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CHAPTER I.—M. di Savelli is serving in the French army under the duke of Treviso, and is suddenly accused of being a traitor of the duke, and upon his quarters being searched numerous stolen articles are found. He is arrested and imprisoned, awaiting trial by the duke.

CHAPTER II.—At the trial Savelli is convicted, dismissed from the army in disgrace and ordered to leave the camp in an hour. D'Entragues is able to bribe the king's services are no longer needed by the king. But one thing could have saved Savelli, and that would have been a bribe of shame, which she did not desire, upon Mme. D'Entragues, and he declined to introduce the necessary bribe.

CHAPTER III.—In the city of Arezzo he procures a disguise and starts to leave. On the street he meets Mme. D'Entragues, who recognizes him and tells him that her husband has left her and gone to Florence.

CHAPTER IV.—After leaving Arezzo he is caught in a rainstorm and finds shelter in a ruin built by an old man who is also on the road to Florence. They resume the journey together, and in one of the towns passed through meet with a band of robbers, the leader of whom rides a blood-gray steed. Savelli's companion recognizes and takes away with him, and so they became separated. Savelli is arrested at the soldier's house, and he continues his journey to Florence without his companion of the morning.

CHAPTER V.—He reaches Florence and proceeds to lodge in a tenement. While on the street, the first of the robbers, Mme. D'Entragues and a light entree, in which Savelli receives a severe wound, is taken to his room, his assailant escaping in the darkness.

CHAPTER VI.—During Savelli's sickness he was attended by the caretaker of the house, Ceel, by name, who was in a conspiracy against the Florentine government in which he wished Savelli to join. Before Savelli is entirely strong again Florence, as ally of France, declares war against Rome and Spain.

CHAPTER VII.—Savelli rescues two ladies from the hands of a man named Ceel, the garden of St. Michael, who prove to be the property of the pope. Upon returning to his room he finds on the stairs his companion of the trip from Arezzo, and is conducted by him to a room in which the duke's old man's daughter, whose injuries he had avenged, was dying. The old man gives his name as Matthew Ceel, and tells that his wife's death is due to a priest—the pope—and vows horrible vengeance.

CHAPTER VIII.—Ceel again renews his offers of financial assistance if Savelli will assist in the restoration of the Medici in Florence, but the offer is spurned.

CHAPTER IX.—Savelli is almost dead from starvation and faints on the street. The two ladies who were rescued by him, the garden of St. Michael, find him, and one of them gives him a jewel taken from her bracelet. With the jewel secured for this he purchases food at an inn. While at the inn an attempt is made to assassinate a marked gentleman who is dining there in the company of a lady and another gentleman. He attacks the stranger in his own room, and is then invited to his home.

CHAPTER X.—The stranger proves to be Nicolo Machiavelli, the president of the council of ten, of Florence. He offers Savelli employment in the city of Rome and the offer is accepted. Savelli is shadowed on his way back to his lodgings by Ceel's brother, who is a spy in Machiavelli's library.

CHAPTER XI.—Before leaving Florence Savelli meets one of his companions, Ceel, and engages him to accompany him to Rome. A party of five horsemen, followed by Ceel's brother, leaves Savelli in the hands of his captives.

CHAPTER XII.—The five horsemen who left Florence in advance proceed to the members of the Medici, led by Ceel, who were sent out to capture Savelli. Savelli and his companion have a hard fight with them on the road, but come out victorious. Without further mishap both reach Rome safely.

CHAPTER XIII.—While having his horse shod Savelli becomes interested in some tricks a street juggler is performing and recognizes in the juggler his friend Matthew Ceel. Savelli and Ceel are taken to an inn in the strangers' quarter of Rome.

As I went on I began to feel nervous, in spite of myself, as to what the results of my interview with the cardinal would be, and whether it would end in the further employment, which the secretary had distinctly said it would. I had no reason to doubt, however, and it was with a hopeful mind that I trotted up the Lungo Tevere.

Near the staircase of Pietro and Paul, on the bridge, was a guardhouse, occupied at the time by a detachment of Spanish infantry, and to these men I addressed myself inquiring where the cardinal of Rouen was staying. I was told, at once, that his eminence was lodging in the new palace of Cardinal Ceel, opposite the Senate. Savelli and I, after a few minutes had crossed the Piazza Scorsca Cavalli, and was before the residence of the cardinal. At the time I speak of it was quite finished, but still habitable, and had been rented by Monseigneur d'Amboise, as being conveniently near the Vatican.

On entering the courtyard I dismounted, and, giving my horse to Jacopo to hold, ascended the steps and boldly announced myself as an urgent messenger who had business with his eminence. I was ushered by a page into a reception-room, and, early as the hour was, there was a considerable number of people already in attendance. I was introduced to the cardinal, and he, after a few minutes had crossed the Piazza Scorsca Cavalli, and was before the residence of the cardinal. At the time I speak of it was quite finished, but still habitable, and had been rented by Monseigneur d'Amboise, as being conveniently near the Vatican.

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attention, was surrounded by the gentlemen of the suite, who asked that last word of the duke, and the last word of the duke, where Louis was, holding high revelry, instead of marching, as he should have done, at once to Italy, after the defeat of Ceel at Perombrone. The result of his action being a further truce that much delayed his success, and indeed very nearly ruined his chances, he was greatly distressed. He was, however, left to himself, no one coming near him except the huge hound, which rose slowly, and, approaching, surveyed me with grave interest, and, apparently satisfied, he wagged his tail in approval and touched my hand with his grim muzzle. I ran my fingers over his shaggy coat with a caressing motion, and, observing Defaure, the page whom I had first addressed on arriving, begged him to show me my apartments, inquiring at the same time of Jacopo and the horses.

"The house is fall, signore," he replied, "but we have done what we could for your accommodations. The horses have been attended to, and the Serjt. Jacopo awaits you in your rooms."

"Thanks, friend," and I followed him, and, not having a letter from the duke, which Jacopo had assumed, no doubt out of compliment to our host, my new employer. We passed out by the same entrance, and, after a few minutes, crossing a courtyard, the page ushered me to a set of apartments in an outbuilding, and left me with the horses, and the Serjt. Jacopo, who remained at noon for the cardinal as well as the gentlemen of the suite.

I found Jacopo in high glee. He had set out all my apparel, and was engaged in finishing his sword. This he put down as I came in, and burst into speech. "Blood of St. John! Excellency, but I don't say I lack would care. Yesterday we were anywhere, and he held up both hands before the duke, but he replied to say he could take no action. The duchess, who is my cousin, has also used her influence, not to no purpose, for Tremouille stirs his pride with his own hand, and does not care if it burn or not, as long as he stirs it himself. We could get the king's pardon for you, and as a last resource that might be done, for I like as little to be thwarted as his Grace of Tremouille; but that is not your strong enemy in the duke, and it will not kill the story—you see."

"I do, your eminence. How can I thank you?" "I do not want your thanks, cavalier; but France wants your sword. Your own way is to do a signal service for France, and after this the king is easy. Tremouille is easy, and it would want but a little pressure to make him rescind his sentence apparently of his own accord, provided you could get what I have said. Strange how fate works!"

"I remained silent, and d'Amboise went on: "Such a service is it possible for you to do, and I will put it in your way. I cannot at present give you details, as they have to do with the secret, which you will shortly be in Rome. This much, however, I can tell you: get together a few good men, you doubtless can lay your hands on them, and be ready. You will no doubt want funds, but they will be arranged for. I will give you time to consider yourself as attached to my suite—a moment," he continued, as I was about to pour out my thanks, "you had better for the present call yourself Donatelli. I know something of the history of Roman families, and your name would not smell well to the Chigi and Colonna, and remember the Tiber is very deep."

"He touched a small handbell as he concluded, and the page appeared. "Defaure," he called, "send the Albe Le Clerc and a gentleman to meet after that you will please inform the steward that apartments are to be prepared at once for M. Donatelli, who is here." The page bowed and vanished, as I rose to await the coming of the suite, the cardinal went on with a smile: "Messieurs in the anteroom are doubtless getting impatient, we must make haste to receive them." As he said these words a gray-haired priest entered, bearing on a cushion the secret hat of a prince of the church, and following him a dozen gentlemen and grooms of the chamber. The cardinal rose, and leaning on the arm of Bayard, walked to the door. Le Clerc, who was waiting, immediately before him, and the rest of us formed a queue behind. As we came to the door it was flung open by two lackeys in a blue and silver livery, who shouted out: "My Lord Cardinal—way—way!"

We passed into the room where the people were arranged to dine. D'Amboise and I walked down the line, bowing to one, exchanging a word or two with another, until he came opposite Ceel. The doctor dropped to his knee, and, prostrate on his face, solicited the cardinal's influence to obtain from him an audience with the pope, to whom he desired to dedicate his work. "Fertel," said the cardinal, "why not go to his eminence of Strigonia—books are more in his line than—well, we shall see what he will do."

He passed on, and the next group that caught his eye was that of the young stranger in the cloth of gold and his companion. "As the cardinal approached, the young man drew a letter from his vest and presented it with a low bow. "D'Amboise tore it open, and glanced over the contents. "Diable!" he exclaimed, "from Mme. de la Tremouille herself. See here, Bayard, the duchess writes, introducing her friend the Chevalier St. Armande. I know not the name, but it is a name of the Cavalieri Donati, who is also a new friend."

"I bowed and extended my hand, and St. Armande placed his within mine. It was small and delicate as a woman's, and as I clasped it for a moment it felt as chill and cold as death. "We are of Peardy, your eminence." The voice was singularly sweet and soft, and a strange and undefined feeling came into its tones to some other voice I had heard struck me, but I could not fix upon anything. The duchess says you are anxious to receive me; it has been easier to send you to the duke?"

St. Armande looked round with a heightened color, and then replied, speaking in the same low, soft tones: "If your eminence will kindly read the letter you will perceive that my desire was to see something of the court of Rome before joining the duke."

D'Amboise glanced at the letter again, and an odd smile passed over his face. "I see," he added, "but I have never seen a request as commands me. If you will do me the honor of joining my suite I shall be delighted. Permit me to introduce you to the Cavalieri Donati, who is also a new friend."

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