

nor Guy would be long behind him! Luigi di Gadola could be trusted to see to that for old sake's sake. So the first grate of a steel tool upon the door lock was to him the lifting of the heaviest burden a man can bear and live. With a sigh of relief he slipped his sword from its sheath and put the shadow from him. For good or for ill the issue was knit.

But Roger Patcham was no false prophet. Slowly, and without noise, the lumbering door was swung open, first one leaf then the other, and out of the black gap of the night the fleshy, full-lipped face of Tito Zucchi looked into the shadows, with the narrow, cunning eyes of the Seigneur peering at his shoulder. Slowly and softly, yet with many a tiny jangle of steel on the grey flags, jangles that rang harsh and strident by reason of the great silence, they stole across the shadows of the hall—themselves no denser than shadows—their troop following formlessly at their heels. At the stair-foot they halted a brief space even as Roger Patcham had foretold, and to the watchers the very panting of the half-held breath was sonorous in the stillness. Then they moved up the lowest arc of the spiral stairway.

The time had come. Where he stood bent above the first curve of the steps Roger Patcham straightened himself and filled his lungs twice.

"Saint Denise for Lhoeac!" he shouted at the full pitch of his voice, and racing downward two