## CHRONICLES COUNT ANTONIO

BY ANTHONY HOPE. Author of "A Prisoner of Zenda," Etc.

he smiled, but his smile was uneasy, and he

"The people reverence the bones as God himself," said Tommasino, troubled. "I also reverence them," said Antonio, and fell again into thought. But presently he

rose and took Tommasino's arm, and for

dare not trust in such a matter, but turne

Antonio opened his counsel, and by great re-

plan, although they were, for all their bold-

who touched the ark of the covenant. There-

"will let it go." For Tommasino did not love the archbishop, because he would not re-

move the sentence of excommunication, which

served the church, went with all his train

into the church, and, with the rest standing afar off and veiling their eyes, took from

the wall of the church, near by the high al-

of the blessed St. Prisian. And he wrappe

close behind a pikeman. When the proces

sion had gone something more than a mile from the village of Rilano it came where a

little stream crosses the highway; and, the

rains having been heavy the week before, the stream was swollen and the ford deeper

water. And on hearing this order the talest

among the peasants put his hand up to his

them whispered: "The sign! the sign!

remainder standing at their ease, leaning on their pikes and talking to one another.

Again the tallest peasant twisted the feather

pikemen, utterly amazed and taken full at disadyantage, staggered and fell backward,

midst, so that the waters came in at the windows of the chair, and the procession,

held at bay with their own pikes, sought to

casket in his bands, spoke in a loud voice:

bones of the blessed St. Prisian, and carry

nessage that I give you to the duke."

the prayer of the abbot of St. Prisian's.

had laid upon Antonio and Tommasino on

"I alone will lay hands on the golden cas-

wards he prevailed on them to cor

Convright, 1894, by Apthony Hope,

CHAPTER V. COUNT ANTONIO AND THE SACRED shifted his feet. "Is it that you think of Antonio?" BONES. asked in a low voice. "Beside it, it would be a light thing to kill the duke in his own

One tale there is concerning Count Antonio of Monte Velluto, when he dwelt an outlaw palace. in the hills, which men tell with fear and doubt, marveiling at the audacity of his palm of his hand: "Are dead bones more doubt, marveiling at the audacity of his sacred than that living soul, on which the act, and sometimes asking themselves whether duke lays hands to force it to his will?" he would in very truth have performed what he swere on the faith of his honor he would do if he did not attain what he demanded of the duke. For the thing he threatened was such as no man of Forniola long while they walked to and fro. Ther dere think on without a shudder, for we of they went and sought out certain Forniola prize and reverence the bones of men of the band-for the greater part they our saint, the holy martyr, Prisian, above and far beyond every other relic, and they least of sacred things. And to ten of such are to us, as it were, the sign and testimony of God's enduring favor to our country. But much will a man do for love of a woman, end Antonio's temper brooked no obstacle; so that none know all the truth of the mat-I may not doubt that he would have fore Antonio said: done even as he said, braving the wrath of heaven, and making naught of the terror ket; the rest of you shall but hold me harm that thought of his heart was one that would go?"

Whether but if the lord archbishop will not let it gain pardon, I know not; had the the country of the lord archbishop will not let it gain pardon, I know not; had the thing been done I could scarce hope, even in heaven's infinite mercy. Yet this story, also, I must tell, lest I be charged with covering up what shames Antonio, for with the opinions of careless and fathless men (of whom there are too many in this later age). I have no communion, and I tell the tale not move laughter or loose jests, but rather to show to what extremity a man, by nature good, may be driven by harshness and the unmerited disfavor of his prince.

In the third year, then, of Count Antonio's outlawry his highness the duke looked upon the Lady Lucia and found that she was of the Lady Lucia and found that she was of full age for marriage. Therefore, he resolved the casket in a rich cloth, and held it high that she should be wed, and since Robert de before him in his two hands. And when Beauregard, to whom he had proposed to the people had worshipped the archbishop that she should be wed, and since Robert de that she should be wed, and since Robert de the people had worshipped the architecture give her, was dead, he chose from among left the church and entered his chair, and give her, was dead, he chose from among left the church and entered his chair, and give her, was dead, he chose from among left the church and entered his chair, and give her, was dead, he chose from among left the church and entered his chair, and give her, was dead, he chose from among left the church and entered his chair, and give her, was dead, he chose from among left the church and entered his chair, and give her, was dead, he chose from among left the church and entered his chair, and passed through the village of Rilano, the But Lucia, being by now a woman and no to gaze upon the casket, and in the proces-more a timid girl, returned to his highness sion of the lord archbishop and most de-a message that she would look on no other would be upon the casket, and in the procession that she would look on no other would be upon the man than Antonio; on this the duke, greatly his knees from the moment the procession command; and he charged the abbess to peasants' garb, and having their faces over treat her harshly and to break down her shadowed by large hats. pride; and he swore that she should wed knelt as the casket passed, but they had or, if she were obstinate, then risen and were marching shoulder to convent. Many weeks the Lady Lucia abode in the convent, resisting all that was urged gazed long at them, then he moistened his upon her. But at last, finding no help from lips and crossed himself, murmuring: Antonio, being sore beset and allowed no "What does this thing mean? Now God rest, she broke one day into passionate and forbid--!" And breaking off thus, he also pitiful weeping, and bade the abbess tell arose and went to the house of his father, his highness that, since happiness was not sore vexed and troub'ed to know what the for her in this world, she would seek to thing might mean. But he spoke of it to find it in heaven, and would take the vows, none, no, not to his father, observing the rendering all her estate into the duke's hand, that he might have it and give it to Lorenzo, or to whom he would. Which At the bounds of the village the greater sage being told to Duke Valentine, weary part of the people ceased to follow the pro-contending with her, and perchance cession of the sacred bones, and, having message being told to Duke Valentine, weary secretly fearing that Antonio would slay received the archbishop's blessing, turned Lorenzo as he had slain Robert, he cursed back to their own homes, where they feasted her for an obstinate wench, and bade her take the vows, and set a day for her to take them; bue her estate he assumed into his own hand, and made a gift of great lage, distant three miles on the road to value to Lorenzo. And Lorenzo, they say, Forniols. Their air manifested great dewas well content thus to be quit of the mat-ter. "For," said he, "while that devil is their breasts and downcast eyes, and they loose in the hills, no peace would there have spoke not once on the way; but each kept

But when it came to the ears of Count Antonio that the Lady Lucia was to take the vell on the morrow of the feast of St. Prisian. his rage and affliction knew no bounds.
"If need be," he cried, "I will attack the

been for the lady's husband."

th need be, he cried, I will attack the city with all my men before I will suffer it."

"Your men would all be killed, and she would take the veil none the less," said Tommasino. For Antonio had but fifty men, and the ford, lest he should be wetted by the sible to subdue so long as they stayed in the hills, yet their strength would have been hat and twisted the feather of it between his nothing against a fortress and the duke's thumb and his forefinger; and the shortest of

Then," said Antonio, "I will go alone and while every man of them drew a great e alone."

As he spoke he perceived Martolo coming his back. Now, by this time the priests and

to him, and calling him he asked him what he would. Now, Martolo was a devout man, and had been much grieved when Antonio fell under the sentence of excommuni-cation; yet he abode with him. And now he bowed and answered:

"My lord, in three days it is the feast of St. Prisian, and the sacred bones will then be carried from the shrine in the church of the saint at Rilano to the city." For it was at Rilano that Prisian had suffered, and a rich church had been built on the spot.

"I remember that it is wont to be so, Martolo," answered the count.

Again the tallest peasant twisted the feather in his hat, and, without speech or cry, the peasants darted forward. Six of them seized the pikes that lay on the ground, the remaining six leaped like wildcats on the backs of the pikemen, circling the necks of the pikemen will then a pikemen, and the remaining six leaped like wildcats on the backs of the pikemen, circling the necks of the pikemen will then a pikemen, and the said that and the said that a pikemen are to through the said that a pikemen are to thought a pikemen and the said that a pikemen are to the pikemen are to thought a pikemen are to the pikemen are to thought a pikemen are to thought a pikemen are to the pikemen are to the pikemen are to thought a pikemen are to the pikem

"When I dwelt with my father," said Martolo, "I was accustomed to go forth with all the people of my village and meet the sacred bones, and, kneeling, receive the benediction from the lord archbishop as he passed, bearing the bones in their golden casket. And the like would I do this year, my lord."

"But are you not excommunicated, in complete the unarmed pikemen to set down the archbishop's chair in the

pany with Count Antonio and me?" asked masing, lightly smiling.

nce," said Martolo, signing the cross.
"Go in peace, Martolo, but see that you are not taken by the duke's men," said Count

'But few of them go with the archbishop, my lord. For who would lay hands on the sacred bones? The guard is small, and I shall easily clude them." And Martolo de-



THE DUKE PACED UP AND DOWN

parted, and told the man they called Bena

what had parsed, but Bena was a graceless fellow, and would not go with him.

Now when Martolo was gone Count Antonio sat down on a great stone, and for a long while said nothing to Tommasino. But certain words out of those which Martolo had spoken were schoing through his brain, and he could not put them aside, for they came again, and again and again, and al ast, looking up at Tommasino, who stood by him, he said:

"Tommasine, who would lay hands on the receded hones?"

Tommasine, who would lay hands on the rossed himself many times and wore a fear-trained to the form of one who know Antonio, they hought of him, paying him in good coin of the duchy, three horses which Antonio, Tommasino and Bena mounted, and they three rode hard for the hills, the rest following as quickly as they might, so that the aside ablore toy.

Tommasine, who would not power and for a long who know Antonio, they hought of him, paying him in good coin of the duchy, three horses which Antonio, Tommasino and Bena mounted, and they three rode hard for the hills, the rest following as quickly as they might, so that the aside and they came to the farm of one who know Antonio, they hought of him, paying him in good coin of the duchy, three horses which Antonio, Tommasino and Bena mounted, and they three rode hard for the hills, the rest following as quickly as they might, so that they hought of him, paying him in good coin of the duchy, three horses which Antonio, Tommasino and Bena mounted, and they three rode hard for the hills, the rest following as quickly as they might all they were all safely as they high that they him, he said:

"Tommasine, who would lay hands on the could not put them asked for they who know Antonio, they hought of him, paying him in good coin of the duchy, three horses which Antonio, Tommasino and Bena mounted, and they three rode hard for the hills, the rest following as quickly as they might have proved and the provide hards and the could not put the said counter the hills, the rest following as quickly as they mou

Tommasino booked down into his eyes; then he laid a hand on his shoulder, and Another he he laid a hand on his shoulder, and Another he he laid a hand on his shoulder, and Another he he laid a hand on his shoulder, and Another he he laid a hand on his shoulder, and Another he he laid a hand on his shoulder, and Another he laid a hand some records himself many times and wore a fear erable man was seen, led through the crowd by Peter and some mere, who brought him is him eif, had Antonio Sancho's men to reach the pile. And it was the crowd by Peter and some mere, who brought him and set him in the front is and it the tend of the provider hand on his shoulder, and Another had a had stock the reach had been dealed. In the bessed saint here the saint here the had a had a had a his shoulder had a had a

me, I have done already, answered Antonic. "Therefore I will ask nothing for myself, and nothing may I ask for you or my friends. But if I ask bothing but that right and justice be done, it may be that my sin in laying hands on the sacred bones will be Now after Antonio and his men were gone

the archbishop's train stayed long by the stream in the road, lamenting and fearing to go forward, and being come to the next village, found all the people awaiting them at the bounds. And when the people saw the disorder of the procession, and that the pikemen had no pikes, they ran forward eagerly, asking what had befallen; and learning of the calamity, they were greatly afraid; and cursed Antonic; and many of them accompa-nied the archbishop on his way to the city, where he came toward evening, and a great concourse of people awaited his coming there, and the duke himself sat on a lofty the great square, prepared to receive the sa-cred bones and go with them to the cathedral, where they were to be exposed to the gaze of the people at high mass. And they set the archbishop's chair down before the duke's seat, and the archbishop came and stood before the duke, and his priests and pikemen with him. And the duke started up from his seat, crying: "What ails you?" and sank back again, and sat waiting to hear

what the archbishop would say.

Then the archbishop, his robes still damp and greatly disordered, his limbs trembling cried out: "Give us back the sacred bones, in anger and in fear, raised his voice; and all the multitude in the square were silent only to them that were boldest and recked while he declared to his highness what things Count Antonio had done and rehearsed the message that he had sent. And when the ness, very sore afraid lest they, laying hands on the bones, should be smitten as was he archbishop told how Antonio had sworn that as God liveth he would scatter the ashes of the sacred bones to the winds, the men ing his nails, and the pikemen, finding the caught their breath with a gasp and the fight hard, gave back before the people, and women murmured affrightedly "Christ save us," and Duke Valentine dug the nails of his hand whereon his head rested into the For all the city held that according to the words St. Prisian had heaven to it rested in the presence among them, and the faithful preservation and veneration of those most holy relics. And the Now, when the feast of St. Prisian s.

Now, when the feast of St. Prisian was
come the lord archbishop, who had ridden
from the city on the eve of the feast, and
had lodged in the house of the priests who and they looked on the duke with no favorable looks.

Peter be still, cursing him for in-solence, and shouted that the people should disperse on pain of his highness' dis-pleasure. "Where is the duke? Let him come out to us!" cried Peter, and the capme, I have done already," answered Antain, despising him, struck him lightly with the flat of his sword. But Peter, with a cry of rage, struck the captain a great blow with his staff, and the captain staggered back, blood flowing from his head. Such was the beginning of the fray, for in an instant pikemen and the people had joined battle men cried in anger and women in fright; blood flowed, and many on both sides fell and rose no more, and the archbishop came friends and the priests gathered round him, and when he maw that men were being slain

Then the Lord Lorenzo hastened to the cabinet of the dake, whom he found pacing up and down; grawing his finger nails, and told him of what was done outside.

"I care not," said the duke. "She shall the vowst Let the pikemen scatter Lorenzo then besought him, telling him

that all the city was in arms, and that the conflict would be great. But the duke said "She shall take the vows!" theless he went with Lorenzo, and came forth on to the topmost step of the portico. And when the people saw him they ceased a moment to assail the pikemen, and "Scatter those fellows!" said the duke to the captain of the guard.

"My lord, they are too many. And if we scatter themonow, yet when we have gone against Count Antonio they may do what they will with the city.'

The duke stood still, pale and again gnaw-

the people pressed on.

Then Peter, the furrier, came forward, and the hottest with him, and mocked the pikemen; and one of the pikemen suddenly thrust Peter through with his pike, and the uttered before he suffered the power and prosperity of the duchy and the favor of prosperity of the duchy and the favor of rushed on the pikemen again and slew and were slain; and the fight rolled up the steps. eration of those most holy relics. And the archbishop, having ended the message, cried, "God, pardon my lips that repeat such words," and fell on his knees before Duke Valentine, crying: "Justice on him, my lord justice." And many in the throng lord justice." Valentine, crying: "Justice on him, my trust him, and one cried: "Bring out the lord, justice!" And many in the throng echoed his cry, but others, and among them will burn the palace." And the archbishop many of the apprenticed lads, who loved came suddenly and threw himself on his Antonio, muttered low one to another, "But knees before the duke, beseeching him that no more blood might be shed, but that the Lady Lucia should be set free. Then Duke Valentine rose from his seat lieutenant of the guard and ten men who pursuers not knowing the path so well, and and stood on the topmost step of it, and he called sundry of his lords and officers around him, and then he beckened for silence and give her, was dead, he chose from amoust his lords a certain gentleman of great estate, by name Lorenzo, and sent word to Lucia that she had spent too much of her youth pining for what could not be hers, and must forthwith receive Lorenzo for her husband, forthwith receive Lorenzo for her husband. to gaze upon the casket, and in the procession of the lord archbishop and most devout of them all was Martolo, who rested on his knees from the moment the procession left the church till it was clear of the village.

The paragraph of them, to the paragraph and her estate shall be ners again. And by onely given, though most of those whom I and her estate shall be ners again. And by onely given, though most of those whom I have questioned call him Sancho, came have questioned call him Sancho, came have questioned call him Sancho, came have questioned their swords by the feet of Antonio, where he neither will I constrain her to wed any left the church till it was clear of the village.

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The paragraph and her estate shall be ners again. And by onely given, though most of those whom I have questioned call him Sancho, came there are the village of the restate shall be ners again. And be and his men went and laid down their swords by the feet of Antonio, where he had said this he turned be ners again. And be and her estate shall be ners again. And be and her estate shall be ners again. And be and his men went and laid down their swords by the feet of Antonio and lay on the ground, his head on Tommasino's said the whole band were round the constraint and the said have questioned the paragraph and her estate shall be ners again. And be and his men went and laid down the princely word and these same holy bones. I swear that she shall not take the vows, and the princely word and these same holy bones. I swear that she shall not take the vows, and the princely word and the princely word and the same holy bones. I swear that she shall not take the vows, and the princely word and the same holy bones. I sw

ANTONIO CARRIES OFF THE CASKET.

and knelt there before the altar in the chapel | through the great hall to his cabinet an of St Prisian and there abode on his knees. our, has such a night passed in the city of Forniols. For the duke sent orders for every man of his guard to be ready to start at break of day in pursuit of Antonio, and through the hours of the night they were ousied in preparing their provisions and acof them, that, though the duke might at the end take Antonio, yet he could not come at to carry the duke's promise to Antonio. and take Antonio, yet he could not come at the high before the time that Antonio had said. while the peasants got on top of them and knelt on their breasts and set the great dagthose who were friendly to Antonio, foremost among them being the apprenticed lads, spread themselves here and there among the people, asking cunningly whether it concerned the people of Forniola more that the blessing of St. Prisian should abide with them or that draw their poinards, but Antonio cried:
"Slay any that draw!" And he came to the a rejuctant maiden should be obliged to take a vell, and some grew bold to whisper under chair and opened the door of it, and, using as little force as he could, he laid hands on the their breath that the business was a foul one, and that heaven did not send beauty and love that priests should bury them in casket that held the sacred bones and wrested it from the feeble hands of the archbishop. convent walls. And the girls of the city over most bold by reason of their helpless-Then he and his men, standing in line, stepped backward, with the pikes levelled stepped backward, with the pikes levelled in front of them, till they came out of the them, leading them on and saying: "He is water and onto the dry road again; and a true lover who risks his soul for his love," or "I would I had one who would steal the bones of St. Prisian for my sake, but none of such have I." with other stirring and inme pikeman rushed at Antonio, but Tomnasino, sparing to kill him, caught him a buffet on the side of the head with a pike and he fell like a log in the water, and had been drowned but that two of his comrades flaming taunts, recklessly flung from pouting lips and under eyes that challenged. And all

lifted him. Then all twelve of the band being together-for the first six had risen now from off the pikemen, having forced them, on pain of instant death, to deliver palace. Now there was in the city a certain furrier pikes to them. Antonio, with the named Peter, a turbulent fellow, who had been put out of his craft guild because he "I thank God that no man is dead over this business, but if you resist you shall die one and all. Go to the city, tell the duke would not abide by the laws of the craft, and lived now as he best could, being maintained that I, Antonio di Monte Velluto, have the n large measure by those who listened to his empty and seditious conversation. This man, loving naught that was worthy of love in them with me to my hiding place in the highest part of the hills. But if he will fied the duke, and about midnight, having by these bones that I hold and by his drunk much wine, he came into the square and gathered together the apprentices, sayprincely word that he will not suffer the Lady Lucia to take the vows, nor will con-strain her to wed any man, but will restore "I have a matter to say to you—and to and to you," till there were many scores her to her own house and to her estate, then let him send the archb shop again and of them around him. Then he harangued them, and more came round; and when at last Peter cried: "Give us back the sacred I will deliver up the sacred bones. But if he will not swear, then, as God lives, tobones," a thousand volces answered him: "Aye, give us back the bones!" And when morrow at midnight I will cause a great fire to be kindled on the top of the hills-a the pikemen would have seized him, men and fire whose flames you shall see from the walls and women also made a ring around him, so that he could not be taken. And sober men of the city-and in that fire will I consume the sacred bones, and I will scatter the ashes also, of age, and substance, hearkened to him, saying: "He is a knave, but he speaks truth to the four winds. Go and bear the saying: "He is a knave, but he speaks now." So that a very great throng assembled, every man having a staff and many sembled, every man having a staff and many to those who had not knives And having thus sald, Antonio, with his nen, turned and went back at a run whence they had come; but to the village of Rilano they did not go, but turned aside before they came to it, and, coming to the farm of one the women and girls brought them, thrust-ing them into their hands. Nay, sundry priests also were among the people, moaning and wringing their hands and saying that the favor of St. Prisian would be lost forever to the city. And the square was thronged so that a man could not move unless all moved. nor raise his hand to his head save by the favor of his neighbor. Yet presently the whole mass began to move, like a great wave of water, toward the palace of the duke, where the pikemen stool in ranks, ready now to go against, Antonio, Suddenly arose a cry: "The archbishop comes!" and the ven-

shut the door. For his heart was very sore never, from that day until this such a night passed in the city and, for himself, he had rather a thousand times that the bones of St. Prisian had been burned.

Now, when the duke was gone, the people brought the Lady Lucia to her own house, driving out the steward whom the duke had outrements. But their looks were heavy and set there, and this done, they came to the heir tongues tied, for they knew, every man archbishop and would not suffer him to rest the archbishop was ready to do, for all that And this the townsmen knew well also, and the was weary. But first he sent Lorenzo they gathered themselves in groups in the great square saying: "Hefore the duke comes at him the sacred bones will be burned, and what will then befall the duchy?" And "your highness has sworn nothing concernyour highness has sworn nothing concernlids, as he has delivered up the bones I will set upon him and bring him alive or dead to your highness." But the duke would not

> "The fellow's name is like stale lees of wine in my mouth," said he. "Ten of my pikemen lie dead in the square, and more of my citizens. I will lose no more men over

"Yet how great a thing if we could take

"I will take him at my own time and in my own way," said the duke. "In God's name, leave me now."

Lorenzo therefore got leave from the followed them out beyond the bounds of the lips and under eyes that challenged. And all city, to make all speed. And when they the while Duke Valentine sat alone in his were gone the people came back and took up cabinet, listening to the tumult that sounded with muffled din through the walls of the lodies of the dead, while the pikemen also took up the bodies of such of their palace.

comrades as were slain. Yet had Duke Valentine known what passed on the hills while the city was in tumult, it may not be doubted, for all his vexation, that he would have sent out the 200 whom Lorenzo asked; never had he a fairer chance to take Antonio. For when the count and those who went with him to Rilano were asleep. Antonio's head resting on the golden casket, a shepherd came to the rest of the band and told them what had been done, and how all the country was in an uproar. Then a debate arose among the band, for, though they were lawless men, yet they feared God, and thought with great dread on what Antonio had sworn, so that presently topic and said to him:

it may be that we have done somewhat for you. But we will not suffer the sacred bones to be burned and scattered to the winds." "Except the duke yields I have sworn it, as God lives," answered Antonio.
"We care not. It shall not be—no—not though you and we die," said they.
"It is well; I hear," said Antonio, bowing

shood, and the band went back to the fire round which they had been sitting, all save Martolo, who came and put his hand in Antonis's hand. "How now, Martolo?" asked Antonio.

"What you swill, I will, my lord," said Martolo. For though he trembled when he thought of the bones of St. Prisian, yet he clung always to Antonio. As for Bena and the others of the ten who had gone to Riisno, they had burned, not the bones only, but the blessed saint himself, had Antonio bidden them! Hard men, in truth, were they,

masino, Martolo and their fellows-being thirteen in all-rose from their places, and, tak-ing naught with them but their swords, (save that Antonio carried the golden casket), they stole forth from the camp, and set their faces to climb yet higher into the heights of the hills. None spoke; one following another, they climbed the steep path that led up the moun-tain side, and when they had been going for the space of an hour they heard a shout below them.
'Our flight is known," said Tommasino.

"Shall we stand and meet them, my lord?"

'Nay, not yet," said Antonio, and the thirteen went forward again at the best speed they could.

Now they were in a deep gorge between lofty cliffs, and the gorge still tended upward, and at lergth they came to the place which is now named "Antonio's Neck." There the rocks came nigh to meeting and utterly barring the path; yet there is a way that one man, or, at most, two, may pass through at one time. Along this narrow tongue they passed, and, coming to the other side, found a level space on the edge of a great precipice, and Antonio, pointing over the preci-pice, they saw in the light of the day, which Forniola, a very far away in the plain be- of Lorenzo. Back fell Sancho's men, and An

while Martolo shivered. lows behind," said Tommasino.
"Nay, I think not," said Antonio.

Then he charged Tommasino and all of hem to busy themselves in collecting such sticks and brushwood as they could. and there was abundance near, for the fir trees grew even so high. And one of the caught a wild goat, so that they had meat, But Antonio himself took Bena and set him on one side of the way where the neck opened out into level space, and he stood on the other side of the way himself. And when they stretched out their arms the point of Bena's sword reached the hilt of

Antonio's. And Antonio smiled, saying to Bena: "He had need to be a thin man, Bena, that passes between you and me."

And Bena nodded his his head at Count Antonio, answering: "Indeed, this is as straight as the way to heaven, my lord, and lirection.'

Thus Antonio and Bena waited in shelter of the rocks, at the opening of the neck, while the rest built up a great pile of wood. Then, having roasted the meat, weeping, and they made their breakfast, Martolo carrying therefore moving less quickly, it was but three hours short of noon when they the voices of men from the other side of the neck. And Anton'o cried straightway: "Come not through at your peril. Yet one nay come and speak with me.

Then a great fellow, whose name is variously given, though most of those whom I have questioned call him Sancho, came incensed, sent and took her and set her in a convent within the city walls, and made her known that there she would abide till her life's end, or until she would obey his command; and he charged the above to the carried one another in a convent within the city walls, and made her known that there she would abide till save one, tall and powerful men, wearing concerning the bones of St. Prisian, and they searched one another's faces for the meaning of his words. But the archbishop arose, and sharply around on his heel, and, looking he saw also the great pile of wood, and beheld go by him a party of peasants, all, speaking to no man, went to the cathedral neither to the right nor to the left, went resting now on the top of it the golden said to Antonio:

"My lord, we love you; but sooner than lord?" that the bones should be burned, we will And kill you and all that are with you. And Antonio answered: "I also love you Sancho; yet you and all your company shall die sconer than that my oath shall be proken.'

"Your soul shall answer for it, my lord," said Sancho.

"You speak truly," answered Antonio. The Sancho went back through the neck and took counsel with his followers; and they obedient to all that he ordered. And he said: "Let two run at their highest speed and spoke in a solemn and sad voice: through the neck; it may be well they will "Behold there are ten of the duke's guard them two more, and again two. And I will be of the first two."

their feet, said to Bena:
"A quick blow is as good as a slow, Bena." to the opening of the neck. But Antonio and Bena struck at them before they came out of the narrowest part or could wield their swords freely; and the second two coming on, Bena struck at one and wounded him slew him: while Antonio slew his man at his first shove. And the fifth man and San-che, the sixth, coming on, Antonio cried loudly:
"Are you mad? We could hold the neck

But they would not stop, and Antonio slew the fifth, and Bena was in the act to strike at Sancho, but Antonio suddenly dashed San-cho's sword from his hand and caught him a mighty buffet, so that he fell sprawling on the bodies of the five that were dead. "Go back, fool, go back!" he cried.

An Sancho, answering nothing, gathered himself up and went back, for he perceived now that not by the loss of half of his men could he get by Antonio and Beno, and be-yond them stood Tommaso, with ten whom he knew to be the stoutest of the band. "It's a sore day's work, Bena," said Antonio, looking at the dead bodies. too great a fool to keep him-'If a man be

self alive, my lord, he must die." answered Bena, and he pushed the bodies a little further back into the neck with his foot. Then Sancho's company took counsel again for, much as they reverenced the sacred bones, there were none of them eager to enter

the neck. Thus they were at a loss, till the shepherd who had come along with them spoke to Sancho, saving: "At the cost of a long journey you may come at him, for there is a way round that I

ing necessary rest by the way."

But Sancho, counting the time, said: "It will serve! For, almough a thousand came against him, yet the count will not burn the bones before time of his oath."

Therefore he left fifteen were to held the said that no man should heark to her weeping. Say, my lord, for it is yours to teach and mine to learn, which of these Therefore he left fifteen men to hold the

Therefore he left fifteen men to hold the neck, in case Antonio should offer to return back through it, and with the rest he followed the shepherd with great stealth and quiet; by reason of which, and of the rock between them, Antonio knew not what was to be done, but thought that the whole company lay still on the other side of the neck.

Thus the day were to evening, as the arch.

But the archbishop answered not a word to Count Antonio but he and the Lord Lorenzo.

But the archbishop answered not a word to Count Antonio but he and the Lord Lorenzo. "Yes, we bring it," said they.

"I am charged," said he, "to lead the arch bishop and one other after the count." But since the archbishop could not climb the hills. But being old and weary, Lorenzo constrained the man to take with him four of the guards besides, and the four bore the archbishop along. Thus they were led through the secret tracks in the hills, and these Lorenzo tried to engrave on his memory, that he might come again. But the way was long and devious, and it was hard to mark it. Thus going they came to the huts, and passing the huts still climbed wearily till they arrived near to the neck. It was then night, and as they guessed near on the time when Antonio had sworn to burn the sacred bones; therefore they passed on more and more, and came at last to the entrance of the neck. Here they found the 15, and Lorenzo, running up, cried aloud:
"We bring the promise, we bring the

But scarcely had he spoken these words when a sudden great shout came from the other side of the neck, and Lorenzo, draw-ing his sword, rushed into the neck, the fifteen following, yet leaving a space between him and them, lest they should see him fall, pierced by Antonio and Bens. And Lorenze d many his head.

In an hour, said they, "we will take the bones, if you will not yourself, my lord, send them back."

Sundry moaning "Again I hear," said Antonio, bowing his feet and passed unburt through the mouth of the neck, and the fifteen followed that the "Again I hear," said Antonio, bowing his feet and passed unburt through the mouth of the neck, and the fifteen followed after him, while the guard supported the Archbishop in their hands, his chair being too wide to pass through the neck. And when they all thus came through, wild and strange was the sight they saw. For i had completed their circuit and had burst from behind upon Antonio and the twelve. And when the twelve saw them they retreat-ed to the pile and made a ring around it.

and stood there ready to die rather than allow Sancho's men to reach the pile. And it was

aloud: "Hold them while I fire the pile!" and he leaped down and came to the side o the pile and laid his torch to the pile. And in an instant the flames shot up, for the pile

was dry.

Now, when Sancho's men saw the pile alight, with shouts of horror and of terror they charged at the top of their speed against the twelve who guarded the pile. An Lorenzo and his men also rushed, but the cries of Sancho's men, together with the answering defiance of the twelve, drowned the cries of Lorenzo, and Antonio and the twelve knew not that Lorenzo was come. And the flames of the pile grew, and the highest tongue of flame licked the side of the golden casket But Antonio's voice rose above all as he stood, aye, almost within the ambit of the fire, and shouted:

"Hold them a moment, Tommasino—a moment, Bena, and the thing is done!" The Lorenzo tore his casque from his head and flung down his sword, and rushed unarmed between Antonio's men and Sancho's men shouting louder than he had thought ever takent: "The promise! the promise!" And a the same moment (so it is told-I but tell as it is told), there came from heaven a great flash of lightning, which, aiding the now was dawning, the towers and spires of light of the flames, fully revealed the feature "It is a better place for the fire than the other," said Antonio, and Bena laughed, while Martolo shivered, "Yet we risk being hindered by these felsaid, they were seen by the great throng that gazed from the city walls, and they were seen by Duke Valentine as he watched from the wall of his garden by the river and he went pale, gnawing his nails.

Then the Count Antonio leaped on the burning pile, though it seemed that no man could pass alive through it. Yet God was with him and he gained the top of it and stooping seized the golden casket and flung it down, clear of the pile, even at the Lord Lorenzo's feet; and when Lorenzo sought to lift it the heat of it blistered his hands and he cried out with the pain. But Count An- bugs, cotton flour sacks & twine a specialty tonio, choked by the smoke, his hair and his eyebrows scorched by the fire, staggered half way down the pile and then sank knees. And there he had died, but that Tommasino, Bena and Sancho, each eager to outstrip the other, rushed in and drew him forth, and fetched water and gave it to him so that he breathed again and lived. But the flames leaped higher and higher, they said on the city walls; "God help us God help us! The sacred bones are burnt! aye, and men, too, fell to weeping, and there was great sorrow, and desolation. And the duke gnawed his nails even to the quick, and spat the blood from his mouth, cursing Antonio.

But Lorenzo, having perceived that the greater number were against Antonio, cried out to Sancho's men: "Seize him and bring For the duke's promise carried no safety to Antonio. But Sancho answered "Now that the sacred bones are safe we

have no quarrel with my Lord Antonio, Antonio, and Lorenzo had but four with

"He asks for war?" growled Bena to "Shall he not have war, my Tommasino.

And Tommasino laughed, answering: "Here is a drunkard of blood!"
But Count Antonio, raising himself, said:

'Is the archbishop here?" Then Lorenzo went and brought the arch bishop, who, coming, stood before Antonio, and rehearsed to him the oath that Duke Valentine had taken, and teld him how the Lady Lucia was already free and in her own house, and made him aware also of the great tumult that had happened in the city. And Manufacturers of parlor furniture, lounges, din-Antonio listened to his tale in silence the archbishop raised a hand toward heaven

die, but the bones must be saved. And after dead in the city, and there are twelve of the townsmen dead, and here in the opening of the neck there lie dead five men of those But they would not suffer him to be of the first two, although he prevailed that he should be of the last two. And the six being chosen, drew their swords, and, with a cry, the control of the last two. And the six being chosen, drew their swords, and, with a cry, the control of the last two. should be of the last two. And the six being cubsen, drew their swords, and, with a cry, rushed into she neck. And Antonio, hearing their feet, said to Bena:

"A quick blow is as good as a slow, Bena."

And even as he spoke the first two came lously stolen and carried away, used with vile irreverence, and brought into imminent hazard of utter destruction, and had they been destroyed and their ashes scattered to the four winds, according to your blasphemous eath, I know not what would have be ing on Bena struck at one and wounded him in the breast; and he wounded Bena in the breast; and he wounded Bena in the done. And for what has this been done, my face, over the right eye; and then Bena done. And for what has this been done my low, while Anjune slew his man at lord? It has been done that a proud and violent man may have his will, and that his passion may be satisfied. Heavy, indeed, is the burden of your soul, my lord; yes, on your soul is the weight of sacrilege and much

The archbishop ceased, and his hand dropped to his side. The flames on the pile were burning low, and a stillness fell on all the company. But at last Count Antonic rose to his feet, and stood with his elbow on Tommasino's shoulder, leaning on Tom masino. His face was weary and sad, and he was very pale, save where in one snot the flame had scroched his cheek to an angry red. And, looking round on the archbishop and on the Lord Lorenzo, and on them all, he

and on the Lord Lorenzo, and on them all, he answered sadly:
"In truth, my lord archbishop, my burden is heavy. For I am an outlaw, and excommunicated. Twenty and seven men have died through my act, and I have used the sacred bones foully and brought them into imminent peril of total destruction according to my eath. All this is true, my lord. And yet I know not for Almighty God. And yet I know not. For Almighty God, whom all we whether honest men or robbers, men of law or fawless, humbly worship, Almighty God has His own scales, my lord. And I know not which thing be in those scales the heavier—that twenty an seven men should die and the bones of the blessed St. Prisian should be brought in can lead you by. But you will not traverse peril, aye, or should be utterly destroyed—it in less than twelve or fifteen hours, takto teach and mine to learn, which of these things should God count the greater sin

Thus the day wore to evening, as the archbishop with the Lord Lorenzo and the guards came to the spur of the hills; and here they found a man waiting, who cried to them:

"Do you bring the duke's promise to the Count Antonio?"

"Yes we bring it." said they.

"Yes we hring it." said they. showed it to the people; and after the peo-ple had rejoiced greatly that the sacred bones which they had thought to be destroyed were safe the archbishop carried the golden casket back to the shrine in the village of Rilano, where it rests till this day. But Count An tonio buried the five men of his band whom he and Bens had slain, and with the rest he abode still in the hills, while the Lady Lucia dwelt in her own house in the city, and the duke, honoring the oath which he had sworn before all the people, did not seek to constrain her to wed any man, and restored to her the estate that he had taken from her Yet the duke hated Count Antonio for what he had done, and sought the more how he might lay hands on him and put him to death. (To be Continued.)

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