

THREE MONTHS WITH ITALIAN BRIGANDS.

Mr. Moens is an Englishman of fortune, and, as it appears, an amateur photographer. Early in 1865 he set out, accompanied by his wife, upon an Italian tour, going first to Sicily, and making the giro or "round" of that island, which was a few years ago so pleasantly described by Ross Browne in his famous "Yulet."

Mr. Moens had, moreover, the special design to photograph the eruption of Etna, which was then going on. His description of this is very interesting; but we must pass it over in order to give, as far as we may, some account of his subsequent experiences when a captive among the brigands on the mainland.

Crossing over to Naples early in May, he set out for a trip to the ruins of the famous temple of Paestum, which stand in solitary grandeur in a mountain wilderness, with no traces of the people by whom the stupendous edifices were reared. The party consisted of Mr. Moens, Mr. Aynley, an English clergyman, and their wives. From Naples a railway runs past the considerable town of Salerno, somewhat more than twenty miles from Paestum. It was indeed a little suspicious that the landlord of the "Hotel Victoria" at Salerno thought it necessary to post up, in various languages, notices to "travelers desirous of visiting the temples of Paestum that the road is now perfectly safe between Salerno and Paestum, owing to the vigilance of General Avenati, the military commander of the district, who has stationed patrols along the route, and Battaglia, Barizzo, and Pastam."

After a three hours' drive they reached the temples a little before noon. A squad of soldiers accompanied them. Mr. Moens set his camera in order and photographed the ruins. Towards evening they set out on their return; not a little surprised that their military protector was nowhere visible. The truth was, as they afterwards learned, the soldiers had been withdrawn so that negotiations for the relief of a couple of Italian gentlemen whom they had gobbled up for a few days before on this very safe road. For these the brigands demanded a ransom of 17,000 francs, but finally compromised for 5,000.

They had almost reached Battaglia, and supposed that they had passed the dangerous place, when a lit before dusk they perceived a number of fellows creeping out of the cornfield. Some of the brigands aimed their guns, others turned the horses' heads across the road. They started upon all sorts of hiding-places, and in a few minutes thirty or more were gathered around the carriage. The travelers were politely desired to "descend." "Don't be afraid, Madame, don't be afraid," they said to Mrs. Moens. The coachman was ordered to stay where he was for a quarter of an hour, and then to drive off with the ladies, and two gentlemen hurried off over roads and through thickets.

The bandits were wonderfully polite—the leader, whom Mr. Moens came to know quite well as Captain Manzo, always addressed them as "Signore" or "Gentlemen," with a strong accent on the "t" syllable. "What do you want with me?" inquired the captives. "Denaro—non temete" ("The Shiner—don't be scared") was the reply. "How far are we to walk?" "A good way, a good way enough." When they came to a stream the brigands carried the ladies across on their shoulders. On they went through swamps, over ditches, and across cultivated fields, marching in Indian file, until midnight. By the way they stopped at a house and bought a little bread, and a while after came upon a patch of cabbage and onions, of which they made short work, pocketing what they could not eat; wisely, as Mr. Moens found out before long.

can't see! Before I was with the brigands the smell of garlic alone was nauseous, at some late hour the other I put into my pocket. We had some water to drink during the night, and when it was exhausted I was obliged to swallow a village was near, for we heard the bells of the church chiming the hours. I fancied we were near Paestum; but on asking one of the brigands if it were so, he replied "Yes," and I knew at once that it could not be for it is always the brigands' principle to deceive their captives, as to where they are. At dusk we started again, and, as yesterday, I diverged over mountains and through woods for four or five hours, till having reached a point at the foot of a mountain covered with grass there was a halt, and we lay down to sleep. The night was very cold, wet, and foggy; in fact, we were actually in the clouds.

"We awoke up an hour before daybreak, stiff from cold. I could not move till I had rubbed my knees for ten minutes, and then I was able to rise and take up another mountain. As the sun got up we grew very thirsty, for we had dared to stop only half a minute for a drink the evening before. On the road, being dangerous, and we had passed no streams during the night. After some time a search was made for water, and a large quantity was found, and then a cup of tea was brewed, and we walked on I kept eating it. The brigands lay down on the ground, and lapped up the water that had thawed their hands, and then they decayed. I have a thought of fever, and preferred the snow."

They soon came upon the main body of the band, from whom they had been separated for a few days. They were in a lovely glade, surrounded by large oaks, and there was a sheep on the point of a hill up another mountain. As the sun got up we grew very thirsty, for we had dared to stop only half a minute for a drink the evening before. On the road, being dangerous, and we had passed no streams during the night. After some time a search was made for water, and a large quantity was found, and then a cup of tea was brewed, and we walked on I kept eating it. The brigands lay down on the ground, and lapped up the water that had thawed their hands, and then they decayed. I have a thought of fever, and preferred the snow."

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The band were in unusual spirits, for besides Mr. Moens they had just captured Signor Francesco Visconti, son of a landed proprietor of Giffoni, a small village near by, and his cousin Tommasini, a lad of twelve, who turned out to be a regular imp of mischief. For these a ransom of 170,000 francs was fixed, and 100,250 actually paid by their relatives, some in cash, some in bonds; and moreover on this occasion they had chosen to eat for about the only time during the months in which Mr. Moens was with them. For in spite of an occasional rich prize, the life of the bandits is one of constant privation, exposure, and terror. Moens had an interview with Talario, an ex-bandit chief who had left off business by arrangement with the Government, receiving pardon and a pension. "He was an extremely handsome man, with the smallest nose," declared the band leader, says Mrs. Moens. He interested himself considerably in Mr. Moens, and even offered to accompany her, with a man, to the brigands. If Government would grant him pardon, he would accompany her. The lady asked him which he liked best, the life of a brigand, or that of an honest man?

"Oh, that of an honest man," he replied; "a brigand's life is this," turning his head rapidly over one shoulder and then over the other, indicating by this gesture constant apprehension of them. There were properly two bands of these robbers with whom Mr. Moens and Signor Visconti had to do. Of one Gaetano Manzo was captain; of the other, Gaetano di Paestum, was chief. They were, together, about twenty together numbered forty-two persons, of whom seven were runaway soldiers. Another, a lad of eighteen, used to carry milk about the streets. One day a friend tried to cheat him out of his milk, and he, in revenge, threw upon the milk-boy a stone and took to the mountains. Nearly every member of the band was known to be a murderer. In fact, Manzo, and one other, Mr. Moens thinks, were the only ones who had not committed a crime. Whenever a man was received a small sum was set apart for common expenses, and the remainder divided among all the band, the captain getting only a single share. At every possible moment the whole gang set off to gain money, and in a usual way they would take the road of the most lucky or skillful gamblers. Gambling was carried on in the most dangerous places, even when the soldiers were known to be near, and when the risk of being drawn out among themselves might easily have been fatal to the brigands.

Before I could bring myself to eat these butercurry first, and suffer afterwards, often caused me to eat my share, for I soon learned it was unwise to refuse it. While these two men were preparing the mutton, the other two were cutting up the carcass. The first cut out the ribs, and the shoulders; the second cut out the legs, and the neck, and the head. The first was laid on a stump and cut up, so that it all would be cut in small pieces. One man would cut the mutton, while another would take care of a piece with his left hand, and cut with his right. As it was cut up the pieces would be put into the pot, and the mutton would be cooked in the pot; and the liver and lungs were cut up in the same way; the fat was put in the cold, and when it was melted, the kidneys and heart (if the latter had not been appropriate) some were put in, cooked, and eaten, every one helping himself by dipping his fingers in the pot. The pieces of mutton were then put in the pot at once and after a short time the pot was taken off the fire and jerked, so as to bring the under pieces to the surface.

A few notes, taken almost at random, will give an idea of the ordinary way of life of the brigands and the r captives:—"No fire was made to-day on account of the proximity of the soldiers, who did not see the band last night. Bread in small quantities was divided among us, but there was no water." "Some of the band were laid up with two sheep. I rejected to eat it for fear it had not been properly cooked. The sheep were so killed, skinned, and in the great camp-kettle; but Visconti and I were surrounded by large oaks, and there was a sheep on the point of a hill up another mountain. As the sun got up we grew very thirsty, for we had dared to stop only half a minute for a drink the evening before. On the road, being dangerous, and we had passed no streams during the night. After some time a search was made for water, and a large quantity was found, and then a cup of tea was brewed, and we walked on I kept eating it. The brigands lay down on the ground, and lapped up the water that had thawed their hands, and then they decayed. I have a thought of fever, and preferred the snow."

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Mr. Moens thus describes the one feast-day which happened during his life with the brigands—"At last, tired of watching the band, I lay down and fell asleep. I kept for some hours, during which a poor sheep was dragged into the enclosure, killed, cut up, cooked in the pot, and eaten. I must have eaten a usual quantity, when I awoke another sheep was being brought forward, and I watched the process of killing and cutting up the poor beast. The sheep was taken in hand by two men, and the head was cut off by one of the band. The rest of the sheep was then cut up, and the pieces were put into the pot, and the mutton would be cooked in the pot; and the liver and lungs were cut up in the same way; the fat was put in the cold, and when it was melted, the kidneys and heart (if the latter had not been appropriate) some were put in, cooked, and eaten, every one helping himself by dipping his fingers in the pot. The pieces of mutton were then put in the pot at once and after a short time the pot was taken off the fire and jerked, so as to bring the under pieces to the surface.

At length they agreed to take 30,000 ducats (something more than 25,000 of ours). The last payment was made on the 20th of August, three months and five days after the capture, Manzo giving a receipt for it in due form. It was not a very easy thing to get the prisoner to a place of safety; but Manzo had promised that he would do all he could to keep him from being killed, and he was not to be deceived. He believed that he thought himself bound by honor, as a brigand chief, to deliver the English safe to his friends. The money was fairly divided among the gang. There had been originally 100 of them; but two had been shot by the troops the day after the capture, another had fallen over a precipice and broken his neck, and had been captured, one had surrendered, another had been shot while foraging, and three had quarreled with the others, and were excluded from any share of the money; so that there were but seventeen left.

Captors of a captive parted with all due formalities. Manzo took off his hat, and putting some napoleons in it, went round making a collection, so that, as he says, "I was not a beggar, but a gentleman." The band, most of whom were "cleaned out" by gambling, were not very liberal; whereupon the captain took some money from the common fund, and made up a couple of napoleons and a half napoleon (about \$70). Mr. Moens asked him for a heavy gold chain which he wore; Manzo was just taking it off to give it to him when somebody called him away, and he was not received. Generous, gave him a ring as a keepsake, and, besides, some beautiful exchanged for a pen-knife his own great knife, with which he had killed two men. Pasquale, who had been the most ferocious of the gang, and who was always hinting about cutting off ears, walked up and gave a couple of napoleons, which," says Mr. Moens, "I accepted with thanks." Manzo's mother brought a small loaf of white bread and a little omelette. Then came the final parting. Manzo asked what Mr. Moens had to do, and the latter, when questioned about the band, Mr. Moens replied that he should say that this band of about 30 had been a match for an army of 10,000 men. The brigand captain was highly delighted, rubbed his hands with glee, and gave a couple of napoleons; Generoso added another, making five in all. Manzo said he was quite satisfied with the amount which had been paid him; and Mr. Moens advised him in future to confine his attention to his own country, and to give up a career which was taken into all the newspapers, and the Government was obliged to send so many soldiers that the brigands had very little chance of escaping. The brigands professed to kiss him, after the fashion of the country, but they declined to do so, however," he says, "shook hands all round with them, they parting with me in the most friendly manner. The brigands wishing me a pleasant journey, waving their hands to me with a sigh, and saying that they would wish them 100 days during all of which time he had never entered a house.

When Mr. Moens at length made his entrance into Giffoni, his appearance was not very attractive. "My trousers," he says, "were all in tatters, and hanging in ribbons at my feet. My coat was all worn, and the collar and cuffs of the neck which I had to carry in the pocket, and all the lining of the skirts was torn to shreds. My wide-awake was dirty and torn. My shirt had worn dry and might suit the King of Rome, and my trousers were all broken, and many of the seams stretched. It is almost unnecessary to describe the state of my body. I was covered with sores from the effect of the vermin, through the brigands having refused to allow me to remove my clothing for washing purposes, and never allowing me to stop at a stream, or for of the troops coming upon us before I could rearrange my dress."

It is a subject of which the Italian, practically published in the lively work of Mr. Moens, is a very curious one. He was captured by a railroad—one of the few in Italy, and therefore in the midst of a dense population. For almost of a third of a year he was carried round from place to place among the mountains, never going more than forty or fifty miles from the great city of Naples. It is much as though one had been seized by a band of robbers within a couple of hours from New York, carried off to the highlands, and kept there for three months, and more, and only released upon the payment of \$20,000 or \$30,000. Nor was this a single case of seizure by this band. During that year fully a score of persons were in like manner taken by the brigands, besides those who were ransomed; and in all but a million dollars were demanded; and more than \$100,000 was actually paid. The richest prize, in their estimation, was that of "Signor Werner, son of Albert Werner, a coffee printer of Salerno," captured by Manzo, and a number of other brigands. For him more than \$200,000 was demanded, and an instalment of \$25,000 paid; but at the latest accounts he was still held, the brigands demanding the whole amount. There are only the great cities, besides those who were ransomed, or smaller amounts. All this it must be borne in mind, belongs only to a single province. As far as we can ascertain, a similar state of things exists in a considerable part of the dominions of Victor Emmanuel. The consequence is, as stated by Mr. Moens, that the "proprietors" or indeed any person supposed to be wealthy, "dare not show their faces out of their houses, for they are carried off to a step from their own doors." He took it so at first, and he has since done so on every venture beyond the gates of the city for fear of the aid and information, and greatly to the regret of the persons who would associate him in all league with the brigands. They furnish him with food and other necessaries, for which they charge extravagant prices. Mr. Moens was allowed to inspect the accounts of Captain Manzo, and found that five-sixths of the money received in the way of ransoms went to the peasants. For a loaf of bread, weighing 3½ pounds, costing in the towns from threepence to sixpence, the brigands paid a ducat—three shillings and fourpence—in the proportion of "fences," and like other fences, set nearly all the gains of the actual perpetrators of a robbery. This profitable business is indeed a risky one; for Mr. Moens was informed that, during the month of June last, the brigands were more than one thousand five hundred persons were arrested and imprisoned on suspicion of complicity with the brigands in only two provinces, and he was in fear after his release that some of the relatives of those persons would associate him in revenge; for it seems that it was in consequence of the notoriety given to his seizure that the Government was stirred up to unwanted vigils.

Complicity with the brigands is, however, by no means confined to the peasants, for among those arrested on this charge we had three priests, a baron, two syndics, a doctor, and a score entitled to style themselves "Don" and "Signor." What sort of a life these persons lead among the mountains, and begging and the most notable institutions? The measures deliberately recommended by Mr. Moens and others for the suppression of brigandage, may be studied with benefit by those who are engaged in those delicate and sensitive respects "bridge-burners" and "guerillas" put forth by us during the late rebellion. Thus, he would "levy the sum paid as a ransom for any captive upon the district haunted by the band." And, "in addition to this, a court-martial held on the spot on any one found with more bread upon his person than a specified amount—say sufficient for his mid-day meal; and, after a speedy trial, any one thus proved to have any dealings whatsoever with the brigands were hanged, excepting always any persons who may be rescuing one of their family from the brigands' hands. It would cause a great state of fear among the peasants." And "when any of the inhabitants of the villages and the surrounding country were absent at night, they should be made to account for being abroad. This would speedily prevent all carrying of food during the night. In fact, a Curfew Act, such as that which existed not so very long ago in Ireland, would soon produce the desired effect."

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GOVERNMENT SALES. LUMBER FOR WAGON-MAKERS AT AUCTION. CHIEF QUARTERMASTER'S OFFICE, DEPT OF WAR, WASHINGTON, D. C., August 1866. Will be sold at Public Auction, under the direction of the Chief Quartermaster, on August 22, at 10 A. M., the following described lots:— About 20,000 feet of inch Oak Plank. " 110,000 feet 3 " " " " 20,000 feet 4 " " " " " 10,000 feet 5 " " " " " 15,000 feet 6 " " " " " 20,000 feet 7 " " " " " 10,000 feet 8 " " " " " 5,000 feet 9 " " " " " 20,000 feet 10 " " " " " 10,000 feet 11 " " " " " 5,000 feet 12 " " " " " 20,000 feet 13 " " " " " 10,000 feet 14 " " " " " 5,000 feet 15 " " " " " 20,000 feet 16 " " " " " 10,000 feet 17 " " " " " 5,000 feet 18 " " " " " 20,000 feet 19 " " " " " 10,000 feet 20 " " " " " 5,000 feet 21 " " " " " 20,000 feet 22 " " " " " 10,000 feet 23 " " " " " 5,000 feet 24 " " " " " 20,000 feet 25 " " " " " 10,000 feet 26 " " " " " 5,000 feet 27 " " " " " 20,000 feet 28 " " " " " 10,000 feet 29 " " " " " 5,000 feet 30 " " " " " 20,000 feet 31 " " " " " 10,000 feet 32 " " " " " 5,000 feet 33 " " " " " 20,000 feet 34 " " " " " 10,000 feet 35 " " " " " 5,000 feet 36 " " " " " 20,000 feet 37 " " " " " 10,000 feet 38 " " " " " 5,000 feet 39 " " " " " 20,000 feet 40 " " " " " 10,000 feet 41 " " " " " 5,000 feet 42 " " " " " 20,000 feet 43 " " 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