

**THE ADVENTURES OF SIG.
GAUDENTIO DI LUCCA. BEING THE
SUBSTANCE OF HIS EXAMINATION
BEFORE THE FATHERS OF THE
INQUISITION AT BOLOGNA, IN ITALY**

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The Adventures of Sig. Gaudenzio Di Lucca. Being the Substance of His Examination Before the Fathers of the Inquisition at Bologna, in Italy by Simon Berington

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SIMON BERINGTON

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Berington, Surm. in.

T H E
A D V E N T U R E S
O F
Sig. GAUDENTIO DI LUCCA.
BEING THE
Substance of his Examination before the
Fathers of the Inquisition at Bologna in Italy :
G I V I N G
An Account of an UNKNOWN COUNTRY
in the Deserts of AFRICA,
T H E
Origin and Antiquity of the PEOPLE,
T H E I R
Religion, Customs, and Laws.

C O P I E D

From the original Manuscript in St Mark's Library at
Venice; with critical Notes of the learned Sig. RHEDI.

To which is prefixed,

A Letter of the Secretary of the Inquisition, showing the
Reasons of Signor GAUDENTIO's being apprehended, and
the Manner of it.

Translated from the ITALIAN.

L O N D O N :
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L. S.
Sanders
11-21-27
18778

THE
P U B L I S H E R
T O T H E
R E A D E R.

IT is very natural to think the reader would willingly be apprised of two things relating to these Memoirs: First, how this curious manuscript came to light, considering the dark and deep secrecy with which all things are transacted in the inquisition. Secondly, how it came into the translator's hands. To satisfy such a commendable curiosity, he is to be informed, that the manuscript was sent by the secretary of the inquisition at Bologna to the learned Signor Rhedi, keeper of the library of St Mark at Venice, his intimate friend and correspondent, with the whole account how the author was taken up, and secured in the inquisition, as the letter of the secretary to the same Signor Rhedi will show; which letter, as it contains a great many curious particulars in the examination of the criminal, (for he was taken up as such, though nothing very material was proved against him; for which reason, he received a more favourable treatment than is generally believed to be customary in that dreadful tribunal); so it discovers no indirect practices of the inquisition, but, on the contrary, shows they proceed with a great deal of circumspection within their walls, though all things are involved in impenetrable darkness to those

without. Beside, the succession of new popes, and, generally speaking, the change of other officers attending it, might make them be less upon their guard, as the secretary seems to hint in his letter. Neither is there any thing that might do him any harm, in case he were discovered; especially writing to a friend of his own communion, and a priest, as Signor Rhedi was; which is likewise seen by the letter.

As to the second quære, the manuscript came into the publisher's hands by the means of the same Signor Rhedi, who is an honour to his church, profession, and country, and one of the most learned and polite men in the world. He is not so bigotted to his religion or profession as to shun the company of the *heretical tramontani*, a title the Italians generally give us; but loves and esteems a learned man, though of a different persuasion. One reason for this may be, that he breathes a freer air at Venice than they do in the other parts of Italy. The inquisition has nothing to do in the Venetian territories. Though they are Roman Catholics, the state admits of no tribunal independent of itself. Besides, as they are a trading people, their commerce obliges them to be civil to persons of all persuasions, especially strangers. But of all others they seem to have the greatest respect for the English; whether it be on account of their power at sea, or their frankness in spending their money, so many of the English nobility and gentry traveling that way; or from the candour and sincerity of our nature, so opposite to the Italians, and therefore the more valued by them; be that as it will, the publisher, who had several times made the tour of Italy, was not only intimately acquainted, but had contracted a particular friendship with Signor Rhedi, as well on account of their mutual inclinations for learning and antiquity as

P R E F A C E.

v

for several reciprocal obligations passing between them. The last time he was at Venice, which was in company of a person of the first rank, who liked the place as well as he did, he staid there upwards of fifteen months; during which time he had the opportunity of enjoying the conversation of his learned friend, with as much liberty as if he had been of the same persuasion. But the present of a gold repeating watch, with some other of our English curiosities, so won his heart, that one day, being together in the great library, he unlocks a little grate where he kept his rarities, and turning to me with a smile, Signor Inglese, says he, holding a manuscript in his hand, here is such a curiosity, as, I am sure, you never saw, and perhaps never heard of: it is the life of a person who is now in the inquisition at Bologna, taken from his own confession before the inquisitors; with the account of a country in the heart of the vast deserts of Africa, whose inhabitants have lived unknown to all the world upwards of three thousand years, and inaccessible to all the world but by the way he was carried thither. The inquisitors are so far persuaded of the truth of it, that they have promised him his liberty if he will undertake to conduct some missionaries the same way, to preach the gospel to a numerous people, who, by his account, have the greatest knowledge of natural religion and polity of any Heathen nation yet known, even beyond the Chinese. For my own part, I could scarce have believed it, had not the secretary of the same inquisition, who, you may be sure, by his post, is not a man to be imposed upon, assured me of the truth of it: nay, that he himself was present at his seizure and examination, and sent me a copy of his life, which he was ordered to give in by the inquisitors; with the whole account of the occasion and manner

of his seizure. It seems he had lived some time in Bologna in quality of a physician, under the name of *Signer Gaudenzio di Lucca*, which, he says, is his true name, and confirms it by the place of his birth, the names of his parents, time of his captivity, &c. He had dropped some words of several strange secrets he was master of, with mutterings of an unknown nation, religion, and customs, quite new to the Italian ears; for which reason the inquisition thought fit to seize him, and, by ways and means made use of in that tribunal, obliged him to give an account of his whole life, which is the most surprising I ever read. Here is the secretary's letter, giving a succinct account of the whole affair. I have added, continued he, some critical remarks in proper places, to show that this account is not so incredible as it may appear at first sight, and that it agrees with some hints left us in the remains of ancient history. Besides, the man stands to the truth of it with a steadfastness that is surprising. He is a person of a very handsome presence, well read, good sense, and, as it appears to the inquisitors, (who are nice judges), of seemingly good morals. He professes himself a zealous Roman Catholic, and that he always was so; for which reason the inquisitors are more civil to him than ordinary. He gives such a rational and circumstantial account of his adventures, that I am of the secretary's opinion as to the truth of it. But, added he, I wont forestall the satisfaction you will find in the perusal: so delivered the manuscript and the secretary's letter into the publisher's hands, who, running his eyes over it for some time, was so struck with the novelty of the thing, that he asked Signor Rhedi whether he might not take a copy of it? He was answered, he could not permit the manuscript to be taken out of the library; nor could he, with

safety to himself, allow a stranger, and of a different religion too, the liberty of staying so long in the library by himself as the transcribing would take up. The publisher said, he might put what guards upon him he pleased, provided he might but transcribe it. No, says he, that is inconvenient too; but I will order one of my under librarians I can confide in to write you out an exact copy, with the secretary's letter, and my own remarks, if you think them worth your notice; which he did most faithfully; generously commanding the transcriber, at the same time, not to take any thing of me for his pains. Thus this curious manuscript came to hand, to the infinite satisfaction of the publisher, and he hopes it will prove no less to the readers in the perusal of it. The character of Signor Gaudenzio cannot be called in question; nor is the publisher a person so little versed in the nature and ways of the Italians as to be imposed upon. The translation from the Italian is as exact as possible. This is the previous account the publisher thought proper to give of this affair.

N. B. Great part of the matters treated of in these memoirs being transacted in a Roman Catholic country, and among Roman Catholics, the reader must not wonder, if they speak of their religion, as if it were the only true one in the world.

It will not be improper to admonish the reader, not to discredit immediately some of the relations contained in these Memoirs; but to suspend his judgment till he has read Signor Rhedi's remarks; particularly, when he comes to the origin and antiquity of the people the author speaks of. The learned will find in them such a vast knowledge in history, and the most intricate remains of antiquity, as will render them very well worth their notice. The same Signor Rhedi told the publisher, he had in-