

Nelson at Naples

MR. F. P. BADHAM, in a recent pamphlet,¹ renews his attack upon Nelson's reputation, as involved in the transactions at Naples in June 1799; discussing again the old evidence, and introducing some that is new. Prominent in the latter, and alone deserving of very serious consideration, is the journal of the Cavaliere Antonio Micheroux, lately published at Naples by the Marchese Maresca.² This may be conveniently designated by its subtitle, the 'Compendio,' and it is this journal, in connexion with Mr. Badham's pamphlet, that is the occasion of the present article. Incidentally Mr. Badham in his preface (pp. vi-viii) endeavours to convict me of serious errors in statement, by misquotation or misconstruction, in my article in the *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW* of July 1899, and subsequently in a controversy between us in the *Athenaeum* of July and August 1899, which started from an attack made by him upon the accuracy of my revised 'Life of Nelson,' then recently published.

I have to regret that the limitation of space at my disposal, and the superior necessity for dealing at large with the more important question of Nelson's reputation, as affected by Mr. Badham's former charges and new matter, prevent my giving the exposition I have prepared of these fresh examples of his methods of handling evidence. Such a discussion, however, although it would certainly contribute incidentally to clear up the main subject, would have the appearance of a wearisome personal altercation; and I am further reconciled to the omission by the fact that Mr. Badham's dealing with two principal matters—Hamilton's letter to Acton of 27 June and Nelson's to Ruffo of 26 June—necessitates an analysis which will sufficiently illustrate his characteristics. The additional instances would be merely cumulative.

Mr. Badham, at the opening of his argument, very properly admits the error, of which I had convicted him, of quoting, as the words of Hamilton, a comment interpolated by Dumas in Hamilton's letter. He could scarcely do less; the error is too glaring. How grave was

¹ *Nelson at Naples: a Journal for 10-30 June 1799*. London, 1900.

² *Gli Arretramenti di Napoli dal 13 Giugno al 12 Luglio 1799: Compendio dei fatti, &c., narrati dal Cav. A. Micheroux*. Naples, 1900.

the conclusion clinched by the false quotation was shown by me in the *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW* and need not here be repeated. Unfortunately Mr. Badham immediately betrays his tendency to hasty assumptions. 'The fact that other writers should have *verified* and repeated my quotation furnishes some proof that there is a ready pitfall in the manner in which the letter is printed.'³ That no such pitfall exists may be ascertained by any one at pains to consult the authority quoted.⁴ As I have said before,⁵ M. Dumas was perfectly exact and accurate in his dealing in the matter, by clear quotation marks, as well as by other indications, phraseology included. Mr. Badham, however, asserts that other writers have 'verified' the quotation, and yet they made the same mistake. The proneness of Mr. Badham in the past to assume, as verities, the hasty surmises of his own imagination leads me to question this assumed verification by others, which attending circumstances make especially doubtful. Can he bring evidence that any other man has so verified and so blundered? Maresca has acknowledged that he accepted the quotation on Mr. Badham's authority, without verification. Signor Lemmi⁶ and Mr. Laird Clowes⁷ both give the false quotation, attributing it wrongly to Hamilton. If either of these gentlemen, or both, or any other writer now unknown to me, will say that he, before publishing, had verified the quotation in question, he will convict himself of a great capacity for blundering, but he will relieve Mr. Badham from a fair imputation of uncandid precipitancy, even greater than the Hibernian enthusiasm which he attributes to me. The internal evidence is that both Signor Lemmi and Mr. Clowes took the quotation from Mr. Badham. For instance, the quotation occurs, in Dumas, on p. 95 and runs over to p. 96; Mr. Badham loosely gives it as pp. 94-6; Signor Lemmi follows him exactly; Mr. Clowes gives it as p. 94. Either one of these is a natural mistake for one man; the concurrence of errors in three is singular at least. Again, Signor Lemmi, although an Italian, writing in Italian, does not give Dumas's version, to which he refers, as it stands, but a loose rendering, with tenses changed and other alterations, the whole apparently translated back from Mr. Badham.⁸ Mr. Clowes follows Mr. Badham's English version quite literally halfway, after which he introduces a curious variation, by no means an improvement. Both Mr. Clowes and Signor Lemmi follow Mr. Badham in saying 'the garrisons' (plural), whereas Dumas wrote 'the garrison' (singular).

³ Preface, p. vi. My italics.

⁴ Dumas, *I Borboni di Napoli*, iv. 95, 96

⁵ *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, July 1899, p. 495.

⁶ *Nelson e Carracciolo*, p. 49.

⁷ *History of the Royal Navy*, iv. 396.

⁸ E.g. Dumas's final words were 'si vede che cosa ne aveva fatto.' Mr. Badham in a footnote, gives them as 'si vede che ne aveva fatto.' Signor Lemmi repeats him literally. The deviation is inconsequential, not so the concurrence.

It is open to these gentlemen, or to some one else unknown to me, to support Mr. Badham's assertion of verification; failing some proof it may justly be adduced as a further illustration of what I have before claimed is a characteristic trait of Mr. Badham's writing, viz. taking the assumptions of his own mind for truth and by adroit introduction adducing them as fact.

I come now to the discussion of Hamilton's letter to Acton, dated Naples, 27 June. The version of this used by Mr. Badham, and consequently by myself, whose concern with it, both before and now, is almost wholly as illustrative of Mr. Badham's methods of handling evidence, is that given by Dumas in his work '*I Borboni di Napoli*,' vol. iv. pp. 87-9. The reader, therefore, will understand that we are here dealing with a translation of an English original, done into Italian, and in this form sponsored by a Frenchman. So much of the letter as relates to the present discussion follows here, in the Italian rendering of Dumas.

. . . Dopo buone riflessioni, Lord Nelson me autorizzò a scrivere a sua Eminenza, *ieri mattina, presto*, per accertargli che non farebbe nulla per rompere l' *armistizio* che S. E. avea creduto conveniente conchiudere coi Ribelli racchiusi ne' castelli Nuovo e dell' Uovo—e che la Signoria Sua era pronta a dargli ogni assistenza cui la flotta posta sotto il suo comando fosse capace, e che S. E. credesse necessaria per il buon servizio di S. M. Siciliana. Ciò produsse il migliore effetto possibile. Napoli era stata sottosopra nel timore che Lord Nelson rompesse l' *armistizio*; ora, tutto è calmo. Il Cardinale ha concertato coi Capitani Troubridge e Ball che i Ribelli de' castelli Nuovo e dell' Uovo vengano imbarcati *questa sera*, mentre 500 marinari saranno fatti scendere a terra per andare a guarnigione i due castelli, [sopra i quali, la Dio mercè, sventola ora la bandiera di S. M. Siciliana, mentre le bandiere della Repubblica, *corta vissuta*, stanno nello stanzino del Foudroyant, dove, lo spero, la bandiera francese che sventola ancora sopra Santelmo, andrà a raggiungerle. Eravamo nella lancia di Lord Nelson allorchè i marinai sono sbarcati all' ufficio della Sanità. La gioia del popolo era eccessiva. I colori napoletani ed inglesi erano inalberati alle finestre, ed allorchè prendemmo possesso de' castelli, fu in tutto Napoli un immenso *feu de joie*, e quando sopravvenne la notte, un' immensa illuminazione, come la prima notte.]

The italics here introduced—with the exception of *corta vissuta*—are by myself, and are not for the purpose of emphasis, but to enable a reader's eye readily to catch the expressions indicated. The brackets show where Mr. Badham, for the purpose of his argument, has divided the letter in quoting it.

The date of the letter first demands attention, for the occurrence of two expressions—*ieri mattina* and *questa sera*—if unreconciled, gives internal impression of contradiction, as follows. Hamilton, writing on 27 June, could say accurately that 'yesterday morning,

early'—*ieri mattina, presto*—he wrote to his Eminence that Nelson would not break the armistice, for such a letter of 26 June from Hamilton to Ruffo is on record; but when he goes on to say, seven lines lower, 'The cardinal has arranged with Captains Troubridge and Ball that this evening—*questa sera*—the rebels shall be embarked,' which is the correct English rendering of the Italian before us, he describes, as future, a transaction which on 27 June was already past; for the rebels embarked late in the afternoon of 26 June.

Until the English original which Dumas had before him is again unearthed, conjecture only can be used to account for this clear contradiction in the Italian text. Mr. Badham surmises that Hamilton wrote on the afternoon of 26 June, and used nautical time, according to which, by the usage of that day, 27 June began at noon of 26 June, civil time. He consequently refers to his own letter of that morning as having been written yesterday morning; while the transaction of embarking the rebels and placing British marines in the castles was at the moment of writing still future, as the letter makes it. By this theory of Mr. Badham's Hamilton began to write on 26 June (civil time), between noon and 4 P.M., at which latter hour the marines began to go ashore, and he continued writing as far as the first bracket. He then laid down his pen, and resumed the sentence the next day, continuing to the end of the letter, in which are mentioned transactions that certainly occurred after nightfall—'when night supervened.'

This explanation might have a certain air of plausibility were not Hamilton's use of sea time, conjectured in this instance, demonstrably inconsistent with his practice on other known contemporary occasions, as well as intrinsically most improbable. In the absence of demonstration it seems somewhat forced to argue that a British ambassador, writing to a Neapolitan minister, would use nautical time in preference to civil, and even carry his literalism so far as to call the morning of the current solar day 'yesterday morning.' Not only, however, is demonstration wanting of so singular a fact, but demonstration of the contrary is at hand. Acton, writing to Hamilton on 28 June, says—

I receive this moment your letter of the 25th inst.⁹ . . . I mention these particulars so minutely for apprising the unexpressible surprise which was made in their majesties' mind when they heard that the cardinal *in his visit to Lord Nelson* had expressed to have an order from the king to do the best he could for his majesty's service.¹⁰

⁹ Acton here mentions translating Hamilton's letter to the king and queen, also the latter's reading a letter received by her from Lady Hamilton.

¹⁰ Egerton MS. 2640, f. 28. My italics.

Now the first visit of the cardinal to Nelson was, by sea time, the afternoon of *Wednesday*, 26 June (by civil time, 25 June). Therefore, if Hamilton commonly used sea time in writing to Acton at this period, he would certainly not have dated his letter mentioning the visit, 25 June. The illustration possesses particular value because it occurs in correspondence with the same person, Acton, to whom the letter dated the 27th was addressed. One would suppose that Mr. Badham, with a 'mastery of the Italian evidence,' with the want of which he reproves me,¹¹ might have unearthed this; but how shall we account for his failure to notice even that Hamilton's first letter to Ruffo, carried by Troubridge and Ball, was dated 24 June, although unquestionably the 25th by nautical time? In the facsimile given by Sacchinelli in his appendix the heading is "'Foudroyant,' 24 June 1799, 5 p.m., in the Bay of Naples.' If Hamilton was then using sea time, this would be 23 June, civil time, when the 'Foudroyant' was not in sight from the Bay of Naples, and the contents of the letter also demonstrate that its 24 June was civil time. Proof of the use of civil time can also be elicited from Acton's two letters of 25 June.¹² It may be added that Nelson himself was no such purist as to adhere to log-book chronology in his other letters. Thus, writing to Lord Keith, on the same date as Hamilton's—27 June¹³—he says, 'I arrived in the Bay of Naples on the 24th,' whereas, as the ship did not anchor until 9 p.m., it was 25 June, sea time; and as late as 4 p.m. she was logged ten to twelve miles distant. Still more decisively the letter concludes, 'Carracciolo was executed . . . on 29 June,' whereas, being at 5 p.m., it was 30 June, and was so logged.

Mr. Badham's suggested solution may therefore be dismissed. It certainly did not occur to me. In common with the Marchese Maresca, whose work was before me, and who had noted¹⁴ the incompatibility, in Hamilton's letter, of 'yesterday morning' with 'this evening'—and with the facts—I saw that somewhere there was a slip of the pen in the specification of times; but my business then was to show how Mr. Badham dealt with texts when he wanted to make a point.

It may here be noted that Acton and Hamilton generally, if not always, corresponded in English, as is shown by numerous letters of the former, of which I have copies, and by the necessity, mentioned in Acton's letter of 28 June,¹⁵ of translating one of Hamilton's in order that the king might understand it.

¹¹ Preface, p. viii.

¹² Egerton MS. 2640, ff. 267, 269.

¹³ Nicolas, iii. 890-3.

¹⁴ *Il Cavaliere Micheroux* (Naples, 1895), p. 213, note 2.

¹⁵ Egerton MS. 2640, f. 280.

Leaving now the question of date and text in the uncertainty in which they must remain until Hamilton's original is found, I proceed to the use of the text made by Mr. Badham (1) in his paper in the *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW* of April 1898 and (2) in his pamphlet. Mr. Badham accepts the text, qualified only by his explanation of the date and times of writing, and upon it he argues.

Mr. Badham's original statement criticised by me was this:—

The two captains promised not only that Nelson 'would not oppose' the execution, but also that he would land 500 marines to assist.¹⁶

His reference is Dumas, iv. 87-9, where Hamilton's letter is to be found. It is evident that the alleged promise, in Nelson's name, to land 500 marines 'to assist' is here by him adduced as clinching the alleged promise not to oppose the execution. My statement was, and is, that 'the landing the 500 marines,' and the 'assisting,' were taken from different parts of the same letter, in order to constitute a single assertion, which assertion, thus falsely constituted, is further used to clinch the allegation of a promise which was not given. Upon this assertion I commented¹⁷—

The statement that the captains further promised that Nelson 'would land marines to assist in the execution' of the capitulation is again an error, based on a letter of Hamilton's, given in full by Dumas, but here (by Mr. Badham) mangled and garbled. The reader is referred to the original,¹⁸ which is dated 27 June. In it will be found two statements—one, that Nelson had promised to give all the assistance that the fleet could give for the service of the king; the other, some lines further on, separated by a period, that, the embarkation of the rebels having been arranged, 500 marines will be landed 'to garrison the castles.' The two, relating to different times and conditions, are brought together to constitute a promise of which there is no other proof.

To this Mr. Badham, in his pamphlet, rejoins—

Apropos of my statement that Nelson promised to land marines 'to assist' in the embarkation of the rebels¹⁹ . . . Captain Mahan's courageous precipitation is still more conspicuous. In furtherance of the idea that Hamilton's two statements relate 'to different times' he has given the *nautical date* of Hamilton's letter, though in land language the half referred to was written in the afternoon of the 26th! In furtherance of 'different conditions' he leaves the reader to imagine that it was with the fleet itself, and not by landing a detachment, that Nelson promised assistance! He proceeds with 'no other proof,' overlooking Sacchinelli's repeated statement that the detachment landed did, as a matter of fact, assist in the embarkation! And, to clinch Sacchinelli, there is the unquestionable evidence of the 'Culloden's' log.

¹⁶ *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, April 1898, p. 276.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* July 1899, pp. 495-6.

¹⁸ Dumas, iv. 87-9.

¹⁹ Mr. Badham here quotes my words, though not fully. I shall reproduce them immediately.

For the convenience of readers I here interpose a translation of the Italian text, italicised and bracketed as in the original, above.

After full reflexion Lord Nelson authorised me to write to his Eminence, *yesterday morning early*, to assure him that he would do nothing to break the *armistice*²⁰ which his Eminence had thought proper to conclude with the rebels shut up in the castles Nuovo and Uovo, and that his lordship was ready to give him all the assistance of which the fleet placed under his command was capable, and which his Eminence might think necessary for the good service of his Sicilian majesty. That produced the best possible effect. Naples had been upside down, for fear lest Lord Nelson might break the armistice; *now all is calm*. The cardinal has arranged with Captains Troubridge and Ball that the rebels of the castles Nuovo and Uovo shall be embarked *this evening*, while 500 marines shall be sent ashore to garrison the two castles, [over which, thank God, the banner of his Sicilian Majesty is now waving, while the banners of the short-lived republic are standing in the cabin of the 'Foudroyant,' where I hope the French flag, which is still flying over St. Elmo, will rejoin them. We were in Lord Nelson's boat when the marines were landed at the office of the Sanità. The joy of the people was excessive. The Neapolitan and English colours were displayed at the windows, and when we took possession of the castles there was throughout Naples an immense *feu de joie*, and *when night supervened*²¹ an immense illumination, as on the first night.]²²

The words bracketed are given, at least in all essentials, by Mr. Badham in his pamphlet (pp. 25-7); but he has divided the quotation at the place marked by the first bracket, to indicate the point—the 'suture,' as he calls it (p. 27, note 3)—where, according to him, Hamilton lay down the pen in the afternoon of 26 June (27 by nautical time), to resume his story on the 27th. I purpose to show that the division thus made is purely arbitrary, so far as any evidence adduced by Mr. Badham goes, and that its consequence is to constrain into the line of Mr. Badham's argument the statement in the text of the time when the Sicilian colours were hoisted, which, according to the simple natural tenor of the phraseology, was before the marines went ashore. As in his dealing with Nelson's letter of 26 June, before exposed by me,²³ he goes so far in support of his contention as to introduce a period, instead of a comma, after the words 'garrison the two castles.' Thereby he attains the end—with those who may thus be deceived—of transferring the time, according to the text he accepts, of the hoisting of the Sicilian flag—the token of surrender completed—from before the marines were landed to the following morning. This is to support his argument that the marines were sent—not 'to garrison the castles,' as the text says, but—'to assist' in the execution of the treaty, made by Ruffo and disallowed

²⁰ My italics.

²¹ My italics.

²² Dumas, *Borboni*, iv. 87-8.

²³ ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW, July 1899, pp. 491-3.

by Nelson, which neither Hamilton nor any other Englishman present—except perhaps Mr. Badham's grandfather, Captain Foote—has said.

The facts are now before the reader—the text of the letter of 27 June, as far as needed here, Mr. Badham's original statement in April 1898, my criticism upon it in July 1899, and his reply to the latter, now under consideration. Let us examine the whole.

Mr. Badham says, '*In furtherance of the idea*'²¹ that Hamilton's two statements relate to different times he (Captain Mahan) has given the nautical date (27 June) of Hamilton's letter.' Evidently I have done nothing of the kind. I mentioned the date, true; for the date to some extent specifies the letter, and shows that it was written near the time of the occurrence; but the fact—that the two statements relate to different times and conditions—is established not by the date, but by the text of the letter. The latter, as is often the case in letters, contains several incidents, not necessarily simultaneous or even connected. That these statements do relate, as I said, to different times and conditions, and are separated in the letter by a period, is evident, and is further supported by the tenses of the Italian version given by Dumas, and used by Mr. Badham.

In that version the words, italicised by me, *ora, tutto è calmo*, in the present indicative, with certain antecedent circumstances specified, separate the two statements, which Mr. Badham brought together in order to prove that at an interview—which, I maintain, did not involve certain promises alleged—the captains made a promise in two clauses, viz. 'not only that Nelson "would not oppose" the execution, but also that he would land 500 marines to assist.'²² The Italian text reads that the marines were landed not only at a period and under conditions different from those of the promise of assistance by the fleet, but under no promise of assistance to the execution of the treaty, as implied by Mr. Badham, and by him supported by garbling and mangling the reference. He mangled it by leaving out the transition period, indicated by the present indicative, between the time of the promise to assist with the fleet—which time is distinguished in the letter by the use of the past definite—and the time of the completed arrangement that the rebels should embark and the marines be landed, which time is indicated, as to the rebel evacuation, by the use of the perfect indicative, governing a subjunctive, and by the future indicative as regards the landing of the marines. Thus: *Yesterday morning*, early, Nelson authorised me (Hamilton) to promise to observe the armistice and to give assistance by the fleet. *Now* all is calm. It has

²¹ My italics.

²² Badham, in *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, April 1898, p. 276. The reference given is to this letter of Hamilton's.

been arranged that the *rebels shall embark* this evening, and that the marines *shall* be sent ashore. And this construction is clinched by the words, also quoted above, that the flag of his Sicilian majesty is *now* waving above the castles, which would indicate that the capitulation had been consummated at the moment of writing, while the landing of the marines was still in the future.

I think this demonstrates the correctness of my criticism, challenged by Mr. Badham, that he mangled the text he was using; while the other part of my charge, garbling, is established by the fact that he thus brought together two statements, relating to different times and conditions, and so distinguished in the letter itself, in order to constitute a promise of which there is no other proof. For, trivial as this discussion may appear, Mr. Badham's aim is to entangle Nelson's reputation in a web of proof that he promised to observe the capitulation, as arranged by Ruffo, of which web the alleged promise, to assist in its execution by landing the marines, is an important fibre. I assert that no valid proof has anywhere been adduced that Nelson, whatever promise of needed assistance he may have given, ever promised—directly or by implication of act—to observe the capitulation granted by Ruffo. He yielded so far as to allow the rebels to embark; but, by his own express assertion, 'they came out with the knowledge' that he would not recognise the terms of the capitulation, 'unless approved by the king.' I have rebutted before²⁸ the attempted proof that he lied in making this statement, and I hope in this paper to rebut also the new evidence since adduced.

The above analysis, I hope, sufficiently disposes of Mr. Badham's statement (p. vii) that Captain Mahan 'leaves the reader to imagine that it was with the fleet itself, and not by landing a detachment, that Nelson promised assistance.' Mr. Badham's accusation against Nelson was that the promise of assistance with the marines was in order to assist at the execution of the capitulation; there lies the sting. I demonstrate that, according to the text Mr. Badham uses, the promise of assistance—'yesterday morning, early'—was anterior to the decision of the rebels to come out, and applied to different conditions, viz. when the city was in an uproar, confusion, panic, and disorder prevailing, to stay which the fleet would do anything within its power, as desired by the cardinal. A naval officer may possibly presume too much on lay apprehension of nautical methods; but the intelligence of the reader must indeed be mediocre who requires to be told that, under such conditions ashore, in Naples, assistance by the fleet may mean landing men. Such men, however, would go not to carry out execution of a capitulation, but for other purposes.

²⁸ ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW, July 1899.

It is in thus contorting facts that Mr. Badham excels. When landed, the marines went not to assist in the execution of the capitulation, as inferred by Mr. Badham's ingenious manipulation of sentences, but, as Hamilton's letter and the 'Culloden's' log, which Mr. Badham quotes (p. 26), both show, to 'garrison the castles,' which the embarkation of the rebels would leave tenantless. If, when arriving for the purpose of garrisoning, any rebels were found not yet embarked, doubtless the marines assisted, as the 'Culloden's' log also says, in that or in any other necessary task; but that is purely incidental, not the main purpose. Moreover, the mere assisting in the embarkation, if this to any extent occurred, would establish nothing as to the terms under which the rebels came out, or as to Nelson's consent in, or correct knowledge of, those terms, which is the point at issue. Nobody denies that they came out. The question is, Did they do so with the knowledge that Nelson's ultimatum still held, as he explicitly affirms? Or had they sufficient ground to believe that Nelson had receded from his ultimatum and permitted the terms first granted by Ruffo?²⁷ The latter was, and is, Mr. Badham's contention, resting upon evidence which I maintained was hopelessly discredited. This evidence he again brings forward, together with new data. I hope to show that new and old are inherently so improbable as not to weigh seriously in the balance against the certain affirmation of a man whose honour is in all other public matters unquestioned.

In dealing with his authority, the Italian text, Mr. Badham has not been able to refrain from his bad habit of dividing at will, in order to make facts conform to his theory, and at the same time failing duly to warn the unsuspecting reader. When (p. 26, second line from top) he substitutes a full stop for a comma after the words 'garrison the two castles,' closes the quotation there, and a page and a half after resumes it (p. 27) with the introductory clause, '*Hamilton resumes (27 June) his letter to Acton of the previous evening*':²⁸ "over which the flag of his Sicilian majesty is now floating . . ." he uses precisely the same proceeding, and as injurious in effect, as in the words misattributed to Hamilton,

²⁷ It is to a certain extent anticipating, but the remark has here application, that, if the rebels came out without looking at the alleged 'documents from Nelson,' as Micheroux says (*Compendio*, p. 16), it shows not only the desperateness of their situation, but that they came out, not upon Nelson's assurance, but upon Ruffo's—through Micheroux; the inadequacy of which, as from Nelson, they would at once have detected had they examined the papers, if the latter were, as the marchese Maresca believes, the alleged and utterly invalid declarations of Troubridge and Ball, confusedly adduced by Sacchinelli. If, therefore, Ruffo deceived them, as I believe, they had no case; for the written warning they had had from Nelson gave no warrant for an evacuation, unless it was recalled by a paper equally explicit, and from himself. If, without such warrant, they came out on an assurance of Ruffo's, whom they knew Nelson had overruled, they did so knowingly, at their own peril.

²⁸ My italics.

which he has admitted (p. vi), and in the mutilation of Nelson's letter of 26 June, which—as regards the effect—he has denied (p. vii). For the words, consecutive in the text, but arbitrarily parted by Mr. Badham, 'five hundred marines *will be* landed to garrison the two castles, over which the flag of his Sicilian Majesty is *now*²⁹ floating,' would establish the fact that the rebels had accepted the terms—whatever they were—before the marines were landed, and that the going of the latter, therefore, was not 'to assist' in the capitulation, but simply to meet a new condition of things consequent upon the capitulation. In a footnote (p. 27) Mr. Badham says, 'The change of tense marks the suture.' Admit this, for argument's sake, where would the change of tense place the 'suture'? The present and future run down to and include *andrà a raggiungerle*, the future of the last expression depending upon the *spero* just preceding. Then comes the period, and *then* the change of tense—*eravamo nella lancia*—imperfect—succeeded after a few phrases by the past definite *allorchè prendemmo possesso de' castelli*.

I admit, of course, that as a surmise, frankly advanced as such, and supported by reasons, an hypothesis like this of Mr. Badham may properly be offered; but when the natural sense is violated the conditions should be made clear. It would be within the experience of most of us to have stopped and resumed a letter in the middle of a sentence after the interruption of a day. But no one has a right thus to assume, and at the same time not only to refrain from warning readers of the extent of the assumption, but to mislead them by changing a comma into a period. Having done this, and doing it in support of an argument intended to be destructive of a man's reputation, it is almost offensive to find Mr. Badham saying, 'It would be gratifying if one could tack on the matter of the flag to the first half of the letter, for then there would be overt proof of an act of surrender to Nelson's terms before the landing of the 500 marines. But it is not till 27 June that the royal flag over the castles is noted in the Diario'³⁰ ('Napoletano'). 'Gratifying!' Why then does Mr. Badham, on such evidence as he gives, put in his period where a comma is, and abstain from placing his readers in possession of the fact that, by natural construction, the Italian text, which he is using, does say the royal flag is now flying, and the marines yet to go ashore? What dignity of proof, even negative, is to be attributed to the failure of a journal to note the hoisting of a flag?

It is not true that the royal flags were not hoisted till the 27th, as Mr. Badham loosely infers. It is true that the marines landed before the hoisting, and the text is there in error; but it is also nearly certain that the flags were run up before the marines took

²⁹ My italics.

³⁰ *Nelson at Naples*, p. 27, note 3. My italics.

possession of the castles, a circumstance which would contradict the insinuation that they were assisting in the execution of the treaty as concluded by Ruffo. The flags were in fact hoisted on 26 June before dark; in one castle certainly, and probably in both, by Neapolitan authority, holding under Ruffo. If Mr. Badham had paid careful heed to the Italian evidence, he would have seen in the 'Verbale' of Minichini,³¹ to which he attributes great importance, that at Uovo after the formalities were concluded 'the *brigadier* (Minichini) caused to be hoisted the flag of H.M. the king of the Two Sicilies,' and that 'all these operations,' which began at 6 P.M. 26 June, 'were finished at a quarter past eight o'clock.' Also, if Mr. Badham had carefully consulted the log of his grandfather's frigate, the 'Seahorse,' he would have read, 'Thursday, 27th, P.M.'—which by civil time is 26 June—'A large body of marines went on shore to take possession of Castle Ovo and Castle Novo. *Shortly after*³² they landed saw the king of Naples's colours hoisted at the above two places.' It is thus certain that the flags were hoisted on 26 June, and probably in both cases—certainly at Uovo—by Neapolitan, not by British, authority. That is, royal Neapolitan possession preceded British occupation. As a matter of fact the hoisting of the flag at any stage, whether first or last, would prove indeed an act of surrender, but it would not be, as Mr. Badham claims, 'overt proof of an act of surrender to *Nelson's terms*,'³³ whether it occurred before or after the landing of the marines. The proof of the terms lies elsewhere; and the statement that hoisting the flag then would have been overt proof of their character, as coincident with Nelson's declaration, carries the implication—indeed, to all intents the assertion—that hoisting at the time assumed erroneously by Mr. Badham signified that the garrisons came out under Ruffo's terms, and with Nelson's adhesion to them, which penetrating conclusion I am quite willing to leave to Mr. Badham's credit.

Whatever the difficulties on the face of this letter, as it stands in the Italian version, there is nothing to suggest the terms on which the garrisons come out. There is consequently no shadow of disproof of Nelson's repeated assertion that they came out—capitulated—on the terms of his declaration; and this, as regards Nelson's character, is the one important point. That the armistice and the capitulation were distinct things I have before shown; the promise to observe the armistice, therefore, involves no implication of acceding to the capitulation upon the terms granted by Ruffo, and formally rejected by Nelson, which is the stigma sought to be fastened on Nelson's reputation. Now the whole drift of Mr. Badham's argument, alike in his article in the *ENGLISH*

³¹ Sacchinelli, *Vita del Cardinale Ruffo* (Rome, 1895), pp. 237–8.

³² My italics.

³³ My italics.

HISTORICAL REVIEW and in his present pamphlet, is to fasten just his stigma upon Nelson's memory: that the garrisons surrendered upon the assurances of the latter that he would observe the original terms signed by Ruffo and by Captain Foote. Nothing less than this, and it is as contributing to prove this that each assertion and inference is to be tested and sifted, as I have done. Hence the importance assigned by Mr. Badham to the presence of the marines; they were 'assisting in executing' Ruffo's capitulation, then accepted, and afterwards violated, by Nelson. Mr. Badham formerly contended that Nelson's declaration was never sent in.³⁴ This contention he has been forced to abandon. It remains to examine the charge as he now maintains it, that, having been sent in, the declaration was nullified by subsequent assurances.

I proceed now to show that Mr. Badham has failed to free himself from my charge that he supported a libel against Nelson's reputation for honour by garbling a letter of Nelson's. To this demonstration, due to Nelson's maligned character, and to an examination of the new evidence, I devote the rest of this paper.

The question before us, as regarding Nelson's reputation, is simply this: In a letter to Lord Keith, dated 27 June 1799, which, though possibly not concluded and signed before 3 July,³⁵ was in any event within a week of the occurrence, Nelson made this statement:—

I gave the cardinal my opinion in writing—viz. 'Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson, who arrived in the Bay of Naples on 24 June with the British fleet, found a treaty entered into with the rebels, which he is of opinion ought³⁶ not to be carried into execution without the approbation of his Sicilian majesty.' . . . Under this opinion the rebels came out of the castles, which was (*sic*) instantly occupied by the marines of the squadron.³⁷

A fortnight later, 13 July, he repeated this statement to Lord Spencer, then first lord of the admiralty.³⁸ In so short a space of time he cannot have been mistaken as to what he had believed at the moment of the surrender of the castles. Did he then deliberately state as true what his conscience told him was untrue; or was he mistaken; or was the fact, as he states, that the rebels did come out under this 'opinion'?

³⁴ ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW, April 1898, p. 273 and note.

³⁵ I base this time on the expression near the end, 'The "Alexander" and another are just going to Malta' (Nicolas, iii. 893). From the 'Foudroyant's' log the 'Alexander' sailed 3 July.

³⁶ The copy in the order book reads here 'cannot be carried into execution' (Nicolas, iii. 888).

³⁷ Nicolas, iii. 893. The reader will note that this is the 'opinion' given to the cardinal. The 'Declaration' addressed to the rebels follows later.

³⁸ Nicolas, iii. 406.

The question, therefore, is not whether Nelson had lawful authority to act as he did.³⁹ Nor is it whether he acted wrongly in disallowing a capitulation already signed, though not yet executed. It simply is, Did he procure the surrender by treacherous assurances, so that the rebels were induced to come out under a false statement of his purposes; and, having done this thing, did he then lie about it?

To make good such a charge against any man of fair reputation for integrity, it is necessary to establish, first, that no clear warning was given to the enemy prior to surrender; or, if such warning were given, that it was subsequently with like clearness withdrawn, so that the enemy came out under a distinct understanding, which was afterwards violated.

It is now, I think, conceded that warning was given; that the following declaration was sent in in Nelson's name:—

H.B.M. Ship 'Foudroyant,' Naples Bay: 25 June 1799.

Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson, K.B., commander of his Britannic majesty's fleet in the Bay of Naples, acquaints the rebellious subjects of his Sicilian majesty in the Castles of Uovo and Nuovo that he will not permit them to embark or quit those places. They must surrender themselves to his majesty's royal mercy. NELSON.

To Ruffo, who had at first refused to act as an intermediary in transmitting this message to the garrisons, Nelson gave also the opinion above quoted: 'The treaty cannot be carried into execution without the approbation of the king.' It was after this opinion was given, in the post-meridian of 25 June, that Ruffo went ashore and that night sent in the declaration—to which, however, he declined to be a party.

Those two papers make Nelson's position perfectly clear, and he received an assurance from the cardinal that 'the letter' had gone in. Mr. Badham now admits this.⁴⁰ With customary inaccuracy he says that 'Captain Mahan is wrong in taking this *lettera ai castelli* to be some letter of Ruffo's sent by himself, and equivalent to Nelson's declaration. It is the *declaration* itself, sent by Nelson entirely in his own name.'⁴¹ My words were, 'Whether Ruffo spoke truth or not, whether by the letter he meant Nelson's or his own inadequate rendering of it,⁴¹ the assurance is there, and justifies fully Nelson's assertion that the rebels received "this opinion" and had "this knowledge."'⁴²

³⁹ This question of authority I have discussed at length (revised *Life of Nelson*, pp. 383-9). I see no reason to enlarge or change what I have there said. Concerning this part of my argument the marchese Maresca, writing in August 1899, said that in his opinion it hangs perfectly together ('*fila perfettamente*').

⁴⁰ *Nelson at Naples*, p. 19, note 5.

⁴¹ This referred to a letter sent in by Ruffo, quoted by Sacchinelli (p. 233), conveying Nelson's attitude, but, as I said, inadequately.

⁴² *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, July 1899, p. 491. See also my revised *Life of Nelson*, pp. 376-7.

Mr. Badham then, and I myself, agree that distinct warning of Nelson's attitude was given some time between Ruffo's leaving the flagship, during the post-meridian of 25 June (by sea time, 26 June) and midnight of that civil day. Did Nelson then recede from that position? As an argument to demonstrate that he did, Mr. Badham quoted a letter of Nelson's, which he and I agree was written at some time about 26 June. He quoted only half the letter, cutting it short with a period where Nelson had placed a comma. I maintained, and maintain, that by so doing he concealed the essential purport of the letter. From this charge he now seeks to clear himself, and, incidentally, to impeach my accuracy, and to confirm his previous impugnment of Nelson's uprightness.

I will endeavour here to summarise Mr. Badham's argument, guarding against any unintentional error on my part by referring the reader not only to his present pamphlet, but also to his article in the *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, April 1898. There the argument that Nelson receded from his position, and enticed the rebels out of the castles by a promise to execute the capitulation which Ruffo and Foote had signed, will be found (mainly) between p. 274 and p. 276. Mr. Badham has now abandoned the contention he then maintained that the declaration was never sent in (p. 273, and note 50); but he seeks to strengthen his case as to its subsequent revocation by fuller presentation and by new matter, which I purpose to discuss and to refute.

Mr. Badham claims that during the night following Ruffo's visit to the flagship 'Nelson executed a complete *volte-face*,'⁴³ the result of which was that he authorised Hamilton to write the next morning (26 June) to the cardinal the following letter:—

Lord Nelson begs me to assure your eminence that he is resolved to do nothing which can break the armistice which your eminence has accorded to the castles of Naples.

This letter Hamilton certainly wrote early that morning. Mr. Badham contended, in April 1898, that by armistice Nelson meant capitulation as well, a contention to which I understand he still adheres. I have argued at length, and will not here repeat, that the two were different and were distinguished by Nelson throughout;⁴⁴ and that therefore, although there was concession as to the armistice, there was none as regards the terms of capitulation in this letter of Hamilton's.

Mr. Badham maintains, however, on the authority of Sacchinelli, that this letter was sent by the hands of Captains Troubridge and

⁴³ *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, April 1898, *Nelson at Naples*, p. 42, note.

⁴⁴ *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, July 1899, pp. 485-6, 489; revised *Life of Nelson*, pp. 870-1.

Ball—which I think most improbable⁴⁵—and that they having been accredited on the 24th by a letter from Hamilton, but in Nelson's name, as 'fully informed of Lord Nelson's sentiments, and will have the honour to explain them to your eminence,' were still so accredited on the 26th. According to Sacchinelli—and Mr. Badham—the captains thus coming, and bearing Hamilton's of the 26th, made then the following declaration in writing :—

Rear-Admiral Nelson does not oppose the execution of the capitulation of the castles Nuovo and Uovo.

This declaration (Sacchinelli continues) Troubridge wrote with his own hand, but would not sign, saying that they had been accredited by the letter of 24 June to treat verbally concerning military operations and not at all in writing concerning affairs pertaining to diplomacy.⁴⁶

In proof of Troubridge's having written the above Sacchinelli gives what he calls a facsimile,⁴⁷ which reads thus :—

Captains Troubridge and Ball have authority on behalf of Lord Nelson to declare to his eminence that my lord will not oppose the embarkation of the rebels and of the people composing the garrison of the castles Nuovo and Uovo.

Concerning this facsimile it is to be remarked at once that not only is it not signed by any one, but that it is not in Troubridge's hand, and that the words do not tally with those given in the *text* of Sacchinelli (p. 236). 'Not to oppose the embarkation' is not the same thing as 'not to oppose the execution of the capitulation.'⁴⁸ To consider the expressions as equivalent is to assume the very point at issue, viz. whether, when the rebels came out, which all admit that they did, they did so under the terms of Ruffo's capitulation, which gave a safe-conduct to Toulon, or of Nelson's

⁴⁵ My reason for doubting this is that Hamilton's letter of the 26th, being a clear-cut announcement, involving no necessity for explanation or negotiation, gave no occasion for sending officers of such rank. A lieutenant would have been quite sufficient for the function of a postman. Also, when Nelson employed Troubridge and Ball on the 24th and 26th, he stated their mission and their names explicitly in letters carried by them. Nothing of the sort appears in Hamilton's letter of the latter date.

⁴⁶ Sacchinelli, p. 246.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* app. C.

⁴⁸ On this discrepancy Mr. Badham now offers a remark (p. 24, note) that makes one rub one's eyes and look again to verify. 'There is an alternative explanation that the text' (i.e. 'will not oppose the execution') '... is quite correct, "Rear-Admiral Nelson, etc.," having really been written by Troubridge; and it may be remarked in passing that the signature of the captains would scarcely be necessary for the declaration containing their names.' That the writing of B's name by A, in an unsigned paper, said to express B's declaration, would be equivalent to B's signature is an argument of which Mr. Badham may be proud. That Troubridge, writing such a paper, would put it 'Rear-Admiral Nelson,' and not 'Rear-Admiral Lord Nelson,' disposes of the other conjecture. Mr. Badham's object, in this ingenious surmise, is to reconcile Sacchinelli with Micheroux's *Compendio*. The latter says documents, in the plural; Sacchinelli uses the singular. The version in the latter's text, and that in the appendix, thus make two, although the author himself always speaks of one.

mandate, 'surrender themselves to the royal mercy,' awaiting 'the approval of the king.' Nelson explicitly affirms the latter, in words already quoted.

Mr. Badham has given Sacchinelli correctly, so far as the above is concerned. I have objected heretofore to the whole account, on the ground that Sacchinelli is not trustworthy, because (1) he assumes the identity of meaning in the above two alleged assurances of Troubridge; because (2) he states falsely that Troubridge wrote with his own hand; because (3) he ignores the letter of the 26th, signed by Nelson himself, never mentioning it, and attributing to Troubridge the statement that by Hamilton's letter of 24 June he was accredited for military (not diplomatic) operations, whereas that letter attributed to him not a military, but a diplomatic function, viz. to convey to the cardinal Nelson's disapproval of the capitulation and his intention not to remain neutral. Nelson himself explains their mission of 24 June thus to Keith: 'I sent Captains Troubridge and Ball instantly to the cardinal, to represent my opinion of the infamous terms entered into with the rebels, and also two papers which I enclose.' These papers I understand to be the summons to the French in St. Elmo, and the declaration to the rebels, both part of the diplomacy of war; whereas by Nelson's letter of the 26th, which Troubridge and Ball also carried, they were, by words which Mr. Badham in the *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW* omitted, limited strictly to a military conference concerning St. Elmo.

To these exceptions taken to Sacchinelli's trustworthiness is to be added that he makes other serious mistakes, and that he wrote after Ruffo's death—therefore at least twenty-eight years subsequent to the events. Nothing can be safely accepted on his sole authority if contrary to other contemporary evidence or to a reasonable probability. Thus Mr. Badham admits that after the delivery of the above letter of the 26th from Hamilton

there seems to be another gap, which, strangely enough, Sacchinelli does nothing to fill up, due perhaps to the fragmentariness of the notes left by Ruffo. If his representation of Ruffo's sentiments be correct,⁴⁹ the cardinal's natural course would at this point have been to write directly to Nelson, explaining that he was dissatisfied with the assurances of the two captains. *There seem to be grounds for supposing* that he did actually take this course, for we presently find Nelson replying.⁵⁰

Here we have Mr. Badham evolving out of his own inner consciousness a purely hypothetical letter, to which he has associated Nelson's of the 26th as a reply. He did the same in the *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, but in so doing emasculated Nelson's. It is thus he fills a gap which, indeed, is not merely seeming but certain,

⁴⁹ Suspicion of treachery.

⁵⁰ *Nelson at Naples*, p. 24. My italics.

and is due to Sacchinelli's defective material or imperfect memory, or both, but which does not need to be filled by a phantom of the imagination. The gap appears in Sacchinelli's assertion that, after the captains had given assurance in Nelson's name, the cardinal, though suspicious, proceeded, without further concern (*non s' ingerì in altro*),⁵¹ in conjunction with them to execute the capitulation, whereas it is demonstrable that if they carried Hamilton's letter of the 26th—which, I repeat, I greatly doubt—they were certainly back on board the flagship, and there received the letter to which Mr. Badham alludes from Nelson himself—not from Hamilton—*before the capitulation was arranged*; and consequently when they went ashore with this last letter their function was governed by it, the writing of which was due—not to Mr. Badham's surmised letter but—to the following circumstance.

Some time before noon on 26 June Nelson received from Ruffo a communication, of which Sacchinelli shows no more knowledge than he does of Nelson's reply. The connexion between the two, I said before, lies on the surface, and for that reason I bring them into direct sequence here.

Ruffo to Nelson.

Your Excellency,—The letter to the castles will have been sent off by this time, and if there is hope that they will surrender at discretion it may meet with success, as they see the increase of the force, and in case they should wish to attack it will be well that we find ourselves in force to destroy them. I therefore beg your excellency to disembark 1,200 men, whom it would be well to place in position to proceed afterwards against St. Elmo, and therefore I offer for their quarters my house, which is vacant and very large. . . . I hope that your excellency will favour me, since there have already *this evening* been hostilities from St. Elmo and there is no time to lose. . . .

P. della Madalena : 25 June 1799.⁵²

F. CARD. RUFFO, V.G.

H.E. Rear-Admiral Nelson.

Nelson's answer is undated, but its reference to Hamilton's—'this morning'—shows it to have been 26 June. Its connexion with the preceding is obvious, but Mr. Badham in the *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, by omitting the latter part (bracketed), concealed the occasion of Nelson's writing and the limitation of the captains' mission.

'Foudroyant,' Naples Bay.

Sir,—I am just honoured with your eminency's letter; and as his excellency Sir William Hamilton has wrote you this morning that I will not on any consideration break the armistice entered into by you, I hope your eminency will be satisfied that I am supporting your ideas. I send

⁵¹ Sacchinelli, p. 237. This disposes of Mr. Badham's supposed letter, as far as Sacchinelli's testimony can dispose of anything.

⁵² Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 84944, fol. 238. *My italics.*

once more Captains Troubridge and Ball, [to arrange with your eminency everything relative to an attack on St. Elmo; whenever your army and cannon are ready to proceed against it I will land 1,200 men to go with them under the present armistice. I have only to rejoice that his Britannic majesty's fleet is here to secure the city of Naples from all attacks by sea.

I am, &c.,
NELSON.] ⁵³

This letter, clearly being written on the 26th, is subsequent to Ruffo's, dated the 25th. It is equally evident that Nelson, when he wrote this, had no information that the '*present armistice*' had been terminated by a capitulation, although the mention of Troubridge and Ball shows that they were with him, or at hand, at the moment of writing. Had they carried Hamilton's letter of the early morning on shore, and at that time concluded the capitulation—as Sacchinelli states that they did—they certainly would have told Nelson, and he would have known that the armistice was at an end by the surrender. His intention to proceed against St. Elmo, '*under the present armistice*,' indicates that that castle was not included in it; therefore its '*present*' existence meant that the lower castles were then in the condition of armistice⁵⁴—not of capitulation. And this is confirmed by his opening words, '*I will not on any consideration break the armistice.*' It will be observed also that the first part of Nelson's letter is obviously addressed to Ruffo's fear of a sortie by the garrisons, which Nelson considers is removed by his promise to observe the armistice, a promise which was subsequent to the time of Ruffo's writing. Ruffo's letter crossed Hamilton's.

It is clear, therefore, that Sacchinelli was entirely mistaken in connecting the conclusion of the capitulation with a bringing of Hamilton's letter of the 26th by Troubridge and Ball, and that at the later hour when these received from Nelson his own letter of the 26th no capitulation had taken effect of which they had any knowledge. Consequently, if they had any part in the capitulation which did take place—at some time subsequent to Ruffo's receiving Hamilton's letter—they and Ruffo then had before them Nelson's own letter, which defined their mission, and by defining limited it to the specified object of arranging for an attack upon St. Elmo. Therefore, whether they made one visit or two that morning, and

⁵³ Nicolas, iii. 394.

⁵⁴ When Nelson sighted the shipping in Naples, 24 June, flags of truce were flying from castles and ships. He at once (3 p.m.) annulled the truce by signal, which however took effect only with the ships. It appears from the journal of the '*Seahorse*' that the white flags were still flying from Uovo and Nuovo at noon of the 25th. The night following Nelson decided '*to do nothing which can break the armistice . . . accorded to the castles of Naples.*' Micheroux seems perfectly clear that St. Elmo was not included in the armistice, negotiations looking thereto not being completed when Nelson's arrival interrupted them (*Compendio*, p. 15).

whether they gave any verbal statement of what they believed to be Nelson's views, their credentials at the moment of capitulation depended upon the letter of the 26th which Ruffo received from them; and Mr. Badham in omitting that qualifying clause perverted Nelson's letter, as I charged.

Nor is Mr. Badham now consistent with himself in dealing with this charge, as can be seen by comparing his preface (pp. vi, vii) with the passage of his article in the *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW* which I criticised. In the latter he wrote that 'Ruffo evidently replied to Hamilton's letter, taking exception to his assurance as inadequate, for Nelson presently wrote himself' that of the 26th. This Mr. Badham then quoted in the mutilated form, and immediately continued, 'These two captains, who had previously been accredited by Hamilton as "thoroughly informed of the sentiments of Lord Nelson," came to Ruffo and completed the impression which the letters *above quoted* would naturally convey. They verbally *assured* him that "Nelson would not interfere with the execution of the capitulation."' ⁵⁵ Now he says in his preface (pp. vi-vii) that 'the letter of the 26th has nothing whatever to do with their powers on the occasion of the *pledge*,⁵⁶ being written several hours subsequently.' Why then did he quote the letter—mutilated—*before*, and in immediate connexion with, the *assurance* of the captains, if it was written several hours after, and had nothing to do with their powers when they gave the assurance?

Notwithstanding the obvious connexion of Ruffo's and Nelson's letters, just given, Mr. Badham still argues that the latter was replying to the hypothetical letter he himself has surmised. He supports this contention by emphasising the word 'just'—'I am *just* honoured with your eminence's letter'—and asks in astonishment how it could be that Ruffo's letter of the 25th 'had only just arrived. Twenty hours' delay in a matter of such urgent importance is not very likely.'⁵⁷ Where does he get these twenty hours? Where do they begin and where end? Micheroux tells us that he, who was on shore, but not at Ruffo's headquarters, received from the latter, at ten o'clock of the 26th, a written message that Nelson had consented to allow the capitulation of Uovo and Nuovo. Upon capitulation the armistice with the lower castles would be superseded; and that it was still existing when Nelson wrote has been shown. Obviously, therefore, Nelson's letter was written before Micheroux's time of reception, 10 A.M.; and working back from that, his alleged concession could scarcely have left the flagship later than 9 A.M. Twenty hours before 9 A.M. would be 1 P.M., 25 June; yet Ruffo's letter ('the letter to the castles') was written at an hour when he could say an attack had been made '*this evening*' from St. Elmo—

⁵⁵ *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, April 1898, p. 275. My italics.

⁵⁶ My italics.

⁵⁷ P. 25, note 1.

clearly, therefore, after nightfall, very probably towards midnight. The exact hour either of Ruffo's letter or of Nelson's reply is a matter only of inference; nor am I concerned to doubt that Nelson *may* have received the *ai castelli* letter earlier, and just before he wrote a second, viz. Ruffo's of the 26th, concerning the reported reverse of the royalists before Capua, given by Mr. Badham (p. 21), to which he attaches an importance that to my mind has no existence, and which, speaking as a military man, I am certain would make no other impression upon Nelson than that which Micheroux conveys throughout—that Ruffo was in a very 'nervous condition,' as the phrase goes, and needed bracing up. That it would weigh with Nelson one jot to concede either armistice or capitulation I do not for a moment believe. He knew too well the value of the Neapolitan forces, regular or irregular, to trouble about their doings at Capua.

This point of Mr. Badham's is perfectly immaterial. I mention it only lest I should seem to avoid it. The importance of *Ruffo's* letter is that it establishes, what had been questioned, that Nelson spoke truth when he said that the rebels received his declaration or opinion. The essential fact in *Nelson's* is that it shows that no capitulation had taken place at a stage demonstrably subsequent to that at which Sacchinelli says that Troubridge and Ball were present, as parties pledging and consenting, in Nelson's name, to the original capitulation signed by Ruffo and Foote. Whatever action Ruffo took as regards a capitulation on 26 June he took with Nelson's written papers before him, viz. the declaration and opinion given above. From these the captains—if they were with him at all when he arranged the capitulation of the 26th—could take nothing; for their present powers were defined and limited, by Nelson's of that date, to arranging for an attack upon St. Elmo. As regards Hamilton's letter of 24 June, which stated that the captains were then 'fully informed as to Nelson's sentiments'—which Sacchinelli names, and which Mr. Badham claims still accredited them—Ruffo knew also that he had, subsequently to it, on 25 June, and in person, received from Nelson the 'opinion' that the capitulation could not be carried into effect without the king's approval. To cite the letter of the 24th, given for a specific end, as qualifying the captains, on the 26th, to give assurances contrary to Nelson's written opinion of the 25th, is clearly untenable.

It seems proper to note, at this point and in this connexion, that it is now by no means certain that Troubridge and Ball had anything to do with the final compact for surrender, either on their own account or on Nelson's, although, after the compact was made, Ruffo doubtless arranged with them, as Hamilton wrote, for the embarkation of the rebels and for the landing of the marines, who to the number of 500—not the 1,200 promised

against St. Elmo—afterwards garrisoned the castles. Sacchinelli says Micheroux accompanied the captains to the castles to arrange the execution. Micheroux, whose newly found journal constitutes the new proof upon which Maresca and Badham rely, and who wrote soon after the event, so far from supporting Sacchinelli's account, does not as much as mention the captains in connexion with the capitulation, nor at all on 26 June, although he does mention them both, coupled by name, several times, both before and after. According to Micheroux, Ruffo wrote to him that Nelson had consented to carry the capitulation into effect, and sent the 'enclosed documents from Nelson for the surety of the garrisons, but these having trusted to a verbal assurance, there was no need for me to use them.'⁵⁸ He mentions no one but himself as an intermediary agent in the transaction.

Nor is this inference from the 'Compendio,' hitherto inaccessible, the only reasonable indication that the surrender of the castles was procured by Ruffo alone, acting through Micheroux, and by Micheroux through Minichini, and alleging a consent of Nelson's to Ruffo's terms; of which consent no valid proof is forthcoming, the 'Compendio' to the contrary notwithstanding. The 'Verbale' of Minichini,⁵⁹ on which Mr. Badham lays much stress, and which was by Maresca questioned⁶⁰ until the resurrection of the 'Compendio,'⁶¹ makes—equally with the 'Compendio'—no mention of Troubridge and Ball. By the 'Verbale' the whole proceeding is at Uovo conducted by Minichini, who, deputed by Micheroux, stipulates terms in accordance with those of Ruffo, and at the conclusion hoists the royal flag. Though not expressly so stated it is evident that what he did at Uovo Micheroux was doing at Nuovo; and yet, though the 'Verbale' is curiously circumstantial, no mention whatever is made of the British marines. From this double omission there is but one conclusion, viz. that the marines and British officers, though certainly at hand, were not officially concerned until after the surrender was completed, in form and in fact. It was purely the transaction of Ruffo acting through subordinates. That the British subsequently took charge is proved both by general mention⁶² and, specifically, by the fact that two days later Minichini needed a special order from Nelson to permit him to inspect Uovo,⁶³ of which, two days before, he had taken formal possession.

Without pressing too severely the maxim, 'False in one, false in all,' it is plain that Sacchinelli's account of this business, being so markedly both erroneous and defective, shares in the general ruin of evidence that has involved also Mr. Badham's mutilation of Nelson's letter of 26 June, and his false quotation from Dumas,

⁵⁸ *Compendio*, p. 16. My italics.

⁵⁹ *Il Cavaliere Micheroux*, p. 217.

⁶⁰ *E.g.* Nicolas, iii. 389, 393.

⁶¹ Sacchinelli, pp. 237–8.

⁶² *Compendio*, p. 3.

⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 394.

brought up to reinforce Sacchinelli. It can be positively affirmed that this and other mistakes make the latter an insufficient witness. The most that can be said for him is that his account may have some germs of truth, which upon adequate corroboration may appear. That such corroboration has been found is believed not only by Mr. Badham, but by the very respectable Italian authority, the marchese Maresca.

The latter, writing in August 1899, was good enough to say that he found my reasoning in the *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW* of July unanswerable, so far as the evidence then accessible went; but he added that he knew of a document which, if he were at liberty to publish it, would throw important new light and modify conclusions. Since then he has obtained the necessary consent, and the document has been published.⁶⁴

This recent discovery is in the form of a journal, probably intended as a report to a superior, kept by Antonio Micheroux, already so often mentioned, a Neapolitan diplomatist, who had obtained a reinforcement of Russian troops from Corfu, with which he had joined Ruffo, and was present throughout the proceedings at Naples. The portion of this document which bears upon the question of Nelson's good faith, in the final capitulation, is as follows, beginning with Nelson's handing Ruffo the 'Opinion' in the post-meridian of 25 June:—

Lord Nelson delivered to the cardinal a written declaration that the capitulation ought not to take effect so long as it was not approved by his Sicilian majesty.

26 June. At daybreak a copy of the said declaration was sent to each of the castles, together with a note signed by his Eminence and the Russian commandant announcing that the troops would resume their former positions. But no sooner had the Russians fallen back from the surroundings of the castle and the palace to Spirito Santo than there spread throughout the city an incredible consternation, so that in a few hours thousands and thousands of persons left Naples.

In this situation of things what may have been the motive through which Lord Nelson suddenly changed his mind has never come to my knowledge. I will say positively that towards ten o'clock his Eminence wrote me that, Lord Nelson having consented to put the capitulation into effect, I was to replace the Russian troops in the abandoned posts. In proof of that his Eminence sent me pressing the documents from Lord Nelson herewith enclosed⁶⁵ as security to the garrisons; but the latter having relied upon a simple assurance it was not necessary for me to use them.⁶⁶

The marchese Maresca, prior to the discovery of this document, held thus:—

⁶⁴ See above, p. 699, note 2.

⁶⁵ These documents are wanting in the *Compendio* as found.

⁶⁶ *Compendio*, p. 16.

It is therefore allowable to suppose that Micheroux with the two Englishmen arranged with the commandants of the forts that the capitulation should be executed upon lines subordinated to the declarations of Nelson. Of an unconditional execution of the capitulation, after the declarations of the English (admiral), and after the enforced adhesion of Ruffo, there was no longer room to talk. Only of an unconditional surrender could there at that moment be any discussion; and, if conditions were then offered, they could only have been most briefly these: that the patriots should give up the castles, purely and simply, that those who had declared their wish to go to Toulon should embark and remain in the roads, that the others should stay in the forts until the determination of the king, in the case of either, should be known.⁶⁷

Upon the ground of the quotation from Micheroux's '*Compendio*,' given above, Maresca now announces his change of opinion in these words:—

The imposing name of Nelson, and the very enormity of the thing, made it seem to me impossible that the great admiral would resort to fraud to induce the abhorred republicans to leave the forts and to get them into his power. I must acknowledge my mistake. The '*Compendio*' removes all doubt . . . and, if I am not mistaken, speaks the final and definite word in this cause.⁶⁸ . . .

The two documents indicated in the narrative cannot be other than those which Sacchinelli publishes, one in the text, one in the *facsimile*, documents which, being not kept by the patriots, remained among Ruffo's papers.⁶⁹

It is with diffidence, not unmingled with a sense of rashness, that one ventures to differ from the marchese Maresca, whose name in connexion with Neapolitan annals has something of the prestige which he here attributes to Nelson. Still his conclusion herein is so hasty, and so overlooks difficulties in its way, that it must be subjected to test. It rests upon the assumption that the 'enclosed documents from Lord Nelson,' mentioned by Micheroux, 'cannot be other than' the same as those two versions which Sacchinelli gives of one 'declaration,' which he alleges was written by Troubridge himself. Sacchinelli speaks of but one document, always in the singular—'this declaration'—although he gives of its contents two versions, which differ decisively one from the other.⁷⁰

What is this document in itself? A paper which Sacchinelli alleges that Troubridge himself wrote, with his own hand, though he refused to sign it, but which upon the examination of the *facsimile* is not in Troubridge's handwriting; nor does any one know in whose handwriting it is. Mr. Badham thinks he can identify it with that of a clerk or interpreter;⁷¹ but neither he nor any one else now knows who wrote it.

⁶⁷ Maresca, *Il Cavaliere Micheroux*, pp. 214–5.

⁶⁸ *Compendio*, p. 8.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p. 7.

⁷⁰ Sacchinelli, pp. 286–7, and app. C.

⁷¹ *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, p. 275, note 59.

What then does this new proof amount to ?

1. Taking the marchese Maresca's supposition, that Micheroux's 'documents' are Sacchinelli's 'declaration' of Troubridge, we are to believe that an unsigned paper, in the handwriting of a subordinate to us unknown, received from Ruffo by an intermediate messenger, purporting to contain a declaration of Troubridge as to a promise by Nelson, was by Micheroux accepted as a definitive statement from Nelson, so that he assured the rebels that they could come out in reliance upon Nelson's faith.

2. There is an alternative supposition open that by the 'in-closed documents' Micheroux meant—what he calls them—'documents from Lord Nelson' himself, in some way authenticated to his satisfaction. To this is to be replied that nowhere else is the existence of such documents, reversing Nelson's previously announced position, even remotely hinted at, and that if such ever were sent to, or through, Ruffo, Nelson would not have dared to say, as he did to his commander-in-chief and to the first lord of the admiralty, that the rebels came out under the opinion given to Ruffo, and with the knowledge conveyed by his declaration to themselves.

3. We are further asked to believe that the rebels had such faith in Micheroux's simple statement, after all the agony of fear through which they had passed, and the dangers that await treason, that they were willing to go out without retaining, nay, even without seeing, papers sent expressly for their surety, and the preservation of which in their own hands would have shielded them with the power of the whole British empire, had Nelson been a Borgia instead of the upright man he at all other times was.

And these incredibilities we are asked to accept as outweighing Nelson's clear statement, four times made in writing,⁷² that the rebels came out with the knowledge that the capitulation could not be carried into execution without the approval of the king.

I have before given reasons for believing that Sacchinelli cannot be depended upon. Micheroux also cannot be considered a competent witness, when he stands alone. Even if the two agreed together—which in the present instance they are far from doing—neither the one nor the other possesses those characteristics of truthfulness which would give their joint testimony weight against the word of a man who has had the long and honourable public career, open to the scrutiny of all men, that Nelson ran. Not only was Micheroux suspected by the court, as was Ruffo ; in the atmosphere of treachery and suspicion that hung about the Neapolitan court that alone would be insufficient to condemn a man. His narrative elsewhere is in direct issue with Troubridge in

⁷² To Keith, Nicolas, iii. 398 ; to Lord Spencer, *ibid.* p. 406 ; to Davison, *ibid.* p. 510 ; to Alexander Stephens, *ibid.* p. 520.

a matter where the indications are distinctly against the truth of the 'Compendio,' concerning which the marchese Maresca remarks that, being directed to Acton, it has all the appearance of a self-defence.⁷³ The marchese Maresca had previously noted that Micheroux, after the capitulation of the lower castles, 'had from the beginning wished to get possession of St. Elmo by paying a sum of money to Méjan (the commander), so avoiding injury to the city;' ⁷⁴ the latter a dominant and natural object with him and Ruffo, to effect which he was willing to try bribery of a military commander. In the 'Compendio,' addressed to Acton, Micheroux states, under date of 28 June, that there was a conference in the morning of that day between the commandant and council of St. Elmo on the one side, himself, Troubridge, and Ball on the other, after which,

upon returning to the city, Captains Troubridge and Ball desired that my adjutant should again go to St. Elmo under some pretext, to offer 15,000*l.* sterling to the commander, if he would immediately yield the castle. The adjutant discharged the commission. The commander having replied to me that he would be ready to come to an agreement, for no venal motive, and with care only for his honour, if it were not for certain very troublesome persons in his council, the adjutant thought best to entrust to General Gambs the charge of winning over the more obstinate of the council.⁷⁵

Among the letters of Troubridge to Nelson in the British Museum is the following, a postscript, which has become detached from its letter:—

Since finishing my letter the governor has through Mihereaux (*sic*) sent an offer to surrender for 150,000 ducats. I have long suspected Mr. M——. Ball will explain to your lordship this afternoon, as he is coming down, if you can spare Hallowell I should be much obliged to your lordship.

T. TROUBRIDGE.

I treated the offer as it deserved.⁷⁶

The date of this is wanting, but the reference to the exchange between Ball and Hallowell fixes it at 2 or 3 July—probably the former, as Ball's ship, the 'Alexander,' sailed for Malta on the 3rd.

The marchese Maresca has elsewhere stated that, at the beginning of the siege, 'the others, and probably the English above all, were opposed' to Micheroux's proposition to bribe. But, as 'the injuries to the city increased day by day, and the hope of reducing the fort became ever more remote, the English them-

⁷³ *Compendio*, p. 6. Maresca specifies Ruffo's apparent accusation that Micheroux had had a prominent consenting part in the capitulation, but this was not the only suspicion under which Micheroux lay. See Maresca, *Il Cavaliere Micheroux*, p. 248.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 248.

⁷⁵ *Compendio*, p. 17.

⁷⁶ Add. MS. 84915, f. 888. This letter, being undated, appears to have been placed with some others in a folio to which they do not belong.

selves began to bargain with Méjan concerning the price of a surrender.' ⁷⁷ Among numerous letters of Troubridge during the siege, copies of which I have before me, I can find no trace either of a disposition to bribe or of fear concerning the issue. Maresca's authorities at this time seem to be chiefly Micheroux's letters and the contemporary 'Diario Napoletano.' The reader will remark that the statement that the English were 'at first opposed' is in flat contradiction to that of Micheroux in the 'Compendio,' before quoted, that on 28 June, before the siege even began, Troubridge and Ball offered 15,000*l.* for a surrender.

To this contradiction, as affecting Micheroux's credit, add Troubridge's letter above quoted, coincident with which, and corroborating it, we find the statement, in Maresca's 'Cavaliere Micheroux,' that on 3 July Micheroux did receive a letter in cipher, through an intermediary with Méjan, offering to surrender for 150,000 ducats, concerning which Micheroux commented, 'The truth is that for 50,000 to 60,000 ducats we could have had the fort from the beginning, without burning a match.' ⁷⁸

Nor are these the only circumstances that throw grave doubt upon Micheroux's truthfulness. In the same number of the 'Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane' in which the 'Compendio' was first published, and immediately consecutive to it, is an article by M. E. Bertaux, quoting from the records of the French ministry of war a number of documents relating to the affairs at Naples in 1799. Among these is a copy of a letter, certified by the 'inspector of reviews,' from Micheroux to Méjan, presented by the latter in his own defence against charges of misconduct in the surrender of St. Elmo, for which use it had been written. In it Micheroux 'certifies upon his word of honour . . . that a sum of money having been offered to the said commandant, he rejected the proposal in the most honourable manner.' ⁷⁹ How this statement is to be reconciled with that quoted by the marchese Maresca does not immediately appear. The natural surmise is that Micheroux was himself so far involved—at Méjan's mercy—that he could not refuse to write such a letter. That the queen, as well as Troubridge, suspected him is well known. ⁸⁰ M. Bertaux, indeed, does not hesitate to characterise another statement of Micheroux's, in the same letter, as a lie, in the following words: 'I am willing even not to take account of a first lie (*menzogna*) of the Cav. Micheroux, and to believe provisionally that which other witnesses more worthy of trust deny—that is, that the castle, when surrendered, was *pour ainsi dire pulvérisé*.' From his research into Méjan's official records

⁷⁷ *Il Cavaliere Micheroux*, p. 248.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 242-3.

⁷⁹ *Arch. Storico*, anno xxiv, p. 477 (1899).

⁸⁰ *Il Cavaliere Micheroux*, p. 248; Palumbo, *Carteggio Maria Carolina*, pp. 98, 100, 202.

M. Bertaux wholly discredits his refusal of a bribe,⁸¹ though he might have enacted the old comedy of indignant virtue protesting, with an open hand behind its back.

The reader must decide for himself how far the inherent improbabilities here indicated, and those involved in Micheroux's account of the surrender, in the 'Compendio,' before noted, affect his credibility as a witness. For myself, they place him alongside of Sacchinelli, as one from whose account side-lights may be received, inferences drawn, but whose uncorroborated statements cannot be accepted. The statements of the two, in the matter of the surrender of Nuovo and Uovo, are not only not corroborative, but are mutually destructive, while over against and contradicting them are the records of Troubridge—'whose honour,' said Lord St. Vincent, who knew him long, 'is bright as his sword'—as well as the explicit assertion of Nelson, 'With this knowledge the rebels came out of the castles.' To Nelson also, nearly two years later, when the transactions at Naples had become history, St. Vincent wrote, 'Be assured, my dear lord, every public act of your life has been the subject of my admiration;' and this was after Mr. Fox, St. Vincent's party chief, had made his well-known attack upon Nelson's conduct in the transaction under discussion. I mean not by this to claim that St. Vincent had perfect knowledge of the Naples business, but that he testified to an unimpeachable character, through over three years of close official association, as well as of longer opportunities for knowledge less direct. Every man is entitled to the presumption arising from such pertinent evidence to character, until credible proof to the contrary is brought.

Mr. Badham closes his attack upon Nelson by quoting Southey's words:—

A deplorable transaction! a stain upon the memory of Nelson and the honour of England! To palliate it would be in vain; to justify it would be wicked: there is no alternative for one who will not make himself a participator in guilt but to record the disgraceful story with sorrow and with shame.

Just so: Southey at the beginning of the century, with his fascinating style and narrative power, took up and gave currency to this view in a book which, through its singular literary merits, has ever since been the favourite and most widely read of the lives of Nelson. Yet one familiar with the details has but to read the passage beginning, 'About six-and-thirty hours afterwards Nelson arrived,' to see how imperfect and secondary was Southey's knowledge of the facts upon which he dared to pass his eloquent judgment. Nelson's statement, 'The rebels came out with this knowledge,' is not mentioned—was probably not even known to him—while the influence of Foote's resentful attack upon the

⁸¹ *Arch. stor.*, anno xxiv. pp. 479-81.

admiral's memory is traceable in Southey's very words. Thus current rumour and prejudiced view received the stamp of a supposed high authority, and gave existence to a prepossession against which laws of evidence strive at a disadvantage. Thus the case is ever being tried on appeal, and before the unqualified bench of biassed public opinion. Were the matter new, and could it be approached with open mind, the inadequacy of the testimony against Nelson would be apparent. But prejudice dies hard. Let men, however, squarely face the two facts—his record otherwise unblemished and his distinct affirmation, 'The rebels came out under this opinion—with this knowledge.' Then let them ask themselves whether against these two rocks the allegations of denouncers, as so far adduced, do not break in vain.

Nor should we, in the wish to be upright, 'lean over backward,' as an American expression has it. That a man is a national hero, and is dead, does not disentitle him to the presumption of innocence until guilt is proved; nor is it partiality to declare positively that a great and honourable name has not been stained, accepting as proof his own assertion, unless this is rebutted by clear and tenable evidence. Singularly enough, the fact that the evidence adduced against him is contradictory, 'shady,' and intricate, seems to give an impression that his own conduct must have been the same. Yet nothing could be clearer or more explicit than his assertion already so often quoted. Owing, however, to the denunciation of Southey and Fox, it has been for a century assumed that Nelson must have been guilty unless proof—negative proof—can be brought forward that he was innocent; that he did not do that of which, upon inadequate testimony, he has been accused and condemned.

A. T. MAHAN.