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Adventures in Geography Series

Editor: Robert Owen

WITH GARIBALDI IN ITALY

by

GODFREY LIAS

Illustrated by

Harry and Ilse Toothill

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I

Coming of the Red Shirts

It is hard to realise today, when Italy is one of the Great Powers, that when my father first went to that country, there was, strictly speaking, no Italy for him to go to.

The State he entered when he crossed the frontier from France was not Italy, but Piedmont. And this frontier was not, as now, at Modane high up in the Mont Cenis pass through the Alps, but ran along the western border of what has since become the French Department of Savoy. It is just 100 years since the southern shore of the Lake of Geneva and those two other Savoyard Lakes, Annecy and Bourget, and also the north and western slopes of Mont Blanc were handed over to France by King Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont and Sardinia.

My father went by train as far as Lyons, but the English engineers who were driving a tunnel under the Mt. Cenis Pass had not yet finished it so my father and his companions had to change to a horse-drawn diligence. When they reached the snow line, the body of the coach was lifted off the wheels and fastened on to runners so that it became a sleigh. On the other side of the Pass, at Susa on the river Doria Riparia (a tributary of Italy’s longest river, the Po), the whole coach was hoisted with the help of a crane on to a railway waggon which soon took it to the Piedmontese capital, Turin. But my
father had spent two whole days and nights in the coach
between Lyons and Susa, a distance of less than 125 miles
as the plane flies today.

In my father's time, no Englishman was regarded as
properly educated unless he had been to Italy. Actually,
however, my father was only passing through on this occa-
sion—he was on his way to the Crimea via Istanbul, or, as
he called it, Constantinople. And at Turin, he was still
nearer to London than to the town of Otranto some 700 miles
away in the "heel" of Italy. And at Otranto he would have
been nearer to Istanbul than to Turin.

His direct route to Istanbul lay through what is now
Yugoslavia. But he wouldn't have been able to go by road
because there weren't any—he would have had to go down
the Danube. However, he felt he ought to visit the collection
of little States which have now been joined to form Italy,
especially the Grand Duchy of Tuscany where he had
friends at the capital, Florence, and, of course, Rome—then
the capital, not of Italy but of the States of the Church or,
as they are often called, The Papal States because they were
under the direct rule of the Pope.

This meant going first from Turin to Genoa, the birthplace
of Sebastian Cabot who discovered Newfoundland for our
King Henry VII. Genoa had once been an independent
republic but it was now the chief seaport of Piedmont, a
lovely place built on the slopes of a steep hill overlooking the
Ligurian Sea. From Genoa, he went by ship to Leghorn
(Livorno) which, like Florence, was then in the Grand
Duchy of Tuscany. His boat arrived just after midday and
all the Customs officials were taking their afternoon siesta so
he was unable to land till they came back about five o'clock.
Dates of joining Piedmont
Some siesta, in fact! As he had not been able to get anything
to eat during the previous twenty-four hours, he was not
exactly pleased.

He was even less pleased that evening. While he and an
English friend were crossing the great square in the centre
of Leghorn—there were no street lamps but fortunately there
was a brilliant moon—they suddenly heard a shout. Looking
round they saw a sentry covering them with his rifle and
threatening, first to shoot them and then to put them in gaol.
When they asked why, he told them it was their business to
know that no-one was allowed out in the streets after dark.
He added that, on the previous night, a man had actually
been shot almost where they were standing. My father dis-
covered later that the poor man was deaf.

He also discovered why there was a curfew. A few years
before his visit, there had been a rebellion against the Grand
Duke. And not against the Grand Duke only but against the
Pope in Rome, against the King of Naples and against the
Emperor of Austria who ruled in Lombardy and Venice.
“You remember that fellow, Garibaldi,” his friend explained.
My father did. “But I thought he was in exile,” he remarked.
“Exiles sometimes come back,” his friend said.

Garibaldi did, anyway.

There was a railway from Leghorn to Florence—with
strange open carriages very much like those we had in
England a hundred years ago. It traversed the great plain
that is the valley of the river Arno on which Florence stands
in the foothills of the Apennines which run like a backbone
right through Italy from the Maritime Alps past Bologna,
Florence, Rome down to Apulia and Calabria, respectively
the heel and toe of Italy. Then the Apennines dive under the
straits of Messina to reappear in Sicily which lies like a huge rocky football waiting to be kicked—which it too often has been, metaphorically.

No less than four-fifths of Italy, and Sicily, consists of mountains or hills far too many of which are bare as well as rugged because, down the centuries, the Romans, Venetians and Genoese felled the forest trees to build their wooden ships and did not trouble to plant fresh ones to take their place. Not only the soil but the climate suffered in consequence. Some parts of the country do not get as much rain as they need, or get too much at once. And in many places the rain has washed the soil down into the sea. Indeed, at the mouth of the Po, there is now a delta which has been built up over the centuries from soil washed off the hills and mountains in which the main river and its tributaries rise. Consequently, Ravenna, which used (like Rye, in Sussex) to be an important port, is now several miles inland. We shall be hearing more about Ravenna later on.

Round Florence, on the western side of the Apennine watershed, the hills and the more distant mountains are mostly green and fertile—and still forest-clad. Little towns, many of them walled, cling to their sides with houses built of local stone and sometimes even of marble. Similar places are to be found all over Italy. Indeed, it is only in the low-lying parts of the country—Venice in particular—that Italian builders of the past used brick.

My father found Florence a very different place from what it is today—a busy but lovely city with 400,000 inhabitants nearly all of whom seem to ride motor scooters. But the world-famous pictures he saw in the Pitti and Uffizi galleries are still the same. The friends he went to stay with were
building a railway which now links Florence with Bologna on the other side of the Apennines and, at that time, in a different “country”, the States of the Church.

My father might have gone from Florence to Rome by road. But the one through the mountains was almost impassable owing to snow and the one which runs from Leghorn along the coast would have taken him longer than going by sea via Civitavecchia, which, in those days, was an important port. Today, it has not even been thought worth while to repair the damage done to its harbour installations during the war because it is much easier to go to Rome by road, rail or air than by sea.

There was another Customs inspection at Civitavecchia but this time my father had no trouble, though an Irish priest who was travelling in the same steamer had his breviary taken from him because “it had not been printed in Rome”. However, my father was in trouble again at Naples (then the capital of the kingdom of “the Two Sicilies”) where his Bradshaw’s Railway Guide was confiscated. The officials thought its time-tables were a cypher concealing plans to “overthrow the Bourbon dynasty”. It is true that the dynasty was overthrown four years later. But it was Garibaldi who did it, not my father!

Due largely to Garibaldi, the peninsula called Italy ceased to be split between one empire (Austria), two kingdoms, one Grand Duchy, three ordinary Duchies (Parma, Modena, Lucca), the Papal States and one Republic (San Marino), each of them, incidentally, with their own stamps. Before he died, these had all been incorporated in the Kingdom of Italy, except the Republic of San Marino. Today, of course, Italy is a Republic, too, with 118,000 square miles of land
and nearly 50,000,000 inhabitants. And tiny San Marino with 38 square miles and a population of 12,000, still carries on independently. If you ask why San Marino was not merged into Italy like the rest, the answer is again: Garibaldi. Because, but for San Marino, Garibaldi would have been killed seven years before my father went to what is now Italy.

The road to Rome followed the coast for some twenty miles before turning inland at Palo. To the right lay a long stretch of sandy beach. On the left were wild pinewoods which have now been partly replaced by holiday villas. It was Easter, and at Palo, the coach in which my father was travelling got entangled in a religious procession so that the last twenty miles took nearly five hours and there was so much dust that at times he could scarcely see the candles the processionists were carrying.

Apart from the religious celebrations, Rome, as my father first saw it, seemed “a city of the dead”. Only one street, the famous Corso, had gas lamps. Almost all the others were dirty, dark and narrow. Every hundred yards or so, an oil lamp hung from a chain suspended from house to house across the street. The “hotel” he stayed at was what you would expect from the kind of street it was in. It did not provide food. It was cold. And the proprietor refused to clean my father’s boots so he had to go and look for a shoe-black. The only street he could find one in was the Corso. When he went back eight years later, Rome was still not in the State of Italy and things were much the same. But immediately it became the capital of a united Italy, he noticed a change for the better.

Many famous names play important parts in the story of
Italy's unification. One is that of a king: Victor Emmanuel II (Vittorio Emanuele) King of Piedmont and Sardinia—the fiery little man with a big moustache as his subjects called him. Another is that of his Prime Minister, Count Cavour, who played on the jealousies of Austria, France and Prussia with the object of setting Italy free. Several are priests. And one is—Giuseppe Garibaldi who helped Victor Emmanuel in spite of being an ardent republican and who is one of the most picturesque, kindly, quarrelsome, ruthless, controversial, beloved, hated and travelled guerilla leader in history.

Garibaldi was born in a lovely town which he and his parents called Nizza. It nestled cosily between the blue Ligurian Sea and the steep slopes of the Maritime Alps and it still nestles there today though you will no longer find its name on the map because it is now called Nice—one of the most popular resorts on the French Riviera. Nizza, or Nice, has changed hands many times in the course of the centuries. It was actually French when Giuseppe was born on 4 July, 1807, because Napoleon Buonaparte had annexed the whole of Piedmont in 1798, about the time Nelson destroyed the French fleet off the coast of Egypt in the battle of Aboukir Bay. After Napoleon's downfall in 1815, the exiled king returned—or rather his son did, King Victor Emmanuel I (Vittorio Emanuele). So eight-year-old Giuseppe became Piedmontese—as his parents had originally been. He never thought himself anything else but Piedmontese till he was twenty-five when the idea of a United Italy first took hold of him. But, all his life, he spoke French better than Italian.

Giuseppe's playmates called him Peppino. His father was
a sailor who owned a small sailing ship in which he traded to various ports in the Mediterranean, earning enough money to give Peppino a good education. In later years, Garibaldi used to say that he was unhappy at school. But he certainly didn’t waste his time because he evidently got a good grounding in history, geography and literature and also learnt some Latin. But he wrote long afterwards in his Memoirs that he much preferred to coax his fishermen friends to take him out trawling for oysters or netting sardines off Limpia. And he never missed the annual festival of the tunny fishers of Villafranca (Villefranche) with its exciting procession and dancing. But what he liked even better was to climb the steep, grey-green slopes of the Maritime Alps and lie reading a book under an olive tree or mimosa bush. He loved to sing, too, especially in a good, rousing chorus of some sea shanty or folk song. His voice when speaking was unusually deep and had a mysterious quality which immediately captured attention.

When he was fifteen, Peppino begged his father to let him leave school and go to sea. His father wanted him to be a lawyer, or a priest, and said no. So Peppino and some school friends decided to run away. They commandeered a boat, stocked it up with provisions and fishing tackle and set sail for Genoa. But, as he says in his Memoirs, “a vessel sent by my good father overhauled us and brought us back, deeply humiliated. An Abbé had revealed our flight.”

Peppino frankly admitted that the Abbé’s action had probably saved his life. But he disliked all Abbés, and most but not all priests, ever after.

At last his father yielded to his son’s entreaties and took Peppino on as a cabin boy. By the time he was twenty-five,
he had not only passed the tests for his master's certificate in navigation but had sailed all over the Mediterranean including the Levant where the Greeks (and Lord Byron) were fighting their war of independence against the Turkish Sultans.

He had also been captured three times by pirates who had robbed him of all he possessed though fortunately they did not carry him off to the North African Barbary coast and make a galley slave of him. Even these misfortunes did not destroy his love of the sea which stayed with him all his life.

This is what he says in his *Memoirs* about his first ship, *Costanza*:

"Your ample sides, lithe masts, huge deck, and even your broad-breasted female figure-head will remain for ever engraved on my imagination. How gracefully the San Remo sailors, truly typical of our brave Ligurians, swung themselves about! With what delight I used to seek the fo'castle to hear their songs of the people, their rousing choruses! They sang of love and they softened, or excited, me with an emotion I was still too young to understand. Ah! that they had sung of our country—of Italy, of freedom, of slavery! Alas! no-one had taught them to be Italian patriots—champions of the dignity of Man. Who was there to tell us young men that there was an Italy—a country to avenge, to redeem? Who? with priests as our only instructors!"

Most—perhaps I might say, all—schools in Italy in those days were run by the Roman Catholic Church and most—but, definitely, not all—of the priests who taught in them supported the idea that the Popes should exercise temporal as well as spiritual power. Many believed in a vast "State of the Church" in which the Pope would rule over a kingdom
much larger than Italy. But there were some who thought as Garibaldi did—as we shall see in due course.

It was the Greek fight for independence which first inspired Garibaldi with his passionate determination to set Italy free. And when, shortly afterwards, his father took him to Rome for the first time, he could not think of the venerable city merely as what it was—the capital of the States of the Church. He tells us in his Memoirs, “I saw the Rome of the future. Shipwrecked, dying (he exaggerated!), banished to the furthest depths of the forests of (South) America, I never despaired of her as the regenerating principle of a great Nation, the dominant thought and inspiration of my whole life.”

The next time Garibaldi went to Rome, he was invited there to help defend it after a revolution which had caused the Pope to take sanctuary in Naples. The revolution failed and Garibaldi led the defenders across the Apennines to San Marino though surrounded by no less than five armies—Austrian, French, Spanish, Tuscan as well as Neapolitan. More than twenty-five years passed before he was able to go back to Rome, his youthful ambition realised. It was in Constantinople (Istanbul) that he first realised he was Italian. A young Piedmontese exile named Cuneo told him about an organisation known as “Young Italy” which had just been started by another Genoese exile named Giuseppe Mazzini, one of the most famous names in the Italian Risorgimento who lived for many years in London.

“I must join at once,” Garibaldi declared enthusiastically. “Where can I find him?”

He found Mazzini ultimately in Marseilles. As soon as he was enrolled as a member, Mazzini offered him a dangerous
mission. "Will you," he said, "join the Piedmontese Navy and try secretly to gain its support for the revolution I am organising to overthrow the Piedmontese Government?"

Garibaldi agreed instantly though he knew it might mean death as a traitor if he was caught. The member of the House of Savoy who was king at that time was called Charles Felix. I wonder what Garibaldi would have done if he had known that, years later, he was to help a relation of Charles Felix, Victor Emmanuel II, become King of all Italy!

Though Garibaldi had considerable personal success among the sailors, Mazzini had none at all on land and, three days after "invading" Piedmont from Switzerland he was back where he had started. Garibaldi's connection with the "revolution" was soon discovered and he had to flee for his life. Crossing the Alps disguised as a peasant, he paid a short visit to his parents in Nizza (to say goodbye and ask them for money) and then fled hastily back to Marseilles.

There, the next day, he saw his name in a newspaper for the first time in his life—but by no means the last. Nor was it the last time, by any means, that the newspaper stated he had been condemned to death.

He decided it would be unwise to stay in Marseilles so he booked his passage to South America where he traded for a while along the east coast in partnership with yet another Genoese exile whose name was Rossetti. But very soon, revolution broke out in South America, too. Garibaldi and other Italians offered their services to the revolutionary government which gave them "letters of marque" authorising them to attack ships flying the flag of the Governments they were fighting against—first the Argentine and then Brazil. They were quite successful but decided they would be better
employed fighting on land. Garibaldi, the guerilla chieftain, had come into being at last—when he was twenty-eight.

He was successful at the start and his followers soon numbered thousands, mostly South American gauchos, or cowboys, with a sprinkling of Italians. The gauchos deserted whenever their chief struck a bad spell and returned as soon as his luck changed. The Italians stuck to him in bad times as well as good. They all wore red shirts which soon became famous throughout the world, especially in England. And most famous of all was their leader, the romantic and handsome Giuseppe Garibaldi who was now a General and married to a South American girl named Anita. She not only fought at his side but also bore him four children. She was small and dark. He was of middle height but very broad-shouldered with chestnut hair which billowed down over his shoulders; blue eyes which deepened to violet when he was excited. His beard and moustache were blonde and his face covered with freckles. As you can imagine, such looks created havoc among the ladies! In fact, they caused so many heart-throbs once in Buenos Aires, the capital of the Argentine Republic, that, for Anita’s sake, he cut his flowing chestnut mane down to normal length. But he let it grow again later.

In due course, the call came for General Garibaldi and his Red Shirts to go back to Italy to fight for the independence of their own country. This was in 1848 when a revolution in Sicily against the Bourbons sparked off a vast series of political explosions right across Europe. There were rebellions from one end of the Austrian Empire to the other—in Hungary, Poland, Bohemia as well as in Lombardy and Venetia. Tuscany, the little duchies nearby, and the Papal States all rose against their rulers one of whom, Pope Pius
IX—known as Pio Nono and probably the most liberal-minded of them all—fled from his capital, Rome, and went to Naples.

News travelled slowly in those days and it was weeks before it reached South America. Garibaldi and his Red Shirts responded at once. On 15 April, 1848, they sailed from Montevideo for Italy. And thus it happened that the New World, which the British Prime Minister Canning said on 12 December, 1826 that he had "called into existence to redress the balance of the Old", actually did so in a way he never anticipated. For it was Garibaldi's little band of Red Shirts, one of them being Anita, which paved the way for the unification of Italy, thus bringing into existence a new Great Power to take its place in the councils of Europe.
The Siege of Rome

The boat the Red Shirts came home in, the *Speranza*, was a sailing ship and it took her two months to reach Nizza. Once fire broke out and they were nearly forced to abandon her. But they got the flames under control at last and sailed on.

During the long watches of the day and night they used to discuss, over and over again, how they would be received when they arrived. Most of them had emigrated to South America because they had conspired against this or that local tyrant in favour of a free, united Italy. Indeed, their leader, Giuseppe Garibaldi, was under sentence of death as a traitor. And, when they left Montevideo, capital of Uruguay, the new State they had helped to establish, all the governments they had opposed at home were still in control.

They need not have worried. Their exploits in the New World had made them famous—and their ideal of a united Italy was on everyone’s lips, if not yet in everyone’s heart. So when *Speranza* reached Nizza on 21 June, 1848, the excited population rushed to the quayside and would not let the harbour officials keep the returning exiles in quarantine as the law prescribed. A gala dinner was held that evening at which Garibaldi offered his services to the King of Piedmont (who had sentenced him to death) in the sacred task of driving the Austrians out of Italy.
King Charles Albert, at that moment fighting the Austrians in Lombardy not far from Lake Garda, could not very well accept help from someone who had been sentenced to death. Yet he could not carry the sentence out against a popular hero. So he simply acknowledged Garibaldi’s offer without accepting it. Garibaldi, nothing daunted, took his Red Shirts, first to Milan and then to the Italian lakes at the southern foothills of the Alps to protect Charles Albert’s left flank.

Milan received Garibaldi with open arms—and very little else. It was already the capital of Lombardy but its population was small compared with the 1,272,000 who live there today. And it was simply the centre of the vast, irrigated basin of the river Po instead of the hub of important engineering and textile industries it has become since Italy was united. But individuals flocked to his banner and he soon had a thousand enthusiasts in his First Legion. He led them at once to Lakes Maggiore, Lugano and Como which grope like fingers out from the Alps into the vast Lombard plain with its network of ditches and canals.

Meanwhile, however, King Charles Albert had fought a pitched battle against the Austrians at Custoza near the southern end of Lake Garda on the Venetian border—and had been beaten. Shortly after, he signed an armistice in which, naturally enough, he said nothing about Garibaldi.

Very soon, therefore, Garibaldi’s Legionaries found the Austrians too strong for them. What was almost worse, from the point of view of morale: the Lombard peasants flooded their fields to hinder his movements in the hope of avoiding Austrian reprisals. Garibaldi’s “Legion” quickly dwindled to the handful of Red Shirts who had come with
him from South America. Bidding them take their red shirts off, he told them to find their way home as best they could. He himself slipped across the border into Switzerland like Mazzini in 1833.

But, unlike Mazzini, he did not go to London—he went back to Piedmont, entirely disregarding that death sentence, and the King took care to disregard it, too. Both wanted the same thing—the unification of Italy—but not always for the same reasons. There were times when they went in diametrically opposite directions when striving for the same goal.

Baulked in Lombardy, Garibaldi started to look elsewhere. He thought of offering his services to Venice where a patriot named Daniele Manin had risen against the Austrians. He actually went to Tuscany where there had been a rebellion against Grand Duke Leopold. Then, in January 1849, he was invited to help defend Rome which was menaced by no less than five States each determined to restore the rule of the Pope. Three of the five were great Powers: Austria, France and Spain. The other two were Naples and Tuscany.

Garibaldi, highly delighted, recruited a new Legion. But the Roman triumvirs, one of whom was Mazzini, kept him waiting at Rieti, forty miles to the north, for weeks before they allowed him to enter the “Eternal City”. And they did not put him in command of the garrison but made him second-in-command under General Rosselli. The two men disliked one another at sight and very soon Garibaldi, with the support of most of the garrison, acted first and did not even trouble to ask Rosselli’s permission afterwards.

Rieti is a pleasant place, surrounded by vineyards and olive groves with a background of thick, wild forest and
mountains to the east and a gently-sloping shelf down to the river Tiber to the west. But Garibaldi and his legionaries were impatient to get to Rome and the invitation to do so did not come till the middle of April. Garibaldi’s Legion increased in numbers from 500 to well over 1,000 during these three months.

Ostensibly, the Legion was guarding Rome from an attack by a Neapolitan army stationed in the Abruzzi region eastwards across the Apennines. But another Neapolitan army was advancing against Rome from the south and everyone knew that the French were preparing to land an army at Civitavecchia. It was only when they did so, that Mazzini and his two fellow triumvirs hastily called Garibaldi to the defence of Rome.

A Dutch artist named Koelman has described his entry into Rome, on 15 April, 1849. Garibaldi himself—flowing chestnut hair, blonde beard, aquiline nose, freckles and all—rode through the gate on a white horse and wearing a red tunic with short flaps, a little black felt sugar-loaf hat with two ostrich feathers and a white South American poncho which hung loosely round him to his knees. He also had a cavalry sabre. Just behind him, on a black horse, rode Aguyar, a giant South American negro whom he had rescued from slavery. Behind Aguyar were the Red Shirt officers, also in red tunics, with green facings. Their hair was in most cases black and they wore it long, like their chief, right down over their shoulders. To Koelman’s surprise, the legionaries behind them did not wear “bearskins, ugly shakos, braid and horsetails, red, yellow, white, gold and silver stripes and embroideries”. They had “dark blue coats hanging on their bodies in loose folds and caught in with
black belts... On their heads were small black felt hats with broad turned-down brims”, traditional Calabrian hats, from Italy’s toe.

As Garibaldi entered Rome for the second time in his life, there was a cry from all sides: “He has come! He has come!” Just “he”. Everyone was surprised when Koelman asked who “he” was.

It is worth mentioning here that, during the siege of Rome which followed, Garibaldi decided that all his legionaries should wear red shirts, or tunics, not merely the officers. Since then, red has been the colour of revolutionaries everywhere. But Garibaldi and the people now known as “Reds” had very little in common. Indeed, when he visited London in 1864 and received an unprecedented welcome from more than half a million people who lined the streets, the founder of communism, Karl Marx, who was then living in Hampstead was furious, calling the welcome “a miserable exhibition of imbecility”.

As to why Garibaldi adopted red as his uniform, your guess is as good as most other people’s. British soldiers wore red and Garibaldi had a great admiration for England. But, according to Charles Dickens, so did the prisoners in Neapolitan gaols. And so, also according to Dickens did the members of an English rowing club at Messina, some of whose shirts were certainly worn by Garibaldi’s army when he liberated Sicily eleven years later.

When Garibaldi entered Rome, his Legion numbered about 1,200. One company consisted entirely of lads under eighteen, most of them being between twelve to fifteen. The youngest legionary was eleven, the oldest was over sixty—he had been one of Napoleon’s soldiers forty years previously.
Garibaldi enters Rome, 15 April, 1849
The whole garrison of Rome numbered about 8,000. The French at Civitavecchia had 8–10,000 at first, well supplied with artillery, and over 20,000 later on. The Neapolitan armies advancing from the south numbered 10–12,000. Some 6,000 Spaniards were on their way to Naples from Spain. Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany had 3–4,000 most of whom were at Siena. As for the Austrians: there were at least 15,000 around Bologna and more in the north of Tuscany as well as garrisons in many parts of the States of the Church—for example, in Perugia, the capital of the province of Umbria and in all the principal Adriatic seaports from Comacchio near the mouth of the Po to Ancona, one of the principal ports on the Adriatic. Finally, there was that Neapolitan army in the Abruzzi which Garibaldi had been watching from afar while in Rieti.

Altogether not less than 60,000, they completely surrounded Rome.

About the only thing that told in the garrison's favour was the fact that there was no unified command and each army was there, not so much to restore the Pope as to promote the interests of the Government which had sent it. King "Bomba" of Naples (so-called because his body was nearly round) wanted to make sure that when Pope Pius IX went back to Rome his government would be less gentle than previously—in case his liberal ideas should find an echo in Naples. The French wanted the honour of restoring the head of the Catholic Church to his throne because Napoleon III relied on Catholic support in France and because he was jealous of Austria. The Austrian Emperor believed that an independent Republic in Rome would lead to his losing Lombardy, Venetia and South Tirol which is
now called the Alto Adige. The Tuscans were at least as afraid of the Austrians as of republics. In fact, only the Spaniards had really come to help the Pope.

The most immediate danger to Rome when Garibaldi arrived was from the French who were already advancing from Civitavecchia. The Rome garrison was too weak to attack them before they reached the city, all the more so as the French were not only more numerous but better trained and better armed. General Rosselli wanted to keep the whole garrison within the walls which ran from the banks of the Tiber in the north, round the Vatican City, to the west of the Janiculum Hill and back to the Tiber. The Janiculum, by the way, is not one of the famous Seven Hills. Nor are any of the Seven really "hills". The highest is only about 200 ft. above sea level.

Garibaldi, who had learnt the importance of looking carefully at the lie of the land during his campaigns in South America, saw that if the French captured two villas outside the wall to the west of the Janiculum they would be able to look right into Rome itself. Every move the garrison made would be visible to the French artillerymen who would also be able to destroy the bridges over the Tiber—there were only three in those days—making it impossible to bring reinforcements and supplies to the defenders of the Janiculum wall and of the Vatican. So he insisted on occupying both the villas. But the French were on him before he could fortify them.

However, General Oudinot, the French commander, fortunately marched first against the Vatican City which lies about a mile to the north of the two villas. He had received messages from friends inside Rome that the Pope's sup-
porters would open the Cavalleggeria Gate, just south of the great Church of St. Peter, and let his men in. But the French were received with a storm of bullets, instead of open arms and gates, and were forced to retire in disorder.

Oudinot soon rallied them and then, at once, turned his attention to the villas, just as Garibaldi had foreseen. His first attack succeeded momentarily. But Garibaldi, realising what was at stake, galloped on his white horse to the head of his Legion, took his cigar momentarily from his mouth and called on them to follow him. He, and they, raced through dark avenues of holm-oaks to a terrace and then fought their way across a deep sunken lane. The battle reached its climax among a bed of rose bushes. Behind Garibaldi rode his “tigers of Montevideo”, red-shirted, bearded and long-haired like their leader and, behind them, came the company of teenagers—and sub-teenagers.

The French were driven out of both villas, back under the arches of the ancient aqueduct, known as Aqua Paola and into the vineyards of the Campagna plain beyond, where their pursuers halted to re-form. Garibaldi himself had been wounded in the side by a bullet during the charge but he refused to leave the field.

Garibaldi wished to follow up this victory by pursuing the French and driving them, as he declared, into the sea. But the triumvirs would not let him—they believed they could persuade the French Government to change sides. So they released the prisoners the Garibaldians had taken—400 un-wounded and 200 wounded—showed them the sights of Rome and then sent them back to General Oudinot’s camp.

Though Garibaldi was very angry, they may have been right—for the wrong reason! It was important to keep the
French from attacking again because the Neapolitans were rapidly approaching Rome from the south. Indeed, Garibaldi’s scouts told him that some of them had already reached Frascati, a famous wine-producing town in the Alban Hills, and had also occupied Valmontone, a little village about fifteen miles east of Frascati and between the Sabine and Volscian Hills which hem in the undulating plain of the Campagna south of Rome. All three sets of hills are famous in Roman history and the Alban Hills, which rise to a height of over 3,000 ft., are equally famous today as a summer resort where the Romans can get relief from the stifling heat of the capital. The Pope is now one of those who has a summer home in the Alban Hills—at Castel Gandolfo on the shores of Lake Albano—which was once the crater of a volcano.

Garibaldi established his headquarters at Palestrina, a very ancient walled town on the slopes of Mount Ginestro which are so steep that it almost looks as though the town must slip down into the plain below. From here Garibaldi could see for miles—as he always loved to be able to do. Indeed, one of the secrets of his success as a soldier was that he always reconnoitred personally the ground his troops were going to operate in. He didn’t just look at it. He, so to say, memorised it. In sections. He knew exactly where every main road and little lane or mule track was, every fold in the ground, every copse, vineyard, stream, bridge, village and town.

The only people I know who could compare with Garibaldi in this respect are some Kazakhs—nomads from the north-west corner of China. After fighting for fifteen years against Chinese and Russian communists, they decided to make their way to Kashmir with their camels, sheep and
horses—a matter of perhaps 1,500 miles over a huge desert and trackless mountains in Tibet not very much lower than Mount Everest itself. Afterwards, their chief showed me the map he had used—a sheet about the size of this page torn from a school atlas.

Garibaldi’s second secret was that he never asked his men to do anything he was afraid to do himself. He was quite ruthless with cowards—and with bullies. If he caught any of his men ill-treating not only a woman but an animal, he was quite capable of ordering him to be shot without bothering to take his cigar out of his mouth. Anyone caught stealing or looting was liable to be treated in the same way. In fact, he was not unlike that famous headmaster who, if he was a brute, was at least a just brute. And, for that reason, his soldiers never let him down. It was the same with Nino Bixio, one of his officers, who thought nothing of using the flat of his sword on a soldier’s back. But he never did so without good reason.

From his vantage point at Palestrina, Garibaldi could actually see the Neapolitan column coming from Valmontone but not the one from Frascati. He decided to attack those he could see and merely sent a small party of thirty to find and “contain” the Frascati column not knowing that it consisted of over 1,000 men. With the Thirty was Garibaldi’s great friend, a friar named Ugo Bassi who being a priest, never carried arms (and never hit anybody). When they came upon the Neapolitans near the ruins of Tusculum, he rode forward under a hail of bullets to within shouting range. Then he yelled: “You wicked men to be fighting against your country!” Having repeated this several times, he rode back to the Thirty.
Whether it was his words, or the Thirty’s bullets, the Neapolitans retreated.

Meanwhile Garibaldi was watching the main body of Neapolitans debouch into the Campagna. Many of them were mounted and as they picked their way among the vineyards and little gulleys, Garibaldi sent some of his men to take them in the flank. Nevertheless, the main body managed to reach the outskirts of Palestrina. But when the Garibaldians poured out from the cobbled streets through the Valmontone Gate with fixed bayonets, the Neapolitans did not wait for them. At the Roman Gate, however, on the other side of the town, the Neapolitans actually managed to seize some houses and this time they had to be driven out in hand-to-hand fighting. But the battle was won so easily that a Swiss named Hofstetter who took part in it and who afterwards wrote an account of Garibaldi’s defence of Rome, was evidently more impressed by some nightingales than by the fighting qualities of the Neapolitans.

Once more Garibaldi wanted to drive the enemy into the sea and was not allowed to. It might have been easier this time. The road along which the Neapolitans were retreating ran across the huge Pontine Marshes without a single bend—or, in those days, a single side road—and it was dead flat, except for one small dip, for nearly thirty miles. The marsh really was a marsh—water-logged, infested with malarial mosquitoes and practically uninhabited except, possibly, by a few brigands.

Today, things are very different, largely thanks to Mussolini who had the marsh drained. Since 1932, it has been the home of a growing host of farmers and the capital of the district, called Latina, has a population of over 45,000.
This time, the reason the triumvirs gave for not letting Garibaldi pursue the enemy was that the French were believed to be on the point of launching a new attack—in spite of the release of the prisoners. But, very soon after Garibaldi and his men got back to Rome, a French Envoy arrived from Paris to start negotiations for an armistice. His name was Ferdinand de Lesseps who, some years later, became world famous as the man who built the Suez Canal.

While these negotiations were in progress, Garibaldi’s scouts brought news that the Neapolitans were coming back again. This time, he met them at Velletri, a Volscian town which suffered severely during the Second World War. It stands 1,100 ft. above sea level on a spur of a mountain and has a tall black and white tower, nearly as high as Rome’s “hills”, which was built over 700 years ago. It was surrounded by vineyards so Garibaldi, following his usual custom, divided his men into small parties with orders to harass the enemy from the flanks as they marched along the road.

But one of the little groups of Garibaldians ran unexpectedly into a much larger force of Neapolitan cavalry and decided that discretion was much better than valour. The Cambridge historian, G. M. Trevelyan, in his account of Garibaldi’s campaigns describes what followed.

“They came bolting back (Defence of the Roman Republic, p. 155) at a pace which so aroused the indignation of Garibaldi that, regardless of dynamics, he reined up athwart their path. Behind him sat his friend, the gigantic negro, on his jet-black horse. Like equestrian statues of Europe and Africa, they sat immovable . . .”

Immovable? Well, hardly, for Trevelyan goes on:
“One moment, the young lancers, vainly tugging at their frightened steeds, saw these two loom in front; the next, down they all went together in a welter of beasts and men, with Garibaldi at the bottom. The enemy cavalry, who had some spirit, came dashing up and it might have gone ill for Italy, had not some Legionaries, fighting a little distance to the right of the (Valmontone) road, come running up to save their leader. The rescue party were mostly boys of 14 and upwards.”

Garibaldi wrote in his *Memoirs*: “I believe my safety was chiefly due to those gallant boys since, with men and horses passing over my body, I was so bruised that I could not move.”

The upshot of this near-disaster was a triumphant assault on the Neapolitans which took the Garibaldians through the vineyards on both sides of the road, into and through, Velletri itself, past the Capuchin monastery just outside. Then they pursued the beaten enemy towards Terracina. But they were recalled by an urgent summons from the triumvirs when they had got no further than Rocca d’Arce, the frontier in those times between the Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples. The message said that the Austrians had captured Bologna which is at the extreme north of the Papal States in the province called Romagna. Though Bologna is more than 220 miles from Rome, the triumvirs wanted to assemble every man they could to defend the capital.

The Garibaldians were tired, hungry, thirsty when they reached Rocca and wanted to buy food and drink. But there was not a soul to be seen and every door and window was closed. So they threw themselves down on the hard cobbles
Garibaldi in his Red Shirt uniform.
(Above) Milazzo, the castle of which was regarded as impregnable but which Garibaldi and the Thousand captured after a short battle. (Below) St. Elmo Castle, the mediaeval fortress at Naples which also fell to Garibaldi.
Nearly-dry watercourses (*fiu mare*) shown in these pictures become raging torrents after a storm. Typical of many parts of Italy and Sicily.
of the market place and were soon asleep. Presently the
inhabitants who had been watching from the surrounding
hills began to trickle back. "We were told you were ogres,"
they explained, "and that your leader is the Devil who scours
the country protected by his father, Black Beelzebub
(presumably Aguyar!). They said you burnt houses and ate
children. Now we realise it was all lies."

On the day the Garibaldians got back to Rome after their
victory at Velletri, the triumvirs signed an agreement with
de Lesseps by which the French undertook to defend Rome
against both the Austrians and the Neapolitans and, at the
same time, promised not to enter Rome itself. But, on the
day after, General Oudinot, the French Commander-in-
Chief, announced that he refused to be bound by this agree-
ment. He promised, however, that he would not attack Rome
till the morning of 4 July, 1849, at the earliest—and then,
in spite of this promise, he attacked the two "key" villas
before dawn on 3 July.

Most of Rome's garrison were asleep on the far side of the
Tiber and Garibaldi himself was in bed trying to sleep off
not only the bruises he had received at Velletri but also the
effect of his wound in the battle of the villas which still
troubled him. However, he was out of bed as soon as he
heard the sound of rifle shots and the boom of cannon.

The next moment, the bells of every one of Rome's 420
churches were pealing to awaken the people to their peril
and the garrison's drummers were sounding a toscin* in
every street. People poured out of their houses and soon the
narrow streets were so thronged that the garrison had hard
work trying to force its way to the bridges. Long before more

* Signal of alarm.
than a handful had reached the San Pancrazio Gate, the two villas had been captured.

As each little party arrived, Garibaldi hurled them piece-meal into a counter-attack—often twenty men, or boys, and once no more than ten. The military experts have been saying that he was crazy ever since. But to him, it seemed essential to prevent the French from establishing themselves in the villas as he believed they would be able to do if he gave them a moment’s respite. It counts in his favour that he did recapture the villas several times that day. But he lost many of his best men in doing so, and, when dusk fell, it was the French who held them. What was almost as bad, they had crossed the Tiber at Ponte Molle, four miles north of Rome and not far from where the river Anio flows into the main river after racing tumultuously down from the Laris Hills where it has its source. This meant that supplies could not longer reach Rome from Rieti.

The events of that day sealed the fate of Rome although the garrison hung grimly on to the Janiculum for a whole month. Then the French forced their way over the city wall and drove the defenders back across the Tiber. After that, the triumvirs decided to surrender.

Today, a huge bronze statue of Garibaldi on horseback stands on the highest point of the Janiculum. A little lower down, is a statue of his wife, Anita, riding a wild horse of the South American pampas while holding a baby in one arm and firing a pistol at the same time. Close by is another statue—this time of a tall, bearded Cornishman, John Whitehead Peard, known to history as “Garibaldi’s Englishman”. We will see why in due course.

After the loss of the villas, Garibaldi wrote to Anita whom
His voice filled St. Peter’s Square
he had left behind, with his children and his mother, at Nizza. His letter is dated 21 June, 1849 and, in it, he said in part: "I know thou hast been, and maybe still art, ill. I wish to see thy handwriting, and my mother's, and then I shall feel easy."

He went on to tell her just a little about the siege, adding: "This people is worthy of its past greatness". Then he concluded: "Get well. Kiss Mamma, and the babes, for me. Love me much. Thy Garibaldi."

The letter never reached her. As soon as she heard about the battle of the villas she decided that her place was at her husband's side. She left Nizza the same day. I have not been able to discover how she got to Rome through the armies that encircled the city except that it was via Rieti. But get there she certainly did. And on 2 July, 1859, which was the day before the act of surrender was to take effect, she rode out at dusk through the San Giovanni Gate by her husband's side at the head of the 4,000 who had volunteered to try to fight their way out and offer their services to Daniele Manin who was still defying the Austrians in Venice.

On the morning before they set out on this extraordinary enterprise, Garibaldi addressed a meeting of Roman citizens and soldiers in the great square of St. Peter in the Vatican City. The vast throng of those who came to listen filled every corner of the square. His voice filled the square, too, though loud speakers and microphones had not been invented. It has echoed down the years as well. Indeed, I fancy Winston Churchill recalled it when, ninety years later, he addressed the British Nation after Dunkirk, promising them nothing except blood, toil, tears and sweat.

This is what Garibaldi promised the people of Rome:
"I am going out of Rome (he told them). Let those who wish to continue the war against the foreigner, follow me. I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor provisions. I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles and death. Let him who loves his country in his heart and not with his lips only FOLLOW ME."
GARIBALDI made this famous speech while sitting on his white horse with Aguyar, the negro, on his black one just behind him. Before riding away, he told all who wished to follow him to meet him that evening in front of the Lateran Palace on the opposite side of the city. The crowd pressed excitedly round him as he left the square to make arrangements for the long march into the unknown. Many, perhaps most, were in tears. Behind him there was even greater excitement. Mothers were trying to drag their sons from the ranks of those who intended to go with him. And young lads in their teens were wrestling themselves from the restraining hands of their parents to join those who were determined to face the dangers their beloved leader had predicted.

There was a great deal to be done that day before the expedition could start. Stores and ammunition had to be loaded on to bullock carts. Garibaldi decided to leave their artillery behind, all except one little piece which the legionnaires insisted on taking with them. Food they intended to buy en route—so long as their money lasted. After that they would have to eat the bullocks. Finally, Garibaldi had to send out scouting parties to find out where the enemy were—not so much the French who, he knew, were still on the
west side of the Tiber, but the Neapolitans and Spaniards who were to the south and east. His scouts searched for them all that day and came back in the late afternoon to say that the Neapolitans had halted at Frosinone—too far off to be an immediate danger—but that the Spaniards were approaching Valmontone and apparently intended to bivouac there for the night.

As the sun went down behind the two villas that evening (2 July, 1849) the Garibaldians answered their names in a final muster-roll in the open space in front of the Lateran Palace which had been the home of the Popes from the days of the first Christian Emperor until they were driven out to Avignon in the south of France at the beginning of the 14th century A.D. When they returned, it was to the Vatican City on the opposite side of the capital.

After the roll-call, Garibaldi placed himself at the head of his men, with Anita at his side, dressed in the Red Shirt and trousers of the Legion, and, as darkness fell, they marched out through the San Giovanni Gate into the dusty, undulating plain of the Campagna. "He must be mad," one spectator whispered to another. "He's taken the Valmontone road—where the Spaniards are! Why, when he said he was going to Venice?"

Why indeed? The explanation was that Garibaldi knew perfectly well that his departure was being watched by his enemies as well as by his friends. And he knew that Oudinot would soon hear which route he had taken. He wanted him to.

It was not long before the news reached London as well as General Oudinot and The Times (which disliked Garibaldi in those days) wrote in a leading article on 10 July, 1849: "As Garibaldi fortunately marched out of Rome to the
South at the head of his 6,000 partisans (2,000 more than the real number) who are hotly pursued by the First Division of the French, the worst enemies of the country will probably be annihilated."

But the French were "hotly pursuing" people who were not there. In fact, General Oudinot's First Division spent four or five fruitless days searching for them in the forests of the Alban Hills. For when Garibaldi was within two or three miles of Valmontone, he turned off the road on to another which led almost due north and by daybreak the whole column had reached Tivoli, tired, hungry but happy because, at Tivoli, they were on the lower slopes of the Sabine Hills overlooking the low-lying Campagna. Any movement of troops out of Rome would immediately be visible. The Spaniards from Valmontone would have to cross the Campagna, too. So Garibaldi could let his men sleep all day while he himself rode on to organise the next stage in the retreat.

Tivoli is still a very pleasant place to rest in. That famous old Roman poet, Horace, who loved good living, spent his old age there. The river Anio bursts out of the Sabine Hills down a series of waterfalls and then almost encircles the town in a wide loop where there are olive groves and a number of ruined temples which artists have been painting for over 500 years. There is a famous painting of the place by one of the most famous French landscape artists, Claude, which now hangs in a gallery in Edinburgh.

Garibaldi himself had no time to rest. He had successfully hookwinked his enemies (and The Times) once. Now he had to do it again. So he spent the whole of that day exploring the hills to the east and north. At last he found what he
Garibaldi's Route
wanted—a track which the local peasants said was impassable to wheeled traffic but which he knew wasn’t impassable at all because he had ridden along it to see.

So, late that afternoon, he led his men up the steep road on the north bank of the river which leads to Vicovaro and Pescara. At nightfall, when they had gone about five miles, he ordered them to bivouac by the side of the road. As he expected, the usual spies soon got busy and raced the news to both the French and the Spaniards. General Oudinot refused to believe them—he was still convinced that Garibaldi was in the Alban Hills. But the Spaniards at once jumped to the conclusion that he was making for the Adriatic port of Pescara through the Abruzzi province and they hurried to Subiaco to cut him off. They went on chasing him for a week on the wrong side of the hills. Several times they were actually within ten miles of him but they could not have got to him even if they had known where he was. There were no roads in those days through the bleak mountains and thick forests.

What Garibaldi had done was to break camp as soon as it was dark and then turn off the road along the “impassable” mule track to the left. All that night, his men toiled northward over stones and ravines, up and down (mostly up) steep mountains, cursing, swearing, sweating, heaving at the wheels of the waggons when the bullocks could not move them—and taking the greatest care of that little cannon. Next morning found them still at it and it was not till late afternoon that they came to a real road again. They marched wearily along it through the vineyards of the Campagna towards the walled town of Monterotondo, another of those hillside vantage-points from which they could again see Rome, which was still
only fifteen miles away but due south now, instead of west. And they could also see that in all the country between, there was not a single hostile column.

They arrived at Monterotondo on Garibaldi's birthday, 4 July, 1849. He had not slept for two days and nights, nor had Anita who was ill. But she did not complain and, on the following day when the column reached Poggio Mirteto, ten miles further up the valley of the Tiber, she sat on a rock laughing and joking while the men roasted some of their oxen on spits of green olive wood behind a great stone bridge in a cool, shaded valley. In her lap were long strips of linen which she was cutting and sewing into a tent for her husband and herself.

By this time Garibaldi was preparing another wild-goose chase for General Oudinot. He planned to march to Terni, now a flourishing industrial town which gets its water-power from a man-made waterfall over 2,000 years old which carries the whole river Velino into the river Nar, 600 ft. below. If Oudinot knew the fugitives were going to Terni, he could easily get there first by following the main road from Rome which mostly runs along the valley of the Tiber. So Garibaldi sent his scouts westward to Lake Bracciano (which was once the crater of a volcano) with orders to make themselves as conspicuous as possible.

Oudinot had realised at last that he had been wrong about the Alban Hills. Now he jumped to the conclusion that Garibaldi was on his way to attack Civitavecchia, thus cutting the French army off from their supplies which came by sea from France. He wasted several more days looking for a needle which was in an entirely different haystack.

The Garibaldians marched on towards Terni, weary but
unmolested, along a road through hills covered with vines and olives and then across a dry water-course to a long pass between mountains clothed in ever-green forests till they emerged into the broad, vine-clad valley of the Nar. The French were looking for them at Corneto, ten miles north of Civitavecchia and a good fifty miles from Terni. The Spaniards were much nearer—at Rieti which is only fifteen miles away but they too had no idea where the Garibaldians were. In the end, they decided to look for them at Spoleto. Today, they would probably have gone there via Terni because that is the easiest route.

By this time Garibaldi had managed to get his little army more than sixty miles on their way through their enemies without firing a shot. But its numbers were already dwindling. Some members of the garrison had only joined him because they were afraid they would be shot or gafiled if they were caught in Rome—though they need not have worried: the British and American Consulates worked overtime issuing false British and American passports to any patriot soldier who asked for one. In fact, those who stayed in Rome had a much easier time than those who chose Garibaldi’s path of glory. As, indeed he promised would be the case.

Perhaps a thousand men had deserted between Tivoli and Terni. But, at the latter place those who remained received an unexpected reinforcement of 900 men and two field guns under an Englishman, Col. Hugh Forbes, who had been policing the rural districts north of Rome. Col. Forbes’s idea of the correct uniform for a guerilla soldier differed widely from Garibaldi’s. Instead of the ostrich-plumed black hat, red tunic, white drainpipe trousers, flowing white poncho—and, of course, long hair and beard—Col. Forbes wore a
silk top hat and frock coat. He was also clean-shaven. But the two men took to one another at once.

Onwards from Terni, things began to get tougher every day. Even Oudinot could no longer fail to realise that the fugitives were either making for Venice or intended to cut northwestward across Tuscany in order to get to Piedmont. To get to Venice they must cross the main chain of the Apennines; to get to Piedmont, they must emerge sometime into the plain of the Arno. In either case, they would soon run into the Austrians. French prestige required that they should be rounded up before the Austrians came into the picture.

So, while the Garibaldians pushed on from Terni to Todi over mountainous country dotted with little spas, the French turned inland from Corneto and raced past Lake Bolsena towards Orvieto.

Garibaldi knew that it was vital to get to Orvieto before the French. So he and Forbes decided to leave the waggons, and the two field guns, but not the much-loved little cannon from Rome, and push on as fast as possible into the mountains with what they could load on to the bullocks and oxen.

Todi itself is perched, like so many other Italian towns, on the side of a hill so steep that some of the “streets” were simply a succession of steps. From it, Garibaldi and Forbes could see Lake Trasimene, where Hannibal the Cathaginian defeated the Romans. They could even see Perugia, twenty-five miles east of the lake, where the Austrians were assembling to cut them off.

They marched out of Todi, with many God-speeds from its citizens, on the night of 14–15 July, 1849 into a cleft in naked mountains above thick forests which ran from the heart
of the Apennines right down to the Tiber gorge beneath them. Here Garibaldi let his men sleep for they were utterly exhausted. But he himself pushed on to Prodo in the darkness where he found a track leading to Orvieto, twelve miles to the westward, near where three rivers meet—Tiber, Clanis and Paglia. And he saw that it ran chiefly downhill.

Riding back, he woke his men and they trudged on as fast as they could. It was not very fast, but it was just fast enough—they breakfasted on food which had actually been prepared for, and paid for by, the French. They were back in the mountains working their way northward towards Citta della Piave before the French arrived to remonstrate.

Citta della Piave is on the river Clanis, five miles from Lake Trasimene, and the Garibaldisians were approaching it when the scouts galloped back to say it was held by Tuscan troops. Once again, their leader’s insistence on careful reconnaissance had paid off—and their enemies’ failure in this respect had cost them dear—because the Garibaldisians got away without being seen. Soon they reached Le Piaze in the valley of the Chiane river with its network of irrigation ditches. They were in Tuscany now—in rich, fertile land abounding in vineyards, olive groves and orchards—out of reach of the French, Neapolitans and Spaniards. But they were also correspondingly nearer their most formidable foe, the Austrians.

Unmolested, they marched wearily on to Cetona where Anita took off her Red Shirt uniform and dressed once more as a woman. A little further north, at Chiusi not far from Cortona, they came on the Tuscans again but a few shots soon sent the enemy away in disorder. Chiusi was once called Clusium, the place by whose nine gods Lars Porsena swore
when he announced he was going to destroy Rome about 500 B.C. and did at least capture the Janiculum. Clusium used to be surrounded by malarial marshes but they were drained in the Middle Ages. By 21 July, the Garibaldians had reached Castello Fiorentino and were on their way to Arezzo, a town of some 70,000 inhabitants close to the upper reaches of the Arno, the river on which Florence and Pisa both stand. Here they had their first great disappointment since leaving Rome, for the citizens refused to admit them. Garibaldi's men were furious and pressed round him clamouring to be allowed to take the place by storm. But their leader would never attack other Italians unless they attacked him first. So he refused to listen to them and led them back into the valley of the Tiber over the Scolpetone Pass.

It was while they were on their way from this pass to San Sepolcro that they first saw the Austrians—no less than three separate columns of them, one from Arezzo, one from Anghiari and one from Perugia, converging on the valley of the Tiber above which they were resting. But though they could see the Austrians, they themselves were out of sight, and the countryfolk were their friends. Garibaldi let his men rest for two whole days and nights, taking care, however, to lock up the monks in whose monastery gardens they were camped, a lovely place full of cypress trees, Mediterranean pines, fig trees and orchards framed in a background of evergreen oaks. Across the valley of the Tiber they could see a broad white ribbon climbing up into the central range of the Apennines. It was the road by which their leader intended to take them although, between them and the road, lay not only the wide, sandy valley of the Tiber but also the Austrians, now less than a mile from their camp.
It looked pretty hopeless. The "White coats" outnumbered the Red Shirts by at least ten to one and were far better armed. But it was impossible to turn back. They were in a net and the only way out was to break through to that road.

On the afternoon of 26 July, 1849, Garibaldi launched a feint attack on the Austrians to the south. Then, as soon as it was dark, he and his men climbed down the steep hill to the north driving their cattle before them and—carrying the little cannon. With them, protesting but not daring to do so out loud, went the monks—Garibaldi was afraid to leave them behind in case they should send a message to the Austrians to tell them what was happening.

By the time they got across the river, they were too exhausted to go any further. Fortunately, the hillside was covered with undergrowth so they hid in it and, though there were over 2,000 men, forty mules and a herd of white, long-horned cattle, the Austrians failed to find them. The Red Shirts learnt later that the white road was not marked on the Austrian maps. As the Austrians relied on their maps instead of on personal reconnaissance, they did not know it was there. By the time they found it the Garibaldians were miles away, having released the monks before they started to climb the twisting road to the pass. I think Garibaldi's fear that the monks would betray him was unjustified because they do not seem to have told the Austrians about the road. But in war, a leader cannot afford to take unnecessary chances.

Garibaldi's Swiss admirer, Hofstetter, watched the long column of men winding up the hill "like a beautiful snake" through scattered oak copses, cornfields and farms. Garibaldi, he says, rode in front, his white poncho streaming in the
warm breeze. Close behind him was Anita; then a few lancers who were followed by the forty baggage mules. Next came the white bullocks with their long, curved horns—food for

The column looked like a beautiful snake

the arid mountain region which they were now approaching. Behind the bullocks were the Red Shirts and almost at the end of the "snake", Hofstetter saw Col. Forbes and his son—another Hugh—who had exchanged their top hats and frock coats for white summer suits. Behind them, was
the dark green valley across which they had stumbled on the previous night. The Tiber itself, and the Austrians vainly searching, were out of sight. And a good thing, too.

By nightfall, the fugitives were on the long watershed which divides Italy in two. The slopes around them were bare and desolate though in spring, they are carpeted with primroses, crocuses, blue squills and other flowers. Below them to the east lay wooded hills through which their road ran along a tributary of the river Metaurus, the first river they had met which flows into the Adriatic instead of the Tyrrhenian Sea. They reached the broad valley in which the town of Sant’ Angelo in Vado stands, and the inhabitants warned them that another Austrian army had just arrived from Ancona and had bivouacked for the night less than a mile away.

The St. Angelans were whole-heartedly on their side and told them of a rough track which would take them over the bare hills to another valley. But the track actually left the main road between Sant’ Angelo and the Austrian camp.

Nevertheless, Garibaldi decided to let his men rest among the friendly St. Angelans till daybreak. As soon as it was light enough, he sent a small detachment of his few remaining mounted troops to launch a surprise attack against the Austrian camp and force them to deploy so that it would be difficult for them to pursue the Garibaldians till they had re-assembled. The moment the firing started, the rest of his men were to slip away along the track, leaving a small rearguard in Sant’ Angelo in case the Austrians in the Tiber valley should at last have found the road across the Apennines.

The rearguard was actually attacked by Hungarian
hussars of the imperial Austrian forces in the very streets of the town because the warden of the gate had failed to shut it. The St. Angelans managed to hide some of the rearguard in their houses but the rest were captured—and shot as rebels.

Meanwhile, the rest of the fugitives were hastening back into the high mountains, still carrying their precious mascot, the little cannon. They seemed now to be in an entirely different world. Gaunt, naked peaks towered into the sky, their summits crowned with what looked like mediaeval castles. Indeed, that is what some of the fantastic shapes actually were. The rest had been carved, fretted and moulded by wind, rain, frost and sun beating against them day and night, winter and summer for uncountable ages. Below the high peaks, the Garibaldians saw the bare bones of smaller hills from which past rain storms had eroded the soil after the covering of forest had been cut down for shipbuilding. What little soil was left had been baked grey by the sun. Lower still, however, it seemed that the winter snow was still lying thick in the deep warm valleys. But, as the Garibaldians climbed down from ridge to valley and up from valley to ridge, they found that the whiteness was not snow but pebbles smoothed and rounded by the flood water which dashes turbulently down the watercourses after a storm.

If you were to follow in the Garibaldians’ wake today, you would cross these formidable obstacles—called Fiumare—by bridges. But there were no bridges then—only interminable stones which burned and bruised their bare feet.

At last they reached Macerata Feltria only to learn that the Austrians were already within sight of the town, thanks to having been able to use the main road close to the sea.
The inhabitants told them they could still escape—across the foothills of the Carpegna Mountains to the westward and then turning north-east towards the neutral territory of San Marino.

This time there was not even a track—just a stony moor dotted with thin grass-stalks, not unlike some of the Yorkshire fells. Crossing this, they came to the tiny village of Villa-grande, 2,700 ft. above sea level, on the lower slopes of a great mountain. They had been on the move now for more than twenty-four hours but their leader would not let them stop. He could see a forest of dwarf holm oaks not far ahead and believed they would be safer there than in the village.

While his men slept that night under the shelter of the gnarled forest, Garibaldi and a few of his officers pressed on to San Marino which was now only five miles away. When Garibaldi asked for sanctuary for himself and his men, the Captain General of San Marino, whose name was Belzoppi, replied that he could supply them with food and drink on the frontier but that he could not admit them into the Republic.

I don’t think Garibaldi ever imagined that his request would be granted—little San Marino could scarcely be expected to challenge the might of the vast Austrian Empire which, in those days, not only stretched from Switzerland to the Carpathians but also completely surrounded the tiny Republic. The San Marinesi had preserved their independence since the Middle Ages by keeping out of other people’s quarrels. Even Napoleon did not annex San Marino though he carved up the rest of Italy as he pleased. And there, perched on a precipice high above the Italian port of Rimini, twelve miles distant across a belt of fertile, green and peaceful country, free San Marino still stands today.
The Secretary-General of the Republic whispered to Gari-
baldi that the Belzoppi was really speaking for Austrian ears,
not his. So Garibaldi rode back next morning to the tangle
of dwarf holm-oaks, roused his men and led them to the
border. Then he rode on into the town to explain.

“My troops,” he said, “are no longer able to fight. It has
become necessary to cross your frontier to obtain bread and
a brief repose. They shall lay down their arms.”

Captain General Belzoppi replied at once: “You are
welcome. This hospitable country receives you.”

While Belzoppi was sending messages to the Austrian
commander to try to negotiate terms by which the Garibaldi-
ians would be allowed to go free on handing their arms over
to the Austrians, Garibaldi rode back to the deep ravine
which forms the boundary of the Republic. On his way, he
heard the sound of gunfire.

What had happened was that the little cannon had fallen
into the ravine on the wrong side of the frontier and while
the Garibaldians were trying to lift it out, the Austrians
attacked them. Anita, hearing the shots and seeing some of
the Red Shirts scrambling up the sides of the ravine to
safety, galloped to the rescue shouting as she went: “Peppino!
Where is Peppino?” Then she and Colonel Forbes collected
some of the men who were already across the frontier and
they succeeded in holding the Austrians at bay till they saw
“Peppino”, his white poncho streaming behind him, gallo-
ping to join them. Soon, the Austrians were in full retreat.

It was the last fight in the campaign and it ended in
victory though the campaign itself ended in defeat. But the
little cannon remained at the bottom of the ravine.

Negotiations with the Austrian commander went on for
most of the day before he agreed to Belzoppi's proposal that the fugitives should be allowed to disperse unmolested after handing over their arms. He insisted that these terms must be ratified by the Austrian Commander-in-Chief, Gorzkowski, who was in Bologna, seventy-five miles to the north-west. Garibaldi was convinced that Gorzkowski would reject the terms and insist on the fugitives being handed over to him—which is what actually happened. So, that night, Garibaldi, Forbes, Ugo Bassi, Hofstetter and some 200 of the Red Shirt rank and file slipped out through the gate of the capital along a mountain path to the northward. The rest of his men decided to stay in San Marino. Garibaldi tried to persuade Anita to stay in San Marino too where the Captain General had promised to take care of her, but she insisted on going with her husband.

Led by a San Marinesi named Zani, the little band climbed silently down the steep slopes of Mt. Titano in the moonlight till they reached the banks of the river Marecchio which, in summer, is a tangle of sandbanks, stones and isolated pools of water. On the far side, another steep climb faced them and then another and another, over dried, pebbly watercourses, steep ravines, rugged hills. One of the watercourses they crossed was Caesar's famous Rubicon. It, too, was dry. Soon, however, they were once more among olive trees, vineyards, orchards and cornfields. Garibaldi, Forbes and Anita had not slept for three days and nights. On the last of the three nights Anita was constantly moaning for water which for many hours they could not give her.

They were in the Romagna now, and in sight of the Adriatic, trudging along between vineyards filled with ripening grapes. By evening they reached Cesenatico, a
little fishing port with a canal in the middle of its main street and filled with shallow-draught, one-masted fishing boats called "bragozzi" whose sails are of many colours—scarlet, orange, brown as well as white.

Zani left them on the outskirts of the town and the Garibaldians marched silently to the main square where they roused the sleeping fishermen and ordered them to man the "bragozzi" and put to sea. But a gale was blowing and though willing hands soon towed the vessels down the canal, it was impossible to get them past the jetty—till Garibaldi, the seaman, decided to warp them out. He himself fell into the water while this was being done. His Red Shirts did not know that he could swim and gasped with relief when they saw him toss his chestnut locks away from his eyes and then strike out for the jetty.

Meanwhile, Forbes was on guard at the other end of the town lest the Austrians should arrive and take them by surprise. All went well, however, and before daybreak the little band, divided between thirteen "bragozzi", were on their way to Venice, eighty miles to the northward. The gale had blown itself out, the sun shone and their hopes were high.

None of them realised that a squadron of Austrian warships was blockading Venice.
Out of the Jaws

THE “bragozzi” lumbered slowly on all the day, past Ravenna which had once been a port and is now miles inland, past the huge lagoon of Comacchio, past Comacchio itself, and the tiny harbour of Magnavacca, towards the delta of the Po. Night had fallen by then but the moon was full and they were still in sight of the shore where casual watchers wondered at seeing so many bragozzi in company.

But there was one watcher who did not wonder. His name was Nino Bonnet, a wealthy landowner whose friends had already told him secretly of Garibaldi’s arrival in San Marino. He guessed at once who was on board the “bragozzi”. He knew, too, about those Austrian warships which barred the way to beleaguered Venice. What he did not know was how to warn his friend Garibaldi about them.

When he went to bed that night, he did not undress. He ordered his groom to be ready to harness his “biroccino” (high-wheeled gig) at a moment’s notice.

The distant boom of cannon-fire wakened him about midnight. Within minutes, he was being driven at a gallop along the causeway which connects Comacchio—a sort of pocket-size Venice—with the mainland.

He reached Magnavacca to find Austrian soldiers drawn
up on the pier. So he drove off again along a little-known track which ran between the sand dunes and a marshy lagoon further inland. Stopping after two or three miles to investigate, he saw that ten of the bragozzi had been captured and three driven ashore. Then he saw men scrambling ashore pursued by boatloads of men who were firing at them. To Nino Bonnet’s great relief one of the fugitives was carrying a woman in his arms. He might still be in time to save them.

Among those who were captured that night were Colonel Forbes and his son. They were imprisoned for nearly a year but were finally released. Ugo Bassi got away, only to be captured by the Austrians in Magnavacca and shot. Hofstetter found his way home safely to Zürich. Another Gari-baldian whom we have not met before, Captain Leggiiero, who had been badly wounded during the siege of Rome—perhaps luckily for him—stayed with Garibaldi and Anita because he was unable to keep up with the little group led by Ugo Bassi.

Bonnet, who was not in very good training, panted after Garibaldi praying that he would not miss him in the maze of dunes. The little strip on which the fugitives had landed was only three miles wide by six long and the White Coats from Comacchio might already be combing it, egged on by the price which the Austrian Government had placed on Garibaldi’s head. And there was a marsh on the far side of the strip in which he might easily drown if he was not captured first.

They met almost by chance. Bonnet, too out of breath to speak, held out his hand. Garibaldi looked at him for a moment before he recognised him. “Bonnet,” he exclaimed
... And, before he could say any more, stiffened. There was somebody else hovering in the background. Was he another friend? Or a foe?

He turned out to be a beachcomber, named Baramoro, a man without a penny. But Bonnet knew he was to be trusted. "Take my friends to that straw-roofed hut on the far side of the marsh," he said, pointing. "Don't let the White Coats see you. I will rejoin you as soon as I can." Then he hurried off towards the "bragozzi" to fetch some papers Garibaldi had left behind. But the Austrian long boats got there before him, and fired at him, so he had to turn back.

Meanwhile, Baramoro had escorted the three fugitives to the edge of the marsh. They could hear the White Coats shouting to one another as they searched the dunes. Baramoro knew a safe way to the hut through the high reeds. So did Bonnet. But not the Austrians.

Bonnet arrived to find Garibaldi and Leggiero both dressed as peasants. Anita pleaded to be left behind. But Garibaldi refused to go on without her. Between them, they managed to carry her to a farm a little further inland where the biroccino was waiting. There they saw White Coats coming towards them and hid hastily in the farm. Presently the White Coats turned back towards the sand dunes and after a while Bonnet led the fugitives to another farm on the edge of the Comacchio lagoon. That night, boatmen whom Bonnet had hired, rowed the three fugitives between low islands which were often miles long and only a few feet across. But when they reached the causeway, instead of carrying their boat across it and rowing on, the boatmen took fright and rowed back to Comacchio.

Fortunately, it was Bonnet and not the Austrians who
heard about it and soon two other boatmen were rowing the fugitives to a house standing in vineyards close to the famous pine forests of Ravenna. Anita was unconscious now and that evening she died. Close by, in some other sand dunes, she was buried.

The tired but indomitable Bonnet arranged for the two survivors to be passed from one patriot household to another—just as our airmen who were shot down in France were handed on during the Second World War. Once, while they were lying behind some bushes, the White Coats walked past on the other side. On another occasion their guide plied the guards of a road-block with liquor till they were too sleepy to prevent Garibaldi and Leggiero from walking openly past them.

On the Tuscan border, Bonnet handed over his charges to Don Giovanni Verita, parish priest of Modigliano where three lovely valleys meet in the eastern foothills of the Apennines. They were behind schedule by this time and when the priest conducted them along rocky paths across several rivers to the next rendezvous, the guide who was to meet them had given them up in despair and gone home. The rendezvous was on a main road along which Tuscan soldiers were constantly passing. It was no use, as well as unsafe, to wait, so Garibaldi actually bought a peasant’s cart and they drove on southwards through thick woods across the watershed in the direction of Florence. Garibaldi had been there a year previously and when they stopped at an inn for coffee, the landlord’s daughter, Teresa Baldini, immediately recognised him. “Take care,” she warned. “They are looking for you.”

She had scarcely got to the kitchen to make the coffee when a party of soldiers entered, sat down at the same table
as Garibaldi and roughly ordered “Garibaldi’s wife” (as they called Teresa) to serve them. The room was small and dark so there was a lamp on the table. Garibaldi took out a cigar, handed another to Leggiero, lifted up the lamp, lit them and then replaced the lamp on the table so that their faces were in shadow. When Teresa brought the coffee they drank it and went on smoking till the soldiers left.

That night, Teresa’s father led them across the mountains to Mangona where he left them, not daring to go further after daybreak. It was raining so they took refuge in an inn which was also a flour mill. They found a stranger there, named Enrico Sequi, who was also sheltering from the rain and who, like Teresa, recognised Garibaldi at once, though the miller didn’t. Finding that Garibaldi intended to go back to his native Piedmont by land, Sequi warned him that every possible route was guarded. “Trust me,” he said. “My friends and I can get you safely to the Maremma marsh and find you a fishing boat which will land you safely in Piedmont.” When Garibaldi agreed, he left saying he would come back as soon as he could.

Garibaldi and Leggiero spent the rest of that day with the miller and his family wondering whether Sequi really would come back and, if so, whether it would be with the police. However, when he did arrive, at nightfall, it was with a four-wheeled carriage in which they drove to the railway station at Prato, halfway between Florence and Pistoia on the line to Bologna which my father’s engineer friends were still building seven years afterwards.

Several of Sequi’s friends were waiting at the railway station and they conferred with Garibaldi in the waiting room for a long time while a Tuscan sentry stood at the door watch-
ing them. Then Garibaldi and Leggiero drove in another carriage under the shadow of the city wall out into the country to the river Arno which they crossed by a sentried bridge at Empoli. Forty miles in six hours without a single hold-up.

A party of Tuscan soldiers entered

Another carriage met them at Empoli, but the next stage of their journey was most unpleasant. It took eleven hours and wherever they stopped to change horses, inquisitive eyes peered at them through the windows and harsh voices demanded their names. The coachman cursed the inquisitors and tried to drive them away but they only pressed closer. Whether they knew who the passengers were is not certain. But the coachman did not, though he became suspicious when Garibaldi, having heard someone say there were
soldiers in the next village, insisted on making a détour to avoid them. At first the coachman refused but finally he consented.

About midnight on 27 August, 1849, he drew up at the house of an old man named Girolamo Martini in the fashionable Tuscan spa called Bagno al Morbo. Garibaldi had a letter of introduction to him but, for obvious reasons, it did not mention his name. Martini looked him up and down suspiciously till Garibaldi said, quite loud: "I am Garibaldi." The old man quickly led him inside and said: "Courage, General. All will come right again."

For greater safety, Martini sent his two guests to a small village named San Dalmazio, high in the mountains in the direction of Siena, where they stayed four days, guarded day and night by Martini's friends. Then, on the evening of 1 September they walked a mile or so across the rocks to where horses were waiting to carry them to Castelnuovo. There they found a carriage in which they rode to Casa Guelfi, an isolated farmhouse in the Maremma marsh close to the coastal high road which runs from Pisa to Rome. Beyond the marsh lay—the sea.

Early next morning six men, one of whom was lame, started to walk across some swampy meadows towards the canal which drains away the surplus water. They were dressed as sportsmen out for a day's shooting. Whether they felt like sportsmen is another matter. An unexpected visitor at the Casa Guelfi during the night had asked to see Garibaldi so it was clear that his presence was no secret. And there were two hostile coastguard stations within a mile, with another, smaller, guard-post even nearer. But all three, fortunately, were out of sight.
Straight ahead of the "sportsmen" was the Isle of Elba. On their left, were forest-clad hills nursing a little town named Scarlino which was almost buried in a grove of olive trees. They could hear its church bells from time to time across the flat, open ground.

Crossing the canal by a little foot-bridge, they came to a glade through a forest of oaks. Beyond the glade was a low tangle of ever-green bushes, so thick that it took them two hours to force their way a few hundred yards. Around them, they could see the heads and horns of white cattle and hear the grunting of pigs. Here and there, too, they saw the heads and shoulders of tall, cloaked shepherds and swineherds with big calling-horns hanging round their shoulders to summon their flocks and herds together when it was time to go back to Scarlino in the evening.

At last the party of six reached a path which soon led them to a tiny secluded bay. The fishing vessel they were expecting was not there!

There was nothing they could do—except wait and hope for the best. While his companions sat worrying, Garibaldi took off his boots and paddled as excitedly, and as care-free, as a child.

When the boat at last rounded the point and it was time to say goodbye, Garibaldi said to his four guides: "Nothing can repay you for what you have done for me."

One of them, named Pina, replied: "A piece of your handkerchief is reward enough for each of us. We will preserve it as an heirloom for our children."

A few minutes later, the two fugitives were on board the fishing boat where Garibaldi stood waving till they had rounded the point and were out of sight.
THREE days later, on 5 September, 1849, the fishing smack landed her passengers at Portovenere, a little village near the naval port of La Spezia from which Byron swam one day to visit Shelley who was living on the other side of the bay.

The news that Garibaldi was safe spread like a forest fire along the Ligurian coast, causing so much excitement that the Piedmontese Government began to fear that either the French Government, or the Austrian, or both, would insist on the hero of the Rome "rebellion" being handed over to them for punishment, which meant, of course, that he would be shot as a traitor.

The King of Piedmont had been forced to abdicate in favour of his son after his defeat by the Austrians in the previous year and the new king, Victor Emmanuel II, secretly sympathised with Garibaldi but did not dare say so. Fortunately Garibaldi understood his difficulties and when the police came to arrest him at Chiavari on 6 September it was he who appealed to the angry crowd not to try to rescue him. A few days later, when the Piedmontese Parliament passed a resolution declaring that Garibaldi’s arrest and impending exile were contrary to the rights of a citizen of Piedmont, to feelings of patriotism and to the honour of Italy, Garibaldi
wrote to one of the sponsors of the motion: “I have no cause for complaint. This is a time for being resigned. I sail tomorrow for Tunis.”

Greatly relieved at Garibaldi’s attitude, the young king felt strong enough to let him spend a few hours with his mother and motherless children at Nizza before he embarked. An enthusiastic crowd of relatives and friends met him and literally carried him from the jetty to his home.

The Bey of Tunis was too afraid of France and Austria to let him land so he was put on shore at Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia, from which he was hastily moved to the little island of Maddalena where he spent a month. Maddalena lies in the strait between Sardinia and Corsica and was one of the places the British fleet under Nelson had sheltered in from storms during the Napoleonic wars. It is well away from normal shipping routes so Garibaldi was able to receive many visitors anxious to discuss plans to repair the disasters of the previous year. He made the same reply to all of them: “Wait. In ten years it will be our turn.”

From Maddalena, Garibaldi was taken to Gibraltar. But the British Governor told him he could only stay a fortnight and he began to wonder whether he would not be forced to roam the seas for ever, like the fabled Flying Dutchman. Then, unexpectedly, the Piedmontese Consul in Tangier risked official displeasure and invited him to stay in his own house for as long as he pleased. He was there six months, spending much of his time writing the story of his adventures in South America in which his dead wife, Anita, plays a principal part. He also busied himself repairing sailing boats—and making cigars. Someone gave him a dog, Castor, with whom he used to go on long treks through the mountains
during which they both slept in the open air and lived on the
game Garibaldi shot—principally rabbits and, occasionally,
a wild boar.

During this period, Garibaldi hoped he would be allowed
to take command of a merchantman in the Mediterranean
in spite of the fact that he was a rebel in the eyes of every
Government which controlled the Mediterranean ports
except, possibly, those of Great Britain and Greece. Finally,
however, he gave in and decided to go back to the New
World. So, in the spring of 1850 we find him in New York,
not commanding a ship, but making candles. This was
because he had fallen ill during his journey across the Atlantic
and had to be carried ashore, as he said, "like a piece of
luggage". The doctors diagnosed rheumatism but, whatever
the trouble was, his right arm often hung helpless at his side
for the rest of his life. Indeed, there were times when he
could scarcely move any of his limbs. But, whenever an
opportunity to serve his country arose, he somehow overcame
these physical disabilities.

The man for whom he made the candles was an Italian
refugee named Meucci who treated him as one of the family.
Garibaldi spent a year with him during which he learnt to
speak English, besides giving away every penny he earned,
and even the red shirt he had worn in Rome, to refugees who
were poorer than he was. At the end of a year, a Piedmontese
merchant from Genoa insisted on taking him on a trip to
Central America during which he fell ill again—this time
with marsh fever. Then an English sympathiser took him
to Lima, the capital of Peru, and when he had recovered,
another Italian patriot, named Pietro Denegri, offered him
command of an ancient sailing ship named Carmen. Gari-
baldi accepted joyfully and, a few days later on 10 January, 1852 he sailed from Callao for China.

On 19 March, while in mid-Pacific, he dreamed that his mother had died. It was almost a year before the news of her death actually reached him from home but I don’t think he ever doubted that his dream was true. And, throughout that year, he was worrying about his beloved Italy. When he got back to Lima in January, 1853, he wrote to his old comrade-in-arms, Augusto Vecchi: “I thought that distance could diminish the bitterness of my soul. But it is not true. I am athirst for the emancipation of my country. Though my life is sadly the worse for wear, it would be honourably devoted to this holy cause. But the Italians of today think of their bellies, not of their souls. I am terrified at the prospect that I shall never again wield sword or musket for Italy.”

I think his employer, Denegri, understood his feelings for Garibaldi’s next voyage took him round the dreaded Cape Horn (there was no Panama Canal in those days) to New York. When he arrived there, six months later, Denegri offered him command of a three-masted schooner, the *Commonwealth*, bound for Newcastle-upon-Tyne. At Newcastle he had two even more pleasant surprises. First, a deputation of English miners met him on his arrival and formally presented him with a sword of honour, subscribed for (as their leader Joe Cowen said in his speech) “by the pennies of some hundreds of working men”.

Joe went on: “Each penny was contributed not only voluntarily but with enthusiasm. Each penny represents a heart which beats true to European freedom.” Incidentally, threepence in those days was the price of two oysters.

Garibaldi replied: “As one of the people, a workman like
yourselves, I value very highly these expressions of your esteem ... Italy will one day be a Nation and its free citizens will know how to acknowledge all the kindness shown to her exiled sons in the days of her darkest troubles.”

The second surprise was closely connected with the first: he was to load the Commonwealth with coal and take her to Genoa! It was clear, in fact, that King Victor Emmanuel and his new Prime Minister, Count Cavour, were getting ready to renew their efforts to expand the Kingdom of Piedmont and Sardinia into the Kingdom of all-Italy and that they needed the help of Garibaldi and his sword of honour. So they had secretly arranged with Denegri to send him back.

Garibaldi arrived in Genoa to find his countrymen arguing fiercely about their Government’s decision to join Great Britain and France in the Crimean War against Russia. Many said “What has the Crimea, tucked away in the Black Sea, got to do with us Piedmontese?”

The Government could not reply: “We’re not in the least interested in the Crimea. What we’re trying to do is to gain the sympathy—and perhaps the active support—of Great Britain and France in helping us drive the Austrians out of Lombardy and Venetia when the time is ripe.”

Garibaldi came down firmly on the Government’s side. “Italy,” he declared (note that he did not say “Piedmont”) “should lose no opportunity of unfurling her flag on any battlefield which may recall to the remembrance of European nations the fact of her political existence.”

So, Piedmont sent a contingent of 17,000 “Italians” to the Crimea where they earned golden opinions among their British and French comrades-in-arms thereby winning valuable political support for the cause of Italian unity.
It happened that, in the autumn of 1855, Garibaldi's brother Felice died, leaving his tiny fortune of about £1,400 to his brother, Giuseppe, who used £360 of it to buy the northern half of the island of Caprera which lies only a few miles from Maddalena where Garibaldi had spent the first month of his exile. To look at, Caprera was (and still largely

Garibaldi's villa on the isle of Caprera

is) a little wilderness of grey rock fifteen miles in circumference dotted with rather stunted trees and dark green brushwood. But look closer and you will find unexpected crannies in which orchids, rosemary, asphodel and tamarisk flourish as well as a few cultivated patches. In those days, there was only one real road in Sardinia, running from Cagliari to Porto Torres in the northwest. So the islands in the northeast were remote, inaccessible places. Indeed, the only
inhabitants of Caprera were an Englishman and his wife, named Collins, and the descendants of a brigand named Ferracioli who had fled from Tuscany 150 years previously to escape justice.

Garibaldi got on famously with the brigand’s descendants but the pigs and goats belonging to the Collins’ soon scented out the vegetables he planted and his relations with their owners suffered accordingly—all the more so as Garibaldi’s cow retaliated in kind. In the end, Garibaldi, like Balbus, built a wall right across his half of the island, helped by the numerous visitors who came from the mainland to consult him. His visitors were also conscripted to help build the flat-roofed South American-type villa which replaced the tent he, and his son Menotti, started with. Garibaldi was not such a good builder as Sir Winston Churchill, but parts of the wall are still there, hidden in some places by a little pinewood. Most of the villa has been rebuilt and a Garibaldi museum has been added to it. Down by the beach there is a village, connected to Maddalena now by a causeway. Nearby is a statue of the hero and his grave.

I think Garibaldi was happy in Caprera where, in those pre-radio days, he was away from the political arena which always maddened and confused him and which he did not understand. In Caprera, he was back with the Nature he had loved as a boy in the hills above Nizza. His friend Augusto Vecchi tells of how, when a new-born kid had strayed, Garibaldi conscripted all his visitors to help search for it. At about nine o’clock his visitors, tired and wet through, insisted on going back to the house. But Garibaldi, in spite of his crippled arm and painful legs would not give up.

“About midnight,” Vecchi writes, “a voice woke us. The
hero had returned carrying the lost kid in his arms. He took it to his own bed and lay down with it, giving it a piece of sponge dipped in milk to suck. . . . He spent the night caressing and feeding it . . . At five in the morning we found him in the garden planting potatoes. We took our spades and set to work, too."

Garibaldi was not in Caprera, however, when my father passed through Italy on his way to the Crimea—he had gone to London to take over a ship bought by friends in England so that he might try to rescue the unfortunate Neapolitan political prisoners whom the famous English statesman, William Ewart Gladstone, had seen living in dreadful conditions in the penal island of San Stefano—the counterpart of the French Devil’s Island—in the Gulf of Gaeta. The enterprise came to nothing because the ship was wrecked in the North Sea before Garibaldi had even set foot on her. Then his first political mentor, Giuseppe Mazzini, tried to persuade him to take help to the revolutionaries in Sicily. Garibaldi agreed at once on condition that they asked him themselves. They did not do so at that time, so he went back to Caprera.

He was still there when the first-fruits of Cavour’s Crimean venture began to ripen. The first sign actually came from Paris on 1 January, 1859 when the Emperor Napoleon III informed the Austrian Ambassador that he regretted his relations with the Emperor Franz Josef were not as good as he wished—he meant: because of Austria’s behaviour in Italy, but did not actually say so.

This deliberate bombshell was followed nine days later by one from Count Cavour who reminded the Piedmontese Parliament in Turin of “the cry of suffering which rises to
our ears from so many parts of Italy”. Vague though these statements sound to our ears, the Austrians (no doubt correctly) interpreted them as heralding a joint Franco-Piedmontese invasion of Lombardy so Franz Josef decided to declare war himself without waiting to be attacked. On 27 April, 1859, his troops crossed the Ticino and marched into Piedmont.

It was the moment Garibaldi had been waiting for since 1849 and it came, exactly as he had predicted, ten years after his defeat in Rome. During the previous six weeks he had been urgently calling on his veterans from that disastrous campaign to rally to his standard. Using them as officers and non-commissioned officers, he soon had three regiments of volunteers, each one thousand strong, ready to take the field. They were not irregulars this time, but a branch of the regular Piedmontese army and wearing its uniform instead of red shirts, with Garibaldi himself dressed in the uniform of a general. It is true that their muskets were antiquated—except for fifty carried by the “Genoese carabineers” who brought their own rifles with them and acted as what we would now call snipers and scouts. As for the rest, well, Garibaldi did not think much of muskets. He preferred bayonets.

Another volunteer who brought his own rifle was J. W. Peard, that bearded giant of 6 ft. 4 ins. from Oxford who in due course became famous as “Garibaldi’s Englishman”. A group, known as “the gentlemen of Milan” had smuggled themselves out of Lombardy, getting their name from the fact that most of them were the sons of noblemen and could afford horses. The rest of the 3,000 all rode “the horses of St. Francis” which meant that they went on foot—as we do
when we ride Shanks’s pony. Most of them were students, artisans, farmers, professional men, and boys who had run away from school. Most of them came from towns and were unused to physical exercise. Their officers had learnt the art of war while trying to avoid capture. Collectively, they were known as the Cacciatori delle Alpi which corresponds to the name of the famous French regiment, the Chasseurs Alpins. And in spite of their manifest and manifold disadvantages they soon proved themselves to be invincible.
Back in the Alps

When Cavour first asked Garibaldi to raise the Cacciatori, Garibaldi said to his friend Mercantini who was a composer: "Write me a hymn for my volunteers." Ten days later, "Garibaldi's hymn" was a best seller.

An English version of the first verse, published in G. M. Trevelyan's book, Garibaldi and the Thousand, runs as follows:

The tombs are uncovered, the dead come from far,
The ghosts of our martyrs are rising to war
With swords in their hands and laurels of fame
And dead hearts still glowing with Italy's name.
Come join them! Come follow, O youth of our land!
Come fling out our banner and marshal our band!
Come all with cold steel and come all with hot fire!
Come all with the flame of Italia's desire!
Begone from Italia! Begone from our home!
Begone from Italia, O stranger, begone!*

Trevelyan commented: "In the coming years (this hymn was) destined to resound on the battlefields of Italy from the Alps to the Sicilian mountains and to become, in effect, the National Anthem."

* Punctuation modernised.
Within six weeks the Cacciatori went into battle with the hymn on their lips as they stood side by side with the Piedmontese regulars, holding the Austrians till the French army came to their aid across the Mt. Cenis Pass—on foot because the railway tunnel was still unfinished. Fortunately, the weather was stormy and hindered the Austrian commander, General Gyulai, from getting his supplies across the river Ticino.

On 21 May, 1859, the Piedmontese felt able to take the offensive and the honour of making the first attack was given to the Cacciatori delle Alpi. They launched it from the southern end of Lake Maggiore where the Ticino, swollen by many Alpine tributaries, swirls out of the lake on its way to the great Lombard Plain and its junction with the Po. This was the region in which Garibaldi had fought—and lost—eleven years previously. He used that bitter experience as a spur to success on this occasion.

As usual, he started with a feint, sending orders openly to the mayors of Arona and Meina on the west bank of Maggiore to collect food for his men to use when they arrived. So, all the local inhabitants, and even the Cacciatori themselves, believed he was going to march north. Actually he did, setting out for Arona just before dark on 22 May. The candles and oil lamps of the little town were already in sight when there came a whispered command: Halt. And then another: No smoking or talking. Then the whole column wheeled south along the road to Casteletto. The clocks were striking midnight when they reached it.

At Casteletto, they found a number of lake barges which had been collected one by one on the previous day under the very prows of the armed Austrian patrol boats by Garibaldi's
“Gentlemen of Milan” led by a popular local landowner named Simonetta. Soon an advance-guard was across the river making for the hamlet of Sesto Calende where there was an Austrian garrison of fifty who were captured to a man while still in bed. There was a whole Austrian battalion of a thousand men asleep at Gallarate, ten miles to the south-east. Before they had woken up, all the Cacciatori were across the Ticino and on their way to Varese, which today is a popular tourist centre with magnificent views of the Alps and a flourishing trade in making shoes. In Garibaldi’s time, it was just a richly-colonnaded mediaeval city on a steep hill in the centre of a rich agricultural district with a lake not far away bearing the same name.

The Cacciatori marched on joyously all day along side roads and lanes through steadily-mounting hills lush with sweet chestnuts, oak and fir trees. Hayfields almost ripe for scything and a profusion of spring flowers lined the roadside and, at every Lombard village, the whole population turned out to greet their deliverers with cries of “Viva Garibaldi! Viva l’Italia!”

Eleven years previously, they had turned away from him in terror and mistrust.

Night fell before the marchers reached Varese—a night gay with darting fireflies some of which caused great gusts of laughter by entangling themselves in the beard of “Garibaldi’s Englishman”. Just as the column reached Varese, came the rumblings of an Alpine thunderstorm and flashes of lightning lit up the excited crowd that had assembled to welcome them. Soon, everyone was wet through but took no notice. If there had been a police cordon it would have stood no chance against those who were determined to embrace
Garibaldi. But the police were Austrian and had run away not only from Varese but from the whole area between lakes Maggiore and Como.

The whole population greeted their deliverers

Garibaldi, however, knew that, tactically, he was out on a limb, twenty miles east of a river which the main force of French and Piedmontese had not yet crossed. So he hastily began to organise the defence of Varese before the inevitable Austrian counter-attack developed. Although Milan was little more than a day’s march away, it did not come till 25
May—at a little hamlet called Lower Biumo which was then just east of Varese but is now part of the town. Garibaldi’s scouts reported the enemy to be in two columns one of which was making for Upper Biumo, a mile to the north, and the other coming from the east, across a flat cornfield dotted with mulberry trees.

The Austrians began their attack with an artillery bombardment to which the Cacciatori could not reply because they had no guns. When the barrage ceased, the Austrian infantry charged towards Lower Biumo whereupon the Cacciatori leapt from their trenches and charged too.

Garibaldi had stationed himself in Upper Biumo. Shortly after the firing began below him his scouts came back to report that the northern Austrian column had disappeared, having apparently lost its way. So Garibaldi galloped down the hill with most of his men behind him to take the other Austrian column in the flank. In a matter of moments, the “White Coats” were in full retreat towards Binago pursued by the triumphant Cacciatori. Garibaldi himself turned back to Upper Biumo in case the “lost” Austrian column turned up again, which it never did. On his way, he met his “Englishman”, furiously angry because he had been unable to keep up, having walked all the skin off his feet. Someone lent him a horse.

This little victory so impressed the Austrian Commander-in-Chief, General Gyulai, that he detached three brigades—11,000 men with many guns—to deal with the Cacciatori whose success was making them a serious threat to his lines of communication. Rumour had magnified Garibaldi’s force from 3,000 to over 20,000, and it was clear that the whole of Lombardy would revolt if it was not destroyed.
Although the main Franco-Piedmontese army had still not moved, Garibaldi now determined to push ahead—this time to Como where the Austrians were concentrating before attacking him again. And this time it was he who marched in two columns, the smaller of which went openly, and not too fast, along the main road through Olgiate while he himself led the other swiftly along by-paths towards the mountain pass of San Fermo north-west of Como town. The Austrian commander, General Urban, soon discovered the Olgiate column, believed it to be the main one, and sent his three brigades to meet it at Camerlata, two miles south of Como, leaving only a handful of Hungarians to guard San Fermo.

At about four in the afternoon of 27 May, the Garibaldians charged up the smooth western slope of the pass and though the Hungarians resisted for a while, they were soon fleeing helter-skelter down the steep eastern side where a road zig-zags down a near-precipice to Como itself. General Urban hastily switched his main force from Camerlata to try to dislodge the triumphant Cacciatori but they failed and, by dusk, the Austrians were in full retreat towards Como.

Let Garibaldi’s Englishman tell what happened next—as he did in the *Cornhill Magazine* of January and June, 1908, nearly half a century later:

“Just as the sun had gone down and it began to get dusk . . . Garibaldi rode to the front with his staff, with the peak of his cap pulled down close on his eyes, the only indication he ever gave of his thoughts being more intensely occupied than usual. It was as usual a barometer of his feelings, as the working of the stump of Nelson’s
Stamps of the Republic of San Marino, the tiny 1600-year-old Republic near the Adriatic where Garibaldi took refuge in 1849.
(Above) Barricades in a street of Palermo, 27th May 1860, on which day Garibaldi ordered the attack on the town. (Below) The meeting of Victor Emmanuel and Garibaldi at Jeano, 1860.

(Above) The farmhouse near Ravenna in which Garibaldi hid after escaping from the Austrians at the end of his retreat from Rome. (Below) Todi, the town perched on a hill through which the Garibaldians passed during their retreat from Rome.
Calatafimi. From their vantage point on the hill, the citizens watched the progress of the battle in which Garibaldi declared "Here we make Italy or die!"
arm. Slowly our whole body began to move. As we descended the road, darkness began to close in. Everybody expected some hot work before we should be in Como (and) as we got nearer . . . the men were careful in arranging the position of their canteens and anything that might make a noise . . . Not a footfall was to be heard. The silence became almost painful. In this way the first of the houses of the suburb were reached. The inhabitants instantly, as the column advanced, showed lights at their windows. They began to cry 'Viva Garibaldi', but someone would run over immediately and beg them to remain silent."

Thus, tensely and cautiously, the Cacciatori advanced to Como itself, expecting all the time to be met with a hail of fire from those 11,000 Austrians with their artillery. But, instead (to return to Peard's description), they were met by "a dense mass of figures and . . . a deafening shout: 'Viva l'Italia! Viva Garibaldi!' The people were wild with delight. Men with torches marched on either side of his horse and old and young rushed forward kissing his feet and his clothes. Old men with tears streaming down their faces, and young girls threw their arms round our necks and saluted us as their deliverers."

G. M. Trevelyan, in his description of the liberation of Como, mentions that "even the men whom Bixio had too often cursed and beaten with the flat of his sabre came to tell him that they loved him after having followed him in battle that day."

Bixio, so gentle with his family, and a real holy terror to his men, will be heard of again.

The almost bloodless capture of Como, spectacular enough
in itself, had a decisive effect on the whole campaign. General Gyulai had to face the possibility of Garibaldi’s cutting all communication between Milan and Austria whether over the Stelvio Pass (north-east of Lake Como) or through South Tirol (Alto Adige) or even across the Tarvisio Pass on the direct road between Venice and Vienna. So he sent a whole army corps with cavalry and artillery to wipe the Cacciatori off the map once and for all. He was correspondingly weaker when the Piedmontese army attacked him at Palestro on 30 May and drove him back across the Ticino.

But, on 28 May Garibaldi in Como had at least as good reason to fear being cut off as General Gyulai had. So he decided to go back to Varese. And, indeed, when he arrived at Campo dei Fiori—the Field of Flowers—a hill 4,000 ft. high overlooking Varese with a glorious view of the mountains from the Maritime Alps as far as the St. Gotthard, General Urban had just started to bombard the undefended town in reprisal for the help its citizens had given to Garibaldi. This was on 30 May and when Urban heard of the Austrian defeat he withdrew hastily, while Garibaldi, for the same reason, was able to go back to Como. He was still there on 5 June when news reached him that the French had crossed the Ticino at last and defeated General Gyulai at the battle of Magenta.

Without wasting a moment, Garibaldi embarked his men on the lake steamers which he had captured and they were in Lecco at the southern end of the eastern arm of the lake by nightfall on 6 June, again threatening the Austrian communications. By the next day they were in Bergamo just below the first foothills of the Alps and now a city of over 100,000 inhabitants with important silk and cotton industries
but then an ancient "free commune" fretting against sub-
jection to the Austrians. Here he was parallel with, and only
a few miles north of, the Austrian army retreating towards
Venetia. Nevertheless, he pushed on as rapidly as possible
to Brescia, thirty miles due east and not far from the shores
of Lake Garda itself where Lombardy ends and Venetia
begins. Brescia had revolted against the Austrians once before
—in 1848, at the time of Garibaldi's previous, and disastrous,
Alpine campaign. He was determined that those historic, and
tragic, ten days should not be repeated.

To get to Brescia, however, he had to make a night march
through country occupied by the troops of General Urban
who had excellent reasons for wanting to get even with him.
So, according to Alexandre Dumas the elder, writer of The
Three Musketeers and The Count of Monte Cristo, he slipped
off the main road by a track which winds along the slopes of
Mt. Orfano between Brescia and Lake Iseo. Suddenly (says
Dumas) he drew rein and began to listen intently. His staff
stiffened automatically. What had he heard? Urban's
cavalry? Or his guns? On their way to intercept them?

Then Garibaldi, in his deep, mellow, thrilling voice,
remarked: "How beautifully that nightingale sings!"

It is only right to add that Dumas was not present himself.
But he was with Garibaldi during his expedition to Sicily in
the following year which is described in the next chapter.

When Garibaldi reached Brescia, his part in the campaign
suddenly petered out—he was ordered to take his triumphant
Cacciatori to the Valtellina, a mountainous region near
the Swiss frontier on the upper reaches of the Adda, the
river which widens out to become Lake Como. The alleged
reason was that the Austrians were said to be planning to
invade Lombardy through the Stelvio Pass. But I think the real reason was that some members of the Piedmontese Government, not the King, were afraid he might proclaim himself President of Italy.

Such fears were not surprising. Giovanni Venosta, who was a minor official in the Valtellina at the time, wrote afterwards: “When Garibaldi passed through a village ... you would not have said he was a General but the head of a new religion surrounded by a crowd of fanatics. Women, as enthusiastic as the men, brought their babies for him to bless and even to baptise. To the crowds which followed him he would say in that beautiful voice which was one of the secrets of his charm: ‘Come with me! He who stays at home is a coward. I offer you toil, hardship and battles. We will conquer or die’. At these words, enthusiasm mounted till it became delirium.”

Garibaldi was known to be a republican so why didn’t he take advantage of the people’s adoration? Because he was afraid he would split Italy into two camps thus making it much harder to win independence. And because he had promised King Victor Emmanuel he would not do so. I think the King knew he would keep his word. But Cavour the Prime Minister was afraid he wouldn’t.

Garibaldi was still at Sondrio, the capital of the Valtellina, when news came that the Austrians had counter-attacked the French and Piedmontese at Solferino on 24 June. The slaughter was so immense that the Austrian and French emperors decided to make peace without consulting King Victor Emmanuel. Count Cavour was so angry that he urged the King to continue the war alone and he resigned when the King refused. To Garibaldi’s disgust, the terms of peace not
only left Venetia in Austrian hands but also stated that the other parts of Italy which had driven their rulers out must take them back. They even declared that there should be an Italian Federation ruled by the Pope.

The two Emperors proposed but it was the men-in-the-street who decided. The people of Tuscany, Modena and Parma declared that they would fight rather than have their dukes back. The Emilians and Romagnuols mobilised to fight the Swiss mercenaries who came to restore the temporal power of the Pope. All of them said they wished to join Piedmont and not the proposed Papal Federation.

At this point, the British Government suddenly came out strongly on the side of Piedmont, supported now by The Times which began to praise Garibaldi whom it had described as Italy’s “worst enemy” ten years previously. A new Ministry, under Lord Palmerston, had recently come to power. Two of its leading members, Lord John Russell and William Ewart Gladstone, were strongly pro-Italian. Indeed, Gladstone had been so horrified by what he had seen of the treatment of political prisoners in Neapolitan gaols that he published a series of letters about it. And when Lord John Russell as Foreign Secretary declared in Parliament that it was “the policy of Her Majesty’s Government to let the Italian people settle their own affairs”, the Piedmontese Minister is said to have thrown his top hat in the air. He believed, and so did the two Emperors, and Pope Pio Nono, that Lord John meant that England would not intervene herself but would see that nobody else did. If necessary by force. And Great Britain was strong enough in those days to make the use of force against her a highly dangerous business.

So Italy was left alone to continue working out her destiny.
The Tuscans at once invited Garibaldi to help them keep the Swiss mercenaries out of Emilia and Romagna. He gladly accepted and, in August 1859, was able at last to pay a visit to the tomb of his beloved Anita who was buried near Ravenna. Then, when the mercenaries did not attack, he decided to attack them. But King Victor Emmanuel wrote urgently to dissuade him and he obeyed.

A few weeks later, he went back to Caprera ignoring all the invitations people showered on him to start a revolution somewhere—in Venice, in the States of the Church, in Naples and, especially, in Sicily where revolutions were endemic.

Cavour went back to office soon after Lord John Russell had cleared the would-be interveners out of the ring and in April 1860, Garibaldi was horrified to hear that he had persuaded the King to hand over Nizza and Savoy to France in return for permission to include Tuscany, Modena, Parma and the papal province of Emilia in the Kingdom of Piedmont. He hurried to Turin to try to prevent the deal going through and, when he failed, he threatened to mobilise his Cacciatori to destroy the ballot boxes in which the votes of the so-called referendum were to be deposited. Then he was reminded that he had agreed to go to Sicily “with joy, with delight” as soon as the Sicilians themselves “joined themselves indissolubly to our programme: Italy and Victor Emmanuel.”

Fortunately for the ideal of Italian unity, a revolutionary band which rebelled against the Bourbon dynasty in the Sicilian capital, Palermo, on 4 April, 1860 under a plumber named Francesco Riso did this to the letter. Nevertheless, Garibaldi hovered between the two projects for a month. I
think it was at this time that he replied to someone who asked him what he was going to do: "If my shirt knew, I should burn it". Bixio strongly urged him to go to Sicily. So did Sir James Hudson, the British Minister in Turin. In the end, he did.

If ever there was a crazy adventure, this was it. Garibaldi had no ships to take him there—not even the unlucky thirteen “bragozzi” he had commandeered to take him to Venice. He had no arms, unless he could persuade the “traitor” Cavour to give him some. He had no uniforms for the men he proposed to take with him and he had practically no money. Furthermore, between him and his destination were the Neapolitan, and French, possibly even the Piedmontese, navies. The first two would certainly hang him from a suitable yard-arm if they caught him—the Neapolitans for obvious reasons; the French because he was toying with the idea of trying to drive their garrison out of Rome as well as because of his opposition to their being given his beloved Nizza. As for the Piedmontese, though they secretly sympathised with him, they could not afford to do so openly. When the expedition started, the French and Austrian Emperors both denounced it. Bismarck, the famous “Iron Chancellor” of Prussia said that, if he had had any warships in the Mediterranean, he would have stopped “this piracy”. The Tsar said the same.

However, Garibaldi had now told his shirt (without burning it) and he at once started making active preparations which he tried to keep secret. Sending for a friend named Fauché, agent of the Florio Rubattino Shipping Co., he said frankly: “I need ships.” Fauché, without telling his employers, offered him two, adding: “You must come and take
them.” Both were steamers: the Piemonte, built in Glasgow, of 180 tons and the Lombardo, built in Leghorn, 238 tons.

Garibaldi then left Genoa where the ships were berthed and went to live at Quarto where Augusto Vecchi had lent him a villa. Quarto is now called Quarto die Mille (Thousand) in honour of the part it played in subsequent events and there is a monument at the spot from which the expedition started. From Quarto, Garibaldi sent secret messages to his Cacciatroî delle Alpi who were so excited that they at once told their friends what was in the wind. Meanwhile, his staff officers, Bixio and others, were collecting old muzzle-loading muskets, and carbines while a fund, known as the Million Rifles Fund supplied 200 real rifles. They collected bayonets, too, but mostly not matching ones. Ammunition in the form of powder and shot was packed into boxes so that it could be put on board the two steamers when they were seized which, of course, could not be till the day, or night, on which the expedition started. The guns were packed in cases, labelled “books” but would have been more appropriately called “any old iron” which is all most of them were.

After many postponements the Sicilian “D Day” was finally fixed for 5 May, 1860 and all that afternoon silent crowds lined the road to Quarto to watch—and pray—as little parties of volunteers in plain clothes strolled casually—and self-consciously—down to the rocky coast. Then Bixio took two boatloads of volunteers under cover of darkness to seize the ships in Genoa harbour. The coastguards, unlike the owners, were in the secret, and obligingly concentrated on the other side of the harbour to “intercept” the boarding parties. The crews, who had not been told, were preparing to resist when they heard the name of Garibaldi whereupon
one and all threw themselves heartily into the "cutting-out" business. The engines of Lombardo was less co-operative and the Piemonte had to tow her out of harbour where, after several hours frenzied activity, the engines were induced to function.

The "Thousand" embark for Sicily

However, the ships were already several hours late when they reached Quarto. As soon as they were sighted, rowing boats weighted down to the gunwales with volunteers swarmed round them, and a mad scramble followed as everybody tried to climb up swaying rope ladders at once. Miraculously, no-one was drowned. When the last man was safely on board, Garibaldi asked how many there were.
“With the sailors,” someone replied, “We are more than a thousand.” The expedition has been known as the Thousand ever since.

The muskets had gone aboard with the boarding parties and when the Thousand were mustered next morning to receive them, Garibaldi asked Bixio where the ammunition was. “I hoped you had got it,” Bixio replied. “But it seems that the boats carrying it must have lost their way.”

“We will go on all the same,” Garibaldi replied.

At that moment, I think most of the Thousand would have preferred to go to the bottom. They were being sea-sick.
THE actual number of those who sailed on this madcap expedition was 1,089 and there is plenty of evidence that most of them did not expect to return alive. Roughly, 150 were lawyers, 100 doctors, 100 businessmen and tradesmen, 50 engineers, 30 sailors (many of them captains of merchantmen), 20 chemists, 10 artisans, 3 ex-priests with an unspecified number of government employees, barbers, cobblers, writers, professors, people of independent means (mostly “aristocrats”), and students. There was one woman, the wife of Francesco Crispi, a Sicilian on Garibaldi’s staff. Few were over twenty-five. The youngest, Luigi Biffi, was thirteen. A rather older teenager was the son of a duke whose closest comrade was the son of a Turin shopkeeper. Almost all were from North Italy. Scarcely a dozen were Sicilians.

Being, as we know, without powder and shot, and also, as Garibaldi soon discovered, without food and coal, the Piemonte and Lombardo, had to put in at some port or other as soon as possible. But which? La Spezia, the Piedmontese naval base, was clearly impossible. Leghorn would have been embarrassing for Bettino Ricasoli, the “dictator” of Tuscany, who was having trouble with the Austrians because Tuscany was about to be incorporated in Piedmont. Civitavecchia
was controlled by the French in the name of the Pope.

Garibaldi chose Talamone, an insignificant Tuscan port a few miles south of the Maremma Marsh from which Garibaldi had embarked after his almost miraculous escape from the Austrian warships between Venice and Ravenna in 1848. He knew there was a garrison town, Orbetello, close by and a little harbour named San Stefano just beyond, where there was a coal depot. But could he persuade the commandant of Orbetello, and the superintendent of the coal depot to hand over their keys without orders from their superiors?

Garibaldi’s emissary to Lieutenant-Colonel Giorgini, commandant of Orbetello, was a Hungarian exile named Colonel Türr who boldly asked for every ounce of powder and shot in the arsenal. When Lieutenant-Colonel Giorgini asked him to produce his authority, Colonel Türr replied: “My dear Sir, it shall come from the King himself. But it will take five days to get it, by which time the European Powers, and the Neapolitan fleet, will have intervened against us and I need the ammunition NOW.”

Giorgini replied: “Since you assure me that the King approves, I put the arsenal at your disposal.”

The King certainly did approve, though he could not have said so. Indeed, on that very day Cavour had sent a telegram on his behalf to the Governor of Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia, ordering him to arrest the whole expedition “if it enters a Sardinian port”. Off the record, he then sent another telegram which said: “Do not arrest the expedition at sea—only if it enters a port”. Sardinia being where it is, Cavour knew that Garibaldi was most unlikely to go there. In much the same way, Giorgini was arrested and courtmartialed for the record. And then acquitted.
What little spare time the Thousand had at Talamone, they seem to have spent chiefly in learned discussions about the Etruscan and Roman antiquities which abound there. But mostly, they were loading powder, shot and cartridges on to carts, then transferring them to rowing boats and finally manhandling them on to those two little ships where there was scarcely room for themselves, let alone ammunition, to say nothing of the five pieces of “artillery” which Garibaldi had just managed to scrounge. Two were bronze cannon cast in 1802. One was a “culverin” dating from about the middle of the 18th century. The other two had been adorning the tower of Talamone for a good hundred years. None of them had gun carriages.

The superintendent of the coal wharf proved more reluctant to part than Lieutenant-Colonel Giorgini. But the coaling party was led by Nino Bixio whose “diplomacy” was not like that of Colonel Türr and, after the superintendent had been sufficiently shaken he became notably more co-operative. “Operation Coal” also involved manhandling and by the time it was finished, the civilian suits most of the Thousand were wearing had become decidedly unkempt. The men must have looked most unlikely material to Lieutenant-Colonel Giorgini when he watched General Garibaldi, spick and span in his Piedmontese uniform, drilling them and assigning them to their different units. Garibaldi himself commanded about 300 odd in the Piemonte. Bixio, who now became known as “The Second of the Thousand”, commanded the other 700 in Lombardo. He established his authority, first by throwing a plate at a corporal whom he considered insubordinate and then by summoning everybody on deck where he addressed them as follows: “I com-
mand here. I am everything: Tsar, Sultan, Pope. I am Nino Bixio and must be obeyed like God. If a single one of you dares so much as to shrug his shoulders or think of disobeying, I shall come in my uniform with my sabre in my hand and cut him to ribbons.”

The 700 knew he meant exactly what he said and cheered him to the echo.

They spent 7 and 8 May at Talamone and San Stefano. But Garibaldi wanted to get to Sicily before the French and Austrian navies joined the Neapolitans in their search for the expedition so, on the afternoon of 9 May, the two overcrowded and unarmed little ships could have been seen steaming at top speed (perhaps eight knots) past the rocky island of Giglio and making for the north-west corner of Sicily. They were right out in the open sea when night fell, but they did not dare show lights and steamed on hoping that they would not get too far apart and that Lombardo’s engines would not break down again. They did lose touch with one another once. How they found one another again in the darkness was a near-miracle in those radar-less days. Garibaldi, who knew the shipping routes of the Tyrrhenian Sea, held well away to the west of Cape San Vito and the only living things the expedition sighted till he changed course for the little island of Marettimo was a school of dolphins and some flying fish. Marettimo is the most westerly of the Aegades group which lies near the Sicilian coast between Trapani and Marsala.

Even at this supreme moment when they were approaching their goal, Garibaldi’s shirt still did not know what its wearer was going to do. It was a red shirt again by this time, with his favourite poncho over it, not the general’s uniform he had
Campaign in Sicily, 1860
worn to impress Lieutenant-Colonel Giorgini. And it was tucked inside his creamy trousers instead of hanging loose as when he was in Rome.

The two vessels were in sight of Sicily itself by now, looking rather uneasily at a little ship which had put out from Marsala and was coming towards them under full sail. Garibaldi soon saw she was English so he hailed her: "Are there any Neapolitan warships in harbour?"

"No," was the reply. "They left three hours ago for Sciacca."

"Then I'm right in thinking the two warships I can see are British?"

He was and it was just as well because the warships of any other navy in the Mediterranean would have arrested him. But H.M.S. Argus, commanded by Captain Winnington Ingram, and Intrepid, Captain Marryat (not the writer of those stirring sea stories) left them alone. When the British sailors saw Garibaldi's red shirt they guessed who he was and cheered.

Meanwhile, the Neapolitan warships had completed their routine sweep to Sciacca and were coming back to Marsala. At first, they did not realise what, and who, the two tiny steamers carried. Indeed, it seems probable that Captain Acton, who commanded the leading ship, Stromboli, was misled by the sprinkling of red shirts on the decks into thinking that there were British soldiers on board. At any rate, he did not open fire till two other Neapolitan warships—Capri and Partenope—arrived. Meanwhile, Lombardo had gone aground but she was soon surrounded by rowing boats from Marsala and nearly all the volunteers and crew were on shore by the time the Neapolitans opened fire. Their aim
was so poor that the total casualties sustained by the invaders were one man wounded in the shoulder—and one dog in the leg.

Marsala in those days carried on a flourishing trade with England in wine, which explains the presence of the British warships. Its history, however, goes back to the time of the Carthaginians who founded it in B.C. 356 and called it Lilibeo. All of Sicily’s many invaders had used it as their chief mart for trade with North Africa and the Arabs who captured it in the 7th century A.D. renamed it Mers Ali, the harbour of Ali, which the Sicilians modified to Marsala. Though the Neapolitan Navy used the harbour, they had no land forces nearer than Trapani and Sciacca. Actually, Garibaldi had thought seriously of landing at both these places, not knowing about the garrisons. Indeed, he was on his way to Sciacca when that British sailing ship warned him that the Neapolitan warships had just gone there. Once again, there-
fore, the expedition had been saved by a near-miracle.

By dawn next morning, 12 May, the Thousand were on their way to Salemi, a small town in the mountains overlooking the dusty coastal plain in which Marsala stands. There was no road and very little water and though Salemi was scarcely twenty miles away it took them two days to reach it. The fact that those five museum pieces still had no gun-carriages and had to be carried did not make things easier. But the effort was well worth while. In the course of the next ten days, rumour multiplied the ancient relics into five batteries of excellent field guns with which Garibaldi intended to batter down the defences of Palermo.

As the Thousand toiled upwards through scanty groves of stunted olive trees, little groups of Sicilian revolutionaries rode in to join them. They were known as Squadri which corresponds to our "squadrons" and wore untanned sheepskins and low top-boots, with ancient flintlocks over their saddle-bows. Most of them were under twenty except the leaders, feudal chieftains whose method of fighting was to raid and run back to the wild, unpathed mountains which cover so much of Sicily. They had never heard of the pitched battle type of warfare which the Thousand had learnt under Garibaldi in the Alps. Even if they had, they would have found it difficult to accept orders from northerners because their Italian was even more different from the Italian of North Italy than Glasgow's English is to Dartmoor's. In any case, most of the squadri preferred to see whether the northerners could stand up to the regular soldiers of the Neapolitan army many of whom were not Italians but Germans and Swiss whose trade was fighting and who had up-to-date weapons.
When Garibaldi reached Salemi, he had himself proclaimed Dictator of Sicily and called on the population to rise en masse against their oppressors. Dictator is a word we don’t like nowadays and I think Garibaldi himself would have preferred Regent because he was really fighting on behalf of King Victor Emmanuel. But, owing to the opposition of so many of the Great Powers, he could not proclaim himself Regent without making his King disown him. So, Dictator it had to be because he intended to issue decrees—for example, about paying taxes—binding on the civil population.

But the decrees came later: his immediate object was to find the Neapolitan army and beat it. So, as soon as possible he rode out to reconnoitre the district in which the nearest enemy detachment was said to be, namely, the region round Calatafimi some six miles to the north of Salemi. It consisted of 3,000 infantry with cavalry and artillery in addition but he did not let that worry him.

When he came back, he again did not tell his shirt what he was going to do. Indeed, most of the Thousand, and all the squadri, believed he would take refuge in the inaccessible interior and adopt the hit-and-run raiding tactics the Sicilian rebels had used for generations. But, at dawn on 15 May, 1860, he led the Thousand northward down into a deep tree-filled valley and then up again along the slopes of a smooth, bare hill called Pietralunga which forms the watershed between the intermittent torrents flowing respectively west and north into the sea. Opposite them, scarcely a mile away, on another hill named Pianto dei Romani, they saw the Neapolitans.

The Neapolitans at once charged down their hill, and the
Thousand down theirs which was a gentler slope so some of the Neapolitans got to the bottom first and were on their way up the Pietralunga, firing as they went before the opposing forces met. The Neapolitan skirmishers in front did not like the look of the bayonets flashing in the sunlight which were advancing to meet them so they turned back, thus hindering their comrades from firing at the Thousand who were at their heels.

The slopes of Pianto dei Romani had been made into a series of flat terraces by the local villagers and planted with olive and fig trees, vines, grain crops, beans and other vegetables. The Thousand with 200 of the squadri fought their way up, terrace by terrace, while the rest of the squadri galloped wildly around well out of range firing their blunderbusses into the air at intervals.

It was terribly hard going, with a fresh terrace wall to be scaled nearly every fifty yards and the moment came when Bixio said to his chief: “General, I fear we should retreat.” Garibaldi replied: “Here we make Italy or die.”

They struggled up till they reached the top terrace where they heard a Neapolitan officer order his men to charge. But the charge did not come and when Garibaldi raised himself to look over the terrace wall, a Neapolitan soldier instead of firing, threw a stone at him knocking him over. He leapt to his feet, shouting: “Come on, lads! They’re out of ammunition.” I doubt if he was right, but his men were over the wall and chasing the Neapolitans down the hill before there was time to find out.

One of those who died that day was Luigi Biffi, the youngest member of the Thousand, whose age was thirteen.

That night, the Neapolitans evacuated Calatafimi. As they
passed through Partinico, on their way to Palermo, the local inhabitants fell on them. Those who escaped—a rabble now instead of a disciplined force—were attacked by squadri at Montelepre, five miles further on, so that very few reached Palermo. Their arrival severely shook the morale of the whole garrison. And that night, all around the plain of the Conca d’Oro (the Golden Shell) which rings Palermo with orange, lemon and olive groves, the local inhabitants, and the squadri who roamed there, lit bonfires to encourage the handful of revolutionaries still holding out inside Palermo.

The Thousand did not hurry after the fugitives—Gari- baldi had no intention of hurling his little band of ill-armed patriots against a fortified city with a garrison which outnumbered him by twenty to one. Besides, his men’s clothes were in rags and their boots falling to pieces. So he led them by easy stages to Renda, a mountain pass five miles east of Partinico, where it rained without stopping for three whole days. But, when the sky cleared, they saw Palermo. “Soon we’ll be in Palermo,” Bixio told his men.

On 21 May, however, Garibaldi gave the order to turn their backs on Palermo and make their way into the mountains. Information had reached him that the Neapolitans had dispersed the squadri lurking in the Conca d’Oro and he decided that this time he would lure them into chasing him instead of giving battle at once. It meant leaving his five cannon behind but they turned up again a day or two later—Sicilian mountaineers had slung them on poles and carried them by footpaths over the gaunt hills.

The Thousand spent the first night at Parco where they were less than three miles from their pursuers who were at Monreale. Then Garibaldi turned south, up and up, to
Piana degli Albanesi, a village inhabited by Albanians whose ancestors had been there for 500 years and who still today speak Albanian and belong to the Greek Orthodox faith, not the Roman Catholic. The Neapolitans had reached Parco by this time, so they were still only three miles away as the crow flies.

On the afternoon of 24 May, Garibaldi sent his baggage, his wounded, his five museum pieces and their crews with an escort of Albanian squadri along the road to Corleone, another Arab town, twenty miles away inland at the bottom of a long hill. Soon after nightfall, he gave orders to the main body to follow. The Thousand set out gloomily, with Palermo getting further away at every step, and they remained gloomy for about a mile and a half when Garibaldi suddenly turned off the Corleone road into a side road leading to San Cristina Gela and Martineo. He did not say why, but they soon guessed that his shirt, at any rate, had hopes of being washed in Palermo. Meanwhile, his pursuers thought they were hot on his heels as they hurried along the road to Corleone and they sent off messages to Palermo to say so.

The Thousand bivouacked about midnight hidden in a wood bordering on the pasture land belonging to the village of Chianettu. “Do you see Arcturus,” Garibaldi asked his staff. “I chose it as my guide star when I was a cabin boy. I have never seen it so bright as it is tonight.”

They marched gaily on next morning towards the north coast crossing one ravine after another filled with orchards and olive groves. Soon they were striding through Martineo which stands beneath a cliff supposed to resemble the Rock of Gibraltar. About midnight on 25 May they reached Misilmeri, less than ten miles from unsuspecting Palermo.
About the same time, their "pursuers" were gazing with some surprise at two "cannon" they had just captured near Corleone.

While the Thousand rested in the olive groves and vines of a little hill on which are the ruins of an Arab-Norman castle, Garibaldi was asking the Sicilians whether they would prefer him to retreat to the interior or attack the capital, though he knew the answer because they had been pleading with him to attack for a week. A harassed sentry interrupted the proceedings. "General," he said, "a carriage has just arrived from Palermo with three English naval officers in it."

"Give them my compliments," Garibaldi answered quite unperturbed, "and say I hope they will do me the honour of calling on me."

They did and told him they had come ashore for a picnic. Two American naval officers arrived shortly afterwards on a similar mission. One of them gave Garibaldi a revolver. And hard on the heels of these five came a correspondent of The Times, a Hungarian refugee named Eber, who at once asked to be enrolled in the Thousand. Garibaldi agreed—without "screening" him. Eber then disclosed that, while in Palermo, he had made it his business to find out exactly where the Neapolitan defences were. Most of the garrison, he said, were either at the Palace which was on the west side of the city on the road to Monreale or in the Barracks to the north-east, near the main harbour. The two gates on the Misilmeri side, Eber went on—the Termini and San Antonino gates—were only held by a few hundred soldiers. "And of course, as you doubtless know," he concluded "the Termini 'gate' isn't a gate at all—merely a barricade. Capture that and Palermo is yours."
That evening, the British and American warships in Palermo harbour were buzzing with excitement. So were the British residents. And the Sicilian patriots. Even the political prisoners in the great Vicaria gaol had heard a whisper pass from cell to cell: "Tomorrow Garibaldi will be in Palermo. Tomorrow Garibaldi will be in Palermo." But their guards heard nothing. Nor did General Lanza, the Neapolitan Viceroy. What Garibaldi still kept under his shirt was the fact that he intended to attack Porto Termini. Everybody else believed it was to be Porto Antonino and
someone actually sent Admiral Mundy, the British Commander-in-Chief a message to that effect.

Roughly 750 of the original Thousand took part in the attack, supported by 3,000 Sicilians. They had scarcely one up-to-date weapon between them except Garibaldi’s American revolver which went off of its own accord during the night, though without hitting anybody.

The attackers got within half a mile of the Termini Gate before they were spotted. A confused medley followed at the end of which a handful of men, led by Bixio, raced for the barricade and, throwing themselves to the ground, began to demolish it under a hail of bullets and a cannonade not only from a battery inside the city but also from Neapolitan warships in the harbour. Bixio stopped a bullet with his chest but went on tearing at the barricade’s foundations till it suddenly collapsed enabling him to rush on with his handful, and the bullet, into the heart of the city. Some of the squadri, being accustomed only to hit-and-run tactics, feared to run the gauntlet after him. So Francesco Carbone, a lad of seventeen from Genoa, found a chair, placed it in the middle of the road and sat down on it. “You see how badly they shoot,” he shouted.

Nevertheless, there were some casualties among those he inspired with his own courage—till Bixio came storming back and rebuilt the barricade into a breastwork. He had cut the bullet out of his chest by this time, with his own hand and a knife after which he raged round among the Palermitans telling them exactly what he would do to them if they did not rise against the Neapolitans. None of them understood what he said, which was perhaps just as well. But many followed his example. He was almost fainting from loss of
blood when Garibaldi found him and ordered him to bed. He actually got him to stay there throughout the next three days of bitter street-fighting.

Palermo a hundred years ago was a warren of hovels intersected by two main streets, one running almost north and south and the other east and west. Garibaldi established his headquarters at the Municipality which is near where the two streets cross. The Neapolitans soon found out where he was and rained shells at the place for three days without hitting it once though the building was soon ringed with the fires the shells started. Meanwhile the Palermitans were tearing up the paving-stones for barricades to keep the garrison from breaking out of the Castle and Barracks in which they were besieged.

After three days and nights of continuous fighting, Garibaldi's forces literally had no ammunition left. Moreover, the wild goose-chasers who had been tricked into going to Corleone were on their way back so that things were beginning to look very black indeed. Indeed, Garibaldi was actually communing with his shirt in the Municipality about the advisability of withdrawing to the interior after all when he was told that two Neapolitan officers were approaching under a flag of truce. He gave orders for them to be admitted and they handed him a letter from the Viceroy, General Lanza, which ran in part as follows: "To His Excellency, General Garibaldi. The British Admiral has informed me (it was by semaphore) that he will be glad to receive two of my generals to confer with you at a meeting over which the Admiral will preside provided you will grant them safe-conduct through your lines. I therefore beg you to inform me whether you agree ..."
Having duly noted that he was no longer a bandit but an “Excellency”, Garibaldi came to the conclusion that the Neapolitans were at least as badly off as his men were. Actually they had almost run out of food and wholly out of morale, both of which Garibaldi’s men still had even if they were short of ammunition. So he agreed to a cease-fire.

It had only been in force a short while when shooting started again—the Corleone detachment was trying to batter its way into Palermo not knowing about the truce. The situation was saved by Lieutenant Wilmot, one of the three English picnickers, who stepped between the opposing forces waving his handkerchief and walked calmly over to explain to the Neapolitans under a hail of bullets.

The next near-disaster was when the Neapolitan Navy took pot shots at Garibaldi while he was waiting for a British boat to row him to the conference in Admiral Mundy’s cabin. Garibaldi refused to take cover. But the Bourbonist sailors were just as bad marksmen as the soldiers otherwise the history of Italy’s unification would have been very different.

When Garibaldi and the two Neapolitan generals reached Admiral Mundy’s cabin they were surprised to find three other naval officers there besides Mundy himself. They were the commanders of the American, French and Piedmont ships in Palermo harbour and when the Neapolitan generals made some quite outrageous suggestions for an armistice, Garibaldi did not have to say anything—the “neutrals” said it for him. In fact, the first milestone in carrying out Lord John Russell’s policy of letting the Italians settle their affairs themselves without interference was reached because four independent naval officers 2,000 miles away came to the conclusion that Garibaldi had beaten the Neapolitans and
was entitled to send the entire garrison of Palermo home. They did not consult their Governments, nor the United Nations. They just did what they thought right and a United Italy blossomed from their decision.

But it did not look like that at the time. At first General Lanza rejected the terms of the armistice. Then he accepted them. Then he changed his mind again and went on see-sawing for six long days but without breaking the cease-fire arrangements. Bixio who refused to stay in bed any longer was beside himself with anxiety. He told Garibaldi that the squadri had stolen so many muskets from the Thousand that they only had 390 left. If Lanza finally decided to fight on, he said, the Thousand would be wiped out. Surely it was wiser to retreat to the interior while there was still time. Garibaldi would not listen to him.

At last an armistice was signed and on 7 June, 1860, the Neapolitans marched out of Palermo in two columns, each 10,000 long, watched by Garibaldi’s son, Menotti, on a black horse, and a dozen of the Thousand, all properly dressed by this time in red shirts—thanks, in part to the fact that, according to the 8 November, 1862 issue of the weekly magazine, All The Year Round, edited by Charles Dickens, members of the English rowing club in Palermo wore red shirts which they gladly handed over.

But the Neapolitans only went as far as Mt. Pellegrino on the northern side of the Golden Shell and it was not till 18 June that the last of them left Palermo for Naples, the very day, as it happened, that 2,500 more Red Shirt volunteers under General Giacomo Medici reached Castellamare from Genoa. And, to mark how the political wind had changed since the Thousand sailed, the new arrivals were
escorted to Sicily by a Piedmontese warship, as well as armed with modern weapons supplied by the Piedmontese Government. With them, at this great moment in the rebirth of Italy came the bearded giant J. W. Peard, “Garibaldi’s Englishman”, who was about to earn his place of honour just below the statues of Garibaldi and Anita on the Janiculum Hill in Rome.
The Straits of Messina

BEFORE Peard's great moment came, the "crowning mercy" of Palermo had to be consolidated. The capture of the capital left the Bourbon régime without any effective forces in Sicily except at Messina which is over 160 miles away at the other end of the island. If Garibaldi stayed too long in Palermo, the Messina garrison might be reinforced from Naples and march westwards to re-establish Bourbon authority over the rest of the island. So, on 20 June, Garibaldi's men began to march east and south to anticipate them.

The first column, under Colonel Türr, went straight to Caltanissetta, in the centre of the island, so that he could replenish his stocks of ammunition by making gunpowder with the help of the sulphur deposits for which Caltanissetta is still famous. Then he marched on, without opposition, to Catania, the second largest town in Sicily, over which towers the majestic peak of Etna with its tree-clad lower slopes and huge snow-capped cone above them. Before refrigerators came into use—and before people went to ski there—peasants used to come from all over Sicily during the winter, load the snow on to their mules and store it in cellars and caves to keep their food from going bad in summer.

With Türr's "brigade" went Alexander Dumas the elder
as a free-lance war correspondent and Eber of The Times who actually took command of the Brigade when Türr fell sick. But Eber did not, on that account, stop writing for his paper any more than Winston Churchill did when he was an officer and newspaper correspondent in South Africa during the Boer War of 1899–1901.

Eber did not get to Catania till 15 July and another column, led by Bixio, joined him there a few days later. Bixio had come via Corleone where they recovered the two “museum-piece” guns (now no longer needed). Then he led his men to Agrigento with its steep narrow lanes and famous Grecian temples. When they reached Licata, 20 miles to the south east, Bixio decided to do the next stage by sea. But they only sailed as far as Gela (then called Terranova) which is where the American troops landed when they invaded Sicily during the Second World War. Bixio’s brigade then marched on to Catania without seeing the enemy.

Both these columns were mainly intended to show the tricolour flag of Piedmont and to establish the Dictator’s authority over the civil population. The third column, under Medici, was much stronger and much better armed because its mission was to march as fast as possible along the north coast and try to prevent the Bourbon troops from coming too far west from Messina. With Medici went the “English Regiment”, so-called because most of its officers (but not the men) were English. Colonel Dunne, who commanded it actually joined the Sicilian revolutionaries some time before Garibaldi landed. The rank and file of the English Regiment were Sicilians—a good many of them “corner boys” from the streets of Palermo and lads of thirteen and fourteen who had run away from a Palermo foundling hospital. Both
groups behaved splendidly in the fighting which soon followed.

And so we come to the Battle of Milazzo on 20 July, 1860, which ended Bourbon rule in Sicily. Milazzo stands on a narrow isthmus only fifteen miles east of Messina and when Medici with 2,000 Red Shirts reached Barcellona (not to be confused with Spain’s Barcelona which has factories instead of orange groves) he found that Milazzo castle was occupied by 4,500 Bourbonist troops under Colonel Bosco. Bosco had been ordered to watch Medici but not to attack him. And Medici’s orders were not to attack Bosco. So he took up his position behind one of those too-numerous dry river beds filled with white pebbles and called fiumara and sent a message post-haste to Garibaldi in Palermo. This was on 18 July. On 19 July, Medici’s men were astounded to see an open carriage galloping furiously towards them from Patti, a small port a few miles to the west. In it was Garibaldi.

He attacked at dawn next morning, going out first in front of his men and then turning to beckon them on because most of them, including Dunne’s English Regiment had never been under fire before. About midday when Dunne’s lads were held up by heavy fire through a thick belt of canes down which there was one narrow “ride”, they heard the sound of galloping horse hooves. The next instant Garibaldi was racing down the “ride” on foot, never looking behind him to see if they were following. Years later, one of the Englishmen who was there—his name was Patterson—told G. M. Trevelyan, the historian, that the untried teenagers never halted till they had driven the enemy out at the point of the bayonet. Then there was a counter-attack by a small detachment of enemy cavalry which hurled the
(Right) The Garibaldi Gate at Marsala, the Sicilian port at which Garibaldi landed when leading the Thousand against nearly 50,000 Neapolitan soldiers. (Below) The seafront at Quarto dei Mille, where the Thousand assembled for the invasion of Sicily.
The castle and square of Salemi, where Garibaldi proclaimed himself "Dictator" of Sicily.
Mount Etna from Taormina. The ruins in the foreground are of a Roman temple.
(Left) Monument to Garibaldi on the Janiculum Hill in Rome. (Below) Garibaldi's house in Caprera. Originally built by Garibaldi with the help of friends, it has recently been restored.
English Regiment back and left Garibaldi alone with his aide-de-camp near a small bridge. Both were on foot but they stood their ground and presently the enemy fled. Peard arrived soon afterwards and the English Regiment held the bridge till the battle ended.

Meanwhile, Garibaldi had rowed out to a tiny paddle steamer which mounted ten small guns, swarmed up her mast and guided her close inshore to bombard Milazzo castle which stands on top of a granite “wall” 300 ft. high and could almost have withstood a nuclear missile if they had had such things a hundred years ago. The castle surrendered meekly on 25 July.

Although the Governor of Messina still had at least 12,000 men at his disposal—about three times as many as Garibaldi—he was so shattered by Bosco’s defeat that he agreed to let Garibaldi occupy Messina town so long as he was not molested in the citadel and the arrangement remained in force till the war ended. So, in less than two and a half months from the date of landing, Garibaldi had cleared the whole of Sicily, except one tiny, unremitting corner. And of the 1,089 men who came with him expecting to be killed more than 800 were still very much alive.

But their task was not finished. Somehow or other, they now had to cross the straits in which the whole Neapolitan fleet was concentrated. And, if they did get across, they would then be faced by the main Bourbonist Army of nearly 60,000 men with cavalry and artillery many of whom were well-trained Bavarian, Swiss and north German “mercenaries”. Against these, Garibaldi now had about 5,000 men, no cavalry, about a dozen guns and no warships.

Anything else? Yes, the most important thing of all:
selfless devotion to a cause for which he was ready to die, matchless courage and men who trusted him completely.

At the time, however, the obstacles looked insuperable. Away in the capitals of Europe, governments were planning to stop him. In particular, Emperor Napoleon III was afraid Garibaldi would not halt at Naples but would go on and drive the French garrison out of Rome. So he tried to persuade Lord John Russell to send a combined Anglo-French fleet to prevent Garibaldi and his "bandits" from doing any more harm. He nearly succeeded, but not quite. In addition, Austria was afraid of losing Venetia. The Tsar and the King of Prussia believed that if Garibaldi drove a king out of Naples, it would undermine their own positions.

Garibaldi kept his eyes, and his thoughts, sternly to the problem of crossing the straits. The narrowest part is close to Faro in Sicily (near the whirlpool formerly called Charybdis) and Scilla in Calabria guarded in the time of Ulysses by a seven-headed monster who bent down and devoured sailors. In Garibaldi's time, the guardian was a castle perched on top of a rock rising 250 ft. sheer out of the sea with Neapolitan warships endlessly patrolling in front.

Nevertheless, Garibaldi made his camp at Faro (which means lighthouse) erecting breastworks to protect his dozen guns from the fire of the Neapolitan warships. Then, on the night of 8 August, 1860, some 200 volunteers rowed across, actually passing between the warships, to attack the little fort of Altifiumara, later renamed Fortino Garibaldi, in the narrowest part of all.

The leader was a Calabrian, named Musolino (no relation of Mussolini's) who expected friends inside the fort to open its gates to him. When they did not, the 200 clambered
painfully over the white stones of the fiumara up into the arid Aspromonte Mountains, the last spur of the Apeninnes before they descend in a series of bare, flat terraces and dive beneath the sea. There they met some more of Musolino’s friends, rebels dressed in the traditional Calabrian peasant costume: brimless, sugar-loaf hats with black velvet streamers, white shirts, knee breeches and goat-skin sandals. During the next few days they managed to rush the little port of Bagnara and it took several thousand Bourbonist troops to get them out again.

Meanwhile, Garibaldi at Faro had waited all night for the bonfire which was to show that the two hundred had succeeded. When it did not come, he slipped through the cordon of warships to meet his friends in Sardinia and then hurried back to have another try at crossing the straits. He knew there was no time to waste—Musolino’s exploit at Bagnara had brought the whole Calabrian countryside into open revolt. If the rebellion was crushed before he and his so-called “foreigners” crossed to help it, the Bourbonists would win.

On 18 August Garibaldi arrived unexpectedly at Giardini, a village near Taormina, after driving from Faro across countless fiumare beneath the shadow of Mt. Etna. Bixio was waiting for him with 3,500 men from Catania and that night they embarked on two little unarmed steamers—Torino and Franklin—while the Neapolitan warships patrolled up and down, up and down, in front of Faro at the other end of the straits, where a little flotilla of rowing boats had been assembled to delude them. Even Medici’s own men encamped in the sand dunes outside the town believed that Garibaldi meant to use them. So he did. But not then.
By dawn, the real invasion “fleet” of two was off Melito, the southernmost point in Calabria. Bixio managed to ground the ship he commanded, just as he had done at Marsala, but the “foreigners” soon got ashore somehow on to a deserted, sandy beach rimmed with a desert. Away to their right stood a strange crag with five fingers pointing skywards—the Pentedattilo which Edward Lear, nonsense rhymer and artist, and expert on Marsala wine, loved to paint. It was not till the foreigners were forming up on the beach that the first Neapolitan warship arrived and started to shell them. The rest soon followed. Not only were they too late but they had literally left the coast clear for the Faro flotilla which raced for the mainland with 1,200 of Medici’s men as fast as oars could drive it. The warships met the flotilla on its way back to Faro for more and captured or sunk most of it. But 1,200 of Medici’s best men were already in Calabria and hastening to link up with Garibaldi and Bixio.

Meanwhile, the first invaders, after spending the night in the arid waste behind Melito, were both starving and thirsty having been without food or drink for thirty-six hours—except a few who had drunk seawater without ill effects. But they were in high spirits as they marched across the white headland called Capo dell’ Armi, one of the best known landmarks in the Mediterranean. They were on their way to Reggio and when they reached it at midnight the local National Guards opened the gates for them. The Bourbonist regulars fought for a while like tigers in the streets. Bixio was hit as usual—two bullets this time, both in the same arm. Also as usual, he went on fighting, till Garibaldi saw him and once more ordered him to bed saying: “I suppose any bullet that hits you is made of puff paste!”
As soon as Reggio was in the foreigners' hands, they hurried on to join up with Medici's contingent which they met on 22 August above Piale in a tangle of dry mud-banks dotted sparsely with vineyards amid a sea of cactus. Beneath them lay the straits but the warships had gone—with both shores now firmly in Garibaldi's hands, they had no option. Besides, most of the Bourbonist troops had withdrawn much further north—indeed, there were only 3,500 left in Italy's toe. By dawn on 23 August, these were surrounded and Garibaldi could see that they were ripe for surrender. So he and two of his staff rode down to them. "Soldiers!" he told them, "You and I are sons of Italy. You are free—free to join us or to go home." Most of them chose to go home. All of them had expected to be taken prisoner and treated like vermin till they were released. On their way home, they told everyone that it was Garibaldi's custom to set his prisoners free. Many people had believed (like those of Rocca near Rome) that he ate them. They were prepared to fight to avoid being eaten, but not to avoid being sent home.

Most of the Sicilians (except Dunne's English Regiment) also preferred to go home. But other volunteers were now flocking to Garibaldi's tricolour, including some 500 from England who became known as the British Legion—positively no connection with those who bear that name today. The earlier Legion was also known as the Garibaldi Excursionists.

On the day after the surrender of 23 August, the fort of Altifiumara did open its gates at last after which the Garibaldians poured across the straits unhindered. Long before they arrived, however, Garibaldi was on his way to Naples accompanied by a few friends at least half of whom were
English. One, of course, was Peard. Another was the wife of Angelo Mario whose maiden name was Jessie White. The army was miles behind. Some 10,000 fleeing Bourbonist troops were just ahead. But between 24 August and 6 September, 1860, Garibaldi pushed on for 340 miles, mostly without a bodyguard, through desolate mountains, wild forests, malarial plains as well as through pastures, cornfields, orchards and towns still under Bourbonist rule amid a wild people who could scarcely understand a word he said.

At Nicotera on 26 August, where he was hourly expecting the arrival of some of Medici’s men by sea from Messina, an army of 10,000 offered to surrender to him and his three companions, “with the honours of war”—that is to say, if they might keep their arms. Garibaldi insisted that the surrender must be unconditional and when they refused he hurried after them, still almost alone, as soon as Medici’s men had landed and he had given orders for them to follow him. He nearly caught the fugitive army at Monteleone, now called Vibo Valentia, where there is an old Norman castle not unlike those still in England. Twenty miles further on, he was on its heels again when Calabrian fruit growers from the surrounding hills barred its way near Maida which in those days was a tangle of sand and marsh criss-crossed by those familiar white stony ribbons and also infested with malarial mosquitoes. I don’t suppose he knew that in 1806, a year before he was born, an English General named Sir John Stuart defeated the French there which is why there is now a district in London called Maida Vale.

Once again, the fleeing army eluded him—this time because the fruit-growers thought it had a safe-conduct from Garibaldi. So Garibaldi raced on after it with four or five
companions determined to catch it before it joined up with a still larger army of Bourbonists just ahead. He did so at Tiriolo, a town on the watershed between great walls of mountains in Italy's instep and overlooking both the Tyrrhenian and Ionian seas. Angelo Mario, Peard and an ex-priest named Bianchi somehow persuaded Garibaldi to let each of them ride down in turn to urge surrender while he waited for the vanguard of his army to catch up with him. There was an earthquake that evening, bad enough to send everybody rushing into the road—except Garibaldi who stayed to finish his supper.

The next morning, 2,000 Calabrian insurgents turned up and the Bourbon army handed over its weapons without further fuss: 10,000 excellent rifles and ammunition; twelve pieces of artillery. There were also a number of horses which Garibaldi gave to 200 Hungarian exiles who had trudged the eighty miles from Messina in the scorching heat of the summer sun hopefully wearing spurs and carrying sabres. At last Garibaldi had some cavalry.

The surrender completed, Garibaldi hurried on, first on horseback and then in an unescorted open carriage with six companions. Close behind, in another carriage, were Peard, an English naval officer (Commander C. S. Forbes, R.N.), a new Times' correspondent (named Gallenga) and an Italian named Fabrizi. This time their quarry was another Bourbonist army of perhaps 18,000 but they were more interested in getting to Naples now than in taking prisoners.

The two carriages, the horses at full gallop, raced past Cosenza into the valley of the Crati which flows into the Gulf of Taranto out of another plain where the river split into dozens of little channels concealed among brushwood,
trees and reeds. Many years before, the town of Sibaris, the last word in luxury, stood there. The lost fertility of the valley may soon be restored by drainage. However, the occupants of the two carriages saw only a swamp (and possibly some startled brigands) and heard the hum of mosquitoes.

At Rotonda, back on the Tyrrhenian side of the peninsula, Garibaldi forsook his carriage and rode into the almost trackless mountains on muleback: “Seven men on seven mules, going to conquer a kingdom” was how one of them, Augustino Bertani, described it afterwards. They rode for some time along the banks of the river Lao through a huge gorge between towering mountains. Then they climbed and climbed till they saw the sea again and they finally struck the coast near Maratea in the Gulf of Policastro. Their reason for choosing this route seems to have been that they thought the fleeing Bourbonist army ahead would delay them. Peard and his party stuck to the main road and by the time Garibaldi got to Sapri, in a little sailing ship, they were fifty miles ahead.

Their progress slowed almost to a walk. The fleeing Bourbon army had nothing to do with it: at every town or village they came to, the people mistook Peard for Garibaldi. The Englishman was a good head and shoulders taller than the Italian but he did have the same sort of beard and moustache. So Garibaldi he became. At first, Forbes tried to persuade the demonstrators that they were mistaken. “Keep your ‘secret’ if you want to. But what’s the good of pretending to us when we know?” they replied. Then Fabrizi pointed out that if people suddenly found that the Liberator was not there after all, they might take a poor view of the matter,
especially if the news reached the Bourbonists and boosted their morale. So Pead decided to carry on as Garibaldi. He wrote in his diary: “Deputations began to arrive wanting to kiss my excellency’s hand and I had to hold regular levies.” Towns were illuminated when he arrived and Te Deums sung in his honour. Once a priest, carried away by the prevailing excitement, “went on his knees and called me a second Jesus Christ.” The poor man evidently did not know what he was saying but he was soon brought back to earth when Pead told him not to be blasphemous.

Pead’s route took him along the river Tanagro much of which has since been canalised. In due course, he and his companions managed to struggle through to Eboli where a local telegraph operator came to ask him what reply he should send to the Bourbonist commander in Salerno who had just telegraphed to ask where Garibaldi was. “Tell him I’m here,” Pead said. “With 5,000 men. And say that Caldarelli’s brigade has come over to our side.” It hadn’t—then. But it soon did. And more than 5,000 Red Shirts turned up in due course though not till long after the Bourbon commander had hurriedly evacuated Salerno. If only Pead could have been there to get the German Panzers out when the Allies landed on Salerno beach on 9 September, 1943!

Pead arrived in Salerno on 6 September, 1860, having slipped unnoticed out of Eboli early on the previous day. The real Garibaldi joined him the same evening while his nearest troops—Türr’s Brigade of 1,500—were still two day’s march to the south. “Viva Garibaldi!” the real one shouted to his Englishman, jumping from his carriage and taking off his plumed hat with a flourish and a low bow. But there was
a vein of seriousness behind his gay mockery: Peard's impersonation had opened the way to Naples without a shot having to be fired in anger—though plenty were fired in gleeful excitement. Furthermore, on the day that Peard and the real Garibaldi met in Salerno, the Bourbon King, Francis II, slipped out of Naples by sea, with his wife, and went to Gaeta. That is how Garibaldi's Englishman earned his place of honour behind the Liberator and Anita on the top of the Janiculum Hill in Rome.

The next morning, Garibaldi drove to the railway station at Vietri-sul-Mare where a special train was waiting for him. Peard, of course, was with him; and Forbes. So were three other Englishmen who had turned up at Salerno from nowhere in particular. One was Evelyn Ashley, son of Lord Shaftesbury. Ashley was wearing a red shirt although he was secretary to the British Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston. The other two were the Public Orator of Cambridge University, W. G. Clark, and a celebrated lawyer, Edwin James, Q.C., who happened to be on holiday in the neighbourhood. The rest of the train was filled to the very roofs of the carriages by a seething mass of Neapolitans. There were no troops within dozens of miles—except the hostile garrison of Naples and some 40,000 enemy soldiers who were making their way northward somewhere between Salerno and Naples. A trainload of retreating Bavarians was actually shunted on to a siding at Nocera to let Garibaldi's special steam past. The nearest Red Shirt detachment was still fifty miles to the south.

Beyond Pompeii, the train had to slow down to less than a walking pace because tens of thousands of cheering, liberty-drunken people were milling about on the rails. Half a million
more were waiting at the station at Naples which was then outside the city down by the sea. When, at last, Garibaldi managed to reach the open carriage which was to take him into the city, the crowd happy-go-luckily switched the route off the pre-arranged one and on to another which took him under the very muzzles of the guns in the fort of Carmine, still held by the Bourbonists. Garibaldi stood up, folded his arms and stared straight at the gunners who were standing to by the side of their guns. They stared back—without firing.

The rejoicing went on interruptedly for three days and nights at the end of which time the commander of another fort—St. Elmo—sent a message to warn Garibaldi that he could no longer restrain his troops from bombarding the city. “Let them fire and we will fire back,” Garibaldi replied though he still had no guns to fire with and no soldiers to fire them. But the threat sufficed and by the time the Red Shirts began to arrive, all four of the city’s forts had surrendered.

Some twenty miles further north, however, at Capua, the Bourbonist troops were massing to fight back and very soon Garibaldi was concentrating all his available men and guns at Caserta to give battle to them. Exactly eighty of the milling Neapolitans who had welcomed him, had volunteered to join him.

Garibaldi established his headquarters in the royal palace at Caserta which was also where Field Marshal Lord Alexander received the surrender of the German Army in Italy at the end of the Second World War. The palace is a vast, semi-circular warren of a place about a mile from the wooded, limestone foothills of the Apennines and it was in and round
these hills that the final battle of this extraordinary campaign was fought on 1 October, 1860. It was known as the Battle of the Volturno which is the river on which Capua stands. The name is as untidy as the battle was—hardly any of the fighting happened within a mile of the river. Some of it was ten miles away.

It was the first time Garibaldi had ever commanded more than a few thousand men in the field, so perhaps it was natural that he had small detachments all over the place. But his enemies, who were "professional" soldiers split their forces up even more surprisingly and some of their men never came into action till the following day when the battle was already lost.

It began in the early morning when the Bourbonists attacked the village of Santa Maria under cover of a mist. At about the same time, Swiss mountaineers dragged guns up a steep hill near the village of Maddaloni, ten miles away on the other side of Caserta Palace. In both cases, some of the Red Shirts who had never been under fire before, panicked—indeed, a few ran the whole twenty miles back to Naples yelling that the victorious Bourbonists were at their heels. Actually, the veterans had stood their ground, though it is anybody's guess what would have happened if 5,000 Neapolitans had not sat still all day in the wooded hills waiting for orders to attack which never came. Thanks to their inactivity, Bixio at Maddaloni and Medici at Santa Maria were able to hold the enemy while Garibaldi brought his reserves into action. As usual, he seemed to bear a charmed life. Once when he was driving across a bridge, some Bourbonists suddenly rose out of a sunken road and fired at him from not more than the length of a cricket pitch.
They killed his horse and the coachman but he leapt from the carriage unhurt, and, drawing his sword, held the enemy at bay till some of Medici’s men came to his rescue.

About midday, while Garibaldi was eating some figs brought to him by Jessie Mario, some ratings from the British flag-ship, H.M.S. Hannibal, came up to her and said: “Please m’m, we’ve taken a day’s leave so we could see the fun. Do you think he (and they pointed) could get us some muskets?” Garibaldi at once said “no”. But, a few minutes later, they saw Garibaldi’s 200 Hungarian cavalry overrun a Bourbonist battery. This time the ratings did not ask for leave—they simply ran out and dragged the guns back into Garibaldi’s lines. This manoeuvre was reported in several newspapers and became the subject of acrimonious diplomatic exchanges, to the grave embarrassment of Admiral Mundy.

The customs (rather than the laws) of neutrality were a good deal more lax in those days than they are now. In fact, there was another group of ratings, from H.M.S. Agamemnon this time, who had gone absent in Naples a few days previously, donned red shirts and slipped away to Caserta for their “bit of fun”. On the day of the battle, Lieutenant Deane, also of H.M.S. Agamemnon, took a party of midshipmen on a day trip to Caserta for the same reason. Coming under heavy fire from a Bourbonist battery in Capua, they ran for cover to a Garibaldian battery which was protected by a breastwork. Someone inside threw them a rope and when they had swarmed up it they mustered their Italian to say “thank you”. Their efforts were met with rather sheepish grins. When the battle ended, officers and men went back to the Agamemnon together and the charge of being absent without leave was discreetly dropped.
The Battle of the Volturino ended with Garibaldi in possession of the field and that is about all. It finally put an end to King Francis's hopes of recovering Naples but it did not put either Capua or Gaeta into Garibaldi's hands—he did not dare risk an attack on either place seeing that they were held by 60,000 troops. Some of his friends urged him to ignore the danger to his flank and march straight on Rome but again he refused.

Meanwhile the Royal Piedmontese army had taken advantage of Garibaldi's successes in the south to win a great victory at Castelfidardo near Ancona over an international army of papal "crusaders" who were defending what was left of the States of the Church. Garibaldi's oldest friend, Augusto Vecchi, who had fought by his, and Anita's, side in South America, and then in Rome, and in whose villa at Quarto the expedition of the Thousand had taken shape, wrote urging him to invite King Victor Emmanuel to Naples at once "in the name of Italy". And, three days after the Battle of the Volturino, this is what Garibaldi did.

At first it was touch and go whether Victor Emmanuel would dare accept. The Emperors of Austria and Russia were about to meet the King of Prussia in Warsaw to decide what action to take about Garibaldi's "presumption" in driving a king from his capital. There had also been a large Austrian contingent among the "crusaders" defeated at Castelfidardo and Emperor Napoleon III was uneasy about his prestige if the French garrison should be forced to leave Rome. Suppose all, or any of, these potentates decided to occupy Piedmont if Victor Emmanuel went to Naples where he would inevitably be chosen as the first king of Italy?
Eventually, King Victor decided to risk it and, on 26 October, 1860, he and Garibaldi met near Calvi on the northern edge of the great plain in which Capua stands. Garibaldi once again removed his plumed hat with a big flourish as he bowed low and said: “I salute the first king of Italy.” The King, who was on horseback, took the Liberator’s hand and held it for a full minute while he asked: “How are you, dear Garibaldi?”

“Well, your Majesty,” was the reply. “And you?”

“First class.”

Then Garibaldi remounted his horse and, as the two rode on together followed by their staffs, the King told Garibaldi that the royal army would finish the war so that the services of the Red Shirts, and of Garibaldi, would no longer be needed.

Garibaldi never complained either then or afterwards. Even to Jessie Mario whom he met on the following morning, all he said was: “Jessie, they have sent us to the rear.”

So, on 6 November, 1860, the Red Shirts were drawn up on the parade ground at Caserta to be ceremonially reviewed by the King for the last, and first, time after which they were to be not merely “sent to the rear” but disbanded and sent home. The King never came. Small wonder that when the King and Garibaldi entered Naples in a carriage sitting side by side on the following day, they scarcely spoke to one another.

It seems probable now that the King’s behaviour was dictated by Cavour. Certainly the King personally offered Garibaldi an estate for his son, Menotti, a dowry for his daughter, Teresita, and a castle as well as a steam yacht for himself. The Liberator refused them all and when he left
Naples for Caprera on 9 November, his secretary had to borrow a few hundred francs to meet current expenses.

Before leaving, he went to thank Admiral Mundy in whose visiting book he wrote (in French):

"G. Garibaldi owes Admiral Mundy the most lively gratitude, which will last throughout his life, for the many sincere proofs of friendship which have been showered on him in all kinds of circumstances".

His departure was kept secret from all but a few friends to whom he said as he shook their hands: "We will meet again in Rome." But it was twenty-five years before they did so.
GARIBALDI’s first attempt to keep the appointment in Rome came two years later—in 1862. But the King of Italy frowned on the venture and Garibaldi’s Red Shirts were stopped in the Aspromonte Mts. of Calabria. Garibaldi himself was wounded in the foot and deported back to Caprera.

However, he bore no malice and when the Italian Government decided to occupy Venetia during the Austro-Prussian war of 1866, Garibaldi asked for and was given command of the left wing which was intended to take over the South Tirol, too. He won several victories but when he had almost reached Trent (Trento) the Italian Government was warned by Bismarck that, though Austria had lost the war, Prussia was determined she should keep her Alpine provinces. So Garibaldi was recalled and this district remained in Austrian hands till the end of the First World War. It is now called the Alto Adige.

In the following year, Garibaldi again tried to get to Rome—this time from the north. He actually captured Monestario, the hillside town he passed through during his great retreat in 1849. But French and Papal troops met him at Mentana. They fired at him and wounded him in the chest but those who did so were Italians and he refused to let his men fire back.
When the Franco-Prussian war broke out in 1870, Garibaldi offered his services to the French Government and they were accepted, though reluctantly. Consequently, when Victor Emmanuel took advantage of the situation to march on Rome, Garibaldi was in Dijon. But Bixio—a Royal General now—took part in the attack which ended with the complete break up of what was left of the Papal States.

So it was not till 1874 that Garibaldi entered Rome again. A vast throng met him outside the gates where King Victor Emmanuel welcomed him into the city. The Romans chose him by acclamation to represent them in parliament and he was offered a pension of £40,000 a year which he refused. The money meant little to him. But the welcome was the culminating triumph of his life. He was sixty-eight and almost a cripple. And, in the autumn of his days, his last aspiration had been fulfilled.

In 1864, he visited London where he received an ovation such as had never been given to anyone before—not to the Duke of Wellington, Lord Nelson nor to Queen Victoria herself. He arrived at Stafford House, near St. James’s Square, wearing his red shirt and white poncho. It had taken the Duke of Sutherland’s coach six hours to traverse five miles of London’s streets and the crowd literally pulled it to pieces as Garibaldi stepped out of it.

I don’t know how he managed to remain unspoiled by all this adulation, but he did. And Tennyson who met him while he was staying in the Isle of Wight wrote to a friend: “What a noble human being! I expected to see a hero and I was not disappointed.”

The hero married twice after Anita died. He left his second wife, at her suggestion, on the day they were married.
His third wife bore him two children but neither she nor they come into our story.

As the autumn of Garibaldi’s days wore on towards winter, his infirmities increased till he became almost bedridden. But he lived on contentedly at Caprera amid his sheep, goats and cows, and friends, till 2 June, 1882 when he was nearly seventy-five years old. On the evening he died, two little birds came and sat outside his window as they had often done before. His last words were: “Let the little things in and be sure to feed them when I am gone.”

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