

He evidently handed the scoria to her.

"And you could think me such a cad," she murmured, in a tone full of sorrowful indignation. Then suddenly, in bewilderment: "But what has this to do with Phyllis?"

"You are Phyllis!" he said. And he moved nearer to her. "I only knew your initial, you see, so I had to invent a name; but I like the real name much better."

At this point I became seriously alarmed at my involuntary eaves-dropping, and, with a loud and demonstrative yawn, remarked that I supposed the book had sent me to sleep, wondering whether tea was ready, and made a dash for the door and liberty.

It was an hour later—a good twenty minutes late for tea—when Pamela and Lambert emerged from the study; and as they entered the drawing-room, and all eyes were bent upon them, their palpable confusion gave them away.

Bobby turned pale with disappointment for one brief moment; then, rallying, gallantly rescued them.

"Look here," he said, "you two are abominably late for tea! Don't apologise, unless you have a really good excuse—an interesting one that will atone for the past."

"You see, Bobby—" began Pamela, and looked at Lambert.

"It's like this," he said, cheerfully, "Pamela and I have been quarrelling over the card case, and the only way we could settle it and come to tea was by her consenting to keep the cardcase herself, and—"

"And?" repeated Bobby blandly.

"And its original owner, too!"

"We all of us make mistakes," exclaimed Bobby, "but Pamela is a perfect genius at it. She had better have taken me—or Sorby. Still, you are third best, I must own, Lambert."

"And even old Sorby himself laughed—through a little consciously."

"Well," he said, holding out his hands to the happy pair, "there's a welcome to you both; and you are a lucky fellow, Gervoise! So am I, in gaining such a charming niece!"

"I should just think you were!" concluded Bobby. "Why, I would even change places with you myself under the circumstances!"

"You must be married here!" declared Mollie.

"I shall consider it a favour," said Lambert, "if Mr. Robert Grant will be best man on the most important occasion of my life."

Bobby bowed with staidness; then, relapsing into his usual style, said:

"Don't mention it, old man! No trouble, but a pleasure. I'll see you through."

So the scene closed in general rejoicing and goodwill; but I felt a little "dashed" myself. Still, everyone can't be pleased. There is always an "odd man out," and, after all, he has his mission. He can tell the story so much better than the others can.

It needs Lord Byron's brilliant pen,  
His clever, brainy head,  
To tell us how and why and when  
Some people are not dead.  
But since he's gone we'll tell the way,  
How good health to assure,  
And colds and hacking coughs allay,  
Take Woods' Great Peppermint  
Cure.

Complete Story.

# A KING'S WORD.

Short Story by Elena, Queen of Italy.

The beautiful new Queen of Italy wants literary fame. She has written a short story under the poetic name de plume of Farfalla Azurra—the Blue Butterfly—and this contribution will simultaneously appear in a new Russian magazine. Her Majesty was educated in Russia and can express herself most fluently in the Russian tongue. The money she receives for the story is to be given to charity.

This, her first story, deals with an episode from the life of the late Humbert, who while travelling in the provinces was called from sleep at night by the father confessor of a doomed man who was about to suffer for a crime he had not committed. Humbert went to the dungeon, announced himself supreme judge of the realm, and procured a confession by the promise to pardon the real criminal, who was the father of the man about to be executed.

## THE QUEEN'S STORY.

On Nov. 12, 1874, during a tour of the provinces, the King stopped for the night at Castelgondolfo. That small town was originally not his programme, but a washout on the road had compelled His Majesty to change his dispositions, and the railway being impassable he proceeded to Castelgondolfo in the carriage of a petty land owner, attended by a single gentleman of his suite only.

Arrived in the town, the exterior aspects of the only hotel were found to be so uninviting that the King decided to try his luck with one of the local grandees, and as Castelgondolfo happens to be the seat of a bishop he drove to his grace first. The bishop's palace was a formidable building, where many, many years ago the tyrants of the principality used to hold forth. There was plenty of room, enough to lodge the King's entire retinue of sixty persons. King Umberto got a fine suite of apartments and an ample supper, though a frugal one for the bishop, who was an ascetic man.

But His Majesty did not mind the severe plainness of the fare and the sour wine. He never had been a gourmet, and as there was enough to go around he was quite pleased with his experience.

Supper over he sat up a while with his grace, listening to that gentleman's historical memoirs of Castelgondolfo, and became so interested that he asked the bishop to lend him his carriage for a tour of the city. The town had no gas, and there was little illumination save the carriage lanterns and occasional tallow dips and kerosene lamps in the shop windows; but the King was rather glad of that, as he didn't want to be recognised. He intended to get away at an early hour next morning, and if the city authorities learned of his presence there might be delay, owing to loyal demonstrations of the sort that bore and tantalise the recipient.

So His Majesty viewed Castelgondolfo's historical landmarks and monuments as best he could, being satisfied that neither himself nor his good city would be benefited by a closer inspection, and then after bidding good night to his host retired to his rooms.

His long carriage ride had tired him out, and the King quickly divested himself of his clothes, hoping that his valet would arrive before morning to help him to cut a respectable appearance when he proceeded on his journey. His Majesty's wearing apparel was well distributed over chairs, sofas and tables when the door bell of the palace rang, making a great noise in the immense hall with its bare walls and granite floor. Umberto paused in the act of blowing out the light, for he had a sort of presentiment that he was wanted, despite Ma In-cognito and the unannounced suddenness of his visit, and sure enough there was shuffling of feet outside and

a feeble knock at the door of the ante-room.

"Who is there?"

"If it pleases your Majesty, Marshal Conte Rossi."

"Wait, I will open."

The King threw his military great-coat over his shoulders, for the fire was low. The interruption was not to his liking, and his good-natured face probably expressed annoyance and impatience, for the Marshal wasted some minutes in excuses.

"Very well, you are forgiven, my dear Conte," interrupted the King, "but now to the point. What brings you here and who are the people outside, for I heard other footsteps besides yours?"

"The State's Attorney of the district and the father confessor of the county prison," reported the Marshal. "By the merest accident they have heard of your Majesty's presence, and make bold to beg for an audience at this unseemly hour, owing to the urgency of the business they claim to have." And as the King made a motion of impatience, probably suspecting some petty political or office-seeker's ruse, he continued: "They say it concerns a matter of life and death."

King Umberto was always a merciful man, and so without further parley he replied: "Take the gentlemen into the salon, and then come back and help me to dress. If you don't, I am not sure that I will be able to find my clothes again, the candles are so few and the chairs so many."

Ten minutes later the King met his nocturnal visitors, whereupon the State's Attorney, an elderly man of dignified mien, came forward and spoke what follows:

"Your Majesty is the most high Judge of the realm," he said, "and, as my business concerns the administration of justice, I had to set aside, for the moment, the consideration I owe the King's comfort."

"My Marshal tells me that it's a case of life or death," remarked Umberto; "that excuses everything. State your appeal for royal clemency. I will weigh it in my mind, and, if the case brooks no delay, as I understand, I promise to give a decision even before retiring."

"May it please your Majesty," began the State's Attorney anew, "it's not mercy we desire; it's justice—justice in a case where the ordinary machinery of the law falls short."

The King stepped back a pace or two. "You, the public prosecutor, say that?" he demanded, in an angry voice.

"Yes, for conscience has turned the prosecutor into a defender," replied the official. When he heard these words the King looked even more annoyed than before, but the advocate continued his appeal. "I beseech you to be calm," he cried with an emphasis, for your Majesty is to decide whether an innocent man is to be executed to-morrow at daybreak or not."

King Umberto took no notice of this outburst, but sat down in an armchair. "I am listening," he said, after thinking long and earnestly. "State this extraordinary case in the manner you would assume before the Appellate Court."

"Some three months ago," began the State's Attorney, "it became my painful duty to prosecute for murder a young farmer of this section, who up to then had borne the highest character for peacefulness, industry, and sobriety. He was accused of having ambushed and shot down a gamekeeper, and the proofs against him were such that I had no difficulty in persuading the jury of his guilt. I did so because the law compelled me to act, yet, at the same time, I was morally certain of committing a great wrong. An inner voice kept telling me that this young man was innocent despite the net of direct and circumstantial evidence woven around him, and the more evidence accumulated the more affrighted I became of my cleverness to convict."

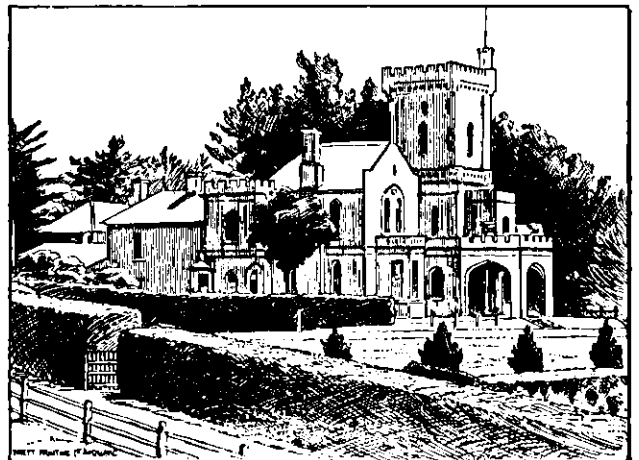
"He was sentenced to be shot a month after judgment had been passed—that is, to-morrow—and as soon as my public duty was discharged I began work to clear up the mystery. I have had, perhaps, twenty conversations with the doomed man since then, in all of which he repeated his declaration of innocence made at the trial, swearing on his baby's head that he had not done the bloody deed. I believe him, but that does not help matters, since Thomas cannot or will not furnish proofs that might lead to the discovery of the real culprit."

"As a last resort I took his young wife and three children into his cell yesterday, hoping that their tears and entreaties might loosen his tongue. He cried a good deal, and I was almost persuaded that he would make a clean breast of the whole business, but when I approached him with a demand for the name of the culprit he pulled himself together and re-

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