transmitting it. The laws against paying ransom to the brigands, or trafficking with them in any way, are very severe; and as the capture of an English milord, a relation of Lord Palmerston, and the friend of the Italian government, had created immense excitement, the whole country was scourged by soldiery, to the imminent risk of the poor captive's life, when they came to shots with the brigands. For, as he says, they always seemed to take special aim at him, as he was the tallest of the party; and he was thus in even more than