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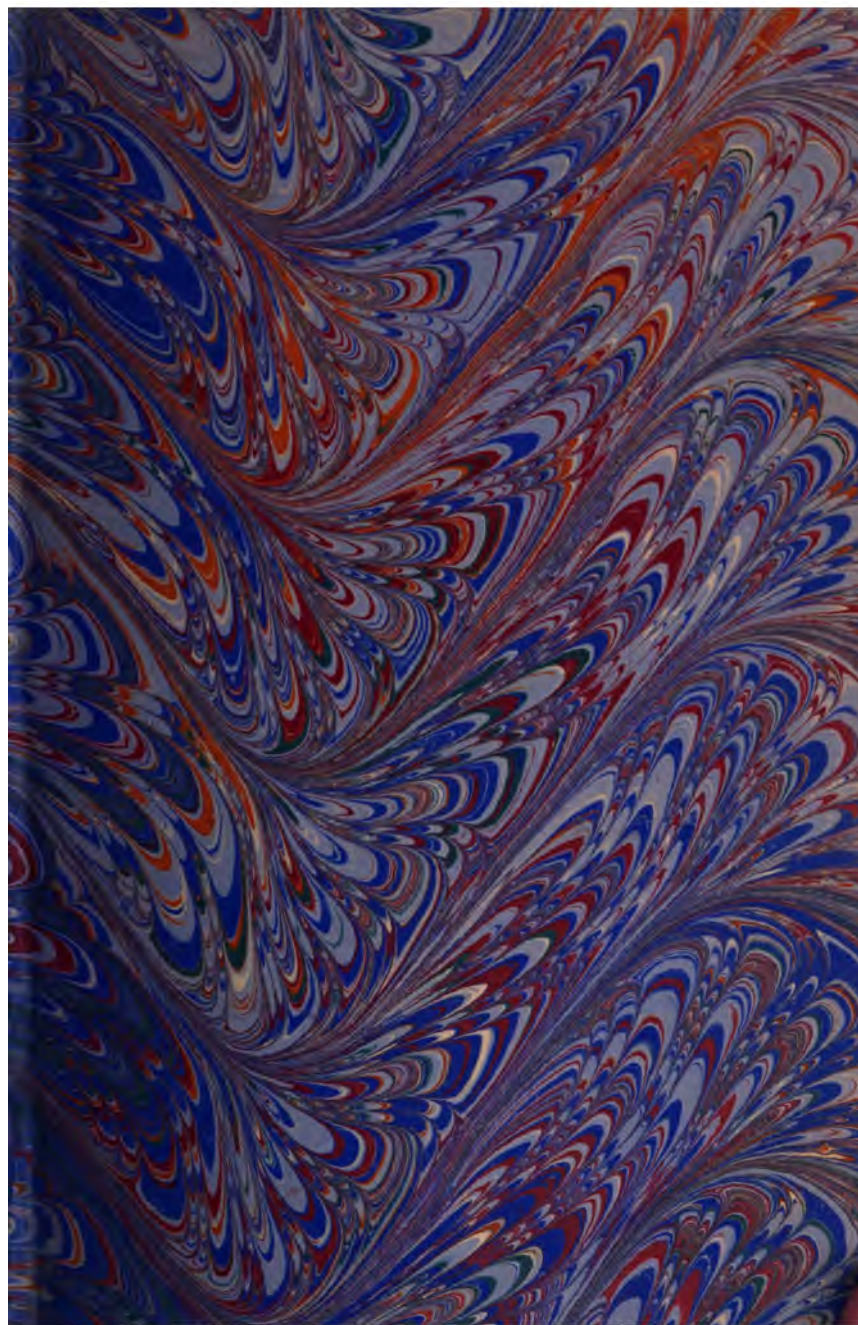
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Arthur Sherwell



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*From Teresa Colonna di Tocco
in memory of days passed
at the Moritz-Jan 1902*

VITTORIA COLONNA:

HER LIFE AND POEMS.



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COLONNA PORTRAIT.—MUZIANO.





Wilson

VITTORIA COLONNA:

HER LIFE AND POEMS.

BY MRS. HENRY ROSCOE.
"

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INTRODUCTION.

THE life of Vittoria Colonna, the celebrated Marchesa di Pescara, has received but cursory notice from any English writer, though in every history of Italy her name is mentioned with great honour among the poets of the sixteenth century.

Mrs. Jameson and Mr. Trollope have given biographical sketches of her; and she is noticed in Roscoe's "Life of Leo X." among the many distinguished persons who were her contemporaries. A French author, Le Fèvre Deumier, published a memoir of her in 1856, with prose translations of some of her sonnets.

Gambatista Rota appended a short notice of her life to his edition of her "Rimè" in 1760. He stated that he had used the greatest diligence

to render it singularly correct—which it is on almost every point—and he gives very valuable references and notes. Deumier expresses great surprise that Rota entirely omits any account of the friendship between Vittoria and Michael Angelo, which, however, may be explained by the fact that Rota was a monk, and his work required to be licensed by the Inquisitor-general of the Holy Office at Vicenza; and Michael Angelo, perhaps, did not enjoy the good opinion of the Inquisitor. Deumier, with no foundation of truth, and in very bad taste, endeavours to make a French romance out of the friendship that subsisted between the great sculptor and this illustrious Lady.

In 1840, a memoir of Vittoria was written by the Cavaliere Pietro Visconti, at the desire of the Prince Torlonia, on his marriage with Teresa Colonna in that year. It is appended to a splendid edition of Vittoria's poems, containing some which had never before been published, and also many complimentary verses addressed to Vittoria by her friends. The book is dedicated to the "Principessa Donna Teresa Torlonia, nata Colonna,"

with a poem in honour of the occasion, by the editor. This work is to be relied on, as far as it goes, for the author had the privilege of access to the archives of the Colonna family.

He commences his memoir by stating that Vittoria had raised a name for herself which was unrivalled even in the brilliant sixteenth century; and he adds, "*E noi Romani* ought particularly to be proud of the glory which she shed on our common country of Italy; as in three hundred and fifty years there has been no other lady who can be compared to her." He says that he drew many of his facts from an unpublished history in the Colonna House, and he states that there was also a history of the D'Avalos family, written by Il Meola, but that he had not been able to obtain it, after the most careful search. "It is the more to be regretted," he adds, "as it probably contained an account of that period of Vittoria's life which was passed in Naples, of which we know nothing." He had made repeated inquiries, hoping it had been preserved by the D'Avalos family, but he was told that no memoir,

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inquiries, hoping it had been preserved by the
Alvarez family, but he was told that it never

public or private, exists relating to Vittoria Colonna.

He says, "Except the fact of her betrothal, we know nothing of the early years of Vittoria, nor who were her instructors, nor how her grand nature, her poetical tastes, and the turn of her genius were formed; but certainly Molza could not have been her instructor, as he was only one year older than herself. Judging, however, from such honourable results of the care and ability of her instructors, there was no defect in those who embellished her with all the gifts suited to a noble and great soul."

Visconti insists upon the extreme correctness of his edition of the poems, as he had carefully collected and corrected them from every source. He states that many poems, not written by Vittoria, had been included in other editions, and remarks, "*Vaglia il vero*" (let truth prevail). He especially relies on the correctness of the manuscript in the house collection, "*Casanatense*," written in Vittoria's own hand, or in that of her beloved pupil, Innocenza Gualteruzzi.



In this collection he found inedited sonnets referring to events in the last years of Vittoria's life, and also the beautiful Latin prayer, which he found there by great good fortune. And he argues that, as she was so anxious to correct and finish her compositions, this latest collection of her sonnets must be the best; but he states that other manuscripts exist in Florence.

The title of "*Diva*," which was awarded to Vittoria Colonna for her great talents as a poetess, was never before bestowed on any woman. "*Non prima ad altra Donna consentito giammai.*" It expresses the summit of excellence. In endeavouring to convey some idea of these talents, we are painfully aware that the grace of her language, and the charm of her ideas, cannot be fully rendered; though her tenderness, pathos, humility, and strength can be estimated in the garb of English prose. In making a selection from her poems, those have chiefly been chosen which illustrate her history and her character. They present a beautiful and living picture of a most charming woman; and from their perusal we

can estimate, in some degree, the unbounded respect and admiration with which she was honoured during her life. One of her biographers says, "He who had once known her, continually regretted not seeing her again ; and bore away a recollection which no length of absence could efface."

LIST OF PORTRAITS.

- I. Frontispiece, a photograph from the engraving of the Colonna Portrait, in the Colonna Gallery at Rome, and painted by Muziano.
- II. A photograph from the engraving by Raphael Morghen, of the celebrated picture in the Tribune at Florence. Supposed to be a portrait of Vittoria Colonna, and to have been painted by Sebastian del Piombo. Styled a Lady, 1812, by the best judges. Page 41.
- III A photograph from the engraving of a medal struck in honour of Vittoria Colonna in 1840, at the marriage of the Princess Teresa Colonna. Page 152.

**"The peerless light of her immortal praise,
Whose lustre leads us." - MILTON.**



VITTORIA COLONNA:

HER LIFE AND POEMS.


CHAPTER I.

1050—1507.

THE family of the Colonnas is one of the oldest and most illustrious in Italy. As early as the year 1050, they became possessors of the feudal estate and castle of La Colonna, whence their name was derived. The Lord of Colonna is prominently mentioned in the history of the twelfth century, and for several centuries afterwards the Colonnas fill a conspicuous place in the history of their country. They belonged to the Ghibelline party, and were actively engaged in the wars and quarrels with the Guelphs. Divided into many branches, they took various titles; one branch being named Princes of

Palestrina, another Dukes of Zagorolo, and others Princes of Sonnino and Stigliano, in the kingdom of Naples.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Pope, Boniface VIII., waged a war of destruction against the Colonna family, two of whom were cardinals opposed to the election of Boniface; and they afterwards refused to admit papal garrisons into their castles. Boniface accused the Colonnas of many crimes, and the two cardinals complained of the Pope's arrogance, and questioned the validity of his election. On this the Pope excommunicated the whole family of Colonna and their adherents, called them heretics, and declared they had forfeited their honours and property of every sort. Further, he besieged Preneste, which he razed to the ground; and destroyed likewise Zagorolo and Colonna. On the 7th of September, 1303, the Pope and cardinals were startled by the tramp of armed horse, and the terrible cry of "Death to Pope Boniface!" Sciarra Colonna, at the head of three hundred horsemen, attacked the Pope's palace; the Pope implored a truce, but the insurgents demanded his abdication. In the hearts of these men all feeling



for the Pope was destroyed by his pride and cruelty. In the Colonnas, the wrongs and beggary and exile of their house had extinguished all feelings except revenge. The Pope was taken prisoner, and carried on a vicious horse, with his face to the tail, to the place of imprisonment; his palaces were plundered, and immense wealth carried off. After a few days' suffering he was released, but on refusing to take the Colonna cardinals into favour again he found himself once more a prisoner, and this last mortification hastened his end.¹ It is said that Sciarra even struck the old man with his gauntlet. Boniface had been an inveterate persecutor of the Ghibellines; Dante refers to this in the "*Inferno* ²;" and, though he brands the pride, avarice, and treachery of Boniface with his most terrible words, and has consigned him to the direst doom, yet he expresses the universal horror of Christendom on beholding such cruel conduct to the Vicar of Christ.

The Colonnas were constantly at the head of the great Italian factions which filled Italy with their jealous rivalries, and they had interminable

¹ He died in October, 1303.

² And also in the *Purgatorio* xx.

quarrels, especially with the Orsini. They possessed great influence, and were enormously wealthy.¹ They received great additions to their possessions during the papacy of Martin V. who was one of the family of Colonna, and was raised to the papal chair early in the fifteenth century. They were also enriched by a number of fiefs taken from the Orsini family, and at one time they held a great part of the Campagna di Roma, besides large estates in the Abruzzi. Among the many strongly fortified and beautifully situated castles which they possessed may be mentioned especially the famous stronghold of Palliano, and the castle of Marino, on the Lago d'Albano; but they had many other castles, and magnificent palaces in Rome and Naples. By a diploma, still preserved in the Colonna archives, dated Nov. 15, 1504, it appears that eighteen baronies were then conferred on

¹ The respective genealogies of the various branches of the Colonna family may be found in *Morini* (art. "Colonna").

Some of them are extinct, but the Stigliano of Naples, and the Sciarra Colonna of Rome, continue to exist. The Princess Teresa Colonna was married, in the year 1840, to the Prince Torlonia of Rome; and there is the announcement of the death of another Princess Colonna, by the fatal effects of cholera, in the last few weeks, at the Lago d'Albano. The Colonna Palace and Gardens on the Quirinal at Rome, are well known to every traveller.

Prospero Colonna by Ferdinand of Spain; three days afterwards all the fiefs which Fabrizio Colonna had possessed were restored to him; and by another deed, dated the same day, thirty-three other fiefs in the Abruzzi and Terra di Lavoro were bestowed on him. Prospero and Fabrizio Colonna were distinguished generals, and were frequently engaged in wars against the popes. Pope Sextus IV. endeavoured to subdue them with the help of the Orsini, but the Colonnas showed themselves "*multum feroces seu audaces*"—very fierce and audacious. Their fortress of Palliano could not be reduced, owing to the strength of its situation and the bravery of its defenders; and the Pope was so enraged to find himself balked of his vengeance against the Colonnas, that "he turned his face to the wall, and died."

At the end of the fifteenth century a long succession of military contests had thrown the people of Italy into new difficulties and fresh animosities. Emperors, kings, and princes, seemed to make this beautiful country the battle-ground of their jealous rivalries; and the popes gave their weight and support, first to one party, and then to another, as they found their own interests to lie.

The Italian princes often held their possessions by most precarious tenure ; and amongst them no family suffered more continual variations of fortune than the noble House of Colonna, as will appear in the course of this narrative.

The father of Fabrizio Colonna, and the grandfather of Vittoria, had the title of Duke d'Amalfi.¹ This city was formerly the seaport of Naples, and contained in the eleventh century 50,000 inhabitants. It was at one time an independent republic, and attained considerable maritime and commercial eminence. It stands in a most commanding position ; it is built of terraces of white houses, tier above tier, with their flat roofs ; and the whole is surrounded with magnificent hanging gardens, and groves of orange and palm trees. One solitary pine lifts its green crown into the blue air, where, on the ridge of the mountain,

¹ Amalfi is encircled and crowned by mountains, and is built at the mouth of a deep gorge, through which a torrent dashes into the sea. There is no place in the world which presents more glorious beauty. It was once a place of great importance, both for strength and commerce ; but a great storm and inundation in the middle of the fourteenth century destroyed its arsenals and quays, and scarcely a fragment of its walls is left. Under the dynasties of Anjou and Aragon the feudal title of Duke d'Amalfi was enjoyed by several of the distinguished families of Rome.

the old castle, with its encircling wall, serves as a couch for the clouds.¹ Fabrizio's other titles were Duke of Palliano and Tagliocoti. He was a Roman patrician of pure Italian race, and lord of many a powerful barony. He was early devoted to the profession of arms, and became one of the most celebrated generals of the age. He married Agnese di Montifelto, the daughter of the Duke d'Urbino; who was also of a distinguished and powerful family. Urbino is a duchy in the Papal States. The city is famous for having been the birthplace of Raphael. Agnese was born in the year 1472, consequently she was only eighteen years of age when her daughter, the subject of these memoirs, was born. Vittoria Colonna was the eldest of six children, the five others being sons. Federico (who is styled the eldest-born by some writers) must have been seven or eight years younger than Vittoria, as is proved by the date on his tomb, which is still to be seen in the church of S. Anna di Pallazzola. The names of the other children were Ascanio, Ferdinando, Camillo, and Sciarra.

Vittoria Colonna was born in the year 1490, at

¹ Hans Andersen.

the castle of Marino, on the Lago d'Albano. This beautiful residence had been selected by Fabrizio and Agnese, that they might, in its privacy, "enjoy the short period of tranquillity which smiled on their first years of marriage." It is about twelve miles from Rome, and is described as in a most lovely situation¹.

"Many a stranger has probably looked down from the beautifully wooded heights of Castel Gandolfo, on the picturesquely gloomy little walled town of Marino, creeping up the steep side of its hill, and crowned by the ancient seignorial residence of the Colonnas."²

"The old castle has recently been repaired and modernised into a very handsome nineteenth-century residence, to the no small injury of its outward appearance in a picturesque and historical point of view. The interior still contains several of the nobly proportioned old halls, which were planned

¹ Flaminio, in one of his poems, thus apostrophizes it :—

"Salve! Magna Domus, miæ Columnæ Natalis! Domus O! Beata! Salve!" &c. Hail, noble House! The birthplace of my Colonna! O blessed House, all hail. Did not this noble lady first see the light of heaven here! She who is worthy to have been born on high, and to live in the temples of the gods, above the stars, herself a bright star! Oh! happy House!"—*Carm. lib. i.*

² Trollope's "Decade of Italian Women."

when mighty revels in the rare times of peace, and defence in the more normal condition of class-warfare, were the objects held in view by the builder. Many memorials of interest, moreover, pictures and other records of the old times, were brought to Marino from Palliano, when the Colonnas were, in the time of Pope Borgia, most unjustly compelled to sell the latter stronghold to the Roman Government to be turned into a prison for political offenders.”¹ Marino was enriched by all that was transferable of the ancient memorials that had gathered round the stronger mountain fortress in the course of centuries. The property of the Colonna family was at this time immense, but the “ever-turbulent Colonna” as frequently lost as he gained his castles by the fortunes of war.

In the noble Castle of Marino the beautiful child passed her earliest years, surrounded with everything that could give an impression to her young mind of the glory of high chivalry, and the nobility attached to the fair deeds of arms. Her father, Fabrizio, duke of Palliano, was a man who took a first rank in the world’s esteem in those days of martial daring. “Like all the

¹ Trollope.

princes of that age, he was a soldier of fortune, ready, like the best of his fellow nobles, to sell his blood, and great military talents, in the best market. It was his profession to fight, and mere fighting in whatever cause, if it were bravely and knightly done, was the most honoured and noblest profession of that day.”¹

These ideas the little Vittoria imbibed from her cradle. No doubt the Princess Agnese early taught her daughter by her words, and her example, to honour the deeds of the brave husband and father whom they loved. But the young mother and young child were soon to be separated, and we lose sight of Agnese, in following the destiny of Vittoria.

The Colonnas had changed sides suddenly in 1494, in the war between the French and Spanish, and, when Fabrizio was called again to arms, from the calm seclusion of the Castle of Marino, he had to join the forces of Ferdinand, king of Naples, as Naples at this time belonged to Spain. The fact of this change of party is mentioned as a perfectly simple matter; but to the little Vittoria the circumstance became the most important event

¹ Trollope.

in her future life ; for the King, anxious to have a better hold on his new adherent than was furnished by his oath of fealty, insisted on Fabrizio Colonna betrothing his little daughter to the son of his subject, Alphonso, Marchese di Pescara. This boy, Francesco d'Avalos,¹ was a child of the same tender age as Vittoria : they were both only four years old. Vittoria refers to this early betrothal in the sonnet which begins—

“ Appena avean gli spirti intera vita,
Quando il mio cor prescrisse ogn' altro oggetto,”² &c.

The King desired that these two great families should add the ties of relationship to those of a friendship by which they were already so strongly bound. The beauty of the child and the promise of her mind, even at the earliest age, attracted general observation, and her parents doubtless were satisfied that, in making this early contract, they secured to their daughter the highest position for the future, owing to the rank of the family of the boy-bridegroom. If worldly and political

¹ F. Francesco d'Avalos was born in the Castle of Ischia, in 1489.

² “Hardly had my spirit entered into life, when my heart proscribed every other affection.”

reasons had influenced the arrangement, it proved, indeed, a choice which turned out most happily for Vittoria, and led to the formation of one of the most delightful characters with which we have any acquaintance.

Fabrizio, having deserted the cause of the French monarch, was fully aware of the danger to which his castles would be exposed, and he desired to consign them to the Sacred College as a deposit; but the Pope, Borgia, insisted that they should be delivered into his own hands. Guicciardini states that the Colonnas, having placed garrisons in Amelici and Rocca di Papa, abandoned all the rest of their possessions in the Roman States.¹

Fabrizio, being made Grand Constable of Naples, was immediately obliged to devote himself to public affairs; and not being able, perhaps, to educate his daughter under his own eye, he determined to place her under the care of the sister of the young Pescara.² Vittoria was at this time only five years old. It must have been a sacrifice on the part of

¹ The Colonnas were restored to all their Roman possessions in the papacy of Julius II. ; and in 1509, on the occasion of Vittoria's marriage, we find that she "came from the Castle of Marino, escorted by a large company of Roman nobles."

² The Duchessa di Francavilla.

her parents to part with their only daughter at so early an age ; but as there was constant communication between Ischia and the city of Naples, the two families probably enjoyed continual intercourse. The Duchessa di Francavilla, *nata* Costanza d'Avalos, was Governor, or Châtelaine, of the island of Ischia. She had defended the Castle of Ischia during the war, and had the bravery to refuse to capitulate ; as an acknowledgment of her services the government of the island, civil and military, was settled on her and her family, and was retained by them till 1734.

So highly did the d'Avalos family rank at Naples in the esteem of the King, that on one occasion, when he entered in triumph into the city after a victory over the French, the Marchese di Pescara (Costanza's father), rode at the King's right hand. This king died about a year after Vittoria had been placed in the Castle of Ischia—in 1496.

The Duchessa di Francavilla was one of the most remarkable women of her day ; she was admirably adapted to the task she had undertaken, of educating the two children. She lost her father the 7th September, 1495, “*per fiero colpo*,” murdered, it is said, by a slave ; and, in consequence of her

brothers and nephews having died in the wars, Costanza had the entire government of the affairs of the house of d'Avalos, and managed them so wisely and generously that she made it easy (*abile*) for those who came after her.

The office of perpetual Castellana d'Ischia was an important and uncommon one to be held by one of her sex, as it was considered a key of the kingdom of Naples. The princes all emulated one another in honouring her, and the Emperor Charles V. created her a princess. She greatly loved letters, and cultivated the society of the learned. She studied Italian, Latin, and poetry, and wrote a work entitled "*Degli Infortuni e Travagli del Mondo.*"¹

The family of d'Avalos were famed for their devotion to the Muses, as well as their prowess in war. Alphonso considered the reading of the ancient classics a sweet relaxation from his heavy cares; and his son inherited not only the glory of his father in his talent for government, but also his taste for letters.

The Duchessa di Francavilla resided constantly in her magnificent castle, on the lovely island of Ischia,

¹ "Of the Misfortunes and the Labours of the World." A singular subject in those days!

where she had received the two beautiful children, and had undertaken to bring them up as her own. It was the wish of Vittoria's parents that her great promise as a child should be well directed, and that she should be taught everything which was best suited to her age and her talents. And her biographer, Visconti, states that "she made great proficiency, and gained great praise from her instructors, so that her growth in beauty and in learning was greater than could be found scattered among many other children."

Fabrizio Colonna was constantly occupied with public affairs during all those wars and tumults which ended in the King being deposed. But he paid, no doubt, frequent visits to see his little daughter, and to watch the progress of her education; and we hear of one visit which he paid the island, when the dethroned King and his exiled family took shelter there in 1501. Ischia was at this period the refuge of many of the nobles who had fled from the city of Naples during political disorders.

Those who have visited this island speak of its charms in glowing colours. "Nothing under heaven could be lovelier," writes Mrs. Oliphant, and she

describes "the gleam of that violet sea, the distant mass of Ischia lying against the fading glow of the west, and all that world of exquisite blue air warmed through and through with the departed sunshine and sweet with blossoms. The sound of the *Ave Maria* droppiu^g suddenly into the glorious blue of sky and sea and air, just at that charmed moment when the light throbs and trembles before it turns into darkness ; and then comes a sound of singing from the violet sea—

‘ Mare ! si placido !
Vento ! si caro !
Scordar fa i triboli
Al marina^ro ! ’ ”

Vittoria's French biographer thus describes this delightful retreat :—" Ischia¹ est la plus étendue et la plus charmante de ces îles grecques qui semblent faire du golfe de Naples un immense jardin d'eau, dont les massifs sont autant de miniatures de la

¹ Bishop Berkeley thus describes the island :—

" Ischia is twenty miles from Naples ; it is twenty miles in circumference. In the centre of the island rises the Monte Essomeo, 3,574 feet above the sea ; an Etna in miniature. There is a wonderful variety in the island—barren mountains, fruitful plains, and rocks thrown together in romantic profusion ; hills covered with groves of chestnut and myrtle, with rivulets and fountains interspersed ; the air constantly refreshed by cool breezes, and with the finest prospect in the world."

Suisse. Avec ses forêts, ses sources, ses rochers, ses volcans, qui ne jettent plus que des fleurs, elle est sans contredit un des plus magiques séjours que puisse imaginer l'âme du poète. C'est, à côté du tumulte effréné d'une capitale, la retraite la plus ombreuse et la plus recueillie ; un paradis de verdure et de silence, défendu par les flots transparents de la mer de Tyrrhène contre les vagues de bruit et de poussière de l'enfer napolitain."

Tasso also celebrates the island, and the far-famed meetings in Costanza's court, in a sonnet beginning—

*"Superbo scoglio, altero e bel recetto
Di tanti chiari eroi," &c.*

*"Proud rock! The high and beautiful retreat
Of so many noble heroes." . . .*

*"Well be it with thee! May both winds and seas respect thee!
May thy native air and wave be tempered ever by a genial sky!"*

The two lovely children passed the early years of their education in this delightful retreat, pursuing their studies with the greatest pleasure, and growing up together in happy friendship. The varied accomplishments of Vittoria, and the talents and martial graces of Francesco, proved the care with which their education had been conducted.

They also enjoyed the advantages of the best

society, around their admirable sister, the Duchessa di Francavilla. The ladies who formed her society "were the ornament of that age and the envy of after-times." In that assembly the Duchessa held the first place, but in a short time Vittoria was destined to outshine every one else. "There were many gentlewomen both of Sicily and Naples whose talents and beauty proved them worthy of that high company," says Visconti. "The name of Ischia was synonymous with everything glorious and elegant, and its fame has been immortalized by many writers." Vittoria, in her poems, also frequently refers, with the tenderest recollections, to this scene of her youthful happiness.

"Era in questo mezzo cresciuta Vittoria; bellissima della persona, e ornata delle più care doti dell'animo."¹ Of Francesco, Visconti also says he was "Garzone avvenente, e il meglio costumato che fosse!"—a charming boy, and of the best dispositions. He had few equals in manners, in letters, or in arms. He had been exercised in military affairs from childhood, and his noble nature inclined him to all martial exercises. His hair was auburn, his

¹ "Thus surrounded Vittoria grew up, most beautiful in person, and adorned with the most precious gifts of the mind." Visconti, lxiii.

nose aquiline, his eyes large and fiery, but at times mild and gentle. In every respect he was fitted to fill a distinguished position in the chivalry of that age. Though born in Naples he was of Spanish blood, and spoke Spanish, by preference, even to Vittoria. He considered himself a Spaniard, and affected the manners of that nation in his dress and deportment.

The beauty and charms of the young Vittoria attracted the notice of all visitors to the island. She was tall, and of a noble carriage, "the perfection of her form, aided by her pure blood, which shone in her so resplendently, caused her hand to be sought by many." She was adorned with a splendid head of hair, of a colour so rarely met with in Italy, "di un biondo dorato," and its beauty was praised in the verses of many of the poets of the day. Ridolfi says, "nè chiome d'ore più, nè ardenti soli temea;" and he elsewhere asserts "le trecce d'or in gli alte giri, non è ch' unqua pareggi o sole o stella;" and he remarks that both the sun and his lady are adorned "con chiome d'or lucide e terse." Andrea di Asola, in dedicating his edition of the *Divina Commedia* to Vittoria, says "le quali cose siccome le care gemme la vostra bionda testa ornano et abbelliscono," &c. (Visconti, p. xlii.)

CHAPTER II.

1500—1509—1512.

THE tranquil life of the young children in their beautiful island home was continually interrupted by the events which were occurring in Naples and in Rome. In Naples, no fewer than five kings had reigned in three years, causing the wildest grief, or the gayest festivities, among those excitable citizens. The first event, which occurred when the children were hardly old enough to comprehend the distress that threw a shadow over the Duchessa di Francavilla's house, was the untimely death of the young King and Queen of Naples in October, 1496, immediately after their marriage. The whole country was in indescribable grief; and "there arose a cry of weeping so great," says Passari, "that I truly think since God made the world a greater weeping was never known." After this event came the grand Jubilee of 1500, in which Naples was most desirous to

partake, by sending to Rome its famous Madonna, escorted with much pomp. This great treasure, however, Pope Borgia in no wise would permit to remain there, and immediately ordered the sacred procession to turn home again. It was asserted that the image, not only worked miracles all the way there, but even a more wonderful series on the way back. And the Neapolitan world would of course be full of talk and indignation at the circumstance, "It was discussed, we may shrewdly conjecture, in a somewhat different spirit in that Ischia household, which most interests us."¹

The Jubilee fête was first held in 1300 for the express sale of indulgences. Originally it was held every fifty years, and then every thirty years. The Popes drove a sordid traffic in the lesser, as well as in the larger, indulgences. The sale was carried on with the coarsest avarice. They did not refuse the pence of the poorest people, who would compound for their sins by giving what they could. In the cities, castles, and country houses, every woman, or peasant, who had nothing else to give, was asked to bestow linen, or woollen cloth, household utensils, grain, and corn. Nothing was refused. The Com-

¹ Trollope.

mission in this manner deceived the people with words, and robbed the country houses and castles more than even the cities.

The mighty temple of St. Peter's was erected by the money thus fraudulently wrung from the ignorance and crimes of the peasantry of Europe. The Synodal Courts were also a great means by which the prelates enriched themselves. They punished by fines, convicted by perjury, and innocent persons were willing to buy themselves off from false accusations at any price.

In the year of Jubilee, 1300, the roads were crowded by pilgrims of all ages to visit the tombs of the Apostles. Two hundred thousand strangers were in Rome at once; and during the year, it is said, millions of pilgrims visited the Holy City. Many people were pressed to death, and at one time the crowds were so great that openings in the walls had to be made. The offerings to the Pope poured in so fast that priests stood with rakes in their hands to sweep the gold and silver from the altars. These gifts were entirely at the free irresponsible disposal of the Pope, and the people received in return the promise of pardon and everlasting life.¹

¹ Milman's "Hist. Latin Christ." vi. 285.

The next public event occurred in 1501, when Frederick, king of Naples, came to Ischia with his queen and children, accompanied by his sister Beatrice, widow of the great Matthew Corvinus, king of Hungary, and his sister Isabella, widow of Gian Galeazzo. These illustrious exiles were the guests of the castle; and the young Vittoria was old enough to sympathise fully with such interesting visitors. They remained there till the unhappy king went to France to surrender himself to Louis in person; so that Ischia saw the last of the Arragonese dynasty.

In the year 1506, a more brilliant scene presented itself in Naples, on the arrival of the new King and Queen in Italy, on November 1st. The same people who had made such exceeding lamentation for Ferdinand of Arragon, were equally loud in their expressions of welcome towards his usurping kinsman. The King and Queen were to land at the Mole, and a pier had been thrown out a hundred paces into the sea for their accommodation, and a tent of gold was erected upon it, in which the royal party were to rest on arrival. The city wall was thrown down, to allow the *cortège* to pass, and as the royal pair proceeded, noble ladies were seated on

richly-tapestried seats, and nothing was to be seen but velvets, silks, and gold, nor heard but the thunder of the guns and the cheers of the populace. Among these gracious dames, Costanza d'Avalos shone conspicuous, with the lovely girl of sixteen at her side, and attended by the graceful youth, her brother.

It is said, that as the King passed along, the ladies rose and kissed his hand, at which he seemed highly gratified. Fêtes and entertainments followed, in which, perhaps, the young Vittoria might be permitted to take some share, and so delighted would the two young people be with all the gaiety and pageantry, that they would be unwilling to listen to the thoughts that might present themselves to the more matured mind of Costanza, when she compared the tumult of the present rejoicing with the melancholy fate of the exiled monarch, who had so lately been a guest under her roof. The beauty of Vittoria could not fail to be the subject of general observation. Now, as ever, she was the cynosure of neighbouring eyes, and in a year from this time, we find that many offers for the honour of her hand were made to Fabrizio Colonna; though it must have been then well known that she had been betrothed in her childhood to Francesco d'Avalos.

Naples had belonged to Spain since the year 1503, and it gradually settled down under the Spanish rule. Fabrizio Colonna continued to live in much splendour and consideration under the Spanish viceroys. Vittoria had now returned to her father's house. The period was approaching when she would be claimed by her betrothed, and other suitors were to be rejected.

In Roscoe's "*Life of Leo X.*" it is stated that her hand was sought by several independent sovereigns of Italy; and, in 1507, "when Francesco di Pescara was about to give her the ring" (as the Italian biographer expresses it), the Duke de Savoia and the Duke de Braganza both aspired to seek her in marriage. Giovio, in speaking of these three lovers, says of them, in a letter to Stefano Colonna, "*L'uno è troppo lontano; l'altro è troppo fuoriscito; e l'altro è troppo tenerello;*"¹ and a doubt seemed to exist as to which suitor was to be preferred. The following sonnet, already referred to, apparently relates to the difficulty:—

¹ "One is too far off, another is too old, and the other is too young."

SONNET XXXVII.

“Hardly had my spirit entered into life, when my heart proscribed every other object! and nothing found favour in my eyes but the heavenly aspect of him in whose light I was always nourished.

“O! what hard law has since withdrawn my soul from this grateful shelter, this divine asylum?

“My safeguard, my light, my day is gone! My road is lost in blind darkness.

“Nature and Heaven join in a similar wish to unite us. Ah! what inimical force separates us?

“If his life nourishes my frail life, for him I was born; I am his, and if he is taken from me, in his death I also ought to die!”

The Pope, Julius II., interfered to settle the question at once, and in favour of the Marchese di Pescara, either because he preferred that nobleman to any of the other suitors, or because there was no hope that the affections of Vittoria could be turned to any other quarter, as she had been brought up with this charming youth from her childhood—
“della prima e tenera sua giovinezza.”

Some of Vittoria's biographers have said that she was married in 1507, at seventeen years of age; but it is proved by Visconti, from the archives of the Colonnas, that the union did not take place till 1509, when the youthful bride was brought from

Marino, in Napoli, with great state, and with a grand escort of Roman nobility, to the ducal castle of Ischia, where the marriage ceremony was celebrated with all that pomp and festivity demanded by the wealth and position of both families.¹

A list of the rich presents² that were exchanged

¹ Visconti states that the bride was brought from Marino in Napoli to Ischia, for the wedding festivities. This probably was not Marino on Lago D'Albano, but some other palace belonging to Colonna.

² Lists of the presents given on the occasion of the marriage, taken from the original documents in the Colonna Archives, by Signor Visconti.

The Marchese di Pescara received, says the document, from the Lord Fabrizio Colonna and the Lady Vittoria—

1. A bed, of French fashion, with the curtains and all the hangings of crimson satin, lined with blue taffetas, with large fringes of gold; with three mattresses, and a counterpane of crimson satin of similar workmanship; and four pillows of crimson satin, garnished with fringes and tassels of gold.

2. A cloak of crimson-raised brocade.

3. A cloak of black-raised brocade and white silk.

4. A cloak of purple velvet and purple brocade.

5. A cross of diamonds and, a housing for a mule, of wrought gold.

The bride received from the Marchese di Pescara—

1. A cross of diamonds, with a chain of gold, value 1000 ducats.

2. A ruby, a diamond, and an emerald set in gold, of the value of 400 ducats.

3. A writing-desk of gold, value 100 ducats.

4. Twelve bracelets of gold, value 40 ducats.

between Vittoria and Francesco is still preserved in the Colonna archives, and also the names of all those personages who officially testified to the marriage signatures; "and no better authority can be had," adds Visconti. "These were happy days for Vittoria," he remarks, "if the separation from her mother's bosom, and from her brothers, did not distress her. Of her brothers, she most espe-

Marriage Gifts to Vittoria.

1. A suit and gown of double-raised brocade.
2. A *briale* of brocade, trimmed with lappets of crimson velvet.
3. A *briale* of crimson velvet.
4. A *briale* of brocade and silk, of white colour.
5. A *briale* of crimson silk, with trimmings of brocade and white silk.
6. A *briale* of Lyons velvet and silk, of black colour.
7. A suit and gown of velvet, dark crimson, with trimmings of brocade.
8. A "baschiglia" of blue silk, trimmed with lappets of gold silk.
9. A petticoat of carnation-coloured silk, trimmed with black velvet.
10. A petticoat of cherry-coloured silk, trimmed with black velvet.
11. A cloak of double-raised brocade.
12. A mantle of crimson velvet, trimmed with ermine.
13. A hood of black damask, trimmed with gold fringe.
14. A mantle of white silk, trimmed with brocade, and a robe of black damask.

Her marriage portion was 14,000 ducats.

cially loved Federigo, who was the first-born, and the first to die, and who was a youth of a very holy and peaceable nature. Sad, also, to her must have been the departure of her father, who was called to the supreme command of the Arragonese soldiers in September, 1510. But in her Pescara she quickly found everything on which to place her affections: all that was sweetest in daughter, sister, or mother." This passage certainly implies that Vittoria had lived in her father's house previous to her marriage, which indeed was to be expected.

Every favour of fortune concurred to render this union joyful. "*Questa riguardevole coppia*," says Rota, "*non ebbe forse pari in Italia di que' tempi*." This noted pair had not their equals in Italy at that time. Certainly in Vittoria's eyes there was no one to be compared to her young hero. Their life in Naples was all festivities and magnificence, and when they desired to exchange it for the tranquillity of the country, they left Naples to go to Pietralba, a villa belonging to the d'Avalos family, on the side of Monte Ermo, where frequently pleasant parties of ladies and gentlemen assembled. But still more delightful and cheerful times were spent by them in their beloved Ischia, where the

Marchese di Pescara usually resided. Here neither at first, nor later, could they enjoy much quiet, because the Duchessa, being Castellana, was obliged to receive much company, and exercise a large hospitality. And in this remote corner of Italy often were found the flower of chivalry, and the men most noted in letters. Anidst such society Francesco and Vittoria heard narrations of bold factions, happy counsels, military perils, reverses, and victories, from the lips of a Prospero and a Fabrizio Colonna, and other generals who frequented their society, and were inflamed with the love of war in the first place, and in the second place enamoured of the Muses. Or they listened to the poets Sanazzaro, il Cariteo, il Rota, and Bernardo Tasso, repeating their verses, or they heard the admirable discourses on letters of Musefico, il Filocalo, il Giovio, and il Minturno. It was an agreeable and approved school for the youthful minds of Vittoria and Pescara. Thus passed most happily the first three years of their married life.

Dear to Vittoria's heart was every spot in the beautiful island where they had lived together, and those early days are again and again immortalised in her verse. But when the war with France broke

out, at the beginning of the year 1512, the Marchese di Pescara was called upon to serve for the King of Naples, and to embrace an opportunity of giving proofs of his martial valour. He immediately prepared to accompany Vittoria's father, the grand constable, Prospero Colonna,¹ her uncle, and her brothers to the scene of action.

In that age it was universally considered essential to the character of a gentleman to distinguish himself in feats of arms; and though it was a great grief to Vittoria to part from her beloved Francesco, yet "far above the generality of women, she did not endeavour to alter her husband's resolves, remembering that those who desire to attain glory and fame must give up their private wishes."

On Pescara's shield was the motto, "*With this or on this;*" and there is no doubt that he was a brave man, a great soldier, and a chivalrous gentleman. He was second only to Prospero Colonna in fame, and was adored by his men. He was elected captain-general of cavalry at the

¹ *Prospero Colonna* had such a name as a great and successful general that the French are said to have exclaimed when they heard of his death, "Milan is ours, now that Colonna is dead!"

age of twenty-one, and was afterwards appointed captain-general of infantry in 1513. This is not the place to speak of his military deeds, except in so far as they affected our Colonna; but his life is written by Giovio in seven volumes, in which may be found the history of his great military successes, and his name is famous in all the histories of that period. When Vittoria had taken a tender leave of her brave warriors, and seen them depart at the head of their troops—after providing Pescara with everything in armour, horses, &c. suited to his high rank—and having commended her husband to her father's care, and her father to her husband—she returned to the citron groves and laurels of Ischia, in 1512, there to indulge in secret her grief, and to occupy herself in her studies.

Before many months had passed she had a new cause for grief; for the fatal tidings came that, at the battle of Ravenna,¹ the 11th of April,

¹ *Ravenna* is a city of the highest antiquity, and full of interesting relics and histories. This noble imperial city was under Venice in 1441, and afterwards ceded to the Roman See in 1509. It was governed by a Legate, and was next to Rome itself in importance. It is very strongly fortified. This great battle was fought on Easter Sunday, 11th of April, 1512. Italy never had

1512, whilst fighting at the head of his troops, her beloved Pescara had been wounded in many places; and after lying for dead on the battle-field had been taken prisoner. Her father, the Grand Constable, had also fallen into the enemy's hands. Pescara was carried to Milan, and there placed in "*a superior prison*," in the fortress of Porta Gobbia.

Vittoria was at this time in Ischia, and a special messenger was sent over to the island to acquaint her with the evil tidings; she describes her grief in a letter to Pescara written in terza rime, and containing thirty-seven stanzas. This epistle was not published till Visconti, in 1840, added it to the other poems in his revised edition of Vittoria's writings. It is, evidently, a private letter to Pescara, and has been treasured up in the family archives.

seen so bloody a combat. It is said that 20,000 men were left dead on the field.

Its bishopric was one of the most ancient in the world. Dante died there on the 14th September, 1321. Bembo, the podesta of Ravenna, and the father of Cardinal Bembo, erected a mausoleum at Ravenna, in honour of Dante, in 1483. In 1519, the Florentines petitioned Leo X., but unsuccessfully, to permit the bones of Dante to be restored to his native city. Michael Angelo affixed his great name to the petition. "*Io Michael Angelo, scultore, supplico offerendomi al divin poeta, fare la sepultura nuova con decenza e in loco onerevole in questa città.*"

Written only three years after her marriage, it is, in fact, a most beautiful and touching love-letter. It begins—

“Eccelsio Mio Signor ! Questa ti scrivo
Per te narrar tra quante dubbie voglie,
Fra quanti aspri martir, dogliosa io vivo !”

and it concludes—

“Tu, vivi lieto, e non hai doglia alcuna :!
Chè pensando di fama il nuovo acquisto,
Non curi farmi del tuo amor digiuna.
Ma, io, con volto disdegnoso e tristo,
Serbo il tuo letto abbandonato e solo,
Tenendo con la speme il dolor misto,
E col vostro gioir tempore il mio duolo !”

The following is a translation of this pathetic letter :—

“Epistle from Vittoria Colonna to F. F. D’Avalos, after the defeat of Ravenna.”¹

“ECCELSO MIO SIGNOR,—I write this to thee to tell thee amidst what dubious wishes and bitter anxieties I live. I little expected such grief and torment from thee, who oughtest to have gained the victory if the favour of Heaven had been propitious. I did not think that the Marchese and the Fabrizio would ever have caused me such great sorrow—the one my father, the other my husband ! Piety towards my father, and love towards thee, are for ever gnawing at my heart like two hungry rabid snakes. I believed

¹ “Epistola a Ferrante Francesco D’Avalos suo Consorte nella Rotta di Ravenna. Rime ommesse nelle precedenti Edizioni e per nostra cura unita per la prima volta alla stampa del suo canzoniere.”

—Visconti.

that the Fates would have been more benignant. I believed that so many prayers and tears, and love without measure, would not have been displeasing to God; whilst thy deeds are known in heaven, and the fame and glory of my father also.

"But now this dangerous assault and this horrid and cruel fight has turned my mind and heart to stone. Your great valour has shone as in a Hector or an Achilles; but what comfort is that to me, weeping, abandoned!

"My mind was always doubtful, which caused me to give a mixed judgment, divided between assent and dissent; but I, O miserable! always thought that evil fortune could not come nigh thy valour and thy brave soul!

"Others may desire war! I always desire peace! saying, it is enough for me if my Marchese remains quietly in his place. It does not disturb you to attempt difficult undertakings, but to us, grieving and afflicted, what seeds of fear and doubt it brings!

"You, full of ardour, not dreaming of anything but honour, disdainful of danger, rush to battle with furious cries; whilst we, timid of heart, sad of aspect, desire—the sister, the brother; the wife, the husband; the mother, the son; and I, alas, desire both husband, father, brothers, and son! In this case I am daughter by nature, wife by the legal ties of marriage, and sister and mother by affection!

"Never before came messenger from whom I did not seek to know every little particular, to make my mind joyful and at ease; but on that fatal day I (in *the body*, my *mind* is always with *thee*), was lying at a point of our island, when the whole atmosphere appeared like a thick cloud—like a cavern of black fog; the water boiled up and showed fear; the verdure seemed stagnant; the sea looked like ink, and, weeping around, the marine gods seemed to say to Ischia—'To-day, Vittoria, thou shalt hear of disgrace from the confines. Though now in health and honour, thou shalt be turned to grief; but thy father and husband are saved, though taken prisoners.'

"Then with a dark and sad countenance I, weeping, narrated the fearful and sad augury to the magnanimous Costanza. She comforted me, as is her wont, saying, 'Do not think of it. It would be a strange thing for such a force to be conquered!'

“ ‘He cannot be much removed from such evils,’ I replied, ‘who, animated to great deeds, does not fear to what his hand leads. Those who go into action must show a prompt and rapid boldness, and can have no breathing time, nor bargain with fortune.’

“And behold! as I spoke the fatal messenger arrived to tell us the sad tale of thy ill-fortune; the remembrance of which still seems to me like a trick played upon my feelings. If victory thou desired I was near thee; but thou, in leaving me, lost *her*, and in seeking another she has fled from thee!

“It distressed Pompey, as thou oughtest to know, to leave Cornelia; and it distressed Cato to leave Marcia in bitter tears. A wife ought to follow her husband at home and abroad; if he suffers trouble, she suffers; if he is happy, she is; if he dies, she dies. What happens to one happens to both; equals in life, they are equals in death. His fate is her fate.

“Thou livest cheerful, having no care; and in thinking of thy newly-acquired fame, thou grieveest not to be separated from thy beloved! whilst I, with angry and sad countenance, rest on thy abandoned and solitary couch, with hope and sorrow filled; thy joy tempering my grief.”

It does not appear how long the illustrious prisoners remained in this captivity, but as Pescara, owing to the state of his wounds, could not take any exercise, he amused himself with writing a “Dialogue on Love,” addressed to his wife in Ischia, in which he expresses very vividly the love he bore her, and how he was grieved to be so far from her. This poem is now lost, having been searched for in vain by Visconti; but it has been well spoken of by some writers. Vittoria went, at this time, to reside in Naples, to be more within

reach of tidings of her husband. Probably many letters passed between them during this separation; but these may not have been preserved. She sent him a little device she had made for him. A cupid in a circle formed by a serpent; with the motto, "*Quem peperit virtus, prudentia servet amorem,*" showing that wisdom united with valour should make the beautiful knot indissoluble — (we may interpret it, "The wisdom of the serpent and the innocence of the dove.") The condition of the prisoners was mitigated by the efforts of Pescara's maternal uncle, who resided in Milan. He had in 1488 married Beatrice, the daughter of Inico d'Avalos. In a short time their release, also, was obtained (not without the payment of a heavy ransom) by this uncle, and by the Duke de Ferrara, who had a great esteem for Fabrizio, duke de Palliano. He had been so fortunate as to fall into the hands of Alfonso D'Este, who knew his worth, and treated him with the respect due to his high and unimpeachable character. The King of France requested several times to have the prisoners transferred to France; but the duke found reasons to excuse his non-compliance, till the total expulsion of the French

from Italy enabled him to gratify the generosity of his own disposition, by freely restoring his captives to liberty.

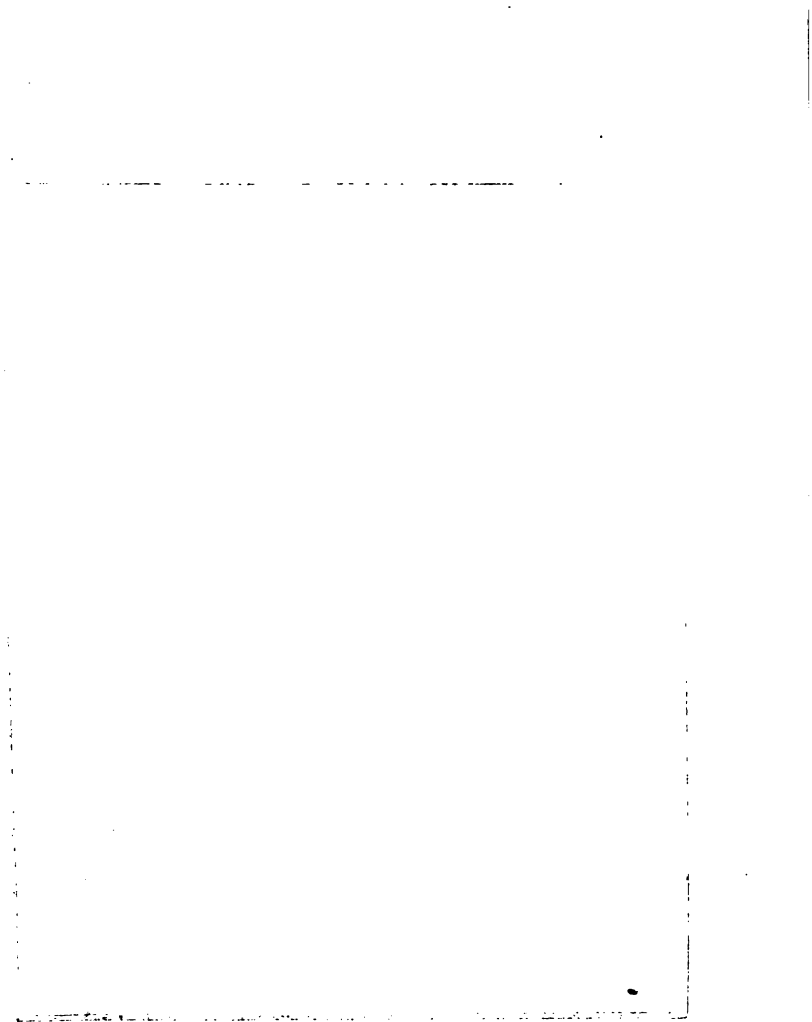
The Duke de Ferrara, in return, requested that Fabrizio Colonna, when he arrived at Rome, would endeavour to obtain the Pope's pardon for him, and effect a reconciliation between them.

Julius expressed no reluctance in complying, but he suggested that D'Este's presence would be necessary in Rome. A safe conduct was accordingly sent him, and the Spanish ambassador also pledged himself to the Duke, for his safe return. He arrived in Rome in June, 1512, and was admitted into Consistory. Here he humbly begged pardon for having borne arms against the Holy See; entreated to be restored to favour; and promised to conduct himself as a faithful son and feudatory of the Church. Julius received him with apparent kindness, and deputed six cardinals to treat with him, as to the terms of the proposed reconciliation; but the surprise of the Duke may well be conceived when the ecclesiastics proposed to him to divest himself of the territory of Ferrara, which he had derived through a long line of ancestors, and to accept as a compensation the remote and unim-

portant city of Asti, to which the Pope had lately asserted some pretensions. Of all his family there was no one less likely than Alfonso to have submitted to such a disgrace; but his astonishment was converted into indignation, on hearing that the Duke d'Urbino at the head of the Papal troops had entered his dominions and occupied the towns, and ventured within the walls of the important City of Reggio. The Pope also refused to allow the Duke to quit Rome. The Spanish ambassador and the nobles of the Colonna family, some of whom were closely connected by affinity with the Pope, interceded with him for the strict and honourable performance of his engagement. Julius answered their remonstrances only by reproaches and threats. Convinced of his perfidious intentions, Fabrizio and Marc Antonio Colonna resolved to rescue the Duke from the danger to which he was exposed. Having, therefore, selected a small band of their confidential adherents, Fabrizio rode at their head towards the gate of St. John Lateran, followed at a short distance by the Duke and Marc Antonio; but to his surprise, he found the gates more strongly guarded than usual, and his further progress opposed. It was now, however, too late:

to retreat, and directing his followers to effect a passage by force, he conducted the Duke in safety to the Colonna fortress at Marino.

Here the protection of the Duke was entrusted to Prospero Colonna, who secretly conducted him from place to place, but so diligently were they pursued by the emissaries of the Pope, that the Duke was frequently obliged to change his disguise, and after having for upwards of three months appeared in the successive characters of a soldier, a cook, a hunter, and a monk, he had the good fortune at last to arrive in safety at Ferrara. The vexation and resentment of the Pope were so extreme, that the Duke determined to mitigate his anger by a respectful and submissive embassy ; but such was the well-known character of the pontiff that he found it difficult to prevail on any of his courtiers to undertake the task. At length he fixed on Ariosto, who, preferring the will of his prince to his own safety, hastened to Rome. On his arrival he found that the Pope had retired to a villa in the neighbourhood. To this place Ariosto followed him, but on being admitted to his presence he soon discovered that the only chance which he had for his life, was immediate flight ; the ferocious pontiff





VITTORIA COLONNA.—SEBASTIAN DEL PIOMBO.

having threatened, if he did not instantly quit the place, he would have him thrown into the sea. The poet was happy to avail himself of the safer alternative, and returned to Ferrara with all possible expedition. To this embassy Ariosto himself alludes in one of his satires.

This adventure of Ferrara occurred on the 17th of July, 1512, and it was very often afterwards related by Fabrizio Colonna as a most excellent joke.

Pescara returned after his short captivity with great delight to his beloved home ; which he may have feared never to behold again. His presence "made the day brilliant" to Vittoria, and filled her heart with joy. His very paleness, caused by the honourable wounds from which he had suffered, endeared him to her the more. Her "*noble wounded*" came back to her covered with glory. His invalided looks gave a certain charm to his countenance, so that Isabella D'Aragona, duchessa di Milano, had exclaimed on seeing him, "I should like to be a man, that I too might receive a wound in the face, as you have done, and see how becoming it would be to mine, as it is to yours!" Pescara only remained in the quiet of Ischia till

the following year, 1513, when he was again called to join the allied armies in Lombardy along with his father-in-law and Prospero Colonna.

Louis XII. had waged an unsuccessful war in Italy for fifteen years, and when Francis I., the gay and gallant young prince, succeeded him on the throne of France, the war was prosecuted with renewed vigour. By an incredible effort an army was marched over the Alps by Chevalier Bayard, in 1515, which took Prospero Colonna by surprise, and made him a prisoner. Francis I., at the great "Battle of the Giants," was at the head of his troops, and gained a victory which gave him, for a short time, possession of Milan; but eventually the French were worsted in every engagement, owing to the reckless daring of the king and his generals, which finally ended in the capture of Francis at the Battle of Pavia, and in the French being driven entirely out of Italy.

CHAPTER III.

1515—1520—1521.

VITTORIA, after she had parted with her beloved heroes, returned to Ischia; to its perpendicular cliffs, and its orange and olive groves, reflected in the wonderful mirror of its pure waters—to its peace and its leisure—there to pursue her reading, and to dwell with tenderness on all the recollections of the past. “She remained constantly at home, not wandering from her studies, and considering no time of value, but so spent.”¹ Her dear friend and sister, Costanza, shared her study of the ancient languages; and, perhaps also, the exercises in Italian poetry, from which Vittoria’s fame has chiefly arisen. At the revival of learning, in the fifteenth century, the nobility and higher classes in Italy, stimulated by the example of popes and princes, cultivated the classics, and emulated one

¹ Rota.

another in the love of literature. The Italian language was perfected, and became the language of the poet, the historian, and the people. It arose under its new beauty, in the time of Dante; and Vittoria Colonna, in her graceful poems, displayed its charms and musical rhythm, in the utmost perfection.

She was now by study, by thought, by retirement, and the gradual ripening of her powers, preparing to take that place in the world of letters, which after-times have unanimously accorded to her. She only occasionally visited Naples, when she could receive a flying visit from her husband, who came from the camp to join her as often as he could snatch a short period of repose. It had long been a source of grief to Pescara and Vittoria that they had no children to continue their name and family. Vittoria speaks of her sorrow on this subject in the Sonnet, No. 22. She wished to turn her thoughts from her regrets, and her affections into new channels, by adopting a son, and in 1515, when Pescara visited her, in Ischia, she proposed to him to adopt his young cousin, the Marchese del Vasto, to be his heir. She was eminently fitted for the task of education, and she turned all her

talents, and her strong and ardent affections, to the task of cherishing and training her adopted child, who is described as having been "beautiful as an angel." She had the entire satisfaction of succeeding in her task, which was by no means an easy one; and she was rewarded by the delight of seeing Vasto become everything she could desire, and of enjoying his devoted love for the rest of his life. He was a boy of a quick and lively intelligence, who had hitherto been without check or rule, and who was so rude and unmanageable, as to have the character of being almost savage and rebellious. "So headstrong and violent was he, that he seemed doomed to a life of crime," but Vittoria gave herself the mission of taming him and turning him to good. Her grace, her beauty, her unchangeable gentleness, her proud and tranquil bearing, and her firmness tempered with kindness, exercised a magical influence over this rude boy. His sole delight was to obey his instructress, and he soon loved the studies for the sake of the teacher.

The return of Pescara in 1515 was a triumphal one. Fêtes and rejoicings followed, and Vittoria celebrated the event in two sonnets, the 75th and

the 102d. She describes how the summit, heights, and ample sides of the great mountain were aflame with bonfires, and the borders of the beautiful shore bright and warm with lights, and she says—

“Neither the steadfast earth nor the moving waters are behind-hand, so joined is the whole island in these rejoicings. Whichever way I turn I see new triumphs and worthy trophies rising up, and all around are the immortal praises of thy high valour. Nor is this only upon one day, my lord ; but I know that all thy years have been so well spent, that they all equally record thy great merit.”

In Sonnet 75 she says—

“My beloved returns to us, loaded with regal spoils and rich booty, his countenance radiant with piety to God, with deeds born of inward faith, and with words dictated by true wisdom.”

And she relates that, at last, conquered by her prayers, he showed her his beautiful wounds, and described to her the time and mode of his many and great victories :—

“So much pain and so much joy I have in these things, and in that thought, that, weeping, I enjoy but little pleasure, and many bitter tears.”

In February, 1517, a very magnificent fête was given by the D'Avalos family in Naples, on occasion of the marriage of another Costanza d'Avalos, the sister of Vasto, and the young cousin of the Duchessa di Francavilla. She was married to Alfonso Piccolomini, duke d'Amalfi, of the great Roman family of that

name, and there had not been so grand a wedding in Naples for a long time. The superb appearance of Vittoria Colonna on this occasion was such as "few could equal, and none surpass."¹

On the 6th December, 1517, there was another high festival held in Naples, on the marriage of the King of Poland with Donna Bona Sforza. Passing over all the changes which Master Passeri rings on velvet, satin, gold, and brocades and costly furs, we come to the account of the illustrious lady, the Signora Vittoria, Marchesa di Pescara, and we are informed she was mounted on a black and white jennet, with crimson velvet housings trimmed with gold, and was accompanied by six ladies in waiting, clad in azure damask, and attended by six grooms on foot, with cloaks and jerkins of yellow satin.

She herself wore a robe of brocaded crimson velvet, with large branches of beaten gold on it, a crimson satin cap, with a head-dress of wrought gold above it, and around her waist was a girdle of beaten gold. On quitting the church, the noble party sat down to table at six o'clock, to a sumptuous entertainment, which lasted till five in the morning. Large interludes were probably allowed for music and reci-

¹ Guiliano Passeri's Diary, printed in Naples, 1785; rare.

tations of poetry. Thus passed the first day "with infinite delight," and the whole party enjoyed a second and a third day in the same manner. The bride's *trousseau* was displayed, article by article, as the guests still were sitting at table, and Passeri gives a catalogue of the whole exhibition, linens, dresses, and plate, besides 100,000 ducats of gold in caskets and on trays. "It may well be imagined," says Trollope, who gives the whole particulars of this wedding feast, "that Vittoria was not sorry to return to the quiet and intellectual society of Ischia after these tremendous three days at Naples."¹

Pescara was absent on the day of the grand entry into Naples, as well as at the solemnization of the marriage, but by "putting spurs to his haste," he was enabled to reach Naples in the evening; and coming to the Castle Capuano, he was received with a most gracious welcome from the Duchessa di Milano, the bride's mother, and the next day he rode beside the bride to Manfredonia, where she took ship. Il Passeri, who writes a full account of everything in his diary, of the dowry and furniture which the Queen took with her to Poland, as well as of the marriage feast, gives us some idea of the immense

¹ "Decade of Italian Women," p. 319.

wealth and extravagant habits of the nobility of Naples in that day.

In this year Pescara received the appointment of Grand Chamberlain to the Royal House in Naples, and in the year 1520 he accepted a new post of honour, being elected ambassador to Charles V. on the occasion of his intended coronation at Aix-la-Chapelle. The Arragonese barons had selected the Marchese di Pescara to represent their body at this splendid ceremony.

This very honourable and agreeable appointment of her husband could not have been entirely without care to the heart of Vittoria, for so long an absence and so distant a journey was not accomplished without sacrifice and anxiety to her.

Charles V. had inherited the crowns of Arragon and Castile at the age of sixteen, with all the vast possessions in the New World, as well as the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, and the island of Sardinia. And in 1519, at the death of his grandfather Maximilian, he had been elected Emperor of Germany, and was now about to repair to the very ancient city of Aix-la-Chapelle, there to receive the crown and sceptre of Charlemagne.

Charles determined to go by sea, and he arranged

to visit Henry VIII. of England on his way. Pescara most probably joined the fleet which conveyed the Emperor and his suite. In this case he would sail from Corunna, and land with the party at Dover. The imperial visit, which occurred on the 25th of May, 1520, was entirely unexpected by Henry, but his wily Chancellor already knew the Emperor's intentions, and was prepared for his coming. Cardinal Wolsey was pensioned, and courted, both by the French King and by the Emperor; and the latter, on this occasion, presented him with an additional sum of 7,000 ducats, and styled him "most dear friend," whilst Francis strove by presents, and flattery, and deference, to preserve him in his own interest, calling him "father, tutor, and governor." The Emperor wished to prevent the intended meeting of the Cloth of Gold between the two gay young monarchs, but they were too fond of spectacles and display to give up that magnificent fête, and Wolsey himself was no less fond of exhibiting his greatness and wealth. The Emperor was not at the tournament, but Henry visited him afterwards at Gravelines, and persuaded him to go with him to Calais. During these interviews the Emperor succeeded

in entirely winning Wolsey's good offices.¹ Charles was received by Henry in great state. He went to meet him at Dover, and brought him to Canterbury, where Queen Catherine, the Emperor's aunt, with all the court, were assembled, at a grand Jubilee in honour of the shrine of Thomas à Becket.²

It was the last Jubilee ever held at that place. All the immense wealth of the shrine was soon to be in the king's coffers, and the most splendid jewel that adorned it was soon to hang on Henry's own breast.

¹ Shakespeare has most exactly described the circumstances. He says (Henry VIII. act i. scene 1):—

“Charles the Emperor,
Under pretence to see the Queen, his aunt
(For 'twas, indeed, his colour; but he came
To whisper Wolsey), here makes visitation.
His fears were that th' interview betwixt
England and France might, through their amity,
Breed him some prejudice; for from this league
Peep'd harms that menaced him: he privily
Deals with our Cardinal; and as, I trow,—
Which I do well, for I am sure the Emperor
Paid ere he promised; whereby his suit was granted
Ere it was asked; but when the way was made,
And paved with gold, the Emperor thus desired,
That he would please to alter the King's course,
And break the foresaid peace. Let the King know
(As soon he shall by me) that thus the Cardinal
Doth buy and sell his honour as he pleases,
And for his own advantage.”

² Dean Stanley's "Canterbury."

The two handsome young sovereigns rode into Canterbury under the same canopy, the great Cardinal riding directly in front of them, and on the right and left were the proud nobles of Spain and England, Pescara perhaps among them. The kings alighted from their horses at the west door of the cathedral, and together paid their devotions before that rich shrine blazing with jewels. They humbly knelt on the steps worn by the knees of tens of thousands of pilgrims. Such a magnificent assemblage was never seen there before, nor such an entertainment, as was given afterwards, in the Archiepiscopal Palace, by Warham, to the kings. After three days, the Emperor and his suite repaired to their ships, and set sail for the Low Countries, reaching Aix-la-Chapelle at the appointed time. The ceremonies in the fine old halls of that most ancient city were equally gorgeous.

Francis I. had also aspired to be elected Emperor; and that Charles V. should have been preferred before him, was one cause of the lifelong struggle which these ambitious monarchs continually sustained against each other.

Pescara is said to have shown as much prudence and good sense in the office of ambassador, on this

celebrated occasion, as he had before exhibited military skill and valour. On his return to Naples he held a parliament of the barons, in the church of S. Maria di Monte Oliveto, to relate the result of his journey, and to lay down his authority; he then hastened to join the Marchesa di Pescara at Rome, whither she had gone in the year 1521 with her father Fabrizio to visit the Colonnas, and pay their respects to Leo X. who had lately, out of attachment to that family, bestowed a cardinal's hat upon Pompeo Colonna.

The tranquil state of Italy at that time, enabled Leo to follow his taste for entertainments and luxury; and he delighted to draw round his court all the most distinguished persons in letters and art. Among these Vittoria shone conspicuous. She was at the height of her beauty, and her charms were sung by the poets of the day. "But the testimony of graver writers, lay and clerical, is not wanting to induce us to believe that Vittoria, in her prime, really might be considered the most beautiful woman of her day."¹ At this time she sat to Gaudentio Ferrari, a pupil of Raphael, for that portrait which is now in the gallery of the *Giustiniani*.²

¹ Trollope.

² Visconti.

Pope Leo X. died on the 1st of December, 1521, aged forty-six. However much the Colonnas might regret him, the people generally felt nothing but relief at his decease. It is even believed that he owed his death to poison. The people hated him. They said, "Thou hast crept in like a fox; like a lion (Leo) thou hast ruled us, and like a dog thou hast died."

His kind and conciliatory temper, and his liberal patronage of art, have not been able to hand his name down honourably to posterity. His extravagance, his immoral life, his indifference to all religion, his scandalous sale of indulgences, and his private hours passed among buffoons and jesters, laid the Roman Church open to the contempt and hatred of all the great and good men of that time. Ranke says, "Never died a Pope in worse repute since the Church of God had existence." And the character of the lower clergy was even more scandalous.

Adrian, who, to his own surprise, and that of every one else, was elected Pope in his stead, had been tutor to Charles V., and, along with Cardinal Ximenes, had been regent during Charles's long minority. It was supposed that he owed

his elevation to the chair of St. Peter to the intrigues of the Spanish ambassador, who wished the new Pope to be in his master's interests.¹ Wolsey had been promised both by Charles and Francis that he should have all their interest, in case of the decease of Leo ; for Wolsey's insatiable ambition would be satisfied by nothing less than to see himself Pope. Charles amused him with vain hopes, which he never meant to gratify, and though Wolsey spared no bribes or promises, when the election came on Adrian was elected.

The very first effort which the new Pope made, was to deter, if possible, the two kingly rivals from amusing themselves any longer with the dread game of War. He issued a bull to restrain the Christian princes from further aggression for three years. But Francis I. almost immediately determined to evade it. And it was this renewal of the war in Italy by the French monarch that caused the life-long grief of Vittoria, as it led to the fatal Battle of Pavia, in which the brave Pescara lost his life.

¹ Robertson's "Charles V."

CHAPTER IV.

1521—1524—1525.

THE jealous rivalry between Charles V. and Francis I., which produced no good to themselves, and much evil to the world, was more like a game of chess, or the encounter of knights in a tournament, than the efforts of great men in a great cause.

There were four great wars between them. The first from 1521 to 1526; the second from 1527 to 1529; the third from 1535 to 1538; the fourth from 1542 to 1544, when peace was at last settled between them at Crespy. The intervals were occupied in raising the funds to renew the contest. They considered no arts unworthy which might overthrow or circumvent one another, and for this they cared not if Europe were bathed in blood, and widespread ruin overran the garden of Italy. The popes, even more crafty and unprincipled, and less excusable, followed their example for their own private ends.

And what advantage did either party gain? Though Charles V. seemed possessed of "the wealth of the Indies," the wars he engaged in so impoverished him that he was in continual want of money even to pay the wages of his troops. This was one of the Marchese di Pescara's great difficulties. Pescara was a man of first-rate abilities, both in a civil and a military capacity, and he was beloved and almost adored by the soldiers. The imperialist troops were not mere mercenaries. Many of them were men of high rank, and they were in a state of perfect discipline under him. Their discontents were largely shared by their generals, and the Emperor's name became very unpopular.

But when Pescara once more was summoned to take his place at the head of his troops, he was welcomed by them with acclamations.

The war had commenced again in 1521, and Leo X., withdrawing his support from the French king, made a secret compact with Charles V. Prospero Colonna was called to the supreme command of the imperialist army, Pescara taking the command of the infantry. When he was preparing to leave for Lombardy, it became a question whether the youthful Vasto should accompany

him. But there was so much opposition to it from their friends at Naples, to whom the delightful manners and agreeable qualities of the boy had endeared him, that, at first, Pescara refused to take him, more especially as he felt that Vasto was the sole heir to the d'Avalos family, which would become extinct if anything fatal occurred to him.

The lively boy, however, whose natural disposition was brave and fearless, so much preferred the life of the camp to that of a student, that he used every effort to induce the Marchese to take him in his suite. It is said that he had caused votive offerings to be made in every church, to bring about the wished-for end. At last he succeeded, chiefly by the influence of the Duchessa di Francavilla, and still more that of Vittoria, who said to her husband, "Take him with you! if he is lost, there is only a man the less; if he dies, only one family will be extinct. It is not a thing to be dreaded and avoided so much as that a descendant of your noble house should be a mean, dastardly character, unworthy of the name of D'Avalos."

This brave speech, worthy of a Roman matron,

proves with what devoted ardour the daughter and wife of the warriors of that age forgot her selfish fears and wishes, in the glory attached to the profession of arms. When Vittoria was about to part with this beloved youth, she presented him with a superb tent, to serve him in the field, when he wished to retire to rest; and in order to "keep her in his dear remembrance," she added a little ornamented cabinet, with this motto worked upon it, "*Nunquam minus otiosus quam cum otiosus erat ille.*" (He is never less idle than when idle)—an invaluable hint to a young soldier, and by which Vittoria wished to warn him against the idle life of the camp.

Vittoria's pride and joy in her young pupil was amply rewarded by seeing him take a high and honourable position in his profession, and by receiving from him the continued affection and devotion of a son. She wrote several sonnets to him, of which we shall give a specimen or two. She had now three heroes belonging to her—her Fabrizio, her Pescara, and her young Vasto. To her father she addressed some lines, endeavouring to induce him to throw all his great influence into the scale of peace, a sentiment which

was always uppermost in her heart. We subjoin a translation of this sonnet, and add another written after his death :—

SONNET TO HER FATHER, PRAYING FOR PEACE.

“ I pray the Heavenly Father that He may send into thy heart, O my earthly father, so much of His celestial fire that none of the heat of human anger may remain therein ; so that, as the defenceless doe flies from the fierce lion, the base love of weak, worthless, mortal honour may fly from thee, if thy soul be inflamed by divine love.

“ We should then see all the cheerful hosts flocking to the most holy light which the great Sun of Righteousness throweth upon the earth.

“ We should see the glorious sacred nets of St. Peter filled, and the sceptre of peace subduing the world, and not the arms of war.”

TO HER DECEASED FATHER.

“ Poichè tornata sei Anima bella,
Alla porta celeste, onde partisti
Quanto lasciati hai noi miseri e tristi,
Tanto lieta hai nel Ciel fatt' ogni stella.

“ Non piango già il tuo ben, ma l'empia e fella
Sorte del mondo, il qual, mentre vivesti,
Col dotto stil così onorato festi,
Che non fu ugual in questa etade, o in quella.

“ Rimaso è senza te povero, e privo
D'ogni sua gloria, e per disdegno e doglia
Sommerso ha quasi Roma il Tibro altiero.

“ Sol per te ha fatto quel, che per lo Divo
Cesar già fece, e a par di quella spoglia
Pianto ha la tua beato almo sincero.”

“ Since thou art returned to heaven's gate, beautiful soul ! in leaving us, thou hast left us our miseries and our sorrows, but thou

hast caused delight to every star in heaven. I do not weep thy present felicity, but the melancholy fate of this world, for, whilst living, thou gavest a splendour to those honoured fête-days which never were equalled either in this age or any other. It remains, without thee, poor and deprived of all its glory, and distress and grief have overflowed the city, as if the Tiber had flooded Rome.

"Alone for thee has been done that which before was done for the great Cæsar, and at the moment of such glory thou hast yielded up thy true and blessed soul."

The death of Fabrizio occurred in the month of March, 1520.¹ Il Passeri gives a long account of the magnificent obsequies, with a list of all the persons who attended on the occasion, Ascanio Colonna being chief-mourner. His wife, Agnese, only survived him two years. She died in consequence of a journey she had made to the shrine of Loretto, in 1522. Thus Vittoria had the great affliction of losing both parents nearly at the same time. We subjoin a sonnet written on her mother's birthday.

SONNET TO HER MOTHER.

"Recall, O my heart, this sacred day, that beheld the birth of her by whom thou camest into being!

"Her noble soul needed not wings to rise to the true heavenly day! Her mortal veil was wrought of many rays, and a thousand impulses led her to just and righteous thoughts! Even behind her severe looks a bright light was hid. I know, O Lord, that she prays to Thee for us! But intercede Thou for her, that she may pray

¹ Visconti says, "he ended a life full of grandeur and glory in March, 1520."

aright, and that I may feel her vital power within me, and break and disengage myself from the bonds of earth, and that this mortal frame may be servant to the soul, and the soul to God alone."

Ascanio Colonna was now the head of the family, as Federico Colonna had died prematurely in the year 1516, at the early age of seventeen. His tomb is still to be seen in the church of S. Anna Maria di Pallazzola, with the date of his birth and his death. He seems to have been a youth of the most amiable disposition, and deeply beloved by his sister. Federico was named after his grandfather, the Duke d'Urbino. We find several of Vittoria's sonnets addressed to this dear brother's memory. She calls him "Beato Federico — più che io non posso dire bella e gradita." In the sonnet (189th) she compares his last hours to the sudden brilliancy of an expiring lamp, most beautiful at its going out. "So thou, good, invincible Federico, appearedst most powerful at the last, sustained by Divine strength, and with eye fixed on truth, following the right path joyfully."

SONNET TO HER BROTHER FEDERICO.

"Qual lampa, a cui già manca il caldo umore
Che la nudriva, onde ella ancor si sente
Mancar sì, che virtù vivace ardente
Mostra e s'avvampa forte all' ultime ore ;

Tal tu, buon Federico invitto, il core
Sempre mostrasti, ma più assai possente
Apparve, e la tua alta lucente
Nel fin sospinto dal divino onore.
L'ire, gli sdegni, e nulle insidie intorno
Correndo sol con l'occhio fisso al vero,
Per lo destro sentier lieto spregiasti.
Or godi sotto il giusto, largo Impero
L'alta giustizia, della qual t'armasti,
Quando il gran sol t'asperse il suo bel giorno."

In the 169th sonnet she addresses him as "Anima chiara," and pictures him as flying joyously from the dark valley of earth, and exchanging his miserable mortal garments for the beautiful robes of heaven, having ended his fragile life, to become a prince in that other better life. "And now," she adds, "that the ties of blood are dissolved, how much dearer to me is the new tie between us, in that world, where thy Saviour has changed thy bitter day, into the blissful eternal day!" In the 144th sonnet she compares him to the North Star, that shines above the other stars, high and alone. "Thy high-born and elected soul, immortal Federico, is no longer enveloped in the shadows of earth, but by heaven's grace, has joined the glorious company, and is taken from our sight for ever."

Of her second brother, Ascanio Colonna, we shall hear more in the following pages. He seems to

have been a true and faithful friend to her during her troubled years; and to his wife she was most warmly attached.

During the campaign in Lombardy, in 1524, a singular incident occurred, which is graphically described by all historians, showing the knightly conduct of Pescara to the celebrated chevalier Bayard, who fell wounded in the battle of the Sessia, a small river near Milan.

The Imperialists had driven Bonnivet, the French general, from the strong camp in which he had entrenched himself, and he was forced to attempt a retreat into France through the valley of Aosta. When he had arrived on the Sessia, and was about to pass that river, Pescara and Bourbon attacked him with great fury. At the beginning of the charge Bonnivet was wounded so dangerously that he was obliged to quit the field, and the conduct of the rear was committed to Bayard, who was always called to the post of the greatest difficulty and importance. He put himself at the head of the men-at-arms, and animating them by his example, sustained the shock of the enemy, and gained time for the rest of the French to make good their retreat; but in this service he received

a wound which he immediately found to be mortal, and being unable any longer to continue on horse-back, he ordered one of his attendants to place him under a tree with his face towards the enemy. Then fixing his eyes on the guard of his sword (exclaiming, "*Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam*"), and holding it up instead of a crucifix, he addressed his prayers to God, and in this posture he awaited calmly the approach of death. The Marquis di Pescara coming up, manifested his admiration of Bayard's virtues, and his sorrow for his fate; and with the generosity of a gallant enemy, finding he could not be removed from that spot, he ordered a tent to be pitched there, and appointed proper persons to attend him. Bayard died like his ancestors on the battle-field, and Pescara directed that his body should be embalmed and sent to his relations. His motto is well known; it was "Sans peur et sans reproche."

France was the fountain of chivalry. The laws of chivalry required loyalty, courtesy, munificence, justice, and courage. There was a strong tincture of religion in it, as well as of respect towards women. Honour to God and to the ladies was the motto of the knight.

The youths were educated to knighthood by being early placed in the castles of the great lords—first as pages, and afterwards as apprentices. Thus they imbibed an emulous and enthusiastic spirit, and learned a courteous demeanour to ladies and to strangers. They attended their lords to the tournaments, and became themselves desirous of glory. Honour to the sons of the brave, was a passion felt by every one; and the ladies' smiles and favour were reserved for the highest valour, united with the steadiest fidelity.

Spain, as well as France, was strongly tinctured with this spirit of chivalry; which has left behind it, to this day, its beneficial effects on the manners of modern times. The character of the true knight has subsided into that of gentleman. The above scene is worthy of the most brilliant days of chivalry; the spirit of which had not died out in the sixteenth century. In Spain especially, an almost romantic gallantry taught the warrior to bring into the fight all the civilities of peace. War was carried on with less ferocity; and humanity was deemed no less an ornament of knighthood than bravery itself. Courtesy was united with valour, and it was the union of these most graceful and manly qualities

in Pescara which created in Vittoria such ardent admiration and such devoted attachment.

Pescara, soon after the battle of Sessia, was desirous to follow up the advantage he had gained over the French by carrying the war into France.

With great daring and bravery he passed the Alps, and entering Provence, laid siege to Marseilles, with only an army of 18,000 men. But after a period of forty days, with every prospect of success, he was forced suddenly to retire from before that city, and bring his army, by forced marches, back into Italy. The French king, who loved everything bold and adventurous, had suddenly determined to invade Lombardy himself, and, notwithstanding the approach of winter, he was for leading his French troops over Mount Cenis. Pescara, informed of the movements of the enemy, was forced therefore to take the longer route, by Monaco, hoping to reach the battle-ground first.

The reappearance of the French army so unexpectedly, threw the Italians into dismay. The king's "evil genius" led him to attempt the siege of Pavia, a strongly-fortified place, and well garrisoned, and defended by Antonia di Leyva, one

of the bravest generals in the Spanish service ; and not all the science and valour of the French could make any impression on the place. The ranks of the soldiers were thinned by the severity of the winter and the fatigues of the siege. Hitherto Pescara and Bourbon had not molested them, but they were not idle. Bourbon had pawned his jewels, and gone into Germany, and levied, at his own expense, a considerable body of fresh troops ; and the united army advanced, in the beginning of 1525, to the relief of Pavia, now reduced to extremity by the want of ammunition and food.

The advice of Francis's most experienced officers failed to induce him to raise the siege. His romantic notions of honour forbade it. He had said that he would take Pavia, or perish in the attempt ; and he anxiously awaited the approach of the enemy. He was strongly entrenched, and the firmest battalions of the Imperialists gave ground on the first assault. But the fortune of the day soon changed. The Swiss troops, in the service of France, shamefully deserted their post. Pescara fell upon the French cavalry with the Imperial horse, and broke that formidable body by a new mode of attack. Whilst the garrison, headed by Leyva, made a furious

sally, and threw all into confusion. The rout became general.

Francis himself, surrounded by gallant nobles, many of whom fell by his side, long sustained the combat. His horse being killed under him, he fought on foot valorously.¹ His life was saved from the fury of the soldiers by a French gentleman who followed the fortunes of Bourbon, and who recognised the King. He persuaded him to surrender; but the King refused obstinately, great as was his danger, to deliver up his sword to Bourbon, and the honour fell to Lannoy.² This great battle took place on the 24th of February, 1525, and it is said that ten thousand men perished on the field. Pescara is much praised for the strategic skill he showed in the conduct of it. He possessed a great influence over the troops, and though they had been without pay for some time, he exhorted them to fight for honour and not for money.

After Francis was taken prisoner, he gave a safe-conduct to the messenger of Lannoy, through France, that the Emperor might the sooner hear

¹ "All is lost except honour," he wrote to his mother.

² Who received the King's sword on his knee.

of the result of the battle of Pavia, Lannoy assuring him that after the first conference he would get the royal prisoner his release.

In the meantime Lannoy proposed to Bourbon and Pescara to remove the King to Naples, and himself furnished six vessels to transport him. They embarked on the 7th of June at Porto Fino. But instead of directing the fleet to Naples, Lannoy made straight for Spain, and in eight days landed his prisoner at Roses, in Catalonia, without the knowledge of his colleagues, who were in despair when they were informed of Lannoy's treachery, as the whole army considered the King the gage of the ransom and recompense they demanded.

Pope Clement's papers had been found in the French camp, putting it beyond doubt that he had been in league with them, and he was, in consequence, in great fear of the imperialist leaders and the "*audace Colonnas.*" From this decisive day Charles V. held all Italy in subjection, from the Alps to the sea; and from that time until now she has never been free from the rule of the stranger.

Pescara had been very severely wounded in the action, and was consequently unable to receive

the honour of taking the King prisoner. When he heard what a great honour he had missed, he was exceedingly wrath, especially as a heavy ransom might be expected. Bourbon was equally enraged at Lannoy, the grand constable, and gave way to expressions of angry contempt against him.

Pescara wrote to the Emperor Charles V. accusing Lannoy of cowardice in time of danger, and of insolence after victory. He said that Lannoy had contributed nothing to the success of the battle, either by his valour or his conduct; and Pescara also complained in the letter that the Emperor had not entertained a due sense of his own merits, nor bestowed upon him any adequate reward for his services.

It was this well-known disgust which Pescara did not hesitate to express, on which Morone relied, when after the battle of Pavia he endeavoured to seduce Pescara from allegiance to the Emperor. Morone well knew the ambition, the intrepidity, and the talents of Pescara, and that he was one of the ablest politicians, as well as one of the greatest generals, of the age. He also knew that Pescara was extremely displeased that he was placed in such straits after the battle,

to provide supplies for his army. It was believed, therefore, that it would not be a difficult task to win him over to the French cause, and that they might recover their lost ground if they could get the Emperor's best general on their side.

CHAPTER V.

1525.

A LEAGUE of princes had been formed to join the Milanese, Venetian, and Papal forces, in order to free Italy from the Emperor's rule, which league Pope Clement had joined for a time, not that he loved the French, but he thought it would be for his own interest. The house of Medici hitherto had leagued with Spain. Girolamo Morone, chancellor of Milan, was appointed to make the offer to Pescara to join this league.

The throne of Naples was the bait. The Pope himself confirmed this offer by a messenger, whom he sent to Pescara from Rome. Ranke says, "There was no dearth of promises; even that of a crown was included in them. But how grievously had they miscalculated. This General Pescara, though an Italian born, was of Spanish race. He spoke Spanish, and would be nothing but a Spaniard.

For the elegant cultivation of the Italians he had neither taste nor aptitude. He owed his education to Spanish romances, which breathe nothing but loyalty and fidelity. Scarcely had the proposal been made to him, when he communicated it to his comrades and to the Emperor. He used it only as a means of discovering all the views and thwarting the projects of the Italians.”¹

The biographers of Vittoria, however, state that Pescara did not immediately reject these offers. Amazed at the extent and boldness of the scheme, he listened attentively, but with the countenance of a man lost in thought. He is said also to have sought the advice of civilians and divines on the subject, some think only to gain time.

Vittoria, however, heard of the unworthy overtures which had been made to her husband, to endeavour to seduce him from his allegiance to the Emperor, and she immediately despatched a letter, given in Giovio's “Life of Pescara,” in which she says she had heard of these unworthy overtures, and that she remembered how he had gained honour by his valour, and had advanced the glory and the fortunes of many kings.

¹ Ranke's “History of the Popes,” Book i. p. 70.

“But,” she added, “titles and kingdoms do not add to true honour, without virtue and without principle, which alone enable a name to descend untarnished to posterity. I do not desire to be the wife of a king, but I glory in being the wife of that great general who shows his bravery in war, and, still more, by magnanimity in peace, surpasses the greatest kings.”

Jerome Morone, chancellor of Milan, was a man whose genius for intrigue distinguished him, in an age when the violence of factions and frequent revolutions gave scope for such talents, and called them forth in great abundance. He considered that it would be for his own fame if he could rescue Italy from foreign rule, and he was especially disgusted with the Emperor, and thought if he could seduce his greatest general from his service it would be a feather in his cap. Bourbon had gone to Madrid, in order to guard against Lannoy's treachery. Pescara was therefore left sole commander of the forces, and to everyone he accused Lannoy of baseness. The Spanish troops were quartered on the frontier of the Milanese, and Morone had occasion for many interviews with the general. He took the opportunity, whenever he saw him, to

turn the conversation to the transactions subsequent to the battle, and Pescara entered into it with passion. This ill-feeling Morone artfully aggravated, and painted in strong colours the want of discernment in Charles V. in preferring Lannoy to him. He spoke of the ingratitude which the Emperor had shown to Pescara, to whose skill and valour he owed the having his rival in his power. Having thus paved the way for his proposal, he began to insinuate that now was the time to be avenged, and he informed him that the states of Italy were weary of the intolerable dominion of foreigners, and he used every spurious argument to draw him from his allegiance.

Pescara perhaps listened to him till the time should elapse before his messengers or letters could arrive from the Emperor. At length he received his commands.

The Emperor desired Pescara to discover more fully Morone's intentions, and convict him with certainty. To this end Pescara was forced to the mean and disgraceful part of betraying Morone, and he succeeded in deceiving even that penetrating and artful man.

He invited him "to visit him at Novara" (where

he resided at that time), "in order to complete their arrangements," and he received him in an apartment where Antonio de Leyva was concealed behind the tapestry, in order to overhear their confidential discourse.

When Morone was about to take his leave, having fully explained himself to Pescara, Leyva suddenly appeared, and, to his astonishment, arrested him in the Emperor's name. He was conducted to the castle of Pavia, and there Pescara "had the assurance to sit as his judge and interrogate him."

The Spanish judges empowered to judge him condemned him to death, but he was set free soon after, by paying 20,000 ducats to Bourbon, money being more wanted in the Imperial army than revenge. Morone's talents were so useful to Bourbon, that he soon after made him his prime confidant and adviser.¹

This conduct, however, caused great odium to fall upon Pescara,² and Italian writers vilify him in consequence. Vittori called him "proud beyond

¹ Which certainly proves that Morone was not averse from following his own prescription, "to change sides as occasion may present itself."


² "Several of those concerned in this intrigue saw reason to suspect that Pescara only listened to the overtures in order to betray them, as is proved by the letters from Gilberto to Gismondo Santo, and to Domenico Sauli."—*Lettere de Principi*, vol. i. p. 87.

measure, envious, ungrateful, greedy, cruel, without religion, without humanity, a man born to be the destruction of Italy." Morone says "there was no man more faithless and malicious."¹ "And yet," says Ranke, "this was the very man they desired to attract to their side." He adds, "I do not cite these unfavourable opinions as *believing them to be true*, but simply to prove that Pescara showed no feelings for Italy but those of enmity."

Giberto, writing at that time, says: "The way the French have betrayed themselves will not raise them in Cæsar's opinion. We have not spoken of Pescara, and were silent for a time even on the subject of the promised throne, from fear that, by making known that all that was said against him was *false*, we might ruin him. Beware of writing anything which, if revealed, may injure him." He also says, that "Pescara only listened to these overtures that he might discover the enemy's intentions."

Of Pescara's character we have the following brief account in Roscoe's "Leo X.:"—"He was a man who, by his great endowments, unshaken fidelity, and heroic valour, merited such an acquisition" (in a wife). "A perfect conformity of temper

¹ Hist. d'Italia, vol. xvi. p. 476.



and of excellence was the pledge of their conjugal affection. His dialogue on love is replete with good sense, eloquence, and wit."

It is impossible to doubt that he was a man worthy to command homage and love. All the world honoured the men who immortalized themselves in fair deeds of arms, and his domestic graces must have been irresistibly attractive. Vittoria's grief at his death was as lasting as it was strong; the floods which at first overwhelmed her mind fell into the channels of her poetry, and she is said to have "sung his victories with such noble verses, that she seemed a new Muse, designed to immortalize this great general."

Vittoria had not seen her husband since October, 1522, when, on the death of her mother, he made a flying visit to his wife and home; but he was with her only three days, and it was the last time she ever saw him. After the Battle of Pavia, where he had received three wounds, he lay for some months suffering from their effects, and from the mortifications of his mind, in consequence of public affairs. He also fell into a weakness, caused, as some say, by the waters he had drank. He shortly found his strength so exhausted that he was too weak to travel

home, and at length was reduced to so dangerous a state that, despairing of his life, and finding that neither the excellence of medicine nor the advice of his doctors could do anything for him, and that every day he became weaker, he determined on sending a messenger to Ischia, to Vittoria, desiring her without loss of time to repair to Milan, as he wished to see her before he died. He also summoned the young Vasto to his side, and appointed him trustee of the estates and property of his most beloved wife, and declared him heir to his great riches, as, after nineteen years of married life, he had no son to inherit it.

Vittoria no sooner received the messenger and the afflicting message, than she hastily left Naples for Rome, with her attendants. At Rome, her family received her most affectionately, but she resumed her journey without delay, in great anxiety of mind.

On reaching Viterbo, however, another messenger met her, with the fatal news of the death of her beloved husband, who had expired on the 25th November, 1525.

On receiving the account of this most terrible affliction, Vittoria at first entirely lost her senses, so overpowering was the shock. After a while,

however, she was restored to consciousness, and was relieved by tears, which did not cease to flow for many years.

Her first impulse was to enter into the cloister, and immure herself and her griefs from the world. Her brother and sister had probably fetched her back to their palace in Rome, and we find that she immediately entered into the convent of S. Silvestro, a place particularly venerated and frequented by the Colonnas, and adjoining the gardens of their palace, on the Monte Cavallo. Here she was in quiet and repose. The funeral took place at Milan, on the 30th of November, with great pomp and honour. But the body was afterwards removed to Naples, and buried in the church of S. Dominico, with magnificent obsequies.

Pescara was only thirty-six years of age when he was removed from the sight of his devoted friends for ever. Vittoria also was in the prime of her days. Her friends heard her declare that she could not survive him, and that she envied the fate of Molza's parents, who both died on the same day. It was even feared that, in the prostration of her grief, she might be tempted to end her life. In consequence of these fears, her most attached friend

Sadolet, bishop of Carpentras, went to Clement to beg that he would exert his influence to prevent Vittoria from remaining in the convent. He felt certain that it would not be for her happiness to take the veil. He succeeded in influencing the Pope to issue a brief, enjoining the nuns of S. Silvestro, on pain of the greater excommunication, not to advise or permit her to take the vows.¹ This brief is dated the 7th of December, 1525, almost immediately after Vittoria's loss. She did not remain in this nunnery more than a few weeks.

Notwithstanding this brief from the Holy Father, the Roman Catholic biographers of Vittoria Colonna continually assert that she retired into a monastery after her great loss, and there ended her days in seclusion and prayer. We thus see how very little truth there is in the chronicles of the monks.

The Marchese di Pescara in his will honourably provided for his widow, says Visconti, "*Lasciatala in condizione onoralissima,*" and made Vasto heir to his property. He desired in his will that if there were anything in his house which had not been

¹ They were to treat her "*omnibus spiritualibus et temporalibus consolationibus;*"—but it forbade them to allow her to take the veil;—"inpetu potius sui doloris, quam maturo consilio circa mutationem vestium vidualium in monasticas."

acquired legally, that it should be given back ; and he made several pious bequests.

Vittoria, writing to the Principessa di Francavilla, respecting the restitution of the Hill of St. Manno to the monks of Monte Cassino, says to her, "That blessed soul (*felice anima*) has ordered that anything which belongs to others in his property should be restored ;" and this same thing is repeated in other letters to Francavilla herself and to Vasto. Visconti says : "These letters are drawn from the originals, which are kept in Monte Cassino, and which I have had in my hands ; and which I can bring to light, with all the prose, both published and unpublished, of Vittoria Colonna, which hitherto no one has cared to collect." He also says "that Pescara desired to erect a church in Naples, in honour of S. Tommaso."

The monastery on Monte Cassino, which was founded by F. Francesco d'Avalos, Marchese di Pescara, is called the Camaldoli, and is still in existence. It occupies the eastern crest of the ridge of hills which extends westward from Naples as far as the Lago di Licola. It is built on the highest point of the ridge, and the view from it is most magnificent. The church attached to this monastery

contains some valuable pictures, the best of which is the *Santa Candida*, by Parco di Siena, the friend of Michael Angelo; which picture was probably presented to the monastery by Vittoria herself.

Her brother, Ascanio Colonna, early in 1526, induced her to remove to the Castle of Marino; a seclusion which he kindly selected for her, as it was associated with her childhood and her beloved parents, and safe from the troubles which at that time were coming upon Rome. One can imagine how she spent her sad days, beside the still waters of that beautiful lake,¹ and in the shade of those loved woods; and that here, perhaps, she wrote those first bitter words which flowed from her pen, and assuaged her terrible grief.

The first sonnet we possess, explains her motive for writing at all:—

¹ "This lake is about seven miles in circumference, longer than broad, but of an irregular form; and in every point of view its rocky and wooded sides form the most beautiful subjects for the pencil. It is, doubtless, the crater of an extinct volcano. Its volcanic origin is indisputable. This lake, and the neighbouring mountain, and its surrounding scenery, were the theatre of the action of the *Æneid*, and here was the city founded by its hero."—MISS BATTY'S *Italian Scenery*.

SONNET I.

“Scrivo sol per sfogar l'interna doglia,
Ch' al cor mandar le luci al mondo sole ;
E non per giunger luce al mio bel sole,
Al chiaro spirto, all' onorata spoglia.
Giusta cagione a lamentar m'invoglia,
Ch'io scemi la sua gloria assai mi dole ;
Per altra lingua, e più saggie parole,
Convien ch'a morte il gran nome si toglia.
La pura fè, l'ardor, l'intensa pena
Mi scusi appo ciascun, che 'l grave pianto
E'tal, che tempo, ne' ragion l'affrena.
Amaro lagrimar, non dolce canto,
Foschi sospiri, e non voce serena,
Di stil—no ! ma di duol mi danno il vanto.”

“I write solely to assuage my inward grief, which destroys in my heart the light of this world's sun ; and not to add light to *mio bel Sole* ; to his glorified spirit, and to that honoured corpse. It is fit that other tongues and more practised words should preserve his great name from oblivion. But my pure devotion, my intense love, and my deep grief will be my excuse before every one ; and so bitter is my weeping, that neither time nor reason can check it.

“Bitter tears, not sweet songs ! Deep sighs, not serene accents ! Style,—no ; but grief gives me an advantage.”

Her earlier poems form the history of her heart ; she did not think of the public when she wrote them, and a deep humility pervades them all. Her later ones portray her religious aspirations. She has the great honour of being the first modern poet who devoted her powers to religious subjects. “C'est pour elle un mérite dont il est juste de lui tenir

compte, que d'avoir été la première à doter la lyre d'une sorte de sacerdoce." ¹

Her sonnets, in their liquid brilliancy and the melodious choice of beautiful words, seem like so many inestimable gems, singly set, and surrounded by a wreath of pearls. In selecting a few of them, we are painfully aware how impossible it is for translations to give any idea of the beauty of the original, but they will serve to show the sentiments which they so elegantly inclose.

To some highly-gifted individuals it is as natural and as easy to pour out their sorrows and feelings in stringed words, as it is to others to relieve their griefs by recording their thoughts in their private journals; and if these emotional writings, after a time, are made public, there is no deeper interest than such a record of the inner life. Critics may laugh at what they have been pleased to call "the tuneful wailings of a young widow, as lovely as inconsolable; as irreproachable as noble." ² But we, who know the true poetical temperament better, cannot for a moment acquiesce in such a satirical judgment of Vittoria Colonna's writings.

¹ Deumier, p. 159.

² Trollope.

Her French biographer is much nearer the truth when he says, "*La poésie n'était, pour elle, qu'une autre manière de prier Dieu.*" Her poems are the almost involuntary ejaculation of an impressible and imaginative nature. She wrote because she could not help it. From the "sweet singer of Israel," to our own Burns, Hemans, and Browning, we feel that the gift of song is the natural channel of a grief that otherwise might consume the life. And as Beethoven poured forth his deep woes in his wondrous harmony, so the affliction which rent the heart of Vittoria Colonna found relief in verse :—

"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee."

The following canzone, from its passionate devotedness, bears evidence of having been written very soon after her first abandonment of grief. It is the natural outburst of love and despair, and every person who has suffered from a similar bereavement will feel the truth of it.

She says in it, that life is insufferable to her without her beloved. She beseeches him to look down with compassion on the grief which overwhelms her. She adjures him to turn his looks

towards her, and behold how her eyes are worn with weeping, which to him, only, had before seemed so beautiful:—

“ If thou canst, from the proud heights and the ineffable beauty of heaven, look down on one who, here below, has been dear to thee, listen to my prayer!—if not for love, at least for pity. For I am, I am *indeed* the same, though such frightful fiery grief at thy death has changed me so much! Alas! how rapidly has departed from my cheek, my eyes, my hair, all that thou wert pleased to call beauty; but of which I was never proud. I only thought well of it because it was precious in thy sight! But it is gone from me now, never, never to return.

“ Since thou, whose sole pleasure it was to contemplate it, art lost to me, it can never return! No, no; as I cannot come where thou art, I do not wish that this, or any other thing, should be pleasing to me. How is it possible, when I remember that beautiful, kind look, hour by hour, which has had so short a duration?

“ Where is that sweet, joyful smile gone? Why does death conceal in the tomb those gems, and the sweet carnation of that angelic face? How can I survive the thought that the wicked grave and envious dust contaminates and dissolves those delicate alabaster limbs? Hard condition! But yet I fear not death! For in suffering death shall we not live together for evermore?

“ I will hope that from the dark tomb, which closes on all below, the emancipated soul will rise, to follow the footprints of thy holy feet, and that I shall be clothed in one of the beautiful forms of heaven, and find thee what thou hast been; and that thou speaking my praises of faith and love to Him who keeps the keys, He will not close His gates against me!

“ But ah! how long will the strength of this body last? The great torments which my heart suffers cannot bring it to the wished-for death, so that I might leave this world, which, without thee, who wert its light, is darkness (*hell*) itself! every way to thee seem closed! But oh, my song, go thou up to my beloved Lord, and let the winds convey the message which I send:

“ ‘Ch’io di lui sempre pensi, o pianga, o parli.’ (That I always think of him, or weep for him, or speak of him.) ”

Mrs. Jameson remarks upon this canzone: “No translation can do justice to the deep pathos, the feminine feeling, and the eloquent simplicity of this beautiful and celebrated poem.” It is included in Matthias’s collection, “*Componimenti Lirici*.”

It is extraordinary that neither this Canzone, nor Canzone II., nor the Stanze, are to be found in Visconti’s edition of the “*Rime*.” They are given in Rota’s edition.

SONNET XVII.

“Quand’ io dal caro scoglio miro intorno,
La terra e ’l ciel nella vermiglia aurora,
Quante nebbie nel cor son nate allora,
Scaccia la vaga vista, e ’l chiaro giorno.

“S’erge il pensier col sole ; ond’ io ritorno
Al mio, che ’l ciel di maggior luce onora,
E da quest’ altro par ch’ ad ora ad ora
Richiami l’alma al suo dolce soggiorno.

“Per l’esempio d’Elia, non con l’ardente
Celeste carro, ma col proprio aurato
Venir se ’l finge l’amorosa mente

“A cangiarne l’umil doglioso stato
Con l’alto eterno ; e in quel momento sente
Lo spinto un raggio dell’ ardor beato.”

“When from this dear rock I see around me earth and heaven in
the roseate dawn, all those mists that rise in my heart are scattered

by that clear sun and extensive view. And with the sun my thoughts are raised, and I return to my *Sole*, who is made a greater light, by the heavenly Father, than this earthly luminary ; and hour by hour, I recall to my heart his sweet sojourn here. Following the example of Elijah, not in the fiery chariot, but with his own brilliancy, I picture how he exchanged the humble, miserable state for the life eternal ; and in that moment my spirit feels ray of the beatified ardour."

SONNET XLI.

" Parmi, che 'l sol non porga il lume usato
In terra a noi, nè in cielo a sua sorella :
Nè più scorgo pianeta o vaga stella
Chiari i raggi rotar del cerchio ornato.

" Non veggio cor più di valore armato :
Fuggito è il vero onor, la gloria bella :
Nascosta è ogni virtù nobil con ella,
Nè vive in arbor fronda, o fiore in prato.

" L'acque torbide sono, e l'aer nero :
Non scalda il fuoco, nè rinfresca il vento,
Ch' hanno smarrito la lor propria cura.

" Di poi che 'l mio bel sol fu in terra spento,
O è confuso l'ordin di natura,
O il duolo ai sensi miei nasconde il vero."

" The sun no longer gives its beauteous light
To the green earth, nor to the moon by night.
No more for me the dazzling planets burn ;
Nor the eternal stars on their bright axis turn.

" No more shall I on Valour rest mine eye !
Fled is true honour and high chivalry !
The world no longer manly glory yields ;
The woods no verdure, and no flowers the fields !

"The turbid waves are dark, and black the air !
No heat the fire —no scent the zephyrs bear !
And everything has lost its proper care !

"Since quenched my sun darkly in earth doth lie,
Nature to me hath lost its charm ; or I
Have lost all sense of it through my calamity !"

SONNET III.

To the Marchese di Pescara.

"That proud banner and that courage which, in thy victorious hand, made every movement and design against thee vain ; that strength which softened all enmity and anger ; that invincible superhuman valour which defeated all foolish schemes, and closed all the passes to cities, mountains and plains, was not the good fortune of others, nor thy lucky star, but thy most fatal and bitter martyrdom.

"Valour, celerity, strength, and wisdom brought thy undertaking to a felicitous conclusion, and the eternal heaven bestows the glorious reward of thy brilliant fame ; for human treasure cannot repay a divine work."

SONNET LXXXV.

"I thought to sweeten my bitter days by doing worthy honour to that beloved theme—now in heaven—who was on earth the brightest light that adorned and enriched our age. And I attempted, weeping, to narrate great sufferings, grievous and dear, and to lighten them in rhyme. I took counsel from them, and endeavoured to rise to the summit of such high and rare wisdom. But I watch the inconstant wheel of the fickle goddess, and I see that those whom she most flatters only receive greater evils, by long or by short lives ; and not finding any cause of rejoicing, my soul continues obstinate in its grief, and I pray that death may end my weeping."

CHAPTER VI.

1526.

VITTORIA'S grief at the loss of her husband was as lasting as it was intense. So entirely devoted was she to the deep affection of her life, and the memory of his greatness, that her thoughts were filled with nothing but regrets, and the intense desire to rejoin him. Her writings for the first seven years of her widowhood were devoted to this one all-engrossing idea, and the writers of that age declare that she has erected "a monument to Pescara's memory by her poems, so honourable to his name, that whilst the world endures it will always be celebrated and illustrious."

This instance of conjugal fidelity is the more remarkable in a day when morals were at so low an ebb, and when many of the women most prominent before the world were great in everything that could most disgrace their name. Vittoria,

indeed, among these, shone like a pearl of purity among jewels of a very different colour.

After residing for some time in the palace of her brother and sister, under their tender care, Vittoria determined to return to Ischia, to the society of her beloved sister the “magnanimous Costanza ;” and to that dear rock in the sea (which she describes in her sonnets under the name of “Scoglio”), there to endeavour to find some solace for her deep affliction, by the calm and peace of a place so endeared to her memory and soothing to her feelings. It is certain that she relinquished any thought she may at first have entertained under her loss, of conventual seclusion; and desired to refresh and compose her mind with the repose and beauty of nature. She had a poet’s sensibility to every sight and sound around her; and she has the singular merit of being the first Italian poet who turned to nature for her poetical images.

The extreme beauty of the Bay of Naples has been often described, and of the islands of Capri and Ischia, rising out of the blue billows of the Mediterranean like giant towers. The immense blocks of stone are heaped one upon another, in

such a supernatural manner, as to give a colouring to the legend, that beneath them, in those vast volcanic caverns, dwells the giant Tifeo. The transparency and extraordinary purity of the water, the warm mild air filled with the fragrance of ten thousand flowers, and the wonderful beauty of the trees and shrubs, growing down even to the water's edge, have been eulogized by every writer.

Hans Christian Andersen, in contemplating this scene, exclaimed, "God has made the world infinitely beautiful, therefore man ought not to turn himself away from the glory of His works, and immure himself in a dark convent."

The following lines of Shelley most beautifully apply to this favoured spot:—

"In a dell 'mid lawny hills
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
And soft sunshine, and the sound
Of old forests echoing round ;
And the light and smell divine
Of all flowers that breathe and shine !

"By that clime divine and calm,
And the winds whose wings rain balm
On the uplifted soul ; and leaves
Under which the bright sea heaves !
While each breathless interval
In their whisperings musical
The inspired soul supplies
With its own deep melodies."

Ischia,¹ the ancient *Ænaria*, is an island situated at the northern entrance of the Bay of Naples. It is separated from the mainland by a channel six miles across.

The soil of Ischia is very fertile, producing corn, abundance of wines, and all sorts of fruits. The hills are covered with chesnut-trees. The island is twenty miles in circumference; the chief town, or village, is named Ischia, and is a bishop's see. It was in the castle of Ischia that F. Francesco d'Avalos, Marchese di Pescara, was born, and that the Duchess di Francavilla, who was governor of the island, resided with her two pupils.

Ischia abounds with mineral springs, which are

¹ The castle of Ischia is built on a very lofty mass of rock, standing out beyond the main island, to which it is joined by a narrow isthmus or causeway, and from it the ascent is made by a series of stone steps. The whole rock bristles with fortifications, and must have been a place of great strength. It was called the Key of Naples. Above the walls, and filling all the space at the summit, rise the church, palace, and other buildings contained within their circuit, sitting like a crown upon the brow of the mighty "rock," which well deserves the name so often given to it by the poetess and her friends, "*Suberbo Scoglio! Altero e bel ricetto di tanti chiari eroi!*" as Bernardo Tasso sings:—

"in te s'asconde
Casta beltà, valore e cortesia;
Quanta mai vide il tempo, o diede il Cielo."

much frequented by invalids, and it is one of the finest islands on the coast of Italy. It is well described by Luca Contete in his letters published in 1564.

Vittoria loved Ischia as having been the scene of her early years with Pescara. She speaks of her attachment to it in the 74th sonnet, and that she hoped to end her days there. In the 117th sonnet, beginning, "Donna sicura, accesa, e dall'errante volgo lontana," she describes herself as a "lady resting safely on that rock, far from the wandering crowd, in a solitary home, delighting to turn from everything which was displeasing to the Great God (*al primo eterno amante*)."

She calls them "these rocks of Pescara, this rugged island, where I follow his footsteps over the high hills, and imitate his beautiful character, his straightforward high thoughts, and his blessed walk!"

In another sonnet she compares herself to a melancholy bird.

"I live on this horrid and solitary rock, like some melancholy bird, which abhors the green trees and the pure waters. I hide myself from those I love, and from mine own self also.

"Because my thoughts fly to that sun whom I revere and adore.

"And though my thoughts cannot fly as swiftly as I would have

them, still they always turn from everything else to that image ; and when they have arrived at that desired end, I feel a short-lived joy, which surpasses all earthly pleasure.

“ Ah ! if my memory could restore as much as I desire his high and sublime image in a life-like form, I should taste again here below something of perfect bliss ! ”

She speaks of Ischia in the 100th sonnet as more famous as a mausoleum to the memory of her Pescara, than as the dwelling-place of the giant Tefio, which the legends describe as being under the mountains of that island.

SONNET C.

“ Se quel superbo dorso il monte sempre
Sostien, perch' aspirare al ciel gli piacque,
Da peso e fuoco oppresso, e cinto d'acque
Arde, piange e sospira in varie tempre ;

“ E degno, che'l passato duol contempre
Il presente gioir ; chè Tifeo nacque
Per alte imprese, e a forza interra giacque.
Non convien bel desir morte distempre.

“ Or gli dà il frutto la smarrita speme,
Dal qual può aver sì lunga e chiara istoria,
Che compensi il piacer l'avute pene.

“ Non cede il carco, che felice il preme,
(Se nei Spirti divini è vera gloria)
A quel che 'l vecchio Atlante ancor sostiene.”

“ If that proud back which for ever sustains this mountain
aspired to heaven, though oppressed with the weight and the heat,
and girt round with water which burns, weeps, and sighs at various

temperatures, it is right that the Tifeo, who was born to heroic deeds and now lies buried in earth, should not have his great deeds concealed by death. Give him the fruit of all his lost hopes, of which I can give so long and brilliant a history, to compensate in joy for all he has suffered (if indeed true glory is felt by heavenly souls); and so great will be the reward, that the weight will be as heavy as that which Old Atlas for ever upholds!"

SONNET LXXXVI.

"Quando 'l gran lume appar nell' Oriente
 Che'l negro manto della notte sgombra,
 E dalla terra il gelo, e la fredd' ombra
 Dissolve, e scaccia col suo raggio ardente :

"Dell' usate mie pene alquanto lente,
 Per l'inganno del' sonno, allor m'ingombra,
 Ond 'ogni mio piacer risolve in ombra,
 Quando da ciascun lato ha l'altre spente.

"O viver mio nojoso, O avversa sorte !
 Cerco l'oscurità, fuggo la luce,
 Odio la vita ognor, bramo la morte.

"Quel, ch' agli occhi altrui nuoce, a' miei riluce,
 Perchè chiudendo lor, s'apron le porte
 Alla cagion ch' al mio Sol mi conduce."

"When in the East the grand light appears that removes the dark mantle of night, and melts the frost, and with its ardent rays scatters the cold shadows of earth, then am I restored slowly, to my accustomed sorrow, which had been for a while lost in sleep, and all my pleasant dreams, which had extinguished the other thoughts that oppressed me, dissolve into shadows.

"O wearisome days! O adverse fate! I seek obscurity, I shun the light, I hate life, I wish for death. That sleep which to other eyes is an evil, to mine gives new light, because in closing them the doors are opened to those dreams that conduct me to my beloved!"

SONNET XCVII.

TO HER BROTHER'S WIFE.

"S'io potessi sottrar dal giogo alquanto,
Madonna, il collo, e volger i pensieri,
Dalla mia luce altrove sciolti e intieri,
Gli porrei in voi, volgendo in riso il pianto.

"Farei dolce lo stil, soave il canto,
Per dir de' vostri onori i pregi altieri :
Che l'alte sue virtù son regni veri,
Non corona, nè scettro, o real manto !

"Ma a voi fu'l ciel sì largo, e a me la stella
Sì parca, che s'oppon tosto il mio Sole
Tra 'l vostro Paradiso, e gli occhi miei.

"Ei retien la mia vista, e come suole
L'affrena in lui, per non veder men bella
La vostra lode, e torme i cari omei !"

"If I could take my neck from the yoke, and turn my thoughts freely and entirely from my grief, they would be changed for thee, Madonna, from tears to smiles. My words would be cheerful, and sweet my song, to chant thy honours and thy noble praise. For high virtue is true royalty, more than crown, sceptre, or regal mantle.

"Whilst to thee heaven has been so bountiful, how cruel has fate been to me, in so soon taking *mio Sole* from your paradise and from my eyes ! But, while my gaze is ever fixed on him, thy merits are still delightful to me, though my songs are always mournful."

SONNET LXXVI.

"Solco tra duri scogli e fiero vento
L'onde di questa vita in fragil ligno ;
L'alto favor, e'l mio fido sostegno
Tolse l'acerba morte in un momento.

“Veggio il mal grave, e 'l mio remedio spento,
 E 'l mar turbato, e l'aere d'ira pregno,
 D'atra tempesta uno infallibil segno,
 E 'l valor proprio al mio soccorso lento.

“Non che sommerga le commosse arene
 Temo, nè rompa in perigliose sponde;
 Ma duolmi il navigar priva di speme.

“Almen, se morte il vero porto asconde,
 Mostrimi il falso suo, che chiare e amene
 Mi saran le sue irate e torbid' onde.”

“I plough the waves of this life in a frail bark amid cruel rocks and fierce winds, but heavenly aid and my sustaining faith preserve me each moment from a bitter death. I see the terrible danger, and my lost help! The troubled sea, and the angry clouds, the sure sign of a coming storm, and my own courage slow to succour me! I fear not to be lost in treacherous sands, nor wrecked on dangerous rocks, but I fear to make the voyage bereft of hope.

“If Death conceals its true portal from me, and shows me its false one, how dear and delightful to me would then become these black and angry waves!”

SONNET CXVI.

“Am I able in the bitter and black tempest of this miserable world to enter into the Ark with Noah, the beloved of God, when no other bark is available in the perilous and troubled waters? or can I with the Hebrew host thank God! singing in joy and festivity on the further shore, when they had boldly and quickly passed over the Red Sea? Or with Peter, does my heart feel itself supported by the Divine hand, when my faith fails to support me on the heaving waves? Ah! if I am not equal to these things, yet the favour of heaven is not removed nor lessened; nor is its succour slow.”

SONNET CI.

“ Humility, with ploughshare sharp and strong,
Its furrows deep within my heart must make ;
And all the bitter stagnant waters take,
Clearing away the earthly and the wrong,
Lest these should drown, and those choke up the seed,
Cumbering the ground with rubbish and with weed.
Nay ! rather spread a better soil around,
And pray that gentle dew from heaven be found,
And the heavens' love to fructify the flower,
Nor idly wait till the last awful hour,
When all is swallowed in eternal night.
O Humble One ! leave me not in such plight !
But manifest Thyself to this sad heart !
Banish dark thoughts, and bid my pride depart ! ”

SONNET XLVIII.

“ Tra gelo e nebbia corro a Dio sovente
Per foco e lume, onde i ghiacci disciolti
Siano, e gli ombrosi veli aperti e tolti
Dalla divina luce e fiamma ardente.

“ E se fredda ed oscura è ancor la mente,
Pur son tutti i pensieri al ciel revolti ;
E par, che dentro in gran silenzio ascolti
Un suon, che sol nell' anima si sente ;

“ E dice ; Non temer, che venne al mondo
Gesù, d'eterno ben largo ampio mare,
Per far leggiere ogni gravoso pondo.

“ Sempre son l'onde sue più dolci e chiare
A chi con umil barca in quel gran fondo
Dell' alta sua bontà si lascia andare.”

"Often I flee to God through frosts and mists, and pray for His celestial light and fire to melt the icy chains, and remove the dark veils. And, if my mind is still cold and dark, my thoughts, at least, ever turn towards heaven, and in a great silence there appears to me a voice that only the soul can hear, crying, Fear not! for Jesus, that mighty and wide sea, came into the world to make light every heavy burden; and that gracious sea is ever calm and clear to him who, in humble bark, trusts himself to its heavenly guidance."

SONNET XXX.

"If I have conquered self, by heaven's strength,
 'Gainst carnal reason, and the senses striven,
 With mind renewed, and purged, I rise at length
 Above the world, and its false faith to heaven!
 My thoughts, no longer now depressed and vain,
 Upon the wings of faith and hope shall rise,
 Nor sink into this vale of tears again,
 But find true peace and courage in the skies.
 I fix my eye still on the better way;
 I see the promise of th' Eternal Day!
 Yet still my trembling steps fall erringly.
 To chose the right hand path I must incline,
 That sacred passage towards the life divine;
 And yet I fear that life may ne'er be mine."

Rota¹ says that "her brothers," after Pescara's death, sought to induce Vittoria to marry again—

"Era allora Vittoria, giovane d'anni trentacinque, di fresche bellezze, e celebre per la sua letteratura, aspiravano perciò varj Principi alle sue nozze, cui cercavano di disporla ancora i proprj fratelli, quali si aspettavano di far di lei alcun gran parentado; ma ella, ben lontana dal darci orecchio, a chiunque di ciò le faceva parole, usava

¹ *Bullart*, quoted by Rota, xvii.

di rispondere, che il suo Sole quantunque dagli altri fosse riputato morto, appresso di Lei sempre vivea.”

The 18th Sonnet, written probably about the year 1526, refers to this subject. It has been selected by Zilioli as a specimen of Italian poetry.

The sonnet is as follows :—

“ Di così nobil fiamma amor mi cinse,
Che poco apprezza il trapassar dell' ore,
E col suo dolce, casto, e santo ardore,
Ogni altra nel mio petto altera estinse.

“ Ricco legame a bel giogo m'avvinse
Tal che disdegna umil catena il core ;
Nè più speranza vuol, nè più timore ;
L' arse un incendio, un sol nodo lo strinse.

“ Scelto dardo pungente all' arco tese,
Che fè la piaga, ch'or serbo immortale,
Per schermo contra ogni amoroso impaccio.

“ Amor le faci spense ove l'accese,
L'arco spezzò all' avventar d' un strale
E ruppe i nodi all' annodar d' un laccio.”

“ By so noble a flame has love enclosed me, that the flight of the hours is little heeded ; and by its sweet, chaste, holy ardour, it has extinguished every other feeling in my faithful soul. So rich a chain binds me to the blessed yoke, that my heart despises every other tie. It neither hopes nor fears more. One flame consumes it, one knot binds it ; one pungent dart from the bended bow has love selected to make the wound—now become eternal—and I keep it as an impassable shield against every other affection. Love has extinguished the torch where he had illumined it ; he has broken the bow from whence the one arrow sped, and destroyed all the snares which treachery would weave around me.”

CHAPTER VII.

1528.

VITTORIA remained in Ischia during the years 1525, 1526, and 1527, in great retirement; occupied in writing and study.

Many of the beautiful sonnets which we possess, were written during this period of seclusion; and we shall select some of them to show the train of thought, and the state of feeling, which she passed through. One beauty runs through them all, and that is the spirit of unfeigned humility which pervades all she wrote. No praise, no celebrity, no devotedness of friendship, had any power to raise her from her calm humility of spirit. In her isolation of heart she was far removed from self-conceit, or the vain desire of applause. There was no attraction for her in anything which this world could give.

The 78th sonnet, written on the fourth anniversary of her loss, expresses that the world can have

no danger for her. The 48th invokes the dear image against the seductions of the world, the troubles of ocean, and the song of syrens. The 74th, written in the seventh year of her widowhood, exhibits her devoted love to his memory, and her faith and hope in his eternal peace. In the 47th sonnet she compares herself to an imprisoned bird, which rejoices within the nest when it hears the sound of its mother's wings approaching, from whom it receives its food, and which longs to take wing also, and follow wherever she goes ; and so also, *she*, receiving into her soul the light of the divine *sun* which nourishes her, would willingly take flight to follow where he is gone. In another sonnet she says :—

“To me the sun does not give its wonted light, nor the moon in heaven ; nor do I see the clear rays of the planets, nor the lovely stars in their resplendent sphere, because I no longer behold that brave armed heart ! and for me is fled true honour and beautiful glory ! There is no verdure of trees, and no flowers in the meadows ; the waters are turbid, and the air dark ! The sun does not warm, nor the wind refresh ; everything has forgotten its accustomed duty, since my beautiful Sun is quenched on earth. Either the order of nature is confused, or grief has hidden the truth from my senses.”

In the 6th sonnet she compares herself to a boat subjected to variations of the weather ; and it is


easy to imagine that she composed it sitting on the shores of Ischia, watching the waves which lay at her feet. It begins:—

“Oh! on what a tranquil sea, on what calm waves floats my happy bark, with its rich and noble freight! Favoured with pure air and prospering breezes, and heaven itself scattering the darkness, already gives promise of its serene light! But, behold, even now impious and capricious Fortune shows her iniquitous face, and raises up an angry storm! Winds and lightnings together meet ready to overwhelm me, but my soul still sees its *Faithful Star!*”

Speaking of this beautiful sonnet, “O che tranquillo mar,” Vittoria’s French biographer remarks, “These thoughts are not new in *our* day; the English poets have adopted them. *But the way was led by Vittoria Colonna.* It is to *her* glory to have been the first to be a model for others in these comparisons.” “C’est quelque chose pour sa gloire d’avoir été la première, et d’avoir fourni un modèle qu’il est toujours plus facile de surpasser que de créer. Surpasser? pas toujours. Qui ne croirait, en effet, si on en taisait la date, lire dans le sonnet suivant une traduction inédite de Coleridge?”¹

“That *grand sun*, who always makes day in my soul, from his high sphere creates in my faithful heart a second spring-time, with its lovely flowers and green foliage adorned. Its light extends

¹ Lefevre Deumier, p. 129.



to all time; no night hides it, and no morning renews it; but whether it be day or night, every day it is here, with its lovely rays and true form. High thoughts are the sweet flowers which give out fragrance to that noble light, under which they expand and are sustained. The green verdure is the sweet hope that he will call me to heaven, and that he desires that I should partake with him there, where he shines, of his beatitude."

The 66th sonnet has the motto—

"*Conantia frangere frangunt.*"¹

"When the troubled sea rises and surrounds a firm rock with its impetuous and furious waves, if it stands secure the tempestuous pride is broken, and the wave falls back into itself. So I, if against me the deep waters of an angry world rage, lift to heaven my eyes as from a rock, and the greater their strength, the more does my strength abound! And if the storm of desire renews the combat, I run to the shore, and, with a cord entwined of love and faith, I fasten my bark to that on which I rely, Jesus the Living Rock; so that when I will, I can always enter into the harbour."

Thus did Vittoria, seated beside the rocks and waves of her beloved island, fall naturally into such images and thoughts, marrying them to immortal verse. One of the longer poems consisted of twenty-seven stanzas, and is of a pastoral character. The following is a translation of a part of these stanze:—

"When I see the earth adorned and beautiful with a thousand lovely and sweet flowers, and how in the heavens every star is

¹ They, endeavouring to break, are broken.

resplendent with varied colours ; when I see that every solitary and lively creature is moved by natural instinct to come out of the forests and ancient caverns to seek its fellow by day and night ; and when I see the plains adorned again with glorious flowers and new leaves, and hear every babbling brook with grateful murmurs bathing its flowery banks, so that Nature, in love with herself, delights to gaze on the beauty of her works, I say to myself, reflecting, 'How brief is this our miserable mortal life !' Yesterday this plain was covered with snow, to-day it is green and flowery. And again in a moment the beauty of the heavens is overclouded by a fierce wind, and the happy, loving creatures remain hidden amidst the mountains and the woods ; nor can the sweet songs of the tender plants and happy birds be heard, for these cruel storms have dried up the flowers on the ground ; the birds are mute, the most rapid streams and the smallest rivulets are checked by frost ; and what was one hour so beautiful and joyous, is, for a season, miserable and dead.

"So time flies ! and with its flight carries our years, and our life itself ! For us no new day of flowering can be, except hope. Certainly, there is no other except to die, for the highest born and for the lowliest. All that kind fate can do for us is a pious death !

* * * * *

"How tranquil life would be if pure and serene, without passion and without sighs ! Cheerfully enjoying as much as heaven has given, we could live in a modest, humble state, as in the golden age, when the well-born lived in peace on white milk and green herbs, content with poor fare : and the grand sound of the trumpet of war among armed bands was never heard, nor the voice of the anvil resounding to the making of arms, nor did men indulge the bold design of acquiring fame and honour, nor give to others terrible sufferings with doubts and fears ; nor, in the desire to overthrow and change kingdoms, did they feel chosen to such evil passions.

"But they lived contented to turn up the stubborn earth with the plough, watching their dear flocks feeding together and making peaceful combats, and with jocund pastoral notes scattering grief, if any such befell them ; they sang with the nymphs and shepherds ; or, placed at the foot of an elm, where a pine-tree was

at a measured and fit distance, they threw the dart, that whosoever could come nearest the mark should be crowned with a garland. How much better it is to sleep on the grass in the shade than to sleep in gilded beds with purple curtains, to feel the heart tranquil, cheerful, and pure, rather than to hear, even with choicest music, the roar of marching armies!"

One of her biographers says—"Her verses are an inexhaustible mine of gold, the most pure and the most precious." "All her verses," said the Jesuit Possivino, "breathe dignity of soul, the sanctity of religion, and the majesty of intellect." Cardinal Bembo, a man of first-rate reputation in the world of letters, speaks of her as of some great queen. He says, "I never thought to have such an honour as when she wrote of me with so much praise." Agostino says, "Her marvellous rhymes have built up an indestructible mausoleum to her husband. There is no Italian writer of her age, whether in prose or verse, who has not celebrated her, and raised her above her sex." Lodovico Dolce considered it a glory to have edited her works. Fabricio Luna said, "That she held the first rank among women." Cardinal Pompeo Colonna undertook, in her honour, a book entitled "*Le Lodi delle Donne*." Cardinal Contarini dedicated to her his learned work "*Libre Arbitre*."

Ludovico Martelli addressed some lines to her on the death of her husband. And Paolo Giovio dedicated to her his *Life of the Marquis di Pescara*, in seven volumes. Ariosto compared her to all the famed heroines of Greece and Rome, but preferred her to any of them. In comparing her to Artemisia, who raised a grand mausoleum to her husband, he says :—

“ Tanto maggior quanto è più assai bel opera
Che por sotterra un nom, trarlo di sopra.”

“ It is a far better deed to raise a name to the heavens than to bury it under the earth.” For the whole passage, see Appendix.

“ A volume could not contain all the honourable poems of which she was the object,” says her biographer. Tasso's would fill several pages ; and after him, among the Italians, we find : Francesco delle Torre, Allegretti, Giovanni delle Torre, Tibaldeo, Toscani and Gonzaga. Of women : Veronica Gambarà, Camilla Guidiboni, Gaspara Stampa, and Laura Terraccina. Of critics we have Renaldo Corso, who wrote a volume of enormous glossaries, Crescimbeni, Tiraboschi, Muratori, and many others. Toscano affirms that she was a second Petrarch ; and Il Crescimbeni, “ that she had raised herself above every other woman, and placed herself gloriously to walk in the foot-

steps of Petrarch, from whose followers she received the title of 'Divina.'"

In Italian biography she is designated by the epithets: *diva*, *divina*, *maravigliosa*, *altissima*, *illustrissima*, *vertuosissima*, *dottissima*, *castissima*, *gloriosissima*, &c. &c.

In the first edition of her poems, published, without her knowledge, in Parma, 1538, she is styled the "Divina." And in the third edition, published in Venice, 1540, she has the title "Diva" (goddess) given her; which is the highest term of honour, and never before given to a woman.¹

So much flattery and adulation might have injured even her noble nature had she not been overwhelmed with so many griefs.

In the 80th sonnet she excuses herself for making Pescara the continued subject of her verse:—

“ Sempre è dubbioso il nostro miser stato !
Ma per cangier di tempo o di fortuna
Non fia cangiato in me l'alto pensiero
Di lodar la cagione, piangere il danno.
Dal antica passion nacque sol' una
Fede al mio petto ; chè non men sincero
Del primo giorno sarà l'ultim' anno ! ”

¹ “ Titoli che di que' tempi, non solevano dispensarsi che a uomini eccellentissimi.”

"Our miserable state is always uncertain ; but though time and fortune change, they cannot change in me the high thought to praise the cause and weep the loss. From the old passion is born one only faith in my breast, which will not be less sincere the last year as the first day."

This rare affection, and this self-sustained strength, were the safe defence of Vittoria against the offers of a new marriage, which would seem like an insult to such a woman ; but which, as we have said, even her brothers understood her so little, as to have pressed upon her. She replied to them in the spirit of the 118th sonnet, in which she compares herself to "that beautiful juniper-tree, which stands firm, though its leaves are scattered by the angry winds, and its branches tossed in the air. My soul despises the anger of fortune, and smiles at the bitter warfare, like that tree, and it teaches me that, by evil, faith is strengthened (*'che nel mal cresca la fede'*)."

She said that her sun still shone for her ; and that neither dark days, nor bright ones, could take from her the faith of the heart.

In reading her poems we pass through the vicissitudes of that affliction which lasted to the tomb. Their sameness, also, is a proof of their not having been written for fame, nor intended for the eye of the world. She only made use of this talent to

give relief to her feelings, and an utterance to her thoughts. When at length her poems were collected and published in 1538, it was unauthorized by her.

Her sonnets are classified under two heads: those which she wrote in her early widowhood, which chiefly relate to Pescara and her own grief; and those which she wrote, after her seven years of mourning, in which she encourages her thoughts to turn to higher consolations; and which are more highly finished, and more perfect in style, than the earlier ones.

Even from her youth Vittoria had gained the applause and affection of all who in Italy had made the *Belles Lettres* their profession. She enjoyed in Ischia the society of some of the most learned of the nobility and other distinguished persons of Naples, corresponding also with many of the first men of the day. There are letters addressed to her at Ferrara, Rome, Naples, and Ischia, in years subsequent to the death of the Marquis, in themselves a sufficient proof that she did not immure herself in any convent during these years of mourning, as is stated by her Catholic biographers.

She exchanged letters and verses with Ludovico Dolce; she enjoyed the friendship of Marcantorio

Flaminio, who mentions her in his Latin poems, both during her life and after her death. Castiglione wrote his four books of the Court, as much to show his admiration of her, as to please Louis XII. and his beloved friend Ariosto. Among Vittoria's principal friends and admirers we must not omit to mention G. G. Vescovo di Fossombrone; and also Cardinal Pietro Bembo, to whom she was accustomed to send her verses, and who appreciated them highly, as is expressed in his letters and poems. She also, at the request of these two friends, presented them with her portrait. Cardinal Bembo had the greatest esteem for her. He was a man of the highest literary attainments, and twenty years her senior. His house was a kind of academy, furnished with an excellent library, rich in manuscripts as well as printed books, and a choice collection of medals and antiquities. He had also a botanical garden and everything that could favour the pursuit of science. He wrote in Latin and Italian; and his prose and verse in both languages were equally celebrated. He expressed, to his friend Giovio, the gratification he had felt in having had his verses praised by Vittoria. "She has given a more steady and well-founded judgment, and a more minute criticism, than I have

seen on my poetry by the greatest masters of such things ; and if I were out of the game, so that it might not be said that she did it to please *me*, I should say more than I *do* say. She is certainly that great lady you have honourably described to the world, more than once in your prose writings ; and to me you have many times described *viva voce*."

Vittoria Colonna had also a famed friend and contemporary in Veronica Gambara, Countess of Correggio. She was five years older than Vittoria, whom she resembled in poetical talents, in her domestic sorrows and her conjugal virtues. She was married in 1509 to Ghiberto, Lord of Correggio. She held her court at Fondi, on the coast, and the Sultan, having heard of her extraordinary beauty, was desirous of obtaining her for himself. And sending with that intent a vessel to the Italian shore, her castle was surprised by Turks in the night-time, and she only escaped from them by throwing herself on a horse, as she was, and taking to flight.

Her high rank, her extraordinary acquirements, and excellent literary productions, as well as her unsullied purity and all the virtues which added

lustre to her rank, made her worthy of the devoted friendship of Vittoria Colonna, whom she styled, "Il suo Canzoniere."

In the year 1518 she had the grief to lose her husband after being united to him for nine years; and she henceforth devoted herself to the education of her two sons, and the composition of those works that have perpetuated her memory. Her poems and letters were published in Brescia, in 1559. They rank among the most polished productions of the time.¹

Mrs. Jameson compares these two women. She says: "Vittoria seems to have been as lovely, gentle, and feminine a creature as ever wore the form of woman. Veronica, on the contrary, added to her talents and virtues a masculine spirit, and strong passions, and happily also sufficient energy of mind to govern and direct them. Her verses have not the polished harmony and graceful suavity of Vittoria's, but more vigour of expression and more vivacity of colouring. The simplicity of Veronica sometimes borders on harshness and carelessness. The uniform sweetness of Vittoria is sometimes too elaborate and artificial. Veronica has written fewer

¹ Biogr. Dict. (Aikin).

good poems than Vittoria Colonna, but amongst them two which are considered superior to Vittoria's best."¹

Veronica Gambara in later years resided at Bologna, where her brother Uberto was governor; and on the occasion of Charles V.'s visit to that city, in August 1529, to be crowned King of Lombardy and Emperor of the Romans, her house was the resort of a number of the most distinguished men in Europe who followed his court. It is possible that Vittoria was visiting her friend at this period, and there saw the Emperor. It is certain that when Charles V. was in Rome, six years afterwards, he honoured her with a visit, as well as her accomplished sister-in-law, the beautiful Giovanna Colonna. Charles V. arrived in Italy with a numerous train of Spanish nobility. He landed in Genoa, where he was received with acclamations; and he subsequently proceeded to Bologna.²

¹ Mrs. Jameson's "Romance of Biography."

² Bologna, 1529. Cardinal Bembo, in a letter to Clement, bearing date 7th April, 1530, in speaking of Bologna on this occasion "as the theatre of the whole world," says that "within those walls were assembled a greater number of noble and illustrious men than the world had ever before seen brought together." "They were great days those Bologna coronation-days," says Trollope. "But mankind knows only too well by heart the routine of such great

In this city, on the 5th of November, he had an interview with Pope Clement VII., who so lately had been the prisoner of his army. He met him with the majesty of an emperor, and the humility of an obedient son of the Church, and kneeled down to kiss his foot. The Italians were astonished to find Charles so affable and so exemplary in his demeanour after having suffered so terribly from the licentiousness and ferocity of his army.¹

days. The solemn hymns and the silken hangings, the shouting crowds and the shining soldiery ; the old oaths broken and the new oaths sworn ; the bowings and benedictions, the *Te Deums* and the dinners ; the bargaining, the over-reaching, the signing and the sealing, the processioning and trumpet-blowing, and the organ-swalling ; all the greatness and all the glory producible by the united efforts of cooks, tailors, priests, trumpeters, and upholsterers ! We know all about it, and have no difficulty whatever in picturing to ourselves the grave and graceful courtesies that passed between God's vicegerent in cloth of gold and God's anointed in velvet. Nor is it less easy to imagine what must have been the feelings of these two men towards each other when, the day's comedy over, cloth of gold and velvet laid aside, the solitude of night hours compelled them to commune with their own hearts. How heartily must the Pontiff have hated the Emperor, and how entirely must the Emperor have despised the Pontiff !"

¹ Robertson's "Charles V." vol. iii. p. 38.

CHAPTER VIII.

1527.

IN the year 1523, Giulio de Medici, the nephew of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was elected to the papal throne. His pontificate was full of vicissitudes and calamities. He began by allying himself to the French king, out of hatred to the Emperor; and he indulged an extreme ill-will against all the Colonnas, especially against Pompeo Colonna, who had taken a leading part in the intrigues which had kept the see vacant for some months before Clement was finally elected. It was said that he wished for the dignity himself.

The Medici and the Colonnas were old foes, and the "*Audace Colonna*" were ever ready for war on the slightest provocation. Whilst the leaders of the Imperialists were actively engaged in Lombardy in endeavouring to raise supplies for the army, and authorizing the rifling of the churches,

and the torture of the inhabitants of the cities and villages to obtain money, the Emperor's general at Naples, Don Ugo di Moncada, took it into his head to propose to the Colonnas "a little frolic at Clement's expense, and they jumped at the proposal;" and determined one morning, on the 20th of September, 1526, to invade Rome with only two thousand men.

They knew that the Pope had just discharged the papal soldiers, and had no troops at his command; so they marched at once to the Vatican, sacked it, and also every house belonging to the Orsini; and even robbed the sacristy of St. Peter's. If anybody wonders why no one bestirred themselves to help the Pope in this danger, against such a small force, let him know that Clement was at this time most hateful to men of all classes. Some even maintained that he was no other than Antichrist. On the first alarm he escaped into the Castle of St. Angelo; but as he found no supply of either food or ammunition there, he was obliged to treat for his deliverance at the end of three days. The Most Reverend Cardinal Pompeo Colonna was urgent with Don Ugo not to release him; but the general, having no hope of becoming

pope himself, thought that Clement had been punished enough, and, moved by the hope of money for his private purse, he agreed to a treaty with Clement, who promised to pardon the Colonnas freely for all they had done, and to take no steps to revenge himself against them. When, by virtue of this treaty, he returned to his desolate palace, a burning desire of vengeance seized him. He immediately collected a thousand horsemen, and bargained with several lawless ruffian barons to begin an attack upon the Colonna family, such as no pope had ever yet made upon non-heretical enemies. His troops were commanded to enter the territories of the Colonnas; to spare nothing—neither property, nor life; to burn and destroy houses, men, women, and children. Fourteen castles, with the adjoining villages and farms attached to them, which belonged to the proscribed Colonnas, were razed to the ground; and a great number of men and women suffered much wrong and shame, though totally blameless in the matter.

Vittoria wrote pressing letters to Pompeo and to Vasto, begging them to remember the example of Pescara, who always showed mercy to the vanquished. She offered to ransom the prisoners;

and as Ghiberto said,¹ "She shone like the star of peace in a stormy sky." She was in new and indescribable grief at these events. She was angry to see her father's family mixed up in such disgraceful scenes. She wept to see them attacking such a city, and applied to her friend Ghiberto, the Pope's Danario, who was so influential that his advice weighed as much as the Pontiff's, praying him to intercede to make peace. But the Pope was too much enraged to listen to any such overtures ; he deprived Pompeo Colonna of the hat, excommunicated all the Colonna family, and seized their castles and lands. So that Vittoria in all haste had to fly from Marino, by way of Arpino, another of the Colonna fiefs, to Naples ; and she came to Ischia, where she found many other fugitives, driven there by the pestilence in Naples, as well as by the troubles in Rome.

Here, shortly afterwards, the news reached her of the terrible attack upon Rome by the army of Bourbon, which obscured for ever the glory of Charles V. Bourbon being left in command of the 19,000 Germans and of all the Spanish troops of the Emperor ; and being, as we have said, in diffi-

¹ Letter from Ghiberto, dated Rome, November 1527.

culties how to pay and support this great army, conceived the daring idea of marching on to Rome. It is an expedition which is considered to have been the boldest recorded in history. The Emperor declared that it was not authorized by him; but there seems no doubt that he secretly enjoyed the discomfiture of Clement. Clement had only just recovered from his first imprisonment in St. Angelo; and he had hardly wreaked his vengeance on the Colonna faction, when he was astounded to hear that a far more formidable foe was coming upon him. Bourbon, in the depth of winter, had to march more than a hundred leagues through an enemy's country, to cross rivers, to pass the Apennines, and to keep in check three opposing armies. He had to allure his men on by promises of immense booty. He marched on foot himself, and partook of the same food and hardships as his men. He allowed them to plunder all the villages as they passed; and this great and brutalized army, like a swarm of locusts, reached at last the plains of Rome on the 5th of May, 1527.

When he came within sight of the Eternal City, into which the riches of the Christian world had flowed for centuries, he promised his men a

grand reward if they succeeded in entering the city.

On the 6th of May, at daybreak, Bourbon himself led the assault ; but, to the dismay of the soldiers, he fell at the first attack whilst raising a scaling-ladder against the walls. The Prince of Orange took the command, and led on the troops with the greatest ardour, and so little defence was made that the city was soon entered sword in hand. Clement, who had been praying for aid in St. Peter's, fled to St. Angelo again. He might at the last moment have saved Rome from the horrors which followed, as the besiegers had offered to spare it if he would pay a heavy ransom ; but he looked for safety to the army of D'Urbino, which never came to his rescue.

The soldiers, left without their old leaders—both Pescara and Bourbon being dead—wild with hunger and tardy pay, found themselves unrestrained in the most luxurious city in the world ; abounding with riches, and ruled by a pope who was called by the people the devil himself. The German soldiers, before St. Angelo, proclaimed Luther Pope, and vowed vengeance upon Clement's head, and a horrible scene ensued.

Benvenuto Cellini relates that he was in the Castle of St. Angelo on the fatal night when the troops first entered Rome. He saw the flames bursting forth in the darkness, and heard the sorrowful cry. It was as if suddenly the earth had opened and disgorged a legion of devils, so horrible were the scenes which ensued. Never was such cruelty exercised, even in the fifth or sixth century, when the barbarians were masters of Rome! And these were the soldiers of the most Christian Emperor!

The mad excesses of the terrible six months which followed are too frightful to relate. The soldiers lighted their fires on the marble floors of the Vatican, and stabled their horses in the Sistine Chapel. Property of every kind was carried away. The possessors of some of the noble palaces had to purchase safety by the payment of immense sums. Escape was impossible! During this frightful period the Colonnas doubtless lost many of their invaluable possessions, or had to pay enormous ransoms to preserve their magnificent palaces from pillage.

Among the treasures taken from the Vatican, in this year of rapine, 1527, by the Imperialist army, were the tapestries which had just been completed

from Raphael's immortal cartoons to hang in the Sistine Chapel. Raphael had received 300 ducats for the work. The tapestry was intended to be hung in the presbytery, and the different size of the cartoons is explained by the spaces on the walls being of unequal width. The order was given in the year 1514, and the tapestries had only been hung up once, on St. Stephen's day. They fell a prey to the soldiers of Charles V., but were restored, in 1553, by Anne de Montmorency, who bought them from a soldier. They were afterwards shown only on Corpus Christi day, on the front of St. Peter's. In 1798 the French carried them off again. But Pope Pius VII., in 1808, bought them; and since then they have hung in the Vatican.

The original designs, the Raphael Cartoons, are of much greater value: they were purchased for Charles I., and placed in Hampton Court, but very recently have found a better resting-place in a gallery of the South Kensington Museum.

Whilst Bourbon had been marching to Rome, the people of Florence had taken advantage of the opportunity once more to drive out the Medici from their city. And this circumstance was more

distressing to Clement than all the evils which attended the sacking of Rome. After the ignominy which Clement had personally suffered from the Imperialists, it astonished everyone to see him almost immediately renewing his alliance with the Emperor. This he did, because he saw that it was the only chance of restoring his family to their old power in Florence.

The Pope and the Emperor met at Bologna, and their united forces marched to the subjection of Florence at the end of 1530. The Marchese del Vasto led the Spanish troops. The siege of Florence lasted till August in the following year, and the history of its brave defence is fully given in Trollope's "Florence," and Grimm's "Life of Michael Angelo." This is the first time that we meet with the great sculptor's name in this memoir. He left his work in Rome unfinished, to take up arms against his patron, in defence of his beloved native city. He showed himself as great on this occasion as on every other. Ferrucci's name stands next, and is to this day known to every child in Florence. Three times did he lead the sortie, and oblige the Imperialist commander to raise the siege; and success might have crowned the patriotic efforts of the Florentines,

had not Malatesta's¹ treachery hastened the end. Clement, at length, beheld the restoration of his family, at a fearful sacrifice. After the year 1531, they possessed not the old Florence. The rich, proud, luxurious, haughty, free city, with its suburbs, villas, and gardens, had suffered such destruction that it had become a tale of past glory; and after accomplishing this great ruin, his original temper towards the Emperor returned, and he refused to yield to the wish of Charles to hold a council in Germany. Charles at this time affected, at least, to lean towards the Protestants, but Clement considered it would be an insult to the papal chair to have a council out of Italy. He accordingly turned again to the French king, hoping to gain his assistance. But Ranke is of opinion that no council would ever have been called during Clement's pontificate. His life, however, was not much prolonged. He died in the year 1534, after a lingering illness, aggravated by the vexation and mortification which his own wretched vacillating

¹ Malatesta Baglioni held the supreme command in Florence. He was a traitor to the cause. "The form of Malatesta stands ever like the shadow of a devil in the background, when we speak of the decline of Florentine liberty," says Grimm, vol. ii. p. 91.

policy had entailed. He died unregretted ; leaving behind him a character stained with harshness, avarice, and deception. He had most of the failings, though none of the splendid and amiable qualities, of his cousin Leo. The Colonnas must have been relieved to hear of his death, for he had been almost constantly their avowed enemy.

CHAPTER IX.

1530—1536.

IN the year 1530 Vittoria again visited Rome, “nel Palazzo Cesarino detto Argentina, sfidata dei Medici” (in spite of the Medici). The Pope, Clement VII., when he determined, with the Emperor’s aid, to attack his native city of Florence, and reinstate the Medici there, had thought it expedient to pacify the Colonnas by granting them a full pardon, and restoring all their castles and possessions in the Papal States. Three years had elapsed since the frightful ravages that Rome had undergone from Bourbon’s soldiers; the city began to resume its usual life, and the learned and gay were returning to their accustomed haunts. But Rome never recovered from the effects of the horrors of 1527. The population of Rome, in the time of Leo, was 90,000; and when Clement returned to the Vatican, the number was reduced to one-third.

The destruction of temples and of old monuments had been frightful; and popes and princes continued the spoliation. In 1531 there was a public sale of the stones of the Coliseum.¹

The papal government was in the habit of granting permissions to excavate *travertine* from the walls to any princely family who could afford to pay for them. And Paul III., who was elected Pope in 1534, spared nothing. He stripped the ancient temples of their precious pillars and marbles to build his palace, and Gibbon remarks that "every traveller who views the Farnese Palace may curse the luxury of these upstart princes."

The Coliseum was only saved from entire destruction by being consecrated to divine worship, to celebrate the deaths of Christian martyrs who had met their fate in its arena. "It is wonderful that anything is left to remind us of the past," says Trollope. "Rome is but the bones of a mighty skeleton."

But the golden sunshine and blue skies of Italy still threw their beauty over the ruins of the Eternal City; and in the loved society of her brother, his beautiful wife, the Marchese del Vasto, and a select

¹ See Appendix, "Raphael."

party of friends, Vittoria visited everything worthy of note in the ancient city. "We have here a singularly pleasing picture of these sixteenth-century rambles, by as remarkable a company as any of the thousands who have since trodden in their steps."¹ Like a second, and a nobler Corinne, Vittoria was versed in all the classic associations connected with these buildings, and she exclaimed, as she beheld them, "Happy they who lived in times so full of beauty!" The poet Molza, who was of the party, took this exclamation of Vittoria as a subject for one of his sonnets, and assumed that the ancients had heard the remark, and had replied, "That they were less happy than she imagined them, because they had not known her."

The Coliseum must have particularly attracted their admiration. It is noble and beautiful even in its decay. We are tempted to give a description of it² as it is at present seen :—"A supreme peace reigns there, and thousands of beautiful flowers adorn its broken arches. The flowers drink in a glory of colour from the setting sun, and show like gems against the rough crust of their setting.

¹ Trollope.

² From the pen of the gifted American artist, Mr. Story.

Slowly the great shadow of the western wall creeps along the arena ; the cross in the centre blazes no longer in the sun ; the shadow climbs rapidly up the eastern benches, and the glory of sunset is gone. The molten clouds grow cool and grey, the orange refines into citron, and pales away to tenderest opaline light ; and stars begin to peer through the dim veil of twilight. Later on the moon shines through the arches, and softens and hallows the ruins."¹

We also give another beautiful picture from the same author of the scene which must have been presented to our exploring party from the heights of the Capitol. Looking over the waving plains of the Campagna in the clear, lovely Italian atmosphere, they would see towards the south "the varied outline of Monte Albano culminating in the cone of Monte Cavi. And along its lower slopes the gleaming towns of Albano, Marino, Gandolfo, and Frascati, with villas, gardens, and orchards ; and still higher, resting on its little jutting edge, the little grey town of Rocca di Papa. Green forests and groves girdle its waist, and soften the volcanic hollows around the Alban Lake. High up on its

¹ *Roba di Roma*, p. 178.

summit is the Convent of Monte Cavi, built by Cardinal York on the ruins of the Temple of Jupiter Latialis; and here you may overlook where the Alban Hill again drops into the plain, and see in the distance the faint misty heights of Ischia, just visible on the horizon, and may descry the three little hills on which stand, like advanced posts before the lofty mountains, the villages of Colonna, Zagarola, and Gallicano, which give their names to princely Roman families of to-day. It is a picture wherever you go. The land bursts forth into spontaneous vegetation, and everywhere laughs flowers. You may gallop for miles through meadows of green smoothness, on fire with scarlet poppies; over hills crowned with ruins that insist on being painted, gracious with myriads of wild flowers; and you may gaze through lofty arches into the wondrous deeps of violet-hued distances."¹

But where are the inhabitants?—Cut off by the sword, cut off by the pestilence, driven before the curse of the tyrant, sacrificed by the cruelties of the Inquisition! Where are the criminal legislators? where are the patrician fathers? where are the ambitious and ever-turbulent princes? where

¹ *Roba di Roma*, p. 251.

are the wicked popes, at whose doors all this most terrible desolation is to be laid? Who is responsible for the frightful change which has taken place in this beautiful wilderness? In the days of Pliny the neighbourhood of Rome was considered healthy and salubrious; and even so late as in Petrarch's time the scourge of the malaria was unknown. In a letter from him, written to Giovanna Colonna from Capranica (a town thirty miles from Rome, where he had been staying), he says, "The air here is very salubrious." And now the pestilential miasma from the Campagna, at some seasons, is so fatal, that it is unsafe, even at Rome, to be out after sunset. The Campagna, which extends for a hundred miles along the coast, and is about forty miles in diameter, is now a wild, almost uncultivated waste, and buried palaces and temples are everywhere found under the soil. Twenty-two cities are buried beneath that pall of wild flowers!¹

The forests, once sacredly preserved by the

¹ "So melancholy a decline of culture and population, through physical causes, gradually overspread Italy. The vices of society and public misfortunes retarded all agriculture. Regular gardens were not made in France till the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."—HALLAM's *Middle Ages*.

Romans, were cut down and never replaced; drainage was neglected, the herds and their shepherds were in continual jeopardy; wars without end carried off the feudal retainers, and the tillers of the soil, at the bidding of their lords; the implements of good husbandry and security of the crops, were never given to the peasants; and the castles were for ever changing masters. So cruel were the wars, and so frequent the consequent pestilence, that the peasantry everywhere were decimated and rendered hopeless; and Vittoria may, indeed, be styled a prophetess, for she saw the evils impending upon her hapless country; and she used all the influence she possessed to prevent these suicidal wars, and "left nothing untried in order to bring her brother Ascanio back from the raging of war, to rest and repose."¹

Vittoria's visit to Rome in 1530 was one continued ovation. Amongst her most intimate friends were the saint-like Venetian Contarini, a scholar and statesman; Pole, one of the English royal family, a man universally beloved for his benignity and modesty; and Bembo, one of the first literati in Italy. These men, in the midst of a corrupt

¹ Cardinal Pole's letter to Contarini.

age, were truly the "salt of the earth." They were no less pious than learned ; and Vittoria was their friend, inspired muse, and disciple. They had the highest respect for her, and their friendship lasted through life.

Hallam speaks with great praise of Bembo.¹ He says, "Among the polished writers of Italy, we meet on every side with the name of Bembo ; great in Italian as well as Latin literature, in prose as well as verse." Varchi says, "The Italians cannot be sufficiently thankful to Bembo for having not only purified their language from the rust of ages, but given it such regularity and clearness that it has become what we now see."

After the death of his great patron, Leo X., Bembo lived at Padua in literary elegance, enjoying the society of the learned, who visited him from all parts of Europe. He obtained a cardinal's hat a few years before his death,—“on the recommendation of Sadolet,” says Hallam. He died in 1547 at an advanced age.

Vittoria was also instrumental in Bembo's being raised to the cardinalate. In a letter written to her in 1539, he says that she had used her

¹ Literature of Europe, vol. i.

influence with the Pope in his favour.¹ She assisted several other literary men, among whom we may name Bernardo Tasso, the father of the poet; and Il Molza, who had been her master in poetry. She was ever ready to help all who needed either money or her kind countenance; and following the munificent old custom of persons of rank, she adopted into her household those whom she could thus serve. Among others Giovio, and Giuseppe Jova, whom she took as her secretary. She also placed confidence in Carlo Giulleruzzi da Fano, a man learned in the laws and rules of the Roman court. He had a young daughter of most amiable disposition, and Vittoria adopted her, and received her into her family, superintending her education for some years, until her pupil took the veil in Vittoria's favourite retreat, the nunnery of St. Silvestro, at Rome.

When Vittoria left Rome, at the end of the year 1530, and returned to Ischia, she found there a number of gentlewomen and men of elegant culture.

¹ The letter is dated Venezia, April 1539. The following is the passage:—"Vostra Illustris. Sig. ha più da rallegrarsi della nuova dignità e grado datomi da Nostro Signor, perciò che ella ne è stata in' buona parte cagione che per alcun mio merito, de che ella per sua molta cortesia ragiona meco nelle sue lettere." And he stated the same thing to Ascanio Colonna.

who had taken refuge in the island from Naples, which was in danger of an attack from the French army. Among these refugees was Il Minturno, introduced to Vittoria by Monsignor Giovio, with a recommendation from the Pope, that he, as belonging to the Papal Court, should read to her his Latin poem on the origin of the Colonna Family. This is mentioned in one of his letters dated from Palermo, the 25th of April, 1531. In another letter he informs her that he has turned a composition of hers, which he had received from the Marchese del Vasto, into two Latin epigrams, which he considered quite unworthy, but sent them to her as the inventress of a new and polite mode of complimenting.

In the ensuing year, 1531, the contagion in Naples having reached Ischia, she had to find a retreat at Arpino, one of the Colonna castles, "after her family had resumed their usual grandeur. Here she executed a deed, appointing Vasquez her vice-marchese of Aquino and Palazzuolo, which document is among her inedited papers;"¹ and from Arpino she went on to Rome, where she resided for some time.

Her correspondence and her advice were sought

¹ Visconti, cvii.

out by many distinguished persons. Bernardo Tasso acknowledges the obligation he was under to her influence, in awakening his mind to a love of religion and virtue. And in a letter addressed to her he entreats that she will continue her good offices towards him. Events seemed to enhance the great influence that her character exerted over her large circle of acquaintance. She stood at the head of the party of which also Renée of Ferrara, and Margaret of Navarre, were the acknowledged leaders. And her mind began to turn from her private griefs to take an interest in the religious controversies and reforms of which the whole world was at this time speaking and writing.

From the year 1532 we begin to trace in her poetry this change of thought. Her Muse took a higher flight, as her French biographer expresses it: "*Désertant alors les sentiers battus, elle chercha des routes moins fréquentées, et d'invoquer une plus haute assistance.*" She says in one of her sonnets:—

"Me reformò la Man che formò il Cielo.
E sì pietosa al mio priego s'offerse
Che ancor lieto ne trema ardendo il core!"

"The Hand which formed the heavens hath re-formed me; and so pitifully hath He heard my prayer, that again, joyfully and without fear, glows my heart."

SONNET LXXIV.

"Sperai, che 'l tempo i caldi alti desiri
Temprasse alquanto, o da mortal affanno
Fosse il cor vinto sì, che 'l settimo anno,
Non s'udisser sì lunghe i miei sospiri !

"Ma perchè 'l mal s'avanzi, o perchè giri
Senza intervallo il sole, ancor non fanno
Più vile il core, o men gravoso l' danno :
Che 'l mio duol spregia tempo ed io martiri.

"D'arder sempre piangendo non mi doglio ;
Forse avrò di fidele il titol vero,
Caro a me sopra ogn' altro eterno onore.

"Non cambierò la fè nè questo scoglio
Ch' al mio sol piacque, ove fornire spero,
Come le dolci già, quest' amare ore."

"Thou hopest that time and high and living thoughts would have tempered the heart from such mortal grief, and that in the seventh year my sighs would not have been heard so far off. But as evil goes on, and the sun without ceasing moves on, so my heart does not become more despicable, nor less heavy my loss. My loss defies time. I am martyred. To love always weeping is not grief to me. Dear to me above every other honourable title is the title of a true fidelity. I will not change my faith, nor this rock, which my husband loved, and where I hope to end my bitter days as already I have ended my happiest ones."

Her religious poems bear the marks of much greater care and finish than her earlier sonnets. She laboured to make them as perfect as possible, from the idea that nothing ought to be so noble as religious expressions.

She also found, in the year 1538, that her

sonnets had been published without her knowledge and permission. "It was daringly done," "*Contral voler suo*" (contrary to her wish). Her newest effusions were also handed about, from one friend to another, as the interest in the author induced the circulation, and the fashion of the day authorized. No doubt this circumstance added, naturally, to the care with which Vittoria is said to have revised and improved her later sonnets. We possess upwards of two hundred of these written after 1532. In the "Invocation," the first of this series of sonnets, she expresses her desire to leave terrestrial objects, and to rise to the love divine. She says, that blind love of this world had, for a time, captivated her soul with its vain fame, and like a serpent had been nourished in her bosom; but that now she turned weeping, in her affection, to the "Hills whence cometh help." She invokes not Parnassus nor Delos; she looks up to other mountains which no foot hath trod by its own strength. She beseeches that light, which illumines the eternal world, to open to her the source of light; and to give her to drink of those living waters which alone can allay her great thirst.

Vittoria Colonna, as it has been before remarked, was the first poet in Italy to tune her lyre to sacred subjects, and it may not be too much to say, perhaps, that, with the exception of Michael Angelo, she is the only one. In making this assertion we almost prove her Protestantism. There was a general outburst of religious song in the first age of the Reformation, headed by the deep impressive hymns of Luther. Germany loved enthusiastically these compositions, and the fervour with which they are sung by the multitudes in the great German churches is like a spontaneous thanksgiving for freedom of thought, and freedom from the priesthood, and is a strong contrast to the mutterings of the abject groups in the Roman churches, eternally repeating their Paters and Ave Marias. Luther said, "Music is God's grandest and sweetest gift to man." There are upwards of 33,000 of these hymns. With some of the most beautiful of them the talented Catherine Winkworth, and other translators, have lately made the world familiar.

CHAPTER X.

1536—1538.

IN the year 1536 we find Vittoria again in Rome. Paul III. (a Farnese) had been elected Pope two years before ; and though far from possessing the qualities required for that high office, he was not a man of such evil passions as his predecessor. He had not Clement's hatred of the Colonnas ; and he desired, if possible, conciliation and peace. He began his pontificate by raising to the College of Cardinals many excellent and liberal men ; and he instructed them to prepare a scheme for the reform of the Church. This document was signed by Contarini, Caraffa, Sadolet, Pole, Fregoso, Ghiberto, Cortese, and Uleandeo. Most of these men belonged to the Oratory of Divine Love, a society founded in Leo's time, which bound the members (sixty in number) to a strict morality of life, and a better observance of divine worship.

Caraffa, after a time, had left this society as too liberal for his views, and he founded another which took the title of Theatines, and in 1537 he was joined by Ignatius Loyola.

Paul III., though he might desire a reform of abuses in the Church, was as averse to a council as his predecessor; but he yielded to the necessity. He felt that the first thing to be done was to insist upon peace between the Emperor and the King of France; and, in hopes of establishing it, he proposed to meet them at Nice, an offer which they did not dare to refuse, but they altogether declined when there to meet each other; and the Pope had to visit them alternately. Their jealousy and enmity continued till the year 1544,¹ when, tired of harassing one another, the rival monarchs concluded a treaty of peace at Crispy.

In 1536 the Emperor paid a visit of four days to

¹ Francis died in the year 1547, aged fifty-three; and Charles abdicated in 1555, and died eighteen months afterwards, aged fifty-nine, his body enfeebled by ill-health, and his mind weakened by self-indulgence and gloomy reveries. It has been said that he died a Protestant. It is certain that his old confessor, who was afterwards burnt for heresy, visited him a little while before his death. Charles V. visited Germany nine times, Spain six times, France four times, Italy seven times, the Low Countries ten times, England twice, and Africa twice; and he made eleven voyages by sea.

Rome. He entered the city on the 6th of April with such extraordinary pomp that it was found necessary to remove an ancient Temple of Peace in order to widen the road through which the cavalcade was to pass. Some of the wits observed that it was an omen of the war which soon followed. He was received by the Pope and cardinals in full consistory, and the ambassadors of the French king. He addressed the Pope in Spanish in a violent speech against Francis, and ended by saying, "Let us not continue to shed the blood of our innocent subjects. Let us decide the quarrel man to man with what arms he pleases to choose. In our shirts—on an island—a bridge—aboard a galley moored in a river." He ended by saying, "If my hopes of victory were no better founded than his, and my resources no more certain, I would instantly throw myself at his feet, and with folded hands, and a rope about my neck, implore his mercy."

The astonished Pope made no reply to this strange speech except a short, pathetic recommendation to mercy, and broke up the assembly.

It was at this very juncture, when all the Roman upper ten thousand were paying their homage to Charles V. and talking of this singular royal speech,

and challenge to the King of France ("the Mirror of Chivalry"), that the Emperor paid a visit of compliment to the two illustrious sisters in the Colonna Palace. How interesting it would be if we could state what passed when the most graceful and noble of women received this honour from the first prince of the age. The Emperor was at this time thirty-five years of age, and was not only one of the most powerful, but one of the most remarkable men that ever lived.

In the following year, 1537, Vittoria made a long visit to several cities in the north of Italy. The first place she sojourned at was Lucca. Visconti merely states the fact, and does not explain the reason of her visit. It was a journey of at least three hundred miles, of much fatigue, and some peril. Lucca was celebrated for its antiquities, its cathedral, its palaces, and galleries of paintings. There were famous baths in the neighbourhood, frequented for their healing properties. It might be that she desired to try their efficacy, as her health was already beginning to suffer from the sorrows of her mind. Perhaps her adopted son, the commander of the Imperialist forces, might have been then in the neighbourhood ;

or she might have visited the celebrated Peter Martyr Vermigli, who was prior of a rich abbey in the city, and professor of the University of Lucca. He was an intimate friend of Ochino, and it is not unlikely that Ochino might be preaching there at this time. Lucca was called "a heresy-stricken city." There was a flourishing congregation of Reformers in this republic, and the new opinions had gained such general acceptance, that Protestantism was nearly being proclaimed the religion of the State. Vittoria, after a sojourn in Lucca, proceeded on to Bologna, perhaps to visit her friend Veronica Gambara, who resided there with her brother the governor. Here she would find also many objects of interest: a cathedral, many splendid buildings, a school of art, and especially the beautiful Arcade, three miles in length, which led to the celebrated monastery of the Madonna de S. Lucca.

Vittoria Colonna had the privilege of beholding all those pictures in the palaces and churches in these cities, which now form one of the chief attractions to travellers. Since the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who was the great patron of art as well as of letters, there had been a wonderful

revival. With a few exceptions, it was only at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century, that men whose names are so honoured in this day, began to be heard of as sculptors and painters. The old masters, as we call them, were just springing into fame as young artists. Francia of Bologna, Fra Angelico at Siena, Fra Bartolomeo at Lucca, and Titian, Tintoretto, and Giorgione at Venice, were occupied in creating their admirable works; and at Rome, Raphael and Sebastian del Piombo were rivalling the great Michael Angelo in the patronage of the high ecclesiastics and noble princes. Most of the other Italian painters whose names are so familiar to us lived at a later period.

Bologna also was noted for its adhesion to the new opinions, and a few years subsequently the chief heretics who lived there were in great peril, and it is related that Rotto, who enjoyed the intimate friendship of powerful persons like Morone, Pole, and the Marchesa di Pescara, collected money, by every means, to relieve the poor concealed heretics.

Vittoria, in the summer of 1537, passed on to Ferrara, "that pleasant place of all festivity." She visited her friend Renée, Duchessa de Ferrara. "in

humble guise, with six waiting-women only." She was received with honour and affection in the Ducal Palace, for her father's sake, as well as for her own; and she remained the guest of her friends Renée and Duke Hercules for some months. Her residence in that city is proved by two letters from Vittoria to Aretino,¹ dated from Ferrara, September and November of that year, and by four letters which Molza wrote to his son in Bologna, in which he speaks of his kind patroness being at Ferrara.

The ancient family of Este had long reigned as Dukes of Ferrara, and being distinguished for talent, they delighted to assemble at their court the poets and literary men of the day; and Ferrara was celebrated as much for its classical elegance as for its tone of romance. It was the cradle of modern epic poetry. The first poem in the Italian language was written in 1194, in this city, by the Sicilian Ciullo d'Alcamo. Matteo Maria Boiardo wrote there the "*Orlando Innamorata*" (of which the "*Orlando Furioso*" was intended as the sequel), and he was honoured by the friendship of Ercole d'Este.²

¹ See Appendix.

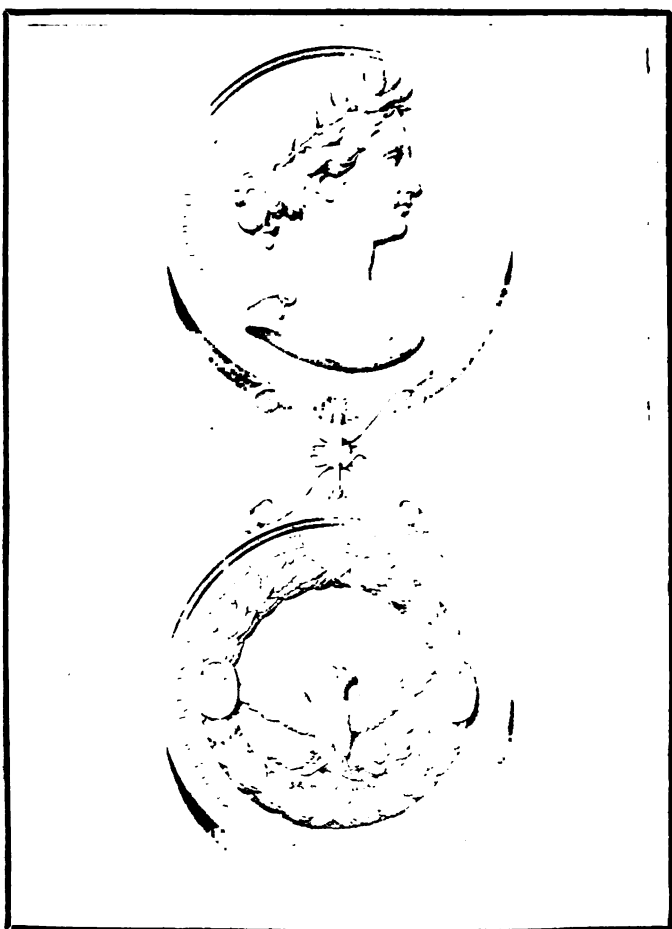
² Tasso also lived at this brilliant court, but at a later period. The melancholy history of his love, madness, and imprisonment, is well known. His prison is still shown in the Hospital S. Anna.

Ariosto's presence also gave a grace to the society of Ferrara. He was allied to the Dukes of Ferrara, and intimate with Cardinal Bembo. He alludes to Vittoria in the 37th canto of the "*Orlando Furioso*."

The Duke invited all the most celebrated men from Lombardy and Venice to meet Vittoria Colonna, and deemed himself honoured by her presence; and doubtless she was shown everything worthy of notice in this beautiful city. Ferrara is situated in a fertile but unhealthy plain. It is twenty-six miles north-east of Bologna, on the coast of the Adriatic. It has broad and ample streets, and its walls are seven miles in circumference. It once had a population of 100,000 persons. The University was renowned throughout Christendom. The fine old cathedral is Gothic. The Church and Monastery of St. Benedetto are fine buildings; and the Church of St. Francesco, built by Ercole I., contains much to interest. There is an echo in it which replies sixteen times from all parts of the building. The public library is a particularly fine one, and contains 900 manuscripts and 80,000 volumes, among which are preserved the original manuscripts of the poems of Ariosto and Tasso. During the sixteenth century upwards of one hundred editions of these poems

issued from the press of Ferrara. Ariosto's house is in the Via di Miracole. He built it for himself in 1526, and died there in 1533.

Ferrara, when Vittoria visited it, was almost as much noted for being an heretical city as Lucca itself. The Duchessa di Ferrara was an avowed Protestant. She was the daughter of Louis XII. of France, and her influence consequently was great; yet we shall find that the shadow of the Inquisition fell upon her also. She was the friend and patroness of Calvin, who often found refuge in Ferrara. He had also a firm friend in the Queen of Navarre, who had a great respect for his learning, and he returned at one time to Paris under her protecting power. He published, at the age of twenty-six, his famous "Institutes," in 1535, and dedicated them to Francis I. He immediately afterwards visited Ferrara, and was received by Renée with marked distinction. His book made an immense impression. It is looked upon as one of those works which have changed the face of society. It was the only work which had exhibited the doctrines of the Reformers since the Reformation, or attacked the peculiarities of the Romish Church. Calvin was at Geneva in July 1537; and if Vittoria did



MEDAL STRUCK IN HONOUR OF VITTORIA COLONNA
IN 1840.

not meet him at Ferrara during her visit at the ducal palace, she must there have heard of him, and the fame of his great work.

Calvin was of middle size, and naturally of delicate health. His habits were frugal and unostentatious, and he was so sparing in his food that for many years he had only one meal a day. He had a clear understanding, an incredible memory, and a firmness and inflexibility of purpose that nothing could overcome. He had never taken orders, having early by study of the Scriptures seen the errors of the Romish faith; but he became a preacher of the Reformed religion in Geneva, where it was established by law in 1536. He was devout and sincere, and the purity of his character in private life was without a stain. "His great talents and strong nature raised him to at least the second place in the Reformation."¹ He enriched his native tongue with modes of expression hitherto unknown to it; and he translated into French, from the Latin, his own "Institutes."

The modern tongues may be said to have been created by the Reformation. Latin had been the language of the monks, the Church, and the learned.

¹ Aikin's Biographical Dictionary.

Now the exclusive language of priests was at an end, and a more general and popular language was wanted ; and everywhere the ordinary speech of the people had to undergo a mighty transformation. "It must experience a happy deliverance from its shackles ; it must be indebted to a renovated Christianity for its patent of nobility. The popular idiom, hitherto only employed by the chronicler and the minstrel, was summoned to receive a new development." And Calvin in French, Luther in German, and Dante in Italian, were the fathers of modern language. Vittoria Colonna was no unworthy disciple of the new school of Italian language, for which art, in her immortal sonnets, she was so justly celebrated.

Peter Martyr was another of these great authors of modern language ; no one wrote better than he, except Calvin, and he was greater than Calvin as a linguist. He was the friend of Cardinal Pole, and probably of Vittoria also. He wrote several letters to Pole, declaring explicitly his adhesion to the new doctrines ; and he had afterwards to fly from Italy, at the time that Ochino also left, from the terrors of the Inquisition.¹

¹ He afterwards filled the chair of Theology at Strasburg for

Whilst Vittoria resided at Ferrara, she suffered in health from the climate of the place ; and she came to the determination that she must leave her hospitable host and hostess on that account. Ferrara stands very low, being only six and a half feet above the level of the Adriatic, and the intervening plain is full of swamps and canals. She had received, on the 11th of September, 1537, a most pressing invitation from her friend Bishop Ghiberto, of Verona, to extend her journey to that city. Apologizing to her for not coming himself to press his request, he sent his friend Torre, a learned doctor, well known and esteemed by many of Vittoria's friends, with his letter of invitation, begging her earnestly to favour Verona. Torre, after fulfilling his mission, wrote to the Bishop that all his eloquence had failed to persuade the Marchesa to leave Ferrara. He said that "the Duke would not listen to the idea for a moment, and that all the people of Ferrara were ready to stone him for proposing it." He added, "Every one here is so grieved with the idea of losing her that I have not

some years, and, following Luther's example, he married a nun. He went to England at the invitation of Edward VI., and was made Professor of Divinity at Oxford, but left at Mary's accession.

the heart to tear away from this city the greatest treasure that they possess, and so impoverish it."

"It is impossible to have a more striking testimony," says Trollope, "to the fame our poetess had achieved ; and it is a feature of the age and clime well worth noting, that a number of small States, divided by constant hostility, should have, nevertheless, possessed among them a republic of letters capable of conferring a celebrity so cordially acknowledged throughout Italy."

Vittoria continued, for some little time, to remain in the Castle d'Este ; but we find that she was reluctantly obliged to leave early in 1538, owing to her continued indisposition. The following letter, dated the 10th of January, was written by her to the celebrated poet and diplomatist, Giovanni Giorgio Trissimo,¹ to apologize for her leaving Ferrara at the time when he was expected to visit the Court. It has all the grace and courtesy which is so much to be admired in her manner and language :—

"MAGNIFICO SIGNORE,—The Lord Duke shows an excellent judgment in everything, and I am very happy that so admirable a guest is expected here, though I cannot hope to benefit much from

¹ "Trissimo, in his '*Italia Liberata*,' introduces a sharp invective against the Church of Rome."—*Hallam*.

the visit myself. It is a grief to me that I cannot enjoy your society, as the climate of Ferrara does not suit my health. Though this destroys my own pleasure, charity constrains me to rejoice in the pleasure of others. Our Lord God be with you.

“Serva al comando vostro, .

“LA MARCHESA DI PESCARA.

“10th January.”¹

Accordingly Vittoria Colonna determined to bid adieu to the kind hospitalities of the court of Ferrara, and to accept the invitation of the Bishop of Verona. This city stands high, and enjoys a bracing climate from the breezes from the Alps. She was here the honoured guest of her old friend Ghiberto, in the noble palace in which he resided, which was of very ancient date. It is called “*Il Vescovado*,” and is remarkable for many antiquities

¹ The original is as follows :—

“MAGNIFICO SIGNORE,—Il Signor Duca mostra in ogni cosa il suo buon giudizio. Mi è soddisfazione che venga qui tal persona, e non potrei spiegarla. Mi duole che non credo goderla molto per l'aere contrario all' indisposizione mia ; pero è moderato il piacere ; benchè la carità mi constringa di averlo caro per gli altri. E nostro Signore Iddio vi guardi.

“Serva al comando vostro,

“LA MARCHESA DI PESCARA.

“*Di Ferrara, a di 10 Gennaio.*”

Published from Bossi, in the Appendix of Roscoe's “Life of Leo X.”

and paintings. In the principal court stands a colossal statue of a crowned female, with the name of the artist upon it, Alessandro Vittoria; and in the Sala dei Vescovi is a collection of portraits of all the bishops of Verona.

Verona la Degna, as it is styled, possesses a very valuable Biblioteca, which is still an unexplored mine of wealth to the student; and contains a great many manuscripts. Vittoria would delight in visiting all the places of interest in the ancient city, under the escort of Torre and the Bishop. Berni calls it "eccelsa, graziosa, alma Verona." The Duomo is very ancient. It was re-consecrated in 1160 by Pope Urban III., and is now most richly ornamented. There are also many very fine churches. The campanile of St. Jerome is particularly noted by travellers. The city has a most noble effect on approaching it, with its walls and lofty towers, and its river passing through the middle of it. Two very old gateways, the Porta dei Borsari and the Arco dei Leoni, cross the modern streets, and are 1,600 years old.

The great Roman amphitheatre, which is contemporary with the Coliseum, is in far more perfect condition. It is built of Verona marble, and is

511 feet in diameter, and held 22,000 spectators. It would naturally be an object of great interest to Vittoria. A few years after her visit to it, an officer was appointed for its conservation, and in 1548 a voluntary subscription was raised to repair it, which became a regular tax in 1579. It is now in perfect preservation.

CHAPTER XI.

1538.

How long a time Vittoria remained at Verona is not stated by her biographers, but we learn from them that during her residence there she renewed the strong interest which she had formerly taken in the affairs of the East, and that she conceived an intense wish to visit the Holy Places ; and, in spite of her infirm health, she would certainly have attempted the journey if Vasto had not hastened from Lombardy to endeavour to dissuade her from so long and perilous an undertaking. Whilst persuading her to return to Rome, he comforted her by proposing to escort her there himself.

It would greatly add to the pleasure of understanding Vittoria's different journeys, if we could picture to ourselves the mode in which ladies travelled in Italy three hundred years ago. The distance between Verona and Rome was long and

fatiguing, across "the olive-sandalled Apennines," and with Vittoria's retinue could not have been easily accomplished.

Some few years previously, when Pescara was marching with his troops from Peschiera to Verona, the beautiful young Marchesa di Mantua and a great number of ladies and cavaliers came into the vineyards of the Castle of Villafranca to see the Spanish troops march past, with Pescara at the head of the infantry; and we are informed that she and her ladies came "*in three carts*" to join the procession. These were heavy bullock-carts, with primitive wheels cut out of a solid piece of wood. The officers had provided handsomely-equipped jennets for the Marchesa and for Donna Laura to mount, but their suite remained in the bullock-carts. They rode through the ranks "*Con multa festa e gloria*," and then, on a signal being given, three mules loaded with sweetmeats were led forward, and the ladies regaled the captains with good things, to the great content of the company. After which the ladies took leave, and returned home "*in their carts*" to Mantua. It does not seem likely that such conveyances as these were the mode of travelling which Vittoria would adopt

It is probable that she performed the long and fatiguing journey in a litter or on horseback. It was a distance of at least four hundred miles, and without any of those arrangements which now facilitate such a journey. Perhaps she visited Urbino, where her uncle resided, and was received by friends, or in the monasteries, as she passed on. It was the end of the winter before she left Verona, happy in having the kind escort of her almost life-long friend the Marchese del Vasto. By accident we learn that Vasto was married, and had a son, "*Il giovinetto Pescara*," which was, no doubt, a source of great gratification to Vittoria. Luca Contile, in a letter written in 1541, says: "I have visited the Marchesa di Pescara, and could not get away for four hours. She seemed modestly pleased to show me this indulgence. I might have presumptuously desired never to leave her society. She asked very closely after the Marchese, the Marchesa, and the little Pescara. And I was able to tell her that I had left the Marchese del Vasto well and happy, having seen him, and called upon him; and that he talked of going into Piedmont. The Marchesa held herself in readiness to come to Naples, and bring

the little Marquis, whose foot she had little hopes of curing. Vittoria sighed, and asked after Bernardino¹ di Siena. I answered he was gone; and that in Milan he had left a good name, and such universal contrition, that all esteemed him a true Christian."

Besides the happiness of possessing this "*little Pescara*," Vittoria had also a young nephew, the son of Ascanio and Giuliana, who was named Fabrizio, after her father. There is a little poem addressed to Ascanio, which speaks tenderly of this young child, and is among the hitherto unpublished sonnets given in the Colonna edition of 1840.

It may be translated simply as follows :—

"A thousand lovely flowers show where, in the grass, hid in a little veil, thy noble tree lies, whose tender bud excites in every mind the ardent hope and promise of riper years. Heaven, perhaps, may will that I should not behold thy son's perfect growth, but I pray that when his beautiful cheek shall assume the manly beard that he may prove himself a superb Roman; and not only boast of the name of our great Fabrizio, but that in word and deed he may copy that rare example.

"Thou must be overjoyed, Signor, that a son of thine should inherit thy high soul! and may Heaven shed its brightest blessings on him!"

Vittoria arrived in Rome, escorted by her beloved

¹ Ochino.

adopted son, from Verona and Ferrara, early in 1538. She was now in the zenith of her fame. The learned Bembo considered her poetical judgment to be as excellent as that of the greatest masters of song. Guidiccioni, the poetical Bishop of Fossombrone, and one of the most able diplomatists of Paul III., declared that the ancient glory of Tuscany had passed into Latium in her person; and complimented her by sending his own sonnets to her to "point out their faults to him."

"All looks are turned upon her," said another of her admirers. "She is full of a sweet and amiable expression; and she leads all men to desire her good opinion by emulating each other in high and elegant works, but above all captivating the austere and stoic soul of Michael Angelo in fervent and chaste love, such has never before had power over this most wonderful man, and which caused him to gain a fourth crown by the verses that he wrote to her. Well indeed did he show the power she had over him when he exclaimed, 'I was born a rough model; and it was for thee to re-form and re-make me.'"

It does not appear that Vittoria and Michael Angelo had met prior to the year 1538. She was

now forty-eight years of age, and the great sculptor was sixty-four,—that is, sixteen years her senior. He was hard at work on the “Last Judgment,” the immense fresco in the Sistine Chapel; on which he laboured incessantly without any assistance. Every one in Rome took an interest in the progress of this magnificent fresco; from the Pope (who continually visited Michael Angelo, urging on its completion in a way extremely irritating to the artist) down to the humblest of the people. We may imagine Vittoria herself standing behind the great painter to view his sublime work; but Michael Angelo did not require the patronage of even a Colonna, and it is possible, with his retiring nature, that Vittoria herself first sought out his friendship. He was universally considered to be the first artist, sculptor, and architect of that, or indeed of any, age. He had attained this pre-eminence by unremitting labour, and the steady pursuit of his art. He said his art was his wife, and his works were his children. Among Vittoria’s intimate friends in Rome was Claudio Tolomei, of the noble house of Siena, a man who founded the *Accademia delle Vertù* at Rome, the principal object of which was architectural. He was a friend of the great sculptor,

and might have probably been the means of introducing him to Vittoria.

Michael Angelo had just lost, in the previous year, his dear old father at the age of ninety-two years, and nearly at the same time his brother Buonarrotti, who died of the plague in his arms. For his relations, and for his father especially, he had laboured and spent both his strength and his money. The gratitude he received in return had not been great. In the most touching letter ever written, he said to his father, "I have burdened myself with all my labour and work only for your sake." And in this letter he humbles himself like a little child before his father—this man of fifty years and of European fame, before whom popes and princes took off their caps. The sorrow which shook his great heart, at the loss of these beloved relatives, is shown in his poem¹ on their deaths. This grand, humble, self-sustained man was now alone in the world. "I have no friends; I need none; I wish for none." There are unpublished papers and poems of his in which he represents himself as "alone before heaven." The things of this world are mentioned with contempt, and

¹ Grimm's "Life of Michael Angelo," p. 243.

thoughts on God and immortality are acknowledged to be the only things worthy of the soul.

It was when suffering under such grief as this that he first beheld the gracious and most gentle lady, who came, as it were at the right moment, to fill up the empty place in his holiest affections. She was such a friend as his soul had longed for. "She belonged to that class of women who never seek to extort anything by force, and yet obtain everything. How tenderly she exercised her authority over Michael Angelo; whom she inspired with the happiness of yielding to a woman! The few years during which their friendship lasted, were the happiest that ever were granted him in his whole life."¹ In many respects their tastes agreed; and their sorrows and their principles were the same. She found in him not only those great gifts which have rendered him immortal, but also that he was a poet equal to herself in purity and depth of thought, and a theologian and moralist whose spirit (like the Apostle's) was "stirred within him to behold the city wholly given to idolatry."

His deepest religious convictions are found in his poems. And his abiding contempt for the

¹ Grimm, p. 276.

sinner in high places was shown not only by his unbending manners, but by the caricatures in which he enshrined them. There is no doubt that his religious faith tended towards "the new opinions." The German writer of his life, who views his character from the artistic side, says, "It was owing to the healthiness of his nature" (why the *healthiness*? we may inquire) "that, though his thoughts approached the doctrines, and his whole nature inclined to these speculations, there is no trace of his taking cognizance of Luther and his doings."

None of the *peculiar doctrines* of the Romish Church are found in his writings; and he cared but little for outward ecclesiastical rule. A great many unpublished poems are in the Vatican Library, and are still kept back from the world. There are also papers and essays termed "*difficiltosi*," and eight of his letters, at Florence. May we not be right in thinking that they remain unpublished on account of their liberality of religious sentiment?

Michael Angelo had made Rome his home from the year 1533. Popes and princes were vying with each other which of them should gain his services; and recently the popes had been the most successful bidders. We call him *The Sculptor*, for that

branch of art was his most esteemed and highest occupation; it was only at the command of the popes that he turned his great powers to architecture and painting. He loved the marble for the mind he carved out of it; and his noblest fame rests on his statues. "There is a whole symphony of Beethoven in the statue of the Dawn." The figure seems struggling through the stone. Michael Angelo conceived of a statue as something complete from the first, but concealed in the marble, and released from its covering by the chisel. This graceful and poetical idea is expressed in a sonnet which was addressed to Vittoria, in which he compares himself to such an unhewn block :—

“ As when, O lady mine,
With chiselled touch
The stone unhewn and cold
Becomes a living mould,
The more the marble wastes
The more the statue grows ;
So, if the working of my soul be such
That good is but evolved
By Time's dread blows,
The vile shell, day by day,
Falls like superfluous flesh away.
Oh take whatever bonds my spirit knows,
And reason, virtue, power, within me lay.”

Popes and cardinals threw their shield over the great painter, whatever might be his religious here-

sies,—“Let that man alone!” He was one to whom nothing could be refused. There was nothing he asked that the Pope did not agree to. Clement was afraid to sit down when he spoke to Michael Angelo, for fear the latter, though unasked, would do the same; and if he asked the sculptor to put on his cap in his presence, it was because he knew he would not wait for an invitation to do so. At one time, when he had been offended by the Pope’s behaviour towards him, he said, “If his Holiness wants me, he may seek me elsewhere,” and the same night he left Rome. The Pope sent five couriers after him with a letter, “Return immediately, on pain of our displeasure.” He replied, “I cannot return. If I were undeserving of your esteem yesterday, I shall not be worthy of it to-morrow.”

This anecdote is characteristic. It is easy to conceive what an ameliorating influence the friendship with such a woman as Vittoria exerted over him. One writer says, “History affords no instance of a purer and stronger affection. I am inclined to regard her intimacy with Michael Angelo as a circumstance which exerted considerable influence upon his character.” “The poetry of Michael Angelo

is all devoted to the depicting of feeling, and of the passions of the soul.”¹

We can well understand how, in the midst of his daily labour, Michael Angelo rejoiced his heart with dwelling on the gracious words and looks of this noble lady, who had come before him like the vision of an angel. Their minds had both been moulded by the great poet, who had, for a century, been leading men to dare to think for themselves.

Dante's divine poem had moved all hearts in that age. He has been styled “Apostolic Missionary;” “A Paul of Italian Unity;” “A Cavour.” “Exclusively he was none of these, or he was all. He was the grandest individuality of the heroic times of individualism.” In all his writings he waged a ceaseless war against the Papacy; and when Michael Angelo, with his intense devotion to his art, was left to accomplish his grand work, it was as if Dante stood beside him, and inspired him with his spirit. The great picture seemed like a second revelation from Dante. The “Last Judgment” was painted on an immense space of wall; and nothing has been executed, before or since, to compare to this astonishing production. He laboured at it from

¹ John Edward Taylor's “Essay on Michael Angelo.”

1533 until he had completed it in the summer of 1541, and the Sistine Chapel was re-opened at Christmas. The Inquisition, with all its fearful apparatus, had been just established at Rome against the heretics; and to the great horror of the Pope's Master of the Ceremonies, Bragio da Ceseria, and the entertainment of the vulgar crowd, it was discovered that the face of the infernal Judge Minos was a portrait of this worthy; who expressed his furious rage on the occasion; but the Pope only ventured on the jest that "he could do nothing; as the popes themselves had no power to release from eternal condemnation."

Such was the man who was now made happy with the friendship of one of the noblest of women. They seemed to understand at once the beauty and the depth of each other's minds. Before her his unbending nature could bow down, in whose eyes cardinals and prelates were of small account; and till her death he became her most devoted friend and servant.

It was natural that a mind so imaginative as Michael Angelo's, should unite his religion and poetry with the art he so ardently pursued. They animated and elevated his work; and he glorified

God who had bestowed upon him such high and noble powers. He honoured and adored his art, and styled it, "*Leggiadra, altera, e diva*" (beautiful, exalted, and divine). His poetry is filled with his deepest thoughts on the highest truths. It opens to us the secrets of a mind singularly noble ; filled with all greatness and all beauty. The exalted tone of his thoughts raised him above all common, selfish, and sinful men. It is this which made him feel "*alone*" in the world.

He was, indeed, a man whom such a woman as Vittoria could look up to with the noblest admiration, and rely upon with the most entire confidence. Is it not one of her highest claims to our devoted approbation, that she could comprehend his great genius and his isolated nature ; and by paying him a respectful homage, call forth his deepest affection, tempered with the most profound respect ? Sir Joshua Reynolds says, that "to kiss the hem of his garment, to catch the slightest of his perfections, would be glory and distinction enough for an ambitious man." Vittoria had more than this distinction ; for she enjoyed his private friendship, and she was honoured by his entire devotion. His poems to her are extant and well known ; four of

them are given by Visconti, among the poems by various authors addressed to Vittoria.

SONNET BY MICHAEL ANGELO.

“ Per esser manco, Alta Signora, indegno
Del don di vostra immensa cortesia
Con alcun merto ebbe desire in pria
Precorrer lei mio troppo umile ingegno.

“ Ma scorto poi ch’ ascender a quel segno.
Proprio valor non e ch’ apra la via
Vien men la temeraria voglia mia,
E dal fallir più saggio al fin divegno.

“ E veggio ben, com erra s’ alcun crede
La grazia che da voi divina piove
Pareggiar l’opra mia, caduca e frale.

“ L’ingeno, e l’arte, e l’ardimento cede ;
Chè non può mill’ opre, e chiare, e nuove,
Pager celeste don virtù mortale.”

We borrow the translation in “*Life of Michael Angelo*” (pp. 284, 285):—

“ Not all unworthy of the boundless grace
Which thou, most noble lady, had bestowed,
I fain at first would pay the debt I owed
And some small gift for thy acceptance place,
But soon I felt ’tis not alone desire
That opes the way to reach an aim so high ;
My rash pretensions their success deny,
And I grow wise while failing to aspire.
And well I see how false it were to think

That any effort, poor and frail as mine,
 Could emulate the perfect grace of thine !
 Genius and art and daring backward shrink,
 A thousand works from mortals like to me
 Can ne'er repay what Heaven has given to thee !"

There is also, translated by the same author, a
 madrigal addressed to Vittoria by Michael Angelo.

MADRIGAL.

"Ora in sul uno, ora in sul altro piede
 Variando cerco della mia salute
 Fra 'l vitio e la virtute ;
 L'alma confusa mi travaglia e stanca
 Come, chi 'l ciel non vede
 Chè per ogni sentier si perde e manca.
 Ond' io la carta bianca
 Convien ch'a pietà mostri
 Che, qual di me si voglia tal ne scriva ;
 Ch'a ogni muover d' anca
 Infra grandi error nostri
 Mie picciol resto più quaggiù non viva,
 Che 'l vero di se mi priva :
 Ne' so, se minore grado in ciel si tiene
 L' umil peccato che 'l soperchio bene." ¹

"Now on the one foot, on the other now,
 'Twixt vice and virtue balancing below ;

¹ Under this poem, which is appended to a letter to Vittoria in the British Museum, there is the signature of Michael Angelo. It is also among the Vatican manuscripts, and this is undoubtedly in the form that she received it. There are two corrections in his handwriting ; over "uno" is written "destro," and over "altro," "manco." His poems, published first in 1623 by his great-nephew of the same name, have undergone great alterations.

Wearied and anxious in my troubled mind,
Seeking where'er I may salvation find ;
Like one to whom the stars by clouds are crossed,
Who, turn which way he will, errs and is lost,
Therefore take thou my heart's unwritten page,
And write thou on it what is wanted there !
And hold before it in life's daily stage
The line of action which it craves in prayer !
So that amid the errors of my youth
My own shortcomings may not hide the truth,
If humble sinners lower in heaven stood
Than the proud doers of superfluous good."

SONNET BY MICHAEL ANGELO.

" Da che concetto ha l'arte intera e diva
Le membra e gli atti d'alcun, poi di quello
D'umil materea un semplice modello
E 'l primo parto che da quel deriva.

" Poi, nel secondo, in pietra alpestra e viva
S'arrogie le promesse del martello
E si rinasce tal concetto bello,
Ch'il suo eterno non è ch'il prescrive,

" Tal di me stesso nacqui e venni prima
Umil model, per opra più perfetta
Rinascere poi di voi, donna alta e digna,

" S'el manco adempie, e 'l mio soperchio lima,
Vostra pietà, qual penitenza aspetta
Mie fiero ardor se mi gastiga e insegna."

" When pure and godlike art has conceived the form and action of a statue, the first thing to be done is to model it in the humble clay ; the second is to carve out the idea in the rough living stone with the chisel ; and thus the beautiful conception is reborn into immortal life.

“So I myself was born a humble model in order that by thee, high and admirable lady, as a more perfect work of yours, I might be born again; and if your goodness should fill up and file away my deficiencies, what bitter penance will be required before my fiery nature is chastened and subdued ! ”

The following sonnet by Michael Angelo is beautifully translated by Southey.¹ It presents us with an accurate transcript of his mind, in which a sense of solitude, and a conscious superiority, strongly tincture his feelings.

“ Ill hath he chosen his part, who seeks to please
The worthless world : ill hath he chosen his part,
For often must he wear the look of ease
When grief is at his heart ;
And often in his hours of happier feeling
With sorrow must his countenance be hung ;
And ever his own better thoughts concealing,
Must he in stupid grandeur's praise be loud,
And to the errors of the ignorant crowd
Assent with lying tongue.
Thus much would I conceal, that none should know
What secret cause I have for silent woe ;
And taught by many a melancholy proof
That those whom fortune favours it pollutes,
I, from the blind and faithless world aloof,
Nor fear its envy, nor desire its praise,
But choose my path through solitary ways.”

In this spirit of proud independence his character resembles Dante's. It was the pride arising from

¹ From Duppa's “Life of Michael Angelo.”

the dignity of right, when opposed to injustice; of intellect as opposed to ignorance. His character was no less distinguished for moral virtues than for intellectual greatness.

Michael Angelo may be classed with the greatest poets and the greatest thinkers of his country; his love of the beautiful in art, and his aspiration after eternal truths, burst forth into poetry; and it is no small glory for Vittoria to have so frequently been the object and inspirer of his Muse. "From one of his poems he seems to have had the idea of perpetuating her memory either in marble or on canvas. This he never accomplished, but has left us a no less imperishable monument of her virtues and his affection in the sonnets which he addressed to her whilst living, and the beautiful epitaphs which he wrote in memory of her after her death."¹

"Forse ad amendue noi dar lunga vita
Posso, o vuoi nei colori, o vuoi nei sassi,
Rassembrando di noi l'affetto, e 'l volto;
Secchè mill' anni dopo la partita,
Quanto tu bella fosti, ed io l'amassi,
Si veggia, e come a amarti io non fu stolto."

¹ J. Edward Taylor.

“Perchance to both of us I may impart
A lasting life, in colours or in stones,
By copying the mind and face of each ;
So that for ages after my decease
The world may see how beautiful thou wert ;
How much I loved thee, nor in loving erred.”

In Grimm's “*Life of Michael Angelo*,” most unexpectedly and fortunately, we have a very faithful picture of Vittoria and her friend the sculptor, drawn by an eye-witness.

D'Ollanda, a Spanish miniature-painter, in his manuscript journal (found in a library at Lisbon), describes two Sundays which he passed in their society ; and he gives, rather fully, an account of the conversation. The meeting took place in the sacristy of the favourite church of the Colonna family, the San Silvestro.

Grimm describes the church as he saw it when in Rome. He says : “This little church is on Monte Cavallo, opposite the Quirinal Palace, still standing where it did, but now full of ornaments of a later date. The small, comfortable sacristy behind the altar is painted with Domenichino's frescoes ; the carved choir stools are no longer the old ones—at that time the monastery to which the church belonged was a nunnery ; at the present day it is tenanted by monks

—but the small, dim space is as it was then; and the convent-yard, which I found full of flourishing lemon-trees; and behind it the Colonna Gardens, rising from the palaces standing at the foot of the hill, up the Quirinal, and through the paths of which Vittoria ascended to the convent, which was not situated then, as now, on a square surrounded with palaces, but lay alone on the height, amid gardens and small houses.”

D'Ollanda,¹ in the manuscript from which the account of this meeting is extracted, mentions first of all what men he had sought out in Rome; such as Don Giulio di Macedonia, a famous miniature-painter; Baccio (or Bandinello), a noble sculptor (at that time executing the monuments of Leo and Clement); Melichino (an architect in the employ of the new Pope, Paul III.); Tolomei and Michael Angelo,—“men,” he says, “whose friendship was of higher value to me than the favour of the richest nobles. Michael Angelo,” he says, “awakened such a feeling of faithful love in me, that if I met him in the Papal Palace, or in the street, the stars would often

¹ A woodcut engraving of a portrait of Michael Angelo, by D'Ollanda, is annexed to the “*Arta da Espagna*.” And several letters from D'Ollanda to Michael Angelo are among the manuscript remains of Michael Angelo.

come out in the sky before I let him go again.” “Tolomei helped me to become acquainted with Michael Angelo through Blasio, the Pope’s secretary. He left word that I should find him in the church of San Silvestro on Monte Cavallo; where, with the Marchesa di Pescara, he was hearing the exposition of the Epistles of St. Paul. So I started off for San Silvestro. Vittoria Colonna, the Marchesa di Pescara, and sister of Ascanio Colonna, is one of the noblest and most famous women in Italy, and in the whole world. She is beautiful, pure in conduct, and acquainted with the Latin tongue; in short, she is adorned with every grace which can redound to a woman’s praise. Weary of the brilliant life which she formerly led, she has quite devoted herself, since the death of her husband, to thoughts on Christ, and to study. She supports the needy of her sex, and stands forth as a model of genuine Christian piety. She was the intimate friend of Tolomei, and I owe her acquaintance to him. I entered; they asked me to take a place, and the reading and exposition of the Epistles was continued.¹ When it was ended, the

¹ D’Aubigny says that *Peter Martyr* “daily taught the Epistles in Greek, and that he expounded a Psalm, or some portion of

Marchesa spoke; and looking at me and Tolomei, said, 'I am not quite wrong if I imagine that Messer Francesco would rather listen to Michael Angelo on painting than Fra Ambrosio¹ upon the Pauline Epistles.' 'Madam,' I replied, 'your Eccellenza seems to entertain the opinion that everything which is not painting and art, is foreign and unintelligible to me. It will certainly be very agreeable to me to hear Michael Angelo speak, but I prefer Fra Ambrosio's exposition of the Epistles of St. Paul.' I spoke with some pique. 'You need not take it so seriously,' said Tolomei; 'the Marchesa certainly did not mean that a man who is a good painter, is not good for anything else. We Italians rank too high for that. Perhaps the words of the Marchesa were intended to intimate, that besides the enjoyment we have had, the other, of hearing Michael Angelo speak to-day, is still in store for us.' 'If it be so,' I replied, 'it would be after all nothing extraordinary, for your Eccellenza would only be following your usual habit of granting a thousand times more than one ventured to desire.'

Scripture every night; and that several of the nobility and gentry came to hear him."

¹ One of the Pope's most famous preachers.

The Marchesa smiled. 'We ought to know how to give,' she said, 'when a grateful mind is concerned, and here especially, when giving and receiving afford equal enjoyment.' One of her retinue approached at her call. 'Do you know Michael Angelo's dwelling? Go and tell him that I and Messer Tolomei are here in the chapel, where it is beautifully cool, and the church, too, is private and agreeable; and that I beg to ask him whether he is inclined to lose a few hours here in our society, and to turn them into gain for us,—but not a word that the gentleman from Spain is here.' After a few minutes, in which neither of them spoke, we heard knocking at the door: every one feared it could not be Michael Angelo. Fortunately the servant had met him close by San Silvestro, as he was just on the point of going to the Thermæ (warm baths). He was coming up the Esquiline way, in conversation with his colour-grinder, Urbino; he fell at once into the snare, and it was he who knocked at the door. The Marchesa rose to receive him, and remained standing some time, till she had made him take a place betwixt herself and Tolomei. I now seated myself at a little distance from them. At first they were

silent; but the Marchesa, who could never speak without elevating those with whom she conversed, and even the place where she was, began to lead the conversation with the greatest art, upon all possible things, without however touching even remotely on painting. She wished to give Michael Angelo assurance. She proceeded as if approaching an unassailable fortress, so long as he was on his guard." And here D'Ollanda describes with what delicate tact she at last drew out from the great artist a discourse on painting, which he gives in full. "'Your Eccellenza has only to command, and I obey,' said Michael Angelo; and forthwith he compares the German, Spanish, and Italian Schools. 'Art belongs to no land, it comes from Heaven,' he said; and Tolomei remarked that the Emperor Maximilian, when he pardoned an artist who had been condemned to death, had said, 'I can make earls and dukes, but God alone can make a great artist.'"¹ A long dissertation ensues from Michael Angelo, which was the occasion of giving

¹ "What Francesco relates is true; we feel he could not have invented it: he stood in such close intercourse with Vittoria, Tolomei, Ambrosio, and Michael Angelo, and he gave the characters truthfully."

this remarkable scene ; in which—as by happy accident—the graceful and honoured character of Vittoria shines forth in a light so truthful and natural, that we feel obliged to accept it as a *bonâ fide* description. Grimm says that he had no doubt of the authenticity of the manuscript. The conversation concluded with a request from D'Ollanda to be permitted to join the reunion the next Sunday. He says, “She acceded to my request, and Michael Angelo promised to come. He was the first to rise, and the Marchesa stood up. We accompanied them to the gates. Tolomei went with Michael Angelo, and I with the Marchesa, from San Silvestro up to the monastery, where the head of John the Baptist is preserved, and where she lived.”¹

On the next Sunday D'Ollanda again appeared at San Silvestro. He had roamed through the city filled with the festive crowds in honour of the Duchess Margherita, Alessandro de' Medici's widow, whom the Pope (Paul III.) had obtained from the Emperor as the consort of his grandson, the young Ottavio Farnese. In her honour the carnival of

¹ “El Arte en Espagna,” Madrid, 1863, has an article about D'Ollanda, and also “Les Artes en Portugal,” Paris, 1846.

1537 surpassed in splendour any that had before been celebrated in Rome. D'Ollanda describes the magnificently-attired horsemen and the triumphal carriages descending from the Capitol.

"He admired the standards, the golden equipments, the splendidly-accoutred horses; and then ascending Monte Cavallo, where all was solitary, he found Tolomei, Michael Angelo, and Fra Ambrosio.¹ It was afternoon: they went into the garden behind the monastery, where they sat down under the shadow of the laurel-trees, with the distant city at their feet." But Vittoria Colonna was not there. It is probable that her presence was required on so august an occasion as the marriage of Margherita de' Medici with the Pope's grandson. But on the third Sunday D'Ollanda was expressly invited by Vittoria herself. He does not give the substance of the conversation in the passages quoted from the journal by Grimm. It is probable that they might not, on that occasion, have discoursed upon art. D'Ollanda did not think it of sufficient importance to note down what passed.

¹ Grimm imagines, without apparent reason, that D'Ollanda had mistaken the names, and that the reader was *Ochino* instead of Ambrosio, and *Claudio Tolomei* instead of Lattantia Tolomei.

CHAPTER XII.

1538—1542.

THE Pope had received Vittoria Colonna as became her rank ; and she was surrounded by an admiring circle of the highest Roman society. Those who were not linked with her by an interest in the reform of the Church, were attracted by her beauty, learning, and gracious manners. Men were proud to be her admirers, and to be reckoned as belonging to her society. Her high standing and character enabled her to take many under her protection and patronage.

She enjoyed the friendship and society of many other celebrated persons in Rome as well as that of the great sculptor. We may particularly mention Contarini, who was resident there at this period. Also Ochino, who had been appointed confessor and private chaplain to the Pope ; and Cardinal Pole, of whose regard for Vittoria we shall more fully speak presently.

Cardinal Contarini, "the learned and saint-like Venetian," as he was called, was a man eminently calculated, by his wisdom and kindness, to call forth the respectful affection of Vittoria Colonna. He was the intimate friend of Pole, who said of him, "Nothing that the human mind can discover, by its own powers of investigation, was unknown to him; and nothing was wanting in him that the grace of God has imparted to the human soul: and to this eminence of wisdom Contarini added the crown of virtue." He had published a treatise on the doctrine of Justification by Faith, and Pole said of it, "Thou hast brought forth the jewel which the Church was keeping half concealed;" and he congratulated him on being "the first person in Italy to publish that holy, fruitful, and indispensable truth."

Cardinal Contarini was a citizen of the great republic of Venice; which had been at the summit of its power in the fifteenth century, and was only now tending towards its fall. Rome received ideas from Venice, where freedom of thought was permitted, and where the closest intercourse with Germany prevailed. Venice was the universal refuge of the dispersed literati of Rome, and of

those Florentine patriots against whom their native city was closed for ever; and here Bembo and Contarini exercised the most liberal hospitality. The latter was the eldest son of a noble Venetian house, that traded to the Levant. He had early devoted himself to the study of philosophy, and had entered public life in his native city, and risen to the highest offices.¹ His surprise was great when he found himself unexpectedly raised to the cardinalate; and he doubted, at first, whether he should leave the republic of his fathers, where the manners were in harmony with his own, to measure himself against others, in the luxury and display of the Roman Court. He accepted the hat principally lest, in times so difficult, the refusal of this high dignity might exercise an injurious effect, as having the appearance of despising it.

The zeal which he had previously devoted to his native country was now applied to the affairs of the Church; and he was often forced to oppose both the Pope and the cardinals. In this new position he maintained his usual gravity, simplicity, and activity of

¹ Two of his ancestors had filled the supreme office of Doge at Venice; and his father was highly esteemed in different public capacities.

life, and all his dignity and gentleness of demeanour. He was distinguished by the inherent truthfulness and pure moral sense of his nature ; but, above all, by those deep religious convictions which rendered him so happy and enlightened. He was known to declare that he did not consider the cardinal's hat constituted his highest honour.

Contarini was sent as the Pope's ambassador to Spain, in 1528, almost as soon as Clement had recovered his liberty. He arrived there just as the ship *Vittoria* returned from the first voyage that ever was made round the world ; and Contarini was the first person to solve the problem, why she arrived a day later than her journal indicated. He aided in bringing about a reconciliation between Clement and Charles ; and when the Emperor was crowned at Bologna, Contarini accompanied the Pope from Viterbo to Bologna ; when he had the opportunity of conversing with his Holiness upon the subject of Church reform. He wrote a report of this embassy, which is now extremely rare. There is a copy of it in the Library at Berlin. In it he gives an account of all he witnessed in Viterbo, Bologna, and Rome.

At the desire of the Emperor, he was appointed

the Pope's legate to the Diet at Ratisbon, and he entered upon the duty with the greatest hope of succeeding in advocating conciliatory measures, and in meeting the deputies from Germany in a cordial manner. The Emperor himself was there; and the Pope, though averse to the conference, was obliged to send ambassadors. They left Rome on the 11th of November, 1538,—a fact which we learn from a letter to Cardinal Pole from Contarini. In another letter from Cardinal Pole to Contarini, it appears that Vittoria Colonna had also visited Ratisbon at this time. But the motive which induced her to take this journey of six hundred miles has not been explained. Pole, in this letter of which a translation will be given, says how much relieved his mind had been in hearing that Vittoria had got safely through the difficulties of the journey, and had been received both by the Emperor and the citizens with great honour. It appears that Pole had received a letter from Vittoria, who had returned as far as Orvieto, where she was residing in a sisterhood, having made again the long journey from the Danube to the Tiber, crossing the Alps and Apennines at a time when few ladies would have attempted such an expedition. This letter of

her friend Pole is dated 2nd of April, 1541; it is the only notice we have discovered of this interesting circumstance in Vittoria's life, and is another proof of the imperfection of lives written by monks.¹

It would be deeply interesting to know what were her objects, her thoughts, and her experiences, during so memorable a journey; but none of the letters which she must have written during her absence, seem to have been preserved. Pole does not allude to the motive of her journey, but he states that there was another letter from Vittoria which was ordered, by the Pope, to be read aloud in full consistory; and "that she gained great praise for her prudence and energy." She is surely the first and only woman who has had the singular honour of having her letter read before the Pope and the cardinals with praise and consideration.

Contarini was at Ratisbon as the Pope's legate, together with Bishop Morone and Tommaso da Modena, the master of the Sacred Palace. Contarini was older than Pole, and inferior to none in learning and wisdom, yet he consulted Pole in all the steps which

¹ Vittoria was in Rome in August 1539, and was at Orvieto in March 1541, so that her visit to Ratisbon must have occurred between these two dates.

he took in these lengthy and difficult negotiations. They were both severely censured for going so far in the direction of reform. Cardinals Farnese and Caraffa had been secretly working at Rome to counteract their proceedings, and Contarini was recalled, and reproached with having exceeded his instructions. Caraffa was triumphant, and the Inquisition was established.

Contarini's health suffered from the anxieties he had undergone, and the slanders which he had to endure. He died almost immediately afterwards at Bologna, in 1542,—of a broken heart, it is said. Vittoria felt that in him she had almost lost a relative. She said, "Contarini ought to have been Pope to have made the age happy."

She addressed a letter to his sister to condole with her on her great loss. This is too interesting to be omitted, and is as follows :—

"ALLA REVEREND. MADRE SUORA, SERAFINA CONTARINI,
SORELLA IN CHRISTO HONORANDA.

"Rev. Sister and Most Honoured Mother in Christ,—If I had not known that you are armed with those divine shields which prevent the arrows of grief penetrating too deeply, I should not have presumed to write to you on such a sad and bitter occasion. But knowing by your pious and most sweet letters that this much-loved brother hoped to meet you in the heavenly home, and that he

always had the death, passion, and resurrection of Christ in his heart, I am so content and happy, though with my senses I mourn, that I beg you to believe, with that inspired light that God has given you, that we have no cause to grieve, nor even to desire that so excellent a Christian life should have been prolonged.

“And speaking of inferior things, by you justly very little prized, I must say that worldly honours, so valuable in their proper place, were like poison to him. Their fatiguing weight he willingly would have laid down at any time ; but he exercised them wisely and righteously, having as a first and last end the Lord, who gave him success both in spiritual and temporal affairs. He had joy in his true friends, and no just cause of offence towards any one. His principles, his wisdom, and his knowledge were the admiration of the good and the envy of the world. His perfect and holy example was of important usefulness to the Church and to our security in peaceable living.

“We are taught by this event that the Lord and Head of us all knows what is best, and when it is the right time for Him to take His servants. The loss remains to us of his most delightful conversation and the profit of his most holy writings, so that I should have great pity for V. R. and for myself, if it were not that his many journeys and our cloister had prevented our enjoying his society. I therefore see we have not much reason for grief, and that we ought the rather to rejoice when we behold his peaceful spirit united to the true, eternal peace, and his most humble soul glorified in heaven. Now he can speak to V. Reverendissima without being absent, or the impediment of not being heard. Now you will no more have the sorrow of being far off from your brother ! You can rejoice in each other's happiness, and at the same moment and with one consent, enjoy the same light, as I feel certain that your soul will experience. But with my pen I am seeking to describe him to you, who, by long experience, know all the colours, and shadows, and lights of this holy picture ; but, believe me, I have done it from the heart, as he stands before my mind's eye, and as I certainly hope God views him, and in the hope that you will always command me as the most true and obliged servant of your most perfect brother and my Lord. (‘*Quel perfettissimo fratel suo, e Signor mio.*’) Now no other spiritual service remains for me except

that of 'The Illustriss. e Reverendiss. Monsignor D'Inghilterra, suo unico, intimo, e verissimo amico, e piu che fratello e figlio,' who feels so deeply the loss of his pious and strong soul, in such various and unexpected oppressions, to whom he was accustomed to run for advice at all times.

"Da Santa Caterina di Viterbo, sorella di V. Reveren., e in Christo ubidiente figlia,

"LA MARCHESA DI PESCARA."

We have also the following sonnet, written to his memory, in which she speaks of his high example, and "the courtesy with which he turned the erring, and took from many the veil of ignorance :"—

SONNET CXC.

TO GASPAR CONTARINI.

"Quando in terra il Gran Sol venne dal cielo
Per farne agli altre fede, elesse e volse
Quel primo Gaspar ¹ saggio, ond' ei disciolse
A molti poi dell' ignoranza il velo.

"L' alto suo esempio, il vivo ardente zelo
Col qual corse a vederlo, erse e rivolse
Gli occhi nostri al bel raggio, ch' allor tolse
Da' petti umani ogn' indurato gelo.

"Or che rinasce in noi, di nuovo ha eletto
Questo Gaspar secondo a far qui fede,
Ch' ei sol può render l'uom giusto e perfetto.

¹ In allusion to the Christian legend of the three kings of the East who came to see Christ at His birth, one of them being named Gaspar.

" L'uno il vide mortal, ma l'altro il vede
Glorioso, e su in ciel col vero affetto
Della mente e 'del cor l'adora e crede ! "

" When the Great Sun (of righteousness) appeared in earth from heaven to attest the faith of men, He elected and willed that the first wise Gaspar should remove from many the veil of ignorance. His high example, the lively, ardent zeal with which he hastened to behold Him, teaches us to turn our eyes also to the holy light, which removes from the human heart its hard ice. And now He shines again for us, and has elected this Gaspar the second to attest the truth which alone can render men just and perfect. The one beheld Him mortal, the other sees Him in His glory, and in heaven, with true affection of mind and heart, believes in Him, and adores."

Contarini never, to the last moment of his life, denied his opinions ; and he was taken away before he knew that the mere discussion of them would be punished by an infamous death. If he or Pole had obtained the highest dignity after Paul's death, an end which both had in prospect, the victory of the Reformers might perhaps have been achieved. It is a question of vital importance, in the present day, whether an established Church can be reformed from within better than from without ? One authority (John Stuart Mill) has given his opinion that it is right to remain in the Church, as long as possible, in order to reform it ; and this idea influences a great many very sincere and earnest men.

Another authority (the Rev. John Hamilton Thom) urges the fallacy of such a hope. "My sympathy," he says, "goes altogether with the advice which Blanco White gave to the Archbishop of Dublin. So long as you remain in the boat of the Church, you will never move it by pushing it. Come out of it, and give it a kick."

Vittoria Colonna had another friend, of whom but little has yet been said in these memoirs, though his influence had been very great in leading her to take an interest in the momentous questions which were then agitating the world on religious subjects. In the early years of her married life, and afterwards during her widowhood, her palace at Naples, and that of the beautiful Giulia de Gonzaga, had been the resort of the highest personages in that city, where learned discussions arose on all topics of interest, and not least, on the eloquent preaching of the celebrated Monk Bernardino Ochino of Siena, who was at that period in Naples, and drawing all people to hear him. He was a man of astonishing powers of eloquence. He equally riveted the young and the old, men and women, the untaught peasant and the profound scholar. His sermons are described "~~as the~~

deepfelt utterings of one who spoke at once as a patriot and ecclesiastical reformer, dropping words of fire, which might melt the very stones to tears." Princes, nobles, and prelates esteemed his preaching unrivalled; and when the Emperor Charles V. was in Naples, in the year 1537, he went to hear him, and acknowledged his eloquence.

Ochino was born in Siena in 1487, and was the most noted citizen of that powerful republic, which at that period boasted of a population of 100,000. He has been styled the Luther of Italy. His grey hair, his beard which swept his breast, and his pale, emaciated countenance gave him the aspect of a saint. He wore the coarse habit of his order, always travelled on foot, and had no other bed than his cloak. He drank no wine, and strictly enforced on himself and others the vow of poverty; yet he preached in the pulpit and in the confessional the doctrine of justification by grace alone. This man had a powerful advocate and admirer in Vittoria Colonna. "Next to Ochino, Vittoria was the centre round which the doctrines taught by him centred."

They were both of them influenced by the celebrated Spaniard Juan Valdesso, or Valdez, who, though no priest, had made himself a thorough master

of all religious questions. Valdez originally went to Germany with Charles V., and was knighted by him, and sent to Naples as secretary to the Viceroy. He was a very learned and courteous man ; and he soon became a favourite with the first persons in Naples. He is an example of how much good may be done in a private station. His influence was felt by all who came into his presence. He not only impressed the minds of many distinguished laymen, but he stimulated the zeal of those who could teach and preach to the people, especially Peter Martyr and Ochino, both of whom were resident in Naples at that time. The former was elected Abbot of Spoleto in 1530, and soon after Provost of the College of St. Pietro in the city of Naples, a post of dignity and emolument. He was at this time thirty years of age. Ochino preached, and Martyr read lectures ; chiefly on St. Paul's Epistles. They were attended by monks of different convents, and by many of the nobility and bishops. The especial doctrine of Ochino was justification by faith in Christ, which he explained by reference to the Scriptures.

A Reformed Church was established at Naples, which included persons of the first rank in the

kingdom, both male and female. Whilst it was daily increasing in numbers, it was deprived of Valdez, to whom it chiefly owed its origin. He died in 1540, deeply lamented by many distinguished persons. He was one of the rarest men in Europe, as his writings on the Epistles and Psalms abundantly demonstrate. He also wrote "Considerations on the Christian Life." He dedicated one of his works to Giulia Gonzaga. He was a most accomplished man in all his words, actions, and counsels, whose noble and pure intellect was wholly occupied with truth and divine things, and whose fervent piety and unspotted purity of life were universally acknowledged.

Ochino was sent by the Chapter of his order to preach in many other cities. He was a natural orator, and the fervour of his feelings, and the sanctity of his life, gave a power to his discourses which ravished his hearers. He was esteemed incomparably the best preacher in Italy.¹ In 1538 he was chosen General of the Capuchins; and three years afterwards, in another Chapter, held at Whitsuntide, in Naples, he was, as an unexampled mark of respect, and in opposition to his own earnest request, unani-

¹ M'Cree's "Italian Reformation."

mously re-elected to the same honourable office.¹ His official designation is given in the title of one of his first works: "Dialogi Sacra del Rev. Padre Frate B. Ochino da Siena, Generale dei Frati Capuzzini. Venezia, 1542." Long before he was advanced to these honours, he had changed his mode of preaching; a change which was rather felt, than understood by his hearers. He appealed directly to the Scriptures, and exhorted the people to rest entirely upon the Word of God, and to build their hopes of salvation on Christ alone.

His advocacy of these doctrines was understood by Valdez, who detected the Protestant under the patched rochet and sharp-horned cowl of the Capuchin. Valdez introduced him to the private meetings held by the converts in the city of Naples; probably also to Vittoria Colonna herself, to Isabella Manricha of Naples, to Giulia Gonzaga, and other noble ladies. In 1538 the fame of the eloquent Capuchin was so great that the most respectable inhabitants of Venice employed Bembo to endeavour to obtain permission for Ochino to preach in that city. Bembo accordingly wrote to Vittoria Colonna, begging her to intercede with Ochino to visit

¹ Boverio's "Annals of the Capuccini."

Venice, all the inhabitants of which were desirous to hear him. He accordingly obtained permission ; and we hear from a letter written by Bembo to Vittoria from Venice, dated 23d of February, 1539, how much his preaching was admired.

“ I send your Highness the extracts of our Very Reverend Frate Bernardino, to whom I have listened, during the small part of this Lent which is over, with a pleasure which I cannot sufficiently express. Assuredly, I never have heard a preacher more useful or more holy than he. I do not wonder that you love him so much, when he discourses in a more Christian manner than any I have heard in my day ; with more lively charity and love, and with truths of superior excellence and usefulness. He pleases every one above measure, and will carry all hearts in the city away with him when he leaves. I send your Highness immortal thanks from the whole city for the favour you have done us, and I especially shall feel for ever obliged to you.”

In another letter, dated 15th of March, 1539, Bembo says :—

“ I will reason with your Eccellenza as I have just reasoned this morning with the Reverend Father Frate Bernardino, to whom I have laid open my whole heart and soul, as I would have done to Christ himself, to whom I am persuaded he is acceptable and dear. Never have I had the pleasure to speak to a holier man than he. I should have been now at Padua, both on account of a business which has engaged me for a whole year, and also to shun the applications with which I am incessantly assailed in consequence of this blessed cardinalate.” (He had lately received a cardinal's hat from Rome.) “ But I was unwilling to deprive myself of the opportunity of hearing his most excellent, holy, and edifying of sermons.”

On the 14th of April he writes :—

“Our Frate, whom I desire henceforth to call mine, as well as yours, is at present adored in this city. There is not a man or woman who does not extol him to the skies. Oh, what delight ! oh, what joy has he given ! But I reserve his praises until I meet your Eccellenza ; and in the meantime supplicate our Lord to order his life so as that it may endure longer to the honour of God, and the profit of man, than it can endure according to the treatment which he now gives it.”

Bembo had previously written to the minister of the Church of the Apostles, on March the 12th :—

“I pray you to entreat and oblige the Reverend Father Frate Bernardino to eat flesh ; not for the gratification and benefit of his body, to which he is indifferent, but for the comfort of our souls ; that he may be able to continue to preach the Gospel to the praise of our blessed Saviour. For he will not be able to continue this work, nor to bear up under it, during this present Lent, unless he leave off the diet of the season, which, as experience proves, always brings on him a catarrh.”¹

Nothing can more completely prove the power of Ochino's eloquence than the effect thus produced on one of the first scholars of the age. In 1540 we find Ochino at Rome, in the very high office of Chaplain and Father Confessor to the Pope. Vittoria in that year had returned to Rome, accom-

¹ Letter in the “Archives of M. U. Barsione,” published in Bembo's works.

panied by her son Vasto, and had once more joyfully found herself in the society of her brother Ascanio and his children. Visconti alludes to Ascanio Colonna having daughters, as well as a son, and says that one of them was named Vittoria, "di rinnovarne il nome."

In 1541 Ochino was at Milan. It was not till that year that he openly avowed the doctrines of Luther. He then began to turn against the Papacy, and he defended the Reformers by his eloquence. He opposed the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Personality of the Holy Ghost. He published a confession of his change of opinions, which is a very remarkable work. It was not published till after he had escaped from Italy. He acknowledged in it that if he could have continued, without danger to his life, to preach the truth after the manner he had preached it for some years, he would never have laid down the habit of his order. But, as he did not find within himself that courage which is requisite to undergo martyrdom, he took refuge in a Protestant country.¹

We find from a letter from Luca Contile, the Sienese historian and poet, written in Rome in

¹ Bayle's "Historical Dictionary."

the month of August 1541, that Vittoria Colonna had returned to Rome, having been persuaded by her many admiring friends to leave Orvieto, where she had rested on her return from Ratisbon. As has been already stated, he visited her at Rome; and after he had told her the news of her friends the Marchese and Marchesa del Vasto and of young Pescara, she changed the conversation by inquiring—as she naturally would from a Siena gentleman—what was the latest news of Fra Bernardino of Siena. He said he was informed that Ochino had left behind him at Milan the highest reputation for virtue and holiness. On which Vittoria sighed, and said, “*Piaccia a Dio che perseveri!*” (Please God he persevere!) From this, it appears that Vittoria was beginning to apprehend the evil days which were coming upon her friend. She had probably, in Rome, heard that his very life was in danger. He, in fact, received his summons to appear before the Consistory very soon afterwards, in 1542. Vittoria befriended Ochino to the last; and it was a great grief to her to find that he had not the courage to stand firm: but a fearful state of things was now approaching. Ranke remarks: “The weaker resigned themselves, and sub-

mitted; and the stronger withdrew from the dangers which threatened them."

In 1542 the Court of Rome became seriously alive to the boldness of the Reformers, and the increase of their places of worship. There were large congregations in many of the chief cities of Italy. And it was resolved to proceed against the ecclesiastics who were supposed to favour the heresy, especially against Ochino and Martyr; and, as these men were extremely popular, spies were placed over them to procure secret evidence against them. Ochino had been so much admired in Venice that the citizens had sent to the Pope to request that he would grant them an opportunity of hearing him again. The Pope, therefore, directed the Protector of the Order of Capuchins, of which Ochino was the General, to send him to Venice in 1542, to preach during Lent, and ordered, at the same time, that the Apostolical nuncio should watch him, and report of his doctrines.

The whole city ran in crowds to hear him; and a formal complaint was soon made that he preached doctrines at variance with the Catholic faith. For a time he defended himself so powerfully against his accusers, that no pretext could be found for pro-

ceeding against him ; but when he heard that a friend of his had been thrown into prison, he could not restrain himself, and in the course of a sermon preached before the senators and principal persons in the city, he cried out, "What remains for us to do, my lords, if those who preach to you the truth are to be thrust into prisons, and loaded with chains and fetters ? What place will be left to us ? What field will remain open to the truth ? Oh that we had liberty to preach the truth !" &c. The Nuncio, hearing this address, immediately reported the matter to the Pope, and interdicted Ochino's preaching. But the Venetians were so vehement in his defence, that the interdict was taken off in three days. Lent being ended he went to Verona, where he assembled those of his order who were intended for the function of preaching, and began to lecture on St. Paul's Epistles. But whilst thus occupied he received a citation from Rome, on the information of the Nuncio at Venice. Having set out on his journey thither, he had an interview with Cardinal Contarini at Bologna, who was very weak, and then lying on his death-bed, and who desired a share in Ochino's prayers. In the month of August he arrived at

Florence, where he met Peter Martyr Vermigli, and from him received intelligence that his death was resolved on at Rome. Whereupon he returned to Ferrara, and being assisted in his flight by the Duchessa Renée, he escaped from the armed men who were despatched to apprehend him, and reached Geneva in safety.¹

Ochino gave an account of his departure, and his reasons for it, at the end of a volume of sermons which he published soon afterwards, which being in Italian, and very popular, had a wonderful effect. He wrote to apologize to the magistrates of his native city, and to Vittoria and his other friends. The Pope was so enraged against him that he threatened at first to suppress the whole Order of Capuchins. Martyr was in equal danger at Lucca. The monks of his order had been offended against him for his strict discipline as general visitor; for a year they had been secret or open enemies, and he could not have remained

¹ The historian of his order describes him as making a melancholy pause when he reached the summit of the Mont St. Bernard; looking back once more on his beautiful Italy, he recalled all the honour he had received there, and the countless multitudes who had so respectfully listened to his eloquence. Up to this moment he retained the seal of his order, but he now resigned it to his companion, and turned his steps to Geneva.

so long at Lucca if he had not enjoyed the entire confidence of the citizens. He had caused several of the monks to be deprived of their offices for gross crimes; and the Rector-general of the Order, with others, had been condemned to perpetual confinement in the island of Tremiti. A formal accusation at last was lodged against him at Rome, and being warned by his friends that his life was in danger, he resolved to withdraw himself from the rage and craft of his enemies. Having put the affairs of his convent in order, he secretly left the city. At Pisa he wrote letters to Cardinal Pole, and to the brethren at the monastery at Lucca, saying that his conscience would not allow him any longer to give any countenance to the evils of the popish religion. He sent back the ring which was the badge of his office, and after meeting Ochino at Florence, he set out, travelling with expedition and caution by Bologna, Ferrara, and Verona, and reached Zurich in safety. After he left, eighteen of the monks of his convent also retired into Switzerland, and a great many more were thrown into prison.

The Protestant Church which had been formed in the city of Lucca, though discouraged by the loss

of its founder, and exposed to great danger, was not broken up. It was under the protection of some of the chief inhabitants, and continuing to hold its meetings in private, it enjoyed the regular instruction of pastors for twelve years afterwards. Ochino, in 1547, at the invitation of Cranmer, visited England, and was made a canon of Canterbury. The Bishop of Winchester translated Ochino's work entitled "A Dialogue on the Usurped Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome," in 1549. In 1548 a translation of his sermons was published in London. It is entitled "Sermons by Bernardine Ochino of Siena, godlye, fruteful, and very necessary for all true Christians." On the fly-leaf of the copy in Dr. Williams's Library, London, is written, "Invited to England by Cranmer, 1547, and left in Mary's time, 1553."¹

The flight of Ochino and of Peter Martyr, added to the death of Contarini, completely subdued Vittoria and her friends. "They were all struck

¹ Ochino afterwards settled in Basle, in the year 1555, with a congregation of Italian refugees, and, like Peter Martyr, he married a nun. At a great age he died of the plague in Slavonia, and is said to have left a considerable estate to his heirs. Caraffa wrote an answer to his apology, which is inserted in the History of the Theatines. Ochino's Anti-Trinitarian Dialogues were publicly burnt.

with fear." Tolomei wrote most urgently to Ochino, calling upon him by all means to return. Vittoria received a letter from him endeavouring to explain and apologize for his conduct. She grieved extremely over his weakness of spirit. She was living, when she received his farewell letter, at Viterbo, where her own and Ochino's friend, Cardinal Pole, resided ; and it was by his advice¹ that she was induced to send this letter, and the pamphlet which accompanied it, to the Pope's principal Secretary, Cervino, who afterwards became Pope himself.

The following is a translation of Vittoria's letter to Cervino. It was a bitter struggle to her, no doubt, to relinquish her correspondence and friendship with Ochino, and to behold the downfall of all her hopes for that noble work of Church Reform which seemed to have been put into his hands. But the dark storm was approaching which was to overwhelm them all.

LETTER FROM VITTORIA COLONNA TO CERVINO.

"MOST ILLUSTRIOUS, MOST REVEREND MONSIGNORE, — The more I have observed the actions of the very reverend Monsignore D'Inghilterra, the more I see that he is true and most sin-

¹ "Diffidando di se medesima, si governava col consiglio de Cardinale Reginaldo Polo."

cere in serving God ; and as he has through kindness answered my request, it seems to me that I cannot err in following his judgment ; and because he says that it appears to him if letters and other things from Fra Bernardino come to me I should send them to your Reverendissimo, without answering them *if not ordered to do so* (se non mi fosse ordinato), I have to-day received the inclosed, with a book, which I send to you ; it was in a cover stamped by post, which came by a courier from Bologna, without other writing within ; and I have not wished to use other means, so I send it by one of my own servants. I hope that Vostra Signore will pardon this trouble, though, as you see, it is in print ; and may our Lord God keep your *reverendissima persona*, &c.

(Signed)

"MARCHESA DI PESCARA.

"*Da Santa Catarina di Viterbo.*"¹

In the postscript she adds :—

"I grieve exceedingly that whilst he thinks to excuse himself he the more accuses himself ; and that when he believes to save others from shipwreck the more he exposes himself to the floods, being outside of that ark which saves and secures."

Vittoria's Catholic biographer, Rota, is extremely anxious to conceal, if possible, or to explain, if impossible, the influence Ochino exercised over her. "There are not wanting wicked persons who have maligned this *pietissima Dama*, this rare example of Christian life, for the esteem which she had for Fra Bernardino, which was not the case, as it related solely to that period when every one admired

¹ This letter was first published in the "Letters of Tiraboschi," vol. vii.

him as a model of the penitential life—as one who had wonderful zeal as a preacher, and who was filled with the spirit of God. But we may certainly say that it was quite changed with her when he wickedly abandoned the Order of S. Francisco and the Catholic religion.”¹ Visconti also remarks on her exclamation, “*Piaccia a Dio che perseveri*,” that “these words of the most pious lady show what fears she had for Ochino, and how much she suspected he was contumacious against the Holy See, and would secede from the Catholic communion, and not, as some would have us believe, that she herself adhered

¹ Rota, p. 32, note.

We find at the end of Rota's work the “*Licenza*” of the Inquisition, of which a translation is here given :—

“OUR REFORMERS OF STUDY AT PADUA.

“Having been assured by the revision and approbation of the P. F. Geo. Paolo Zapparella, Inquisitor-general of the Holy Office of Venezia, that in the book entitled ‘*Rime di M. Vittoria Colonna d'Avalos, Marchesana di Pescara*,’ there is nothing contrary to the Holy Catholic faith, and likewise by the attestation of our secretary nothing against princes and good government ; we grant a licence to Pietro Lancellotti, printer of Bergamo, that he may print it, observing the orders respecting printing, and sending the usual copies to the public libraries of Vicenza and Padua.

“GEO. EMO, Proc. Rif.

“ALVISE MOCENIGO, Proc. Rif.

“MARCO FOSCARINI, Cav. Proc. Rif.

“GIROLAMO ZUCCATO, Segr.

“Dated the 13th July, 1759.”

to these, or any other innovations." "It would be difficult to show," says Trollope (page 382), "that the simple phrase in question had any such meaning."

Her Catholic biographers say that the esteem Vittoria had for *il Vergerio* was before he fell from the true religion, and that the affection she had for Flaminio had sufficient foundation without supposing that she adhered to his false opinions. They also remark that what Querini says, in his preface to the "Life of Contarini," is enough to silence those persons who would take away the reputation of Vittoria Colonna, and of a thousand other innocent persons.

There is, however, from Visconti and other sources, sufficient evidence to prove that these remarks are unwarranted. Are we to blame Vittoria for not going further? Are we to approve of the advice which Pole gave to that tender heart, which was so distrustful of its own judgment? Perhaps she did not feel, as some braver spirits have done, that she had received "The Grace of Martyrdom." Perhaps she loved the Church in whose bosom she had been nurtured too well to leave it. We judge her not.

CHAPTER XIII.

1539—1541.

ON her return from the fatiguing journey to Ratisbon, Vittoria rested for a time in the Convent of S. Paolo d'Orvieto, whence she wrote to Cardinal Pole, expressing how much delight she found in the ordinances and society of the sisters, and saying that she felt she was "in the company of angels."¹ She subsequently removed to Rome, where she passed much time in her later years. We hear no more of the beloved Ischia and of the "magnanimous Costanza," though it is certain that the custody of Ischia continued in the D'Avalos family for many years afterwards.

In concluding the brief account of Contarini and Ochino in the previous chapter, the date has been brought down to 1542. We have now to retrace our

¹ She remembered them in her last will, and left a legacy of 1,000 scudi to their convent.

steps to the year 1539, when Vittoria's residence in Rome had been cut short, singularly enough, by a tax on salt. The Pope had laid on this very unpopular tax, and Ascanio Colonna asserted that his people were exempt from the payment of it by virtue of some old privilege. Some of his relatives having been imprisoned for refusing to pay this odious tax, Ascanio, ever ready to assert the dignity of his house, and ever ready to give battle to the Pope, made a raid into the Campagna with all his followers, and carried off a great many cattle. This open hostility the Pope could not but resent, and he immediately declared war against the Colonnas. "The Pope lost no time in gathering an army of 10,000 men, and 'war was declared' between the sovereign and the Colonna. The varying fortunes of this 'war' have been narrated in detail by more than one historian. Much mischief was done, and a great deal of misery occasioned by both the contending parties. But at length the forces of the sovereign got the better of those of his vassal, and the principal fortresses of the Colonna were taken, and their fortifications ordered to be razed."¹

This was a great grief to Vittoria. She was

¹ Trollope, p. 381.

always on the side of peace, and she wept to think of the miseries which must ensue. At the outset of the quarrel she had used all her influence with the Pope,¹ promising on her part to make the greatest concessions if he would come to terms ; but all to no purpose ; and “when she beheld,” as Visconti relates, “‘Batter la sua Colonna entro ed intorno,’ dolente e crucciosa se ne uscì da Roma” (“sorrowful and heart-broken she departed from Rome”). She took refuge in the Convent of St. Paolo d’Orvieto for a short time, and probably from there she went to Ratisbon, returning to Orvieto, March 1541. Orvieto is an archbishop’s see, and possesses a fine cathedral, and also palaces of the Pope and of the archbishop.

Whilst Vittoria was among the sisterhood whom she loved, the storm broke over the Colonnas. The Pope attacked them with his army, put their retainers to the sword, destroyed their castles of Rocca di Papa and Pagliano, and took from them all their possessions in the States of the Church, so that they had to take refuge in the estates which they possessed in the kingdom of Naples.

Vittoria in October 1541 removed from Orvieto

¹ See Sonnet to the Pope, chapter xxi.

to the monastery of S. Caterina di Viterbo, in which retreat she continued to reside for two or three years, with occasional visits to Rome. She had in the city of Viterbo the society of Pole, Flaminio, and Sorango, and "here the good Michael Angelo visited her with poems and letters to give her consolation; grieving himself that they were so divided. But she preserved for him so much affection that whenever she was at Rome *per villeggiare*, she went into the city to visit and to see him."¹

The Roman families, during the summer months, were accustomed to adjourn to their villas near Rome, there to enjoy their "*villeggiatura*," or out-of-door life, meeting together in parties of pleasure; receiving the "*contadini*" (peasantry) in the evenings, and mixing in a friendly manner with them. The noble ladies would then dress themselves in the beautiful Albanese costume of the peasants; and, laying aside all state and rank, join in the dance and song.

The vicissitudes of the Colonnas, the destruction and restoration of their palaces, and the rapidity with which the quarrels they engaged in were healed, is one of the remarkable features of their history.

¹ Condivi's "Life of Michael Angelo."

It seems that Vittoria was not altogether debarred from the society of her Roman friends, who came to visit her in her retreat, and invited her to their villas, to enjoy the simple pleasures of the summer with them. And though unfortunate circumstances had obliged Vittoria to quit Rome, and the society of Michael Angelo, it appears that they continued their intercourse by letters and by exchanging their poems. She is believed to have written many letters to him ; but the only one extant is in the British Museum, of which we give a copy and translation. Others are said to be still at Florence, among the remains of Michael Angelo. His papers and valuable pictures and drawings are in the custody of the law, pending a trial as to whether the lineal descendant of Michael Angelo (the late Minister of Public Instruction in Tuscany) should possess them. They form an exceedingly valuable and interesting museum.

Michael Angelo wrote to Vittoria so often that she begged him "to restrict himself a little," as it hindered her in her duties at the convent, and prevented him from going to his work in proper time. Michael Angelo at that time was painting the S. Peter in the new Pauline Chapel. Of these

letters and poems only a few are known to the public. We subjoin those poems which are certainly addressed to her. In writing to her he calls her "Signora Marchesa," and she styles him "Unique Master Michael Angelo, my most especial friend."

Nothing can be more opposed in style than his poetry and Vittoria's. "He is often severe in language, with one fixed idea, endeavouring to give it as strongly and simply as possible. She aims at the gentle expression of her feelings; reflecting them in images which do not penetrate deeply like his; but the euphony of her verse is so great that even he who is not an Italian feels it; and there is an enchanting truthfulness in her ideas."

The poems and letters exchanged between Michael Angelo and Vittoria may chiefly be referred to the years 1541 and 1542. She was accustomed to send him the new things which she wrote; and he bound up forty of her sonnets, with the first that he ever had received from her, and kept them as a relic. In one of them she speaks of the Divine influence to which she owed consolation.

"As the light streams gently from above
Sin's gloomy mantle bursts its bonds in twain,
And, robed in white, I seem to feel again
The first sweet sense of innocence and love."

This humility pervades almost all her poems. It is the outpouring of a sorrowing heart resting upon God, and seeking to be self-reconciled in the spirit of Contarini and of Ochino. The sonnets addressed to her, by Michael Angelo, are full, also, of expressions of his own unworthiness; calling upon her to guide him aright, begging her to teach him to curb his impetuous nature, to lead him into the right path, and to show him how to live. They are the passionate outpourings of a most deeply-attached and intensely fervent nature.

The following madrigal is from the genuine text of the manuscript copy (Grimm, vol. ii. p. 459) :—

MADRIGAL ADDRESSED TO VITTORIA BY MICHAEL ANGELO.

“Perch' è troppo molesta
Ancor che dolce sia,
Quella mercè che l' alma legar suole
Mia libertà di queste
Vostr' alta cortesia
Più che d'un furto si lamenta e duole.
E com' occhio nel sole
Disgrega sua virtù, ch' esser dovrebbe
Di maggior ch' a veder ne sprone,
Così 'l desio non vuole
Zoppa la grazia in me che da voi si crebbe,
Ch' il poco al troppo spesso s'abbandona;
Nè questo agnol perdona.
Ch' amor vuol sol gli amici, onde son rari
Di fortuna e virtù simili e pari.”

"The favour which enthrals the soul, although it is sweet, yet it is burdensome, and my liberty laments and grieves at thy high courtesy, more than it would at a robbery. As the eye in the sun loses its power, when it ought to be able to see better with a stronger light, so the grace that is in me, and created so much by thee, is lost in thy greater light. The less is absorbed in the greater, nor can an angel pardon this.¹ Love wills that those only can be friends where fortune and virtue are alike and equals."

Grimm says, "He was proud and passionate, sensitive, and suspicious; and had grown old in his ways." "What a man would Michael Angelo have become had fate led him to know Vittoria in his younger years! and had she met with him, then, when she was herself less wearied by years and experience! Such as they now found each other, she could give him nothing but that kindly gentleness with which she softened him, and he ventured to desire nothing but what she could bestow. There is one of his poems, a sonnet, in which he expresses this. 'I believe that nature is asking back thy charms, and commanding them gradually to leave thee, that thy beauty may tarry upon earth, but in possession of a woman more gracious, and less severe, than thou art! With thy divine countenance she is adorning a lovely form in the sky, and the God of Love endeavours

¹ Michael Angelo, a play upon his own name.

to give her a compassionate heart ; and he receives all *my* sighs, and gathers up *my* tears, and gives them to him who will love her, as I love thee ! And, happier than I, he will touch her heart perhaps with my sorrows, and she will afford him the favour which is denied me.' ”

“ I only express a supposition,” says Grimm, “ that this sonnet was addressed to Vittoria. It seems to have been written by him (after 1542) when Vittoria came again to Rome, leaving Viterbo, perhaps because Cardinal Pole¹ was absent, he having service elsewhere for the Church.”²

Mrs. Jameson says : “ Not the least of Vittoria's titles to fame was the intense adoration with which she inspired Michael Angelo. The following sonnet, translated by Wordsworth, in a peal of grand harmony, was addressed to her.

“ ‘ Yes, hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed ;
For if, of our affections, none find grace
In sight of Heaven, then wherefore had God made
The world which we inhabit ? Better plea
Love cannot have than that in loving thee.
Glory to that eternal peace is paid,

¹ Grimm, vol. ii. pp. 285-287.

² He did not give up his Governorship of the Patrimony till 1548.

Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only, whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour.
But in chaste hearts, uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.' "

Condivi, Michael Angelo's friend and biographer, says of Michael Angelo, "*Egli amò grandemente la Marchesana di Pescara; del cui divino spirito era innamorata.*"¹ There is another sonnet, also translated by Wordsworth, which evidently was inspired by Vittoria Colonna:—

SONNET.

" No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of thine,
And my soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew bold.
Heaven-born the soul a heavenward course must hold.
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and weak),
Ideal form the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes; nor will he lend
His heart to aught which doth on time depend.
'Tis sense, unbridled will—and not true love,
That kills the soul. Love betters what is best
Even here below—but more in heaven above." ²

¹ "He loved deeply the Marchioness of Pescara, of whose divine mind he was enamoured."

² Moxon's "Wordsworth," p. 201.

In the single letter of Vittoria Colonna to Michael Angelo that we are able to give, she shows the delicate tact which belongs to women of high position. Michael Angelo had sent her a design for a crucifix. Vittoria was to approve of it, and send it back; upon which the crucifix was to be begun.

But the drawing pleased her so well that she would not give it back; and she wrote:—

“UNICO MAESTRO MICHEL ANGNOLO E MIO SINGULARISSIMO AMICO.

“I have received your letter, and have looked at the crucifix: a work which truly effaces the remembrance of all the other representations I know. For nothing more lovely, or more perfect, is possible than this image of Christ; with such inconceivable tenderness and wonderful power is it executed. But now—whether it be the work of any one but yourself, I will not have any one else execute it. Let me know whether really any one but yourself has designed it? Forgive me this question! If it is your work, you must, under any circumstances, give it to me. If, however, it is not your work, and you have wished to have it executed by one of your workmen, we must first talk it over, for I know how difficult it will be to work a second time over such a drawing. I would rather that he who did it should execute for me something else. If, however, the drawing is yours, pardon me if I do not return it. I have examined it narrowly in the light both with lens and mirror, and never saw a more perfect thing.

“Son al conta da uostro,¹

(Signed)

“LA MARCHESA DI PESCARA.”²

¹ This expression is difficult to translate—“*I am as ever*,” “*as usual*,” “*according to our custom*.”

² The following is a copy, by Grimm, of the original letter ~

“With what tact,” says Grimm, “she says, ‘I would rather that he who did the drawing should do something else for me!’ She does not rely on Michael Angelo himself that even he, if he wished to execute the crucifix after the design, could achieve something equally perfect; and she found a way of expressing this without offending him.”

Condivi says of this drawing, that, “contrary to the ordinary idea, Christ is represented, not with drooping head, but with his countenance joyfully raised heavenward.” A wonderfully beautiful design

Vittoria Colonna, in the possession of the authorities of the British Museum, giving the peculiar orthography :—

“UNICO MAESTRO MICHEL ANGOLO ET MIO SINGULARISSIMO AMICO,—Io hanta la uostra et uisto il crucifixo, il qual certamente ha crucifixe nella memoria mia quale 'altri picture, veddi mai ne se po vider più ben fatta, pia viva e più finita imagine, et certo jo non potrei mai explicar quanto sottilmente et mirabilmente e fatta per il che ho risoluta di non volerlo di man d'altri et pero chiaritemi se questo e d'altri: patientia, se e uostra jo in ogni modo, vel torrei: ma in caso che non sia uostro et uogliare fare a quel uostro, ci parlaremo prima, perchè cognoscendo jo la difficoltà che ce a di imitarlo, più presto mi resolvo che colui faccia, un' altra cosa che questa; ma se è il uostro questo, habbate patientia che non son per tornarlo più. Io l'ho ben visto al lume et col vetro, et col specchio, et non viddi mai la piu finita cosa.

“Son al conta da uostro,

“LA MARCHESA DI PESCARA.”

in the Oxford collection¹ may, perhaps, from this circumstance, be the drawing sent to Viterbo.

A letter from Michael Angelo seems to refer to this letter of Vittoria. Perhaps Vittoria, having begged for the drawing, and not being answered, applied to some third person, who was to remind him of his promise; and he wrote the following touching letter:—

“SIGNORA MARCHESA,—As I was myself in Rome you need not have commissioned Messer Tommaso with regard to the crucifix, and have placed him between *you* and *me* your servant, to demand my services in this way. I would have done more for your Eccellenza than for any one else whom I could name in the world, had not the work which burdens me made it impossible to show this, indeed, to your Eccellenza. I know your Eccellenza is familiar with the saying, ‘Amor non vuol maestro;’² and also, ‘Chi amar non dorme.’³ It was unnecessary to make inquiries through others. For, although it seems as if I had forgotten it, I wished to give no hint about it only because I had a surprise in my mind. I am now deprived of this pleasure.

“Mal fa chi tanta fi si tosto obblia,⁴

“Your Eccellenza’s Servant.

¹ “There is also at Oxford,” says Dr. Waagen, “a female portrait in profile, by Michael Angelo, drawn in red chalk, very interesting, as showing to what extent even such subjects as these were imbued with the *austere and elevated melancholy peculiar to him*, and apparent in some of his sonnets. Can this be a portrait of Vittoria Colonna?” (Vol. iii. No. 35).

² “Love does not wish a master.”

³ “He who loves does not slumber.”

⁴ “Evil to him who forgets so much fidelity, so soon.”

Among the inedited letters belonging to Michael Angelo, in the custody of the Senator Buonarroti of Florence, is the following note from Vittoria Colonna. "It is written in a firm, strong hand, and must have been sent only a year before her death, as Michael Angelo did not become architect of St. Peter's till the year 1546."¹ The passage is as follows :—

"Che volendo continuarla con tanto calore essa mancherebbe di stare la sera con le suore nella capella di Santa Caterina, ed egli di andare di buon ora a lavorare a San Pietro : e così l'una mancherebbe alle spose di Cristo, e l'altro al vicario."

"Your wishing to continue the writing of letters with so much zeal will prevent my remaining in the evening with the sisters in the chapel of Saint Catherine, and will prevent your going in good time to your work at St. Peter's ; and so that one would fail in duty to the sisters of Christ, and the other to his Vicar."

Mr. Harford was permitted to read the letters of Vittoria, which are preserved in the collection of the great artist in possession of his descendants, and these are five in number. Two of them refer in a very grateful manner to the fine drawings he had been making for her, and to which she alludes with admiration. Another speaks with deep interest

¹ Trollope, p. 380. It may refer to the St. Peter in the Pauline Chapel, as Visconti states that Vittoria left Viterbo in 1543.

of the devout sentiments of a sonnet which he had sent for her perusal. These letters are written with the most perfect ease, but there is not a word in any of them approaching to tenderness.¹

¹ Harford's "Life of Michael Angelo," vol. ii. p. 158.

CHAPTER XIV.

1541—1543.

THE Marchese del Vasto had always been in command somewhere in Italy ever since the death of Pescara. In the year 1528 both he and Ascanio Colonna were prisoners of war after some of the encounters of the enemy. And it appears that they were both in the custody of F. Dorio.

Vittoria, on hearing of the event, applied herself to the Pope to use his influence with Dorio in favour of the prisoners. Dorio replied to the Pope that, though they were his prisoners, he did not hold them as such ; but did them all the good offices in his power. Vittoria at length succeeded in negotiating their ransom ; paying herself a large sum of money. "Thus the brother and son reaped the kindness and influence of this great lady," says Visconti.

After Vasto's release he remained at Rome with

Vittoria, hoping to be elected by the Emperor captain of his forces in Florence ; but this appointment did not take place, and he was nominated instead Duke of Mantua in 1530. In the year 1541 we find him Governor of the Milanese, and under some obloquy owing to the unhappy fate of two Frenchmen who were attacked and murdered by some of his soldiers as they sailed down the Po. These men were sent, nominally, as ambassadors to Venice by Francis I., to endeavour to seduce Venice to the French cause. This outrage, committed during a truce, Francis considered as an insult to the honour of his crown. And he laid the infamy of the transaction at Vasto's door ; and appealed to the Emperor to demand a suitable reparation.

Vasto confidently asserted his own innocence, but Francis considered that he had legal evidence of his guilt, and that this affront justified him in the immediate resumption of the war. Charles V. meanwhile was so set upon his expedition to Algiers, that he took but little interest in this affair of Vasto's, and probably did not believe in his complicity. It is certain that he retained him as general of infantry in that fatal expedition.

Charles V. was slow, to an uncommon degree, in

deciding on his measures ; but when once they were settled, no power on earth was strong enough to make him change them. He was aware of this trait in his character, and spoke of it to Contarini ; who observed "it was not obstinacy to adhere to sound opinions." "True," replied Charles, "but I sometimes adhere to those which are unsound."

In his expedition to Africa, in 1541, he adhered to his first plan with determined obstinacy, in spite of the remonstrances of the Pope, and of Andrew Doria, the admiral of his fleet ; who conjured him not to expose his armament to almost unavoidable destruction at so late a period of the year. Barbarossa and the Algerine corsairs had long been the dread of the Christians in the Mediterranean. Their ships had infested the Spanish waters and preyed on the commerce of the Spanish ports for several years, and in 1535 Charles had defeated Barbarossa and liberated 20,000 Christian slaves, and had entered Naples in triumph ;¹ and now it was the elements that worsted him rather than the enemy. The fleet consisted of two hundred galleys, furnished by the Pope, the Venetians, and the Emperor. The fleet was dispersed by the

¹ Robertson's "Charles V." book vi.

most frightful storms, and the expedition entirely failed.

The troops,¹ after they had contrived to land on the Algerine coast, found themselves without hut or tent to shelter them from the weather ; and were dreadfully harassed by the Algerines. Among these unfortunate sufferers were the Emperor himself and the Marchese del Vasto, who commanded the infantry. The troops passed an awful night ; the next day the hurricane had abated nothing of its violence, and the sea appeared agitated with all the rage of which it is capable. The ships on which the army knew that their safety and subsistence depended, were seen driven from their anchors : some dashing against each other, some beaten to pieces on the rocks, many forced ashore, and not a few sinking in the waves. In less than an hour fifteen ships of war, and a hundred and forty transports, with eight thousand men, perished. Doria the next day made shift to send a boat to inform

¹ The force consisted of 20,000 foot and 2,000 horse, mostly veterans, with 3,000 volunteers, the flower of the Spanish and Italian nobility, who were fond of paying court to the Emperor by attending him in his favourite expedition, and eager to share in the glory they expected he was going to reap. To this force were added 1,000 soldiers sent from Malta by the Order of St. John, and 100 of its most gallant knights. (A.D. 1541.)

the Emperor that during fifty years he had never seen a storm equal in fierceness and horrors ; and that he was obliged to bear away the shattered remnant of the fleet to Cape Metafus. Charles was consequently obliged to lead the remains of his army to that point, which, with the utmost difficulty, he succeeded in doing, after toiling through deep and almost impassable roads, where many perished by famine, were drowned in brooks, or died of exhaustion by the way. Charles himself, after escaping the greatest dangers, was forced to remain some weeks in the port of Bugia, owing to the storms, before he could again embark.

It must have been a terrible anxiety to Vittoria Colonna when she heard of the disasters attending that ill-advised expedition. Whether the Marchese del Vasto was among those thousands of brave men, who fell victims to the African enterprise, or not, it is certain that Vittoria had the great grief of losing him shortly afterwards.¹ Visconti, in speaking of his death, calls Vasto "the son of her heart, cut off in the flower of his age and his

¹ A Marchese del *Gvasto*, as the name is sometimes spelt, is mentioned in the history of the time as Governor of the Milanese in 1543 ; which was two years subsequent to this expedition.

hopes ; who had, by high qualities and true nobility, and glory and valour, equalled even Pescara." He adds that Vittoria had hoped to have seen him receive the regal crown of Africa, and unite Europe and Africa together in the bonds of Christianity and civilization. He does not mention either the time or the manner of his death. "With him was extinguished the light of the Italian soldiers. This proved fatal to Vittoria, for all her misfortunes were the misfortunes of Italy." (Visconti, p. 138.)

"The last storm that could befall her," says Rota, "had now broken over her ; and her health gradually gave way under her afflictions." She had fondly hoped that Vasto would have been the stay and comfort of her age ; and she had now seen him, and the flower of European troops, ignominiously sacrificed.

We subjoin several sonnets addressed by her to the Marchese del Vasto. The first was written soon after the death of Pescara, to encourage her son to follow his example :—

SONNET CXIII.

"Follow those beautiful footprints, my Lord, that I may behold again in thee the clear light of my *Sole* revived, and cruel Fate

avenged in a magnificent manner, to my desire! Thy brave soul hath despised the bitter, wicked fate of thy relative, and thy rare, invincible valour (than which nothing ever was so dear to him) hath taken away all want of his greater light. And now Pescara, who shines again in thee, shows no longer here his living, glorious light, but is above in the greater glory; and I hear that thy heart, putting aside all deceits and contentions, is anxious to prize only the highest minds."

The second (the 109th Sonnet) speaks of her hopes being realized, by the character which Vasto had acquired. She says:—

"My Lord, thy glory has made our name still more esteemed, and has adorned us with praise, and thou hast encircled thine own noble brow with an eternal wreath by thy courage, ever ready and invincible in danger. Thou hast no need of gems and gold; thou hast found treasures in the fount of Apollo! Thy valour renders thee secure, and raises thee high above other men, and thy humility exalts thee above envy. Heaven has reserved thee to us for many, many years. May this idea give thee high and happy thoughts."

The third is written after his death, when these affectionate expectations had come to so grievous an end:—

SONNET CXCI.

"Figlio e signor, se la tua prima e vera
Madre vive prigion, non l'è già tolto
L'anima saggia, o 'l chiaro spirito sciolto,
Nè di tante virtù l'invitta schiera.

"A me, che sembra andar scarca e leggiera,
E 'n poca terra ho il cor chiuso e sepolto,
Convien ch'abbi talor l'occhio rivolto,
Che la novella tua madre non pera.

“ Tu per gli aperti spaziosi campi
Del ciel cammini, e non più nebbia o pietra
Ritarda o ingombra il tuo spedito corso.

“ Io grave d’anni agghiaccio ! or tu, ch’ avvampi
D’alma fiamma celeste umil m’impetra
Dal commun padre eterno omai soccorso.”

“ Son and lord, if thy first and true mother lives still a prisoner, her wise mind is not taken from her, nor her bright and buoyant spirit, nor the invisible array of so many virtues.

“ To me, who seem to go empty and light, and to have my heart shut up and buried in a little plot of earth, it befits that thou shouldst have thine eyes turned, so that thy new mother should not perish.

“ Thou wanderest through the open spacious plains of heaven ; no more does cloud or rock impede or darken thy way ; whilst I freeze, weighed down with years.

“ Thou, whose soul burns with a celestial flame, intercede for my humble self, and pleading obtain succour for me now from the Universal Eternal Father.”

After this last most severe affliction, Vittoria’s infirm health rapidly grew worse,—“ Fra poche dolce e assai lagrime amare inferma a morte.” She continued to reside for some time in the monastery at Viterbo,—where she could enjoy “ that religious silence which was more than ever suited to her contemplations of heaven,” writes Visconti. “ Here she composed her last *rime*, which breathe an air of heavenly blessedness. And here she wrote the beautiful prayer, in Latin (as the best suited to the august majesty of religion), which invaluable gem I

found," he says, "by a great chance, in a family manuscript." This prayer and the translation are given in the sequel of this memoir.

It must have been a melancholy meeting between Vittoria and Michael Angelo when she came again to Rome with shattered health. We know from Tolomei's anxious letters that she had gone through a severe illness. He writes from Rome to Giuseppe Cencio at Viterbo, saying :—

"I am extremely distressed to hear of the indisposition of the Marchesana di Pescara, for she is one of those ladies worthy of the reverence of the whole world, having in herself such virtue, goodness, and strength ; and, above all, having in these corrupt times done such good work in the service of Christ."

In a second letter he says :—

"I am extremely happy to hear from your letter that she is already so much better of her illness. Remember, Maestro Giuseppe, that in her life is wound up the lives of many others, who receive from her their daily food of the mind or the body. Have a care to let me know daily the accounts of the Marchesa's indisposition, because I continue in great anxiety ; and may it please God that you will be able to send me good news, which the world has need of, and desires every blessing upon her. For Heaven's sake, Maestro Cencio, use every diligence for the health of so noble a lady, who gives more joy to the world by her advice and example than do many others by their preaching and doctrines. Here use all your knowledge ; here show all your art. For certainly, if she is lost through our disgrace, well may Italy say, '*Spento il primo valor, qual fia le secondo.*'"

Her friends all felt great anxiety about her, and

feared that the loss of her adopted son would also prove fatal to Vittoria. There was, indeed, cause for great uneasiness. In another letter Tolomei says :—

“I will not here enter into her merits, because in another place, perhaps, I shall leave a testimony of her, that every one may see, though her life is such that in every age it will be illumed like a new sun, and renewed like the phoenix.”

This letter was written the 28th of July, 1543 ; and, in August of the same year, he says :—

“I am most happy to find from your letter that she is somewhat better of her sad indisposition.”

Il Gualteruzzi,¹ who was a faithful friend and servant of Vittoria Colonna, and the father of her pupil Innocenza, consulted in Verona the cele-

¹ A letter to him, from the learned Dottore Torre, of Verona, speaks of the fame of “the new and high poems” of Vittoria, on the occasion of the loss of the Colonna property in the Papal States, in 1541. These especially were the 139th Sonnet and that to the Pope, both of which are given in Chapter xxi. Torre writes : “I have read many times the sonnets of our most illustrious lady, but I shall not be satisfied unless I read them often again. I beg you please to excuse me if I do not return them now, but I will do so by the first opportunity. I received the original copies with a request that they should not go out of my hands, which promise I gave faithfully, and I confess I am jealous of it ; so that I cannot let these rare compositions be in any other hands than mine in this country. This grace and favour is so highly esteemed, that people come to me with joy to see my treasures ; and the more one sees them, the more one discovers their beauties. Kiss the hand of S. Eccellenza for the favour she has granted me, &c.—Verona, 16th February, 1541.”

brated Fracastoro, a medical man, who, in proposing his remedies, added,—

“I wish that a physician for her mind could be found, otherwise the most beautiful light in this world (*‘a non so che strano modo’*), by I know not how strange a manner, will be extinguished and taken from our sight.”

Visconti says, “*Avvenne intanto che in monistero demorando cadesse in grave infermita*” (she remained in the cloister seriously ill). “And truly,” he adds, “Vittoria lived with excessively little care, almost with scorn, of the body; and of these thoughts her poems of that time are filled. But her letters to the sister of Contarini, and those she sent to the Duchessa d’Amalfi and the Queen of Navarre, are sufficient proofs that she retained, in her affectionate heart, every remembrance of those persons who were dear to her.” A translation of these letters, from the original Italian, is given in Chapter *xxi*.

Visconti says he has discovered by inedited documents that Vittoria continued to reside in Viterbo to the end of the year¹ 1543, and adds: “I can positively affirm that she returned to Rome at the

¹ M. A. Flaminio, writing from Viterbo, February 1543, says: “The Most Reverend Legate, the Cardinal Pole, and the illustrious Marchesa, salute you.”

end of the following year ; and what is not generally known, that she placed her poems in the monastery of the Benedettine di S. Anna, which at that time was called de' Funari, and is now, in 1815, an hospital for poor and abandoned orphans."

CHAPTER XV.

1541—1548.

VITTORIA selected Viterbo as a residence in the year 1541, and it must have been here that the news of the fatal expedition to Africa reached her. The Pope had, in the same year, appointed Cardinal Pole governor of that fair portion of the Papal States called The Patrimony, of which Viterbo is the capital. And it was probably, in some degree, on account of her friend Pole being resident there, that she had fixed herself in a convent in that city. After the death of Contarini, which occurred in August 1542, Vittoria exclaimed, "I have no other spiritual service left to me but Pole." Cardinal Pole was of a kind and gentle nature, and one on whose friendship she might rely ; and which continued to the day of her death. He had the highest respect for her, and "honoured her as a mother." Pole was ten years younger than she was ; and she stood to him,

in the calm dignity of her age, somewhat in the place of the venerable Duchess of Salisbury, who was executed in this same year 1541.

Pole and Vittoria could console one another and mourn for the dear friends whom, in this fatal year, they had lost. We find that after hearing of his bereavement, Pole was living in retirement in a convent near the residence of his friend Sadolet, Bishop of Carpentras, and that he then had received a long Latin letter from Vittoria Colonna, full of sympathy for the heavy affliction he was suffering under; and from this we presume that they were already personally acquainted. We cannot produce her letter, but we give a translation of his in reply. In which he says what "a cordial her letter had been to him; and that he had profited by the wisdom and tenderness with which she had ministered to his comfort." He says, also, that "he had not only ever revered her from the time that he discovered her virtues, but that, when the madness of Henry VIII. (whom he designates by the name of Pharaoh) had snatched away the mother who gave him birth, he had received Vittoria into that mother's place, as he would ever proclaim: if she would undertake the charge of him. And he

compares himself to Moses left exposed to the dangers of the river, 'and not only of the river, but those of land, and sea, but still more of false brethren.' "

He says, "I am encompassed with such a variety of afflictions that I scarcely know how to extricate myself." Of his mother he says, "She was sentenced to death; that is, to life eternal. Unless I had so understood it life would be insupportable to me. I am now the son of a martyr."

It is desirable to give some slight sketch of the life of this remarkable man, as he was so intimately connected with Vittoria Colonna. She proved her high esteem for Pole by appointing him one of the executors of her will, and by leaving him a legacy of 10,000 scudi, which he refused to accept, and ordered that the money should be added to the fortune of Vittoria's niece when she married Don Garcia di Toledo.

LETTER XLVI.

[Translation.]

Reginald Cardinal Pole to the Marchioness of Pescara.

"As there are but few things, at this time, that I read, or learn from the discourses of others, which can please or cheer me, thy Excellency's letter was the more acceptable, since it not only gave great pleasure, but much comfort also. Nevertheless, it was not

the letter itself (for, to tell the truth, I do not attribute so much to it, though gracefully written and well adapted to cheer) which aroused me, destitute of all human consolation, and almost broken in spirit, to a better hope; but that which did so was that Spirit who spoke through it, who, since He is the Source of all true and lasting consolation, exercising His power most at that time when we seem most forlorn, has the name of Comforter, and is called the Paraclete; whom I see that thine Excellency holds as the Inspirer of thy writings, as well as the Guide of thine actions. But since He put before me, in that letter, that it is the cause of Christ that I have in hand, in which I am conscious that I have in no respect failed, so far as in me lay, but that I have laboured according to my strength, and the grace given me by Christ, that it may be completed to His honour; if I find the hindrances more and greater than the helps, or rather that all things are hindrances, that there is no help from man, what remains but that I should console myself in Christ? Of such a kind, truly, is the consolation that I recognise; that it is He to whom has been given all power in heaven and in earth, whose goodness, and whose care for His own, who are those for whose welfare we labour to His honour, is greater than we ourselves can exercise towards ourselves. If, therefore, we acknowledge these things, how, henceforth, can we doubt but that when the time is come that seemeth good to God the Father, which He only knows, He will in a moment scatter all hindrances, and will complete the other things for which we long, even more fully than we can hope. Who in the meantime, according to His grace, does not despise our service; in which we never labour in vain, even though that which we most eagerly desire may not succeed, inasmuch as we often know not what we should desire, even in good things; but He knows, and in His own time will correct all things, who is blessed for evermore. Amen.

“These things, in truth, of which thy Excellency’s letter admonishes me, not only comfort me, but clearly set forth that I must bear all things with equanimity, for which thanks be to Christ. But what thy Excellency writes, that thou fearest that they, whose assistance we beg, will be found somewhat slow to take in hand the work of Christ, because perchance they do not plainly perceive any personal advantage therefrom

wish that, with the public advantage, there may be some put before them individually. For I am not ignorant of how great importance among men is the consideration of private advantage in public matters, a fact which the experience of human life teaches ; nor have we been so deficient in this as not to put forward many attractions. But this fact the doctrine of Christ formerly taught me, now experience points out, that those who, being ministers of the kingdom of Christ, turn away from His cause, unless they first see some private advantage, cannot perceive this even when placed before their eyes. This, I repeat, experience now teaches me in those matters which I have put forward, as the reasoning of the doctrine of Christ had previously taught, in whom are hidden all the treasures, not only of wisdom and knowledge, but also of all individual advantage and benefit, so that His servant who will not recognise individual gain in Him, cannot ever perceive any other even when placed before his eyes. What, then, must we do here if we seek consolation ? Of a truth we must return to that which I mentioned just now from thy Excellency's letter,—namely, the providence of Christ over His kingdom. Put your hope in Him, and He will grant it. But if we seek a manner of handling this work of Christ, assuredly when we have tried everything that can be done by ability and zeal, that resource at length prevails, which, although it is not the only one, is certainly the chief, which thy Excellency touches upon in the last part of thy letter, which consists of prayer. For by this the Church and servants of Christ have ever been more powerful than by all the other means which either ability or strength can employ ; through this the Church has always escaped out of all dangers ; through this it stands.

“ Wherefore this, which thy Excellency writes, so far as especially relates to me, that thou with love, and thy sisters with whom thou livest, with all purity, continually commend me to God in your prayers, was so gratifying to me that nothing could delight me more ; nothing, in fine, could give me greater confidence for my welfare. Verily, if there be any hope left of escaping at any time from so many pitfalls and dangers as are laid out on all sides against my life by Pharaoh, it certainly rests on those holy cohorts which God, according to His mercy, has granted me in many places for a support, by whose prayers I may be defended against the enemies

of God ; of whom, truly, I never think without great peace of mind. And, so often as I hear that they are standing firm in their duty, as indeed I often do learn from the letters of many, I hear nothing more willingly or more pleasantly ; so that, at the present time, I am filled with great joy for this very cause from thy Excellency's letter. Wherefore nothing now remains save that I should beseech thy Excellency, and thy sisters, to keep stedfastly this your watch. And it well becomes thine Excellency to do so, whom I have not only ever revered from the time that I discovered that thou wast endowed of God with the greatest virtues, but whom, at a later date, when the madness of Pharaoh had snatched away my mother who gave me birth, I received into my mother's place, not such an one as Moses had, whose son he afterwards denied that he was, as she was Pharaoh's daughter, but such as, if thou wilt now undertake the charge of me, I shall ever proclaim. And I am no less destitute than was Moses at that time, when he was a babe, exposed not only to the dangers of the river, as he was, but also to those of land and sea, and, what surpasses all, of false brethren : wherefore I am no less worthy of being adopted by the daughter of a mighty King, yea, of that very King who hurled Pharaoh and his army into the sea ; especially as I myself am labouring in consequence of Pharaoh's anger, and in the cause of that same mighty King. And so again and again I commend myself to the protection of thy Excellency and thy sisters, for whom my prayers will ever be laid before that mighty King, that He may always protect and preserve you as become His daughters."

Pole was related to Henry VIII. both on his father's and his mother's side. Most of his family had died, or were executed, in contentions for the crown of England. He was early selected, by Queen Catherine, as a husband for her daughter Mary ; and Pole's mother, the Duchess of Salisbury, was entrusted with the education of the little princess.

Pole incurred the deep displeasure of the King by his famous treatise, "*Pro Unitate Ecclesiastica*," in which he opposed the divorce of Queen Catherine. Henry withdrew Pole's pension, deprived him of his preferments, and procured from Parliament his attainder. Pole escaped into Italy in time to save his own life ; but his aged mother and his elder brother were brought to the scaffold, on the merest pretence, to assuage the wrath of the King.

Pole had already been residing in Italy, having received part of his education at the University of Padua ; and it was here that he formed a lasting friendship with Sadolet, Bembo, and other distinguished Italians, who cordially welcomed him back after his attainder. These cultivated men could fully estimate Pole's great qualities and accomplishments, which had been acquired in Italy, and which were less understood in England, where he did not choose to make them known.

When he fixed himself in his government at Viterbo, he selected none but good men for his immediate household. His friend Sadolet speaks of him as "a man of unshaken constancy, and of virtue of the most superior order. Owing to his wisdom, modesty, humanity, and religion, he was looked upon as one

come down from heaven. All the world adored him for his learning and virtue. His conversation was above the ordinary sort of men, and it would be a strong heart that he would not soften in half an hour's talk."

His birth, ancestors, and obligations in England, and the persecutions and afflictions which he was suffering under, naturally added an interest to his character. We are told that "he set a noble example both in his private life and as a prince and governor." Vittoria resided in the Convent of S. Caterina, but this did not prevent her enjoying occasionally the privilege of the society which he drew around him. These advantages must have been very agreeable to a woman of such matured intellectual tastes; and it is desirable for us to gain some insight into the celebrated group of friends who surrounded Cardinal Pole, "amongst whom shone conspicuously the Marchesana di Pescara, '*whose price is far above rubies.*'"

Pole had established a society for social and literary meetings among his learned friends, including persons of both sexes. To this circle belonged Carnesecchi, a man of the highest character, who afterwards suffered martyrdom at Rome.¹ Also

¹ See Appendix.

Flaminio, who ranked foremost amongst the friends of Pole and Vittoria, and who resided entirely with the former. In some of Pole's letters he speaks of the agreeable society of his court, of which, he says, "Vittoria is the centre."

"I have too much experienced the almost universal depravity, not to own the happiness I enjoy in the intimacy of a few acquaintances, to whose uprightness I can now, more than ever, bear honourable testimony."

And he thus describes, in a letter to Contarini, how, after public business had been despatched, the rest of the day was spent in the improving society of Carnesecchi and Flaminio :—

"Improving, I call it! Because in the evenings Marco Antonio Flaminio feeds me with that food which perisheth not; so that I scarcely know when I have received greater comfort or edification, and all that I feel to be wanting to make our party complete is your presence amongst us."

When it had been, in Leo's time, the tone of society to doubt or deny the truths of Christianity, a reaction took place in the minds of men of high culture and refinement. The cause of learning and that of the Reformation were closely connected. In every country of Europe they had the same friends and the same enemies. The Greek and Latin classics had aroused men's minds to inquire for themselves boldly

on all subjects ; and, instead of being startled by Luther's attack on established errors, they applauded the attempt. It appears certain that Pole leaned to the new opinions, and Flaminio distinctly professed them.

Marco Antonio Flaminio, Pole's faithful friend, was born in 1498. He was one of the most elegant and amiable of the Latin poets of his period ; and had been very carefully educated by his father, who was Professor of Belles-Lettres at Bologna. "His father refused for him, or he himself refused, the office of Pontifical Secretary, offered to him by Leo X. The refusal of so respectable and advantageous an employment for a young man, on his entrance into public life, is remarkable, and might induce a suspicion that they did not approve of the morals and manners of the Roman court, or had not been fully satisfied with the conduct of the Pontiff : a suspicion that may perhaps receive some confirmation from the fact, that Marco Antonio Flaminio has not throughout all his poetical works introduced the praises, or even the name, of Leo X."¹ He resided some time at Verona with Bishop Ghiberto, who gave him a present of a farm deliciously situated

¹ Roscoe's "Leo X." vol. iii. p. 310.

on the Lago di Garda. His health being delicate he removed to Naples in 1537, where he remained till 1541, when he had entirely recovered. Here he became acquainted with Vittoria Colonna, and with Valdez, who had great influence in converting him to the cause of the Reformation. "Perhaps the very piety of Flaminio," says Tiraboschi, "and the austere and innocent life which he led, drew him into those snares ; since the reform of abuses, and the amendment of manners, were the pretexts of which the heretics availed themselves in attacking the Church ; and it is not to be wondered at that some pious persons suffered themselves to be seduced by such arguments." While he was in Naples he was chosen to accompany Contarini on his mission to the Conference of Worms. But he got excused from the journey on account of his health. He afterwards resided at Viterbo with Cardinal Pole. From a letter to Contarini which he wrote whilst there, it appears that Pole was rather the disciple of Flaminio in spiritual matters, than his instructor. He was at Trent with Pole in 1543, at the time when the Council was adjourned, and was offered in the year 1545 the office of Secretary to the

Council, which he declined. He, however, again accompanied Pole thither, nor does he seem ever to have left his service. After a long illness he died in Pole's house, in Rome, in the year 1550, tenderly and universally lamented. His contemporaries are lavish in their praises of his virtues and genius. It was said to be impossible to read his works without loving the author, as "they appear to be dictated by a heart the most sensible and tender that ever existed."

His works were prohibited by the Index Purgatorio of Paul IV. in 1559. It is even affirmed that Caraffa intended to take up his corpse, and commit it to the flames; this, however, was never done.

Among those who were intimate around Pole at this time was Antonio Brucioli. He was a native of Florence. He published the Italian version of the New Testament in 1530, and in the two following years translated portions of the rest of the sacred books. This Bible was ranked among the prohibited books of the first class in the Index of the Council of Trent, and all Brucioli's books, published, or to be published, were formally interdicted. But his translation had previously been eagerly read, and had greatly contributed to the spread of

religious knowledge in Italy. In the dedication to his Book of Job, he calls Margaret, Queen of Navarre, the great patroness of the Reformed—"the refuge of oppressed Christians."

Such was the eager desire of the Italians at that time to read the Scriptures, that other versions were brought out, in the years 1538, 1542, 1551, and 1562, by Marmocchini, Zaccario, Teofilo, and Rustici—who all wrote like Protestants.

It is related by the inquisitors themselves that the new opinions had a number of distinguished adherents in Italy, and they mention amongst them Pagliarici of Siena, Carnesecchi of Florence, Rotto of Bologna, who was protected by Morone, Fra Antonio of Volterra, Pole, Vittoria Colonna, and indeed some man of eminence in nearly every town in Italy.¹

These opinions had made active progress also among the middle classes of Italy. The report of the Inquisition reckons *three thousand school-masters* as attached to them.

But in Italy men did not adopt Lutherism, though they approached it. The idea that the Church is one and indivisible, and the habitual

¹ "Compendium of the Inquisitors," folio 9, c. 94.

reverence for the Supreme Head, were closely woven into the Italian mind. Flaminio, in his Exposition of the Psalms, styles the Pope "The Warder and Prince of all Holiness, the Vicegerent of God upon earth." And Folenzo, though he remonstrated against fasts, masses, and confessions—even against the priesthood, the tonsure, and the mitre—yet continued in the Benedictine Convent, where he had taken his vows at sixteen, till the day of his death.

Clario, who corrected the Vulgate, says in his Introduction, "No corruption can be so great as to justify leaving the communion of Rome;" and Ochino never would have separated from it, except from the fear of martyrdom. "It was not till the torch of persecution blazed that Pole ceased to countenance the reformed opinions. A single step further would have exposed him to an inquisitorial process."¹ He counselled prudence; he inculcated mental reservation; he advised his friends to rest satisfied with a secret belief in the truth. But subterfuge did not save him from the charge of heresy to the end of his life. An expression has been attributed to him: "That a man should content himself with

¹ Harford, vol. ii. p. 292.

his own inward convictions without encumbering his thoughts as to whether there were errors and abuses in the Church ;”¹ but it was from his party, in Italy, that these attempts of reform proceeded.

He is said to have held to the Church, “in opposition to many apprehensions he himself had of some theological points.” Hume says that “he was suspected at Rome of some tendency towards Lutherism, because his benevolent disposition led him to advise a toleration of the heretical doctrines.” His benevolent disposition failed him when he got to Canterbury. Nothing is more extraordinary than the change observable in his conduct on his return to England.

He obtained leave from the Pope to retire from the government of the Patrimony in the year 1548 ; the death of so many dear friends, especially of Vittoria Colonna, the failure of the hopes of the liberal party, with Contarini at its head, and a disrelish of the world, caused him to sink into despair.

It has been said that he retired into a monastery

¹ Pole intreated Contarini to vindicate the honour of so great and good a man as Sadolet from all imputation of having advanced anything foreign to the received tenets of the Church ! Yet Pole calls the great Lutheran tenet “this holy, fruitful, and indispensable truth.” Ranke.

in Verona ; but we find him at Rome, in 1548, living in his own house, and soothing the last hours of his faithful friend Flaminio.

LETTER VIII.

[Translation.]

Reginald Cardinal Pole to Caspar Cardinal Contarini.

"I rejoice greatly that the most reverend Lady Vittoria, with all her companions, having overcome the difficulties and dangers of the journey, arrived at Ratisbon, as at a haven, in safety ; and was there received, both by the Emperor and by the citizens, with that honour with which it was fit, and is customary, for the ambassadors of this Holy Seat to be received by Catholic people and princes. But I am equally glad, too, that the Emperor, in the speech which he made at the first meeting, manifested such a disposition and wish to settle the controversies of the Church, as we all desire, and as becomes such a prince. Not that this was a new idea to me, nor that I doubted what the wish of the Emperor would be in such a matter, but because, from his showing so manifest a desire, this is a great proof to me that he entertains a hope that the affairs, of which some had almost despaired, can be settled. So that, when I hear that the most prudent of princes has not given up this expectation, I myself readily become hopeful ; and the more so from the fact that the arms of the Turks, which especially seemed likely to be an hindrance, both to this holy work and to all such of which the State stands very much in need, God in His providence has turned aside against the East, for which we have great cause to be thankful. Thus all the details of the letter of the most reverend Lady Vittoria were most gratifying to me ; yet not to me alone, but also to those most reverend doctors to whom she wished me to communicate them. Yesterday, however, in the Council, we obtained more accurate and more perfect knowledge of these same things, from the letter of the most reverend Lady Vittoria to the most Reverend Farensius, which the Pope ordered to be read out that they might be heard by all ; about which, when our Holy

Master had first made known his own opinion, not only with respect to the whole matter, but also to the character of the most reverend Lady Vittoria, and with no small praise of her prudence and of her earnest desire, the same was, with great eagerness, confirmed by all.

"As far as relates to the most illustrious Marchioness of Pescara, whose character the most reverend Lady Vittoria thought suited to overcome the obstinacy of her brother, she indeed, such is her affection for her brother, as well as her love for and obedience to our Holy Master, left nothing untried in order to bring back her brother from the raging of war to rest and repose. But as she effected no good with him, either by advice or by entreaty, and did not see by what means she could—but this, indeed, found out, that her sacred leisure to which she is accustomed was, as long as she was in the city, being continually interrupted, and, in short, destroyed, without any results, by those who kept soliciting her assistance in some such matters—this holy plan occurred to her, to leave the city and retire to some place where, with greater peace of mind, she might turn all her prayers to God, whom she rightly judges to be alone able to help affairs that are come to such a pass. Therefore she withdrew to Orvieto, and there hid herself in a convent of nuns, with whose ordinances and conversation, as she wrote to me afterwards, she is so delighted, that she fancies herself living with so many angels. Happy beings, whose care it is to understand these things! I cease not to commend to God continually, in my unworthy prayers, the most reverend Lady Vittoria, that He may, according to His power, grant unto her ability in this His holy work to bruise the serpent's head; and, in turn, I desire to be commended in the pious prayers of the most reverend Lady Vittoria. I salute the Abbot of St. Palatius in the bowels of Christ, and the reverend Doctor Scotus, with the rest of his holy family.

"Given at Rome, 2d April, 1541."

CHAPTER XVI.

1548—1558.

WHEN Paul III. died, (1549) it was very generally expected that Cardinal Pole would be elected Pope. He was twice actually nominated, and the second time was waited upon late at night by the cardinals to perform the ceremony of adoration. But, insisting upon a delay till morning, he missed the tiara,¹ which perhaps he had not ambition enough to desire. Caraffa, in conclave, openly stated his belief in Pole's heretical opinions. He feared the rivalry of Pole; and used all his influence against him. Caraffa, hot-headed and impetuous as he was, quailed before him as well as before Ignatius Loyala.

In a letter from Pole, dated 6th of March, 1548, he says: "I was so overwhelmed with grief at the death of the most illustrious Lady Victoria Colonna,

¹ Marcellus II. was elected Pope.

whom I honoured as a mother, that I almost sank under it." This was just a year after her death. Five years afterwards, in 1553, Edward VI. of England died, and Queen Mary came to the throne. She immediately commanded Pole's return, and, it is said, offered her hand to him in marriage as had originally been contemplated. This honour, if offered, was respectfully declined. Pole did not take priest's orders till 1556, when, on the death of Cranmer, he was ordained and consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury.

Mary had insisted on the Pope nominating Pole Legate to the Court of England. She declared that she knew no one so likely to fill the chair well as her dearest kinsman. The Pope (Caraffa), with the greatest reluctance, at last consented, but he continued to preserve the utmost suspicion and hatred against Pole. Pole, at length, set out to return home; but the Emperor would not allow him to pass into England, till the negotiations he had in hand, for marrying his son Philip to Mary of England, were fully arranged. The royal marriage took place in July, 1554; and the new Legate was, at length, permitted to land in England in November of the same year. His arrival was

conducted with magnificent pomp ; and on his reaching London, the Queen received him with the utmost affection. She threw herself upon his breast and kissed him, rising in haste from table to greet him on his arrival. She said his coming gave her as much joy as the possession of her kingdom. He replied, "*Ave Maria gratia plena Dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulieribus.*" The Queen answered "in words of sweet humility."

She sent him word afterwards that at his coming the babe had leaped in her womb ! ¹

Pole not only compared the Queen to the Virgin Mary, and Philip to Solomon ; he even went so far as to compare Philip to Christ. He wrote to the Pope that their marriage was formed "after the very pattern of that of our Most High King, who, being Heir of the World, was sent down by His Father from His throne, to be at once the Spouse and the Son of the Virgin Mary, and be made the Comforter and the Saviour of mankind. In like manner," he says, "the greatest of all princes upon earth, the heir of his father's kingdom, departed from his own broad and happy realms, that he might come hither unto this land of trouble, to be the spouse and son

¹ Though her hopes of an heir were entirely illusory !

of this virgin." "This amazing comparison," says Froude, "must be given in the original Latin words; for one cannot forget what Philip had been, was, and was to be!"

Add to this the fact that Mary was ten years older than her Spanish husband, that she was thirty-seven and Philip was twenty-seven; that she called him "boy;" and that contemporary writers describe her "as aged, worn" (*fort envieillie et âgée*)¹ "with growing years, wasted figure, ill-health, and with a voice 'grossa, et quasi di huomo;'"² and the language of Pole becomes, indeed, not only blasphemous, but ludicrous. How often in his secret thoughts must he have compared this coarse and infatuated woman, with the gentle and lovely Vittoria, whose friendship he had prized to the day of her death.

Burnet, curiously enough, says of Pole's conduct, after he became Legate, "Being a humble, modest, and good-natured man, he gave up the Queen to the bloody counsels of Gardiner and Bonner." He says also of Mary, "It was the only thing in which she was not led by the Cardinal. Great as was his influence with Mary, he suffered the cruel

¹ Noailles.

² Ellis, vol. ii. 2d Series.

prosecutions to go on, even in Canterbury, though he was averse to such proceedings,¹ and though he declared that the scandals and ignorance of the clergy had given the entrance to heresy. In three years two hundred and seventy-seven persons were brought to the stake in England. "There is nothing but beheading, hanging, quartering, burning, taxing, and levying now in England," wrote Sir J. Smith.

Froude considers that the responsibility of the Queen's cruelties rested—first, with Gardiner, but secondly, with Reginald Pole, in a higher degree, because he was the one person in whom the Queen absolutely trusted.

Pole was afraid of being discharged from the Legation, and of being recalled to Rome by Caraffa, who had put Pole's friend Morone into prison on suspicion of heresy. He was also afraid of losing the archbishopric of Canterbury, now about to fall upon him. He was appointed to that see only three days after the burning of Cranmer. In 1557, Caraffa publicly charged Pole with heresy; and Pole, to escape from the charge, had the weakness to express "a great detestation of heretics." He

¹ "Pole never would allow the Jesuits to come into England. He had the utmost dislike of this body of ecclesiastics."—*Bur-*

wrote to the Pope, comparing him to Abraham sacrificing his son. "Your Holiness is taking my life from me, when you take from me the reputation of orthodoxy." But the charge was never withdrawn; and Pole preferred to lay down his office rather than return to Rome as commanded, with the Inquisition staring him in the face.

Mary wrote privately to the Pope, that "she neither could, nor would, live without Pole beside her;" and she commanded Pole to retain his office, and continue in England. But short were the days; the Queen was already dying, and Pole, shattered in health and sick at heart, did not survive her.¹

He died only a few hours after his royal mistress, in 1558, aged fifty-eight. "He fell into a languishing," says Burnet, "that brought after it a decay of his health, of which he died." And thus he was spared another exile, and the grief of seeing the dissolution of that "phantom fabric which he had helped to raise."

There remain many portraits of this celebrated man, which give a most favourable impression of his person. He was tall and of a most noble

¹ Penny Cyclopædia: art. "Pole."

carriage, with thoughtful, gentle eyes. Froude describes him as having "the arched eyebrow, the delicately cut cheek, and prominent eye of the beautiful Plantagenet face; while a long, brown, curling beard flows down upon his chest, which it almost covers." His portrait by Raffaele, which is well known by the engravings of it, gives a lively idea of his personal appearance. He is said to have stood for the model of the Christ in Sebastian del Piombo's grand picture of the "Raising of Lazarus," in the National Gallery; and a careful comparison of the face in that picture with the portrait of Pole by the same artist, fully justifies the assertion. There is a portrait of Pole, taken at a later date, by a foreign artist, Werff, probably painted in the Low Countries whilst the Legate was under orders from the Emperor. Under the engraving of this picture, by P. à Gunst, are these lines:—

"J'étois du sang royal, mais mauvais politique
J'invectivai le Roi qui mit ma tête à prix :
Le Pape cependant n'eut pour moi que mépris
Et partout ma vertu n'eut qu'une fin tragique."

We subjoin another letter from Cardinal Pole, translated from the original in the British Museum,

which is valuable as exhibiting his feelings at the period when he was losing so many of his most valued friends in Italy; and had just relinquished his government in Viterbo. The letter to Tridentinus is dated Rome, 6th March, 1548.


LETTER XXXII.

Reginald Cardinal Pole to the Reverend Tridentinus.

"When I was so overwhelmed with grief at the death of the most illustrious Lady Vittoria Colonna, whom I honoured as a mother, that I almost sank under it, there came a letter from the Reverend Farensius, which informed me of the death of thy brother Aliprandus, and filled my heart with such sadness that it nearly deprived me of my reason. For I did not only lament that Christendom had lost a noble youth, growing up in the praise of every virtue, and who presented such an example, as well of other virtues as of prudence and bravery in this German war, that he was accounted the equal of veterans and chiefs, by the judgment of the army and of the Emperor himself; but that, hearing of his death from thee, most illustrious Sir, who lovedst him most dearly, I was forced, not without great anxiety, to doubt whether thy vehement grief at his death, which arose from thy great love, might not, by piercing yet deeper into thy heart, either cut short thy life or render it more bitter than death. For I thought that his death would cause thee at this time the heavier grief, as thou wast promising to thyself now, from his approved valour, greater things than ever before,—a fact which thou didst show clearly enough in that letter which thou sentest to me some time since; in which, as it was your purpose to pour out upon me, like ointments and perfumes, all thy love, and, in accordance with thy extreme kindness, to dedicate and give thyself up to me entirely, thou didst not yet seem to have sufficiently poured out thy love upon me, without having expressly dedicated and given up to me that of thy dearest brother also. And so with his name thou didst conclude that most agreeable letter, filled with every mark of love: which circumstance caused me, when I

heard of his death, to be incredibly struck down ; not only for thy sake, but also for mine own, if anything in so great a union of love can be mine which is not also thine.

“ But not to speak of other misfortunes and losses through his early death, which I confess that thou, most illustrious Sir, hast not suffered in the same degree as myself, there remains this one loss, which is the chief, and embraces all : that he, in dying, seems to have taken away with him the half of thy mind and life, the whole of which to me, after God, thou hadst given up. For thus Bishop Farensius writes to me that, overcome with grief, thou now seekest solitude, dost avoid the meetings of men, dost not willingly hear those who offer consolation. But this—what else is it than to follow the footsteps of the dead, and to deprive all thy friends of the fruits of thy life, on account of the death of one ? For although he was worthy, for whom thou wouldst pour out thy life, yet, since thy death can in no way profit him, but can be exceedingly injurious to all thy friends, and especially will offend God himself, who has given thee life and spirit that thou mayest serve His honour, see, I pray thee, most illustrious Sir, that thy grief do not carry thee away so far that thou cannot be acceptable to God, nor useful or pleasant to thyself or others ; but, on the contrary, leave the remembrance of his death bitter to all ; whereas thy chief desire should be to have it remain as dear as possible to all, in proportion to his virtue and thy love for him. Wherefore, most illustrious Sir, compose thyself ; or if this be difficult under so severe a calamity, when nature is now prostrate from the force and magnitude of thy grief, and thy mind, as it were, torn asunder, in order to calm and console thyself (which, if thou attemptest to do of thyself, I think thou wilt find not only difficult, but even to exceed all human strength—as I have always found it in my afflictions, so often as, my soul and being cast down by grief, I have of myself attempted to raise it by human reasoning), turn thy prayers to Him who, of His own free will, invites unto Himself all those that are sad and afflicted, who comforts those that mourn, and ask Him to bring back the scattered powers of thy mind, and to moderate thy grief, lest it extend farther than the law of duty and of love towards God and man requires. But if thou shalt do this—for I myself recently tried this remedy, when, being in need of an antidote to my grief, I



could console myself by no other means—not only dare I promise that thou wilt obtain the greatest benefit that belongs to the alleviation of sickness of the mind, but that in this very loss that thou dost now bewail, thou wilt discover many things for which to be justly grateful, and to give thanks to God, which at the present time thy darkened mind cannot see. Therefore, to this point first I exhort thee to turn all thy thoughts; on the other hand, I beseech thee by thy kindness towards all, not for the death of one man, although most dear, to continue to keep so many living friends in such sadness, nor to wish to deprive me of the gift that I value above all—of thy love—which should be united with cheerfulness at the very time that I shall have most need of it, to show mine own consolation and that of many others, and, as I hope, the glory of God. The rest thou wilt learn from the letter of thy, or rather of our, friend Aurelius, whom I saw so dispirited at this intelligence, that his conversation caused me much greater anxiety for thee and for thy soul, meditating by what means thou couldst bear this calamity, than what I felt previously from the letter of Bishop Farensius, although that was as intense as it could be. Wherefore it will be thy duty, most beloved Sir, to free me and thy other friends as soon as possible from this sadness, by thy letters, which I pray and beseech thee, by thy reverence to God and thy love towards man, to do.

“Farewell, most illustrious Sir, and may God be with thee, thou best example of a true friend.

“Given at Rome, 6th March, 1548.”

CHAPTER XVII.

1521—1555.

DURING the period of which we have been writing, the Reformed opinions were widely spread in Italy. Sadolet told the Pope that there was an almost universal defection of the minds of men from the Church ; and Caraffa also stated to him that the whole of Italy was infected with the Lutheran heresy, which was embraced not only by statesmen, but by many ecclesiastics. Whole libraries were carried from Germany into Italy, in spite of the Pope's edicts. This religious movement was hailed with the greatest enthusiasm by many. Celius Curio exclaimed, "Oh, blessed day! Oh that I might live to see the ravishing prospect realized!" That it did not succeed in Italy must be entirely explained by the fearful power and immediate proximity of the Papal Court.

Grimm, in comparing the Reformation of Ger-

many with the movement in Italy, says the success in Germany was caused by the strong, citizen-like spirit which gave it vigour and continuance; whilst in Italy the movement appears the result of "something that I will call neither sentimentality, nor overstraining." In this observation he appears not to have sufficiently considered either the magnitude of the Italian Reform, or the fact that in Germany there was no Inquisition. Among the Italians there was indeed no one to be compared to the mighty iron-hearted Luther, except perhaps Michael Angelo, and he moved not from his own calling.

Luther was a giant battling with giants. He wrote to the Cardinal Elector, "I will fearlessly discharge the duty which Christian charity lays me under, dreading not the gates of hell, much less popes, bishops, or cardinals."

"It was an age which required a bitter and pungent salt," said Melancthon. And perhaps such a salt was not found among the great and learned men of Italy. Luther's industry was second only to his bravery. He translated the New Testament in ten months, in his Patmos, as he styled the Castle of Wartburg. Eichhorn says of this translation, "It must astonish any impartial judge who

reflects on the lamentable deficiency of subsidiary means in that age ;" and in that prison, he might have added, with its black impenetrable pine forests all around as far as the eye can reach.

"Even enemies could not withhold their commendation of the beauty of this wonderful production."¹ The rapidity with which it was printed and sold was equally astonishing. Ten thousand sheets were struck off every day, and three thousand copies appeared on the 21st of September, 1522. It bore no name of man, but had this title, "The New Testament in German, at Wittenberg." From that hour every German might obtain the Word of God, at a small cost, in the language of the people. In eleven years, fifty-eight editions were published. Decrees were immediately issued to deliver up all copies, and these often were publicly burnt in the towns ; but the people now possessed their treasure, which was soon printed both in French and in Italian. Melancthon, Luther's chief friend, had given his translation of the New Testament a final revision before publication. He had been, even from boyhood, a great linguist, and had especially studied the Scriptures in Greek. He was

¹ D'Aubigné's "Reformation," vol. iii. p. 102.

Professor of the Greek Language at Wittenberg; and having the strongest opinion of the excellence of Luther's cause, he became his most ardent coadjutor. Melancthon published, in 1521, his system of Theology, derived entirely from Scripture. The learned Erasmus compared this work to a wondrous army ranged in order of battle against false teachers. Calvin remarked of it that it is a beautiful illustration that the most perfect simplicity is the noblest method of handling the Christian doctrine; and Luther, in speaking of this work to the students of Wittenberg, said, "If you wish to become divines, read Melancthon."

Erasmus is called the monarch of literature. His supremacy in the world of letters was such as no other writer ever lived to enjoy. He was the restorer, almost the inventor of the popular interpretation of the Scriptures, and was excelled by few, if any, in the science of Biblical criticism. He had published the New Testament in Greek and Latin, with notes, in 1516, dedicating it to Leo X. It was said in Paris Luther wanted to force open the door when Erasmus had already picked the lock. He was a learned, amiable, and timid man. He repeatedly confessed that he had none of the spirit

of a martyr.¹ He said, "If I write with moderation, it is because it is my natural character." And, again, "I will not be unfaithful to the cause of Christ, at least so far as the times will allow."

He was always an advocate for a middle course, and he disappointed and provoked Luther, who saw the necessity of war to the knife with the foe. He also differed with Luther on the subject of free-will. They were two mighty combatants, and Luther with grief conceived that if Erasmus had joined him the Reformation would have been entirely triumphant.

In his three lectures on the subject of these two giants of men, Froude has drawn a very powerful sketch of their characters—giving, with truth, the palm to Luther. Erasmus was an older and more cautious man, and he had a horror of an open breach with the Church. But though in his later years he wrote against the German Reformers, he never sided with the Papists, and was hated by the monks. He died at Basle in 1536, in the arms of his dearest friends, who were Protestants, and without the ceremonies of the Romish Church. He was justly

¹ Sir J. Stephen.

regarded as one of the principal glories of his age and country.

Sadolet wrote a work on the Reformation, which was never printed, owing to the plainness with which it treated of the disorders of the times. It extant in the Vatican manuscripts.

The corrupt state of the Church before the reformation is acknowledged by Bellarmine, who had abundant opportunities of knowing, and who was not over-forward to acknowledge the fact. He says, "Before the Lutheran and Calvinistic heresies were published, there was not any severity in ecclesiastical judicatories with regard to morals; any knowledge of sacred things: there was almost no religion remaining."

The voluptuous lives of the ecclesiastics occasioned great scandal; which scandal was increased by the facilities with which pardon was obtained. The avarice and extortion of the Court of Rome were excessive, and the selling of benefices was notorious. The life at the Vatican was so infamous that all good men desired to see a better example before the people. Some were for remodelling everything; others considered that it was necessary to return to the old strictness, and that men

had only to be silent and obey. Even in Leo's time, men in all positions in life took part in the societies which had these ends in view. The Oratory of Divine Love, the Society of the Theatines, and the Society of Jesus, had their origin in these ideas and requirements. The world was to be changed, if not by virtue and good sense, then by fastings and mortifications. The very rapid spread of the Society of Jesus proved how ripe people everywhere were for some great revolution, from the disgust so generally felt at the disorderly and ignorant condition of the priesthood, and the state of the Romish Church.

When Erasmus and Luther attacked the gross vices and ignorance of the times, the priests were forced to amend their conduct, and to apply themselves to study. And it is certain that the Reformers had great influence in improving the state of things, even in the bosom of the Romish Church itself. "The Reformers were eminent," says Robertson, "not only for the purity, but even the austerity of their manners, and had acquired such reputation among the people on that account, that the clergy must needs have lost all credit if they had not endeavoured to conform to their standard. The

influence afterwards was seen to extend to the sovereign pontiffs themselves."

The popes studied to assume manners more severe, and more suitable to their ecclesiastical character. "The chair of St. Peter hath not been polluted during two centuries by any pontiff that resembled Alexander VI. or several of his predecessors, who were a disgrace to religion and to human nature."¹

These things were known and commented upon by Vittoria Colonna and her friends; and all that was going on in Germany and England, and in France and Spain, doubtless was brought to their notice. Not, indeed, flashed in an hour, as is the news of to-day, nor laid on their breakfast-table, like the *Times* of each morning; but by letter or messenger, by traveller or by mendicant friar, the news of these great events and changes was circulated. There were great souls awake and stirring in the world, when the young Emperor met Luther in 1521, for the first and last time, at Worms, and the mailed hand of a cavalier was laid on the brave Reformer, saying, "Go on little monk, in God's name!" These facts were

¹ Robertson's "Charles V." book xii. p. 487.

not slow to travel even to the Palace of Ferrara, and to the recesses of Ischia. And the books from the new and wonderful printing-presses of Germany and Switzerland quickly found their way into the boudoirs of Margarita, Renée, Giulia, and Vittoria. To these womanly hearts it must have been a joy to know that strong men were up and doing, against the grievous sins and unblushing depravities which they had so long mourned in secret.¹

¹ One of the peculiar features of the Reformation was the fashion, almost universal, of making use of caricature to satirize the times.

In 1475, Murner, of Strasburg, a German popular poet, published his work with bold woodcuts, which did not spare the ecclesiastics. One of them represents the Pope and the Emperor pressing forward to get the fool's cap.

Lucas Cranach, Luther's friend, published, in 1521, a small quarto, under the title of "*Passional Christi und Antichristi*," each page of which is nearly filled up by a woodcut, having a few lines of explanation in German below. The cut on the left gives some incident in the life of Christ, and that facing it gives a contrasting fact in the history of Papal dominion: Christ crowned with thorns contrasted with the Pope enthroned in his worldly glory; and Christ washing the disciples' feet, in contrast with the Pope compelling the Emperor to kiss his toe, &c.

Sebastian Brandt, a native of Germany, born in 1458, published, in 1494, his "*Ship of Fools*," a most popular book of bold woodcuts, with metrical illustrations, ridiculing all sorts of follies and crimes. It was published on the eve of the Reformation, and passed through numerous editions in a few years. Latin and French translations were equally successful.

Even the great Erasmus followed the fashion, and published a little jocular book, taking the same view of Folly as Brandt and

others. His satire is placed in the mouth of Folly herself. In this long discourse the Romish Church, with its monks and its ignorant priesthood, find a place. He intimates that their superstitious follies had become permanent because they were profitable: "There are your pardons, and your measures of purgatory, which may be bought off at so much the hour, or the day, or the month, and a multitude of other absurdities." Ecclesiastica, scholars, mathematicians, philosophers, all come in for their share of the refined satire of this book, which has gone through innumerable editions, like the "Ship of Fools," and been translated into many languages. A copy of the book came into the possession of Holbein, who amused himself with drawing illustrative sketches with a pen in the margin. This copy afterwards passed into the library of the University of Basle.

Luther himself is caricatured by Murner as a fat friar, wearing a fool's cap. Luther was full of comic humour, and scrupled not to use it to the furtherance of his ends, thus reaching the people on the ludicrous side of things, in which he was helped by the mass of both literary and artistic talent ranged on his side.

It is well known also how Michael Angelo, in his great picture of "The Last Judgment," amused himself or avenged himself with caricaturing upon it many of the great sinners of the Conclave.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1540—1545.

A FIERCE war recommenced between the King of France and Charles V. soon after the visit of the latter to Rome, in 1536, and the consequence was, that all idea of a council was delayed. It was fixed for 1542, and then adjourned till 1545, the Emperor meanwhile amusing the Protestants with his professions of good-will. When the Council of Trent at last met, Contarini, who had been so conciliatory at Ratisbon, was dead, and his great opponent, Caraffa, was appointed Legate to the Council, where he eagerly contended against liberal opinions. The Jesuits supported him. Cardinal Pole and the Archbishop of Siena were the advocates of toleration ; and, having been entirely overruled by the violence of Caraffa, they had quitted the place. In the end, the Protestant opinions were excluded, mediation being utterly rejected. The

student of his life can doubt his integrity, or deny him the praise of a sincere and profound devotion.¹ Unaided by military or civil power, and making no appeal to the passions of the multitude, he had the genius to conceive, the courage to attempt, and the success to establish, a policy teeming with results at once so momentous, and so distinctly anticipated. He was a silent, austere, solitary man; at one time a squalid, careworn, lacerated pauper, at another a monarch reigning in secluded majesty, and a legislator exacting an obedience as submissively and as prompt as is due to the King of kings."

Sir J. Stephen draws a vivid picture of Loyala and Luther: "Chieftains in the most momentous warfare of which this earth has been the theatre since the subversion of paganism, each a rival worthy of the other, in capacity, in courage, disinterestedness, and the love of truth. Yet, how marvellous the contrast! As best became his

¹ This is the verdict of a candid critic; but we know how soon his followers abused their irresponsible power, and that Pascal's caustic satire on the lax morality of the Jesuits was deservedly hailed by the world, with intense delight, only a century after the founding of the society. His "Provincial Letters" were published in the year 1656.

Teutonic honesty and singleness of heart, Luther aimed at no perfection which was not consistent with the every-day cares, the common duties, and the innocent delights of our social existence ; at once the foremost of heroes, and a very man ; rejoicing in gladness and thankfulness, for all his abundance ; loving and beloved ; communing with the wife of his bosom, prattling with his children, surrendering his overburdened mind to the charms of music. Loyala, from the depraved life of camps and palaces, falling into an old age of religious abstraction, and bodily mortifications ; apart from mortal men, familiar with visions that he may not communicate, and with joys he may not impart."

When Loyala, in 1540, obtained permission to institute the Society of Jesus, he had only ten disciples. Sixty-eight years afterwards the number was increased to 10,581, and in 1710 the Order possessed 24 professed houses, 59 probationary, 340 residences, 612 colleges, 200 missions, 150 schools, and numbered 19,998 members.¹

The Jesuits were not to be seen in processions, nor required to practise great austerities, nor spend their days in tedious prayers — their Order was

¹ "History of the Jesuits," vol. i. p. 20.

student of his life can doubt his integrity, or deny him the praise of a sincere and profound devotion.¹ Unaided by military or civil power, and making no appeal to the passions of the multitude, he had the genius to conceive, the courage to attempt, and the success to establish, a policy teeming with results at once so momentous, and so distinctly anticipated. He was a silent, austere, solitary man; at one time a squalid, careworn, lacerated pauper, at another a monarch reigning in secluded majesty, and a legislator exacting an obedience as submissively and as prompt as is due to the King of kings."

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¹ "History of the Jesuits," vol. i. p. 20.

formed for active service in the world. They were to instruct, to insinuate, to lead, to cultivate men of high rank, to influence their actions, to study their tastes, and by a system of pliant, relaxed morals, to accommodate themselves to the views of men; and so rule through that influence, even the highest potentates; and it was often with most pernicious effect. Theirs was a strict military rule of implicit obedience to their head. They were to go wherever they were ordered, in a moment; there was a ramification from the extreme to the centre, and everything was known to the General. The books were kept at Rome, in which all names, all characters, all capacities, were entered. These fearful volumes were for a long time entirely concealed, as well as the laws by which the Jesuits governed their dark mysterious movements. But at length they were produced to the light, in the courts of justice: the appalling nature of the society became known to the world; and in consequence the Jesuits have been banished from almost every country in Europe.

The Inquisition was re-established in Rome, exactly at the same time that the institution of the Society of Jesus was founded. Side by side grew up

these two frightful powers. Caraffa exclaimed, "As St. Peter subdued the first heresiarchs in no other place than Rome, so must the successor of St. Peter destroy all the heresies of the world;" and he was in such' great haste to begin the work, that he hired a house himself for immediate use, and fitted it up with rooms for the officers, and prisons for the accused; supplying out of his own resources, though by no means rich, the strong bolts, and locks, and chains required, with blocks, and all the other fearful appurtenances of his office. Teofilo de Tropea, his own chaplain, was appointed Commissioner-General for Rome; and of this man's severity many of the cardinals had bitter experience: among others, Cardinal Pole.

The Inquisition had been established in the thirteenth century in Spain and at Rome by Gregory IX. and in France had been used against the Albigenses with fatal effect; but in the fifteenth century it had fallen into desuetude. In 1484 it was reconstructed at Seville, and in 1543 at Rome, under a new and more appalling form.

The code of the new Spanish Inquisition, as originally promulgated, is the most extraordinary digest ever formed for consolidating a system of

religious tyranny. It struck terror into all hearts. It is impossible to state the numbers who were victims of the "Holy Office" in Europe. In Spain alone 32,000 were burnt, and 291,000 condemned to other punishments. In Italy no approximative estimate can be given.

The Pope's Bull, which "was to suppress and uproot the errors that had found place in the Christian community, and to leave no vestige of them," was published on the 21st of July, 1542. In the manuscript *Life of Caraffa* are the following rules drawn up by himself:—

"1st. When the Faith is in question there must be no delay; but at the slightest suspicion rigorous measures must be resorted to with all speed.

"2nd. No consideration to be shown to any prince or prelate, however high his station.

"3rd. Extreme severity is rather to be exercised against those who attempt to shield themselves under the protection of any potentate. Only he who makes plenary confession shall be treated with gentleness, and fatherly compassion.

"4th. No man must debase himself by showing toleration towards heretics of any kind, above all towards Calvinists."

We find that all is severity, inflexible and remorseless. Caraffa was a man of most austere, stern, and gloomy temper, and was never known to have forgiven any one. He is spoken of as one of the most bigoted, fanatical, and cruel princes that ever sat in the chair of St. Peter. He was of noble Neapolitan family, and removed his Society of the Theatines to that city from Venice at the time that Ochino was preaching there. He immediately accused him of heresy, but Ochino knew well how to defend himself. The Pope wished for Caraffa at Rome, and he was summoned to Rome three times before he would obey. He wished to set up the Tribunal of the Inquisition in Naples, but the Neapolitans, who were well acquainted with the horrors of it in Spain, revolted, and Charles V. promised them it should never be introduced there.

Caraffa was not raised to the Papal chair till 1555, several years after Vittoria's death, but he had ruled at the head of the Inquisition for fifteen years previously, filling Italy with fear by the severity with which he exercised his irresponsible power. He may be said to have been the cause of her death, so smitten with grief and dismay was her heart for all her friends, and her health broken

by anxiety for herself. Caraffa's monk-like figure, tall and emaciated, seemed all sinew, and his deep-set eyes glared with the fire and passion of youth at seventy-nine, when he was elected Pope. Titian's portrait of him could exhibit nothing but his skill, from Farnese's terrible ugliness; his small, aged face, with its old, pinched-up features, looking like an evil spirit. So hateful did he make his name, and that of his two infamous nephews, that when he died, aged eighty-four, the people rose to destroy the prisons of the Inquisition, after liberating hundreds of prisoners. The documents were thrown like rubbish about the streets, and the ministers of the "Holy Office" were bastinadoed and wounded. All the statues of the Caraffa family were thrown down and destroyed, and their name cursed for ever.¹ In this just

¹ The Jews assisted in this raid of bitter revenge. Caraffa had been to them a most cruel tyrant, not only continuing towards them all the ignominious insults that had been heaped upon them by previous popes, but he, for the first time, imprisoned them in the narrow, unhealthy confines of the Ghetto, where to this day they are penned up to the number of at least four thousand, and the gates locked at *Ave Maria*. It was on the 26th of July, 1556, that this edict was first enacted. Nor was this all. The Inquisition did its "holy" office unto them also, and many of them had been burnt in the Campo dei Fiori and the Piazza di Minerva, and now they had at least the satisfaction of helping to pelt his monument with mud, and to drag down his statue, with the papal crown, in the dirt.

retribution all classes joined; even the princely families of Orsini and Colonna. We cannot be surprised at the vengeance of the latter princes, as Caraffa, as soon as he was made Pope, had created one of his nephews Duke of Palliano, and bestowed upon him that stronghold of the Colonnas, a circumstance especially galling to this proud Roman family.

So early as the year 1525 an order had been issued at Lucca, commanding all Lutheran books to be burnt. Disputes on matters of faith were for bidden; and the historian, Guicciardini, of a noble Florentine family, who was governor of Modena, Bologna, &c., under the Popes, says, in his private records (that have since come to light), "One desire alone lives within me,—namely, the ceasing of this cursed priestcraft in Italy. I have ever wished in my innermost soul the destruction of the Ecclesiastical State, but fate has willed it that I should labour under two Popes for the extension of their power. Had not this been, I should have loved Martin Luther as myself, and have hoped that his adherents would have destroyed the accursed despotism of the clergy." His history was not published till many years after his death, and

passages were then omitted which might offend. The edition of Friburg, 1755, contains all the omissions. He died in 1540, aged fifty-nine. He was an historian of great eminence, and a good man.

We have already stated that Ochino and Peter Martyr were among the first who had fled. Celio Secundo Curione waited till the sbirri appeared to arrest him, and, being a large and powerful man, he cut his way past them with his knife, threw himself on his horse and escaped, reaching Switzerland in safety. Valentin withdrew to Trent, and Castelvetri to Germany. Persecution and dismay were now universal. "Scarcely is it possible," said Antonio dei Pagliarici, "to be a Christian and die quietly in one's bed." The body of literary men were the particular objects of hatred, and were subject to the most rigorous supervision. Book-sellers were obliged to send in a catalogue of their stock, and to sell nothing without the consent of the inquisitors. Even private persons were ordered to destroy all forbidden books: and these injunctions were carried out with incredible success; so that of Contarini's book, "On the Benefits bestowed by Christ," not one copy was left; whole piles were

burnt at Rome, and the work has entirely disappeared.

All differences of opinion were subdued by main force, and annihilated. The Auto da Fé was held at certain times before the church of the Santa Maria alla Minerva at Rome. Many fled from place to place, with their wives and children, only at last to fall into the toils of their merciless hunters ; and when the "*Index Expurgatorius*" was published, all persons were prohibited from possessing or reading the books mentioned in that catalogue, under pain of excommunication, incapacity of enjoying any offices or benefices, and subject to other arbitrary punishments and perpetual infamy. Everything was liable to be expurgated, and no authors could publish anything without permission. It took the Popes thirty years, by vigilant, unrelenting severity, to crush the Reformation in Italy. Their triumph was not that of truth and reason, but the effect of the implacable cruelties of the Inquisition.

The admirable Olympia Morata states in one of her letters that a word, a look, or the possession of any book deemed heretical, or of the New Testament in the vulgar tongue, was sufficient to expose persons, without distinction of sex, rank,

age, or office, to be imprisoned and tortured, to make them confess and recant. "Some are every day burnt, hanged, or beheaded. Rome has not prisons enough to hold the people who were taken up on suspicion." Any connexion with heretics, even accidental meeting with them, was punished by a fine of five hundred ducats the first time, and by death in case of repetition. A merely lengthened conversation with such as were summoned before the courts for any cause in matters of heresy met with a fine, for a first time, of two hundred and fifty ducats, then exile, and then death. This was in 1558. Eight years later, it was enacted that all letters, packets, and luggage should be opened and searched on behalf of the Inquisition. Soon after, the strictest surveillance was exercised over merchants travelling abroad; in 1566, death awaited any in communication with Geneva; in 1568, all foreigners were watched. "Caraffa sat there like a skeleton, filled with fire. He would have liked to have burnt up at one blaze every heretic."¹

Even Vittoria's dear friend, Renée, Duchessa di Ferrara,—who, but for the Salic law of France, might have sat on the throne of France,—was not

¹ Grimm, v. 384.

protected from cruel insults by her birth, her high rank, and her noble character; and her husband was her accuser! "She sees no one," says Marot. "The mountains arise between her and her friends, and she mixes her tears with her wine."

It would have been happy for Vittoria if she had been spared all knowledge of the persecutions to which her beloved friend was exposed. But so early as 1545 the Pope addressed a brief to the ecclesiastical authorities in Ferrara (which was looked upon as a hotbed of heresy), to "institute a strict inquiry into the conduct of all ranks, and having taken the depositions, applied the torture, and brought the trials to a conclusion, to transmit the process to Rome for judgment." Spies were employed to insinuate themselves into families, and gain secret information for the inquisitors. Assuming various disguises, they were found both in court and cloister: a number of excellent persons in Ferrara were thus caught in the toils. Among the rest, Olympia Morata, who, having left the court of d'Este, after her father's death, to take charge of her mother and the younger children, was treated in a cruel and ungrateful manner by the Duke, and would have suffered worse treat-

if a medical student had not married her, and carried her away to Heidelberg, where her monument is shown with great honour. In the year 1560, two or three years after Vittoria Colonna's death, the persecutions at Ferrara became more severe, under the new Pope, Julius III. This voluptuous and indolent pontiff signed without scruple the most cruel orders. By his authority the Reformed Church of Ferrara was dispersed, one of their preachers, a person of great piety, was put to death, and many of the people were thrown into prison. Olympia Morata says, "I hear that the rage against the saints is at present so violent, that former severities were but child's play compared to those which are practised by the new Pope. I learn from letters which I have lately received that the Christians are treated with great cruelty at Ferrara: neither high nor low are spared."

The high rank and distinguished accomplishments of the Duchess of Ferrara, instead of extenuating, aggravated her offence, and the clergy were determined to humble her. Strong representations were made by the Pope to her husband, and Hercules pressed his wife to renounce the

new opinions, and conform to the established worship. She refused to sacrifice her convictions. Henry II. of France, her nephew, was appealed to; and he sent Oritz, his inquisitor, to request an interview with the Duchess, and to inform her of the great grief that his Most Christian Majesty had conceived, in hearing that "his only aunt" had involved herself with these detestable and condemned opinions. If Oritz could not bring her to reason, he was, with the concurrence of the Duke, to use severity. He was to preach a course of sermons to turn her from her errors, that she and all her family should be *obliged* to attend; and next, if this proved unsuccessful, the Duke, in his Majesty's name, was to "sequester her from all society and conversation," that she might not taint the minds of others. Her children were to be removed from her, and none, of whatever nation they might be, who were suspected of heretical sentiments, were to come near her; and, finally, he was to bring them all to trial, and lay the proceedings before the Pope.

The daughter of Louis XII., whose spirit was equal to her piety, spurned their conditions, and refusing to violate her conscience, her children were

taken from under her management, her servants proceeded against as heretics, and she herself detained as a prisoner in the palace. Renée bitterly felt her husband's upbraidings. He told her she must conform unconditionally with the commands thus given, an unnatural proceeding on the part of Duke Hercules, which the Court of Rome rewarded afterwards by depriving his grandson of the dukedom of Ferrara, and adding it to the possessions of the Church. After a season her love for her children induced her to yield a little; but at the death of her husband, in 1559, Renée returned to France, and made open profession of the reformed religion, and extended her protection to the persecuted of that faith.¹

From the shameful persecution of this noble and most admirable lady, through the medium of her nearest relatives and the tenderest of her affections, we have some clue to the pressure which was used to keep Vittoria Colonna from throwing all the weight of her illustrious example into the reformed scale. Grave fears were entertained that, on Ochino's defection, she also would ostensibly leave the Church of Rome. The gentle and timid

¹ M'Cree's "Reformation in Italy."

Cardinal Pole was made, as it seems, the instrument by which she was persuaded not to take this extreme step. But the sorrow, and perhaps self-blame, which she experienced, in hearing of all the sufferings which the Court of Rome and the Inquisition were causing to her most beloved friends, added poignancy to her other griefs, and doubtless hastened the end of her life.

From that time persecutions have never ceased in Italy; and at this day, in the Roman States, no book can be published without permission, and the Index Expurgatorius is still in active operation. A short time ago an order was published in *The Times* by Mr. Odo Russell, English consul at Rome, warning travellers not to take English Bibles into Rome. This order was modified by a second one, "that no person was to bring more than his own Bible, either English or Italian, with his name written large in it." Among the inhibited works at this present time we find the "History of England" by Lord Mahon, and the "History of England" by Lord Macaulay; and in the *Siecle* newspaper of 1866 we read the following:—

"Strangers being very numerous at Rome on account of the Holy Week, an attempt has been made to afford them some amusement.

On last Sunday week an enormous tripod, surrounded by a large quantity of fagots, and guarded by eight gendarmes, was erected in the Piazza San Carlo, before the church of the same name, one of the most frequented parts of the Corso. Towards six o'clock one of the missionaries advanced, and from the top of a platform announced to the crowd that his crusade against wicked books had met with unexpected success. Unfortunate persons who had been seduced and deceived by the writings of Renan, Proudhon, &c. had brought the books to their confessors, and it had been arranged to burn the whole of them publicly. At this moment the doors of the church were opened; and amid the noise of bells and the chants of the monks and penitents the pile was lighted. Volume after volume was thrown in, and some jets of turpentine were added from time to time to make the flame more brilliant.

"The Pope has just commanded that the old, very severe laws of Leo XII. should be put in force; and also, that the clergyman of the Scotch Presbyterian Church in Rome should be warned that his services must be immediately discontinued, or that the Inquisition would certainly claim its victim."

Thus we see that the principles of the Vatican alter not; nor the spirit of Jesuitism. The tiger's claw may be stealthy and velvety, but its eye is sharp; its nature elastic and springy, but it can lie in wait for its prey.

CHAPTER XIX.

1547.

IN taking, as it were, a bird's-eye view of some of the characters which have claimed notice in these memoirs, we are forcibly impressed with this observation,—that the greatest men have all failed in some one respect in the long struggles of life, and have committed serious errors. Charles V., in spite of his energy and his heroism, while yet hardly past his prime, hastened his end by the most weak self-indulgence and his ignorant monkish austerities¹ (if the history of his seclusion at the Convent of S. Yusto is to be believed).

Pescara and Vasto soiled the purity of their Spanish plumes, at the close of their lives, by deeds inconsistent with the true chivalrous honour they boasted of so much, and which made Vittoria's heart sad and indignant, that her heroes had been so

¹ Prescott's "Charles V."

misled. Pole, whom she honoured and trusted, either through weakness or through ambition (how shall we explain it?) sullied his last years by his severities and entire change of principle and temper. And even Ochino lost his name and fame, at the end of a long life, by the advocacy of views which were unworthy of his earlier career.¹

But Vittoria herself was the same from first to last—a simple, high-minded, and devoted woman. There is not any single act or word recorded of her that does not redound to her honour. The equableness of her life is truly beautiful. It was meek, affectionate, and feminine from the beginning to the end. Having obeyed and honoured, and lived as a daughter and a wife, she closed her noble career with dutiful obedience to God, loving her friends to the end, and in gentle Christian humility calmly yielding up her soul to her Saviour.

It is to be remarked that none of her biographers have a word to say about any ecclesiastical forms attending her decease. We hear nothing of sacred oil, auricular confession, or the prayers of cardinals and priests at the bed-side. “*Ma l'anima, invitta già sicura eletta, stava col suo Jesu d'amore accessa.*”

¹ He is said to have written in favour of polygamy.

We have seen her as a child, hand in hand with her Francesco, climbing the hills of their beloved Ischia like their own mountain-goats. We have followed the pair in their happy studies under their accomplished sister. We have seen her as the beautiful youthful bride, admired and honoured by all beholders; and as the prudent and virtuous wife, worthy of the respect of emperors, princes, and popes. We have followed her through great affliction, as the angel of peace in her family, giving up all her own property during the losses of her house; meekly seeking shelter in those retreats which were always open to the poor and the pious, yet never losing the *prestige* and influence due to her family and her talents; and dedicating her muse without affectation or self-conceit, according as her powers could direct, to the glory of God and the love of virtue; and at length, having passed through manifold sorrows, the last picture which she presents to us is that touching scene when her true and faithful friend Michael Angelo found himself beside her bed of death; and when she looked so meek and saint-like, there was such a nobility upon her head, that though he pressed his lips upon her dying hand, he felt for her such an intensity of respect, that he

did not dare to kiss that cheek and brow for which he felt such a devoted adoration.

This is certainly a glorious character ; worthy of being pictured, though after the lapse of three centuries, and of being held up as an example to the end of time.

It is remarkable that the date of Vittoria's death is so variously given by her biographers, and that the place of her interment is unknown. Crescembeni says, "that she died in some monastery, and he believes the event to have occurred in 1546." Visconti says, "that she fixed herself in the Convent of S. Anna at Rome, in 1546." Rota says: "It is certain that she returned to Rome at the beginning of the year 1547, and she resided in the Palazzo Cesarini detto Argentina, 'inferma gravamente' (very ill) ; and that, seeing she was near her end, she made her will on the 15th of February, 1547, and that towards the end of that month, 'spargendo di se odore di santita,' she arrived at that end to which all must one day come."

This will is to be found in the Library Capponi at Rome, and is dated "the 15th of February, 1547, Rome, in the Palazzo Cesarini, chiamato Argentina," which was the residence of Giuliano

Cesarini, who had married Vittoria's much-loved relative, Giulia Colonna; and at this time they were the only members of the great Colonna family in Rome.

The Archbishop of Ragusi, in the "Life of Cardinal Bembo," speaking of Bembo's death in January 1547, says, "This year extinguished two of the brightest poets of Rome. For hardly had a month elapsed after the death of the reverendissimo Bembo, before the world was deprived of the Signorina Vittoria Colonna, Marchesa di Pescara; who, in our days, was considered another Saffo, and in works of holiness and charity another S. Elizabetta." And in the letters of Cardinal Pole, dated Marzo 1548, he speaks with grief of Vittoria's death, as a fresh affliction.

Vittoria's last hours were tenderly watched over by Giulia and other friends, and her faithful and devoted Michael Angelo frequently visited her sick couch. His biographer relates that he was so much affected by her death that he almost lost his senses. And many years afterwards he confessed, that he repented of nothing so much as not having kissed both her forehead and her cheeks, instead of her hands only, when he went to her in her last hour.

With whom was he now to converse when he had lost Vittoria? He might, indeed, imagine that his own saddened life was drawing to a close. But he survived her nineteen years. He died on the 17th of February, 1563, aged eighty-nine, his mental and physical vigour unimpaired. His last words were, "In your passage through this life remember the sufferings of Jesus Christ."

The last thing which Michael Angelo had drawn for Vittoria was a Madonna sitting at the feet of the Cross, with the quotation from Dante, engraved with his own hands, "*Non vi si pensa quanto sangue costa*," which motto was now the watchword of all who saw before them the increasing violence against free opinions in Italy. "This work has frequently been copied in paintings, which are erroneously supposed to be by Michael Angelo, and it has also been engraved." ¹

Vittoria was wont to say of Michael Angelo's works, that they stand all together as if only one, and that his friends ranked him higher than his works. "Those who only know your works, and not yourself, value that in you which can only be called perfect on a lower scale." Could any man

¹ Roscoe's "*Leo. X.*" vol. iii. p. 220.

desire higher praise? But the last and highest characteristic of this great man ("più che mortal, angiol divin,") was his devotion to God. One of his latest sonnets commences, "*Le favole del mondo m'hanno tolto, Il tempo dato a contemplar Iddio.*" It is impossible to render in another language the force of these words. We see in the following sonnet, addressed to Vittoria after her death, how he mourned his great loss. Increasing sadness filled his heart, and her image was ever before him. Grimm relates that it was during the long days, and, soon after, also in the nights, which, as ill health increased, he passed in sleepless solitude, that he found expression for his grief in those words which he wrote down, with no idea of publicity, and revised again and again,—poems which were first found among his papers after his death.¹

SONNET ON VITTORIA'S DEATH, BY MICHAEL ANGELO (1547).

"Quando il principio dei sospir miei tanti
Fu per morte dal cielo al mondo tolto,
Natura che non fe' mai sì bel volto,
Restò in vergogna e chi lo vide in pianti.
O sorte rea dei miei desiri amanti,
O fallaci speranze, o spirto sciolto,
Dove se'or? La terra ha pur raccolto
Tue bella membra, e 'l ciel tuoi pensier santi.

¹ Grimm, vol. ii. p. 318.

Mal si credette morte acerba e rea
Fermare il suon di tue virtù sparte,
Ch' oblio di Lete estinguer non potea ;
Che spogliato da lei ben mille carte
Parlan di te ; ne per te 'l cielo avea
Lassù, se non per morte, albergo e parti."

"When the cause of so many sighs of mine was by heaven taken from the world, through death, Nature, who never fashioned aught so fair, stood ashamed, and all who witnessed it were in tears.

"O cruel fate on my loving desires! O vain hopes! O emancipated spirit, where art thou now? Earth indeed has taken thy beauteous form, and heaven thy holy thoughts.

"It is impossible to believe that bitter, cruel death can arrest the fame of thine acknowledged powers; Lethe cannot extinguish it! He is robbed of his prey; for a thousand writings will record thy fame; and how could heaven give to thee a dwelling and a home, except through the gates of death."

Visconti, who had the great advantage of being permitted to examine all the papers relating to Vittoria which could be found among the Colonna Archives, in preparing his memoir for the edition of the "*Rimé*," printed by Torlonia in 1840, does not appear to have found any memorials of her last illness and last words. He does not even give a copy of the will which was executed a few days before her death. All that he says on the subject of her death is that, "touching now at the extreme end of life, which had been passed amid few delights and many bitter tears, weak unto death, she was

conducted into the nearest home, that of Giuliano Cesarini, husband of that Giulia Colonna, who, alone of her family, remained in Rome. Here, exemplifying the height of religion and constancy, she died, at the end of February 1547, in the fifty-seventh year of her age."

Deumier adds to the account of Vittoria's death, that at the last, in the evening, when Michael Angelo was beside her couch, she said to him, "I die. Help me to repeat my last prayer. I cannot now remember the words." He repeated it to her, holding her cold hand, whilst her lips moved, without uttering a sound. All at once she turned her large eyes upon him, a smile trembled on her lips, and she tranquilly expired, murmuring words that he could not distinguish. The following is probably Vittoria's last prayer. It has been much admired for the beauty of the language. We give a translation of it, adhering as closely as possible to the original:—

PRAYER.

"Da, precor, Domine, ut eâ animi depressione, quæ humilitati meæ convenit, eâque mentis elatione, quam tua postulat celsitudo, te semper adorem; ac in timore, quem tua incutit justitia, et in spe, quam tua clementia permittit, vivam continue, meque tibi uti potentissimo subjiciam, tanquam sapientissimo disponam, et ad te ut perfectissimum et optimum convertar. Obsecro, Pater

Pientissime, ut me ignis tuus vivacissimus depuret, lux tua clarissima illustret, et amor tuus ille sincerissimus ita proficiat, ut ad te nullo mortalium rerum obice detenta, felix redeam et secura."

Translation.

"Grant, I beseech Thee, O Lord, that I may ever worship Thee with such humility of mind as becometh my lowliness, and with such elevation of mind as Thy loftiness demandeth; that I may continually dwell in that fear which Thy justice requireth, and in that hope also which Thy mercy affordeth. May I humble myself before Thee as the All Powerful, and yield myself to Thee as the All Wise, and be turned to Thee as the best and All Perfect One.

"I entreat, O most Holy Father, that Thy most living flame may so urge me forward that, not being hindered by any mortal imperfections, I may happily and safely again return to Thee."

Grimm says, "I can nowhere discover the place of her burial." Her French biographer, speaking of the grand pomp with which her bust was crowned on the 12th of May, 1845, remarks: "Ce fut, au reste, la seule pompe qui honora ses funérailles. Elle avait demandé dans son testament à être inhumée comme une simple sœur professe; et l'on obéit fidèlement à l'humilité de ses dernières prescriptions. Ses restes furent portés au couvent de Sainte-Anne, qu'elle avait habité, *et il y a tout lieu de croire* qu'ils furent déposés dans le caveau commun des religieuses de l'ordre." Visconti says, "She desired, with Christian humility, to be buried in the manner in which the sisters

were buried when they died. And so it was ordered, *as I suppose*, to take place in the common sepulchre of the nuns of S. Anna." It is much more probable that she was buried in the tomb of her husband, at Naples. Visconti continues, "Cosi Vittoria Colonna, quanto ebbe altera la cuna, tanto ebbe umile la tomba!" ("Thus Vittoria Colonna, high and noble as was her cradle, had in an equal degree a lowly grave.") "Her tomb remains unknown; and with shame I add, has been entirely neglected. Neither her glory, nor her virtues, nor the consideration of our own honour and her nobility, has moved any one to erect a worthy monument to her memory."

In the Colonna Archives there is the legal document by which Ascanio Colonna accepts to be Vittoria's heir. It is dated Avezzano, 4th of March, 1547. "The will of Vittoria, signed publicly by Girolamo Piroti, 15th of February, 1547, in the room next the garden of the Cesarini Palace at Torre Argentina, where she was lying, has been found," says Visconti, "by my care, to-day, in the office Calvaresi." In it she named the four houses in which she had resided—S. Paolo d'Orvieto, S. Caterina in Viterbo, S. Silvestro and S. Anna

in Rome—leaving to each one thousand scudi : she provided for all her servants, and disposed of much money in charity.¹

It is perhaps more remarkable that we have so many remains, than that we have some things yet to discover, of the history of one who lived three centuries ago, and whose life was passed amidst the gentle duties of daughter, wife, and friend, in the retirement that she preferred.

Her character presents a strong contrast to the many famous, or perhaps infamous, Italian women, whose memoirs may seem, alas ! to some, more piquant even by their crimes.

In the course of the year 1844, at the request of the Prince and Princess di Torlonia, the Académie des Arcades decided, by acclamation, that the bust of Vittoria should be placed in one of the galleries of the Capitol. It was executed by the best artist of the Roman States, and is said to be very remarkable. It was inaugurated with great pomp on the 12th of May, 1845, in an Academical Fête. The event was celebrated in thirty-two poems, in Latin and Italian, which were magnificently printed in

¹ Her signature is written in these words—"ITA TESTAVI
EGO VITORIA COLVMNA."

one splendid volume, by which to record, amidst so many political changes which were then agitating the world, how Vittoria Colonna was crowned, three centuries after her death, in the same place which beheld the triumph of Petrarch.

We are indebted to Deumier's "Life of Vittoria Colonna" for these particulars, as Visconti's memoir was published in 1840, five years before the celebration above mentioned.

We can sympathise warmly in the remarks of Vittoria's French biographer, when he expresses the pleasure he had experienced in translating her sonnets. He says that the sentiments they inspire give them "*un attrait indéfinissable*. We reverence her for the thoughts which she gives; we are attached to her as if we had known her; we regret her as if we had loved her. One of the prerogatives of literature is to meet among the dead those affections that we have failed to find among the living! One of the privileges of religion is to give us the hope of one day seeing more nearly those whom we have honoured on earth. *Quant à moi, je demande à connaître Vittoria Colonna.*"

Almost immediately after Vittoria Colonna's death the prosecutions commenced, and they included

persons of the highest consideration. Paul III. had thrown many Protestant persons into prison, and they were executed by Julius III. Paul IV. followed in the bloody track. Princes, princesses, friars, bishops, academies, even the Sacred Colleges, and the Holy Office itself, fell under suspicion of heresy. The pontificate of Pius IV. (G. A. Medici) was even more disgraced by cruelty than that of Caraffa himself. He appropriated a house beyond the Tiber for the Inquisition, in the place of the building which had been demolished. It was commonly called the Lutheran Prison. Here, amongst other victims, was De Monti, a Neapolitan nobleman; having been seized by the familiars on the Bridge of S. Angelo as he was crossing on horseback with Marc Antonio Colonna. He was sentenced to be burnt alive, but on the payment of seven thousand crowns by his friends he was *only* strangled, and his body committed to the flames.

Pius V., a Dominican monk named Ghislieri, who had been one of the leaders of the Inquisition, was created Pope in 1566, and he was still more fierce and inexorable than his predecessors. The cruelties committed in the two preceding pontificates are ascribed to his influence as president of the Inquisition. He

now enforced its authority over all Italy. A hot persecution followed. It raged with great violence in Bologna, where persons of all ranks were subjected to imprisonment, tortures, and death. In Rome Carnesechi was committed to the flames. Baron Bernardo di Angole and Count Petiliano, a brave Roman, after long resistance promised to recant; and their sentence then was, to be condemned to pay thirty thousand crowns, and to be imprisoned for life. Numerous informers were kept by the Inquisition in every town; and such was the terror produced, that at Pisa the University was deserted. Pius V. reproduced the famous Bull, "*In cœna Domini*," and ordered it to be read in every parish church throughout Christendom; but it was put down in almost every State in a short time.

Faventina Fanio, Casa Bianca, Giovanni Mollio Tesserano, Pomponio Algieri, Ludovico Paschali, and other celebrated men, were beheaded, and their bodies committed to the flames; among them the excellent Paleario, in the seventieth year of his age. The prisons were filled with victims, including men and women of noble birth and men of letters: amongst them were several Englishmen.

CHAPTER XX.

1547.

OF the various portraits which were taken of Vittoria Colonna, the one which is authorized by Visconti, and called "the Colonna Portrait," is prefixed to the memoir of Vittoria in his edition of her "*Rimé*," in 1840. This portrait was in the Palace Gennazzano for some time, but came afterwards into "the safe custody" of the Colonna family, and is now in the Colonna Gallery at Rome. He adds that "this portrait has the majestic air and the nobility of condition of Vittoria's beauty. The grave Roman character is tempered with a sweet, truthful expression, a gentle smile plays on her lips, and all the face beams with a spiritual goodness."

Those who have seen this picture describe it as remarkably interesting. The engraving, which is rather coarsely executed, has been photographed for the present work ; but it does not satisfactorily bear photography.

There is also here given a photograph of Vittoria of a later age, probably about twenty-two. It is taken from a beautiful engraving, by Raph. Morghen, of the original picture in the Tribune at Florence. This well-known and much-admired picture has been called *Raffaelle's Fornarina*. But the *Fornarina* of *Raffaelle* is in the *Barberini Palace* at Rome, and bears his name upon the armlet of the figure. The face in this last picture has no resemblance to Vittoria Colonna, and, though beautiful, has an expression of coarseness and common life.

The other portrait has been considered to have been sketched by Michael Angelo, and painted by Sebastian del Piombo. There is much to be said in favour of its being a portrait of Vittoria Colonna; but the best judges define it as "A Lady. 1512." Sir Charles Eastlake thus describes it: "It is a portrait of a very beautiful woman, holding the fur trimming of her mantle with her right hand. The forms are noble and pure; the painting extremely fine, resembling the Venetian manner; and the hand and arm beautiful. The ornaments, heightened with gold, and the goldlights in the hair, are peculiar."¹

¹ Sir C. Eastlake, "Handbook of Painters," vol. ii. p. 328.

Visconti, in his eagerness to assert the superior authenticity of the Colonna Portrait, disputes the idea that the famous picture in the gallery of the Grand Duke is to be considered a portrait of Vittoria; but he adds in a note, "The author of the letter to Signor Renato Arrigoni, printed in the 'Life of Raffaello,' written by Signor Quatremère de Quincy (printed in Milan in 1829), wishes to persuade us that the celebrated picture in the Tribune at Florence, under the name of Fornarina, is the portrait of Vittoria Colonna, designed by Michael Angelo, and painted by Sebastian del Piombo. But every one knows that the hair in that portrait is painted very dark, '*forte oscuro traente al nere*;' and any one observing that particular must know, without question, that this circumstance sufficiently disproves any resemblance."

It is a question easily solved whether the hair of this portrait is "*traente al nere*." Certainly the engraving of Raphael Morghen does not justify that description; and the strong resemblance in features between this portrait and the medals will strike every attentive observer.

There is a large oil-painting of Vittoria, which was ascribed to Michael Angelo until the mark of

Marcello Venusti was discovered upon it. "We know, however," says Grimm, "that Michael Angelo sketched her, and nothing prevents our supposing that Venusti, as was often the case, only coloured in this instance his master's work. The picture is said to be in England. A lithograph of it is added to Campanari's work; and even from this we can perceive the mind of him with whom the work originated. I believe none but Michael Angelo could thus have represented Vittoria. There is no longer the fair hair, which once invested her with such a charm; a white widow's veil, brought low upon her brow, envelops her head, and falls over her bosom and shoulders. It is a tall figure, dressed in black velvet, upright, and sitting on a circular chair, which is grasped by one hand, whilst the other is lying on an open book on her lap. There is a grand repose in her features, and a slightly painful compression about the eyes and mouth. She appears aged, and the deep lines which fate had drawn are noble and energetic."¹

Five engravings from medals are appended to Visconti's work. Two of them show her in youthful beauty, and are supposed to have been

¹ Grimm, vol. ii. p. 288.

executed in Milan after the battle of Pavia. The originals are in the Imperial Museum of Paris. On the reverse of one of them is the head of Pescara, and of the other a winged figure of Victory presenting the Cross to Italy, in allusion to the generous proposal of Vittoria Colonna to her husband, that he should now turn the Christian arms to the Holy War of Palestine, and counselling him to devote his great wealth acquired in the war to this sacred work: "upon which subject Vittoria had written," says Visconti, "many letters to Pescara and to Vasto."

These medals give a joyful and delightful expression to the features of the Marchesa; she seems radiant with happiness and intelligence. The other two represent her at a more advanced age, in the widow's dress. We hear of several other portraits of Vittoria; one she gave to her friend Cardinal Bembo, and another she presented to Guidiccioni; "so that," as Visconti remarks, "it was to be hoped that the gracious image of her countenance might not be altogether lost. In fact," he adds, "it was not lost; for here, in Rome, in the Galleria Colonna, is exactly preserved a picture in which all persons may see *'la nobilita e il carettere dei lineamenti della gran Colonnese.'*"

In concluding this imperfect sketch of Vittoria Colonna, nothing remains for us but the duty of endeavouring to give a short summary of the opinions and doctrines held by her, and to elucidate them as far as can be done by her writings. A spirit of such earnest humility and truthful simplicity runs through them, that we could not have a better guide than her own words.

Dante lived a hundred years before Vittoria Colonna, but he exercised undoubtedly a wonderful influence upon that age, and indeed upon every subsequent age. As already remarked, he inspired Michael Angelo; and in another manner he may be said to have contributed to the formation of Vittoria's mind, and of all the other minds that dared to think for themselves after him.

In the "Essay on Dante," *Cornhill Magazine*, 1865, Dante's creed is thus given:—

"God is One. The universe is the thought of God. The universe, therefore, is one. All things come from God. They all participate more or less in the divine nature, according to the end for which they are created. Of these, man is the most eminent. Upon him God has bestowed more ~~of His~~ own nature than upon any other creatu

perfectability is what Dante calls *possible*. Mankind must be one, even as God is One. Unity is taught by the design of God in the external world. There must be some centre to which the general inspiration of mankind ascends, thence to flow down again in the form of law: *this is Imperium*." "Rome," he says, "is the seat of empire. There never was, never will be, a people endowed with a better capacity for it, than the holy Roman people."

"It is certain that many of the Italian Reformers held anti-Trinitarian opinions," says Hallam, "and among the rest Ochino and Valdez." Mr. Panizzi discovered a pamphlet of extreme rarity at Lord Granville's, which proves that Berni, the author of "Orlando Innammorato," was a Protestant. Mr. Panizzi in speaking of it says, "The more we reflect on the state of Italy at that time, the more we have reason to believe that the reforming tenets were as popular among the higher classes in Italy in those days as liberal notions in ours."¹

Hallam gives, incidentally, a confirmation of the assertion that the Reformers were men of great purity of life, when he adds, in speaking of the

¹ Quoted by Hallam, vol. i. p. 504.

unexpected discovery of Berni being an early proselyte to the Reformation, "this may account for the freedom from indecency which distinguishes that poem."

The friends of Vittoria, who all ranged themselves on the side of Church Reform, were unquestionably the best and cleverest men of that generation, and her friendship with them sufficiently proves that her opinions coincided with theirs. But there is much stronger proof of this in her own writings, and from them we can illustrate her religious faith in an unmistakeable manner.

"Vittoria's name has descended to us through three centuries as a Poetess. But to any one desirous to comprehend the history of the sixteenth century she becomes still more interesting as a Protestant. Her poetry affords evidence so clear," says Mr. Trollope, "that it is wonderful how Tiraboschi and her biographers can deem it possible to maintain her orthodoxy. Her highly-gifted and richly-cultivated intelligence, her great social position, and, above all, her close intimacy with the eminent men who strove to set on foot an Italian Reformation, make the illustration of her religious opinions a matter of historical interest."

There are several of her sonnets which have been particularly selected as showing her religious faith, and which are far removed from the doctrines of the "Infallible Church." Mr. Trollope notices the 82nd, where he finds heretical notions respecting the confessional. "A sentiment which would have consigned many a victim to the stake. But the high-born Colonna Lady, the intimate friend of popes and cardinals, might write with impunity that which would have been perilous to less lofty heads."

This very beautiful sonnet must be given in the original.

SONNET LXXXII.

"L'occhio grande e divino, il cui valore
Non vede, nè vedrà ; ma sempre vede
Taglie dal petto ardente (sua mercede)
I dubbi del servil freddo timore.

"Sapendo che i momenti tutte e l'ore,
Le parole, i pensier, l'opre, e la fede
Discerne ; nè velare altrui concede
Per inganni, o per forza un puro core.

"Securi del suo dolce e giusto impero
Non come il primo padre e la sua donna
Debbiam del nostro error biasmare altrui ;

"Ma con la speme accesa e doler vero
Aprir dentro, passando oltra la gonna,
I falli nostri a solo a sol con Lui."

"The grand divine eye which never slumbers, but is always open, takes away from the living heart, thank God, the doubts of a mean

and cold fear. Knowing all moments and all hours, He discerns the words, the thoughts, the deeds, and the faith of every one, and will not permit that a pure heart should be concealed from Him by the fraud or force of others. Secure under this sweet and just rule, we must not, like our first parents, lay our sins on others, but with kindled hopes and true penitence, passing by priestly robes, open our sins to Him alone."

"*Passando oltra la gonna*" literally means "passing beyond the gown." And "*a solo a sol con Lui*," strictly interpreted, is "tête-à-tête with God."

SONNET CXCL.

"When I look on the bright, noble ray of Grace Divine, and on the Power which illumines the intellect and inspires the heart with superhuman virtue, my soul gathers up her will, firm and intent to do it honour. But only so far has she power as she is favoured by high election to hear and feel the certain efficacy of the Author of all good. May His mercy be blessed! It is not by our own industry and talent that our way is assured, but those run most securely and best, who have the great sustaining help of heaven."

SONNET VIII.

"When by the light whose living splendour renders the faithful breast cheerful and secure, and when the hard ice, which often congeals round the heart, is dissolved by grace, I feel that the black pall of my sins falls at those blessed rays, and I clothe myself in that hour, clear and pure, in the first innocence and the first love. But though I strive with secret and secure key to arrest that ray, it is so coy and subtle that any low thought drives it away angry. It steals off flying, and I remain distressed and sad, and I pray God to take all defilement from me, so that this light may remain with me in future."

Again, in the 80th sonnet, in speaking of Christ's death, and the benefits thereof, she declares

that "he who hath fixed his eye on Christ—not he who has best understood, or most deeply read, the volumes of this world—shall be blessed in heaven. His law is not written on paper, but it is stamped upon the purified heart, with the impress of fire, by the love of Jesus;" thus advocating the sufficiency of individual conversion, which was very different from the dogmas of the Roman clergy.


In another very remarkable sonnet, the 137th, she gives expression to the prevailing idea of Church Reform. She says the *net of Peter* is so choked with mud and weeds, as to cause a dread that it will be torn in sunder. That the ship is so surrounded with dangers, that it is to be feared the good successor of Peter will have difficulty in bringing it to port.

SONNET CXIX.

"*Sanctus Spiritus*, send Thy clear ray into my mind, from which every shadow flies when Thy light, which can melt the hardest ice, falls on my heart!

"The eye is lifted to heaven, but, owing to the imperfection of obscure mortal light, it is often enshadowed. The soul seeks its good, but it is hindered by loving little, and is opposed to the truth; and my finite, erring virtue cannot bear the rays nor feel the ardour of the infinite sun without Thine aid.

"O give me, I pray Thee, the true salvation, which brings me to the true light and the true sun on celestial wings."



SONNET CXCI.

"I would desire that Jesus, with high and powerful call, should ever resound in my heart, and that my deeds and my words should show, as before, a lively faith and an ardent hope. The elect soul, which feels the seeds of a celestial faith, hears, sees, and comprehends Christ. His grace illumines, inflames, opens, and purifies the mind; and often invoking Him, a firm and beautiful habit is acquired, so that it becomes natural always to ask the true food. And even in the last combat with the ancient foe, to us so hard, armed solely with faith, the heart still, from long habit, on Christ shall call."

SONNET CXC.

"When I shall behold the setting of this light and the dawn of the eternal light, I shall enter that desired haven to which hope already carries me. I shall then behold that ray which comes from heaven to my heart, that consolatory light which I shall see with a clearer eye, and know how it burns, how it is nourished, how it is illumined. So to live will make death itself sweet. It will be sweet to change mortality for immortality. Oh, when will the dawn of this bright and happy day arrive?"

SONNET ON THE DEATH OF THE REDEEMER.

"At that infinite blessing the elect angels desire themselves to die, that in the celestial courts the servants should be as their Lord. Earth weeps, to see how her children have closed the gates of heaven against themselves, and that the *two pierced hands* are needed to lead them back to the way from which they have wandered. The sun hides his radiant locks, the solid rocks are rent, the hills fall, heaven and earth tremble, the sea is troubled, even in hell the spirits weep and feel their chains more galling! Man does not weep, and yet he is born weeping!"

SONNET CVIII.

TO SAINT IGNATIUS.

"Se 'l nome sol di Cristo in cor dipinto
Basta a far forte, e pien d'alto valore

Un fedel servo al ch' ogni vigore
Ha sempre in guerra di vittorie cinto ;

“ Quanto più arditamente Ignazio spinto
Fu al tormento, alle bestie, ed al dolore,
Avendol sculto in lettere d'oro al core
Secura allor di più non esser vinto ?

“ Che nè foco, nè venti, nè saetta
Poteano entrar fra cotal scudo e lui ;
Sì forte e interna fu la sua difesa.

“ Il mortal velo era in potere altrui :
Ma l'anima invitta già sicura elletta
Stava col suo Gesù d'amore accesa.”

“ If the name alone of Christ written on the heart suffices to make so strong and full of high courage a faithful servant, that he ever has strength girded on in a fight of victories, how much more ardently was Ignatius spurred on to brave all torments, wild beasts, and sufferings, having the name of Christ graven in letters of gold upon his heart ; secure then of never more being vanquished ; so that neither fire, nor storm, nor lightning, could penetrate through such a shield and him, so strong and inward was his defence. The mortal frame was in the power of others, but the unconquered soul, already safely elect, abode with his Jesus, kindled with love divine.”¹

CHRIST IN THE GARDEN.

“ Over His heart He felt cold shudders creep
When in the garden. On His Father's name,
To spare the anguish of His mortal frame,
He called ; then on His followers, lost in sleep,
With looks of love He gazed, and sorrow deep.

¹ St. Ignatius, during the persecution of the Christians in the time of Trajan, was brought to Rome, and suffered death in the Amphitheatre, being torn to pieces by lions, A.D. 107.

For ardent zeal on earth was now grown tame ;
And Heaven alone was heedful of His shame,
And the salvation we thereby do reap.
Therefore, that slothful earth might now awake,
He straight resumed the ardour of His life,
And like to one who high resolve would take,
Went forth again to mingle in the strife :
So from His friends their slumbers might be riven,
And holy death appease offended Heaven."

"W. L."

Vittoria's longer poem, called the "Triumph of Christ," was written in 1532, seven years after her first grief. It relates, like most of her other writings, to the history of her feelings, and contains similar expressions. It speaks of the sorrows of one who has loved, who had run her boat on such rocks ("ver gli scogli la sua barca volga"). She appeals to the Saviour, whose eye beholds her, and who knows what hopes and what fears overpower and support her! She expresses the hope that her mind may be drawn from error and doubt; and she exclaims of Christ, "Sua la vittoria, e nostra è la mercede!" (His is the victory, and ours the mercy!)

SONNET XC.

"Star of our sea, bright and safe, Thou wast adorned on earth from the sun of paradise with a sacred mantle, and Thy pure light was softened by the veil of virginity.

"He who regards this great miracle no longer cares for this vain

world. He disdains the mean and wicked contests of the old times, since Thou hast armed our nature with the invincible, high virtue.

"I behold the Son of God nourishing Himself at the breast of a virgin mother, and now, together, resplendent in their human vestments in heaven; where, contemplating them above, in the beautiful serene, a lively faith can ascend to the beatitude, which is the dear hope of every faithful servant."

These thoughts, it is easy to imagine, filled Vittoria's mind as she gazed upon those immortal pictures of Raffaele, which were just then engrossing the admiration of the Roman society in which she moved.

SONNET CVI.

TO THE VIRGIN.

"Lady, who wast so honoured by Heaven that thy milk nourished the Son of God, how was it that He did not entirely consume thee? Why did He not open thy heart as well as thy breast with His divine mouth? Why did He not release thy soul? Why did not thy virtue and thy sensibility make every part of thee alive with milk, to nourish the High Lord?"

"But the imperfection of humanity puts a limit to our understanding of your orders. It does not suit our erring, weak sight, to conceive of God dying upon earth, or of mortal man living in the heavenly mansions. But our thoughts are too ignorant and vain to know the mode of it."

There is another sonnet (the 87th), written, perhaps, after seeing Correggio's famous picture of "La Notte," which so wonderfully represents the scene of the Nativity, with all the light proceeding from the Infant. As this painting was originally

placed in the church of S. Prosper, in Reggio, a city only a short distance from Ferrara, it is not unlikely that Vittoria had seen it. The thought is best given in the original. The sonnet is addressed to the "*Vergina pura*," and describes her as gazing with trembling and fear on the wondrous Babe :—

" Uomo il videsti e Dio, quando 'i lucenti,
Spirti facean l'albergo umile, adorno
Di chiari luce, e timidi d'intorno
Stavan tremando al grande ufficio tutenti.

" Immortal Dio nascosto in mortal velo,
L'adorasti Signor ; Figlio il nudristi ;
L'amasti Sposo ; e l'onorasti Padre !

Giving in the fewest words the awful dogmas of the Romish Church, to which she might well have added her own expression, "*Ma debili e vani sono a saperne il modo, i pensieri nostri.*" (But our thoughts are weak, and unable to know the method of it.)

The sonnet concludes with a prayer to the Virgin to intercede for herself, and be, indeed, the true Mother !

The 104th sonnet is very similar in ideas to the 90th.

SONNET.

" Ofttimes I flee to God, through ice and mists, for light and heat to melt my frozen nature; and when my soul continues cold and dark, at least her thoughts are ever turned to heaven, and in great silence she listens for that still, small voice, which only the soul can hear, which says, Fear not: Jesus, that wide and deep sea, is come into this world to give rest to all who are heavy laden.

" The waves of this eternal sea are ever sweet and bright to all who, in humble trust, embark upon the great deeps of His goodness."

SONNET XXX.

" Father Eternal in the heavens, if through Thy mercy I am a living branch of that tree of life which embraces the world, and which wills that our virtue shall be within ourselves through faith alone; let not Thy divine eye grieve to behold the shade upon my dead leaves, nor let the soft, eternal spring-time, which ought to give the green juices to it, cease to fill them again.

" Purge me, so that I may for the future imbibe the dews of heaven. Refresh Thou the root with my tears. Thou art truth; bid it to abide with me.

" Come Thou now, so that with happy fruits I may bring forth what is worthy of so precious a tree."

The first strong impression made on Vittoria's mind respecting the new religious ideas must undoubtedly be traced to the Spaniard Valdez, who exercised a most extraordinary influence over the nobility and the learned of Naples. He was not a priest. He was occupied in a civil office of importance. He was a man of expansion of mind, and a clear, unclouded intellect, ever uplifted in the contempla-

tion of truth. He wrote many books, but they have utterly disappeared, so searching and complete was the censorship of the Inquisition.

Vespasiano Colonna, Duke di Palliano, and his wife, Giulia Gonzaga, were favourable to the opinions which Valdez promulgated. He dedicated to her his "Commentary on the Psalms" and his "Epistle to the Romans."

She was esteemed the most beautiful woman in Italy, and she held her court at Fondi, on the coast, not far from Gaeta, on the Neapolitan frontier. Ippolito dei Medici was said to have been in love with her, and he deputed Sebastian del Piombo to take her portrait. It is considered the most marvellous of any portrait he has painted. Her titles were Duchessa di Trajetto and Contessa di Fondi. After her husband's death she remained a widow, and exhibited a pattern of the correctest virtue and piety.

We cannot tell the history of her persecutions, as we have done that of Renée of Ferrara. Even the history of the last four years of Vittoria's life is blotted out. Her Italian biographer only says they were passed in the "odour of sanctity." We may rest assured that she never gave up her opinions, and

that she never ceased to regard all her old friends with affectionate interest. But she had been, no doubt, watched with suspicion by Caraffa and his spies. How dangerous even her friendship was considered is proved by the fact that, twenty years after her death, a noble Florentine was condemned to be burnt in Rome, one of his principal crimes being that he once belonged to the circle of Vittoria Colonna and of Giulia Gonzaga.

The remark of her physician, already quoted (p. 240), "Would that a physician of her mind could be found; otherwise the fairest light in the world, by I know not in how frightful a manner, will be extinguished, and taken from our eyes," certainly alludes to the Inquisition, which was stretching forth its feelers further and further. A slight charge was enough to bring about the destruction of a person; and the Jesuits were forcing their way into every family.

It is hardly possible, in this nineteenth century, to conceive of such a state of society. We cannot imagine, in open day, huge fires before St. Paul's or in Trafalgar Square, to burn forbidden books, crowds rushing to fling them into the flames, and the clergy standing by to see it done. We cannot

picture to ourselves to-day hundreds of the noblest men and women dragged to torture, merely for their opinions. We cannot believe that our good archbishops and our learned clergy could stand in fear of a fiery death; or that our Maurices, Kingsleys, Stanleys, Coquerels, could ever have the chance to know the "grace of martyrdom."

But it was such men as these who, in Italy, had the courage to die at the stake, calling out "Victoria! Victoria!" and many others, who did not die by sharp pangs, were brought early to their death by broken health and broken hearts. Among these last mentioned, we may most assuredly reckon Cardinals Contarini and Pole, and their friend Vittoria Colonna.

CHAPTER XXI.

POEMS AND LETTERS.

VISCONTI, in speaking of the first of her poems which we possess, the letter to her husband after the defeat of Ravenna, says, "It is a most noble and truly heroic epistle, warm with magnanimous affections, without which how incomplete would be the idea of the grandeur of Vittoria's heart and mind; and it is the more wonderful that it should have remained so long unknown to every one, as it was the first of her compositions which she saw in print. It was printed in the year 1536, and the first edition of her Sonnets was not published till 1538. There were four editions of her poems published during her life, in 1538, 1539, 1540, and 1544, 'non però di suo volere mai.' It is the only poem extant which was certainly written during the life of Pescara. We must give the merit of having saved it from the destruction which has swallowed up so

many of this illustrious lady's poems to Fabrizio Luna, who printed it at the end of his "Vocabulary of Tuscan Words," to give a truce to the trouble which he had in copying it so often. I send you," he says, in a letter to Pietro di Salviati, Conte di Luna, "the Epistle of the grand Colonnese, and the Ottave of the wise Gambara. For so many persons, both in and out of Naples, are asking for them, that it keeps me continually occupied with them." "Among the poems lost to us," continues Visconti, "are the sonnet beginning, 'Padre del ciel che nostra mente guidi,' and that written on Pescara being appointed ambassador from Naples to Charles V."

"Vanne lieto mio sol, vanne sicuro,
Con lieto augurio, ovunque il ciel ti guidi."

"Go happy, my beloved, go securely, with cheerful augury, where Heaven guides thee."

The sonnet in which she incited her husband to remain faithful to the Emperor is also lost. Only two lines are extant.

"La viva selce, che percossa rende
Scintellando le fiamme desciate."

"The live coal, which struck, gives out sparkling the desired flames."

This argument was likewise used in the sonnet

beginning, "Cura è la vita, e dopo lei mi pare,"—also lost.

After the battle of Pavia, her husband being wounded, and the Marchese di Civita, so beloved by Pescara, killed by the hand of the French king, Vittoria wrote to her husband a poem, in which she urged the necessity of his selecting a new friend for the sake of Vasto. This poem commences—

"Poichè il Fato, signor, ti discompagna
Di nodo così caro, del qual privo
Sempre l'animo tuo s'affligge e lagna."

"Since Fate, my lord, has removed from you so beloved a friend, for which great loss your soul is afflicted and distressed."

"The rest of this poem is altogether lost; and it proves to us that what we have collected in this edition was not all that she wrote to her husband, and that they frequently consoled themselves in this way during the long separations which they had to endure."¹

There are several poems also missing, written after Pescara's death, and among others the following:—

"Se mai Misero visse in doglia e pena
Avvolto in nero duolo, in nero manto,
Quella son' io che vivo sol di pianto."

¹ Visconti, xxxiv.

"If Misery was ever seen in sorrow and pain, in black grief and black dress, I am that person, living only on tears."

When Vasto was a prisoner in the hands of the French, not being able to send him succour and gifts, she wrote him a sonnet commencing, "*Corra i più erte e superbi colli.*" "All these compositions, on the faith of Filocalo, we must deplore as lost," says Visconti; "and we are told of others which refer to circumstances which we do not find in her other poetry."

There are twenty-five poems in Visconti's edition never before published; of these we have subjoined several; and though the second series of "*The Rimé*" is entitled "*Sacre e Morali*," a great many are written on subjects of domestic interest. There are three addressed to Charles V., one to Paul III. during the wars against the Colonna, and others to Cardinal Bembo.

There are several sonnets in praise of the Virgin, and two to St. Francis; but it is not correct to say, as Trollope affirms, that there are "many sonnets to the Roman Catholic saints." The sonnets to the Saviour always address Him as "*Signor*;" and in those in which she speaks of the Almighty, she uses either the term "*Padre* in

cielo," or "Iddio," which is the highest expression of reverence.

We give one of the poems which Cardinal Bembo addressed to Vittoria, and her sonnet in reply, of which he says, in a letter to Giovio, that it is "grave, gentile, ingenuoso, eccellentemente e pensato e disposto e dettato" (majestic, noble, ingenuous, and admirably imagined, treated, and expressed).

She afterwards composed for him the sonnet, "Spirto gentil dal cui gran nome," but it is not known whether she sent it to him. Bembo, in a letter written from Padua, January 1534, to his friend Macchiavelli at Vicenza, speaking of the poetry of another lady, says, "If that sonnet is hers, as you affirm, and which in truth is so beautiful that it has astonished me, she must be excessively brave; for it appears to me that the Marchesa di Pescara, not only at Naples, but also in your city; I repeat it—the Marchesa di Pescara has now everywhere the first name and position."

SONNET BY PIETRO BEMBO, TO VITTORIA.

"Alta Colonna, e ferma alle tempeste
Del ciel turbato, a cui chiaro onor fanno
Leggiadre membra avvolte in nero panno,
E pensier santi e ragionar celeste ;

"E rime sì soavi e sì conteste
Ch' alla futura età solinghe andranno,
E schermiransi dal millesim' anno ;
Già dolci e liete, ora pietose e meste !

"Quanti vi dier le stelli doni a prova,
Forse estimar si può ; ma lingua o stile
Nel gran pelago lor guado non trova.

"Solo a sprezzar la vita, alma gentile,
Desio di lui, che sparve non vi mova ;
Nè vi sia lo star nosco ingrato e vile."

"Noble Colonna ! firm against the storms of a troubled sky ;
whose form is radiant with bright honour, holy thoughts, and
heaven-born discourse, though clad in mourning weeds ; and whose
verses, so sweet and harmonious—sometimes so soft and joyous,
sometimes so pitiful and sad—will descend alone to distant times,
and be preserved for a thousand years.

"How many gifts the stars have shed upon thee may perhaps be
imagined, but language and style find no path in that great ocean.

"Let not the longing for the departed, most lovely lady, cause
thee to disdain life, and let not thy stay among us be displeasing to
thee or despised."

SONNET LXXII.

TO CARDINAL BEMBO.

"A hi ! quanto fu al mio Sol contrario il fato,
Che con l'alta virtù dei raggi suoi,
Più non v'accese che mill' anni e poi
Voi sareste più chiaro, ei più lodato.

"Il nome suo col vostro stile ornato,
Che dà scorno agli antichi, invidia a noi,
A mal grado del tempo avreste voi
Dal secondo morir sempre guardato.

"Potess' io almen mandar nel vostro petto
L'ardor ch' io sento, e voi nel mio l'ingegno
Per far la rima a quel gran merto eguale.

"Che così temo 'l ciel non prenda a sdegno
Voi, perchè preso avete altro soggetto ;
Me, ch' ardisco parlar d'un lume tale."

"Ah! how much was fate against my Pescara, that you were not at first enlightened with his exalted merit; you, who would have praised his name, and made it glorious for a thousand years and more!

"Your admirable style, which shames the ancients and makes us envious, would have for ever preserved him, in spite of time, from the second death.

"Could I at least inspire in your breast the admiration that I feel for him, or could you instil your poetical talents into mine, what a grand exchange it would be!

"But I fear Heaven would disdain it for you, because you have taken another subject, and I have dared myself to speak of such a star."

SONNET XXXI.

"A che sempre chiamar la sorda morte
E far pietoso il ciel col pianger mio,
Se troncar l'ali io stessa al gran desio
Posso, e sgombrare il duol dal petto forte?

"Meglio assai fora che alle chiuse porte
Chieder mercede, aprirne una all' oblio,
Chiuder l'altra al pensier: così poss' io
Vincer me insieme e la nimica sorte.

"Gli schermi tutti, e quante vie discopre
L' anima, per uscir dal carcer cieco
Di sì grave dolor, tentato ho in vano.

"Riman solo a provar, se vive meco
Tanta ragion, ch' io volga questo insano
Desir fuor di speranza a miglior opre."

"Why call for ever on unheeding death, and make Heaven pitiful with my weeping, if I can myself cut off the wings of my great longing, and drive out the grief from my strong heart?

"Better would it be than begging for mercy at the closed doors (of death), to open one to forgetfulness, and to close the other to thought. I may thus conquer myself and my hostile fate.

"I have tried in vain all weapons, and every way that the mind can discover, to escape from the dark prison of this great grief. It only remains for me to prove whether there be still within me sufficient power to turn this insane desire, out of all hope, to worthier deeds."

The 22nd sonnet speaks of her grief at being childless.

"When death untied the dear knot which was tied by Heaven, Nature, and Love, it took from me the light of my eyes and the food of my heart, but bound my soul in a closer union.

"This is the tie which I value and praise, and which draws me from every mundane error, and holds me in the path of honour, to which I rejoice to limit my desires.

"If our bodies were sterile, our souls were fruitful, and his name was made brilliant by his valour, which also will be the light around my name.

"If Heaven has denied other blessings, to me and if my best blessing was taken from me by death, still I live with him ; and that is as much as I desire."

The 133rd sonnet seems to refer also to children, especially to her brother's family.

"I see the sky overcast with dark clouds that fill all the air, and that foretell storm, and thunder, and lightning, to warm and soften the hard, frozen earth. The great God perhaps desires to burn up with fire all sterile and imperfect plants, so that the beautiful garden may afterwards be joyous and secure. I pray that all the little swelling buds, from the roots, may come forth green and with perfect leaves, and rich, and with true glory for the poor plants ; and that they may be always happy, watered with holy dew, and for ever renewed with flowers and fruit."

TO HER FATHER.

"I pray the Father Divine, who has poured so much of His flame and fire into thy heart, O our earthly father! that not the least particle may remain of human anger in thee, and that all unworthy love of poor human glory may flee from thee, as quickly as the poor defenceless deer flees from a fierce lion.

"And when that day dawns upon thy soul, we shall behold thee coming with the joyful multitude to the holy place, warm with the beams of the grand light which God hath lighted upon earth.

"Thus will the sacred nets be filled, and with the sceptre of peace the world will be ruled, and not by arms in war."

This sonnet, though placed by Visconti and Rota in the second series, must have been one of the first Vittoria composed, as it was written before Fabrizio died, in 1520.

The 41st sonnet, on Music, is music itself. It is difficult to translate the beautifully chosen words, and impossible to convey in English the elegance of the original.

"Se il breve suon, che sol quest' aer frale
Circonda e move, e l' aura che raccoglie
Lo spirto dentro, e poi l' apre e discioglie
Soavemente in voce egra e mortale ;

"Con tal dolcezza il cor sovente assale,
Che d' ogni cura vil s' erge e ritoglie,
Sprona, accende il pensier, drizza le voglie,
Per gir volando al ciel con leggiere ale ;

"Che fia, quand' udirà con vivo zelo
La celeste armonia l' anima pura,
Sol con l' orecchia interna intenta al vero,



"Dinanzi al suo fattor nel sommo cielo,
U' non si perde mai tuono o misura,
Nè si discorda il bel contento altero?"

"If the fleeting sounds which only the soft air moves and circulates, and the breath which the spirit gathers up within, and which it then pours forth so sweetly by the imperfect human voice, and often with such gentleness assails the heart, that it raises and frees itself from every low care, enkindles the thoughts, and directs the efforts of the will to rise, flying to heaven on light wings—how will it be when the purified soul shall hear with vivid delight the celestial choirs, with only the inward ear intent on truth, in the presence of her Maker, in the highest heaven, where the tone and measure can never be lost, and no discord mar the beautiful and sublime harmony?"

SONNET LXIII.

TO CHARLES V.

"Sento per gran timor con alto grido
Al venir d' un' eccelsa aguila altera,
Fuggir tutti gli augelli in varia schiera,
Nè ben fidarsi ancor nel propria nido.

"Ella sicura, col soccorso fido
De' cieli e della sua virtù sincera,
Con nuovo onor, con maggior gloria spera,
Volar superba in ogni estremo lido.

"Ma il mio bel Sol, che per aprir il volo
Tante nubi scacciò col suo gran lume,
Gode nell' opre delle sue fatiche.

"E prega il ciel, che stenda in ciascun polo
L'ali, e che tanto abbia le stelle amiche,
Ch' alzando il vol rinforzi ognor le piume."

"I hear with what loud cries all the birds take flight in alarmed flocks, through fear at the approach of the noble, magnificent eagle,¹ not even trusting themselves to their own nests.

¹ The imperial eagle of the Holy Germanic empire.

"Thou, secure in the favour of Heaven and thine own valour, hopest to fly proudly to every remote coast, with new honours and added glory.

"And my Pescara (mio Sol), who made a way for thy flight, and scattered so many clouds by his powerful light, rejoices in heaven over thy great efforts ; and he prays God that you may spread to each pole your wings, and that your friendly stars may enable you to raise your flight and renew your strength."

Sonnet 197. "Recorda le virtù del suo fratello Federico Colonna, e quanto accetto fosse al celebre Reginaldo Polo" (Visconti).

The Italian writers of this period were fond of introducing a double meaning into their poetry ; and this sonnet refers not only to the Pole Star, but to Cardinal Pole, and seems to be intended as a comparison highly complimentary to Vittoria's noble friend.

TO FEDERICO.

"No longer is thy high soul wrapped up in the shadows of earth, but, by the mercy of God, is winging its way with the shining hosts, and taken for ever from our sight.

"Already unloosed from the knot of life by the celestial Hand, oh, immortal Federico ! the divine Pole Star (Pole), which is high and alone above the stars, has turned his approving looks upon thee among thy beloved stars, whither the example of the Lord hath guided thee ; in whose light ye both shine so resplendently, that it burns and irradiates in your well-born and noble spirits in a manner most uncommon, and perhaps unequalled."

SONNET LV.

"Torna a sperare il conquisto di Terra Santa."

"Now the joyful hope is revived, which was become in me so

dry and abandoned, that I may behold the Holy Land, so wickedly taken from us, which the Sacred Sepulchre adorns and presses.

"I hear that now the brave warriors fear neither danger nor death ; and also that there are so many, hitherto ashamed, bold for our faith ; and that their blood is the fertile seed which raises up many others to call with loud voices on the true Lord, hitherto unknown ; and who, to our disgrace, will cause the sign of the honoured Cross to be displayed to the world with greater glory."

SONNET V.

ON THE DEATH OF CONTARINI.

(Inedited till 1840.)

"The little lovely flower rises with green hope, but in how short a time envious death cuts it off, and causes tears in our eyes and sorrows in our hearts.

"May the graces and profound virtues of that noble soul, escaping earth-born cares, now take wing to a safer shore, conquering the dark and angry waves (of death), to restore to Tiber all his ancient glory, and to bring about for his great country, adorned with triumphs, that so much sighed for day, when, the reward being made equal to the work, the sacred mantle of St. Peter shall cover all around, and our age be blessed."

SONNET VI.

ON THE DEATH OF POMPEO COLONNA.

(Inedited till 1840.)

"How many lights that made this dark world so pure and brilliant hath greedily, avaricious, wicked death extinguished, so that our most valued treasures are the most quickly taken.

"And now he hath taken the good Pompeo among those blessed spirits in the high and rare joys of heaven, hitherto hid from sight, for whom is prepared a heart disenthralled from mundane cares. The others who adorn the living Column (Colonna), to show still how much honour can be hoped for in difficult undertakings, these, with the soul always alive to good, conquer the world and themselves : to whom ought to be given the custody of the Holy Keys."

SONNET CXXXIX.

"Batte la mia Colonna entro e d'interno."

"When the States of the Church with armed hand attack my Colonna (pillar) within and without, I behold with the inward eye, thank God, the pillar of fire by night, and the cloud by day, by which I am led to where I see, in part at least, the glorious and high heaven; so that I am turned from those natural affections which are in my heart, and am very often called back from the things of this life, to experience for a long, quiet, holy time, how dear is that which I then discern and feel.

"I know not whether it is my own soul by its beautiful dreams, or perhaps by the gift of my Saviour, but all those things which formerly were cold and dark to me are now warm and light with an unwonted power."

Sonnet addressed to the Pope, Paul III., whilst he was at war against the Colonnas.

SONNET CXL.

"I behold amongst the armed squadrons only the large camps of my people relighted; I hear their songs changed to war-cries; and the sweet smiles with which I was wont to salute the Ancient Mother are turned to tears.

"Oh, Pastor wise and holy, now prove thy forgiving nature, and show thyself in high and graceful deeds!

"These are your sons of old, who by long years of good deeds have made themselves beloved.

"Our ancestors were born under one sky; they had one mother; they were brought up together under the sweet shelter of one only city."

SONNET CXCV.

"Soul, the Lord cometh! therefore drive away the fogs that are around thy heart, so that the shadow of the terrestrial love may not overcast the glorious light.

"And because our human frailty often so dims the sight that we cannot behold the dazzling effulgence, He will remove from thee the imperfection which conceals such blessedness from thine eyes.

"Come thou willingly, and experience the feast and joy and His true delights, when we are made partakers of His exalted treasures, and when we, putting this dark world behind us, and being born again in God, are honoured and loved by Him."

LETTERS.

Very few of Vittoria's letters have been accessible to us, though her correspondence was so large. The few which are here added are interesting chiefly as throwing some additional light on her character. The noble dignity of the Patrician lady is shown, as well as the affection of the woman, and the earnestness of the Christian. When Aretino artfully endeavours to excuse her a small debt which she says was incurred by other people's faults, she declines to be indebted to him, with a cold and stately politeness, and yet without offence.

The three letters to the Duchessa d'Amalfi are chiefly religious discourses relating to the death of a beloved relation, apparently the daughter of the Duchessa. Costanza d'Avalos was Vasto's sister, and is included among the celebrated "*Rimatrici*" of the

sixteenth century by Mr. Roscoe, in his "Life of Leo X."¹ The D'Avalos family were remarkable for their literary tastes. The talents of the Princessa di Francavilla have already been spoken of. Visconti says, "Era antica nella famiglia degli Avalos questa bella lodi ch' esso sapessero trattar le muse, anehe in mezzo alle armi."

The first letter from Vittoria to Costanza was written probably from the Convent of S. Caterina, at Viterbo, but it is not dated. She calls her "Sorella amantissima," and says that she desires to speak to her of those two glorious women, "our most faithfully wise Maddalena, and Caterina, whose death, and now happy life, is celebrated this day." She then quotes the texts, "Qui voluerit inter nos major fieri, sit vester minister; et qui voluerit inter nos primus esse, erit vester servus," and "In domo Patris mei mansiones multæ sunt;" and remarks that, trusting to their humble and loving service, both old and renewed, she is emboldened to consider for a moment the grades and graces that the Saviour hath bestowed

¹ He says of her, "The Duchessa d'Amalfi wrote with grace, elegance, and purity, and her writings are rich with the profoundest sentiments of Christian piety."—*Leo X.*, vol. iv. p. 224.

upon them in heaven. "Let us supplicate Him to judge them truly, and to grant to us the joy of beholding our ferventissima Maddalena at the feet of her Saviour. 'Dilexit multo.'"

In the next letter she continues her religious discourse, and again refers to "la ferventissima serva, mia Maddalena;" and she exhorts Costanza to remember how merciful are "nostra Maria Regina, and l'Altissimo Verbo," and how blessed it is to be united to the spirits in Paradise, and to be raised into the high eternal light of God, to which, by His goodness, we are conducted.

In the third letter she says, "'Sorella dolcissima,' I hear that my letters, so simply expressed, have not given you sufficient consolation. I did not aim at ornament or elegance of style, not to hinder your taste; and I felt safe with your prudence from the evil tongues of malignant persons. But I said only what our Church is accustomed sweetly to teach me." (*Essendo co voi sicura di calonna, ed ogni iniquo di maligna intènto. Ma dico quel che soavemente ne l'usata nostra chiesa mi rappresenti.*)¹

¹ The letters to Sister Serafina, those to the Duchessa d'Amalfi, and to the Queen of Navarre, and her reply, are in Pino's Collection, "Racolte di Lettere."

Margherita di Navara was born in 1492, and was two years younger than Vittoria. She married, at seventeen, the Duke d'Alençon, and afterwards, for her second husband, the King of Navarre. She was active in assisting him to amend the condition of his small kingdom. She composed pieces from Scripture history, to be acted by her Court, from a rude French translation of the Bible. When she adopted the Lutheran opinions, she gave protection in her Court to several divines, and published a book, in 1533, which was condemned by the Sorbonne, because it contained no mention of the saints or of purgatory. Like Renée, she suffered from her husband's severity in consequence of her opinions, and would have suffered still more, if her brother, Francis I., had not authoritatively interposed. She had to conceal her opinions with great care.

LETTER TO THE QUEEN OF NAVARRE.

"SERENISSIMA REGINA,—The noble and religious expressions in your Majesty's most kind letter ought to have taught me a sacred silence, which, in place of praise, we offer to things divine. But, fearing that my reverence might be esteemed ingratitude, I make bold, not indeed to reply to it, but not to prove myself altogether silent, and only to add weight to your Majesty's prophecy, in which you have been pleased to calculate the future of my troubled life, in such a manner that God might grant me the privilege of conversing with you *viva voce*, as your Majesty has deigned to give

me hope ; and if the infinite mercy will grant it me, it will be in accordance with my intense desire.

“ At this time we especially need, in life's long and difficult way, some guide who will show us the road, with doctrine and with works, so that we should be incited to overcome difficulty ; and it appears to me that examples in our own sex would be to each one the most suitable to follow ; and I have turned to the celebrated women of Italy, to learn of them and to imitate them. But though I do not see many among them virtuous, I do not judge them. They should all be models, if I might have the ordering of things. But there is one out of Italy, in whom is united a perfect will and a perfect intellect ; but she is placed in so high a rank, and is so removed from me, that I am as much filled with distress and fear as were the Hebrews when they saw the fire and the glory of God on the Sacred Mount, and did not dare to place their foot on it, but silently prayed the Lord to deign to draw near to them by human speech. And as in their great need the Lord drew water from the rock, and fed them with heavenly manna, so your Majesty has been pleased to console me with your most delightful letter.

“ If to this favour be added the far-off hope that I may behold your Majesty, I am sure that it only agrees with my desire.

“ Certainly the road would not be difficult to me, in order to enlighten my mind and to pacify my conscience ; and I think it would not be disagreeable to your Majesty to have presented to her a subject on which she could exercise her two most rare virtues—that of humility, because she will abase herself to teach me ; and charity, because she will find a resistance in me to know how to accept her kindness. But as it is usual to find that those children who give the most trouble are the most beloved, I hope that your Majesty will have the greatest pleasure in finding me thus difficult in receiving my new birth and my new nature. I should not know how to imagine myself placed before your Majesty in such a capacity, if it were not that your most noble nature has been pleased to call me to you ; and though at a distance, I may fancy myself in your presence.

“ But at least I may, in the desert of our misery, like John the Baptist, notify your Majesty's coming to all Italy.

“ I will speak of it to Renée di Ferrara, whose good judgment is

shown in everything, and to the Rev. Polo, whose conversation is always in heaven, and who cares only for earth so far as he can be useful to others; and I will speak of it to Rev. Bembo, always labouring in the vineyard of the Lord, and also to many others, whom I have not time to enumerate. All my writing begins and ends with my honoured subject, to gain a little of that glory which I behold round your Majesty, and honour so highly, which the noble Margherita worthily displays every day, and knows so well how to impart; treasures that, whilst she amasses them for herself, make the wealth of all others. 'Bacio la sua real mano e nella sua desideratissima gratia, humilmente mi raccomando.'

"Di V. M. obligatissima Serva,

"LA MARCHESA DI PESCARA."

FROM THE QUEEN OF NAVARRE.

"ALLA ILLUSTRISSIMA MARCHESA DI PESCARA,—Your letter, my cousin, has caused me much pleasure, seeing your so much desired affection expressed in it so vividly, that this pleasure has caused me to forget the pain which I ought to have felt at receiving the praise which your kind opinion has expressed towards me. But you, who think others are like yourself, and if they are not, that you know men should say pleasant things to princes, and not show to them their own defects, have exercised I cannot tell how much charity towards me; but this ignorance is changed into the certain assurance of affection which you feel towards me, when you show me the difference that there is between the glory and titles of this world, and all external things, and the adornment within the soul of a daughter and true spouse of the great and only King.

"It appears to me, my cousin, in order that I may find this rock of humility, which is the only true foundation, you cannot take a better way than to tell me what I am, when from the fashion of this world, which regards the nobility and outward appearance, and which you esteem, you turn to what I am 'within.' And I confess to you that, beyond the externals that God has granted to me—He having caused me to be born to this estate—my demerits ought to make me marvellously afraid. And in the said 'within' I feel myself so different from your good opinion of me, that I should not

wish to have read your letters, if I had not the hope that they will be a help to me to rise from the position I am in, to run as you may teach me.

"But as you are so much before me in the race, and looking at the distance that there is between you and me, I lose all hope in my work. But I would not lose faith, which hopes even against hope, for victory. For which may God have glory in our prayers, and not ourselves the merit.

"To this end it is necessary to continue your teachings and your frequent valuable writings, which I pray you not to cease sending. It is a friendship which fame began, and which has much increased by our mutual letters. I more than ever desire to receive them, and am, still more, so venturesome as to hope that in this world I may hear you converse of another world ; and if I may know that I can do you a service, I beg of you, my cousin, to treat me as a sister, for in good faith it would please me as much in this world, as in the other, to see you eternally.

"Your good Cousin and true Friend,

"M. MARGHERITA, REGINA DI NAVARA."

AL MOLTO REVERENDO SIGNOR IL SIGNOR ARCENESCONO
CORNAIO.

"VERY REVEREND SIR,—It would be unnatural in you not to feel such a loss, and it is right also to thank God, who has willed that S. S. Reverendissimo, by a holy death, should have given testimony of so good a life, showing clearly that his heart was with Christ, so that in manners and acts there was nothing to the prejudice of his neighbour. To the last he truly acted in this manner, and he proved that it was not merely his mild and kind nature, but his most constant and pure faith which sustained him in his great need.

"You need not mourn, for he had the offices of a most loving brother, a faithful servant, and an excellent friend ; and during the few hours he was ever left alone his patience and peace set an example to all the world.

"I thank God you did not chance to send back what he needed of my offerings. I felt obliged to send them ; and I beg you to let me serve you also, as a true sister, now and ever. May you be comforted in our common consolation, our true life, in every kind of sorrow or death.

"Believe me, I should have brought them myself, if I had not feared to be troublesome in the midst of an affliction which I would have mitigated with my heart's blood, if I could.

"I recommend you to Christ with all my spirit.

"Al commando di V. S. molto Reverendo,

"LA MARCHESA DI PESCARA."

ARETINO.

This name might have been consigned to the ignominy it deserves, nor would it have occurred in these pages, if he had not had the audacity to attempt an acquaintance with this illustrious lady by sending her books, and writing several letters to her. It appears also that he was acquainted with her adopted son, the Marchese del Vasto. It is perfectly evident from the style of her replies, which we subjoin, that she politely withdrew from any obligation to him.

He was of ignoble birth, and he raised a name far above any claim to genius which he might boast, by means sufficiently scandalous. "His life may be

denominated the triumph of effrontery,"¹ and he has been compared to "a poisonous toad in an unapproachable swamp."

He lived in Venice, whence his evil productions were circulated over the world. His daring and virulent satires were feared by every one. Emperors, princes, and ecclesiastics, purchased exemption from his ridicule and scurrility by bribes and presents. He began with attacking the clergy, and proceeded to sovereigns, princes, artists. No one was safe from his pen. He grew rich with exacting money and gifts by threatening letters; and whilst he was publishing the coarsest and most licentious poems, he was also writing penitential hymns and the lives of saints. He styled himself "the Scourge of Princes." He published a medal of himself, with the inscription "Divine Aretino;" and on the reverse he appeared seated on a throne, with kings kneeling before him. For many years he had been annoying Michael Angelo with letters of advice, and with requests for some of his works. He began with flattery. "There are kings enough in the world," he said, "but only one Michael Angelo."

¹ Roscoe's "Life of Leo X." vol. iv. p. 110, where a full account of Aretino may be found.

This producing neither reply nor presents, he proceeded to villify him, and avenge himself upon "the solitary old man;" and great as Michael Angelo was, the venom of Aretino clung to him to the last.¹

AL MAGNIFICO MESSER PIETRO ARETINO.

"I thank you for the great courtesy that you have shown me in sending me so beautiful and valuable a work, and also for your liberality in presenting me with the balance of thirty scudi, for which, as well as those paid over, I became a debtor through other people's fault. I do accept them as a gift from you, but I beg you, when I remit them to you, which will be as soon as I have reached Rome, that you will be pleased to give them in my name, but on your account, to some poor person.

"Thus my word and your offer will both come into effect. And may the infinite riches of God bestow upon you a spirit so poor that it may feel there is no other treasure than to become rich in Him.

"I stayed some time at Lucca, but not at Pisa, as your letter states. I passed from there; and not being able to go to Jerusalem, I remained here consoled: but I am compelled to return to Rome by his Holiness, instigated thereto by your friend and mine, the Marchese del Vasto, as it seems to him that his Holiness is offended by my Christian humility.

"Ferrara, Sept. 25, 1537."

AL SIGNOR PIETRO ARETINO.

"MOLTO MAGNIFICO SIGNOR,—I know not whether I ought to praise or censure you for the book you sent me: to praise you for the style, because you truly deserve it; or to censure you, because you employ your great talents on other subjects than those of

¹ Grimm, p. 310. .

religion, thus proving yourself less grateful to God and less useful to the world.

"The messenger by whom you sent the book has never returned ; but as I expected him, I deferred replying to you.

"I have written urgently to the Marchese del Vasto about your affair ; but since you are content to let me off with thirty scudi for that matter about which I wrote to you, I send you now thirty, which I have, in writing, requested M. S. Bonaventura to hand to you. I have not here, in fact, as much as I require to continue my journey into the neighbourhood of Bologna, where I am going to a certain locality for its air, this place being most injurious to me. I will send you the remainder as soon as I am able.

"May the Lord God inspire you to speak and to think of Him. I have no time to reply to that youth belonging to you who sent me the book. Pray excuse me.

"LA MARCHESA DI PESCARA.

"Ferrara, Nov. 6, 1537."

APPENDIX.

LIST OF VARIOUS EDITIONS OF VITTORIA COLONNA'S WORKS.

1538. *Rimè della divina Vittoria Colonna, Marchesa di Pescara.*
Parma.
1539. *Rimè della divina Vittoria Colonna, Marchesa di Pescara,*
newly printed, added to, and corrected. No date of
publication.
1540. *Rimè della divina Vittoria Colonna, Marchesa di Pescara.*
In Venezia.
1544. *Rimè della divina Vittoria Colonna, with twenty-four new*
sonnets. In Venezia.
1548. *Le Rimè Spirituali di Vittoria Colonna, not before*
printed. In Venezia.
1548. *Rimè Spirituali di Vittoria Colonna.* In Venezia.
1552. *Rimè Spirituali di Vittoria Colonna.* In Venezia.
1558. *Tutte le Rimè della Illma. ed Eccellma. Vittoria Colonna,*
with the Exposition of Signor Rinaldo Corso. In
Venezia.
1559. *Tutte le Rimè della Illma. ed Eccellma. Vittoria Colonna,*
with additional *Rimè Spirituali.* In Venezia.
1586. *Tutte le Rimè della Illma. ed Eccellma. Vittoria Colonna.*
In Verona.
1692. *Tutte le Rimè della Illma. ed Eccellma. Vittoria Colonna.*
In Napoli.
1693. *Tutte le Rimè della Illma. ed Eccellma. Vittoria Colonna,*
with other Poems, now given to the light. In Napoli.
1760. *Tutte le Rimè della Illma. ed Eccellma. Vittoria Colonna ;*
with a Life of the same, by G. Rota. In Bergamo.

The last and most complete edition of Vittoria Colonna's works is that of Cavaliere Pietro Ercole Visconti, "corrette su i testi a penna, e publicate con la Vita della medesima (corrected from the original manuscripts, and published with the Life of the same). Roma, dalla typografia Salviucci, 1840."

To which are added the poems omitted in preceding editions, and inedited. There are here given 117 sonnets, in the Parte Prima; 6 canzone, or shorter poems than the sonnets; the Epistola a F. F. d'Avalos, suo consorte nella Rotta di Ravenna; 15 sonnets before unpublished; and a madrigal.

Parte Seconda, "Rimè Sacre e Morali," contains 208 sonnets; Capitolo del Trionfo di Cristo, of 48 stanzas (terza rimè); and 11 sonnets hitherto unpublished.

The volume also contains complimentary poems, by various authors, addressed to Vittoria Colonna, including Bembo, B. Tasso, Michael Angelo, and Veronica Gambara.

In the second series of the sonnets, termed Rimè Spirituali, there are many written on other subjects.

The 12th and 62nd are addressed to Charles V.; 69th and 61st, to Pietro Bembo; 79th, to Veronica Gambara; 1st, ditto (unpublished); 98th, to Pompeo Colonna; 13th, to her sister-in-law (unpublished); 6th, why she resided in Ischia (unpublished); 86th, why she does not praise her father; 92nd, to Giovanna d'Arragona, her sister-in-law; 97th and 100th, to Ischia; 8th, praises Pescara and Vasto; 75th, on the return of Pescara to Ischia; 85th, death of Sanazzaro; 45th, on Pescara's death; 13th, to her sister-in-law; 37th, to Molza; 190th, to Gaspar Contarini; 126th and 127th, to St. Francis; 110th, 111th, and 103rd, to the Virgin; 10th, the death of Pescara prevented her having seen her husband attacking the infidels to liberate the Holy Places; 55th, she turns to hope for the conquest of the Holy Land; 140th, to Paul III. whilst he was fighting against the Colonnas; 115th, remembering the birthday of her mother already dead, and hoping to find herself in heaven with her.

It is said in praise of Vittoria Colonna, that in all her poetry

there is not a thought or word which is not "onetissima" (perfectly correct). Toscano especially takes occasion to praise her for this great merit, and to disprove, in consequence, the evil remarks which her enemies had made against her. In the "Life of Reginald Pole" (Latine edita Brixia, in ii. volumina, epistolarum ejusdem Cardinalis, in 4to) we read :—"Victoria Columna, Marchionis Piscariæ conjux ejus qui ob rerum gestarum magnitudinem bellica gloria maxime floruit, magni ingenii et summæ pietatis femina, plurimi eum faciebat."

Sadolet, in a letter to Pole, says of her : "Legi sanctissimæ et prudentissimæ feminae Piscariæ dominæ ad te litteras, in quibus illa mei mentionem facit, videturque nostram hic stationem approbare ; quod ego incredibiliter gaudeo, mea consilia tantæ esse et virtuti et sapientiæ adprobata."

Flaminio composed two odes upon her death, in which the following passage occurs :—

"Cui mens candida, candidique mores,
Virtus vivida, comitasque sancta,
Celeste ingenium, eruditioque
Rara, nectare dulciora verba,
Summa nobilitas, decora vultus
Majestas, opulenta, sed bonorum
Et res et domus usque aperta ad usus.
Illa carminibus suis poetas,
Quotquot sæcula multa protulerunt,
Longe vicerat."

Giammatteo Toscano thus praises her, after praising Saffo and Corinna :—

"Huic ego te obijciam faustum Victoria nomen :
Quæ non prisca tuis laudem muliebria plectris,
Plectra silere jubes, Romanaque Græcaque Tuscis ;
Sed (tua quæ virtus propria est) lascivia versus
Commaculat dum nulla tuos. . . .
Tantum sola decus casto fert carmine, quantum
Dedecus obscene Sapphoque Corinnaque versu."

Ariosto, in the 37th canto of "*Orlando Furioso*," thus alludes to her, when speaking of celebrated women :—

VERSE XV.

"Did I wish to describe these ladies, more than one folio would be required, and my song would relate to nothing else. Were I to choose five or six from among them to praise, I might offend all the others. What shall I then do? Be silent about all, or choose one from among them?

XVI.

"I will choose one who shall so far overcome envy, that no one shall be able to blame me that I am silent about the others and praise her alone. She has not only made herself immortal by her beautiful style, than which I have heard none better, but she can raise from the tomb any one of whom she either speaks or writes, and make them live for ever.

XVII.

"As the fair sister of Phœbus induces more to admire her and be adorned by her light than Venus or than Maia, or any other star that revolves with the heavens, or revolves on itself; so she of whom I speak has more eloquence, and breathes more sweetness, than all other women, and gives such force to her lofty words, that she adorns the heavens in our day with another sun.

XVIII.

"Vittoria is her name : a name well befitting one who was born amidst victories, and who, whether she goes or stays, is ever attended by trophies and triumphs, and has victory before her, behind her, and with her. She is another Artemisia, who was praised for her piety to her Mausolus; yet greater still, since it is a nobler work to raise a man above the grave than to bury him.

XIX.

"If Laodamia, if the wife of Brutus, if Arria, Argia, Evadne, and many others deserved praise for having wished when their husbands died to be buried with them, so much more honour is due to Vittoria,

who hath drawn her husband from Lethe, and from that river which nine times encircles the Shades, in spite of the Fates and of Death.

XX.

"If the Macedonian envied the brave Achilles the Mæonian trumpet, how much more would have he envied thee, invincible Francesco di Pescara, that so chaste a wife, and one so dear to thee, should sing the honour which is thy due, and that through her thy name resounds, so that thou needest not to wish for more noble *peans*."

RAFFAELLE AND THE COLONNAS.

When Vittoria visited Rome with her father, in August 1520, the whole world was mourning the early death of Raffaele. It is probable that she had known him personally, for, like Leonardo da Vinci, he associated with the first families in Rome. Vasari says that Raffaele did not live as pittore, but as principe; and it was his custom, when going to court at the Vatican, to be attended by a numerous retinue of his pupils. Michael Angelo exclaimed, "There you go like a provost!" and Raffaele replied, "And you like an executioner!"

If Vittoria did not sit to the great painter herself, her sister-in-law, "the famous beauty," certainly did, and the portrait was intended as a present from Bibbiena to Francis I. Raffaele also painted for Cardinal Colonna his celebrated picture of "St. John the Baptist in the Leopard Skin."

Vittoria had the privilege of seeing all Raffaele's frescoes and paintings in their fresh beauty—the "S. Cecilia," "Galatea," "Madonna del Sedia," and the frescoes in the Vatican and Borghese Palace, but especially his immortal picture of "The Transfiguration," which was left unfinished. It is said that he never touched his brush again after painting the head of Christ, "in which he has reached the most sublime height of which art is capable."¹

¹ Lanzi's "History of Painting."

When Raffaello was engaged as architect of St. Peter's, he had occasion to observe the terrible destruction which was going on among the ancient buildings of Rome, and he entreated the Pope to prevent the havoc. A Papal brief was issued in 1515, forbidding the taking of any stone from the ruins, on pain of heavy fines; and thus many monuments of ancient art were saved.

The statues which now form the chief attraction of the Italian galleries were all disinterred about this time. The group of Laocoon was discovered in 1504. These statues and relics were doubtless of great interest to Vittoria and her classical friends, and possibly it was in contemplating them that she made the celebrated remark, "O loro beati, che furono a tempi sì belli!"

THE SACK OF ROME IN 1527.

A book has just been published at Florence, entitled "*Il Sacco di Roma del 1527, per Carlo Milanese. Firenze, 1867.*"

It purports to be two original documents, now printed for the first time, giving the history of this terrible outrage by two eye-witnesses.

One is a letter from Cardinal di Como, dated 24th of May, 1527, at Civita Vecchia, where he found an asylum from the plundering soldiers. The other is a detailed report of the events to Charles V. from a Spanish officer named Gattinara, brother of one of the Emperor's ministers.

They describe the assault as commencing from the heights behind St. Peter's. A dense fog, enveloping everything in an impenetrable veil, favoured Bourbon's designs. Both the Cardinal and the Spanish officer's statement testify to the vast destruction of property and the wholesale outrages perpetrated. The value of property taken was estimated at eight millions of ducats, says the Cardinal, whose palace was rifled.

One hundred and fifty thousand ducats were wrung from four prelates who had remained in their palaces. Cardinal

Colonna was stripped of everything, so that literally he owned only the shirt on his back, as Gattinara reports to Charles V. ; and he also states that "the Imperialist soldiers had turned the church of St. Peter's and the Pope's palace from bottom to top into stables." It must be borne in mind that in the Vatican, at least to the first floor, an inclined plane exists in the place of a staircase. It is a current tradition that it was the Lutheran Free Lancers, headed by Fründsberg, who were the chief devastators ; but this is denied by Cardinal di Como and the historian Guicciardini, who both distinctly state that the Germans were more kind, less money-thirsty, than the Spaniards, treated their prisoners with less cruelty, and saved the women from the brutal attacks of their Spanish comrades.¹

PETRARCH AND THE COLONNAS.

Francesco Petrarca lived almost two hundred years before Vittoria Colonna ; but as he was intimately connected with the Colonna family, and as she has been called a second Petrarch, his name deserves some notice in these pages. He was born at Arezzo, in Tuscany, in 1304, his parents having been exiled from Florence in 1302, when Dante also was banished from that city.

Petrarch resided chiefly at Avignon, where he became intimate with Jacopo Colonna, son of Stefano, who had retired into France after the famous quarrel, already noticed, with Pope Boniface VIII. This friendship was the foundation of the attachment which Petrarch preserved during his whole life for the house of Colonna. Jacopo, when he was made Bishop of Lombes, took Petrarch to his new diocese, where they passed the summer, returning afterwards to Avignon. Here the prelate introduced Petrarch to Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, who became one of his great patrons, and in his palace he enjoyed the society

¹ *Spectator* newspaper, Dec. 1867.

of most of the learned men of the age. In 1336 he visited Rome, and interested himself especially in the preservation of manuscripts, which had suffered so much from the negligence and ignorance of the monks.

In August 1340 he received a letter from the Roman Senate, urging him to come "and take the laurel" in their city. A few hours afterwards he was complimented by a similar invitation from Paris. He wavered for a time which to accept, but the advice of Cardinal Colonna determined him for Rome. He was crowned in the Capitol on Easter Day, 1341, surrounded by a numerous assemblage of rank and distinction, and amid the applause of the whole Roman people. The great pestilence of 1348 carried off Petrarch's great patron, Cardinal Colonna, as well as the celebrated Laura, whom Petrarch had so passionately worshipped for twenty-one years. He survived her twenty-six years, and died in 1374, aged seventy.

"Among Italian writers who have revived in their works the style of Petrarch, Vittoria Colonna is entitled to the first rank ; and her sonnets, many of which relate to the state of her own mind, possess more vigour of thought, vivacity of colouring, and natural pathos, than are generally found among the disciples of that school. Of the poems of Vittoria four editions were printed in her life-time. They were first collected by Filippo Pirogallo, and published, without her knowledge, at Parma in 1538 ; reprinted, without note of place or printer, in 1539 ; and again at Florence, in the same year, with the addition of sixteen spiritual sonnets. The fourth edition is that of Venice, 1554, with the addition of twenty-four of her sacred sonnets, and her celebrated stanze, which is perhaps the most favourable specimen of her talents. It equals the productions of any of her contemporaries for simplicity, harmony, and elegance of style ; and in lively description and genuine poetry excels them all, except the inimitable Ariosto."¹

¹ Roscoe's "Leo X." vol. iii. p. 222.

PIETRO GIOVIO.

Pietro Giovio was originally, as we have stated, in the service of Vittoria. He afterwards was received favourably at Rome by Leo X. and appointed one of his attendant courtiers, and provided with an income and a residence in the Vatican, taking the title of Monsignore. During the sack of Rome, in 1527, he secreted his "History," which he had copied on vellum and elegantly bound, in a chest with a quantity of silver, and deposited it in the Church of S. Maria sopra Minerva. Here two Spanish officers discovered it, and one of them seized the silver, and the other took possession of the manuscript. On finding the name of the unfortunate author, he asked Giovio what he would buy it for. Giovio, who had lost all his property, went to the Pope and begged his help. Clement agreed to confer a benefice in Cordova on the Spaniard, if he returned the volumes to Giovio, and he accordingly did.

His history of his own times is a very voluminous work. He also wrote lives of Alfonso Duke of Ferrara, of Leo X., Adrian VI., Pompeo Colonna, the Marchese di Pescara, and others. Their veracity has been questioned.

CARNESECHI.

In the year 1566 Pius V. demanded of the Grand Duke Cosmo I. the person of Pietro Carnesechi, a man of rank and learning, who had adopted some of the tenets of the Protestant Reformers. Cosmo gave him up to the officers of Rome, but at the same time wrote earnestly to the Pope to save him. The Pope was inclined to spare his life, if Carnesechi had shown signs of repentance; but he persisted in his opinions, and, in August 1567, he was convicted by the Roman Inquisition of thirty-four heretical tenets, and condemned to death. The Grand Duke again wrote in his behalf, and the Pope suspended the execution for ten days, and promised to spare his life, on

condition that Carnesechi should abjure his tenets, and sent a friar to exhort him to do so. But he remained firm, arguing with the monk, and desiring to convert him. He was publicly beheaded in Rome, and the body afterwards burnt.

CASTIGLIONE.

Baldassar Castiglione was born at Mantua in 1468, of noble parents. He was early trained to arms and to courts, and served as page and aide-de-camp to Sforza, of Milan. He afterwards passed into the service of the Duke d'Urbino, and was sent by him to the Courts of England and France as Ambassador in 1506. After the death of the duke, he remained in the service of the new duke, and accompanied him as his lieutenant-general to the wars. In 1516 he married Maria Hippolita, the daughter of Count Torella, and grand-daughter of the Duke of Bologna. She was celebrated for her beauty and accomplishments, and wrote well both in Latin and Italian.

Castiglione resided for a long time at Rome, and was one of the chief ornaments of the elegant society of that city. He was a great inquirer after antique remains, and an exquisite judge of art. He was continually exhorting Leo to prevent the demolition of ancient buildings. He had a fine collection of cameos, statues, and other relics of ancient art. He was sent by Clement VII. as nuncio to Charles V., and was very much in the private favour of the Emperor, who was to have taken him as his second, if the challenge he sent to Francis I. had been accepted.

In endeavouring to bring the Papal and Imperial Courts to an agreement, he could not satisfy the Pope, whose unjust suspicions threw him into an illness, of which he died, aged fifty-one, at Toledo. His life was written by Bernardino Marliani. His letters are valuable, as containing much relative to the affairs of those times. Among th

letters to Vittoria Colonna, written from Madrid, in the year 1526. His great work, "The Courtier," was termed in Italy "The Golden Book," the subject being how to live in Courts, and become useful and agreeable to a prince. It has been translated into most of the modern languages. From some free expressions in it, it was inserted in the "Index Expurgatorio;" but in 1576 his son obtained its licence, in a corrected form, from the Congregation of the Index.¹

ANCIENT ROME.

The late Mr. Roscoe had the good fortune to discover, at the mansion of his friend, Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, a collection of inestimable manuscripts, which had been hid away in an upper chamber at Holkham Hall, and considered as rubbish. Mr. Roscoe said one day to his host, "Do you know what your young sportsmen are doing? They are cutting up your choicest old manuscripts for their gun-wads." Amongst these manuscripts were many beautifully illuminated copies of the Latin classics, on vellum; a very fine old copy of Dante; a manuscript written on paper by Leonardo da Vinci; a superb copy of Livy, which had belonged to Alfonso, King of Naples, and had been presented to him by Cosmo de Medici; many copies of the Sacred Writings, especially the Pentateuch, in Hebrew, on a roll of deer-skins thirty-eight feet long. But the treasure which most delighted Mr. Roscoe was a book of drawings by Raffaele of the architectural remains of ancient Rome, executed at the desire of Leo X. Mr. Roscoe wrote, "That I should have had the good fortune of seeing and of turning over at my leisure such a book is almost incredible."

The neglected condition of these invaluable treasures required the most judicious care in the cleaning, pressing, and rebinding. Mr. Roscoe, at the desire of Mr. Coke, entrusted them to the care of Mr. Jones, of Liverpool, who with zeal devoted himself to

¹ Aikin, "Biographical Dictionary."

the task ; and they were rebound and returned to the "Manuscript Library" at Holkham in so splendid and perfect a state, as to give unbounded delight to Mr. Coke and his literary friends. Mr. Roscoe, out of his zeal and friendly feeling, also undertook to make a *Catalogue raisonné* of the whole of them—a labour which took him several years to accomplish, at leisure times.¹

EARLY ITALIAN ART.

It has of late been much the fashion to admire and imitate what is termed the pre-Raffaellite school of art. Mr. Roscoe, of Allerton Hall, was one of the first collectors of this class of ancient pictures. During his Italian researches he was so fortunate as to procure from time to time a series of paintings illustrative of the rise and progress of art in Italy, and his gallery at Allerton Hall was much valued by connoisseurs. This collection of early Italian art is now placed in the Royal Institution of Liverpool.

The use of oil colours was introduced into Italy at the end of the fifteenth century. Previously the colours had been mixed with gum, wax, and the yolk of eggs, to give a lucid hue and polish to them. Mr. Roscoe, in a note appended to Lanzi's "History of Painting," translated by one of his sons, in remarking on this method, adds, "It is astonishing how well the early pictures retain their colouring to the present day."

The most brilliant period of Italian art was undoubtedly the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century ; but schools of art had long existed in Florence, Venice, Bologna, Ferrara, and other Italian cities. The d'Estes of Ferrara had employed and encouraged artists so early as 1240. Giotto decorated their palaces, and Francia their public buildings ; and when Vittoria visited Ferrara, Titian, Bellini, Filippi, Garafolò, Tisio, and the two Dossis, were executing great works for the Duke.

¹ "Life of Roscoe," by his son, Henry Roscoe.

Titian's famous picture of the "Cristo della Moneta," now at Dresden, was then in Ferrara. He had also painted the portraits of the Duke and Duchess. Filippi's fresco of "The Last Judgment" is in the choir of the cathedral, and so nearly approached to that of Michael Angelo, that nothing in the whole Florentine school could compare to it. Some even preferred it to the one in the Sistine Chapel. This great picture, and many others by Filippi, are still at Ferrara, as well as Tisio's paintings, "which are at once so numerous and so beautiful as alone to suffice for the decoration of a city."¹

Tisio's celebrated picture of "St. Peter Martyr" was painted in competition with Titian's famous picture at Venice, "and, in case of its loss, was supposed to be able to supply its place."²

Titian, at the age of twenty-three, was one of the best living poets of the day, but he devoted himself afterwards entirely to painting. He was the father of portrait-painting, and his landscapes are unrivalled. Like Michael Angelo, he lived to an extreme old age, and retained all his vigour to the last, and produced a vast number of works, which enrich all the galleries of Europe. In the great picture at Milan the figure and face of the Saviour is almost superhuman.

Titian died of the plague, in 1576, aged ninety-nine. Bottari says, "His paintings are prodigies of art. No artist was ever comparable to him in his boys and female forms." Lanzi, in speaking of his "St. Peter Martyr," says, "I know not whether painting can afford anything more terrific in the ferocity of those who strike, or more full of compassion in the whole attitude of the falling saint;" and he describes "that horrific wood, whose dreary aspect adds so much solemnity to the Martyr's death."

¹ Lanzi's "History of Painting."

² This loss has just occurred—an irreparable one to the lovers of the great Venetian artist.

THE STATES OF THE CHURCH.

It becomes, at this time, a subject of some interest how the temporal power of the Pontiffs has been gradually assumed. The "Life of Leo" furnishes some clue to it. In the case of the States of Perugia, this Pope exercised treachery, torture, and death, to obtain them. He also made use of every underhand means to endeavour to gain the city and territory of Ferrara, though without success. Roscoe remarks, "The conduct of Leo towards the Duke of Ferrara discloses some of the darkest shades of his character; and in this instance we find those licentious principles which induced him to forfeit his most solemn promises, on pretence of the criminality of those to whom they were made, extended to accomplish the ruin of a prince who had not by his conduct furnished any pretext for such an attempt."¹

¹ Vol. iv. pp. 272-4.

THE END.

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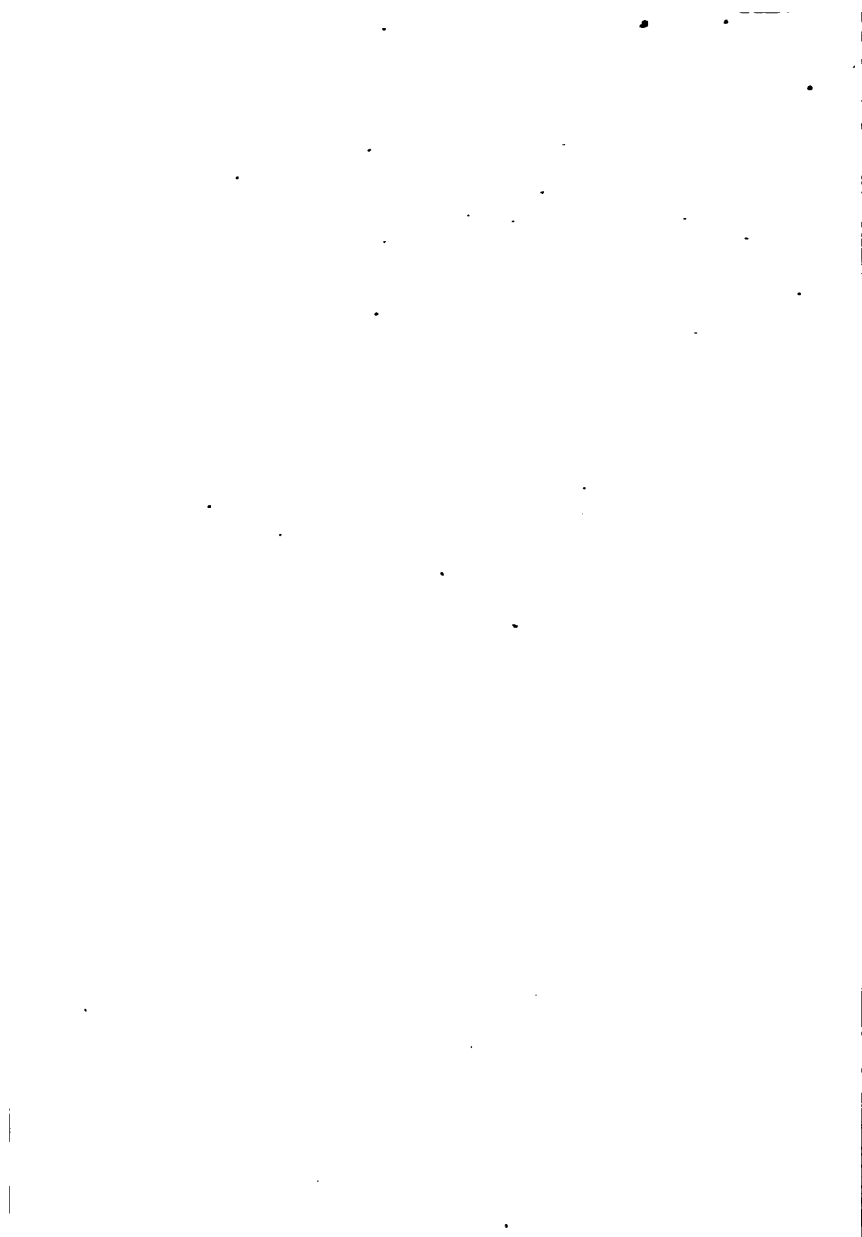
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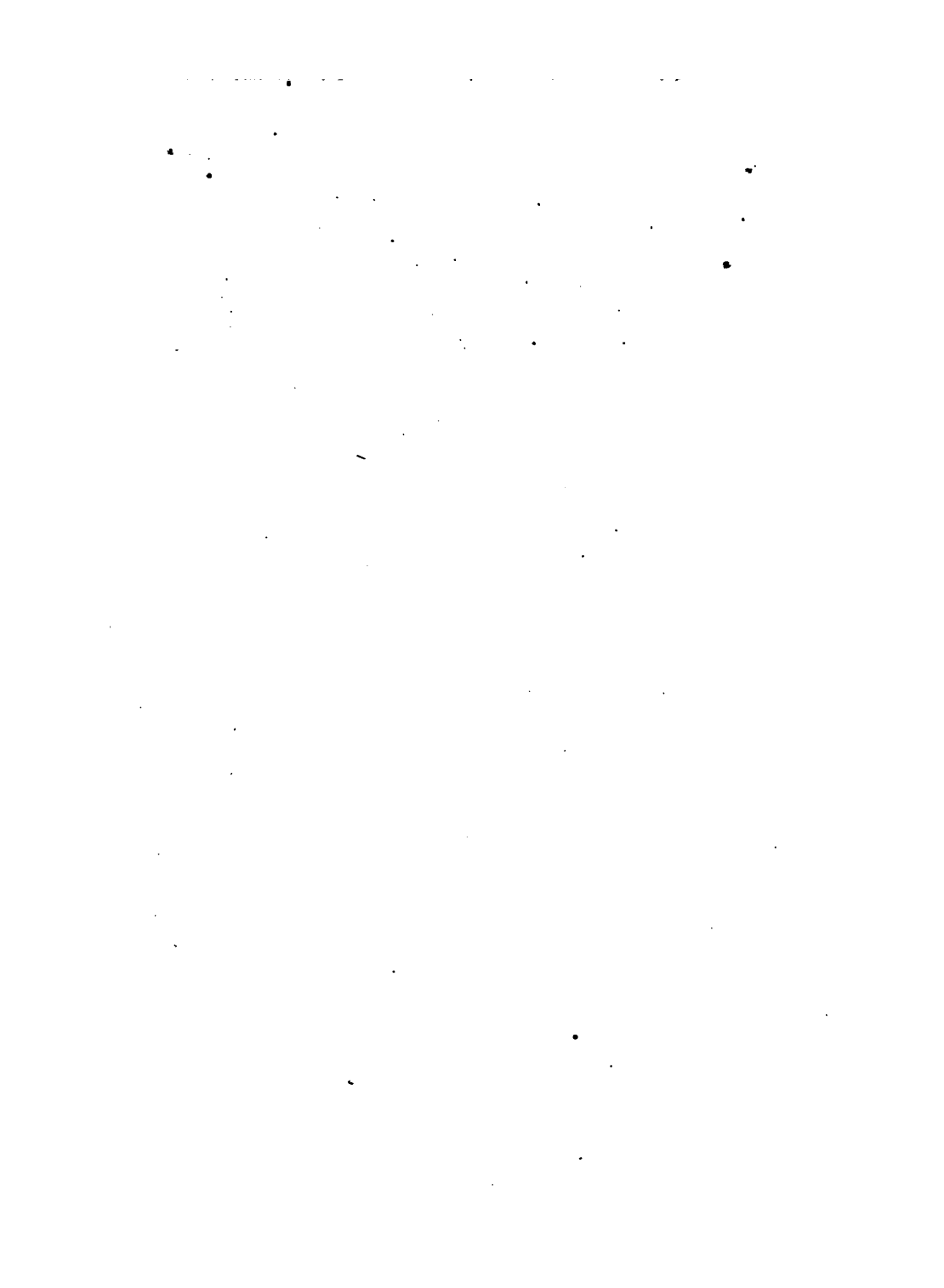
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