

**DIARY OF AN OFFICER OF THE BRIGADE
OF SAVOY IN THE CAMPAIGN OF
LOMBARDY. TRANSLATED BY THE
COMTESSE FANNI DI PERSANO, AND
DEDICATED TO HER MOTHER**

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Diary of an officer of the brigade of Savoy in the campaign of Lombardy. Translated by the Comtesse Fanni Di Persano, and Dedicated to Her Mother by Gabriel Maximilien Ferrero

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GABRIEL MAXIMILIEN FERRERO

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DIARY
OF AN
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BY
GABRIEL MAXIMILIEN FERRERO.

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COMTESSE FANNY DI PERSANO,

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Dedicated to Her Mother.

LONDON:
SAMPSON LOW, 169, FLEET STREET.

1850.



PREFACE.

I HAVE been induced to translate this little book, thinking it reflected honour on that country which has now become mine by adoption, and also as giving a more true and impartial account than can be gleaned from newspaper reports, of the first campaign made by the Piedmontese in Lombardy for Italian independence, headed by the noble and generous Charles Albert.

Should I in any way have succeeded in removing from the minds of some of my friends the prejudice that seems spread in my country against the cause of Italian freedom, and procured my beloved Mother an hour's interest, my aim will have been fully accomplished. To her I dedicate this translation, assured that she will excuse the errors and appreciate the motives that have induced me to undertake this task.

FANNY DI PERSANO.

Genoa, 28th June, 1849.

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INTRODUCTION.

“ Pour avoir la liberté, il faut la mériter ; prenez les armes, et venez avec moi combattre les Autrichiens.”

Paroles de Napoleon aux Milanais.

For many years the Lombards bore the yoke of Austria with indignation : this sentiment grew in their hearts, and manifested itself by demonstrations, by which one of those implacable hatreds was engendered that could only be satiated in the blood of their oppressors.

The freedom granted by the greater part of the sovereigns of Italy made the Lombards more sensible of their slavery, and reanimated in their hearts the desire of independence and of nationality.

Some acute men, wishing to assure themselves if the generality of the population would submit to a trial, which, however, in itself trifling, reveals an astonishing strength of purpose, proposed to give up the habit of smoking, which

proposition has been generally adopted since the 1st of January, 1848. This habit had become so universal, that it produced an annual revenue to Austria of five millions. From this strange compact dates the origin of the revolution of Milan.

The police, irritated at being set at defiance with impunity, has recourse to all its agents, who are spread about the town with the injunction to excite broils, in order to create a legal pretext to attack individual liberty. An insolent soldiery frequent the streets and cafés, smoking cigars, blowing puffs of smoke in the faces of the passers by, and slashing at those who express their indignation at this insolent provocation. The Milanese, exasperated, revolt, and a great number are arrested; the garrison and the inhabitants are in open hostility. The Vice-King, Radetzky, and Fiquelmont, appear to protect the conduct of the military, or, at all events, act without energy and decision, deceiving the Milanese with false hopes. A gloomy rage is fermented in the minds of the populace; the tumult increases hourly.

On the 22d of February, the martial law is proclaimed; Austria commits actions unworthy of a civilized nation.

Now the powerful voice of the people is heard, resounding in the vaults of the temples, in the streets, and in the public places: she proclaims liberty, with threats of vengeance against the tyrants. All classes of society unite themselves with one accord—they fly to arms, numerous barricades are formed in the town, and on the 18th of March a terrible and bloody contest is begun on all sides. After five glorious

days of heroic conflict, the Austrians take to flight, and the tricolour flag, the symbol of the Italian union and independence, floats majestically from the summit of the Cathedral of Milan.

The Lombards invoke the people of the peninsula to aid them in exterminating the stranger. The Piedmontese, animated by noble and chivalrous sentiments, embrace the cause with enthusiasm; Charles Albert seconds their wishes, and, following the generous impulse of his heart, abandons his kingdom to fly to the relief of a nation so long persecuted.

26th March, 1848.—The Sardinian army, under the orders of the King, is divided into three bodies, including the reserve.

The first, consisting of about 24,000 men, is under the orders of Lieutenant-General Baron Bava, one of Napoleon's soldiers, and distinguished for his bravery. Endowed with great presence of mind in difficult circumstances, he possessed also the art of commanding. By his justice and integrity he had acquired the affection of his subordinates, and the esteem of every one. The subsequent facts will enable us to judge of his military talents.

The second body of the army, nearly equal to the first in force, is commanded by Lieutenant-General Chevalier Hector de Sonnaz, Governor of Genoa, where, during his residence as General of the division, he was universally beloved for the goodness and affability of his character. The General de Sonnaz began his career in the French

army, and received from Napoleon the star of the legion of honour.

The reserve, composed of about 12,000 men, is commanded by H.R.H. the Duke of Savoy. This young prince, remarkable for his bravery and frankness of manner, is adored by the soldiers.

H.R.H. the Duke of Genoa has the general direction of the artillery. His peculiar talents, and the military education he has received, render him especially adapted to fill with distinction such an important situation.

To the Major-General, the Count de Salasco, are confided the difficult and intricate functions of the head of the staff, which demand not only great capacity, but also a consummate experience of all that concerns the art of war.

The Major-General Baron Chiodo, a learned officer, commands the body of Royal Engineers.

Before entering Lombardy the King published the following proclamation,—sole and glorious page in the archives of the monarchy :—

LOMBARDS AND VENETIANS !

“The destinies of Italy are maturing—a happier future smiles upon the intrepid defenders of despised rights. By sympathy of kindred, by knowledge of the times, by reciprocal wishes, we were amongst the first to join in the universal admiration awarded you by Italy.

“Lombards and Venetians ! our arms, which were already concentrated upon your frontier while you were anticipating