"RAFFLES, THE AMATEUR! CRACKSMAN"

By E. W. Hornung, Author of "The Shadow of the Rope," "The Rogue's March," Etc.

No. IX. The Fate of Faustina

Mar-ga-ri,
e perzo a Salvatore!
Mar-ga-ri,
Ma l'ommo e cacciatore!
Mar-ga-ri,
Nun ce aje corpa tn:

ch' e fatto, e fatto un no parlamn

metallic music through our open window, while a voice of brass obtained, and print above for identification by such as know their Italy better than I. They will not thank me for reminding them of a tune so lately epidemic that land of aloes and blue skies, but at least it is unlikely to run in their tragedy, and it does in mine

It was in the early heat of August, and the hour that of the lawful and necessury siesta for such as turn night into day. I was therefore shutting my window in a rage and wondering whether I bell. should do the same for Raffles, when he appeared in the silk pajamas to which the chronic solicitude of Dr. Theobald confined him from morning to night.

'Don't do that, Bunny," said be. "I rather like that thing and want to listen. What sort of fellows are they to look at,

I put my head out to see, it being a primary rule of our quaint establishment that Raffles must never show himself at how hot the sill was to my elbows, as I to satisfy a curiosity in which I could see no point.

"Dirty-looking beggars," said I over my shoulder; "dark as dark; blue china, oleaginous curls and earrings; ragged as they make them, but nothing picturesque in their rags."

"Neapolitans all over," murmured Raffies behind me, "and that's a characteris-tic touch, the one fellow singing while the other grinds; they always have that

"He's rather a fine chap, the singer," aid I, as the song ended. "My hat, what teeth. He's looking up here and grinning all round his head. Shall I chuck them Well, I have no reason to love the Neapolitans, but it takes me back-it

takes me back! Yes, here you are, one Raffles put into my hand, but I had thrown them into the street for pennies before I saw what they were. Thereupon I left the Italians bowing to the i, as well they might, and I turned to rotest against such wanton waste.

Raffles was walking up and down, his head bent, his eyes troubled, and his one excuse disarmed remonstrance They took me back," he repeated. "My od, how they took me back!" Suddenly he stopped in his stride

You dont understand, Bunny, old chap, but if you like you shall. I always meant to tell you some day, but never felt worked up to it before, and it's not the kind of thing one talks about for talkflying to the other extreme of equally and unwouted ferocity. But this was toward caug the end of his tale; the beginning he treated characteristically enough, though I could have wished for a less cavaller account of the Island of Elba, where, upon his own showing, he had met with

much humanity. dly, my dear Bunny, is not the nollusks its inhabitants. But they start-I am prejudiced after all, I sprung myelf upon them as a shipwrecked sailor-sole survivor-stripped in the sea and landed without a stitch; yet they took no more interest in me than you do in Italian organ-grinders. They were decent enough. I didn't have to pick and steal for a square meal and a pair of trousers; it would have been more ex-citing if I had! But what a place. Napoleon couldn't stand it, you remember, but he held on longer than I did. I put in a few weeks in their infernal mines, simply to pick up a smattering of Italian; then got across to the mainland in a little wooden timber tramp, and ungratefully glad was I to leave Elba blazing in just such another sunset as the one you

"The tramp was bound for Naples, but first touched at Baiac, where I carefully descrited in the night. There are too many English in Naples itself, though I thought it would make a first happy hunt-ing ground when I knew the language better and had altered myself a bit more. Meanwhile I got a billet of several sorts on one of the lovellest spots that ever I struck on all my travels. The place was a vineyard, but it overhung the sea, and I got taken on as tame sailorman and emergency bottle-washer. The wages were the noble figure of a lira and a half, which is just over a bob, a day, but there were lashings of sound wine in. And for eight whole months, my boy, I was an absolutely honest man, The luxury of it, Bunny! I out-Heroded Herod,

prospect pleases—and all the rest of it— especially all the rest. But may I see it in my dreams till I die—as it was in the beginning-before anything began happen. It was a wedge of rock sticking out into the bay, thatched with vines and with the rummiest old house on the edge of all, a devil of a height above the sea. You might have sat at the windows and dropped your Sullivanends plumb into blue water a hundred

From the garden behind the housesuch a garden, Bunny-olesaders and mimosa, myrtles, rosemary and red tangles of flery, untamed flowers-in a corner of this garden was the top of a ubterranean stair down to the sea; at least there were nearly 200 steps tuniron gate, and another 80 steps in the onen air, and last of all a cave fit for pirates a penny-plain-and-twopence-colored. This cave gave upon the sweetest little thing in coves, all deep blue water and hopes, rocks, and deep

looked after the vineyard shipping, a pot-bellied tub with a brown sail, and a sort of dingy. The tub took the wine to Naples and the dingy was the

tub's tender. the identical site of a suburban retreat of the admirable Tiberius There was of the admirable Tiberius. There was the old sinner's private theater, with the tiers cut clean to this day; the well where he used to fatten his lampreys on his slaves, and a ruined temple of those ribbing old Roman bricks, shallow as dominoes and ruddler than the cherry. I never was much of an anti-

the boats. I had to trim the vines or gather the grapes, or even help make the wine itself in a cool, dark, musty vault beneath the temple that I can see and smoll as I isw. And can't I hear it and feel it, too! Squish, squash, bub-ble: squash, squish, gussle: and your feet as though you had been wading through slaughter to a throne. Yes. brayed the words, which I have since Bunny, you mightn't think it, but this good right foot, that never was on the wrong side of the crosse when the hall left my hand, has also been known to

crush the lees of pleasure From sanguine grapes of pain."

He made a sudden pause, as though he had stumbled on the truth in jest. His face filled with lines. He was sit-ting in the room that had been bare when first I saw it. There were basket-chairs and a table in it now, all meant ostensibly for me, and hence Raffles would slip to his bed with schoolboy relish at every tinkle of the bell. This afternoon we felt fairly safe, for Theobald had called in the morning, and Mrs. Theobald still took up much of his time. Through the open window we could hear the plane-organ and "Mar-ga-ri" a few hundred yards further on. I fancled Raffles was listening to it while he paused. He shook it's head abstractedly when I handed him the cigarettes, and his tone thereafter was never just what it had been. "I don't know, Bunny, whether you're

a believer in transmigration of souls. I that Raffles must never show himself at have often thought it easier to believe any of the windows. I remember now than lots of other things, and I have been how hot the sill was to my elbows, as I leaned upon it and looked down in order I had my being on that villa of Tiberius to satisfy a curiosity in which I could The brute who had it in my day, if he isn't still running it with a whole skin, was or is as cold-blooded a blackguard as the worst of the emperors, but I have often thought he had a lot in common with Tiberius. He had the great, high, sensual Roman nose, eyes that were sinks of iniquity in themselves, and that swelled with fatness, like the rest of him, so that he wheezed if he walked a yard other-wise rather a fine beast to look at, with a huge gray mustache, like a figing gull, and the most courteous manner even to his men, but one of the worst, Bunny, one of the worst that ever was. It was said that the vineyard was only his hobby. If so, he did his best to make his hobby pay. He used to come out from Naples for the week-ends—in the tub when it wasn't too rough for his nerves—and he didn't always come alone. His very name sounded unhealthy—Corbucci. I suppose I ought to add that he was though counts are two-s-penny in Naples

and in season all the year round.
"He had a little English and liked to air it upon me, much to my disgust. If I could not hope to conceal my nationality as yet I at least did not want to have it advertised, and the swine had English friends. When he heard that I was bathing in November, when the bay is still as warm as new milk, he would shake his wicked old head and say, 'You are very audashuss—you are very au-dashuss!" and put on no end of side be-fore his Italians. By god, he had pitched upon the right word unawares, and I let him know it in the end!

ing's sake. It isn't a nursery story, Bun-ny, and there isn't a laugh in it from start to finish. On the contrary, you have often asked me what turned my hair in my own mind I used to call it blue ray, and now you are going to hear." champagne, and was rather annoyed that This was promising, but Raffles man- I had no one to admire the phrase. Otherner was something more. It was unique in my memory of the man. His fine face particular kind very little indeed, though softened and set hard by turns. I never I often wished that you were there, old It so hard. I never knew it so chap, particularly when I went for my And the same might be said of his lonesome swim first thing in the mornnow tender as any woman's, now ing. when the bay was all rose leaves, in prison for sticking a knife into him-to the other extreme of equally and last thing at night, when your body he wasn't worth it—and I did promise nted ferocity. But this was toward caught phosphorescent fire! Ah, yes, it not to stab him in the back. Faustina was a good enough life for a change, a Eden until-

"My poor Eve!"
And he fetched a sigh that took away his words; then his taws snapped togethe and his eyes spoke terribly while he con-quered his emotion. I pen the last word advisedly. I fancy it is one which I have never used before in writing of A. J. Raf-fles, for I cannot at the moment recall any other occasion upon which its use would have been justified. On resuming, however, he was not only calm but cold treme is the single instance of self-dis trust which the present Achates can re-cord to the credit of his implous Aeneas.

"I called the girl Eye," said he of a vast family who hung out in a hovel on the inland border of the vineyard. And wonderful and not more beautiful than Aphrodite emerging from that hole!
"It was the most exquisite face I eve

saw or shall see in this life-absolutely you of old gold, so delicate was its bronze magnificent hair, not black but nearly, and such eyes and teeth that would have made the fortune of a face without an other point. I tell you, Bunny, London would go mad about a girl like that. But t don't believe there's such another in the world. And there she was wasting her sweetness upon that lovely but deso-late little corner of it! Well, she did no waste it upon me. I would have married her and lived happily ever after in such a hovel as her people's—with her. Only to look at her-only to look at her for the rest of my days-I could have lain low that's all I'm going to tell you about that. Bunny; cursed be he who tells more! Ye don't you run away with the idea that this poor Faustina was the only woman I ever cared about. I don't believe in all that 'only' rot; nevertheless I tell you wouldn't touch a grape, and went in the most delicious danger of being knifed for my principles by the thieving crew honestively satisfied my sense of beauty, and I honestive believe I could have chucked honestly believe I could have chucked

"We met sometimes in the little tem ple I told you about, sometimes among the vines, now by honest accident, by flagrant design, and found a readymade rendervous, romantic as one could wish, in the cave down all those subterranean steps. Then the sea would call us—my blue champagne, my spark.ing cobalt—and there was the dingy ready to our hand. Oh, those nights! I never knew which I liked best, the moonlit ones, when you sculled through silver and could see sculled through silver and could see for miles, or the dark nights, when the fishermen's torches stood for the the fishermen's torches stood for the he comes here?" sea and a red zigzag in the sky for old Vesuvius. We were happy. I don't little presents, sweetmeats, ribbons and mind owning it. We seemed not to the like, but the offering had always have a care between us. My mater been made through this toad of a Stefano. took no, interest in my affairs and Knowing the man, I knew all. But Faustina's family did not appear to Faustina, she had the pure and simple bother about her. The Count was in heart and the white soul by the God who Naples five nights of the seven; the

other two we signed apart. "At first it was the offest story in literature—Eden plus Eve. The place had been a heaven on earth before, but now it was heaven itself. So for a little. Then one night-a Monday night-Faustina burst out crying in the boat, and sobbed her story as we drifted without mishap by the mercy of the Lord. And that was almost as

old a story as the other.

"She was engaged—what! Had I never heard of it? Did I mean to upset the boat? What was her engagement beside you know your Swinburne, Bunny, but



"AND THEN-WE WERE ALONE FOR THE LAST TIME,"

"I knew it merely from my knowledge of toe Neapolitans, for I had no idea who the man might be. I knew it, and yet I took this detail better than the fact of the engagement, though now I began to laugh at both. As if I was going to let her marry anybody else! As if a hair of her lovely head should be touched while I lived to protect her! I had a great mind to row away to biazes with her that very night and never go near the vineyard again, or let her, either. But we had not a lira between us at the time, and only the ragg in which we sat barefoot in the boat. Besides, I had to know the name of the animal who had

moment she had taken away my th. 'It is Stefano,' she whispered. and hung her head. .

"And well she might, poor thing! Stefano, of all creatures on God's earth-

"Bunny, he was a miserable little un-der-sized wretch, ill favored der-sized wretch, ill favored, servile, surly and second only to his master in bestial cunning and hypocrisy. His face was enough for me; that was what I read in it, and I don't often make mistakes. He was Corbucci's own confiden-tial body servant, and that alone was enough to damn him in decent eyes; al-ways came out first on the Saturday with the speed, to have all ready for his master and current mistress, and stayed behind on the Monday to clear and lock up. Stefano! That worm! I could well understand his threatening a woman with a knife. What beat me was how any woman could ever have listened to him: above all, that Faustina should be the one! It passed my comprehension. But I questioned her as gently as I could, and her explanation was largely threadbare one you would expect. parents were so poor. There were so many in the family. Some of them begged-would I promise never to tell? Then some of them stole-sometimesand all knew the pains of actual want. She looked after the cows, but there were only two of them, and brought the milk to the vineyard and elsewhere, but that was not employment for more than one, and there were countless sisters waiting to take her place. Then he was 'Rich?' I echoed. 'Stefano?'

"Yes, I played the game on that vine-

yard, Bunny, even to going by my own 'And how comes he to be rich?"

asked suspiciously. "She did not know, but he had given her such beautiful jewels, the family had lived on them for months, she pretend-ing an avocat had taken charge of them world and been true to Paustina for for her against her marriage. But I cared nothing about all that.

'Perhaps the Count has paid for some of them. He is very kind." To you, is he?

"'Oh, yes, very kind." 'Not now, mia cara-not now!'

English. 'But you would have done so,

"Yes, he had sometimes brought her made it, and for all her kindness to a tattered scapegrace who made love to her in broken Italian between the ripples and the stars. She was not to know what I was, remember, and beside Cor-bucci and his henchman I was the Archangel Gabriel come down to earth.
"Well, as I lay awake that night two

more lines of Swinburne came into my head and came to stay God said, "Let him who wins her take And keep Faustine.

"Well, I was strung up for trouble

when the next Sunday came, and I'll tell you what I had done. I had broken the pledge and burgled Corbucci's villa in my manner during his absence in Na-Not that it gave me the slightest told that I had been in when I came out.
And I had stolen nothing, mark you, but time, and only the rags in which we sat barefoot in the boat. Besides, I had to know the name of the animal who had like rabbits for the nearest hole. But threatened a woman, and guch a woman as this.

"For a long time she refused to tell me, with splendid obduracy, but I was as determined as she, so at last she made conditions. I was not to go and get put in prison for sticking a knife into himoto the wasn't worth it—and I did promise not to stab him in the back. Faustina she raced quite satisfied, though a little puzzled by my manner, having herself the raced and nearer, nearer, like revolver wasn't for my own use. It was filled without the revolver wasn't for my own use. It was filled with an element of the cave down there by the sea shooting at candles stuck upon the sea shooting iron and they'il streak like rabbits for the nearest hole. But the revolver wasn't for my own use. It was for Faustina, and I tangth her how to elephantine assault. I should have deserved none in the Rome!

Rome!

No. I just stood over him, with the revolver wasn't for my own use. It was for Faustina, and I tangth her how to elephantine assault. I should have deserved none in the Rome!

Rome!

No. I just stood over him, with the revolver wasn't for my own use. It was for Faustina in the cave assault. I should have deserved none in the Rome!

Rome!

Rome!

Rome!

No. I just stood over him, with the revolver wasn't for my own taking a few steps in the revolver wasn't have for poor Faustina in the cave; as it use this pristing, but is proved in a should have ear.

I have revolver wasn't for my own use. It was full as a shoot in the cave was some. I was not to go and get put in prison for sticking a knife into him. I have no out in the cave was some. I was not to go and gap put in the revolver wasn't have

use upon occasion. Between the two of us, in fact, our friend Stefano seemed tolerably certain of a warm week-end. "But the Saturday brought word that the Count was not coming this week, being in Rome on business and unable to return in time, so for a whole Sunday we were promised peace, and made bold plans accordingly. There was no further merit in hushing this thing up. Let him who wins her take and keep Faustina." Yes, but let him win her openly, or lose her and be damned to him! So on the Sunday I was going to have it out with her people-with the Count and Stefano as soon as they showed their noses. I had no inducement, remember, ever to return to surreptitious life within a cab-fare of Wormwood Scrubba Faustina and the bay of Naples were quite good enough for me. And the prehistoric man

ing for my desire. "On the Saturday, however, we were just once more in secret, down there in the cave, as soon as might be after dark. Neither of us minded if we were kept hours; each knew that in the end the other would come, and there was a charm of its own even in waiting for such knowledge. But that night to be another train from Naples to rossume lose patience, not in the cave, but up another train from Naples to rossume above, where first on one pretext and I have been rowed here now by a fisherman of Pozzuoli. I had not time to stop man of Pozzuoli. I had not time to stop in Naples, but only to drive such knowledge. But that night I did then on another the directore kept me going until I amelled a rat. He was not given to exacting overtime, this direttore, whose only fault was his zervile subjection to our common boss. It seemed pretty obvious, therefore, that he was acting upon some secret instruc-tions from Corbucci himself, and the moment I suspected this I asked him to his face if it was not the case. And it was; he admitted it with many shrugs, being a conveniently weak person, whom one felt almost ashamed of bullying as the occasion demanded.

"The fact was, however, that the Count had sent for him on finding he had to go to Rome, and had said he was very sorry to go just then, as among other things he intended to speak to me about Faustina. Stefano had told him all about his row with her, and, more-over, that it was on my account, which Faustina had never told me, though I had guessed as much for myself. Well, the Count was going to take his jackal's part for all he was worth, which was t exactly what I expected him to do intended going for me on his return but meanwhile I was not to make hay in his absence, and so this tool of a direc-tore had orders to keep me at it night and day. I undertook not to give the poor beast away, but at the same time told him I had not the faintest intention of doing another stroke of work that

knocking my head against the oranges as I ran up the long, shallow steps which ended the journey between the directors's lodge and the villa itself. But at the back of the villa was the garden I spoke about and also a bare chunk of the cliff where it was bored by that subterrunean stair. So I saw the stars close overhead, and the fishermen's torches far below, the coastwise lights and the crimson hieroglyph that spelt Vesuvius, be fore I plunged into the darkness of the shaft. And that was the last time I appreciated the unique and peaceful charm of this outlandish spot.
"The stair was in two long flights,

you came to the iron gate at the bottom boat? What was her engagement beside our love? 'Niente, niente,' crooned Faustina, sighing yet smiling through her tears. No, but what did matter was that the man had threatened to stab her to last time let me tell you that poor Faust.

the heart—and would do it as soon as ina was the whitest and the best I ever I won't swear to my quotation, but I will saw him—I spotted him—it was broad to those stairs. They were as black that I willight after those stairs—and I went in the same it merely from my knowledge "Well, I was strung up for trouble hight as the inside of the safest safe in for him with my bare hands. Not fists, the strongest strong room in the Chan-cery Lane Deposit. Yet I had not got far down them with my bare feet before I heard somebody else coming up in boots. You may imagine what a turn trouble, but no human being could have that gave me! It could not be Faustina, who went barefoot three seasons of the smashed his funny-bone against the rock four, and yet there was Faustina waiting before he could blaze again; the revolver and I and storen nothing, mark you, but only borrowed a revolver from a drawer for me down below. What a fright she in the Count's desk, with one or two trifling accessories, for by this time I had the measure of these damned Neahall at the measure of these damned Neahall at the measure of these damned Neahall at the plodded up and up. It was, it must be, the short-winded Count winded the man sang like a kettle as he plodded up and up. It was, it must be, the short-winded Count winded the man sang like a kettle as he plodded up and up. It was, it must be, the short-winded Count winded the man sang like as the plodded up and up. It was, it must be, the short-winded Count winded the man sang like as the plodded up and up. It was, it must be, the short-winded Count winded the man sang like as the plodded up and up. It was, it must be, the short-winded Count winded the man sang like as the plodded up and up. It was, it must be, the short-winded Count winded the man sang like as the plodded up and up. It was, it must be, the short-winded Count winded Count winded the man sang like as the plodded up and up. It was, it must be, the short-winded Count winded Count winded Count winded Count winded Count was, it must be, the short-winded Count winded Count was the count of the man sang like as the plodded up and up. It was, it must be, the short-winded Count winded Count winded Count with the count of the cou

different terrors were in it; and the knew she would not have me see her wheezing had stopped with the old scounshe was. I could say good-by to

"Chi sta la?" he squeaked at last, gib-

"Arture, signori."

"He didn't repeat my name, nor did he damn me in heaps. He did nothing but wheeze for a good minute, and when he spoke it was with insinuation civilia.

speak with you.'

"No, thanks. I'm in a hurry,' I said, killed Faustina. No, the plan was his, and dropped that match back into my but that was not part of the plan. They

"So you are in a 'urry!" and he kept hard at it overhead and to carry off wheezed amusement. 'And you thought I was still in Rome, no doubt; and so I was until this afternoon, when I caught train at the eleventh moment, and then another train from Naples, to Pozzuoli. anywhere in Naples, but only to drive from station to station. So I am without Stefano, Arturo, I am without Stefano. "His sly voice sounded preternaturally sly in the absolute darkness, but even through that impenetrable veil I knew it

for a sham. I had laid hold of the hand-rail. It shook violently in my hand; he also was holding it where he stood. And ese suppressed tremors, or rather their chill to my heart, just as I was begin-It is lucky for Stefano,' said I grim

stole his girl; he speak with me about it, and I wish to speak with you. It is very audashuss, Arturo, very audashuss! Perhaps you are even going to meet her now, Then there is no 'urry, for she is

cried, too delighted at the thought to I had no such fortune, the old devil

"'She is there, all the same."
'I only wish I 'ad known." 'And I've kept her long enough! "In fact, I threw this over my shoul-der as I turned and went running down.
"I 'ope you will find her!' his mali-cious voice came croaking after me. 'I

"And find her I did." Raffles had been on his feet some time unable to sit still or to stand, moving excitedly about the room. But now stood still enough, his elbows on the

his hands.
"Dead?" I whispered.
And he nodded to the wall. There was not a sound in the cave There was no answer to my voice. Then I went in, and my foot touched here, and they had stabbed her to the heart, had fought them, and they had was colder than the rock .

stabbed her to the heart?"
"You say 'they," I said gently, as he stood in heavy silence, his back still turned, "I thought Stefano had been turned, "I left behind?" "He was in the cavel" he shouted.

missed. And that steadled me,

band. I let him go a few steps higher, was very dead, and I tipped him into the and then I let him have it with both lungs.

was very dead, and I tipped him into the sea to defile that rather than Faustina's cave. And then—and then—we were alone

"Buona sera, eccellenza signori." I for the last time, she and I, in our own roared after him. And a scream came pet haunt; and I could scarcely see her, down in answer—such a scream! A dozen yet I would not strike a match, for I without that. I said it; and I left her like "'Chi sta la?' he squeaked at last, gib-bering and whimpering like a whipped monkey, so that I could not bear to miss his face and got a match all ready to swam, and back I went like a lunatic,

in his best English. - "Come nearer, Arturo. You are in the lower regions down there. I want to the good of that? I had taken blood for turning round with a sigh. "I left him pocket. He might be armed, and I was had found out about our meetings in the cave; nothing simpler than to have me Faustina by brute force in the boat. It was their only chance, for she had said more to Stefano than she had admitted peat about myself. have induced her to listen to him again; bucci's revolver on them, but they had taken her by surprise, and stabbed her before she could fire.

"But how do you know all that?" I asked Raffles, for his tale was going to pieces in the telling, and the trugic end of poor Faustina was no ending for me.
"Oh," said he, "I had it from Cor-bucci at his own revolver's point. He was waiting at his window, and I could have potted him at my ease where he stood against the light listening hard enough but not seeing a thing. So he asked whether it was Stefano, and I whispered. St. signore: and then whether he had finished Arturo, and I brought the same shot off again. He had let me in before he knew who was finished and

"And did you finish him?"
"No: that was too good for Corbucci. But I bound and gagged him about as tight as man was ever gagged or bound, and I left him in his room with the shutters shut and the house locked up. The shutters of that old place were six inches thick and the wall nearly six feet;

Count wasn't expected at the vineyard before the following Saturday. Mean-while he was supposed to be in Rome. But the dead would doubtless be diswould lead to his own discovery with the life still in him. I believe he figured on that himself, for he sat threatening me gamely till the last. You never saw such a sight as he was, with his head split in two by a ruler tied at the back of it, and his great mustache pushed up into his buiging eyes. But I locked him up in the dark without a qualm, and I wished and still wish him every torment of the damned."
"And then?"

"And then?"
"The night was still young, and within ten miles there was the best of ports
in a storm, and hundreds of holds for
the humble stowaway to choose from.
But I didn't want to go further than
Genoa, for by this time my Italian
would wash, so I chose the old Norddeutscher Lloyd, and had an excellent
voyage in one of the boats slung invoyage in one of the boats slung in-board over the bridge. That's better than any hold, Bunny, and I did splendidly on oranges brought from the vineyard."
"And at Genoa?"
"At Genoa I took to my wits one

more, and have been living on nothing else ever since. But there I had to begin all over again, and at the very bottom of the ladder. I slept in the streets. I begged. I did all manner of terrible things, rather hoping for a bad end, but things, rather hoping for a bad end, but never coming to one. Then one day I saw a white-headed old chap looking at me through a shop window—a window I had designs upon—and when I stared at him he stared at me, and we wore the same rags. So I had come to that! But one reflection makes many. I had not recognized myself; who on earth would recognize me? London called me—and here I am. Italy had broken my heart—

here I am. Italy had broken my heart-and there it stays." Filippant as a schoolboy one moment, playful even in the bitterness of the next, and now no longer giving way to the feeling which had spoiled the climax of his tale, Raffles needed knowing as I alone knew him for a right appreciation of those last words. That they were no mere words I knew full well. That but for the tragedy of his Italian life that life would have sufficed him for years, if not forever, I did and do still believe. But I alone see him as I saw him then, the lines upon his face and the pain be-hind the lines. How they came to disap-pear and what removed them you will never guess. It was the one thing you would have expected to have the opposite effect, the thing, indeed, that had forced his confidence, the organ and the voice once more beneath our very windows:

Margarita de Parete, era a' sarta d' e' signore Mar-ga-ri, e perzo e Salvatore!

Mar-ga-ri, Mar-ga-ri, Nun ce aje corpa tu!

hella ch' e fatto, e fatto, un ne parlammo

I simply stared at Raffles, Instead of looked years younger, mischlevous and merry and alert as I remembered him of old in the breathless crisis of some madcap escapade. He was holding up his finger; he was stealing to the window; he was peeping through the blind as though our side street were Scotland Yard itself; he was stealing back again, all revelry, excitement and

"I half thought they were after me before," said he. "That was why I made you look. I daren't take a proper look myself, but what a jest if they were! What a jest!"

"Do you mean the police?" said I me in the face and ask such a ques-tion? My boy, I'm dead to them and me so little that you can look being off the hooks! Why, if I went to Scutland Yard this minute to give my-self up they'd chuck me out for a harmless lunatic. No, I fear an enemy nowadays, and I go in terror of the sometime friend, but I have the utmost confidence in the dear police.
"Then whom do you mean?"

"The Camorra!" intonation. Not that I had never heard of that most powerful and sinister of secret societies, but I failed to see on what grounds Raffles should jump the conclusion that these every-day

organ-grinders belonged to it.
"It was one of Corbucci's threats," said he. "If I killed him the Camorra would certainly kill me. He kept on telling me so. It was like his cunning not to say that he would put them on my tracks whether or no.

"He is probably a member himself!" "Obviously, from what he said. "But why on earth should you think that these fellows are?" I demanded as that brazen voice came rasping

through a second verse. "I don't taink, It was only an idea, That thing is so thoroughly Neapoll-tan, and I never heard it on a London organ before. Then, again, what should

I peeped through the blind in my turn, and, to be sure, there was the fellow with the blue chin and the white teetn watching our windows, and ours only, as he bawled. "And why?" cried Ruffles, his eyes

fancing when I told him. "Why should they come eneaking back to us? Doesn't that look suspicious, Bunny; doesn't that promise a lark?"

"Not to me." I said, having the smile for once. "How many people, should you imagine, toss them 5 shillings for as many minutes of their infernal row? You seem to forget that that's what you did an hour ago." Raffles had forgotten. His blank face confessed the fact. Then suddenly he burst out laughing at himself.

"Bunny," said he, "you've no imagina-tion, and I never knew I had so much! Of course you're right. I only wish you were not, for there's nothing I should enjoy more than taking on another Ne-apolitan or two. You see, I owe them something still! I didn't settle in full. owe them more than ever I shall pay them on this side Styx!"

He had hardened even as he spoke; the lines and the years had come again and his eyes were filnt and steel, with ag

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