THE PUPPET.

BY CLINTON ROSS.

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CHAPTER X.

HOW I DISCOVER THE FICKLENESS OF FORTUNE WHEN HER FAVORS ARE CONFERRED BY A DALMATIAN CONSTITUENCY.

I read the other day a romance of which many people are talking, about a man who played the part of a king. Reading it, I thought of my own experiences when I helped in an endeavor not altogether dissimilar. Yet, when I read that romance, I called it an Arabian night, forgetting that my own adventure was quite as strange in that rebellion in Dalmatia—which for the first days promised well.

For, as I have said, the Dalmatian gentry, the peasantry, appeared to welcome us. During those few days representatives of the different Dalmatian parties came, to see, as the sequel proved, if they might not better themselves by serving the rebellion for the Romaga. We already in three days were so strong—half the country a disorderly rabble of picturesque peasants and mountaineers camped about Bergamo—that is was declared the government feared to give us battle, and we only were waiting our time to march on Zara. So busy was our girlish leader with her numerous conferences with her minister, Signor Reni, and with various persons who wished to find her position regarding their interests, that I saw little of her. She would pass in the great room of the keep with a nod, or I might see her mounted for some expedition into the country, when she looked, I thought, very pretty, and yet too girlish to bear all these new responsibilities. But I rarely saw her alone. For my part I, too, was busied assisting Count Balbi to make out of our recruits something of an army, which, indeed, might not have been much less inefficient than the Dalamtian regulars of the reigning prince. And so I was surprised when a servant brought me word one afternoon that the princess wished to see me in the garden of Bergamo.

The place, while bare-limbed at that season, showed that it might be gorgeous with roses, like a Florentime field, in June. But I thought the girlish princess answered for the roses as she came to meet me, smiling graciously, although I fancied her face pale and worn. When we first had come to her rescue she had not appeared in this way, even if she had been restrained of her liberty. I indeed felt concerned for her, as I bowed in the little, formal way the etiquette of the improvised court had already prescribed, nor indeed did I know her well. A wrinkled old Dalmatian in a red skirt was her only attendant. She herself was in a riding habit that showed wear.

"I wanted to thank you again, M. Gerald," said she, graciously, "particularly as I have heard of you from Mgr. Reux."

"Mgr. Reux is very good."

"He is my cousin," said she, "and more for him than for another reason I am playing this part."

"It is naturally yours," said I not thinking of my phrases.

"Your gallantry aside, I suppose it is, M. Gerald. But why should I—a girl without particular ambition—be left to act a man's part? If my brother, or my father, had lived!"

I looked at her in some wonder, not quite understanding.

"I am loth to believe, your highness, that—"

"That I do not care to be princess of Dalmatia. Do you know why I tell you this?"

"It is gracious of you."

"Because you, being a foreigner, can look on the situation here without a Dalmatian's prejudice."

"Possibly."

"And how does it seem to you—our chance?"

"That we shall win," I remarked, discreetly, and wondered if that glorious hair, worn by some lady of the Romaga, might not have inspired the Venetians. I had not then seen the Titian in the gallery of the Villa Borghese.

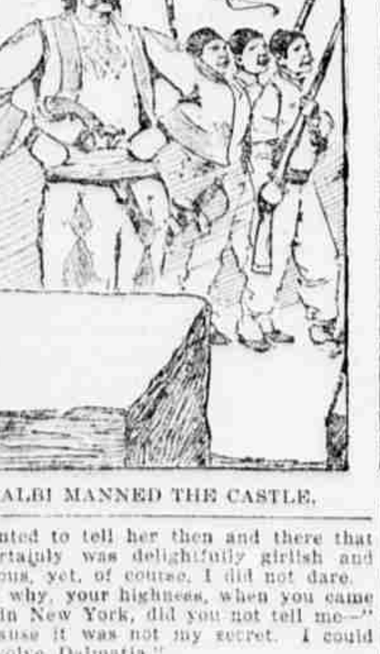
"You say that because it is the proper thing to say to me. The words express no opinion of your own."

"How can I have one, your highness. I do not know Dalmatia."

"No," said she, softly, "nor I, save that I do not wish to make the Dalmatians trouble."

"The situation has made you trouble enough," said I, forgetting that this lady was my superior, removed by the impossible barrier of caste.

"Yes, trouble enough. I have been approached again and again to countenance the Dalmatian party of revolt. I wanted to be free—like you, M. Gerald—to follow my own wishes. Lately I thought I was, for some months. I went traveling like—like an English girl, only to be seized, arrested because in Zara they thought me dangerous. I am now proving they were right."



BALBI MANNED THE CASTLE.

I wanted to tell her then and there that she certainly was delightfully girlish and dangerous, yet, of course, I did not dare.

"But why, your highness, when you came to me in New York, did you not tell me—"

"Because it was not my secret. I could not involve Dalmatia."

"And now?" I asked, curiously.

"It is Henri Reux, my cousin's plot. It is this," she added, as if to herself. "My cousin and his and my friends consider that once established, the powers may agree to uphold us. He believes—we believe—that a decided action on our part may lead—"

"To you as princess of Dalmatia."

"Already has led," she said, almost wearily. "So now that the position is almost gained again—no more freedom for me. I must marry whom they dictate. I must become a creature of statecraft."

I wondered why she was talking to me in this strain, there in the wintry garden of Bergamo.

"I feel," she said, softly, "after what you have done for me, that we are friends, and I wanted to tell you that I am sorry that you have become involved with me—in this—uncertain affair."

"It is good of your highness," I answered, "to show this interest. And you may be sure I am glad."

"Are you, Signor Gerald?" said she, speaking Italian.

"I shall be, indeed, always," when she laughed merrily, so that I wondered. But at the moment we heard a voice—Signor Reux's—the minister's.

"Your highness—"

The princess started, I thought.

"Ah, Signor Reux," said she. "I have been talking to Signor Gerald, and thanking him for all the interest he has taken in our affairs."

"Signor Gerald has been very good," the older man acknowledged, yet looking me over suspiciously, I fancied; "very good. I am sorry to interrupt—"

"And what is it, signor," said the girlish head of the ancient Romaga.

"The council with your highness' approval have decided to advance on Zara."

"I like that," said the Princess Beatrice, her eyes flashing; "at last we shall act."

"Prince Frederick fears to come to us."

"Poor Prince Frederick," she said, smiling, "and then we shall go to my cousin."

Her eyes flashed, and she looked then the proud Romaga—with the blood of a hundred of the greatest Italian and Dalmatian families in her veins. A little wind stirred the bear rose branches. The old Dalmatian attendant stood immovable at the back of the garden.

"I beg your highness' pardon," I began. But neither the princess nor Signor Reux noticed me particularly. Affairs of the moment had put me out of mind, and, for some reason, I was sorry I had undertaken my part—that having been once a puppet in this Dalmatian affair, I should choose to remain one—with the vain expectation of being later something more. But I returned to my duty then, which was in putting some military form into our Dalmatians, and I declare, I knew, or know, nothing of tactics. Count Balbi dubbed me a colonel of new Dalmatia under the rule of the princess of the Romaga. But if I occupied a military position I had no uniform. The rough tweeds which I had worn when I entered Venice still served me, and these indeed were rather better than the tattered variety of clothing the Dalmatian boasted. At first we indeed only had seven uniforms—those of the soldiers and commandant of Bergamo, Colonel Pinaro, who served, now that he thought it would be the winning one, the cause of Princess Beatrice. His was the first desertion. Within seven days some 700 persons had declared for the Romaga, and it was said that Frederick of Heidelberg was preparing to flee Zara for Austria—news Signor Reux had brought the princess when he had interrupted us in the garden of Bergamo.

Yet if this were but the truth I was startled by what I saw as I stepped onto the ramparts. Already soldiery were defiling on the plain below, and our adherents were scattering right and left. I could make no doubt of the truth of my eyes. Men were running, and at the moment I heard Balbi's voice ordering down the ancient draw.

"And where are your six soldiers, and Colonel Pinaro?"

"They, too, have gone."

"There are easily 1,500 men below."

"Easily." The count uttered an oath, which I shared, at all Dalmatians.

"We have no more than my servants—the force with which we left Venice."

"And these reports Signor Reux is even now giving the princess that Prince Frederick has left the country?"

"They were spread designedly."

"And what of the country being ready for revolt, if the standard of the Romaga once were raised?"

"Did not these people flocking to us seem to prove it—"

"Now the government forces seem to attract them the other way," I said, bitterly. "Your Dalmatians seem to run to the side they consider the strongest."

"They but consider their own skins," said the Count Balbi, smiling even in face of the evident disaster, our misplaced hopes, the deceit, the false reports that had been practiced on us. In face of an apparent strength—our real weakness that I never had expected from the beginning of the undertaking. We were surrendered. There was only the ancient draw between us and the government forces. The princess, doubtless, would be pardoned, but as for the rest of us, we likely should hang from the ramparts of the castle. To be sure, there was the narrow channel the draw covered between our rocks and the mainland. Behind was the Adriatic, over which the sun was sinking; before was the low plain along which the governmental forces approached.

"They have two cannon," I said at last. "What avail is a place like this against cannon?"

"None," said the brave leader of this insufficiently considered plot. And Mgr. Reux was safe in Paris. I, too, smiled bitterly, and then a feeling of rage shook me. While there was breath, at least, I could fight. How many times had my father been defeated, if the world had known?

"We must practice strategy, my dear count."

"How can we?"

"From what I have noticed of your Dalmatians, they prefer to negotiate rather than to fight, even with a small force like ours. Your Italian peasants are armed and will fight."

"But these Dalmatians who come to us—and then run over to the government—as soon as it appears—have not even tried to betray us, as they easily could," said Balbi, as if trying to defend his people.

"I suppose really they like the show of fighting better than the reality," he was forced to add, with a smile that was cynical rather than humorous. If there were humor in the situation we were the victims of it, and even a man brave to humor is not inclined to laugh when the question of his life is the one at issue.

"Well, then, the point is that we can have a chance to parley with them about the terms of our surrender."

"Then—?" he began. "But what difference can that make?"

"It can give us time at least."

"Ah, that is true."

"Which is precious."

"Ugh, yes," he said, thinking of his possible fate.

"And there is the sea back of us?"

"We have boats, but they can't be seaworthy."

"After dark—if we can keep them off until after dark—we may devise something."

"That is impossible."

"Ah, it may be," I said, "but I must catch at a straw. I have no particular wish to hang on to that rampart—a feast for the gulls. Now, Count Balbi, permit me to advise this much. Send down one of your trusted servants."

"Jacopo?"

"Yes, Jacopo. And ask him to have the force wait until its leader can consult with the princess. It is obvious that—beyond executing us as enemies to the public order—that the governmental—"

"Which is the Russian policy."

"Yes, exactly; the Russian policy will wish to consider the Romaga."

"You are clever, signor."

"Ah, I have to be."

"I follow your plan."

"And I—I will change the tenor of Signor Reni's news to the princess."

So leaving him to send the messenger I went back into the garden of the keep of Bergamo to put the matter before her who really had involved me in it. Possibly I was a little glad—a little malicious, because of my abrupt dismissal some moments before. Signor Reni, and, indeed, the Princess Beatrice herself, looked their surprise as I interrupted them unceremoniously.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW WE OBTAIN A RESPITE FROM BARON MASSIMO.

"You were wrong, Signor Reni."

"What do you mean, Colonel Gerald?" he said, using the title Count Balbi had conferred, and of which I never have been particularly proud colonels being as numerous in Dalmatia as in the southern United States. Signor Reni's voice had disdain that I should dare to interrupt him. I thought myself for the first time that I was wrong in breaking the news so suddenly to the Princess Beatrice, and then I decided that this was as well. She certainly should know the worst.

"Yes, wrong," I said, disregarding the other's manner; "for the government army has not deserted; on the contrary—"

"Impossible."

"The people you thought were with us all have left, like rats from a sinking ship—as soon as they saw Priene Frederick's banner."

"Impossible!" he said again, while the Princess Beatrice, too, looked on with wonder in her dark eyes.

"Go outside and see, then," I cried, for I had lost my temper, and was impatient at this play at rebellion which staked our lives. I had no wish to die at that moment. At first, looking me over vindictively, he decided to inquire into the truthfulness of my statement. When he had gone I turned to the princess, who was still looking me over as if trying to read me.

"I beg your pardon," said I, losing heart, although I did not know for what I was apologizing.

"You need not ask me that," said she, softly. "This means—"

"That all is a farce, your highness."

I thought there were tears.

"Don't, Princess Beatrice. I pray you. You are a young lady of spirit—a great lady—and now you must bear the honor of your race. These Dalmatians are not worthy your—"

She smiled suddenly.

"What can I do, Colonel Gerald?"

"This; in half an hour a messenger of the government will be here. You will receive him; you will acknowledge the attempt has failed. But you will add that you wish time to consider—to see if you cannot propose terms—"

"I will, gladly," she cried, her face flushing, and I knew that her momentary loss of self-control had not been on her own account.

"You will ask, your highness, until tomorrow morning. If that time is not granted, you must declare that you will make a hopeless fight, that certainly will result in the loss of some lives, and—"

"And—I understand—they, seeing I mean what I shall say, will grant the request."

"I believe that will be the result, your highness."

"And then—when we have the time?" she began.

"Leave that to me," said I, with bravado, although I knew at that moment no more what I should do than the merest child. Only it was clear that I must act for myself—for her, and that I did not dare leave the issue to her advisers.

"I will, Colonel Gerald," said she, softly. "I leave all to you and I believe in you."

I raised her hand to my lips, and in that act Signor Reni, his pale face ashen, interrupted us.

"It's true," he said, "true."

"Did Count Balbi send Jacopo, as I suggested?" I began.

"Yes. What of it?"

"Signor Reni," interrupted the princess, "I will manage this affair. Report to me when the messenger returns. Come, Colonel Gerald, into the castle. I will see this with my own eyes."

"If you will allow me, your highness," I answered, "I now should better consult with the count."

Signor Reni regarded me still with that little vindictive stare, and yet I saw that fear for himself was the principal emotion.

"Come, Signor Reni," said I, as if I had all the authority in the world; when he followed me as if he thought I might arrive at some expedient. The princess hesitated, and then seeing that I was trying my best to solve our riddle she turned without a word through the little postern door into the great hall of Bergamo.

"I have been a fool, Signor Reni."

"Eh, signor?"

"Ever to have entered on such an ill-arranged affair."

"We did our best, signor," he said with surprising humility, which had its source I knew in his fears.

"Yet you are a brave man," I said, changing my tone, "to have dared it. I respect brave men." I really believe he was theoretically brave.

"But now, signor count, I choose to direct this matter myself. It is but self-preservation."

"What can we do—?"

"Leave it to me, signor; I have a way."

"I acknowledge I have none."

I shuddered as I thought how poor my way was, for I actually knew of none. Yet I did not dare show the two leaders this, for I no longer trusted them. I acted as if I knew the exact way out of the difficulty. That Balbi believed in me, or grasped at any proposition relieving him from the responsibility, was proven by the readiness with which he had sent the messenger to the approaching forces of the government. In the meantime I was scanning sea and land. The van of the attacking party had paused a short distance away. The twilight—for it was now past sundown—was singularly still and I noticed the sea was almost unruffled. On one side of the great square tower that anciently had dominated this coast in the interest of the robber Romaga was a window. I looked at the coast line below, and instantly an idea occurred which led me to look at the hesitating line of Prince Frederick's soldiery. The sky was overcast, and it promised a dark night.

At that moment I heard Balbi order the lowering of the draw, and I saw Balbi's messenger, Jacopo, approaching with another person. As this person came over the rusty draw, I recognized the little sly fellow with whom the adventure had begun in New York, the one man in this world whom I thought I hated for having done me a positive injury.

"The Baron Massimo," Reni said at my shoulder.

Massimo advanced toward us, awaiting him in the outer court, smiling. Six of Balbi's peasants were distributed about armed with the muskets and knives he had succeeded in taking from Venice. We, indeed, had munitions for 1,000 men.

I say that Massimo advanced toward us like a gentleman who enters a house on a formal invitation, and as if to impress us further with his sense of the formality of the occasion, he addressed us in French, which still is the language of diplomacy.

"Ah, messieurs," said he, "I am sorry the occasion is so unfortunate for you—"

"Yet if I remember aright," said Balbi, who had turned about from raising the draw, "the Baron Massimo himself showed some interest to Mgr. Reux in this very affair."

"To get knowledge from fools, messieurs," Massimo said at this.

"Such," I could not resist saying, "was Mgr. Reux's idea of the nature of Massimo's errand."

He turned to me at this, his face darkening, looking sarcastically at the sword I had buckled about my tweeds, the only insignia of my position as colonel in this episodical Dalmatian rebellion.

"You are still meddling, Mr. Gerald," he said in English. "You do not appear to have profited by the lesson I gave you. But you doubtless never will meddle again."

"That depends—"

"On the future, Mr. Gerald. I think the future is mine. Prince Frederick's, if I mistake not. I know you feel unpleasantly toward me—"

"Ah, no, Darren," said Balbi, who had recovered his sangfroid, "we admire your wit, which suffered you to intrigue with us, so that if we should succeed you might profit by such a turn of circumstances."

"You may admire my bravery, Count Balbi, which leads me here into your power, when, as General Barnato told me, you might hold me as hostage."

"Pardon me," said I here, "you doubtless know that this would have been foreign to the Princess Beatrice's nature, if not to ours. You knew you ran no risk. As for my lord the count's remark on your trying to play two parts, I myself believe you approached Mgr. Reux simply as a spy."

"You are quite right," said he, looking at me out of the eyes of which he now held the expression hidden.

"And in the meantime we are keeping the princess waiting." I led the way to the great hall of the castle, where the candles had been lit, and where our mistress (for now I will confess I regarded her as mine) was seated in an arm-chair with her woman, and two of Balbi's servants making her little court.

If I had trembled how, girl as she was, she would conduct herself at this crisis, I was more than surprised by the admirable self-possession of her who looked that moment the head of the ancient Romaga. Her yellow hair seemed a crown; her eyes flashed, and her cheeks were flushed with excitement over this turn of affairs.

"Well, Baron Massimo, I am no longer your prisoner." There was in her tone the least resentment at this agent of the Dalmatian government, who had tricked her and deprived her of her liberty. Massimo inclined his head, not discourteously.

"You were detained, your highness, to avoid other people losing their lives on your account in a fruitless attempt to overturn the government of Dalmatia. As it is now, your case—not your individual case—but that of your followers, is worse. Some will lose their lives for rebellion—"

I stepped forward, half expecting her to cry out at this.

"But that is the point, Baron Massimo," the princess said, calmly enough, although her face grew white, and I knew her manner was but a mask. "My friends have been wrong in forcing me into this—"

"Yes, plainly."

"And I suppose they must suffer the consequences."

"Pay the penalty, your highness."

"But this erroneous course, Baron Massimo, has been taken for me—for my house. I cannot see them suffer without making an effort—"

"But you can do nothing, your highness."

"Whether I can or not I want this night to consider some plea to make to the government."

"It can come to nothing."

She rose at this her eyes flashing.

"Baron Massimo," she cried, "if you do not concede this you and your army shall not get into Bergamo until all my friends have died in defending it. Is it not better for a brave man to die fighting than on the scaffold? I cannot deny them this privilege. If they fight some of the government troops shall die as well as they."

Massimo plainly was impressed by her words and her manner.

"But," she continued, "if I take reasonable time to devise some means of presenting these gentlemen's cases to the government, I can say to them, 'There is a chance, my friends.' Resistance simply means death, for we are a small company in an old, disused fortress."

"But, your highness—"

"You have heard," she answered. "Have you power to make the terms?"

He looked down for a moment as if deliberating, and then, considering, doubtless our case hopeless in any event, and that a show of some concession would appear better to the world, he said, "Your highness shall have your wish—your useless delay until 7 tomorrow."

"Until 7 tomorrow," I heard Balbi repeat.

"Until 7 tomorrow," acknowledged the princess. "Ah, baron, I fear it's a useless enough request, but I must make it—for these poor gentlemen's sakes—and for the poor fellows, their servants."

"I am glad to grant you this much, your highness, and I will direct General Barnato accordingly," Massimo said, making an obeisance.

The princess kept her self-possession until he had disappeared under Balbi's conduct, and then she sank back with a little cry.

"I could not have kept up a moment longer, M. Gerald, and now you must do the rest."

"Your highness," said I (I believe kneeling before her, for I hate a woman in tears), "I will try as best I may."

She looked at me through her tears.

"How can you do anything, poor Gerald? And you are in this for me."

"Trust to me," I said softly. But I did not trust to myself. At the moment we heard the creaking draw, declaring Massimo's departure.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW I EMPLOY A STRATEGEM OF OTHER MORE FAMOUS GENERALS BEFORE A VICTORIOUS ENEMY.

Presently Balbi returned, saying he had the castle manned as well as he could with his few armed peasants. His face displayed his utter lack of expedients, while Reni had listened to my short talk with the princess without venturing a word, because he, too, had no opinion to advance.

"It is a dark night," said I, not intending to be facetious. "I can assure you," and speaking now rather to myself.

"Yes. Low clouds, without a breath of wind," Balbi assented.

"So much the better."

"What do you mean," the princess asked, looking at me with brightening eyes.

"If there is a boat—"

"There is, I have told you," Balbi hastened to explain, rather impatiently, as the situation irritated him.

"We can lower it from the window on the side of the sea."

"Yes?" said the princess eagerly.

"If there were enough boats to carry us all."

"I will inquire," said Balbi, going out.

"We may be able to get out to sea?" said the princess, clapping her hands.

"If the sea will permit," said I.

"There are three, I find," said Balbi, returning and catching my last words.

"How far is it to Zara?"

"Fifteen miles, following the coast."

"The sea remaining calm, we might reach—say Zara, in three hours."

The idea had occurred to me but at that moment.

"I hate to confess myself beaten, gentlemen," said I, turning to the irresponsive Reni and to Balbi, "particularly as only we can suffer in this affair we have undertaken. For the princess it may mean simply temporary imprisonment, for I believe her position—and the intervention of the powers will make her punishment go no further in the end than banishment from Dalmatia."

"I do not quite follow you," Reni interrupted.

"I do," said the princess, now smiling, "and I would give the world to thwart them after all."

"How much of a force is left in Zara?"

"Probably not over 200 men."

"And who is commandant there?"

"I believe a foreigner, Colonel Ferguson, an Irishman in the Dalmatian service."

"And the prince is there?"

"Prince Frederick and his family."

"It's this," said I, my own interest kindling in the plot, as an inventor's may in an idea, "we will drop the boats out of the window, if they are in any serviceable condition; that is on the side of the sea, and I do not believe we shall be observed in the darkness, unless the Baron Massimo has thought to patrol the coast, which I do not believe to be the case. For who would think of us descending from that window?"

"But the sea is dangerous with such boats as are likely to be here," interrupted Reni for the first time.

"Have imagination, Signor Reni,' I cried. "We will not put out to sea. We will row to Zara."

"To Zara?"

"We will appear before Colonel Ferguson, who will be astonished enough, thinking that the troops sent out for our capture have us. We will say that we are the van of another force."

"But if he refuses?"

"We will not permit it. We will persuade him by our effrontery. We will take the prince prisoner instead of his troops taking us. We can dictate terms. And I have seen enough of Dalmatian fickleness to know there will be many desertions to our banner."

"But the Russian and English representatives?"

"I will engage to play them against each other, so they will not interfere."

"It's a dangerous plan," Signor Reni began.

"It's our only one," I said. "We can run, but the chances are we shall be taken."

"It is the only way," said the princess. "Ah, Colonel Gerald, I owe you much."

"But first we must see that the boats will answer. If they fail, we shall be forced to build a raft to carry us to shore, and then—"

"Try the boats," said the princess. "We will not fail before we know."

"In the meantime," Balbi interrupted, "a brave show must be kept of the ramparts being manned."

"They do not believe we can get away unless we should fly."

"And they may be right, but we can try," I said, doubtfully enough.

"Ah, we will!" cried the princess, clapping her hands like the girl she was, and yet, a few moments before, in Baron Massimo's presence she had been the self-contained woman.

The boats were examined carefully. Two appeared to be seaworthy. The other we experimented with and thought it might stand. Then we examined the window, a broad opening intended for a gun carriage, I saw; now guarded by a frame of iron bars. The frame swung open, permitting me to look down into the sea, and out into the blackness, for fortunately, as I have said, the night was very dark from the clouds, there being no moon. Ropes were found, and Balbi's man, Jacopo, a brave Tuscan, volunteered to make the first risk.

Cautiously, for after all the enemy might have patrols, we lowered the boat with the man and oars, making, I thought, an intolerable noise. The Princess stood at my elbow, an interested witness of the proceeding. The time seemed long. Six had been left with Balbi outside on the ramparts, and six little, wiry fellows—with the strength those little Tuscans sometimes have—were at the task I superintended. Presently we heard a splash and Jacopo's cry. I directed two of the men who said they had followed the sea at one time, to go down the rope to assist him, and to get the boat already lowered out of the way of the one to follow. All this, you may believe, was done with constant fear of interruption. When Jacopo's cry came again, and we had pulled up the ropes, knowing all was well below, Reni called in three more from the ramparts, leaving there three with Balbi. Putting one in the next boat we lowered this with an equal success. Then I discovered that the third and worst boat had no oars. But finally I agreed with Reni, who here volunteered the opinion that the two boats would carry our party of seventeen, including the Princess and her woman. Six men were already below, manning the boats which were launched so easily as the foundations of the tower of Bergamo are laid well below the line of low tide, which at first had been a question. Now was the question of lowering the women.

"I will wait for you, Colonel Gerald," the princess said. "I should not dare trust myself to any one else."

While this remark flattered me, particularly with the expression accompanying it out of those dark eyes, it did not make the difficulty of getting the princess and her woman to the boat below.

Finally one of the men suggested tying the woman to him, binding her to the rope by a slipnoose. The woman shivered. But when the princess assured her that she, too, was to follow in the same manner, she was reassured.

First we were forced to call in two more men from outside, leaving but Balbi and one man to keep up the appearance. Balbi cautioned me not to forget the arms, which we let down before the man and the princess' maid. The woman crossed herself again and again, but her mistress' eyes encouraged her.

It had come to the princess' turn, it being necessary to keep a sufficient number of the men above to lower her safely.

"I will go down that rope with no one but you, Signor Gerald," she declared positively.

I had intended being the last from the tower, for now, having taken the affair so entirely in hand, I counted it in some sense my own, and yet I felt that she was more precious than all the rest, nor was I willing to commit her to another.

As I have said, she was in a riding habit, we having expected to leave Bergamo on the false intelligence we had had, and it proved the best gown for the purpose. The slipnoose about the rope was tied about her waist, and then—but I paused. I could not see her face in the darkness, in which we had worked thus far. Yet I felt suddenly strangely happy, as I felt her close to me, my arms about her, as we ventured into that mysterious abyss. Down we went. I could feel her heart against mine, and I knew suddenly why I was in Dalmatia; and that no other woman in all the world would ever mean anything to me.

Then Jacopo's voice called and we were in the swaying boat. My heart beat until I could hear it, I thought. For what, if after all this risk, we now should fail?

"You who have been so brave, be brave now," she whispered low to me, her hand on my shoulder, reading my fear.

It seemed an age before the first of those left followed; then, the others, and last of all Balbi—the brave Balbi. And then our fears increasing the sound of the oar beats, we began to row along the coast to the south—to Zara—to the equally dangerous risk; while this other, indeed, was not over.

(To be continued.)

LOWERING THE PRINCESS AND MR. GERALD.

WHEN DAD HAD TOOTHACHE.

Written for The Bee.

When my dad had toothache, I
Tought sure he wuz goin' to die;
For it made 'im holler out
To put wurskey in 'is mouth,
Without swallerin' it—but wuss—
How th' old man cussed!

Ever'body 'bout th' place
Su'gested somethin' fer 'is face;
But my dad's a knowin' man,
So he got an old tin can
Full hot worter—wouldn't leak—
An' slopped it on 'is cheek!

Then my dad he says to me:
"Go git me some more wurskey,
Fer this 'ere ol' tooth o' mine—
Don't you see I'm nearly dyin'?"
Then he wunked, an' says to me:
"Don't let yer mother see!"

"I'll try," I says, an' went to see
Ef it wuz whur it ort to be;
But my ma's more cunnin' yit
Ner my dad is, don't fergit;
Fer she hid it some place whur
You couldn't find it thur.

Fer I had to look an' look
Ever'whur, in ev'ry nook—
But I couldn't find it, an'
Soon's I told th' old man,
He jumped up an' more'n cussed
An' said he'd raise a fuss.

But he said nothin'—fit to mention—
Then I knowed wuz 'is intention
Jus' to kinder fool Ma, an'
Git th' wurskey, understand'?
But from then up to t'day
Nary word I'd say!

—CLARENCE P. M'DONALD.

Omaha, Neb.

Miss Amily Sutters, a London school girl who has already won three silver medals, has just been presented with a special medal from the London school board for attending school regularly for four years without being late.

Cook's Imperial Extra Dry Champagne is the wine for Americans. Its purity and boquet commends it to them.

TWO NOTED SHAKESPEREANS

Interviews with Eminent Authorities on the Bard of Avon.

PHASES OF CRITICISM AND CONTROVERSY

Novel Efforts to Prove the Bard a Welshman—The Baconian Theory—Recent Discoveries by Antiquarians.

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The presence in this country of two notable Shakespearean scholars—one of them perhaps the foremost living authority on the Bard of Avon—is calculated to arouse American interest in some recent phases of controversy and criticism relating to Shakespeare and his works. Prof. Edward Dowden, fellow of Trinity college, Dublin, and the distinguished author of "Shakespeare; His Mind and Art," is the first of these visitors, while the second is Dr. William R. Molloy, fellow of the Royal Irish academy, and of the Royal University of Ireland. Both consented to talk briefly on Shakespeare and "Shakespeareans."

Prof. Dowden does not at first sight convey the impression of great scholarship. He is short and of dark complexion. His swart hair is what Anthony Hope calls "untidy;" and a veteran slouch hat carelessly covers his rather large head. His manner is nervous and even awkward at times. But when Dowden fixes one with his blue-gray Irish eyes, one begins to discover the breadth and intensity of the man. It only needs a little Dowden conversation to complete his conquest of the average interviewer.

"I am rather a student and critic of the Shakespeare plays," said Prof. Dowden, "than a Shakespearean antiquary. After all, it matters little to mankind who the author of 'Hamlet' may be, so long as we have that wonderful poem itself. The critics of the European continent accept the plays, and bother their heads not one jot as to the identity of their maker. To some extent I share those sentiments. Still, of course, one cannot devote years of study to the works of one particular man without taking some little interest in the life of that man. Hence, while I am not by any means a Shakespearean antiquary, I keep myself fairly well informed upon the chief developments in that field of research.

THE DONNELLY CONTROVERSY.

"The embers of the Donnelly controversy are still alight. It will take very little to fan them into a vigorous blaze. Nothing important, however, has to my mind been added of late to the case already presented with a view of proving that Francis Bacon allowed his plays to pass to posterity under another's name. On the contrary I think that the present Burns revival and the evidence of a great poet springing from a point far lower in the social scale than Shakespeare did, has somewhat strengthened the hands of Bacon's opponents. Certainly the onus of proof rests with the latter; and, as yet, they have not persuaded us.

"A curious and (to students of heredity) an important discovery has been made during the year by antiquaries who are ever at work upon this family history of Stratford's greatest son. I refer to the long line of Welsh ancestry with which he has been connected. It is now regarded as sufficiently proven that Shakespeare's paternal grandmother was a Griffith, a member of a race the most intensely Celtic, or rather Cymbric, in South Wales. You probably know that the last few months have witnessed a great revival in Celtic literature. Prof. Sharp has startled the placid "Anglo-Saxon" (so-called) by the daring assertion that considerably more than half of all that is great in his literature comes from Celtic sources and is the work of men with Celtic blood in their veins. The favorite answer to this theory has long been: 'Well, you can take away your Byrons, Goldsmiths, Scotts, Burns and Ben Jonsons, but you cannot claim Shakespeare. He at least was Saxon to the finger tips.'

WAS SHAKESPEARE A CELT?

This comforting opinion has been rudely overthrown by the discovery of a strong strain of Griffith blood in the Shakespeare family tie; and now we are asking ourselves how it did not hitherto strike us that the great poet's undoubtedly Celtic vein was his by right hereditary. Stratford is but a step from the Welsh marshes. The Shakespeares probably made many other Welsh alliances. Nay the name Shakespeare itself may be but a corruption or "Anglification" of some good old Cymbric patronymic. Already Prof. Sharp and his school, with the buoyant credulity of their race, have placed Shakespeare in their gallery of Celtic poets. You may imagine what a storm of wrath this is calculated to excite among persons who think with Dr. Goldwin Smith, that the leaven of the so-called "Anglo-Saxon" has thoroughly leaven the entire British lump.

I spoke of the attention Shakespeare is attracting on the continent. It cannot fail to gratify us who love the master when we observe the continual growth of his strength in France, Germany and Italy. Of course the Germans deserve first credit. They discovered his merits first; and the vast German literature on Shakespeare testifies to the generosity with which they greeted him.

SHAKESPEARE IN FRANCE.

But the French had to combat with the narrow, self-sufficient criticisms of Voltaire, in order to acquire an appreciation of the English poet. That they have done so effectually any reader of modern French criticism can testify. Then there is Italy also. Falstaff the inimitable has recently furnished Verdi with a new inspiration. Salvini, too, is not without successors.

"The curious have been talking over what they claim to be a biblical error in Shakespeare. Plumptre claimed that the master knew his bible thoroughly, which seems doubtful in view of the fact that he lived in times before the bible had yet become common in the households of that class of society to which he belonged. Now in "Hamlet," act 1, scene ii, he uses the words, 'Or that the Everlasting had not fixed His canon against self-slaughter.'

"A German critic points out that throughout the bible there is no verbal condemnation of suicide. Indeed, in Second Machabees XVI., Razis is rather commended for killing himself rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. But this little matter 'amounts to nothing,' as you Americans say, except to prove the importance attached by admirers of Shakespeare to the most of his sayings and doings."

MOLLOY IS A BACONITE.

Dr. William R. Molloy is secretary to the Board of National Education in Ireland. He differs widely in personal appearance from Prof. Dowden, being of good height and portly withal. His genial face is smoothly shaven and his manner might aptly be described as "unctuous."

"To a large extent I am a Baconite," he remarked; "at least you may set me down as a doubter, and by no means one of the faithful few who accept Shakespeare unconditionally as the author of the Shakespeare plays. I reject the so-called 'Cryptogram,' however, as absurd. The internal evidence of the similarities to be found in Lord Verulam's works and the Shakespeare plays are the strongest proofs which can be brought forward. Some new parallels have recently been pointed out which add greatly to the mass of testimony already adduced in favor of Bacon. Let me take two of these at random. Shakespeare in "King Lear," act iv., scene vi., says:

'When we are born, we say that we are come
To this great stage of fools.'

"Bacon has it: 'God sends men headlong into this wretched theater, where being arrived, their first language is that of mourning.'

"Again in 'Troilus and Cressida,' act iii., scene iii., Shakespeare may be quoted:

'The beauty that is borne here in the face
The bearer knows not, but commends itself
To other eyes.'

"While the great lord chancellor voices the same sentiment, using in two instances the precise words of the play: 'A beautiful face is a silent commendation.'

"One cannot help thinking that such cases as these (and I might multiply them to the hundredth time) were not—could not have been coincidences. Two men, contemporaries, could not have so interchanged thoughts and language by mere accident or without some closer tie than the world writes of existing between them."

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