BRIGANDS IN SICILY.

OUIDA SAYS THE ROMANCE OF BRIGANDAGE STILL SURVIVES.

Recital of Recent Melodramatic Episodes That Refute Assertions of Its Decline. Adventures Whose Tragedy Is Relieved by Picturesqueness.

The irrepressible Ouida, from long residence in Italy feels herself responsible for all things that happen on the peninsula. She also has a rod in pickle for the naturalistic novelist who scoffs at romance. Apropos of brigandage in Sicily, she writes to the editor of the London Times:

Sir—Such romantic and tragic incidents have of late been common as daily bread in Sicily, and I think you may care to publish an account of the latest of those daring outrages by brigands. It is a mistaken idea which prevails among English people that brigandage is no longer known in that lovely island. It is, alas! very frequent, and still takes a picturesque, operatic aspect in its decor du scene, though horribly brutal and hideous in its deeds. It is not uncommon for the brigands to wear the uniform of the carabinieri, or gendarmes, so that in the friendly attire of a cocked hat and uniform they surround easily with their horses the unsuspecting traveler.

Three days ago the Baron Antonino Spitaleri, a well known Catanian gentleman, rode out to an estate of his called San Todaro, lying between the communes of Paterno and Centoripe. Not wishing to spend the night on his own lands, which are malarious, he, with his young son, asked the hospitality of a neighbor living at a villa called Polera, the Hermessa Cianchi. The next morning at 8 o'clock the baron mounted his horse to go again to his estates, accompanied by four assistants, but leaving his son with the lady of the house at Polera. Scarcely, however, had he gone a few yards when he was suddenly surrounded by six brigands mounted on fine horses and armed with Wetterli rifles. His four attendants were bound, stood and carried off. The baron himself, having no money upon him, was taken back to Polera. His young son, seeing him from the window approach thus bound and captive, fired on the robbers, who replied with five shots, not one of which did more, happily, than to scorch the boy's hair.

Meantime Mme. Cianchi, running to the window, called to the men to know what they would take to leave the baron free. They replied 50,000 francs, and she threw the sum to them in bank notes, and on getting in they clamored for more, beat in the doors of the villa, or castle, menaced and bound the servants, and two held their daggers to the throats of the lady and the youth while others ransacked all the cabinets, cupboards and wardrobes in the house, succeeding in finding in all 110,000 francs more. They staid altogether eight hours, drank champagne and smoked the cigars of their prisoners. As combie d'honneur they kissed the baron's young son, saying graciously, "You are so handsome it would have been a pity to kill you." And then there are people who say that romance is dead in Italy!

This is a more vividly colored and melodramatic episode, but it is not so truly terrible and cruel as was the capture of another Sicilian gentleman last month—a landed proprietor of smaller means than the Baron Spitaleri, who was borne off by brigands, and because his family could not send his ransom (20,000 francs) quickly enough was killed at the end of a fortnight, his body, horribly mangled and burned, being sent home.

Surprise will be felt at so much money as was found at Polera being kept in a country house, but Italians keep very large sums in their houses or their steward's houses, especially after harvest or vintage. They distrust banks and use them comparatively little. The other day the uncle of a friend of mine, an old gentleman, living alone, went to some baths for a month. He placed his servant and dogs and birds in a small detached cottage on a terrace and locked up the rest of the building.

When he came back he found a hole had been made in the wall at the back and the house had been completely ransacked, 4,000 francs in modern money, a large and unique collection of gold coins of the old republicans of Lucca, Siena, Florence, etc., and a collection of postage stamps valued at 20,000 francs for its completeness and rarity were all gone, with his rich old wines and innumerable curios. On his blotting pad the thieves had written, "Vino buonissimo." The good old gentleman cannot see that he did anything unwise in leaving these treasures in an empty house.

A certain literary school is very fond of asserting that romance is dead and its twin brother adventure dead with it. These gentlemen need only come and live in Italy to meet this pair, so dear to story tellers and their readers, alive and abroad in every thicket of broom and myrtle and under every deep shadowed archway haunted by the moon.

Her Amendment.

Fleeta had seen something on the street which greatly amused her, and when she had concluded talking of it to her mother she threw a long breath and exclaimed:

"My, mamma, I just thought I would burst."

"Gracious say, Fleeta!" said the horrified mother. "You must use more elegant language than that."

"Well, then, break open," she said apologetically, and the amendment was accepted.—Detroit Free Press.

Sounded Like It Anyway.

Willie, a sturdy young Irishman of five years, showed that some of his ancestors must have come from another country, for after all the mission class had given up the question, "What is an alien?" he answered, "I faint quite sure, but I think it's the thing you go around a horse's neck."—New York Tribune.

Why the Lecture Was a Failure.

One winter Nye was at Jefferson City, and as the legislature was in session a number of newspaper men of the state were there, too, and to show what they deemed proper courtesy to one of their number they arranged an informal reception with Nye the principal attraction, on the afternoon of the day in the evening of which Bill was to lecture. And they expected of him the same courtesy.

Australian Shark and Dives.

On one occasion a big shark came alongside me where I was working. I stopped, of course, and stepped back quietly to let him pass. But he did not. He came nearer. I then thought he was curious, but soon found that another feeling than curiosity was exciting him. As I retreated he still advanced, until I found myself jammed up against the rock. I could retreat no farther, and yet the brute came on deliberately. But instead of approaching me with his long nose—for you don't see his jaws—he turned his side and began to rub up against me. I had a small "jumper" in my hand, which I held with the point outward against his skin, as I did not wish to have his rough skin scoring along my dress.

It was something like what a cow would be rubbing against you. The iron on his skin was, however, the very thing he wanted, as he soon gave me to understand. I was kept there at least half an hour scratching that monster with the sharp iron. He took it like a pig, bending his body and turning over on his side so as to present a fresh surface to the jumper. I suppose he must have felt easier for the operation, for after a time he moved away.

I had one or two further visits from him on following days, on each of which I was obliged to scratch him for a time. I think he must have recognized me as a kindly and effectual scratcher. I imagine he was suffering from some parasitical or skin disease, to which he may have fallen a victim. Otherwise I might be in that scratching billet still.—"A Diver" in Chambers' Journal.

Things That Affect the Hypnotic State.

The differences in the climates appear to have great influence on hypnotic susceptibility. Southerners and altogether those who have been exposed to the tropical heat are much more easily influenced than those who live in the temperate or frigid zones. Hypnosis not only appears sooner in the tropical climates, but it is usually deeper, and the more complicated conditions of the states invariably appear immediately. The hypnotic susceptibility does not depend on these circumstances alone. There are many other conditions which we must find partly outside of the individual and partly within. It is necessary to especially notice the different tempers of mind, such as delight, sorrow, etc.

What also works against coming into the hypnotic state is overexertion, either mentally or bodily, an empty or overloaded stomach, excessive use of certain nourishing substances, liquors, strong spices, coffee or tea. All these conditions more or less prevent or disturb the coming hypnosis. Furthermore, outward influences, such as temperature, dress, place of residence and surroundings, should all be considered. The room in which experiments are to be performed must neither be too warm nor too cold.—Chicago Herald.

Whittier's Picture.

On one occasion when the artist Parker had been painting a portrait of Charles Sumner, Whittier came to Chestnut street and said to Mrs. Sargent:

"Friend Elizabeth, will thee go with me to see Friend Parker's picture of Charles?"

"I should be very glad to," she answered.

"Will thee go this morning?" he asked, and upon her assenting they set off for the studio. When they arrived they examined the portrait of Sumner, but Whittier seemed to Mrs. Sargent to be preoccupied and to be in haste to call her attention to something else. In a moment he said:

"Friend Parker, where is the other?"

The artist turned around an easel, and there was a portrait of Whittier himself. The poet was as pleased as a boy at Mrs. Sargent's surprise, and as she had not seen known of his sitting she was naturally not a little astonished. He was like a genial comrade in his fun, and, although he was naturally grave and sedate, there was in him a most beautiful and genial humor and sweetness, like the color and perfume of the mayflower under the grayness of the leaves in the spring.—Arlo Bates in Chicago Tribune.

What Did She Mean?

He—Did you see me on the street yesterday?

She—Yes.

He—Have you quit speaking to your friends?

She—Oh, no.—Detroit Free Press.

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