

# THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man.—Thomas Jefferson

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## MISCELLANEOUS.

From the Cygnet.

## CESARIO BAGLIONE.

### A TALE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Late in the evening of a summer's day, the year 1527, two travellers were seen approaching Florence from the South, as they descended the hills, and the Etrurian Athens, with its fair white walls, lay before them, bathed in the glorious light of an Italian sunset, whose magic hues still hovered over the tops of the distant mountains; while the woods that skirted them stood out with their deep and solemn shadow, in rich harmonious contrast against the glowing sky—the eldest of the travellers, whose bearing rather than his dress proclaimed him the superior, reined in his horse, and set motionless, absorbed in the contemplation of the scene before him. The other checked his steed likewise, rather it should seem from respect to his companion than from admiration of the landscape, for he cast an indifferent eye around, and then began muttering an Ave Maria, that the time might not be altogether thrown away.

'By St. Anthony, this is a glorious sight!—what thinkst thou, Giascopo?

'Aye, Signor, it is well enough,' replied Giascopo, 'but I think that as it is a good half league to Florence, we had better prick our horses, or the gates will be closed.'

'You are right,' said the other, rousing himself, and putting his horse to speed.

They reached the city just in time to gain admittance that night. The travellers alighted at the first inn, and seated themselves on a bench before the door where two or three of the better sort of the citizens were eagerly discussing the affairs of the republic over wine cups. The street in which the inn stood presented an animated and pictorial effect; as the eye rested on the long perspective of houses, built after the old Tuscan fashion, with their deep empayed windows, fantastically carved and now gilded with the last rays of the setting sun, the groups of citizens in their picturesque dresses, some sitting before the doors singing to the accompaniment of the lute—others in passionate discourse on the rival factions whose discord at that time set all Italy in a flame, presented countenances and attitudes worthy of a Raphael.

Your Florence, Signori, wears a different aspect from some of the cities I passed through on my way hither, said the elder traveller, at length breaking silence.

You are a traveller, then Signor, said one of the persons addressed. 'Perhaps you can tell us whether it be true that Charles of Bourbon is to be joined by the Regent of Naples, in his attack upon Rome.'

I have heard so,

Shame,' rejoined the other with flashing eyes, that one who bears so noble a name should league with felons and murderers in laying waste his native land!

'Felons and murderers!—these methinks are strange names to apply to the followers of Charles, among whom may be reckoned some of the noblest in Italy.'

'You cannot deny that the Duke has such in his service, and as to his nobles, I hold them little better in espousing such a cause.'

The cheek of the traveller was flushed with crimson as he involuntarily grasped the dagger beneath his cloak, but he stifled his emotion and said calmly—'A large number of your fellow citizens, then, Signor, are like to fall under your evil report. It is said that the Emperor has as many well-wishers as the Pope, in Florence.'

'He lies foully who says so!' said the Florentine, starting fiercely from his seat.

'Gently good Antonio,' said a third, who had hitherto remained a silent listener, this cavalier does but repeat what he has heard doubtless, with out giving it credit.'

The traveller's eye glanced at the speaker, as if he suspected a snare in the moderation of his words. He was a man advanced in life, with a watchful eye, and cool, wary countenance, which did not greatly please the inspector.

'You are right, Signor,' he rejoined, with an air of indifference. 'I meant no offence, but your friend is somewhat fiery.'

'He is young,' said the other. 'You and I, who have seen more years over our head can talk without quarrelling, though we may differ in opinion.'

But the traveller seemed to have no inclination to accept the implied invitation to a prolonged discussion. He arose, and adjusting his cloak, ordered his servant to brink out the horses, and bade them good evening.

'There goes a spy of the Ghibeline faction Antonio between his teeth: and snatching up his sword, he followed in the same direction. For some time he kept the horseman in sight till his progress was impeded by the crowd following in the train of the Gonfalonier, who was returned from council, in state. Before he extricated himself they were gone. Still however, Antonio, who was a youth of fierce passions and hated the opposite faction with an intensity known only to the parties in a civil discord, kept up the chase till night far advanced. While he hesitated whether to continue the pursuit, or return home, two persons suddenly issued from a low door near the church of the Annunziata, near which he stood, and remained for some time in deep consultation. The street was dark, but the lamp burning in a niche before an image of the Virgin, discovered to Antonio's eager gaze the countenances of the elder traveller, and a person whom he knew to be in the service of a nobleman suspected of a correspondence with the Emperor. Presently the former drew a purse from his bosom, and gave it to the other, who took it hastily and disappeared. The stranger turned also to depart; but Antonio sprang forward, and crying, Traitor!—Spy!—Ghibeline!—attacked him so vigorously, that the other, taken by surprise had scarcely time to draw his sword before Antonio's furious outcry attracted several persons to the spot; who, on hearing the exclamation joined in the fray. The stranger planted his back against the wall, and defended himself with such superior skill, that had the odds been less against him, must speedily have secured the victory. As it was, he began to feel exhausted by so unequal a contest; when an auxiliary appeared in the person of a youth, who shocked by the unfairness of the combat, ranged himself on the side of the stranger, and bestowed his blows with such right good-will, that the assailers, in their turn, began to give ground. Amid the confusion caused by the raised voices and clashing swords, they did not hear the approach of half a dozen men, clothed in crimson, and carrying halberds, till their swords were struck, and they themselves arrested in the name of the republic. 'The city guard, by St. Peter,' exclaimed the stranger's ally. 'Follow me, Signor,' and with a dexterous jerk, he threw down the

man nearest him, leaped over the crossed halberds of the guards, and fled with the speed of lightning. Both ran till cries of of the pursuers died away in the distance. They stopped to take breath and the youth suddenly faced round on his companion, and said with a look of recollection:—'And now Signor that we are safe, will you tell me what you were fighting about?'

A proper question after risking your life,' said the other, laughing: 'I think you should have asked me before.'

'I had no time, but Signor! you are hurt.'

'A mere scratch, which I will speedily cure. I am a stranger in the city—can you direct me to the house of one Bertuccio, a notary?'

'Bertuccio!' ejaculated the youth—'what would you with him?'

'I have business.'

'Oh if you have business, well but if you seek a kind Samaritan to bind up your wounds, you will not find one in Messer Bertuccio.'

'You know him, then?'

'Ay Signor—so well, that I wonder how any one should willingly seek him; seeing that I have dwelt in his house some years & long for nothing so much as to run away with it.'

'You are his relation, or perhaps his apprentice?'

'Neither, by the blessing of Heaven. Some years ago, when the Emperor's troop laid waste Perugia, I was left sprawling amid the ruins of a sacked town, as neither worth killing nor carrying away. Messer Bertuccio was then journeying in Perugia, and his wife would have him take care of while the price of the jewels about me answered the charge twice over, and his wife lived. She is dead and I—'

'And you,' said the stranger who had listened to him with deep interest—'are you, who have given this night such a proof of a gallant spirit—you are content to waste your youth at the desk of a pitiful notary, when all Italy is in a flame, and when valor may win a prize worthy an Emperor's crown?'

'Content!' said the youth, with a cheek of flame, and dashing from him with violence the ink horn at his girdle, which had revealed his profession to his companion—'is the eagle content to perch with the carrion crow? No; but I am content to herd with swine, till Messer Bertuccio can no longer say that I owe him ought and then I will, with my sword carve out fortune for myself, that the noblest in Italy may envy Signor, this is the house you seek.'

They entered a long narrow passage; on one side of which was a door. The youth pushed it, and admitted his companion in a room about eight feet square; one side of which was occupied by a desk black with age, and heaped with papers. The floor was covered with huge piles of parchment; and by the faint glimmer of an old lamp, suspended from the ceiling, Messer Bertuccio was discovered poring over a deed. He was a little old man, so pinched with age and avarice, that he resembled an aged ape. At the noise of their entry he raised his head, and fixing his sharp, rat like eyes on the youth, said in a querulous tone—'Well, Signor Cesario, what more brawls, anon—there's blood upon thy face!—I would it were from thy heart,—I warrant I must to the Podesta again thou hast cost more scudi than thy brains are worth. Ha! a stranger hast thou brought; some bravo, to murder the old man for his gold? And instinctively his shaking hand grasped a dagger that lay beside him.

Messer Bertuccio, do you not know me?'

'Sanctissima Maria! ora pro nobis!' said the old man crossing himself with a look of affright. 'The Signor Adimari in Florence?—Ha, Cesario! why dost thou linger here?—wouldst learn the old man's secrets, that you mayest rifle his strong box! Ha!'

'Tush!' said Adimari, 'there is no cause

to fear Messer Bertuccio: I will answer for this youth; he has done good service to-night, and I will reward him accordingly but of that anon, Cesario, my friend, leave us now: my business requires departh—I will speak with thee by and by.'

The conference between Adimari and Bertuccio, lasted till midnight. During the whole time, Cesario paced up and down the impatient steps. Once or twice he caught the sound of his own name; and this coupled with the demeanor of Adimari, awakened in his youthful bosom hopes and feelings he could not crush, and yet feared to indulge. When the door opened, and Adimari's voice was heard inquiring for him, his heart's tumultuous throbs almost deprived him of sensation. Adimari smiled as he looked on Cesario's burning cheek and flashing eye. 'I would wager,' said he, 'that my thoughts anticipate my purpose. What sayest thou Cesario, to quitting the pen for the sword, and serving with me under the valiant and renowned general, Charles, of Bourbon?'

The youth grasped Adimari's hand in gratitude too big for words. Adimari again smiled. 'Ready then to quit Florence with me to-morrow; and keep this'—dropping a purse into his hands, as he left the house—'that will and more wants than there are pieces.'

'Has he given thee gold, good Cesario?' said Bertuccio, advancing towards him with trembling steps, gloating eyes, and withered shaking hands, and extended as if to clutch the glittering bait.

Cesario looked on him for a moment with unutterable scorn. Then taking on a few pieces of gold he flung the purse to the notary's attendant. 'Take it, Messer Bertuccio, it is mine, and I have no more of it.'

On the following day, before the sun had risen above the horizon, Adimari, accompanied by Cesario and Giascopo, was far on his way to the head quarters of the Duke of Bourbon's army. Adimari had been employed by the Ghibeline party to negotiate with those nobles of Florence who were disaffected to the republican government, and not feeling himself safe in the Florentine territory, did not relax his speed till they were out of it. By the time they reached Braconio, the army had moved forward, and encamped near the abbey of Farfa. It was a brilliant and enlivening spectacle to see the extended line of tents, far as the eye could reach; with its grand woods flanking in the background; the parties of soldiers in their various costumes galloping about the fields, their arms glittering in the sunshine; and to hear their cries of joy ringing in the clear air, as they saw the coveted prize—the Eternal City! rising before them in its hallowed magnificence. In the midst of the field was the tent of the Duke of Bourbon, distinguished by the Imperial Eagle, and white Standard waving proudly over it. The royal leader was surrounded by officers of high rank; but it was impossible to mistake for a moment the noble form of that graceful Prince whose refusal of the proffered hand of a Queen had driven him into rebellion against his sovereign, and well might cost him his life. Charles received Adimari with his usual graciousness, and appointed an honorable post in his own regiment, which he was to lead in persons to the assault. In an army, composed like Charles's of adventurers of all nations, felons, and banditti, there was little discipline observed.

In defiance of the Duke's injunctions, large bodies of the soldiery scoured the country in every direction; carrying off the cattle, maltreating, and sometimes murdering the inhabitants, and burning whole villages in mere wantonness. On the evening preceeding the assault, Adimari went in pursuit of a party who had strayed beyond their limits; and Cesario's yet uncorrupted heart, sickening with the mad riot of the camp, found relief in attending him. As they were returning by the Cambo Sante, Cesario lingered to enjoy a scene so new to him, till his companion

were out of sight. The moon had risen with a brilliancy unknown in those northern climes and by her light he could distinctly see the sentinels passing the rampart of the Castle of St. Angelo.

The wild uproar of the camp, softened in the distance, rose occasionally on the air as if to make the stillness that succeeded more apparent. Cesario rode slowly on plunged in those blissful reveries of youth when fame, and happiness & glory seem not phantoms, to lure us to destruction, but visions palpable to feelings as to sight when he was roused from his dream by a rough voice, demanding his name, and what he did there. Four horsemen had approached, unheard on the soft turf, and surrounded him, before he was aware. 'A spy of the Bourbon, by the keys of St. Peter!' said one—I will knock him on the head, and leave his bones to whiten, for an example to the rest; and he raised his carbine; but Cesario recovering from his surprise, discharged his piece by way of answer, and attempted to dash through them. In an instant his arms were seized and pinioned—his eyes bound and one of them taking his horse's bridle, the whole party returned to Rome at full speed. When Cesario was set at liberty, he found himself in a guard-room, filled with soldiers. At the upper end before a stone table, sat an officer, whose commanding front and stately bearing announced one high in authority; This was the renowned Orazio Baglione, whose valor had nearly made him master of his native Perugia, and then in the service of the Pope;

One of the soldiers who had captured Cesario began to relate his adventure, but hardly had the word 'spy' escaped his lips when the boy, wrenching his sword, said, 'Noble general he lies most falsely—I am no spy, but a soldier.'

'Ha!' said Baglione, 'thou art a bold youth; 'tis a pity such a one should be a Ghibeline.—How long hast thou served Charles of Bourbon?'

'I have never served at all, yet,' replied Cesario; 'and by my faith, I think I never shall; seeing that I have met with such a mischance at onset.' The tone of boyish petulance with which he spoke, contrasted so oddly with his previous belines that Baglione and the soldiers laughed aloud. Cesario looked fiercely from one to the other guessing that he was the object of ridicule though unconscious why. 'By your leave Signor,' said he, 'it is neither the part of a soldier nor a nobleman to insult an enemy accident has placed in his power.'

Baglione, too generous to be offended at hardihood instantly composed his countenance, and questioned him in a mere conciliatory tone. 'Well good youth,' said he when Cesario was silent, 'I like thine ambition well; it is an honorable one, and shall be gratified, if thou art content to follow Baglione, instead of the Bourbon. In other words, wilt thou flesh thy misdeed sword in defence of thy native land, or league with traitors in subjugating her to a foreign power?'

Cesario's face glowed like fire; but he spoke not. His early education in Florence had early enlisted his prejudices to the Guelphic faction, and the riot and debauchery of Charles's camp were such as to fill his youthful mind with horror. His pride too was gratified by the question of the far famed Baglione; while, on the other hand, he considered his honor pledged to Adimari and the Duke of Bourbon. The penetrating eye of Baglione read in a moment what was passing in his mind. Without pressing him farther, he committed him to the charge of an officer, with orders to use no more restraint than was necessary to prevent his leaving the city.

As soon as the first faint streaks of light were visible in the east the cries of the people, mingled with the shouts of the soldiers and the roar of artillery, told that the assault had begun. Cesario followed the officer into the streets, which were filled with the populace some prostrate before