

## THE ITALIAN'S STORY

by Catherine Crowe

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"How well your friend speaks English!" I remarked one day to an acquaintance when I was abroad, alluding to a gentleman who had just quitted the room. "What is his name?"

"Count Francesco Ferraldi."

"I suppose he has been in England?"

"Oh, yes; he was exiled and taught Italian there. His history is very curious and would interest you, who like wonderful things."

"Can you tell it me."

"Not correctly, as I never heard it from himself. But I believe he has no objection to tell it—with the exception of the political transactions in which he was concerned, and which caused his being sent out of the Austrian dominions; that part of it I believe he thinks it prudent not to allude to. We'll ask him to dinner, if you'll meet him, and perhaps we may persuade him to tell the story."

Accordingly, the meeting took place; we dined *en petit comité*,—and the Count very good-naturedly yielded to our request; "but you must excuse me," he said, "beginning a long way back for my story commences three hundred years ago."

"Our family claims to be of great antiquity, but we were not very wealthy till about the latter half of the 16th century, when Count Jacopo Ferraldi made very considerable additions to the property; not only by getting, but also by saving—he was in fact a miser. Before that period the Ferraldis had been warriors, and we could boast of many distinguished deeds of arms recorded in our annals; but Jacopo, although by the death of his brother, he ultimately inherited the title and the estates, had begun life as a younger son, and being dissatisfied with his portion, had resolved to increase it by commerce.

"Florence then was a very different city to what it is now; trade flourished, and its merchants had correspondence and large dealings with all the chief cities of Europe. My ancestor invested his little fortune so judiciously, or so fortunately, that he trebled it in his first venture; and as people grow rapidly rich who gain and don't spend, he soon had wealth to his heart's content—but I am wrong in using that term as applied to him—he was never content with his gains but still worked on to add to them, for he grew to love the money for itself, and not for what it might purchase.

"At length, his two elder brothers died, and as they left no issue he succeeded to their inheritance, and dwelt in the palace of his ancestors; but instead of circulating

his riches he hoarded them; and being too miserly to entertain his friends and neighbours, he lived like an anchorite in his splendid halls, exulting in his possessions but never enjoying them. His great pleasure and chief occupation seems to have been counting his money, which he kept either hidden in strange out-of-the-way places, or in strong iron chests, clamped to the floors and walls. But notwithstanding those precautions and that he guarded it like a watch dog, to his great dismay he one day missed a sum of two thousand pounds which he had concealed in an ingeniously contrived receptacle under the floor of his dining-room, the existence of which was only known to the man who made it; at least, so he believed. Small as was this sum in proportion to what he possessed, the shock was tremendous; he rushed out of his house like a madman with the intention of dragging the criminal to justice, but when he arrived at the man's shop he found him in bed and at the point of death. His friends and the doctor swore that he had not quitted it for a fortnight; in short, according to their shewing, he was taken ill on his return from working at the Count's, the very day he finished the job.

"If this were true, he could not be the thief, as the money was not deposited there till some days afterwards, and although the Count had his doubts, it was not easy to disprove what everybody swore, more especially as the man died on the following day, and was buried. Baffled and furious, he next fell foul of his two servants—he kept but two, for he only inhabited a small part of the palace. There was not the smallest reason to suspect them, nor to suppose they knew anything of the hiding place, for every precaution had been used to conceal it; moreover, he had found it locked as he himself had locked it after depositing the money, and he was quite sure the key had never been absent from his own person. Nevertheless, he discharged them and took no others. The thief, whoever he was, had evinced so much ingenuity, that he trembled to think what such skill might compass with opportunity. So he resolved to afford none; and henceforth to have his meals sent in from a neighbouring eating-house, and to have a person once a week to sweep and clean his rooms, whom he could keep an eye on while it was doing. As he had no clue to the perpetrators of the robbery, and the man whom he had most reason to suspect was dead, he took no further steps in the business, but kept it quiet lest he should draw too much attention towards his secret hoards; nevertheless, though externally calm, the loss preyed upon his mind and caused him great anguish.

"Shortly after this occurrence, he received a letter from a sister of his who had several years before married an Englishman, saying that her husband was dead, and it being advisable that her dear and only son should enter into commerce, that she was going to send him to Florence, feeling assured that her brother would advise him for the best, and enable him to employ the funds he brought with him

advantageously.

"This was not pleasing intelligence; he did not want to promote any body's interest but his own, and he felt that the young man would be a spy on his actions, an intruder in his house, and no doubt an expectant and greedy heir, counting the hours till he died; for this sister and her family were his nearest of kin, and would inherit if he left no will to the contrary. However, his arrival could not be prevented; letters travelled slowly in those days, and ere his could reach England his nephew would have quitted it, so he resolved to give him a cold reception and send him back as soon as he could.

"In the mean time, the young man had started on his journey, full of hope and confidence, and immediately on his arrival hastened to present himself to this rich uncle who was to shew him the path he had himself followed to fortune. It was not for his own sake alone he coveted riches, but his mother and sister were but poorly provided for, and they had collected the whole of their little fortune and risked it upon this venture, hoping, with the aid of their relative, to be amply repaid for the present sacrifice.

"A fine open countenanced lad was Arthur Allen, just twenty years of age; such a face and figure had not beamed upon those old halls for many a day. Well brought up and well instructed too; he spoke Italian as well as English, his mother having accustomed him to it from infancy.

"Though he had heard his uncle was a miser, he had no conception of the amount to which the mania had arisen; and his joyous anticipations were somewhat damped when he found himself so coldly received, and when he looked into those hard grey eyes and contracted features that had never expanded with a genial smile; so fearing the old man might be apprehensive that he had come as an applicant for assistance to set him up in trade, he hastened to inform him of the true state of the case, saying that they had got together two thousand pounds.

"'Of course, my mother,' he said, 'would not have entrusted my inexperience with such a sum; but she desired me to place it in your hands, and to act entirely under your direction.

"To use the miser's own expression—for we have learnt all these particulars from a memoir left by himself—'When I heard these words the devil entered into me, and I bade the youth bring the money and dine with me on the following day.'

"I daresay you will think the devil had entered into him long before; however, now he recognized his presence, but that did not deter him from following his counsel.

"Pleased that he had so far thawed his uncle's frigidity, Arthur arrived the next day with his money bags at the appointed hour, and was received in an inner

chamber; their contents were inspected and counted, and then placed in one of the old man's iron chests. Soon afterwards the tinkle of a bell announced that the waiter from the neighbouring *traiteur's* had brought the dinner, and the host left the room to see that all was ready. Presently he re-entered, and led his guest to the table. The repast was not sumptuous, but there was a bottle of old *Lacryma Christi* which he much recommended, and which the youth tasted with great satisfaction. But strange! He had no sooner swallowed the first glass, than his eyes began to stare—there was a gurgle in his throat—a convulsion passed over his face—and his body stiffened.

"I did not look up,' says the old man in his memoir, 'for I did not like to see the face of the boy that had sat down so hearty to his dinner, so I kept on eating mine—but I heard the gurgle, and I knew what had happened; and presently lest the servant should come to fetch the dinner things, I pushed the table aside and opened the receptacle from which my two thousand pounds had been stolen—curses on the thief! and I laid the body in it, and the wine therewith. I locked it and drove in two strong nails. Then I put back the table—moved away the lad's chair and plate, unlocked the door which was fast, and sat down to finish my dinner. I could not help chuckling as I ate, to think how his had been spoilt.

"I closed up that apartment, as I thought there might be a smell that would raise observation, and I selected one on the opposite side of the gallery for my dining-room. All went well till the following day. I counted my two thousand pounds again and again, and I kept gloating over the recovery of it—for I felt as if it was my own money, and that I had a right to seize it where I could. I wrote also to my sister, saying, that her son had not arrived; but that when he did, I would do my best to forward his views. My heart was light that day—they say that's a bad sign.

"Yes, all was so far well; but the next day we were two of us at dinner! And yet I had invited no guest; and the next and the next, and so on always! As I was about to sit down, he entered and took a chair opposite me, an unbidden guest. I ceased dining at home, but it made no difference; he came, dine where I would. This preyed upon me; I tried not to mind, but I could not help it. Argument was vain. I lost my appetite, and was reduced nearly to death's door. At last, driven to desperation, I consulted Fra Guiseppe. He had been a fast fellow in his time, and it was said had been too impatient for his father's succession; howbeit, the old man died suddenly; Guiseppe spent the money and then took to religion. I thought he was a proper person to consult, so I told him my case. He recommended repentance and restitution. I tried, but I could not repent, for I had got the money; but I thought, perhaps, if I parted with it to another, I might be released; so I looked about for an advantageous purchase, and hearing that Bartolomeo Malfi was in

difficulties, I offered him two thousand pounds, money down, for his land—I knew it was worth three times the sum. We signed the agreement, and then I went home and opened the door of the room where it was; but lo! he sat there upon the chest where the money was fast locked, and I could not get it. I peeped in two or three times, but he was always there; so I was obliged to expend other moneys in this purchase, which vexed me, albeit the bargain was a good one. Then I consulted friend Guiseppe again, and he said nothing would do but restitution—but that was hard, so I waited; and I said to myself, I'll eat and care not whether he sit there or no. But woe be to him! he chilled the marrow of my bones, and I could not away with him; so I said one day, "What if I go to England with the money?" and he bowed his head.'

"The old man accordingly took the moneybags from the chest and started for England. His sister and her daughter were still living in the house they had inhabited during the husband's lifetime; in short, it was their own; and being attached to the place they hoped, if the young man succeeded in his undertakings, to be able to keep it. It was a small house with a garden full of flowers, which the ladies cultivated themselves. The village church was close at hand, and the churchyard adjoined the garden. The poor ladies had become very uneasy at not hearing of Arthur's arrival; and when the old man presented himself and declared he had never seen anything of him, great was their affliction and dismay; for it was clear that either some misfortune had happened to the boy, or he had appropriated the money and gone off in some other direction. They scarcely admitted the possibility of the last contingency, although it was the one their little world universally adopted, in spite of his being a very well conducted and affectionate youth; but people said it was too great a temptation for his years, and blamed his mother for entrusting him with so much money. Whichever it was, the blow fell very heavy on them in all ways, for Arthur was their sole stay and support, and they loved him dearly.

"Since he had set out on this journey, the old man had been relieved from the company of his terrible guest, and was beginning to recover himself a little, but it occasioned him a severe pang when he remembered that this immunity was to be purchased with the sacrifice of two thousand pounds, and he set himself to think how he could jockey the ghost. But while he was deliberating on this subject, an event happened that alarmed him for the immediate safety of the money.

"He had found on the road, that the great weight of a certain chest he brought with him, had excited observation whenever his luggage had to be moved; on his arrival two labouring men had been called in to carry it into the house, and he had overheard some remarks that induced him to think they had drawn a right

conclusion with regard to its contents. Subsequently, he saw these two men hovering about the house in a suspicious manner, and he was afraid to leave it or to go to sleep at night, lest he should be robbed.

"So far we learn from Jacopo Ferraldi himself; but there the memoir stops. Tradition says that he was found one morning murdered in his bed and his chest rifled. All the family, that is the mother and daughter and their one servant, were accused of the murder; and notwithstanding their protestation of innocence were declared guilty and executed.

"The memoir I have quoted was found on his dressing table, and he appears to have been writing it when he was surprised by the assassins; for the last words were —'I think I've balked them, and nobody will understand the—' then comes a large blot and a mark, as if the pen had fallen out of his hand. It seems wonderful that this man, so suspicious and secretive, should thus have entrusted to paper what it was needful he should conceal; but the case is not singular; it has been remarked in similar instances, when some dark mystery is pressing on a human soul, that there exists an irresistible desire to communicate it, notwithstanding the peril of betrayal; and when no other confidant can be found, the miserable wretch has often had recourse to paper.

"The family of Arthur Allen being now extinct, a cousin of Jacopo's, who was a penniless soldier, succeeded to the title and estate, and the memoir, with a full account of what had happened, being forwarded to Italy, enquiries were made about the missing two thousand pounds; but it was not forthcoming; and it was at first supposed that the ladies had had some accomplice who had carried it off. Subsequently, however, one of the two men who had borne the money chest into the house, at the period of the old man's arrival, was detected in endeavouring to dispose of some Italian gold coin and a diamond ring, which Jacopo was in the habit of wearing. This led to investigation, and he ultimately confessed to the murder committed by himself and his companion, thus exonerating the unfortunate woman. He nevertheless declared that they had not rifled the strong box, as they could not open it, and were disturbed by the barking of a dog before they could search for the keys. The box itself they were afraid to carry away, it being a remarkable one and liable to attract notice; and that therefore their only booty was some loose coin and some jewels that were found on the old man's person. But this was not believed, especially as his accomplice was not to be found, and appeared, on enquiry, to have left that part of the country immediately after the catastrophe.

"There the matter rested for nearly two centuries and a half. Nobody sorrowed for Jacopo Ferraldi, and the fate of the Allens was a matter of indifference to the public, who was glad to see the estate fall into the hands of his successor, who

appears to have made a much better use of his riches. The family in the long period that elapsed, had many vicissitudes; but at the period of my birth my father inhabited the same old palace, and we were in tolerably affluent circumstances. I was born there, and I remember as a child the curiosity I used to feel about the room with the secret receptacle under the floor where Jacopo had buried the body of his guest. It had been found there and received Christian burial; but the receptacle still remained, and the room was shut up being said to be haunted. I never saw anything extraordinary, but I can bear witness to the frightful groans and moans that issued from it sometimes at night, when, if I could persuade anybody to accompany me, I used to stand in the gallery and listen with wonder and awe. But I never passed the door alone, nor would any of the servants do so after dark. There had been an attempt made to exclude the sounds by walling up the door; but so far from this succeeding they became twenty times worse, and as the wall was a disfigurement as well as a failure, the unquiet spirit was placated by taking it down again.

"The old man's memoir is always preserved amongst the family papers, and his picture still hangs in the gallery. Many strangers who have heard something of this extraordinary story, have asked to see it. The palace is now inhabited by an Austrian nobleman,—whether the ghost continues to annoy the inmates by his lamentations I do not know.

"I now," said Count Francesco, "come to my personal history. Political reasons a few years since obliged me to quit Italy with my family. I had no resources except a little ready money that I had brought with me, and I had resolved to utilise some musical talent which I had cultivated for my amusement. I had not voice enough to sing in public, but I was capable of giving lessons and was considered, when in Italy, a successful amateur. I will not weary you with the sad details of my early residence in England; you can imagine the difficulties that an unfortunate foreigner must encounter before he can establish a connexion. Suffice it to say that my small means were wholly exhausted, and that very often I, and what was worse, my wife and child were in want of bread, and indebted to one of my more prosperous countrymen for the very necessaries of life. I was almost in despair, and I do not know what rash thing I might have done if I had been a single man; but I had my family depending on me, and it was my duty not to sink under my difficulties however great they were.

"One night I had been singing at the house of a nobleman, in St. James's Square, and had received some flattering compliments from a young man who appeared to be very fond of Italian music, and to understand it. My getting to this party was a stroke of good luck in the first instance, for I was quite unknown to the host, but

Signor A. an acquaintance of mine, who had been engaged for the occasion, was taken ill at the last moment, and had sent me with a note of introduction to supply his place.

"I knew, of course, that I should be well paid for my services, but I would have gladly accepted half the sum I expected if I could have had it that night, for our little treasury was wholly exhausted, and we had not sixpence to purchase a breakfast for the following day. When the great hall door shut upon me, and I found myself upon the pavement, with all that luxury and splendour on one side, and I and my desolation on the other, the contrast struck me cruelly, for I too had been rich, and dwelt in illuminated palaces, and had a train of liveried servants at my command, and sweet music had echoed through my halls. I felt desperate, and drawing my hat over my eyes I began pacing the square, forming wild plans for the relief or escape from my misery. No doubt I looked frantic; for you know we Italians have such a habit of gesticulating, that I believe my thoughts were accompanied by movements that must have excited notice; but I was too much absorbed to observe anything, till I was roused by a voice saying, 'Signor Ferraldi, still here this damp chilly night! Are you not afraid for your voice—it is worth taking care of.'

"To what purpose,' I said savagely, 'It will not give me bread!'

"If the interruption had not been so sudden, I should not have made such an answer, but I was surprised into it before I knew who had addressed me. When I looked up I saw it was the young man I had met at Lord L.'s, who had complimented me on my singing. I took off my hat and begged his pardon, and was about to move away, when he took my arm.

"Excuse me,' he said, 'let us walk together,' and then after a little pause, he added, with an apology, 'I think you are an exile.'

"I am,' I said.

"And I think,' he continued, 'I have surprised you out of a secret that you would not voluntarily have told me. I know well the hardships that beset many of your countrymen—as good gentlemen as we are ourselves—when you are obliged to leave your country; and I beg therefore you will not think me impertinent or intrusive, if I beg you to be frank with me and tell me how you are situated!'

"This offer of sympathy was evidently so sincere, and it was so welcome, at such a moment, that I did not hesitate to comply with my new friend's request—I told him everything—adding that in time I hoped to get known, and that then I did not fear being able to make my way; but that meanwhile we were in danger of starving.

"During this conversation we were walking round and round the square, where in fact he lived. Before we parted at his own door, he had persuaded me to accept

of a gift, I call it, for he had then no reason to suppose I should ever be able to repay him, but he called it an advance of ten guineas upon some lessons I was to give him; the first instalment of which was to be paid the following day.

"I went home with a comparatively light heart, and the next morning waited on my friendly pupil, whom I found, as I expected, a very promising scholar. He told me with a charming frankness, that he had not much influence in fashionable society, for his family, though rich, was parvenue, but he said he had two sisters, as fond of music as himself, who would be shortly in London, and would be delighted to take lessons, as I had just the voice they liked to sing with them.

"This was the first auspicious incident that had occurred to me, nor did the omen fail in its fulfilment. I received great kindness from the family when they came to London. I gave them lessons, sung at their parties, and they took every opportunity of recommending me to their friends.

"When the end of the season approached, however, I felt somewhat anxious about the future—there would be no parties to sing at, and my pupils would all be leaving town; but my new friends, whose name, by the way, was Greathead, had a plan for me in their heads, which they strongly recommended me to follow. They said they had a house in the country with a large neighbourhood—in fact, near a large watering-place; and that if I went there during the summer months, they did not doubt my getting plenty of teaching; adding, 'We are much greater people there than we are here, you see; and our recommendation will go a great way.'

"I followed my friend's advice, and soon after they left London, I joined them at Salton, which was the name of their place. As I had left my wife and children in town, with very little money, I was anxious that they should join me as soon as possible; and therefore the morning after my arrival, I proceeded to look for a lodging at S., and to take measures to make my object known to the residents and visitors there. My business done, I sent my family directions for their journey, and then returned to Salton to spend a few days, as I had promised my kind patrons.

"The house was modern, in fact it had been built by Mr. Greathead's grandfather, who was the architect of their fortunes; the grounds were extensive, and the windows looked on a fine lawn, a picturesque ruin, a sparkling rivulet, and a charming flower-garden; there could not be a prettier view than that we enjoyed while sitting at breakfast. It was my first experience of the lovely and graceful English homes, and it fully realised all my expectations, both within doors and without. After breakfast Mr. Greathead and his son asked me to accompany them round the grounds, as they were contemplating some alterations.

"Among other things,' said Mr. G., 'we want to turn this rivulet; but my wife has a particular fancy for that old hedge, which is exactly in the way, and she won't let

me root it up.'

"The hedge alluded to enclosed two sides of the flower-garden, but seemed rather out of place, I thought.

"'Why?' said I. 'What is Mrs. Greathead's attachment to the hedge?'

"'Why? it's very old; it formerly bordered the churchyard, for that old ruin you see there, is all that remains of the parish church; and this flower-garden, I fancy, is all the more brilliant for the rich soil of the burial-ground. But what is remarkable is, that the hedge and that side of the garden are full of Italian flowers, and always have been so as long as anybody can remember. Nobody knows how it happens, but they must spring up from some old seeds that have been long in the ground. Look at this cyclamen growing wild in the hedge.'

"The subject of the alterations was renewed at dinner, and Mrs. Greathead, still objecting to the removal of the hedge, her younger son, whose name was Harry, said, 'It is very well for mamma to pretend it is for the sake of the flowers, but I am quite sure that the real reason is that she is afraid of offending the ghost.'

"'What nonsense, Harry,' she said. 'You must not believe him, Mr. Ferraldi.'

"'Well mamma,' said the boy, 'you know you will never be convinced that that was not a ghost you saw.'

"'Never mind what it was,' she said; 'I won't have the hedge removed. Presently,' she added, 'I suppose you would laugh at the idea of anybody believing in a ghost, Mr. Ferraldi.'

"'Quite the contrary,' I answered; 'I believe in them myself, and upon very good grounds, for we have a celebrated ghost in our family.'

"'Well,' she said, 'Mr. Greathead and the boys laugh at me; but when I came to live here, upon the death of Mr. Greathead's grandfather,—for his father never inhabited the place, having died by an accident before the old gentleman,—I had never heard a word of the place being haunted; and, perhaps, I should not have believed it if I had. But, one evening, when the younger children were gone to bed, and Mr. Greathead and George were sitting with some friends in the dining-room, I, and my sister, who was staying with me, strolled into the garden. It was in the month of August, and a bright starlight night. We were talking on a very interesting matter, for my sister had that day, received an offer from the gentleman she afterwards married. I mention that, to show you that we were not thinking of anything supernatural, but, on the contrary, that our minds were quite absorbed with the subject we were discussing. I was looking on the ground, as one often does, when listening intently to what another person is saying; my sister was speaking, when she suddenly stopped, and laid her hand on my arm, saying, 'Who's that?'

"I raised my eyes and saw, not many yards from us, an old man, withered and thin, dressed in a curious antique fashion, with a high peaked hat on his head. I could not conceive who he could be, or what he could be doing there, for it was close to the flower-garden; so we stood still to observe him. I don't know whether you saw the remains of an old tombstone in a corner of the garden? It is said to be that of a former rector of the parish; the date, 1550, is still legible upon it. The old man walked from one side of the hedge to that stone, and seemed to be counting his steps. He walked like a person pacing the ground, to measure it; then he stopped, and appeared to be noting the result of his measurement with a pencil and paper he held in his hand; then he did the same thing, the other side of the hedge, pacing up to the tombstone and back.

"There was a talk, at that time, of removing the hedge, and digging up the old tombstone; and it occurred to me, that my husband might have been speaking to somebody about it, and that this man might be concerned in the business, though, still, his dress and appearance puzzled me. It seemed odd, too, that he took no notice of us; and I might have remarked, that we heard no footsteps, though we were quite close enough to do so; but these circumstances did not strike me then. However, I was just going to advance, and ask him what he was doing? when I felt my sister's hand relax the hold she had of my arm, and she sank to the ground; at the same instant I lost sight of the mysterious old man, who suddenly disappeared.

"My sister had not fainted; but she said her knees had bent under her, and she had slipt down, collapsed by terror. I did not feel very comfortable myself, I assure you; but I lifted her up, and we hastened back to the house and told what we had seen. The gentlemen went out, and, of course, saw nothing, and laughed at us; but shortly afterwards, when Harry was born, I had a nurse from the village, and she asked me one day, if I had ever happened to see "the old gentleman that walks!" I had ceased to think of the circumstance, and inquired what old gentleman she meant? and then she told me that, long ago, a foreign gentleman had been murdered here; that is, in the old house that Mr. Greathead's grandfather pulled down when he built this; and that, ever since, the place has been haunted, and that nobody will pass by the hedge, and the old tombstone after dark; for that is the spot to which the ghost confines himself.'

"But I should think,' said I, 'that so far from desiring to preserve these objects, you would rather wish them removed, since the ghost would, probably, cease to visit the spot at all.'

"Quite the contrary,' answered Mrs. G. 'The people of the neighbourhood say, that the former possessor of the place entertained the same idea, and had resolved to remove them; but that then, the old man became very troublesome, and was

even seen in the house; the nurse positively assured me, that her mother had told her, old Mr. Greathead had also intended to remove them; but that he quite suddenly counter-ordered the directions he had given, and, though he did not confess to anything of the sort, the people all believed that he had seen the ghost. Certain, it is, that this hedge has always been maintained by the proprietors of the place.'

"The young men laughed and quizzed their mother for indulging in such superstitions; but the lady was quite firm in her opposition, alledging, that independently of all considerations connected with the ghost, she liked the hedge on account of the wild Italian flowers; and she liked the old tombstone on account of its antiquity.

"Consequently, some other plan was devised for Mr. Greathead's alterations, which led the course of the rivulet quite clear of the hedge and the tombstone.

"In a few days, my family arrived, and I established myself at S., for the summer. The speculation answered very well, and through the recommendations of Mr. and Mrs. Greathead, and their personal kindness to myself and my wife, we passed the time very pleasantly. When the period for our returning to London approached, they invited us to spend a fortnight with them before our departure, and, accordingly, the day we gave up our lodgings, we removed to Salton.

"Preparations for turning the rivulet had then commenced; and soon after my arrival, I walked out with Mr. Greathead to see the works. There was a boy, about fourteen, amongst the labourers; and while we were standing close to him, he picked up something, and handed it to Mr. G., saying, 'Is this yours, sir?' which, on examination, proved to be a gold coin of the sixteenth century,—the date on it was 1545. Presently, the boy who was digging, picked up another, and then several more.

"'This becomes interesting,' said Mr. Greathead, 'I think we are coming upon some buried treasure;' and he whispered to me, that he had better not leave the spot.

"Accordingly, he did stay, till it was time to dress for dinner; and, feeling interested, I remained also. In the interval, many more coins were found; and when he went in, he dismissed the workmen, and sent a servant to watch the place,—for he saw by their faces, that if he had not happened to be present he would, probably, never have heard of the circumstance. A few more turned up the following day, and then the store seemed exhausted. When the villagers heard of this money being discovered, they all looked upon it as the explanation of the old gentleman haunting that particular spot. No doubt he had buried the money, and it remained to be seen, whether now, that it was found, his spirit would be at rest.

"My two children were with me at Salton on this occasion. They slept in a room on the third floor, and one morning, my wife having told me that the younger of the two seemed unwell, I went up stairs to look at her. It was a cheerful room, with two little white beds in it, and several old prints and samplers, and bits of work such as you see in nurseries, framed and hung against the wall. After I had spoken to the child, and while my wife was talking to the maid, I stood with my hands in my pockets, idly looking at these things. Amongst them was one that arrested my attention, because at first I could not understand it, nor see why this discoloured parchment, with a few lines and dots on it, should have been framed and glazed. There were some words here and there which I could not decipher; so I lifted the frame off the nail and carried it to the window. Then I saw that the words were Italian, written in a crabbed, old-fashioned hand, and the whole seemed to be a plan, or sketch, rudely drawn, of what I at first thought was a camp—but, on closer examination, I saw was part of a churchyard, with tomb stones, from one of which lines were drawn to various dots, and along these lines were numbers, and here and there a word as right, left, &c. There were also two lines forming a right angle, which intersected the whole, and after contemplating the thing for some time, it struck me that it was a rude sort of map of the old churchyard and the hedge, which had formed the subject of conversation some days before.

"At breakfast, I mentioned what I had observed to Mr. and Mrs. Greathead, and they said they believed it was; it had been found when the old house was pulled down, and was kept on account of its antiquity.

"Of what period is it,' I asked, 'and how happens it to have been made by an Italian?'

"The last question I can't answer,' said Mr. Greathead; 'but the date is on it, I believe.'

"No,' said I, 'I examined it particularly—there is no date.'

"Oh, there is a date and name, I think—but I never examined it myself;' and to settle the question he desired his son Harry to run up and fetch it, adding, 'you know Italian architects and designers of various kinds, were not rare in this country a few centuries ago.'

"Harry brought the frame, and we were confirmed in our conjectures of what it represented, but we could find no date or name.

"And yet I think I've heard there was one,' said Mr. Greathead. 'Let us take it out of the frame?'

"This was easily done, and we found the date and the name; the count paused, and then added, 'I dare say you can guess it?'

"Jacopo Ferraldi?' I said.

"It was,' he answered; and it immediately occurred to me that he had buried the money supposed to have been stolen on the night he was murdered, and that this was a plan to guide him in finding it again. So I told Mr. Greathead the story I have now told you, and mentioned my reasons for supposing that if I was correct in my surmise, more gold would be found.

"With the old man's map as our guide, we immediately set to work—the whole family vigorously joining in the search; and, as I expected, we found that the tombstone in the garden was the point from which all the lines were drawn, and that the dots indicated where the money lay. It was in different heaps, and appeared to have been enclosed in bags, which had rotted away with time. We found the whole sum mentioned in the memoir, and Mr. Greathead being lord of the manor, was generous enough to make it all over to me, as being the lawful heir, which, however, I certainly was not, for it was the spoil of a murderer and a thief, and it properly belonged to the Allens. But that family had become extinct; at least, so we believed, when the two unfortunate ladies were executed, and I accepted the gift with much gratitude and a quiet conscience. It relieved us from our pressing difficulties, and enabled me to wait for better times.

"And,' said I, 'how of the ghost? was he pleased or otherwise, by the denouement?'

"I cannot say,' replied the count; 'I have not heard of his being seen since; I understand, however, that the villagers, who understand these things better than we do, say, that they should not be surprised if he allowed the hedge and tombstone to be removed now without opposition; but Mr. Greathead, on the contrary, wished to retain them as mementoes of these curious circumstances.'"