

# Carlo's Oath

The old priest of Isola Rossa, standing at his door in the cool of the evening, saw Joseph Serafino stamp furiously across the square. He smiled, and called over his shoulder to the crease who waited on him to get out a bottle of Cap. Can wine from the cupboard, for Joseph carried his gun slung across his shoulders. As Joseph drew nearer, however, the priest's smile changed into a frown, and he ordered the woman to go down into the cellar and fetch up a bottle of an older vintage, for there were scratches upon Joseph's face.

Serafino's wife was something of a shrew, as the priest was well aware, since at times her tongue went out her husband's patience, and he would sling his gun across his shoulders, stuff his pockets with cartridges and hurry to Father Andrea's house in the square, vowing that he would put up with his dog's life no more. The conversation which followed was of so invariable a kind, and ended in so invariable a result, that the priest could anticipate it with a smile. Serafino would call the earth, the water under the earth, and the waters under the earth to witness that he had done with houses and streets and his fellow-men; that henceforth he would live among the trees of the mountains of Mount Padro, where no women's tongues chattered and all the world was still. When Serafino was tired of talking, the priest would persuade him to drink a little of wine before he went. And after the bottle was finished, the old man would propose one last game of piquet, which Joseph was allowed to win. Serafino was led gently home.

"Tonight, however, there were scratches upon Serafino's face, and so Father Andrea ordered his best white wine, which had lain twenty years in bottle, and thanked the Pope he was himself a catholic. A scratched face was not new to Serafino's experience, and the priest wondered whether the conversation tonight might not have a different end. His wonder was justified in the next breath.

"Am I mayor of Isola Rossa?" cried Serafino. "Were my grandfathers corporals in Corsica? Was I taught at the College of Alajazzo? He would never have admitted I inherited my lands? And shall I endure an eternal click-clack of abuse and—look, father!—a woman's infamery!"

Serafino walked about the room, tugging with both hands at his great beard. Except for the remark about the finger nails the language was familiar enough, and the priest with a soothing word or two uncorked his bottle of wine.

But Serafino waved his hand.

"No, father; I will not stay tonight," and he turned to the window and gazed upward to the olive slopes above the village, and above the olive slopes to the thickets of arbutus and myrtle on the mountain sides.

"It has lain twenty years in the bottle, my son. It comes from Luri," said the priest, as he poured out the wine. "The bottle hangs above the glasses so that the splash might sink into Serafino's soul. But again Serafino waved the wine aside.

"No, father, I am going. Tonight I sleep up there. I leave my lands to my wife, but I will see no more of her."

"This, too, was familiar to the priest, who replied:

"But you swore an oath, my son, to your wife and will break it for a few rows words and a slap of the hand? No good words of breaking a oath. And, since Serafino remained silent, he thought of an instance.

"Carlo Giammarchi broke his oath," he said, "and see what came of it. He perished twenty years ago, and to this day his memory lies under reproach."

Then Serafino swung round from the window.

"Giammarchi kept his oath," he said, quietly.

"My son," the old man answered, in an accent of reproach, "you were with me when he swore. Have you forgotten the little hut on Monte Ceneraglia, the man stretched on a few benches for a bed, and the oath he swore to me, that if he recovered he would again lift hand or weapon against a fellow-man?"

"I have not forgotten, Giammarchi kept that oath."

The priest tapped gently with his fingers on the table for a little. Then, as gently, he said:

"That is not right, my son. Carlo Giammarchi was a man of his word, but he is not right, his account. He denied the truth. Giammarchi shot Angelo through the back."

"Who shall prove that?" asked Serafino, bluntly.

The priest sat down in a chair and proceeded to argue with Serafino, in a soft, persistent voice, as though he were talking to a child. He argued that it was not altogether displeased at Serafino's stubbornness, since, in the argument, Serafino's wife seemed likely to be forgotten.

"The two men were found dead upon the hillside," he said. "Both were shot in the back. Angelo was a gentler man, and is excused by his duty, though I do not say he should not rather have taken Carlo Giammarchi. It was evident, however, that Giammarchi was escaping. A few yards would have brought him into the safety of the woods, and so Angelo shot him."

Serafino nodded his head, agreeing so far.

"But Angelo was shot, too. He also was shot in the back. Therefore, he was turning away down the hillside to join his fellows. Giammarchi can only have been wounded, and shot Angelo before he died."

"Who shall prove that?" again asked Serafino.

"There was no witness, it is true," said the priest, "but there needs none, for an exploded cartridge was in the barrel of Giammarchi's rifle, and it was empty."

Serafino looked for a long while at the priest.

"Who said if there was a witness?" he said, slowly. Then he turned again to the window and exclaimed shrilly, "Angelo Montaldi died a dog's death, as he deserved, and Carlo Giammarchi kept the oath he swore."

After he had spoken there was silence. The old priest's object had at all events been secured, for both men had clean forgotten Serafino's life. Joseph stared out the window, the priest stared at the wine in his glass.

At last the priest spoke timidly:

"I do not understand, my son."

Serafino made no movement, but answered in a musing voice, as he looked out up to the mountains, and the maqui of trees and shrubs which clothed the mountain flanks.

"Why should I net tell you? For ten years Giammarchi's memory has lain under this reproach, and he was my friend. As for myself, I would just as soon live among the hills."

He called the priest to his side, and pointed across the square to the large house at the corner.

"There Carlo Giammarchi lived twenty years ago. Twenty years ago it was just such another summer evening as this. Father—I was in supper with Carlo in that house when the news was brought that old Montaldi, Angelo's father, had stabbed Giammarchi's son in a tavern at Catvi. Carlo leaped on his hands and knees and said not a single word. Carlo was fifty, I only twenty-five; so I kept silence, too. After a while Carlo got up very softly from his chair and took his rifle; then as softly he went out of the house and took the road up past Belvedere to the Col. Colombo, where two days afterward he fell in with Montaldi and shot him through the lungs. Carlo took refuge in the maqui about Mount Vadro, and so lived securely for the next ten years. Montaldi, however, left behind him a wife, and she, and she, and a son, Angelo, who was fourteen years old when his father died. Have you not seen them, Father, walking together by the sea, among the orange trees, among the olives, the sister always talking, the boy listening? Angelo learned but one

# THE GOLD DEFENDERS

Not Laid Aside When Their Glories Have Departed.

Boats That Won Trophies Still Sailing on Sea and River—Halcyn Days of the Magic, American, Puritan, and Dauntless—The English Yacht Cambria Carrying Coal.

Where do Cup defenders go to when they die? That depends on whether they have "gold." They have not been good enough in the trial races to defend the Cup they may go to Hallyland under any rig, so far as anybody cares; but if they have been successful in repelling the invader they do not die. A successful Cup defender has as many lives as Buddha, the One. The original schooner yacht America has been sold many times; has been a Government vessel, has been sunk and abandoned, resurrected and started fresh, has rotted and been rebuilt, has been lengthened, replanked, retimbered, and now she is back again among the pleasure fleets and actually put into races. Her mother was the schooner, the late General Butler, and on his death passed to his son, Paul Butler. Mrs. Ames, of Boston, went to Cuba in her last year to bring back her husband, General Butler, and the famous yacht that brought the ugliest and most beautiful of all possible trophies from England in 1851 will probably be seen in the hands of the same course when the Shamrock makes her attempt.

The schooner Magic, owned and raced by the late Daniel S. Hooper, was the first challenger for the cup. Mr. Ashbury's Cambria, is still in commission, after having been often repaired since the late Mr. Hooper's death. It is owned by the Sound, and is now owned by John S. Clarke, of Pittsburg.

The Columbia, owned by Franklin Osby, was the challenger for the cup on some of the Livonia, also owned by James Asbury, is now sailing and kept in the best of condition by Vice Commodore Joseph De P. De P. The schooner, the late J. T. Perkins, late of the New York Yacht Club, she had always been owned in New York, and was sold by J. B. Butler, who was the leader Jeffrey, who subsequently took the yacht to England to race for George Gould. Columbia II is 114 feet long over all, 20 feet beam, with 8 1/2 feet draft of water. With her high bulwarks and general appearance of a trader (a look they all had in earlier days) she was one of the most modern racers, like the side of a house, though she always was, and still is, a fast boat. Commodore Junken was the skipper of the Columbia, and a number of the Philadelphia vessels will cruise to Sandy Hook. Between Columbia I and Columbia II there will be wonderful differences to be seen, although the trip to the Hebrides. The first Columbia lost one race to the Livonia, said to be through an accident, and this was the only race ever lost by an American yacht. The second Columbia, which was the Valkyrie III, which, on a protest, was not allowed.

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