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UNION CLOTHING CO.

The Viper of Milan.

A ROMANCE OF LOMBARDY.

BY MARJORIE BOWEN.

(Continued.)

The soldier laughed with a grimace.

It was the freedom of one whose services are valuable enough, even when well paid, to permit him to bear himself with small respect to his employers. For the mercenaries were a power; the transfer of their services could ruin states and lose towns, and even Visconti had to pay them well and concede license to their leaders; for upon them, to a great extent, his sovereignty rested, and Alberic da Salluzzo could take more liberties than any. He was a famous captain, noted for his skill in wars and turbulence in peace, a man with no country and no honor, endowed with dauntless courage and endurance, of vast rapacity and of all the cruelty his age allowed.

Making no way for Tisio, and motioning curtly to his men, he strode up the stairs, a stalwart figure, overdressed in splendid armor, and swung into the antechamber of the Visconti's audience-room. It was deserted. Alberic, astonished, paused on the threshold, looking around in amazement for the crowd—courtiers, servants, seekers, soldiers—wont to fill it.

Opposite was the closed door of the Visconti's room, but even Alberic dare not knock there unannounced. He was turning away to seek enlightenment, when a dark form he had passed unnoticed in the distant shadows of the great room rose, and he recognized, as it advanced, the secretary's stooping figure.

"What has happened here?" demanded the soldier.

"Is there need to ask?" answered Giannotto. "The Duke has had the room cleared. He will see no one." Alberic half-laughed, and shrugged his shoulders.

"The madness is on him at Count von Schulembourg's escape. Is that it?" he asked. "But art even thou excluded?" he continued in surprise, for Giannotto was the one man who could come and go unannounced, unbidden, the one man who knew Visconti's secrets.

The secretary smiled, the slow smile that men's lips learned in the Visconti palace.

"It is best for the Duke to be alone, and for me that he should be," he said. "The news that Count Conrad has escaped hath galled him much; it came at a bad moment too, following on those parchments twice found within the grounds"—he paused. "Thou wert sent to find the writer, or the one who put them there: art thou successful?"

Alberic shook his head. "I return as I went. Beyond finding that doorway forced in the wall, messer secretary, there is no token whatsoever of how the Count escaped. But after so long a fast, messer," Alberic showed his teeth, "it is not likely that it was alone."

"The one who aided him is the one who inscribed those parchments?"

"'Twould seem so," answered Alberic. "We have searched anew among the huts from which we drove Count Conrad's German dogs: on the threshold of the largest there was—this."

He drew out of his breast a parchment, a long narrow strip, scrawled across in irregular writing, and handed it to Giannotto.

"What does it say?" he asked.

Giannotto glanced at it hastily, his eyes on the Duke's door.

He read, "Della Scala lives!"

The captain whistled softly. "Now, thou may'st hand that to the Duke instead of me," he said.

Giannotto searched the writing keenly. 'Della Scala cannot live; 'tis some trick of the Torriani."

Alberic laughed harshly. "Whate'er it be, I say thou shalt have the pleasure of showing it to the Duke!"

"Nay, thou must speak of thy own failures, friend. Besides, the Duke will need thee for his further orders. Count Conrad must be found, alive or dead!"

"Was it his ghost attacked the walls last night?" asked Alberic; and not wholly did he speak in jest.

The secretary cast uneasy looks across his shoulder at the ominously shut door.

"It angered Viscont strangely," he whispered. "But it was a handful of madmen. Wandering robbers from the hills! They were four at most, and they tried to scale the walls of Milan!" He smiled in scorn.

"And yet," said Alberic, "they were almost on the ramparts ere they were discovered, and when they were pursued, fled back into the night silently, nor could we find from whence they came, nor any trace of them."

"However that may be," said Giannotto, "the Duke hath dismissed even me, and the delivery of this parchment had best wait till his black fit has left him."

He raised the arras from the entrance that opened on the stairway, and passed out of sight along the corridor, leaving Alberic standing in the unguarded entrance of the deserted audience-room, undecided, the parchment in his hand.

But he did not stand there alone. One or two servants stole back to their places, afraid to stay away; and pesently, with slow steps and vacant smile, there passed by him Tisio Visconti, followed by the page who never left him.

"Thou, my lord?" cried Alberic. "Now, how would it be if I asked him to hand this parchment over?" and he turned with a swaggering laugh to the page.

The page shook his head, not comprehending. Tisio, unheeding, seated himself in one of the great chairs, Graziosa's bracelet still between his fingers.

"I will wait no longer," cried Alberic suddenly; "let the Duke summon me."

But the next moment Alberic's swagger dropped, and he swung his plumed hat low to the lady who, unattended, stole across the threshold.

It was Valentine Viscontti.

Her breast was heaving; suppressed excitement showed in every movement; it was not difficult for Alberic to read she had heard of Count Conrad's rescue.

With a motion of the hand she bade him wait, turned to her brother, huddled in his chair, gazing blankly at the floor.

"Tisio!" she said, and her tone was very gentle. "What dost thou here?"

He looked up, and his dull face lit at sight of her.

"I wait for Gian," he said simply.

Valentine shuddered. "What wouldst thou see him for, Tisio?"

He smiled, and held out the bracelet. "To show him this."

The tears rushed to Valentine's eyes, but she remembered the captain and turned to him.

"Thou carryest something here to give the Duke?" she asked.

"Another parchment, lady," said the captain. "But I fear my lord is in no humor for its contents."

Valentine's eyes sparkled lightly. "Thou hast not the courage to present it?"

"I confess lady, I am waiting till I am obliged to," answered Alberic.

Valentine held out her hand. "Give me the paper; I will give it to my brother!"

The captain hesitated.

"Since thou hast not the courage," she added almost with a laugh. All Gian's orders had, not availed to prevent some whisper reaching Valentine of his evil humor and the cause of it; Conrad's escape, the threatening parchments; the hint that Della Scala lived. Alberic glancing at her, saw a triumph and a malice in the lady's glance that made him doubly feel he did not care just then to wait Visconti's coming. But still he hesitated; the Duke might vent on him his fury with his sister.

"This business will not wait," cried Valentine, "give me the parchment to deliver, or knock at yonder door and hand it to the Duke yourself."

But the captain of the mercenaries bent low, shook his head with a significant gesture, and, handing over the fatal missive, bowed himself away. Valentine turned again to Tisio's page.

"Take thy lord away," she said. "The Duke may not be best pleased to see him here."

But Tisio would not go. Valentine bending over him, stroked his hands tenderly, then breaking from him, leaned against the wall in sudden woe.

"All of us crazed," she cried bitterly. "All of us, surely; wretched people that we are!"

Then at the sight of the parchment she held, her former mood returned. Conrad was alive! He had vowed devotion. He would return to her rescue. She would live to be free; to come and go outside the Visconti palace, outside Milan, out yonder in the world. She leaned back against the arras a moment. dizzy at the thought of so much joy, and her courage rose high, her eyes danced.

"The Duke must have this parchment," she said; "and since Alberic da Salluzzo does not care to seek an audience for it, why, Tisio, thou shall see me give it. The Duke loves not an interruption when he is angry," she added, with a soft laugh. "But 'tis my duty to show him this."

And she advanced toward the ominously closed door.

The page looked uneasy. He had no wish to face Visconti in his fury. Yet well he knew he dared not leave his charge.

Valentine tapped at the door with gentle fingers.

"Gian!" she called.

"Lady, this is madness!" cried the page, startled into speech.

She looked over her shoulder.

"I am also a Visconti, boy," she said. "Why should I fear the Duke?"

"Gian!" she called again, her beautiful head close to the dark panels. "I have something here of great moment. Why let everyone know thou art so moved? Gian! Thou makest thyself a mock; dost thou fear Count Conrad, that his escape moves thee so?"

A pause: then with a smile Valentine stepped back a pace or two into the chamber.

"The Duke comes!" she said, and the page turned pale.

The inner door opened as smoothly as silently, and Visconti stood there looking at the trio. He was dressed in purple velvet, but his doublet was tumbled, the fine lace frills at his wrists were torn to rags, his eyes strained wide open, and for a moment, as it was with any who encountered it, his expression gave his sister pause. But again she remembered Conrad lived, and she held out the parchment. "I thought it well to give you this," she said.

Gian advanced and took it in silence. But those torn ruffles, that disordered doublet, had their meanings, and the look in those wide eyes, as he turned them on her, quelled the mockery in hers, spite of herself.

"Begone!" he said, "and do not usurp another's office again. Leave me."

"With thine own thoughts, brother?" she said softly, facing him.

"Be careful," he answered; "thou shouldst know my humors, and that 'tis dangerous to cross them. Remember it only suits my purpose that thou shouldst live!"

At this Tisio', as if half comprehending the threat, rose, and his brother's eyes fell on him.

"Thou too! What dost thou about my doors? hast thou come too to dare me with thy folly?"

His eyes blazed, his hands worked. Tisio, dazed and affrighted, let fall Graziosa's bracelet.

The page stooped to recover it.

'What hast thou there?" cried Visconti with sudden change of tone; and the page, quivering for his life, handed the bracelet on bent knee. Visconti studied it one second, then, with a sound of fury that sent the boy crouching back against the wall, control left him. His eyes lighted on Tisio, and in maniacal fury he seized him by the shoulder and shook him as though he were a rag.

"How camest thou by this?" he yelled. "How came this bracelet in the Visconti palace? Answer me!"

Tisio whimpered, but had no reply, till, with a shout, Visconti flung him from him with such force that, save for Valentine, he would have fallen; then he turned upon the page who knelt by, trembling.

"Answer me!" he cried furiously. "Answer! Where got the fool this?" He held the bracelet out. And the sight of those torn ruffles around his long white hands made the boy's hair rise.

"Indeed, my lord," he gasped, "a girl, whom my Lord Tisio—met by the western gate———"

"Gave it him!" shrieked Visconti. "Ah, the three of thee shall pay dearly for this hour's trifling with me!"

"My lord took it," cried the page half-wild with terror. "He took it, my lord; she wept to give it."

"She wept to give it," said Visconti slowly.

There was a pause. When he spoke again, his tone was calmer.

"Then he shall be slain for taking it," he said, flashing a look on Tisio, who, huddled in the chair, moaned with distress as he leaned against his sister.

(To Be Continued.)

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NEW WARSHIP FOR BRITAIN

Much Secrecy Over the Latest Fighting Machine.

London, March 16—By sepcial order of the admiralty the greatest secrecy is being maintained concerning the details of the construction of the largest cruiser in the world. The cost of the Indomitable is approximately $8,720,000. While ostensibly a cruiser, her actual status has not been definitely set forth, and it is believed she approaches nearer to a battleship in armor and armament.

Sir William Pearce, chairman of the Fairfield Company, the builders of the other warship, presided at a luncheon after the launching. He said he was not permitted to give any information regarding the cruiser, and that she must remain a mystery until the official trials, or until the admiralty saw fit to take the public into its confidence.

Rear Admiral Bearcroft, who spoke at the luncheon said he was confident that the Indomitable, if occasion arises, would carve out for herself a record that would live in the annals of naval history.

The two sister ships will be launched within a fortnight.

Bark Annie (Br), Christian, Pascagoula for Rosario, no date, lat 9, long 29.

Daily Fashion Hint for Times Readers.

BECOMING AND PICTURESQUE

The big Leghorn "flop" shapes are destined to hold sway to a very marked extent this summer, if present indications be aright. There are very few "made" shapes that permit so much freedom of treatment at the hands of the milliner, and their possibilities are simply numberless when a designer of genius turns her attention in their direction. A charming design is that pictured herewith, one that illustrates prettily the new tendency to rich and elaborate effects of the picturesque order. The hat is medium in size, a narrow bandeau set in the headsize serving to tilt it off the face and the front hair very prettily, and a monture of roses and foliage looking as though simply dropped by accident on the hat. A thick bow and many long ends of black velvet ribbon float from the back of the chapeau, the rose trimming, too, falling over the brim in longer trails to the shoulders and making a mode that, while it is new on this side of the water, has been received with much consideration in the fashionable winter cities that centre social and fashionable life along the Mediterranean coast.

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What Liquozone Is.

Liquozone is a tonic-germicide, the virtues of which are derived solely from oxide gases. No alcohol, no narcotic, nothing but gas enters into it. The process of making requires large apparatus, and consumes 14 days' time. The object is to so combine the gases with a liquid as to carry their virtues into the system.

The result is a germicide so certain that we publish with every bottle an offer of $1,000 for a disease germ that Liquozone cannot kill. It destroys them because germs are of vegetable origin. But to the body Liquozone is exhilarating, vitalizing, purifying.

That is its main distinction. Common germicides are poisons when taken internally. They are impossible, for they destroy the tissues as well as the germs. That is why medicine proves so helpless in dealing with germ diseases. Liquozone, on the contrary, acts as a remarkable tonic.

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Such conditions call for a germicide, not for common drugs. Liquozone does what other means cannot accomplish. And it is wrong to cling to old ways when millions of people know a way that is better.

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If you wish to know what Liquozone does, please send us this coupon. We will then mail you an order on a local druggist for a full-size bottle, and will pay the druggist ourselves for it. This is our free gift, made to convince you; to let the product itself show you what it can do. In justice to yourself, please accept it today, for it places you under no abligations whatever.

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POPE PRAISES AMERICAN STAND IN FRENCH CRISIS

Rome, March 17.—Pope Pius today received in private audience the Right Rev. Thomas O'Gorman, Bishop of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, which is in the archdiocese of St. Paul. During the conversation Pope Pius said that Archbishop Ireland's discourse last December on "Church and State in France" was a strong presentation of the Franco-Vatican conflict.

"Although I know it caused some displeasure," his holiness said, "Archbishop Ireland was correct as to the remote causes of the conflict when he said that the French clergy and leading Catholics failed by not following the advice of my illustrious predecessor."

Pope Pius generally praised the American episcopate for its stand on the question between France and the church. He spoke in the strongest way concerning the expulsion from France of Monsignor Montagnini, secretary of the papal nunciature.

The Pope spoke of the church in the Phillippines, and compared the attitude of the United States there with that of France, saying that the action of the United States was the way governments should settle mixed political and religious questions. His holiness asked Monsignor O'Gorman about President Roosevelt and expressed pleasure to hear that he was satisfied with the solution of the Philippine question. He also requested Mgr. O'Gorman to present his regards to President Roosevelt.

The bishop asked Pope Pius to receive Mrs. Douglas Robinson during her visit to the city. The Pontiff answered: "Naturally I shall be delighted. All doors shall be open to her. You must accompany her."

DR. TROTTER IS ILL

Halifax, N. S., March 17.—Dr. Trotter, former president of Acadia College, who is now pastor of a church in Toledo Ohio, is seriously ill. He has for some years been a sufferer and it was thought from sciatica. Three weeks ago he went to a hospital and it was found that he had periosteum of the thigh bone and it developed that the hip and thigh bone are inflamed. He is ordered neither to sit nor stand for long periods. He still retains his pastorate.

Donaldson line steamer Marina, Captain Taylor, sailed Sunday for Glasgow with cattle and general cargo.

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MISS MARIE WALLEN STRUTHERS

NEW YORK, Mar 14—Preparations are already under way for Easter weddings which will be celebrated early in April, as Easter Sunday falls on March 31. One of the brides of Easter week will be Miss Marie Wallen Struthers, daughter of Mrs. James Struthers, whose marriage to Lieutenant George E. Ball, of the Twenty-first infantry, U. S. A., will be very quietly celebrated at the home of her mother, No. 341 Madison avenue, Saturday, April 4.

There will be a small wedding party, restricted to relatives and a few intimate friends. Miss Struthers has chosen for her maid of honor and only attendant Miss Lucille Kittson, and Everett Ball will act as his brother's best man.

CHIEF JUSTICE RESIGNS

Sir Robert L. Weatherbee Retires From Nova Scotia Bench

Ottawa, March 17.—Sir Robert L. Weatherbee, chief justice of Nova Scotia, has sent his resignation to the minister of justice. It was received yesterday and takes effect on Tuesday. Sir Robert is over seventy years of age and retires with the allowance which the statute gives him.

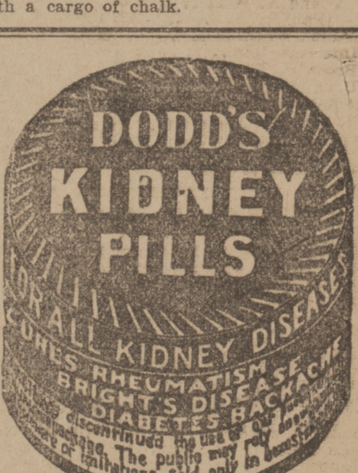
Although the question of a successor has not yet been discussed the opinion expressed here is that Justice Arthur Drysdale will succeed Sir Robert in the chief justiceship and that W. E. Roscoe, of Kentville, will succeed Justice Drysdale on the supreme court bench.

JOHN DILLON TAKES OPTIMISTIC VIEW

He Says John Redmond May Yet Be Premier of Erin.

Wolverhampton, England, March 17—Speaking at an Irish demonstration here today, John Dillon asked the young men to sit at the feet of Generals Botha and De La Rey. He said the South African people had conquered their conquerors. Botha was now a minister of the crown, (being premier and minister of native affairs of the Transvaal) and that Irishmen might see the time when John Redmond would be the premier of Ireland. He said that he believed that in the victory of the Boers the Irish policy had been vindicated.

Battle line steamer Cheronia, Capt. Liswell, arrived at New York from Calais, France, via Placentia (Nfld.), last Friday, with a cargo of chalk.



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