minx who has entrapped the passing affections of Della Fràscolla is known to me, and Venice has need of her. Now, if you can pilot me to where he has taken her, I have that about me — State papers — that will make the young lover fling her off as he would a worn glove."

"Why did you not arrest her here?"

"I came too late,—and then, I did not recognize her at first."

"Have you aught against Fràscolla? I know your trade."

"Madonna Maria! nothing. Have I not got him here," and he stretched out his thumb and patted its under side, "any time I want him? It's the girl that I want, Donnà,—that we both want. '"Alla buon ora! Lei non passo dar un rifiuto (To you I can refuse nothing). I swear," seeing a distrustful look in the Donnà's face, "that far from hurting him, it will redound greatly to his good and to yours. See!" and he kissed a small cross that he drew from his pocket; "I do all that man can; the Holy Church asks no more."

"It must be. He has brought it on himself. Hasten, then, or we are too late. Have you horses?"

"I can get them. In the village there is a carriage. It is better than traveling à cheval, and need not detain us for dress."

An hour later, a carriage drawn by four horses rattled through the narrow streets and disappeared in the gloaming.

"And now, Andrea, here we are," said his host as they alighted in the court-yard of a massive old building that seemed built to resist a siege. "Here you need not fear embodied or disembodied spirits. This belonged to my mother's father, and was inherited by him through a long ancestry. It could tell many a tale of terror, fierce assault and stubborn defense; and if that is not enough, there is that below which will satisfy the most prying. I have never been below myself, but if at any time you wish to explore these mysteries, this is the stone to move." They had entered the main hall while talking, and the young man tapped with his foot on a large, square block of marble that had every appearance of being as firmly a part of the whole as its neighbors. "The key to the entrance is here"; and he stepped to the wall and pulled an iron ring that would not have been noticed unless sought for. As he pulled, one end of the immense block dropped, the other side evidently working on a hinge. The stone thus removed revealed an aperture large enough for a man to enter, and a stairway, the lower part of which was hidden in darkness. Andrea shuddered as the cold air rushed up from the vault.

"What are those words cut in the opposite block, Victor? It looks familiar, yet I cannot make it out."

"A proper welcome for such a hell," was the reply. "Simply Dante's inscription over a like abode,—'Farewell to hope, all ye who enter here.' Enough; let us get into a more congenial retreat. This is sufficient to raise a whole legion of blue devils." On the wall opposite the ring he pressed a spring, and the marble resumed its place, becoming once more a part of the floor.

"You say, Victor, that we are secure here from the powers of earth and air; but my heart is heavy, and time is filled with possibilities. Supposing you away and my retreat discovered: it seems as if the fox at last were caged."

"Oh faint of heart! Why, I know every foot above,—and below, for that matter, though I was never there. Step in here"; and he pushed open a door, ushering his guest into a large-sized room with a lofty ceiling, from which fell heavy silk hangings except where the walls were shelved, in which case they were filled with books. "This is the library, and it is considered a pretty fair one. This," and he unfolded a parchment,—"is a plan of the castle. Here are the steps leading underground, and here are all the windings of its many halls. Supposing such an improbable thing should occur as that which you have mentioned. By opening the trap you can descend; there is a lamp on the left-hand side four steps down,—here it is, marked on the diagram,—always ready. The stone moves back into place readily by pushing it with your hand,