

May 1957

A Message From Garibaldi

Ermanno F. Comparetti

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cq>

Recommended Citation

Colby Library Quarterly, series 4, no.10, May 1957, p.184-185

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colby Quarterly by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Colby. For more information, please contact mfkelly@colby.edu.

184 Colby Library Quarterly

merits of Sharp as a poet and critic may be, these letters present a vigorous and perceptive mind in an age of controversy. Long neglected, Sharp emerges as a poet deeply and conscientiously committed to his art, and as a man sensitive to the cross-currents of thought in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.



A MESSAGE FROM GARIBALDI

By *ERMANNIO F. COMPARETTI*

RECENT attempts in various Russian satellite nations to throw off their chains of bondage to Moscow remind the student of European history that these efforts to win political liberty very much resemble the efforts of Italian patriots in their long struggle for national independence and unification. After the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire in 1815, there were continual revolts in Italy against the foreign domination imposed by the Congress of Vienna. Among those in whose breasts the desire for liberty burned most intensely was the impetuous soldier, Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882). A letter of his, now in the Colby College Library, recalls those efforts of a century ago, when Italy rather than Hungary or Poland was the scene of action.

Garibaldi was involved, as early as 1834 (when he was only twenty-seven and a member of the secret society, *Giovane Italia*) in a revolt and escaped the firing squad only by fleeing to South America. In 1848 he returned to Savoy and offered his services to Charles Albert, King of Sardinia. In 1861, on the union of the Two Sicilies with Sardinia and the proclamation of Victor Emmanuel as King of Italy, Garibaldi retired to Caprera (Goat Island), and from there wrote the letter now in the Colby Library.

Colby Library Quarterly 185

He had again taken up arms in support of efforts to complete the unification of Italy, and (before his defeat by French forces in November 1867) he wrote a simple message of acknowledgment to an Englishman named Samuel Timings. England had long been the friend of Italian freedom. Unforgettable in Garibaldi's mind was the most tangible evidence of this good will, shown when, during the vivid campaign of 1860, English ships had shielded from hostile war vessels the landing of the Thousand Red Shirts at the shore of Marsala. The letter reads:

Caprera

April 9, 1866

Mr. Samuel Timings

Dear Sir,

You offer me a rifle—and I accept it. This will be a further reason, among so many that I have had in the past, for my warm gratitude for English generosity.

Your servant,

G. GARIBALDI*



A STRANGE CASE OF DEBILITY

By AARON POLONSKY

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, two brothers, James and Horatio Smith, were the reigning wits of London. Not many fashionable parties were held without the added lustre of their presence. Their hostesses included such eminent literatae as the Countess Guiccioli and Lady Blessington, both known as friends of Lord Byron. It is reported that John Keats met them at such a

* Garibaldi of course wrote in Italian. What I have translated above reads thus in the original autograph: "Caro Signore, Voi mi offrite un fucile—ed io l'accetto. Sarà questo un nuovo pegno di gratitudine ai tanti da me ricevuti dalla generosità Inglese. Vogliate comandarmi, Vostro G. Garibaldi."