

"The Castle was then in ruins; how is it I now find it rebuilt?"

"Did you not order the rebuilding?"

"I knew nothing of it."

Then the Countess told him a man had presented himself some months prior, with a letter purporting to be from him, containing directions to repair the Castle, and spare no expense in the work.

"Fortunately," she said, "the man is yet in Brindisi."

The Count lost no time in sending for the stranger, who presented him a package sealed and enveloped in oriental style, only on the upper side there was a *tughra*, or imperial seal, which he at once recognized as Mahommed's. With eager fingers he took off the silken wraps, and found a note in translation as follows:

"Mahommed the Sultan to Ugo, Count Corti, formerly Mirza the Emir.

"The wager we made, O my friend, who should have been the son of my mother, is not yet decided, and as it is not given a mortal to know the will of the Most Compassionate until he is pleased to expose it, I cannot say what the end will be. Yet I love you, and have faith in you; and wishing you to be so assured whether I win or lose, I send Mustapha to your country in advance with proofs of your heirship, and to notify the noble lady, your mother, that you are alive, and about returning to her. Also, forasmuch as a Turk destroyed it, he is ordered to rebuild your father's castle, and add to the estate all the adjacent lands he can buy; for verily no Countship can be too rich for the Mirza who was my brother. And these things he will do in your name, not mine. And when it is done, if to your satisfaction, O Count, give him a statement that he may come to me with evidence of his mission discharged.

"I commend you to the favor of the Compassionate.

MAHOMMED."

When the missive was read, Mustapha knelt to the