CHINA'S NEW ARMY

GREAT AT PARADE BUT—FULL OF FLAWS

Is China Becoming a Military Power?—In Number of Soldiers Yes, but in Organization, Quality of Soldiers and Combative Efficiency Never—Selling Commissions to Unqualified and Other Grafts Flourish—Chinese Fine Actors but Poor Fighters.

BY ASHLEY FORD.

IT IS characteristic of the new Army of China that it always tries to look its best before strangers.

Not a few "observant visitors" have been imposed on in this way; they go home saying "The Chinese Army of today is a smart well-drilled body of troops. At present it is small, but what will it be when we have to deal with a nation-in-arms the population of which is three hundred millions?"

Then follows talk about the Yellow Peril.

I have known this Army with some intimacy for a number of years; when the keynote was struck in my presence I was consequently able to recognize it at once. While taking a country walk on the outskirts of a big garrison city I came across a group that appealed to my instinct for the picturesque. A large fatigue party detailed for road mending was being given a short rest and the men had fallen into a series of most characteristic groups. My camera was almost ready when, at a word of command, every soldier scrambled to his feet and I was surrounded by a crowd intent on making photography impossible. The lieutenant in charge of the party came forward.

"You mustn't take a picture," he said, "it wouldn't look well."

"On the contrary," I told him, "it would be splendid."

"No, don't you see the men have been working hard? They are hot and tired and were taking a few minutes at their ease, sprawling about anyhow. Besides, they are not in parade uniform. I cannot let you photograph them thus. It would be a discredit."

All my diplomacy was of no avail. I talked with him for some time. After he had found that I knew his native province intimately and spoke its dialect; after, too, he had been mildly bribed by being himself photographed in heroic pose, he allowed me to snapshot his men, drawn up in regular formation, but I still failed to get his sanction to the taking of any picture that would have shown them in typical attitudes.

It is much more the desire never to be seen except when at their best, than any fear of espionage, that is responsible for many of the general orders by which foreigners are hindered from close contact with this Army. As an instance, any Chinese visitor to a barracks will be admitted as a matter of course, after stating his business, but no foreigners can be allowed inside the gate, on any pretense whatever, till the direct permission of the officer in command has been obtained. This holds good in places where there neither is nor ever could be any thing to conceal.

Those who have ways of piercing these barriers know what a mass of pretense the Chinese army is. Under General Yin Chang, who has now held the presidency of the Board of War for about a year, some matters have been momentarily improved. In particular, Yin Chang is not a notably corrupt man, as was his predecessor, Teh Liang. The latter customarily sold appointments in the army and established a price list on commissions on which few discounts were allowed.

From that current in the year 1908 I may quote, in terms of American money: General of division, $6000; Major-General, $3000; Colonel in command of regiment, $1800; Major, $1200 to $300. Exactly what factors influence the fluctuation of price in this last rank is not specified. These prices are purely graft, and do not bear any relation to the legal "purchase system" in vogue a generation ago in the British army. Any Chinese officer who loses his post loses the whole of his "invested capital" also.

One purchaser of the post of Colonel was (before making this investment) chief cook to the president of the Board of War. A well-filled purse and experience in the slaughter of chickens were his sole qualifications for the Colonelcy. The former was the only essential one.

As a diplomat he would have been a failure, for I have it on his own authority that he paid full market price to his master. Surely a cleverer man would have served up a good dinner and then bargained for reduced rates.

The honesty and moderation of Yin Chang has abolished this sale of office, but when his resignation has been handed in (an event which rumor says will not be long delayed) his successor may establish it again. Yin Chang is a rather broad-minded man who has received something of a military education in Europe and has twice been Chinese Minister to Germany. He has absorbed many ideas from that country, some of which (such as universal military service) he is attempting to apply in rather pedantic fashion to China, without regard to their real suitability to circumstances.

Up to the present most of his recommendations have been shelved, and many of his positive orders have not been enforced, so that the state of the Chinese army has not been greatly improved. Official squeeze has become less severe on the men, however, and is extorted in a different way.

CHINESE ENLISTED MAN IN UNDRESS UNIFORM

CHINESE PIONEER CORPS AT WORK ON MILITARY ROAD.

One division was formerly under the command of a General popularly nicknamed Pa P'i ("Take the Skin"). The troops received a regular ration of inferior grain or flour in addition to their pay. But out of the latter they weer made to buy, from their commanding officers and whenever they were ordered to do so, practically all their equipment—caps, boots, trousers, tunics, blankets and many sundries. Such small part of the pay as was not absorbed in this way they could spend on necessaries or luxuries from outside.

So while he was in command the men were always smart in appearance. Admiring foreign visitors would comment on the spruce new uniforms in which our local troops always paraded. They didn't know the underlying reasons for this spick-and-span condition.

Poor Pa P'i, no worse than his neighbors, has had bad luck. When I last heard of him he had been cashiered, probably less for squeezing than for not allowing himself to be squeezed sufficiently by his superiors.

Now the same division is commanded by a General who pursues a different system. Equipment and uniforms are served out free and with moderate regularity. The full pay of the men is approximately $2.50 (in American money) per month. Ninety-six cents of this, or more than one-third of the whole, however, is kept back by the officers to pay for the grain and flour ration served out daily. No other article of food is given in direct return for this, but there is an arrangement which allows the men, working by messes, to cultivate vegetables and condiments for their own use. These cost, therefore, only labor. If they want meat (and can afford it) they may buy it with the remaining $1.54 per month, from which also they must pay the barber who shaves their heads and attends to their queues and for all luxuries and amusements that the heart of a soldier desires.

Sapient foreigners have been found who declare that the modern Chinese soldier is drawn from a better class than in the past. The soldiers themselves do not pretend that this is the case. The social status of their officers has been a little improved, but not much. The higher ranks are still filled by men of the old stamp, who have paid to get their positions, and who pay to hold them. In time they may be replaced by the youngsters now below them, who have had some foreign training, but who, at the best, would be quite unequal to the handling of large bodies of men, as the term is now understood, and who must buy promotion directly or indirectly.

The monthly pay of a Captain is $30. Men of the class from which they come must support themselves, their wives and possibly help their parents, all out of this sum! Is it surprising that they "squeeze" their men if the chance offers?

One of my acquaintance confesses to being in debt to the extent of $240 (or eight months' pay) after holding a Captaincy for two years. He has had a superior education and is now looking for civil employment.

Officers below this grade do not receive and appear not to expect any show of deference from their men, except when on the parade ground. Even to any one used to the democratic ways of China this absence of respect must be striking.

You may read that by the end of 1912 China will have completed the organization of 36 divisions of 12,500 men each. A standing army of close on 500,000 men, with plans already made to increase it. Well drilled and armed with up-to-date weapons! A population of 400,000,000 from which to recruit!

What beautiful facts for the sensationalist. The Fat Boy in Pickwick could think of nothing better calculated to "make your flesh creep"—till you can learn something more about this "army."

Certainly Chinese troops look well on parade. They do the goose-step with a precision which a Prussian guardsman might envy. All drillground exercises are splendidly carried out.

"I've never seen guns more smartly handled," a foreign military officer said to me.

We were at a review, and no Chinese being within earshot, my companion obviously could not be trying to give a little indirect "taffy."

"Major Wang," he called, "how long have the men been practicing with this type of weapon? Six weeks, you say? Marvelous!"

So it was, but—. The Chinese is a born actor, and when at drill he throws himself into his allotted part, just as he would behind the footlights. His dramatic instinct is aroused and he sees himself for the moment as a hero of romance. I don't mean to say that he cannot be made into a real soldier; he can be. But it is not being done. Drill he can, shoot he can't.

Watch him at scouting exercise, and you will see that it is an automaton that has been set to work, not a reasoning being. The Fifth Division (one of the first to be organized) is still without any rifle range.

A mass of men, even if properly trained, is not an Army till it is organized, and such organization is sadly lacking in China. What can one say of a medical service corps which gives one foreign-taught surgeon to a division? The majority of Chinese soldiers have no faith in foreign drugs, or the medical staff would be hopelessly overworked even in time of peace.

Sensationalists tell us that the legations of the powers in Pekin are watching with misgiving China's rising military power and are closely following every advance that is made.

To do this last is only the plain duty of a military attache. Let me point out what cause the foreigner may have for misgiving. China beyond question dislikes the foreign devil, collectively at least. This is particularly true of the younger men, educated abroad, who believe that they have an army already almost strong enough to enforce their will, turn all foreigners out of the country bag and baggage and slam the doors shut after them. If such men were to have their way, China would again soon declare war on the world. Therefore it behooves the legations to watch as they are doing.

SUBALTERN AND PART OF GUARD DETAIL IN GARRISON.

TYPICAL LIEUTENANT (WITH SABRE) AND PRIVATE MINOR OFFICERS RECEIVE LITTLE DEFERENCE FROM MEN

It is this very hatred of the foreigner, combined with growing self-conceit on the part of China, that is weakening their army. Before the Boxer trouble, German instructors had been freely used and their advice taken. The artillary was wonderfully efficient, and a fair proportion of men understood how to use their rifles.

We are told much today about Japanese advisers to the army of China, but on the spot they are remarkably hard to find. Where they do exist it is at least certain that, like all other advisers to Chinese officialdom, they will not be listened to.

Yet for China to become a serious military power by her own unaided efforts is impossible. If, with organization imperfect, officers still filling their pockets at the expense of the men, men still ignorant of the use of their arms and thoroughly disaffected toward the ruling dynasty, she makes war on even a single foreign nation, she can only meet with another disaster to add to the list of those from which she is as yet so reluctant to learn.

Were the men loyal, which they mostly are not, China's army would today be almost strong enough to preserve order within the borders of her own empire. There is some hope that it may come to do so much, but there is danger that it may attempt to do more. In that case it will fail, and its failure may be a disaster to other nations besides China.

The Tax on Moustaches

AN EXCEPTIONAL TALE OF ADVENTURE AND LOVE

BY H. J. W. DAM.

THE rivalry between Vincent and Halladay was bitter enough before Miss Belmayne occurred. It then assumed an aspect almost Corsican.

Vincent was the Rome correspondent of the London Thunderer. Halladay was the Roman representative of the London National. Vincent was an Oxford man; Halladay's intellectual credentials were dated at Cambridge. Vincent was of middle height, dark, lithe, and athletic. He had an electric energy, and quick, penetrating brown eyes with a merry light in them that was attractive; also a brown moustache that approached the feminine ideal. Halladay was of stouter and flabbier build, with a blond, sharp-pointed beard, and a face like Lord Salisbury's. Lord Salisbury was, in fact, secretly his model. He was the cousin of a peer, but notwithstanding this drawback had managed to develop a value of his own, which shows his great force and determination. He was also five years older than Vincent, who was only 31, and, in the game of life, if not of love, years have a distinct value of their own. Both men drew lavish salaries, moved in the highest society of Rome, and were polished carpet cavaliers and very popular. Both, too, had weaknesses which revealed their temperaments and are correlated forces in this narrative.

Vincent's weakness was a small sloop yacht which he kept at Naples for vacation cruises. Not having time, in the pressure of events, to love a woman, he loved this yacht. Whenever social, diplomatic, or international affairs did not command his attention, he and his pipe and the yacht had charming hours of mental communion together in his apartment. Whenever leaves of absence permitted, the three did Capri, Sorrento, Ischia, and the adjacent Turner paintings of the Bay of Naples in congenial company. On stretching seas, in the calm and gorgeous afterglow, he dreamed of a possible fair one in the nebulous future. This showed his temperament to be romantic.

Halladay's weakness was "The War Cloud in the Balkans." Whenever other news failed he would knit his editorial brow and use his portentous ink and see ominous signs of trouble in Servia, Bulgaria, and the Balkan Provinces. One can always see ominous signs of trouble in Servia, Bulgaria, and the Balkan Provinces, and they make an excellent frame on which to hang long and sweeping periods dealing with possible international complications. From which it will be seen that Halladay was ambitious. He always used the most majestic polysyllables that fitted, and these won him the reputation of a powerful and far-seeing correspondent, which reputation he confidently believed that he deserved.

These diverse temperaments caused the two men to secretly scorn each other, and this feeling was not diminished by their alternating newspaper triumphs, important bits of news from the Quirinal or the ministries, which fell now to one and now to the other, and caused the usual variations of anger and delight.

Thus it was when Miss Belmayne and her parents arrived at the Grand Hotel for the Winter. Parents are, of course, of no importance, but it may be mentioned that Mr. Belmayne had made stoves, and incidentally accumulated two millions, on the shore of Lake Michigan. Miss Belmayne was a girl who, without effort, bowl over unprepared Englishmen like tenpins. She had style, Paris style, and this, when the dressmaker is driven with an intelligent curb, is very fascinating. She was fairly tall, blonde, had ideas, dark blue eyes and a frank, sympathetic nature. All these exercised a novel and powerful influence on the two men. They met her on the same evening at a diplomatic reception. The charms mentioned were quite enough for Vincent. He went home, lighted his pipe, put on his slippers, looked at the fire and said, "By Jove!" He said nothing more to the fire or anything else for two mortal hours. Then he said "By Jove!" again and went to bed. The same charms sufficed to stagger Halladay, but to them he added the two millions. He was older and more practical. He wrote his cousin, the peer, and told him to be sure to come to Rome that Winter. Then he mentally watered his genealogical tree, resolved to lay siege to the beautiful Vicksburg with the firm patience of a Grant, and absently took a cold bath. This chilled him, at midnight, but did not check his ardor.

Miss Belmayne took Rome and the Forum and the Coliseum very seriously. This was a novelty to Vincent and Halladay, so they awoke to its grandeur, and took it very seriously indeed. They sent her books, and bronzes, and prehistoric pavements, and fragments of ancient palaces by the cartload. Papa Belmayne, who was indulgent, said he didn't particularly care for a macadamized drawing-room and engaged another room to hold the ancient architecture. The attentions of the two men soon became constant and very marked. And through archaeological mornings and afternoon drives, on the blocks of the Forum and the steps of the Coliseum, on the Pincian Hill and the roof of St. Peter's, they fell deeper and deeper in love, but kept their own counsel. The dear girl was as yet unconscious of it, but they hated each other with the hate of the 1850-60 dramas. It was anything—all—to win the adorable beauty, and sentence the other fellow to life-long despair.

The primal cause of all the subsequent trouble was Vincent's yacht. He had, on various occasions, shown Miss Belmayne the high responsibility of his position as correspondent of the Thunderer. Now and then he wrote his dispatches at her hotel, after dinner, and two days later would read her the powerful, ponderous Thunderer editorials, which, telegraphed all over Europe, were based upon the dispatches sent by him. This interested her tremendously. Like every true American girl of nowadays—in her ante-matrimonial, ante-babies-of-her-own period—she secretly longed to sway nations. To write dispatches which set Europe and America in a ferment, which caused Salisbury, the German Emperor, and the Czar to instantly buckle on their skates, as it were, and dash off to do something final, seemed to her the only occupation worthy of woman or of man. She found nothing so delightful as helping him, and he knew nothing so delightful as her help, notwithstanding that the hotel note paper was scarcely the proper stationery to bear this freight of heavy thought. When the Thunderer arrived she would read the dispatches with a thrill of interest born of her indirect connection with the great newspaper. Finally she wanted to write a dispatch—just a little one—all by herself. He, reserving rights of correction and revision, consented. It was a safe contribution, not at all sensational, about the returns of the olive crop. She wrote it. She also read it, word for word, in print, two days later. That experience was a crisis in her life. Destiny opened out its arms to her as a Woman of Might and Power. Halladay lost ground visibly after that and had emotional neuralgia of the most torturing kind.

The cause of the trouble, as before stated, was the yacht. A dirty steamtrader from Marseilles, while coming to anchor, had taken off the bowsprit of Vincent's secondary idol, together with a slice of her peerless nose. It was like an accident to a highly esteemed female cousin. The best medical attention was instantly necessary. Vincent knew the Italians. He knew that if he did not personally arrange the contract for repairs at Naples the contractor who did them would afterwards own the yacht, bring suit against his personal fortune, and hold his family responsible for the balance of the money. In short, he had to go to Naples for two days. Miss Belmayne, strange to say, received the news with joy.

"I'll look after things. I'll send anything that's necessary to the Thunderer," she said.

He stared at her in astonishment.

"Oh, do let me! Please do! I want to show you the breadth of my mind."

Events were very dull journalistically. And when a beautiful girl wants to show you the breadth of her mind it is not only dangerous to say "no," but wise to say "yes," that is, if you are as much in love as he was. He finally consented and she radiated enthusiasm. "Just read the papers if you do send anything, and be guided by them," said he. "But don't—er—don't send too much, and nothing that isn't important." Then he went away to single combat with the contractor. She couldn't do him any harm. If what she sent was bad it wouldn't be printed. And his consent to the proposal would certainly do him infinite good in connection with another proposal. Thus he mused, in love, and in the train to Naples.

Now, it is doubtless fully understood by all adult persons that when an American girl desires to show the breadth of her mind she is destined to show it at all hazards. The responsibility of her position weighed heavily upon Miss Belmayne. She came down to breakfast next morning with a far-away look in her eyes and two brown prima-donna hair-curlers still nestling in the soft silken hair above her forehead. Papa Belmayne at first assumed that this was a new style in breakfast toilets and said nothing. He could never keep quite abreast of the fashions and he had made mistakes before. Then he conceived that it might possibly be an evidence of strong, disturbing emotion, and ventured to inquire. She gravely removed the hair-curlers, and after striking her hair three skilful taps put them in her pocket. Then she cautiously whispered to him the news. She, she, was the Acting Rome Correspondent of the Thunderer. Papa was startled. It flashed instantly upon his practical Chicago mind that with a wire like that something might be done in wheat. But no—on second thought—that wouldn't do. Still, he was proud, very proud, of his daughter. He proceeded to like Vincent amazingly. "We'll give the old Thunderer a lift, my dear, if anything happens. I'll furnish the statesmanship and you look out for the spelling and punctuation," said he. Halladay he had never liked. That gentleman's family tree and its luxuriant foliage had been exhibited several times in his presence and it annoyed him. Not having dealt largely in trees in his career, he didn't believe in them. So Vincent stock rose above the hundred mark in the Belmayne family, and Halladay's fell steadily to zero, with no offers.

Halladay knew this and fumed in secret. He also guessed at once from Miss Belmayne's words and questions the foolish thing that Vincent had done. He saw in it only a clever move of his rival, and also saw a chance to spoil Vincent's chances and win Miss Belmayne with a single safe play. He was devoted but thoughtful all that afternoon. Then he went away and meditated.

At 10 o'clock that evening he entered the Belmayne drawing-room, sharp-pointed, immaculate, and smiling with a visible air of conscious triumph.

"Ha, ha, ha! Sorry for Vincent. Pity he's away," he said.

"Oh! what happened? I've read all the evening papers," said the acting correspondent.

"Can't say, you know. Must keep a good thing to myself when I get it."

"It is a very good thing?"

"Very."

"Is it a big thing?" This with fear and trembling.

"Biggest in months. May cause a rebellion in Italy. You know these Italians. Hair-trigger sort of people when anything happens that they don't quite like."

"Oh, Mr. Halladay! Please tell me."

He proceeded not to tell her, for the next half hour, in the cleverest way possible. He dangled the bait before her and cruelly enjoyed her attempts to seize it. He saw with concealed fury, however, that her anxiety was the tender anxiety that he most greatly feared. This armed him in his resolve, and having excited her curiosity till it was painful, he went downstairs.

"What is it, my dear?" said Belmayne.

Miss Belmayne was dumb with disappointment. She loved Vincent—she knew it in that moment—and he would be dreadfully beaten, without excuse, and perhaps lose his position. Because of their compact he had even failed to notify the Thunderer of his absence.

"I've missed the greatest news of the year," she said sharply. "Do go down to the smoking-room. They're sure to be talking about it. Follow Halladay and see to whom he speaks. We must get something about it."

Papa Belmayne was stout, vigorous, 55, and came from Chicago. His hair was curly and showed only a few white lines. Spurred by parental love and a desire for something to do that was slowly undermining his constitution, he followed Halladay like the species of hound which is called sleuth. His eyes twinkled and his blood was up. He had always known that anybody can be a newspaper correspondent, and he enjoyed trying it. He quickly found Halladay in the smoking-room and kept his eye on him. Halladay observed this and was deeply glad. It was as he had hoped. Belmayne had fallen heels over head into his trap.

Halladay was in earnest, low-toned conversation with Sir George Perleybore, a tall, thin, white-haired, perfectly groomed baronet, of any age above 65, the kind of lay figure met everywhere in the best hotels of the south of Europe during Winter. Sir George was astonished. Papa Belmayne saw this plainly, and lay low like Brer Rabbit. Halladay finally went away. Papa then greeted Sir George carelessly and proposed a whisky and soda. Also cigars. Sir George said: "Most extraordinary! Wouldn't have believed it. What'll these beggars do next!" Papa swelled with repressed eagerness. Then it all came out. He got it—every word of it—and chuckled at his own diplomacy. Then he flew to the elevator.

"Now I know what I'm talking about, my dear," he said, when her burst of joy was over. "I understand these things and you don't. I haven't been a State Senator two terms for nothing. You sit down and take your pen and I'll dictate."

Papa expanded like a balloon, walked the floor, and dictated. He measured every word by cubic measurement. He dictated the short despatch four times and half of another time in all. She wrote and scratched out and turned the dictionary pages feverishly, and thought how clearly Edward would see the breadth of her mind.

And neither Edward nor the Thunderer knew the doom that was impending.

When the despatch was finally completed she knew that she could have expressed it much more elegantly, but papa was inexorable. He'd tell the story in America, by jiminy, and he wanted to read his own despatch in the London Thunderer. So she copied it in a bold, round hand, signed Vincent's cipher, gave it to Vincent's commissionaire, who called at 11, and both she and papa went to bed feelling very well indeed.

At 10 o'clock the next morning—Roman time—the face of Europe wore a fearful geographical frown. Consternation, perplexity and uncertainty ruled in five empires. From Downing street the news went under the Channel to the Paris Elysee and overland to the Winter palaces of Berlin, Vienna and St. Petersburg. In her honest attempt to sway nations, the dear girl had succeeded. The thrones sent messages to the foreign offices; the foreign offices wired the ambassadors, and neither wire nor cable could work half fast enough to please the respective senders. When the stock exchanges opened, Italian Rentes fell six points, and their allies weakened in proportion. The smash had come. Italy was bankrupt and the Triple Alliance would fall to pieces. It all arose from a despatch and an editorial in the columns of the London Thunderer, those columns which were held to be infallible as the multiplication table itself. This was the despatch:

ITALY.

(From our own correspondent.)

I saw Signor Crespo this evening and learned from him that the new and important item in the budget, the new source of revenue which has been promised and upon which great hopes have been based, will take the form of a national tax upon moustaches. In his bill, which he will introduce in the Chamber tomorrow, it will be provided that every citizen of Italy wearing a moustache shall pay a sumptuary tax thereupon of one lira yearly. In the ordinary course this tax will yield the 20,000,000 lire per annum which are so greatly needed and whose source up to now it has been impossible to discover. Of course, a certain amount of opposition from the Left is confidently to be expected. The tax on moustaches will undoubtedly afford an opportunity to the Socialists to champion individual rights and protest against interference therewith; but, on the other hand, the clerical wing are certain to view the innovation with favor. The peculiar acceptance of the measure is, however, difficult to forecast.

This was probably the most nonsensical dispatch that has ever appeared in any newspaper, great or small. The editor had looked at it, incredulous. The leader writer said, "H'm, it's neck or nothing with Crespo." Only Vincent's cipher and the condition of Italy made belief possible; but it was believed. This was the editorial:

The extraordinary course which has been adopted by the Prime Minister of Italy in order to replenish the national treasury is so radical an extension of the general principle of taxation that neither its wisdom nor its result can yet be declared with any degree of certainty. Statistics do not, unfortunately, furnish us with the number of Italian citizens who at the period of the last census were wearing mustaches. It is a well-known fact, however, that the custom of cultivating hair in an ornamental form upon the upper lip is perhaps more firmly established as a national habit in Italy than in any other country of the world at the present time. The first lesson of this proposed legislation is its certain indication of the extreme if not hopeless financial straits into which the monarchy has fallen. The second is the very doubtful character of the tax itself as a reliable source of revenue, when viewed from the standpoints of expediency and of successful enforcement. It will be necessary for legislation to establish with perfect clearness not only what a mustache legally is, but also at what age, both of the wearer and of the mustache itself, it becomes taxable; and in these two directions, to say nothing of the popular acceptance or rejection of the measure, the visible difficulties are both many and great.

On that very afternoon a man in a yachting suit went over the side of a yacht at Naples and was rowed to the pier. He was happy and buoyant with the buoyant happiness of the man who loves and is loved. Upon reaching the pier he bought the second edition of the Corriere di Napoli and glanced at the telegraph columns. The Thunderer dispatch had been cabled back to Naples, and under sensational headlines was the first to meet his eye.

His first thought was that he was losing his mind and inventing the telegram. Then something flashed upon him, and his heart seemed to stop beating. He staggered to the curb of the pier, sat down and shut his eyes. He was never sure afterwards whether he fainted or not. For five minutes he knew only the silent whirl of agonized thoughts. He grasped at once what had happened. It was Halladay's work, and Halladay had ruined him. The Thunderer was the laughing stock of Europe, and he, as the responsible sender of that dispatch, was journalistically done for. Ambition spoke first, and the pain was of the bitterest. Love spoke next, but with all his rage and despair he could not find the power to be harsh to Miss Belmayne. "The dear girl!" he said. "She did her best, and that scoundrel fooled her completely. Oh, oh, oh!" And he squeezed his head with his hands as if to shut out the thought of his position and the inevitable consequences that he must face.

A little knot of loungers had gathered, his evident pain exciting their sympathy. This recalled him to himself, and he took a cab and drove away. Little knots of men stood in front of all the cafes, excitedly discussing the new tax. Half of them were clean-shaven for the first time in their lives and the rest were about to be. There was a run on every hairdresser's shop in Naples. The Italian is poor, the taxes are killing, and the art of dodging them is the first thing taught to children. Vincent still held the paper and now read its comments on the tax. They combined a scream of sarcastic laughter with a howl of furious rage. Italy had been touched on the spot that was tenderest. But—and here was a gleam of hope—the reputation of the Thunderer was so high that the dispatch had been taken seriously. The "sell" had not yet been exposed. If only Crespo would save him—but no! Crespo's position, already imperiled by a crisis, was worse than his own. Crespo would want to shoot him on the spot.

He caught the 2:40 train and rode to Rome in a state of numbness. What he would do to Halladay he did not dare to think. He was a man in a rage, a hungry, thirsty rage, that threatened to overpower him. Nor did he dare to go to his apartment. There lay the telegram dismissing him in derision and contempt. In his sorrow his heart turned to love for consolation. Arrived at Rome, he drove to the hotel, entered Miss Belmayne's drawing-room with a white, sad face, and sat in the shadow.

The acting correspondent came in radiant, beaming with pride and pleasure over her shrewdness and success.

"Have you seen it? It's in the Roman papers. You didn't get beaten. Oh, I was so worried and so happy when I knew you were safe!"

She stopped, mystified at his silence. Then she saw his pallor and his expression.

"Are you ill? What is it? What's the matter?"

He tried to spare her; tried to pass the matter over lightly. But the moment she knew that the dispatch had caused his trouble all subterfuges were useless. Her face, too, grew white, and she kept on asking him question after question till she fully understood the effect of what he had done. His ruin was certain, but his replies were gentle, quiet and full of sympathy. Then the society girl known as Miss Belmayne disappeared and the woman in her came out. His career was ended, and through his love for her. His big, beautiful girl stood up, tried to say she was sorry, but couldn't. Her lips only quivered and wouldn't work. Then she sat down, bolt upright, on the sofa, and the tears came first creeping and then tumbling down from her eyelashes as she cried, broken hearted, without a word or a handkerchief. He tried to soothe her, to say it was nothing. "Oh, Edward!" was all she said.

In spite of his grief, he observed the word "Edward."

Upon this interesting and unconventional social tableau bustled in Papa Belmayne, of Chicago, millionaire and newspaper correspondent. He saw a white young man and a young person bathed in tears.

"Wha—what's the matter?" said he, starting and peering over his eyeglasses.

"I'm done for, but it's all my own fault," said the young man.

Papa inquired and was told. He sat down suddenly in a state of collapse.

"If that sneak comes here again I'll cowhide him," he said, exploding. "I'll thrash him, anyhow. Anyhow!" he roared with the rage of an honest man who has been beaten at his own game.

Then several minutes of sad, solemn silence ensued, each trying to find a ray of light in the gloom.

"Why don't you see Crespo? He's a friend of yours, isn't he?" said Belmayne.

"He has been."

"Then come on. Laura, you come with us. We did it. We're responsible, and we'll take the blame. Crespo is the only man that can save you. Here! Order me a carriage!" he shouted to the maid.

The combative financier who had faced and won a hundred battles that were real battles was not to be daunted by a prime minister and a newspaper and a little thing like this. His courage, of course, infected his daughter. With father at the helm everything would, of course, be all right. It must be all right. So she hoped once more and darted away for hatpins. While wanting for her and the hatpins at the elevator another thing occurred. Belmayne put his hand in a friendly way on Vincent's shoulder and said: "Young man, don't you worry. If you have to give up journalism, you may possibly do much better than that. I know you and I like you." Vincent nodded quietly. The implied promise was well meant, but it did not appeal to him just then. They drove to the Quirinal Hill in silence. The acting correspondent merely asked her father if her hat was on straight. She se-

(Concluded on Page 7.)