

THE GARIBALDIANS IN SICILY

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The Garibaldians in Sicily by Alexandre Dumas

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ALEXANDRE DUMAS

**THE GARIBALDIANS
IN SICILY**



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BY

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"MORVE CRISTO," ETC., ETC.

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THE GARIBALDIANS IN SICILY.

CHAPTER I.

THE EMBARKATION.

GENOA, 28th May, 1860.

I ARRIVED here in my yacht, the *Emma*, twelve days ago, and, thanks to her reputation as a fast sailer, the sensation she produced was something extraordinary, so much so, indeed, as to give rise to a little jealousy in the squadron of Vice-admiral Barbier de Tinan, cruising off this coast.

As I had visited Genoa some thirty or forty times before, it will be readily imagined that I was not attracted thither out of mere curiosity.

I had just finished writing the conclusion of the "Memoirs of Garibaldi,"* that is to say, the end of the first part, for, at

* Some French newspapers have not only presumed to doubt the authenticity of these "Memoirs," but have even averred that they were simply a translation of a biography of Garibaldi published some time since in America. In answer to these charitable assertions, I here insert two notes to prove the utter fallacy of such statements:—

No. I. (Copy.)

NAPLES, 29th September, 1860.

It was I who delivered to M. Dumas a considerable portion of Garibaldi's autograph papers, by the express desire of the General himself.

(Signed)

A. BERTANI,

Secretary to the Dictatorship of Southern Italy.

No. II. (Copy.)

I hereby certify that not only did M. Dumas not borrow the "Memoirs of Garibaldi" from any American or English writer, but that M. Bertani delivered to him the Memoirs written by Garibaldi's own hand, by desire of the General himself.

I also placed in the hands of M. Dumas the various Memoirs of Anita, Daverio, and Ugo Bassi; as well as those of most of the General's friends who had fallen fighting by his side.

(Signed)

C. A. VECCHI,

Aide-de-Camp to General Garibaldi.

NAPLES, 16th October, 1860.

the rate of my hero's progress, his exploits promise to furnish me with matter for a long succession of volumes.

Scarcely had I disembarked, when I learnt that Garibaldi left Genoa for Sicily on the 6th of May. Before his departure, he left some letters for me with our friend Vecchi, the well-known historian, and requested Bertani, Sacchi, and Medici to complete, by oral communication, all the details he had not then sufficient time to write himself.

I am now comfortably installed in the "Hôtel de France," working sixteen hours a day, an amount of exertion I am so used to that I do not find it very irksome.

During the last twelve days the most contradictory reports have arrived from Sicily; but no intelligence that can be relied on has been received from that place of a later date than the 9th instant, 6 P.M.

On the 5th, Garibaldi wrote to Dr. Bertani. This letter, which I will presently subjoin, as well as two others addressed by him to Colonels Sacchi and Medici, are the only authentic communications yet received.

The letter he wrote to Colonel Sacchi was merely to express how much he regretted his inability to accept of his services. Sacchi wished to tender his resignation in the Sardinian army, in order that he might follow Garibaldi, whose standard-bearer he had been at Monte Video; but the General has distinctly stated that he wages war solely on his own account; and in order that he may not compromise the King of Sardinia, he has scrupulously refused to accept the services of any Sardinian officer or private soldier in what may possibly prove to be an abortive enterprise.

Medici's letter was also to console him for being left behind at Genoa. "For at Genoa," said Garibaldi, "you will be of greater service to the enterprise than in Sicily."

In fact, Medici had been engaged in preparing two expeditions at Genoa: the first, consisting of a steamboat with a hundred and fifty men and a thousand muskets on board—which left yesterday; and the second, of two steamboats, which are to carry two thousand five hundred volunteers, with arms and ammunition, and these are to depart in a few days.

These two ships have been purchased at a cost of 700,000 francs,* and are both to be commanded by Medici. The volunteers are being enrolled every day. The funds are supplied by subscriptions opened in the principal towns of Italy, and they already exceed a million francs.†

The before-mentioned letter written to Bertani, who, together with La Farina, has the management of these funds, I will now insert.

* 28,000.

† 40,000.

" GENOA, 5th May, 1860.

" DEAR BERTANI,—Called as I am to appear again on the scene of events important to Italy, I intrust to you the following mission:—To use all well-combined means in your power to help us in our enterprise; to impress upon all Italians that, by their mutual aid and devotion to the cause, Italy will soon be free, and at little cost; but that they will not have done their duty to their country should they confine their efforts to a paltry subscription; that Italy, on the point of being free, ought to possess, instead of an army of 100,000 men, one consisting of 500,000, a number certainly not disproportionate to its population, and which would be on the same scale as that of neighbouring states, who have not to fight for their independence; that, with such an army, Italy will not require the protection of foreign patrons, who gradually consume her native strength under the pretext of supporting her; that, wherever Italians are striving against their oppressors, the more resolute should be encouraged, and means provided to help them on their way to join us: for the Sicilian insurrection ought not only to be aided on the spot, but in all other places where there are enemies to cope with. I never advised the insurrection in Sicily; but, as soon as the contest really commenced, I considered it my duty to assist my fellow-countrymen. Let our war-cry henceforth be, 'ITALY AND VICTOR EMMANUEL;' and I trust that the Italian banner will once again be unfurled without encountering disgrace.

" Yours affectionately,
" G. GARIBALDI."

The hour fixed upon by Garibaldi for his departure was ten at night, when he embarked from the Villa Spinola where he had been staying with Vecchi the last month of his sojourn at Genoa, during which period he had made all the preparations for his expedition. The reader, we are persuaded, will willingly allow us to enter into many minute details connected with this enterprise. If it should prove successful, if it should lead to the vast results that ought necessarily to follow success, it must be looked upon, like Napoleon's return from the isle of Elba, as one of the greatest events of the nineteenth century, so fertile in extraordinary occurrences. I trust that when some future historian shall undertake the task of recording the deeds of the present wonderful epoch, the issue of which I cannot possibly doubt when I contemplate the character of the man predestined to be its hero, he will be gratified to find in the recital of one who may be regarded in the light of an eyewitness details abounding in picturesque interest, while they are nevertheless strictly true.

At a few minutes past ten, Garibaldi quitted the Villa

Spinola, and proceeded to the beach, accompanied by a large number of his officers.

La Farina was by his side, but Medici was absent. When I asked the latter recently, the cause of his non-appearance at such a moment, he replied :—

“Had I been there, I should not have had courage enough to allow him to depart without me.”

Proceeding by the narrow pathway which leads from the Villa Spinola down to the sea, the General found thirty boats waiting to receive the volunteers.

As soon as the muster-roll was called over, the number of the men was found to be 1,080.

As quickly as the boats were filled in turn, they hastened towards the steamers; the last boat that left containing Garibaldi himself, and his aide-de-camp, Colonel Türr. The sea was perfectly calm, and the moon shed a genial light over the scene.

The steamers were to have made their appearance at eleven o'clock; but at that hour there were no signs of them to be seen. In the mean time, we may as well give some account of these vessels, and the manner in which they were obtained.

At nine o'clock, Nino Bixio and thirty men embarked at La Marina, in the harbour of Genoa; they rowed from the shore in two boats, each containing fifteen men, and directed their course to two steamers, named the *Piemonte* and the *Lombardo*. They rapidly boarded these vessels, and confined the masters and crews in the fore cabins. So far the project was successful; but when they wanted to weigh anchor and get up steam, the first difficulties presented themselves to the captors, not one of whom on either vessel happened to know anything about engineering or navigation. This was the sole cause of the delay.

Garibaldi began to feel impatient when he saw no signs of the two vessels; and telling Türr to get into another boat, he rowed off to Genoa, a distance of three miles, with six men only.

There he found the two vessels secured indeed, but the captors in the greatest conceivable embarrassment how to put them in motion.

This state of suspense was now over; the anchors were weighed, the steam got up, and the vessels were ready to depart.

During this interval a boat, rowed by one man only, reached the port of Genoa.

This was no other than Türr, who, being left alone by Garibaldi, as we have seen, felt uneasy, and was resolved to find out what had become of the General, with an anxiety similar to that of Garibaldi when he started off to discover what had become of the steamers.