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THE REVOLT OF MASANIELLO.

Translated from the French of Alexander Dumas.

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At the time our history opens, in the year of our Lord, 1647, the Duke of Arcos had been viceroy of Naples for three years, and, since the commencement of his administration, he had taxed everything to such an extent that, at a loss for something more to tax, he at last laid an impost upon fruits; which, being the principal food of the lazzaroni, had been, hitherto, allowed to enter the city free of duty. This new excise seemed, particularly to annoy the inhabitants of the very faithful city, and they began to murmur loudly. The Duke of Arcos doubled his guards, strengthened the garrisons of his castles, brought three or four thousand men, who were scattered about the environs, into the city, added to the splendours of his equipages, dinners and balls, and let the people murmur.

The month of July approached. During this month the fete of La Madonna del Monte Carmello is celebrated, at Naples, with a pomp and devotion peculiar to that city. It was customary at this period, on the occasion of this fete, to erect, in the middle of the market place, a fort, which, in commemoration, without doubt, of the different assaults which the holy mountain was compelled to undergo, was defended by a garrison of Christians, and attacked by an army of Saracens. The Christians wore short breeches and red caps, which, at that time, constituted the costume of the Neapolitan fishermen. The Saracens were dressed after the Turkish fashion, in wide pantaloons, silk vests, and huge turbans. It is not now recollected by whom the expense of the costumes of the infidels was borne. They were preserved, however, with the greatest care, and the combatants handed them down from generation to generation. The arms of the besieged and besiegers were long reed wands, furnished in abundance by the marshy country around Naples, with which, without doing a great deal of harm, they laid lustily about each other's ears. It was customary for those who were to take part in the combat, to assemble occasionally during the month of June for the purpose of training, and friends and enemies, Christians and Saracens, manœuvred together with the most perfect understanding, and, the training over, would enter the city, formed in lines like regular troops, observing the military step, and carrying their reeds at their shoulders, like muskets.

The commander of the Christians, who were to defend the fort of the market place, on the fete day of La Madonna del Carmello, in the year 1647, was a young fisherman of Naples, the son of a poor man, who followed the same occupation at Amalfi. His name was Thomas Aniello, but he was called, for the sake of brevity, Masaniello. A short time before the trainings were to take place, the young fisherman had had cause to complain bitterly of the tax. His wife, whom he married at the age of nineteen years, and whom he tenderly loved, was detected by the officers, in an attempt to smuggle into the city, two or three pounds of meal, hidden in a stocking. She was thrown into prison, where she was condemned to remain until her husband paid one hundred ducats, a greater sum, in all probability, than he would have been enabled to realise, by a life time of labor. The hatred, which Masaniello openly avowed against the officers after the arrest of his wife, soon became widely known amongst the people. He declared, loudly, in the streets, that he would be avenged in some manner, for the injury he had suffered; and, as the people of his class were discontented, he, doubtless, owed his choice, as leader of the more important of the two bands, to his hostile manifestations. The name of the other leader is now unknown.

Masaniello's first act of hostility against the authority of the viceroy was a strange prank. As he was passing with his troop before the government palace, upon the balcony of which the duke and duchess of Arcos had assembled all the aristocracy of the city, Masaniello, as if to do honor to these rich lords and beautiful ladies, ordered his troop to halt, formed them into a line, in front of the palace, commanded them to turn their backs to the august spectators, throw their reeds on the ground, and then pick them up again. The double manœuvre was executed with a remarkable unanimity. The ladies uttered loud cries, and the lords spoke of chastising the insolent fellows who had dared to perform this impudent trick, with such imperturbable seriousness. But, as Masaniello's troop was composed of two hundred gallants, chosen from amongst the most vigorous inhabitants of the Mole, the thing was only talked of, and Masaniello and his companions returned home unmolested.

On the following Sunday, which was set apart for another review, the two chiefs, with their troops, met upon the market place to continue their training. This was the time when the peasants from the neighbourhood of Naples usually brought their fruits to market. Whilst the two bands were exercising in warm emulation, a dispute arose, between a gardener of Portici and a citizen of Naples, with regard to a basket of figs. It related, to the newly imposed duty, which neither wished to pay; the seller insisting that the tax should be borne by the purchaser, and the purchaser contending that it was intended to fall upon the seller. As

this dispute made some noise, the spectators, who had come to witness the manœuvres of the Turks and Christians, ran to the scene of the discussion, and formed a circle around the disputants. Drawn from their employment by the turmoil which began to grow louder, some of the soldiers deserted their ranks to see what was going on. As the discussion became interesting, they soon made signs to their comrades to join them; the latter did not require a second invitation, and the circle increased till it became a formidable crowd. At this crisis, the magistrate, who had charge of the police, arrived, and, interrogated by the gardeners and citizens, to know upon whom the tax should fall, replied that it was intended to affect the gardeners. Hardly was this decision made, when the gardeners turned over their baskets, filled with fruit, declaring that they would rather give them to the people for nothing than submit to this odious imposition. The spectators immediately rushed forward to seize upon the fruits, and were pressing and scrambling for the prize, when a man thrust himself into the middle of the crowd, which became silent and quiet at his command, and declared to the magistrate, that, from that hour henceforth, the Neapolitan people were determined to pay no more taxes. The magistrate spoke of coercive measures, and threatened to bring down the soldiers upon them. The young man stooped, picked up a handful of the figs, and, mingled as they were with dust, threw them into the magistrate's face. The officer retired, amidst the hootings of the multitude, whilst the young man, placing himself at the head of the two troops, which were about to pursue the fugitive, stopped them, and made his dispositions with the rapidity and energy of a consummate general. He divided them into four bodies, three of which he despatched to different parts of the city, with orders to demolish all the custom houses, burn all the excise records, and announce the abolition of all the imposts; whilst, at the head of the fourth division, the greater part of which consisted of those who had been spectators of the training, he marched directly to the palace of the viceroy. The four divisions set off upon their different duties to the cry of "Viva Masaniello!"

This young man, who, in an instant of time, had resisted the authorities as a tribune, disposed his army as a general, and commanded the people as a dictator, was Masaniello.

The Duke of Arcos was already informed of what had taken place; the magistrate, who fled to his palace, had related all. Masaniello and his troop, therefore, found the palace closed. The first impulse of the people was to break open the doors. But Masaniello wished to proceed with, at least, an appearance of legality. He was about to summon the viceroy either to appear before them himself, or send some one in his name, when the window of the balcony was opened, and the magistrate appeared, announcing that the duty on fruit would be removed. But this was not enough; the multitude, feeling its own power, and seeing that something was yielded, had already become exacting. They demanded, with loud cries, the abolition of the duty upon meal. The magistrate replied that he would go to the viceroy for an answer; but, after re-entering the palace, did not again make his appearance.

Masaniello raised his voice, and with all the strength of his lungs cried out, that he gave the viceroy ten minutes to decide. These ten minutes expired, and, no response having been made, Masaniello, with the gesture of an emperor, extended his hand towards the palace. In an instant the door was broken open, and the multitude rushed into the building, crying, "Down with the taxes," breaking the glass, and throwing the furniture out of the windows. But when they reached the *salles du dais*, this immense and excited crowd stopped, at the command of their leader, before a portrait of the king, uncovered, and made obeisance, whilst Masaniello declared, in a loud voice, that it was not against his sovereign he had revolted, but against the bad government of his ministers.

The duke of Arcos had, in the meantime, escaped from the palace, by a secret staircase, leaped into a carriage, and set off at full speed for Castello Nuovo. But he was soon recognised by the populace, pursued, and was upon the point of being seized, when some handful of ducats fell from his carriage window. The crowd precipitated itself upon this shower of gold, and allowed the duke to escape. Finding the drawbridge of Castello Nuovo raised, he took refuge in a neighbouring convent. From this retreat, he issued two proclamations: one abolishing all taxes, and the other offering to Masaniello an income of six thousand ducats, if he would repress the people, and induce them to return to their allegiance.

Masaniello received these two proclamations, and read them, aloud, to the people from the balcony of the Duke of Arcos' palace. He tore up that which related to himself, and scattered the pieces to the multitude, crying out, as he did so, that he would not betray his companions for all the gold in the kingdom. From that moment Masaniello was no longer a leader, or a king, to the multitude; he was a god! Then, in his turn, he sent a deputation to the Duke of Arcos, charged to say to him that the revolt was not against the king, but against the taxes; that he had nothing to fear if he fulfilled his promises, and that he might return, in perfect safety, to his palace. Each individual composing the deputation, pledged his life for the safety of that of the Duke of Arcos. The viceroy accepted their protection; but, instead of returning to his devastated palace, asked to be permitted to retire to Fort Saint Elmo. The proposition was transmitted to Masaniello, who, after reflecting some seconds, with a smile, assented. The Duke of Arcos retired to the Castle of Saint Elmo. Masaniello was sole master of the city.

All this had been accomplished in five hours. In this short space of time had all the Spanish power been extinguished, all the prerogatives of the viceroy destroyed, and a lazzaroni come to treat, on an equal footing, with the representative of Philippe IV. In abandoning the city, the viceroy had made the poor fisherman king in his stead. This strange revolution was effected, too, without the shedding of one drop of blood.

But now commenced, for Masaniello, an immense task. The fisherman, without education; the lazzaroni who could neither read nor write; the fish merchant who had never done aught else but handle his oars, and draw his nets, found himself suddenly charged with all the details of the government of a great kingdom. He was now called upon to issue proclamations; to dispense justice; to organise and command an army; to fight for his head. But nothing of all this affrighted Masaniello; he looked around him, calmly examined his position, and set himself immediately and boldly to work.

The first use he made of his authority, was to set at liberty all those prisoners that were confined for smuggling, or for fines imposed by the excise officers. Amongst this number, it will be recollected, was the wife of the Dictator. The liberated prisoners came immediately, to join him at the palace of the Viceroy. Then, accompanied by them, and escorted by his troop, he marched to the market place, proclaimed the abolition of the taxes, and ordered all the male Neapolitans, between the ages of eighteen and fifty, to take arms and assemble upon the place. This proclamation was dictated by Masaniello, and written by a public scribe. Masaniello, who, as we have said, was unable to write, placed under the last line of the paper, after the manner of a seal, the impression of an amulet which he wore about his neck; and which, from that time, became the seal of the new sovereign. Then, as his first troops were divided into four bodies, he appointed chiefs to lead the three which were not under his command.

These three leaders were his friends, and lazzaroni like himself; their names were Cataneo, Renna, and Ardizzone. They were each despatched to an opposite quarter, and ordered to watch over the safety of the city. The three troops took their appointed posts, and Masaniello remained upon the market place, at the head of his own, waiting the result of the order he had given for the general rising. He did not wait long. In about two hours one hundred and thirty thousand armed men surrounded Masaniello. Every one obeyed the call instantaneously, without, for a moment, questioning the authority of him who gave the command. The association of painters, only, desired to be organized into a particular company, under the name of the "Death Troop"; and as this demand was made of Masaniello by an ancient lazzaroni, to whom he was warmly attached, the demand was granted. The lazzaroni selected to make this demand of Masaniello, was Salvatore Rosa.

Masaniello then thought, that the first thing to be done in a good government, was to empty the prisons, by setting free the innocent, and punishing the guilty. The leader of the revolt had made himself general, the general made himself legislator, the legislator constituted himself judge.

Masaniello caused a kind of wood scaffold to be erected, seated himself upon it in his fisherman's dress, and with his right hand laying upon a naked sword, caused the prisoners to be brought, one by one, before him. During the whole remaining part of the day he sat in judgment. Those whom he proclaimed innocent were immediately set at liberty, and those whom he pronounced guilty were, in the same moment, executed. And such was the penetration of this man, that, although his decisions were, for the most part, based upon a rapid and searching inspection of the countenance and bearing of the accused, there was a conviction amongst the spectators that this improvisator judge had not condemned a single innocent, nor allowed a single guilty person to escape. The severity of the punishments, were not, however, graduated with regard to the enormity of the crimes. Thieves, forgers, and assassins, were alike condemned to die. This severity bore a strong resemblance to the laws of Draco; but Masaniello felt that time pressed, and that he had no leisure to seek out more appropriate methods of punishment for these different degrees of crime. The next morning all was completed; the Neapolitan prisons were empty, and all the sentences executed.

The rapid progress of the revolt, or rather the genius of him who directed it, affrighted the viceroy. He sent the duke de Matalone to Masaniello, to ask what end he proposed to attain by the course he was pursuing; and on what conditions the people would again submit to the authority of their sovereign. Masaniello denied that the inhabitants of the city had revolted against Philip IV. and in proof of this assertion, showed the ambassador portraits of the king of Spain, placed with every show of respect and honor, at the corners of all the streets. The only condition they desired to impose was, that the viceroy should place in their hands the original draught of the proclamation of Charles V. which, from the date of its execution, prohibited all new impositions of taxes.

The viceroy pretended to accede to the proposition, but caused a copy of the instrument to be made secretly, and sent this to Masaniello, instead of the original. But Masaniello, who suspected some treachery, called a council, and submitted the proclamation to their examination. They declared it was only a copy, and not the original instrument. Masaniello descended from his scaffold, walked directly to the duke de Matalone, and reproached him with his treachery. He then dragged the

ambassador from his horse, threw him upon the ground, and thrust his naked foot into his face; after which, remounting his throne, he ordered the duke to be conveyed to prison. On the following night, the duke bribed the gaoler, and made his escape.

The viceroy now began to appreciate the character of the man with whom he had to deal, and finding it impossible to deceive him, he determined to try what could be effected by force. He consequently ordered all the troops stationed at Capua, Gaeta, and those at Salerno, to march upon Naples. When Masaniello was apprised of this movement, he despatched one of the divisions of his army, under the command of two of his lieutenants, to meet the troops from Salerno; with the second he opposed the troops from Capua, and the third, under the command of Ardizzone, he left to guard the city.

It is believed that during this temporary absence of Masaniello from Naples, that the first propositions to betray his cause, were made to Ardizzone, with authority to communicate them to his two colleagues, Cataneo and Renna.

Masaniello fought the troops of the viceroy, killed a thousand men, and took three thousand prisoners. These he brought, with great pomp to Naples, and set them at liberty upon the market place. These three thousand men shouted "Viva Masaniello," and immediately took their places amongst the Neapolitan militia.

Cataneo and Renna repulsed the troops which they were sent out to meet. The "Death Troop," which made a part of their division, performing miracles of valor.

The duke of Arcos had no other resources; he had attempted stratagem, and Masaniello had discovered his treachery; he had attempted force, and Masaniello had beaten him. He, therefore, resolved to treat directly with him; making the mental reservation, to betray him at the very first opportunity which presented itself. This time, in order to give more weight to his negotiations, he chose Cardinal Filamarino as his ambassador. The people, who distrusted the cardinal, opposed the new meeting, but Masaniello acceded to the proposal, and the meeting took place. Masaniello had ordered thirty six palaces, of thirty six of the most distinguished Spanish and Neapolitan nobles, to be burned. Cardinal Filamarino begged Masaniello to revoke this order, and, at his request, it was revoked.

When Masaniello left the palace, and was on his way from the place of conference to the market, five shots, from weapons, the muzzle of which were almost in contact with his breast, were fired at him. He escaped unhurt; his hour had not yet come. The assassins were torn to pieces by the people; but, with their dying breaths they declared that they were paid by the Duke de Matalone, who wished to avenge himself on Masaniello, for the bad treatment he had received at his hands, to commit this act. The viceroy disavowed any knowledge of the attempt; the cardinal pledged his word of honour that the Duke of Arcos was ignorant of it, and the negotiations were continued.

The police had never been better organized; during these four days of Masaniello's administration, not a theft had been committed in all Naples.

The same day on which Masaniello had so narrowly escaped assassination, Cardinal Filamarino communicated to him the wish of the viceroy to hold a personal interview with him, in relation to the affairs of state; stating that the Duke of Arcos would return to his palace the next day, in order to receive him. Masaniello, who distrusted these advances, would have refused, but the cardinal insisted so warmly, that he yielded to his importunities. A new discussion now arose, much more difficult to settle than the other: Masaniello, who did not regard himself as anything more than a simple fisherman, wished to appear at the palace in his ordinary costume; that is, with his naked legs and arms, and with no other clothing than his drawers, shirt, and Phrygian cap. But the cardinal insisted so strenuously upon the unseemliness of his appearing at so brilliant a court, upon business of such high importance, in such a costume, that Masaniello, with a sigh, finally yielded. The same evening he received, as a present from the viceroy, a complete suit of silver cloth, a plumed cap, and a sword with a gold scabbard. He accepted the clothing but refused the sword, not wishing any other than that which had served him as a sceptre, and an emblem of justice.

Masaniello slept badly that night, and, said, the next morning, that his patron saint had appeared to him in a dream, and cautioned him to avoid this interview. But Cardinal Filamarino reminded him of his promise, observing that the viceroy waited for him at the palace, and that he could not fail to keep his engagement without a breach of honour. Masaniello hesitated no longer, but put on his rich dress, mounted his horse, and set out on his way to the palace of the viceroy.

Masaniello was one of those gifted beings who seem, not only in mind, but in person also, to be able to adapt themselves to any circumstances. The duke of Arcos, when he sent the rich dress to the ex-fisherman, had hoped to render him ridiculous; Masaniello put it on, and Masaniello, had the air of a king. He advanced, amidst cries of admiration from the multitude, managing his horse with the ease and address of the best cavalier of the viceroy's court; for, when a boy, Masaniello had frequently broken those little horses, the race of which the Saracens have left in Calabria, and which still rove wild, amongst the mountains. He was followed, too, by an escort such as few sovereigns could boast of possessing; there were an hundred and fifty companies of cavalry and infantry organised by himself, and more than sixty thousand persons without arms. All this escort was