

Italian Literature
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Patriotic Effusions of the Italian Poets, pages 512-515

Introduction	
Vincenzo da Filicaja	Italia, Italia! O tu cui feo la sorte,
Vincenzo da Filicaja	Quando già dal gran monti bruna bruna,
Carlo Maria Maggi	Io grido, e griderò finche mi senta,
Alessandro Marchetti	Italia! Italia! ah! non piu Italia ! appena,
Alessandro Pegolotti	Quella, ch'ambi le mani entro la chioma,
Francesco Maria de Conti	O Peregrin, che muovi errante il passo,

ITALIAN LITERATURE.

MONTI.

(From Sismondi's *Litterature du Midi*.)

VINCENZIO MONTI, a native of Ferrara, is acknowledged, by the unanimous consent of the Italians, as the greatest of their living Poets. Irritable, impassioned, variable to excess, he is always actuated by the impulse of the moment. Whatever he feels is felt with the most enthusiastic vehemence. He *sees* the objects of his thoughts, they are present and clothed with life before him, and a flexible and harmonious language is always at his command, to paint them with the richest colouring. Persuaded that poetry is only another species of painting, he makes the art of the poet consist in rendering apparent to the eyes of all, the pictures created by his imagination for himself, and he permits not a verse to escape him which does not contain an image. Deeply impressed by the study of Dante, he has restored to the character of Italian poetry those severe and exalted beauties by which it was distinguished at its birth; and he proceeds from one picture to another with a grandeur and dignity peculiar to himself. It is extraordinary, that, with something so lofty in his manner and style of writ-

ing, the heart of so impassioned a character should not be regulated by principles of greater consistency. In many other poets this defect might pass unobserved; but circumstances have thrown the fullest light upon the versatility of Monti, and his glory, as a poet, is attached to works which display him in continual opposition to himself. Writing in the midst of the various Italian revolutions, he has constantly chosen political subjects for his compositions, and he has successively celebrated opposite parties, in proportion to their success. Let us suppose, in his justification, that he composes as an improvisatore, and that, his feelings, becoming highly excited by the given theme, he seizes the political ideas it suggests, however foreign they may be to his individual sentiments.* In these political poems, the object and purport of which are so different, the invention and manner are, perhaps, but too similar. The *Basvigliana*, or Poem on the Death of Basville, is the most celebrated; but, since its appearance, it has been discovered that Monti, who always imitated Dante, has now also very frequently imitated himself.

Hugh Basville was the French Envoy, who was put to death at Rome by the people, for attempting, at the beginning of the Revolution, to excite a sedition against the Pontifical government. Monti, who was then the poet of the Pope, as he has since been of the Republic, supposes, that, at the moment of Basville's death, he is saved, by a sudden repentance, from the condemnation which his philosophical principles had merited. But, as a punishment for his guilt, and a substitute for the pains of Purgatory, he is

* The observation of a French author (*le Censeur du Dictionnaire des Girouettes*) on the general versatility of poets, seems so peculiarly appropriate to the character of Monti, that it might almost be supposed to have been written for the express purpose of such an application—"Le cerveau d'un poète est d'une cire molle et flexible, où s'imprime naturellement tout ce qui le flatte, le séduit, et l'alimente. La muse du chant n'a pas de parti; c'est une étourdie sans conséquence qui folâtre également et sur de riches gazons et sur d'arides bruyères. Un poète en délire chante indifféremment Titus et Thamasp, Louis 12me, et Cromwell, Christine de Swède, et Fançon la Vieilleuse."

condemned, by Divine Justice, to traverse France, until the crimes of that country have received their due chastisement, and doomed to contemplate the misfortunes and reverses to which he has contributed, by assisting to extend the progress of the Revolution.

An angel of Heaven conducts Basville from province to province, that he may behold the desolation of his lovely country; he then conveys him to Paris, and makes him witness the sufferings and death of Louis XVI. and afterwards shows him the united armies prepared to burst upon France, and avenge the blood of her king. The poem concludes before the issue of the contest is known. It is divided into four cantos of three hundred lines each, and written in *terza rima*, like the poem of Dante. Not only many expressions, epithets, and lines, are borrowed from the Divine Comedy, but the invention itself is similar. An angel conducts Basville through the suffering world, and this faithful guide, who consoles and supports the *spectator-hero* of the poem, acts precisely the same part which is performed by Virgil in Dante. Basville himself thinks, feels, and suffers, exactly as Dante would have done. Monti has not preserved any traces of his revolutionary character; he describes him as feeling more pity than remorse, and he seems to forget, in thus identifying himself with his hero, that he has at first represented Basville, and perhaps without foundation, as an infidel, and a ferocious revolutionist. The *Basviliana* is perhaps more remarkable than any other poem for the majesty of its verse, the sublimity of its expression, and the richness of its colouring. In the first Canto, the spirit of Basville thus takes leave of the body.

Sleep, O' belov'd companion of my woes,
Rest thou in deep and undisturb'd repose,
Till, at the last great day, from slumber's
bed,

Heaven's trumpet-summons shall awake
the dead!

Be the earth light upon thee! mild the
shower,
And soft the breeze's wing, till that dread
hour,

Nor let the wanderer, passing o'er thee,
breathe

Words of keen insult to the dust beneath.

Sleep thou in peace! beyond the funeral
pyre,

There live no flames of vengeance or of ire,

And 'midst high hearts I leave thee, on a
shore,
Where mercy's home hath been, from days
of yore.

Thus, to its earthly form, the spirit cried,
Then turned to follow its celestial guide,
But with a downcast mien, a pensive sigh,
A lingering step, and oft reverted eye,
As when a child's reluctant feet obey
Its mother's voice, and slowly leave its play.

Night o'er the earth her dewy veil had cast,
When from th' eternal city's towers they
pass'd,
And, rising in their flight, on that proud
dome,
Whose walls enshrine the guardian saint of
Rome,
Lo ! where a cherub-form sublimely
tower'd,
But dreadful in his glory ! sternly lower'd
Wrath in his kingly aspect : One he seem'd
Of the bright seven, whose dazzling splen-
dour beam'd
On high amidst the burning lamps of hea-
ven,
Seen in the dread, o'erwhelming visions
given
To the rapt seer of Patmos. Wheels of
fire
Seem'd his fierce eyes, all kindling in their
ire,
And his loose tresses, floating as he stood,
A comet's glare, presaging woe and blood.

He wav'd his sword ; its red, terrific light,
With fearful radiance ting'd the clouds of
night,
While his left hand sustain'd a shield, so
vast,
Far o'er the Vatican beneath was cast
Its broad, protecting shadow. As the
plume
Of the strong eagle spreads, in sheltering
gloom
O'er its young brood, as yet untaught to
soar ;
And while, all trembling at the whirl-
wind's roar,
Each humbler bird shrinks cowering in
its nest,
Beneath that wing of power, and ample
breast,
They sleep unheeding ; while the storm on
high
Breaks not their calm and proud security.

In the second Canto, Basville enters
Paris with his angelic guide, at the
moment preceding the execution of
Louis XVI.

The air was heavy, and the brooding skies
Look'd fraught with omens, as to harmo-
nize
With his pale aspect. Through the forest
round
Not a leaf whisper'd, and the only sound

That broke the stillness was a streamlet's
moan,
Murmuring amidst the rocks with plain-
tive tone,
As if a storm, within the woodland bowers,
Were gathering. On they mov'd, and lo!
the towers
Of a far city! nearer now they drew,
And all reveal'd, expanding on their view,
The Babylon, the scene of crimes and
woes,
Paris, the guilty, the devoted, rose.

• • • • •

In the dark mantle of a cloud array'd,
Viewless and hush'd, the angel and the
shade
Enter'd that evil city. Onward passed
The heavenly being first, with brow o'er-
cast,
And troubled mien, while in his glorious
eyes,
Tears had obscur'd the splendour of the
skies.
Pale with dismay, the trembling spirit saw
That alter'd aspect, and, in breathless awe,
Mark'd the strange silence round. The
deep-ton'd swell
Of life's full tide was hush'd; the sacred
bell,
The clamorous anvil, mute: all sounds
were fled
Of labour or of mirth, and in their stead,
Terror and stillness! boding signs of woe,
Inquiring glances, rumours whisper'd low,
Questions half utter'd, jealous looks, that
keep
A fearful watch around; and sadness deep
That weighs upon the heart; and voices,
heard
At intervals, in many a broken word;
Voices of mothers, trembling as they
press'd
Th' unconscious infant closer to their
breast;
Voices of wives, with fond, imploring
cries,
And the wild eloquence of tears and sighs,
On their own thresholds striving to detain
Their fierce, impatient lords; but weak
and vain
Affection's gentle bonds, in that dread hour
Of fate and fury, Love hath lost his power!
For evil spirits are abroad! the air
Breathes of their influence; druid phan-
toms there
Fir'd by that thirst for victims, which of
old
Rag'd in their bosoms, fierce and uncon-
troll'd,
Rush, in ferocious transport, to survey
The deepest crime that ere hath dimm'd
the day.
Blood, human blood, hath stain'd their
vests and hair,
On the winds tossing, with a sanguine
glare,

Scattering red showers around them !
 flaming brands,
And serpent-scourges, in their restless
 hands
Are wildly shaken ; others lift on high
The steel, th' envenom'd bowl, and hur-
 rying by,
With touch of fire, contagious fury dart
Through human veins, fast kindling to the
 heart.
Then comes the rush of crowds ! restrain'd
 no more,
Fast from each home the frenzied inmates
 pour ;
From every heart, affrighted mercy flies,
While her soft voice amidst the tumult dies.
Then the earth trembles, as from street to
 street
The tramp of steeds, the press of hastening
 feet,
The roll of wheels, all mingling in the
 breeze,
Come deepening onward, as the swell of seas,
Heard at the dead of midnight ; or the
 moan
Of distant tempests, or the hollow tone
Of the far thunder !—then what feelings
 press'd,
O wretched Basville ! on thy guilty breast !
What pangs were thine, thus fated to be-
 hold
Death's awful banner to the winds unfold !
To see the axe, the scaffold, rais'd on high,
The dark impatience of the murderer's eye,
Eager for crime ! and He, the great, the
 good,
Thy martyr king, by men athirst for blood,
Dragg'd to a felon's death ! yet still his
 mien
'Midst that wild throng, is loftily serene,
And his step falters not—O hearts un-
 mov'd !
Where have ye borne your monarch ?—He
 who lov'd,
Lov'd you so well !—Behold ! the sun
 grows pale,
Shrouding his glory in a tearful veil,
The misty air is silent, as in dread,
And the dim sky with shadowy gloom o'er-
 spread,
While saints and martyrs, spirits of the
 blest,
Look down all weeping, from their bowers
 of rest.

* * * * *
In that dread moment, to the fatal pile,
The regal victim came ; and rais'd, the
 while,
His patient glance, with such an aspect
 high,
So firm, so calm, in holy majesty,
That e'en th' assassins' hearts a moment
 shook,
Before the grandeur of that kingly look,
And a strange thrill of pity, half renew'd,
Ran thro' the bosoms of the multitude.
 * * * * *

Like him, who, breathing mercy till the
last,
Pray'd till the bitterness of death was past :
E'en for his murderers pray'd, in that
dark hour,
When his soul yielded to affliction's power,
And the winds bore his dying cry abroad,
" Hast thou forsaken me, my God, my
God ?"
E'en thus the monarch stood ; his pray'r
arose,
Thus calling down forgiveness on his foes,
" To thee my spirit I commend," he
cried,
" And my lost people, Father ! be their
guide !"

* * * * *

But the sharp steel descends ; the blow is
given,
And answered by a thunder-peal from
Heaven,
Earth, stain'd with blood, convulsive ter-
ror owns,
And her kings tremble on their distant
thrones.

(To be continued.)

ITALIAN LITERATURE.

No. II.—*The Alcestis of Alfieri.*

THE *Alcestis* of Alfieri is said to have been the last tragedy he composed, and is distinguished to a remarkable degree by that tenderness, of which his former works present so few examples. It would appear as if the pure and exalted affection by which the impetuosity of his fiery spirit was ameliorated during the latter years of his life had impressed its whole character on this work, as a record of that domestic happiness in whose bosom his heart at length found a resting-place. Most of his earlier writings

bear witness to that "fever at the core," that burning impatience of restraint, and those incessant and untameable aspirations after a wider sphere of action, by which his youth was consumed ; but the poetry of *Alcestis* must find its echo in every heart which has known the power of domestic ties, or felt the bitterness of their dissolution. The interest of the piece, however, though entirely domestic, is not for a moment allowed to languish, nor does the conjugal affection, which forms the main-spring of the action, ever degenerate into the pastoral insipidity of *Metastasio*. The character of *Alcestis* herself, with all its lofty fortitude, heroic affection, and subdued anguish, powerfully recalls to our imagination the calm and tempered majesty distinguishing the masterpieces of Greek sculpture, in which the expression of mental or bodily suffering is never allowed to transgress the limits of beauty and sublimity. The union of dignity and affliction impressing more than earthly grandeur on the countenance of *Niobe*, would be, perhaps, the best illustration of this analogy.

The following scene, in which *Alcestis* announces to *Pheres*, the father of *Admetus*, the terms upon which the oracle of *Delphos* has declared that his son may be restored, has seldom been surpassed by the author, even in his most celebrated productions. It is, however, to be feared that little of its beauty can be transfused into translation, as the severity of a style so completely devoid of imagery must render it dependent for many incommunicable attractions upon the melody of the original language.

Act I.—Scene 2.

Alcestis, Pheres.

Alc. Weep thou no more—O monarch !
dry thy tears,
For know, he shall not die ; not now shall
Fate
Bereave thee of thy son.
Phe. What mean thy words ?
Hath then *Apollo*—is there then a hope ?
Alc. Yes ! hope for thee—hope, by the
voice announced
From the prophetic cave. Nor would I
yield
To other lips the tidings, meet alone
For thee to hear from mine.
Phe. But say ! oh ! say,
Shall then my son be spared ?

Alc. He shall, to thee.
Thus hath Apollo said—Alcestis thus
Confirms the oracle—be thou secure.

Phe. O sounds of joy! He lives!

Alc. But not for this,
Think not that e'en for *this* the stranger
Joy

Shall yet revisit these devoted walls.

Phe. Can there be grief when from his
bed of death

Admetus rises? What deep mystery lurks
Within thy words? What mean'st thou?
Gracious Heaven!

Thou, whose deep love is all his own, who
hear'st

The tidings of his safety, and dost bear
Transport and life in that glad oracle
To his despairing sire; thy cheek is ting'd
With death, and on thy pure ingenuous
brow

To the brief lightning of a sudden joy.
Shades dark as night succeed, and thou art
wrapt

In troubled silence—speak! oh! speak!

Alc. The gods
Themselves have limitations to their power
Impassable, eternal—and their will
Resists not the tremendous laws of fate:
Nor small the boon they grant thee in the
life

Of thy restored Admetus.

Phe. In thy looks
There is expression, more than in thy
words,
Which thrills my shuddering heart. De-
clare, what terms
Can render fatal to thyself and us,
The rescued life of him thy soul adores?

Alc. O father! could my silence aught
avail

To keep that fearful secret from thine ear,
Still should it rest unheard, till all fulfill'd
Were the dread sacrifice. But vain the wish;
And since too soon, too well it must be
known,

Hear it from me.

Phe. Through my curdling veins
Runs a cold, death-like horror; and I feel
I am not all a father. In my heart
Strive many deep affections. Thee I love,
O fair and high-soul'd consort of my son!
More than a daughter; and thine infant
race,

The cherish'd hope and glory of my age;
And, unimpair'd by time, within my
breast,

High, holy, and unalterable love,
For her, the partner of my cares and joys,
Dwells pure and perfect yet. Bethink
thee, then,

In what suspense, what agony of fear,
I wait thy words; for well, too well, I see
Thy lips are fraught with fatal auguries,
To some one of my race.

Alc. Death hath his rights,
Of which not e'en the great Supernal
Powers

May hope to rob him. By his ruthless
hand,
Already seized, the noble victim lay,
The heir of empire, in his glowing prime
And noon-day, struck :—Admetus, the re-
ver'd,
The bless'd, the lov'd, by all who own'd
his sway,
By his illustrious parents, by the realms
Surrounding his,—and oh ! what need to
add,
How much by his Alcestis ?—Such was
he,
Already in th' unsparing grasp of death,
Withering, a certain prey.—Apollo thence
Hath snatch'd him, and another in his
stead,
Though not an equal,—(who can equal
him ?)
Must fall a voluntary sacrifice.
Another, of his lineage, or to him
By closest bonds united, must descend
To the dark realm of Orcus in *his* place,
Who thus alone is saved.

Phe. What do I hear ?

Woe to us, woe !—what victim ?—who
shall be
Accepted in his stead ?

Alc. The dread exchange

E'en now, O father ! hath been made ; the
prey

Is ready, nor is wholly worthless him
For whom 'tis freely offered. Nor wilt
thou,

O mighty goddess of th' infernal shades !
Whose image sanctifies this threshold
floor,

Disdain the victim.

Phe. All prepar'd the prey !

And to our blood allied ! O heaven !—and
yet

Thou bad'st me weep no more !

Alc. Yes ! thus I said,

And thus again I say, thou shalt not weep
Thy son's, nor I deplore my husband's
doom.

Let him be saved, and other sounds of woe
Less deep, less mournful far, shall here be
heard,

Than those *his* death had caus'd.—With
some few tears,

But brief, and mingled with a gleam of
joy,

E'en while the involuntary tribute lasts,
The victim shall be honour'd, who resign'd
Life for Admetus.—Would'st thou know
the prey,

The vow'd, the willing, the devoted one,
Offer'd and hallow'd to th' infernal gods,
Father ! 'tis I.

Phe. What hast thou done ? O heaven !

What hast thou done ?—And think'st thou
he is sav'd

By such a compact ?—Think'st thou he
can live

Bereft of thee ?—Of thee, his light of life,
His very soul !—Of thee, belov'd far more

Than his lov'd parents—than his children
more—

More than himself!—Oh! no, it shall not
be!

Thou perish, O Alcestis! in the flower
Of thy young beauty!—perish, and destroy
Not him, not *him* alone, but us, but all,
Who as a child adore thee! Desolate
Would be the throne, the kingdom, rest of
thee.

And think'st thou not of those, whose ten-
der years

Demand thy care?—thy children! think
of them!

O thou, the source of each domestic joy,
Thou, in whose life alone Admetus lives,
His glory, his delight, thou shalt not die,
While I can die for thee!—Me, me
alone,

The oracle demands—a wither'd stem,
Whose task, whose duty, is, for him to
die.

My race is run—the fulness of my years,
The faded hopes of age, and all the love
Which hath its dwelling in a father's heart,
And the fond pity, half with wonder blent,
Inspired by thee, whose youth with hea-
venly gifts

So richly is endowed; all, all unite
To grave in adamant the just decree,
That I must die. But thou, I bid thee
live!

Pheres commands thee, O Alcestis! live!
Ne'er, ne'er shall woman's youthful love
surpass

An aged sire's devotedness.

Alc. I know

Thy lofty soul, thy fond paternal love;
Pheres, I know them well, and not in vain
Strove to anticipate their high resolves.
But if in silence I have heard thy words,
Now calmly list to mine, and thou shalt
own

They may not be withstood.

Phc. What can'st thou say

Which I should hear? I go, resolved to
save

Him who with thee would perish;—to the
shrine

E'en now I fly.

Alc. Stay, stay thee! 'tis too late.

Already hath consenting Proserpine,
From the remote abysses of her realms,
Heard and accepted the terrific vow
Which binds me, with indissoluble ties,
To death. And I am firm, and well I
know

None can deprive me of the awful right
That vow hath won.

Alc. Yes! thou may'st weep my fate,
Mourn for me, father! but thou can'st not
blame

My lofty purpose. Oh! the more en-
dear'd

My life by every tie, the more I feel
Death's bitterness, the more my sacrifice

Is worthy of Admetus. I descend
To the dim shadowy regions of the dead
A guest more honour'd.

Alc. In thy presence here
Again I utter the tremendous vow,
Now more than half fulfilled. I feel, I
know
Its dread effects. Through all my burn-
ing veins
Th' insatiate fever revels. Doubt is o'er.
The Monarch of the Dead hath heard—he
calls,
He summons me away—and thou art sav'd,
O my Admetus!

In the opening of the third act, Alcestis enters, with her son Eumeles, and her daughter, to complete the sacrifice by dying at the feet of Proserpine's statue. The following scene ensues between her and Admetus.

Alc. Here, O my faithful handmaids!
at the feet
Of Proserpine's dread image spread my
couch,
For I myself e'en now must offer here
The victim she requires. And you, mean-
while,
My children! seek your sire. Behold him
there,
Sad, silent, and alone. But through his
veins
Health's genial current flows once more, as
free
As in his brightest days: and he shall live,
Shall live for you. Go, hang upon his
neck,
And with your innocent encircling arms
Twine round him fondly.

Eum. Can it be indeed,
Father, lov'd father! that we see thee thus
Restored? What joy is ours!

Adm. There is no joy!
Speak not of joy! away, away! my grief
Is wild and desperate; cling to me no
more!
I know not of affection, and I feel
No more a father.

Eum. Oh! what words are these?
Are we no more thy children? Are we not
Thine own? Sweet sister! twine around
his neck
More close; he must return the fond em-
brace.

Adm. O children! O my children! to
my soul
Your innocent words and kisses are as
darts,
That pierce it to the quick. I can no more
Sustain the bitter conflict. Every sound
Of your soft accents but too well recalls
The voice which was the music of my life.
Alcestis! my Alcestis!—was she not
Of all her sex the flower? Was woman e'er

Ador'd like her before ? Yet this is she,
The cold of heart, th' ungrateful, who hath
left

Her husband and her infants ! This is she,
O my deserted children ! who at once
Bereaves you of your parents.

Alc. Woe is me !

I hear the bitter and reproachful cries
Of my despairing lord. With life's last
powers,

Oh ! let me strive to soothe him still. Ap-
proach,

My handmaids, raise me, and support my
steps

To the distracted mourner. Bear me hence,
That he may hear and see me.

Adm. Is it thou ?

And do I see thee still ? and com'st thou
thus

To comfort me, Alcestis ? Must I hear
Thy dying accents *thus* ? Alas ! return
To thy sad couch, return ! 'tis meet for me
There by thy side for ever to remain.

Alc. For me thy care is vain. Though
meet for thee—

Adm. O voice ! O looks of death ! are
these, are *these*

Thus darkly shrouded with mortality
The eyes that were the sunbeams and the
life

Of my fond soul ? Alas ! how faint a ray
Falls from their faded orbs, so brilliant
once,

Upon my drooping brow ! How heavily
With what a weight of death thy languid
voice

Sinks on my heart ! too faithful far, too
fond,

Alcestis ! thou art dying—and for me !

Alcestis ! and thy feeble hand supports
With its last power, supports my sinking
head,

E'en now, while death is on thee ! Oh !
the touch

Rekindles tenfold frenzy in my heart,
I rush, I fly impetuous to the shrine,
The image of yon ruthless Deity,
Impatient for her prey. Before thy death,
There, there, I too, self-sacrificed, will fall.

Vain is each obstacle.—In vain the gods
Themselves would check my fury.—I am
lord

Of my own days—and thus I swear—

Alc. Yes ! swear

Admetus ! for thy children to sustain
The load of life. All other impious vows,
Which thou, a rebel to the sovereign will
Of those who rule on high, might'st dare
to form

Within thy breast ; thy lip, by them en-
chained,

Would vainly seek to utter.—See'st thou
not,

It is from them the inspiration flows,
Which in my language breathes ? They
lend me power,

They bid me through thy strengthened
 soul transfuse
 High courage, noble constancy. Submit,
 Bow down to them thy spirit. Be thou
 calm,
 Be near me. Aid me. In the dread ex-
 treme
 To which I now approach, from whom but
 thee
 Should comfort be derived? Afflict me not,
 In such an hour, with anguish worse than
 death.
 O faithful and belov'd! support me still!

The chorusses with which this tra-
 gedy is interspersed are distinguished
 for their melody and classic beauty.
 The following translation will give our
 readers a faint idea of the one by
 which the third act is concluded.

Alc. My children! all is finished. Now
 farewell!
 To thy fond care, O Pheres! I commit
 My widow'd Lord, forsake him not.

Eum. Alas!
 Sweet mother! wilt thou leave us? from
 thy side
 Are we for ever parted?

Phe. Tears forbid
 All utterance of our woes. Bereft of sense,
 More lifeless than the dying victim, see
 The desolate Admetus. Farther yet,
 Still farther let us bear him from the sight
 Of his Alcestis.

Alc. O my handmaids! still
 Lend me your pious aid, and thus compose
 With sacred modesty, these torpid limbs
 When death's last pang is o'er.

Chorus. Alas! how weak
 Her struggling voice! that last keen pang
 is near.

Peace, mourners, peace!
 Be hush'd, be silent, in this hour of dread!
 Our cries would but increase
 The sufferer's pangs; let tears unheard be
 shed,

Cease, voice of weeping, cease!
 Sustain, O friend!
 Upon thy faithful breast,
 The head that sinks, with mortal pain op-
 prest!

And thou, assistance lend
 To close the languid eye,
 Still beautiful, in life's last agony.

Alas! how long a strife!
 What anguish struggles in the parting
 breath,

Ere yet immortal life
 Be won by death!
 Death! death! thy work complete!
 Let thy sad hour be fleet,
 Speed, in thy mercy, the releasing sigh!
 No more keen pangs impart
 To her, the high in heart,
 Th' ador'd Alcestis, worthy ne'er to die.

Chorus of Admetus.

'Tis not enough, oh ! no !
To hide the scene of anguish from his eyes ;
Still must our silent band
Around him watchful stand,
And on the mourner ceaseless care bestow,
That his ear catch not grief's funeral cries.

Yet, yet hope is not dead,
All is not lost below,
While yet the gods have pity on our woe.
Oft when all joy is fled,
Heaven lends support to those
Who on its care in pious hope repose.
Then to the blessed skies
Let our submissive prayers in chorus rise.

Pray ! bow the knee, and pray !
What other task have mortals, born to
tears,
Whom fate controls, with adamantine
sway ?
O ruler of the spheres !
Jove ! Jove ! enthron'd immortally on
high,
Our supplication hear !
Nor plunge in bitterest woes,
Him, who nor footstep moves, nor lifts his
eye,
But as a child, which only knows
Its father to revere.

ITALIAN LITERATURE.

No. III.

*Il Conte di Carmagnola, a Tragedy, by
Alessandro Manzoni.*

FRANCESCO BUSSONE, the son of a peasant in Carmagnola, from whence his *nom de guerre* was derived, was born in the year 1390. Whilst yet a boy, and employed in the care of flocks and herds, the lofty character of his countenance was observed by a soldier of fortune, who invited the youth to forsake his rustic occupations, and ac-

company him to the busier scenes of the camp. His persuasions were successful, and Francesco entered with him into the service of Facino Cane, Lord of Alessandria. At the time when Facino died, leaving fourteen cities acquired by conquest, to Beatrice di Tenda, his wife, Francesco di Carmagnola was amongst the most distinguished of his captains. Beatrice afterwards marrying Philip Visconti, Duke of Milan, (who rewarded her by an ignominious death, for the regal dowry she had conferred upon him,) Carmagnola entered his army at the same time, and having, by his eminent services, firmly established the tottering power of that prince, received from him the title of Count, and was placed at the head of all his forces. The natural caprice and ingratitude of Philip's disposition, however, at length prevailed, and Carmagnola, disgusted with the evident proof of his wavering friendship, and doubtful faith, left his service and his territories, and after a variety of adventures, took refuge in Venice. Thither the treachery of the Duke pursued him, and emissaries were employed to procure his assassination. The plot, however, proved abortive, and Carmagnola was elected captain-general of the Venetian armies, during the league formed by that Republic against the Duke of Milan. The war was at first carried on with much spirit and success, and the battle of Macclodio, gained by Carmagnola, was one of the most important and decisive actions of those times. The night after the combat, the victorious soldiers gave liberty to almost all their prisoners. The Venetian envoys having made a complaint on this subject to the Count, he inquired what was become of the captives; and upon being informed that all, except four hundred, had been set free, he gave orders that the remaining ones also should be released immediately, according to the custom which prevailed amongst the armies of those days, the object of which was to prevent a speedy termination of the war. This proceeding of Carmagnola's occasioned much distrust and irritation in the minds of the Venetian rulers, and their displeasure was increased, when the armada of the Republic, commanded by Il Trevisani, was defeated

upon the Po, without any attempt in its favour having been made by the Count. The failure of their attempt upon Cremona, was also imputed to him as a crime, and the Senate, resolving to free themselves from a powerful chief, now become an object of suspicion, after many deliberations on the best method of carrying their designs into effect, at length determined to invite him to Venice, under pretence of consulting him on their negotiations for peace. He obeyed their summons without hesitation or mistrust, and was everywhere received with extraordinary honours, during the course of his journey. On his arrival at Venice, and before he entered his own house, eight gentlemen were sent to meet him, by whom he was escorted to St Mark's Place. When he was introduced into the ducal palace, his attendants were dismissed, and informed that he would be in private with the Doge for a considerable time. He was arrested in the palace, then examined by the Secret Council, put to the torture, which a wound he had received in the service of the Republic rendered still more agonizing, and condemned to death. On the 5th May 1432, he was conducted to execution, with his mouth gagged, and beheaded between the two columns of St Mark's Place. With regard to the innocence or guilt of this distinguished character, there exists no authentic information. The author of the tragedy, which we are about to analyse, has chosen to represent him as entirely innocent, and probability at least is on this side. It is possible that the haughtiness of an aspiring warrior, accustomed to command, and impatient of control, might have been the principal cause of offence to the Venetians; or perhaps their jealousy was excited by his increasing power over the minds of an obedient army; and not considering it expedient to displace him, they resolved upon his destruction.

This tragedy, which is formed upon the model of the English and German drama, comprises the history of Carmagnola's life, from the day on which he was made commander of the Venetian armies, to that of his execution, thus embracing a period of about seven years. The extracts we are about to present to our readers, will enable them to form their own opi-

nion of a piece, which has excited so much attention in Italy. The first act opens in Venice, in the hall of the Senate. The Doge proposes that the Count di Carmagnola should be consulted, on the projected league between the Republic and the Florentines, against the Duke of Milan. To this all agree, and the Count is introduced. He begins by justifying his conduct from the imputations to which it might be liable, in consequence of his appearing as the enemy of the Prince whom he had so recently served.

——— He cast me down
From the high place my blood had dearly
won,
And when I sought his presence, to appeal
For justice there, 'twas vain! my foes had
form'd
Around his throne a barrier; e'en my life
Became the mark of hatred, but in this
Their hopes have fail'd—I gave them not
the time.
My life!—I stand prepar'd to yield it up
On the proud field, and in some noble
cause,
For glory well exchange'd—but not a prey,
Not to be caught ignobly in the toils
Of those I scorn. I left him, and obtain'd
With you a place of refuge—yet e'en here
His snares were cast around me. Now all
ties
Are broke between us; to an open foe,
An open foe I come.—

He then gives counsel in favour of war, and retires, leaving the senate engaged in deliberation. War is resolved upon, and he is elected commander. The fourth scene represents the house of Carmagnola. His soliloquy is noble, but its character is much more that of English than of Italian poetry, and may be traced, without difficulty, to the celebrated monologue of Hamlet.

A leader—or a fugitive!—to drag
Slow years along in idle vacancy,
As a worn veteran living on the fame
Of former deeds—to offer humble prayers
And blessings for protection—owing all
Yet left me of existence to the might
Of other swords, dependent on some arm
Which soon may cast me off—or on the
field
To breathe once more, to feel the tide of
life
Rush proudly through my veins—to hail
again
My lofty star, and at the trumpet's voice
To wake! to rule! to conquer!—Which
must be

My fate, this hour decides. And yet, if
 peace
 Should be the choice of Venice, shall I
 cling
 Still poorly to ignoble safety here,
 Secluded as a homicide, who cowers
 Within a temple's precincts? Shall not he
 Who made a kingdom's fate, control his
 own?
 Is there not one amidst the many lords
 Of this divided Italy, not one
 With soul enough to envy that bright crown
 Encircling Philip's head? And know they
 not
 'Twas won by me from many a tyrant's
 grasp,
 Snatch'd by my hand, and plac'd upon the
 brow
 Of that ingrate, from whom my spirit burns
 Again to wrest it, and bestow the prize
 On him who best shall call the prowess
 forth
 Which slumbers in my arm?

Marco, a senator, and a friend of
 the Count, now arrives, and announces
 to him that war is resolved upon, and
 that he is appointed to the command
 of the armies, at the same time advis-
 ing him to act with caution towards
 his enemies in the Republic.

Car. Think'st thou I know not whom
 to deem my foes?
Aye, I could number all.
Mar. And know'st thou too
 What fault hath made them such?—'Tis,
 that thou art
 So high above them; 'tis, that thy disdain
 Doth meet them undisguised. As yet not
 one
 Hath done thee wrong; but who, when so
 resolv'd,
 Finds not his time to injure?—In thy
 thoughts,
 Save when they cross thy path, no place is
 theirs;
 But they remember *thee*. The high in soul
 Scorn, and forget; but to the grovelling
 heart
 There is delight in hatred. Rouse it not,
 Subdue it, while the power is yet thine
 own.
 I counsel no vile arts, from which my soul
 Revolts indignantly; thou know'st it well.
 But there is yet a wisdom, not unmeet
 For the most lofty nature,—there is power
 Of winning meaner minds, without descent
 From the high spirit's glorious eminence,—
 And, would'st thou seek that magic, it
 were thine.

The first scene of the second act re-
 presents part of the Duke of Milan's
 camp near Maclodio. Malatesti, the
 commander-in-chief, and Pergola, a
 Condottiere of great distinction, are

deliberating upon the state of the war. Pergola considers it imprudent to give battle, Malatesti is of a contrary opinion. They are joined by Sforza and Fortebraccio, who are impatient for action, and Torello, who endeavours to convince them of its inexpediency.

Sfo. Torello, did'st thou mark the ardent soul

Which fires each soldier's eye?

Tor. I mark'd it well.

I heard th' impatient shout, th' exulting voice

Of Hope and Courage, and I turn'd aside,
That on my brow the warrior might not read

Th' involuntary thought, whose sudden gloom

Had cast deep shadows there. It was a thought,

That this vain semblance of delusive joy
Soon like a dream shall fade. It was a thought

On wasted valour doom'd to perish here.

For these—what boots it to disguise the truth?—

These are no wars in which, for all things lov'd,

And precious, and rever'd, for all the ties
Clinging around the heart, for those whose smile

Makes home so lovely, for his native land,
And for its laws, the patriot soldier fights!
These are no wars in which the chieftain's aim

Is but to station his devoted bands,
And their's, thus fix'd—to die! It is *our* fate

To lead a hireling train, whose spirits breathe

Fury, not fortitude. With burning hearts
They rush where Victory smiling waves them on;

But if delay'd, if between flight and death,
Pausing they stand—is there no cause to doubt

What choice were theirs? And but too well
our hearts

That choice might here foresee. Oh! evil times,

When for the leader, care augments, the more

Bright glory fades away!—Yet, once again,
This is no field for us.

After various debates, Malatesti resolves to attack the enemy. The fourth and fifth scenes of the second act represent the tent of the Count in the Venetian camp, and his preparations for battle. And here a magnificent piece of lyric poetry is introduced, in which the battle is described, and its fatal effects lamented, with all the feeling of a patriot and a

Christian. It appears to us, however, that this ode, hymn, or chorus, as the author has entitled it, striking as its effect may be in a separate recitation, produces a much less powerful impression in the situation it occupies at present. It is even necessary, in order to appreciate its singular beauty, that it should be re-perused, as a thing detached from the tragedy. The transition is too violent, in our opinion, from a tragic action, in which the characters are represented as clothed with existence, and passing before us with all their contending motives and feelings laid open to our inspection; to the comparative coldness of a lyric piece, where the author's imagination expatiates alone. The poet may have been led into this error by a definition of Schlegel's, who, speaking of the Greek chorusses, gives it as his opinion, that "the chorus is to be considered as a personification of the moral thoughts inspired by the action; as the organ of the poet, who speaks in the name of the whole human race. The chorus, in short, is the *ideal* spectator."

But the fact was not exactly thus: The Greek chorus was composed of *real* characters, and expressed the sentiments of the people before whose eyes the action was imagined to be passing; thus the *true* spectator, after witnessing in representation the triumphs or misfortunes of kings and heroes, heard from the chorus the idea supposed to be entertained on the subject by the more enlightened part of the multitude. If the author, availing himself of his talent for lyric poetry, and varying the measure in conformity to the subject, had brought his chorus into action, introducing, for example, a veteran looking down upon the battle from an eminence, and describing its vicissitudes to the persons below, with whom he might interchange a variety of national and moral reflections, it appears to us that the dramatic effect would have been considerably heightened, and the assertion that the Greek chorus is not compatible with the system of the modern drama, possibly disproved. We shall present our readers with the entire chorus of which we have spoken, as a piece to be read separately, and one to which the following title would be much more appropriate.

*The Battle of Macclodio, (or Macalo,)—
an Ode.*

Hark ! from the right bursts forth a trumpet's sound,
A loud, shrill trumpet from the left replies !
On every side hoarse echoes from the ground
To the quick tramp of steeds and warriors rise,
Hollow and deep—and banners all around,
Meet hostile banners waving to the skies ;
Here steel-clad bands in marshall'd order shine,
And there a host confronts their glittering line.

Lo ! half the field already from the sight
Hath vanish'd, hid by closing groups of foes !
Swords crossing swords, flash lightning o'er the fight,
And the strife deepens, and the life-blood flows !
Oh ! who are these ? What stranger in his might
Comes bursting on the lovely land's repose ?
What patriot hearts have nobly vow'd to save
Their native soil, or make its dust their grave ?

One race, alas ! these foes, one kindred race,
Were born and rear'd the same fair scenes among !
The stranger calls them brothers—and each face
That brotherhood reveals ;—one common tongue
Dwells on their lips—the earth on which we trace
Their heart's blood—is the soil from whence they sprung.
One mother gave them birth—this chosen land,
Circled with Alps and seas, by Nature's guardian hand.

O grief and horror ! who the first could dare
Against a brother's breast the sword to wield ?
What cause unhallow'd, and accurs'd, declare,
Hath bath'd with carnage this ignoble field ?
Think'st thou they know ?—they but inflict and share
Misery and death, the motive unreveal'd !
—Sold to a leader, sold *himself* to die,
With him they strive, they fall—and ask not why.

But are there none who love them ? Have they none,
No wives, no mothers, who might rush between,

And win with tears the husband and the son
Back to his home, from this polluted scene ?
And they, whose hearts, when life's bright
day is done,
Unfold to thoughts more solemn and se-
rene,
Thoughts of the tomb; why cannot *they*
assuage
The storms of passion with the voice of
age ?

Ask not !—the peasant at his cabin-door
Sits calmly pointing to the distant cloud
Which skirts th' horizon, menacing to
pour
Destruction down o'er fields he hath not
plough'd.

Thus, where no echo of the battle's roar
Is heard afar, even thus the reckless crowd,
In tranquil safety number o'er the slain,
Or tell of cities burning on the plain.

There mayst thou mark the boy, with
earnest gaze
Fix'd on his mother's lips, intent to know
By names of insult, those, whom future
days
Shall see him meet in arms, their deadliest
foe.

There proudly many a glittering dame
displays
Bracelet and zone, with radiant gems that
glow,
By lovers, husbands, home in triumph
borne,
From the sad brides of fallen warriors torn.

Woe to the victors and the vanquish'd, woe !
The earth is heap'd, is loaded with the
slain,

Loud and more loud the cries of fury grow,
A sea of blood is swelling o'er the plain.
But from th' embattled front already, lo !
A band recedes—it flies—all hope is vain,
And venal hearts, despairing of the strife,
Wake to the love, the clinging love of life.

As the light grain disperses in the air,
Borne from the winnowing by the gales a-
round,
Thus fly the vanquish'd, in their wild de-
spair,
Chas'd—sever'd—scatter'd—o'er the ample
ground.

But mightier bands, that lay in ambush
there,
Burst on their flight—and hark ! the
deepening sound
Of fierce pursuit !—still nearer and more
near,
The rush of war-steeds trampling in the
rear.

The day is won !—they fall—disarm'd they
yield,
Low at the conqueror's feet all suppliant
lying !
Midst shouts of victory pealing o'er the
field,

Ah! who may hear the murmurs of the
dying?

Haste! let the tale of triumph be reveal'd!
E'en now the courier to his steed is flying,
He spurs—he speeds—with tidings of the
day,

To rouse up cities in his lightning way.

Why pour ye forth from your deserted
homes,

O eager multitudes! around him pressing?
Each hurrying where his breathless courser
foams,

Each tongue, each eye, infatuate hope con-
fessing!

Know ye not *whence* th' ill-omen'd herald
comes,

And dare ye dream he comes with words
of blessing?—

Brothers, by brothers slain, lie low and
cold,—

Be ye content! the glorious tale is told.

I hear the voice of joy, th' exulting cry!
They deck the shrine, they swell the cho-
ral strains,

E'en now the homicides assail the sky
With peans, which indignant Heaven dis-
dains!—

But from the *souring*' Alps the stranger's eye
Looks watchful down on our *cosanguin'd*
plains,

And, with the cruel rapture of a foe,
Numbers the mighty, stretch'd in death
below.

Haste! form your lines again, ye brave
and true!

Haste, haste! your triumphs and your
joys suspending;

Th' invader comes, your banners raise a-
new,

Rush to the strife, your country's call at-
tending!

Victors! why pause ye?—Are ye weak
and few?—

Aye! such he deem'd you, and for *this*
descending,

He waits you on the field ye know too well,
The same red war-field where your breth-
ren fell.

O thou devoted land! that can'st not rear
In peace thine offspring; thou, the lost and
won,

The fair and fatal soil, that dost appear
Too narrow still for each contending son;
Receive the stranger, in his fierce career.
Parting thy spoils! thy chastening is be-
gun!

And, wresting from thy kings the guar-
dian sword,

Foes, whom thou ne'er hadst wrong'd, sit
proudly at thy board.

Are these infatuate too?—Oh! who hath
known

A people e'er by guilt's vain triumph blest?
The wrong'd, the vanquish'd, suffer not
alone,

Brief is the joy that swells th' oppressor's
breast.
What though not yet his day of pride be
flown,
Though yet heaven's vengeance spare his
haughty crest,
Well hath it mark'd him—and decreed the
hour,
When his last sigh shall own the terror of
its power.

Are we not creatures of one hand divine?
Form'd in one mould, to one redemption
born?
Kindred alike where'er our skies may shine,
Where'er our sight first drank the vital
morn?
Brothers! one bond around our souls
should twine,
And woe to him by whom that bond is
torn!
Who mounts by trampling broken hearts
to earth,
Who bows down spirits of immortal birth!

The third act, which passes entirely in the tent of the Count, is composed of long discourses between Carmagnola and the Venetian envoys. One of these requires him to pursue the fugitives after his victory, which he haughtily refuses to do, declaring that he will not leave the field until he has gained possession of the surrounding fortresses. Another complains that the Condottieri and the soldiers have released their prisoners, to which he replies, that it is an established military custom; and sending for the remaining four hundred captives, he gives them their liberty also. This act, which terminates with the suspicious observations of the envoys on Carmagnola's conduct, is rather barren of interest, though the episode of the younger Pergola, which we shall lay before our readers, is happily imagined.

As the prisoners are departing, the Count observes the younger Pergola, and stops him.

Carmagnola. Thou art not, youth!
One to be number'd with the vulgar crowd.
Thy garb, and more, thy towering mien,
would speak
Of nobler parentage. Yet with the rest
Thou minglest, and art silent!
Pergola. Silence best,
O chief, befits the vanquish'd.
Car. Bearing up
Against thy fate thus proudly, thou art
prov'd
Worthy a better star. Thy name?
Per. 'Tis one

Whose heritage doth impose no common
task

On him that bears it. One, which to a-
dorn

With brighter blazonry were hard emprise.
My name is Pergola.

Car. And art thou then
That warrior's son?

Per. I am.

Car. Approach! embrace
Thy father's early friend! What thou art
now

I was, when first we met. Oh! thou dost
bring

Back on my heart remembrance of the days,
The young, and joyous, and adventurous
days

Of hope and ardour. And despond not
thou!

My dawn, 'tis true, with brighter omens
smil'd,

But still fair Fortune's glorious promises
Are for the brave, and though delay'd
awhile,

She soon or late fulfils them. Youth! sa-
lute

Thy sire for me; and say, though not of
thee

I ask'd it, yet my heart is well assured
He counsell'd not this battle.

Per. Oh! he gave
Far other counsels, but his fruitless words
Were spoken to the winds.

Car. Lament thou not.
Upon his chieftain's head the shame will
rest

Of this defeat; and he who firmly stood
Fix'd at his post of peril, hath begun
A soldier's race full nobly. Follow me,
I will restore thy sword.

The fourth act is occupied by the machinations of the Count's enemies at Venice; and the jealous and complicated policy of that Republic, and despotic authority of the Council of Ten, are skilfully developed in many of the scenes.

The first scene of the fifth act opens at Venice in the hall of the Council of Ten. Carmagnola is consulted by the Doge on the terms of peace offered by the Duke of Milan. His advice is received with disdain, and after various insults, he is accused of treason. His astonishment and indignation at this unexpected charge are expressed with all the warmth and simplicity of innocence.

Car. A traitor! I!—that name of infamy
Reaches not me. Let him the title bear,
Who best deserves such meed—it is not
mine.

Call me a dupe, and I may well submit,
For such my part is here; yet would I not

Exchange that name, for 'tis the worthiest
still.

A traitor!—I retrace in thought the time,
When for your cause I fought; 'tis all one
path

Strew'd o'er with flowers. Point out the
day on which

A traitor's deeds were mine; the day which
pass'd

Unmark'd by thanks, and praise, and pro-
mises

Of high reward! What more? Behold me
here!

And when I came to seeming honour call'd,
When in my heart most deeply spoke the
voice

Of love, and grateful zeal, and trusting
faith—

Of trusting faith! oh! no.—Doth he who
comes

Th' invited guest of friendship, dream of
faith?

I came to be ensnar'd! Well! it is done,
And be it so! but since deceitful hate

Hath thrown at length her smiling mask
aside,

Praise be to heaven! an open field at least
Is spread before us. Now 'tis yours to

speak,
Mine to defend my cause; declare ye then
My treasons!

Doge. By the secret college soon
All shall be told thee.

Car. I appeal not there.
What I have done for you, hath all been
done

In the bright noon-day, and its tale shall
not

Be told in darkness. Of a warrior's deeds
Warriors alone should judge; and such I
chuse

To be mine arbiters; my proud defence
Shall not be made in secret. All shall
hear.

Doge. The time for choice is past.

Car. What! is there force
Employ'd against me?—Guards! (*raising
his voice.*)

Doge. They are not nigh.
Soldiers! (*enter armed men.*)

Thy guards are these.

Car. I am betray'd!

Doge. 'Twas then a thought of wisdom
to disperse

Thy followers. Well and justly was it
deem'd

That the bold traitor, in his plots surpris'd,
Might prove a rebel too.

Car. E'en as ye list,
Now be it yours to charge me.

Doge. Bear him hence,
Before the secret college.

Car. Hear me yet
One moment first. That ye have doom'd
my death

I well perceive; but with that death ye
doom

Your own eternal shame. Far o'er these
towers

Beyond its ancient bounds, majestic floats
The banner of the Lion, in its pride
Of conquering power, and well doth Europe
know

I bore it thus to empire. Here, 'tis true,
No voice will speak men's thoughts; but
far beyond

The limits of your sway, in other scenes
Where that still, speechless terror hath not
reach'd,

Which is your sceptre's attribute; my
deeds,

And your reward, will live in chronicles
For ever to endure. Yet, yet, respect
Your annals, and the future! ye will need
A warrior soon, and who will then be yours?
Forget not, tho' your captive now I stand,
I was not born your subject. No! my
birth

Was 'midst a warlike people, one in soul,
And watchful o'er its rights, and us'd to
deem

The honour of each citizen its own.
Think ye this outrage will be there unheard?
There is some treachery here. Our com-
mon foes

Have urged you on to this. Full well ye
know

I have been faithful still. There yet is
time.

Doge. The time is past. When thou
didst meditate

Thy guilt, and in thy pride of heart defy
Those destin'd to chastise it, then the hour
Of foresight should have been.

Cor. O mean in soul!

And dost thou dare to think a warrior's
breast

For worthless life can tremble? Thou shalt
soon

Learn how to die. Go! when the hour of
fate

On thy vile couch o'ertakes thee, thou wilt
meet

Its summons with far other mien, than such
As I shall bear to ignominious death.

SCENE II.—*The House of Carmagnola.*

ANTONIETTA, MATILDA.

Mat. The hours fly fast, the morn is
ris'n, and yet
My father comes not!

Ant. Ah! thou hast not learn'd
By sad experience, with how slow a pace
Joys ever come; expected long, and oft
Deceiving expectation! while the steps
Of grief o'ertake us, ere we dream them
nigh.

But night is pass'd, the long and lingering
hours

Of hope deferr'd are o'er, and those of bliss
Must soon succeed. A few short moments
more,

And he is with us. E'en from this delay
I augur well. A council held so long
Must be to give us peace. He will be
ours,
Perhaps for years, our own.

Mat. O mother! thus
My hopes too whisper. Nights enough in
tears,
And days in all the sickness of suspense
Our anxious love hath pass'd. It is full
time

That each sad moment, at each rumour'd
tale,

Each idle murmur of the people's voice,
We should no longer tremble; that no
more

This thought should haunt our souls—
E'en now, perchance,

He for whom thus your hearts are yearn-
ing—dies!

Ant. Oh! fearful thought!—but vain
and distant now!

Each joy, my daughter, must be bought
with grief.

Hast thou forgot the day, when, proudly
led

In triumph midst the noble and the brave,
Thy glorious father to the temple bore
The banners won in battle from his foes?

Mat. A day to be remember'd!

Ant. By his side

Each seem'd inferior. Every breath of air
Swell'd with his echoing name; and we,
the while,

Stationed on high, and sever'd from the
throng,

Gaz'd on that one who drew the gaze of all,
While with the tide of rapture half o'er-
whelm'd,

Our hearts beat high, and whisper'd—
“We are his.”

Mat. Moments of joy!

Ant. What have we done, my child,
To merit such? Heaven, for so high a fate,
Chose us from thousands, and upon thy
brow

Inscribed a lofty name, a name so bright,
That he to whom thou bear'st the gift,
whate'er

His race, may boast it proudly. What a
mark

For envy is the glory of our lot!

And we should weigh its joys against these
hours

Of fear and sorrow.

Mat. They are pass'd e'en now.

Hark! 'twas the sound of oars!—it swells
—'tis hush'd!

The gates unclose—O mother! I behold
A warrior clad in mail—he comes, 'tis he!

Ant. Whom should it be if not himself?
—my husband!

(*She comes forward.*)

(*Enter GONZAGA and others.*)

Ant. Gonzaga!—Where is he we look'd
for? Where?

Thou answerest not!—O heaven! thy
 looks are fraught
 With prophecies of woe!
Gon. Alas! too true
 The omens they reveal!
Mat. Of woe to whom?
Gon. Oh! why hath such a task of bit-
 terness
 Fall'n to my lot?
Ant. Thou wouldst be pitiful,
 And thou art cruel. Close this dread sus-
 pense;
 Speak! I adjure thee, in the name of God!
 Where is my husband?
Gon. Heaven sustain your souls
 With fortitude to bear the tale!—my
 chief—
Mat. Is he return'd unto the field?
Gon. Alas!
 Thither the warrior shall return no more.
 The senate's wrath is on him. He is now
 A prisoner!
Ant. He a prisoner!—and for what?
Gon. He is accused of treason.
Mat. Treason! *He*
 A traitor!—Oh! my father!
Ant. Haste! proceed,
 And pause no more. Our hearts are
 nerv'd for all.
 Say, what shall be his sentence?
Gon. From my lips
 It shall not be reveal'd.
Ant. Oh! he is slain!
Gon. He lives, but yet his doom is fix'd.
Ant. He lives!
 Weep not, my daughter! 'tis the time to
 act.
 For pity's sake, Gonzaga, be thou not
 Wearied of our afflictions. Heaven to thee
 Entrusts the care of two forsaken ones.
 He was thy friend—Ah! haste, then, be
 our guide,
 Conduct us to his judges. Come, my
 child,
 Poor innocent, come with me. There yet
 is left
 Mercy upon the earth. Yes! they them-
 selves
 Are husbands, they are fathers! When
 they sign'd
 The fearful sentence, they remember'd not
He was a father, and a husband too.
 But when their eyes behold the agony
 One word of theirs hath caus'd, their hearts
 will melt,
 They will, they *must* revoke it. Oh! the
 sight
 Of mortal woe is terrible to man!
 Perhaps the warrior's lofty soul disdain'd
 To vindicate his deeds, or to recall
 His triumphs, won for them. It is for us
 To wake each high remembrance. Ah!
 we know
 That he implor'd not, but *our* knees shall
 bend,
 And we will pray.
Gon. Oh Heaven! that I could leave

Your hearts one ray of hope ! There is no
 ear,
 No place for prayers. The judges here are
 deaf,
 Implacable, unknown. The thunderbolt
 Falls heavy, and the hand by which 'tis
 launch'd
 Is veil'd in clouds. There is one comfort
 still,
 The sole sad comfort of a parting hour,
 I come to bear. Ye may behold him yet.
 The moments fly. Arouse your strength
 of heart.
 Oh ! fearful is the trial, but the God
 Of Mourners will be with you.
Mat. Is there not
 One hope ?
Ant. Alas ! my child !

SCENE IV.—*A Prison.*

CARMAGNOLA.

They must have heard it now.—Oh ! that
 at least
 I might have died far from them ! Though
 their hearts
 Had bled to hear the tidings, yet the hour,
 The solemn hour of Nature's parting pangs,
 Had then been past. It meets us darkly
 now,
 And we must drain its draught of bitter-
 ness
 Together, drop by drop. O ye wide fields !
 Ye plains of fight, and thrilling sounds of
 arms !
 O proud delights of danger ! Battle-cries,
 And thou, my war-steed ! and ye trumpet-
 notes
 Kindling the soul ! Midst your tumultuous
 joys
 Death seem'd all beautiful.—And must I
 then,
 With shrinking cold reluctance, to my fate
 Be dragg'd, e'en as a felon, on the winds
 Pouring vain prayers and impotent com-
 plaints ?
 And Marco ! hath he not betray'd me too ?
 Vile doubt ! that I could cast it from my
 soul
 Before I die !—But no ! What boots it now
 Thus to look back on life with eye that
 turns
 To linger where my footstep may not tread ?
 Now, Philip ! thou wilt triumph ! Be it so !
 I too have prov'd such vain and impious
 joys,
 And know their value now. But oh ! again
 To see those lov'd ones, and to hear the
 last,
 Last accents of their voices ! By those arms
 Once more to be encircled, and from thence
 To tear myself for ever !—Hark ! they
 come !
 O God of Mercy, from thy throne look
 down
 In pity on their woes !

SCENE V.

ANTONIETTA, MATILDA, GONZAGA, and
CARMAGNOLA.

Ant. My husband!

Mat. Oh! my father!

Ant. Is it thus

That thou return'st? and is this the hour
Desir'd so long?

Car. O ye afflicted ones!

Heaven knows I dread its pangs for you a-
lone.

Long have my thoughts been us'd to look
on Death,

And calmly wait his time. For you alone
My soul hath need of firmness; will ye,
then,

Deprive me of its aid?—When the Most
High

On virtue pours afflictions, he bestows
The courage to sustain them. Oh! let
yours

Equal your sorrows! Let us yet find joy
In this embrace, 'tis still a gift of Heaven.
Thou weep'st, my child! and thou, belov-
ed wife!

Ah! when I made thee mine, thy days
flowed on

In peace and gladness; I united thee
To my disastrous fate, and now the thought
Embitters death. Oh! that I had not seen
The woes I cause thee!

Ant. Husband of my youth!

Of my bright days, thou who did'st make
them bright,

Read thou my heart! the pangs of death
are there,

And yet, e'en now—I would not but be
thine.

Car. Full well I know how much I lose
in thee;

Oh! make me not too deeply feel it now.

Mat. The homicides!

Car. No, sweet Matilda, no!

Let no dark thought of rage or vengeance
rise

To cloud thy gentle spirit, and disturb
These moments—they are sacred. Yes!
my wrongs

Are deep, but, thou, forgive them, and
confess,

That, e'en midst all the fulness of our woe,
High, holy joy remains.—Death! Death!
—our foes,

Our most relentless foes, can only speed
Th' inevitable hour. Oh! man hath not
Invented death for man; it would be *then*
Maddening and insupportable;—from Hea-
ven

'Tis sent, and Heaven doth temper all its
pangs

With such blest comfort, as no mortal
power

Can give or take away. My wife! my
child!

Hear my last words—they wring your bo-
soms now

With agony, but yet, some future day,
 'Twill soothe you to recal them. Live, my
 wife!
 Sustain thy grief, and live! this ill-starr'd
 girl
 Must not be reft of all. Fly swiftly hence,
 Conduct her to thy kindred, she is their's,
 Of their own blood—and they so lov'd thee
 once!
 Then, to their foe united, thou becam'st
 Less dear; for feuds and wrongs made
 warring sounds
 Of Carmagnola's and Visconti's names.
 But to their bosoms thou wilt now return
 A mourner; and the object of their hate
 Will be no more.—Oh! there is joy in
 death!—
 And thou, my flower! that midst the din
 of arms,
 Wert born to cheer my soul, thy lovely
 head
 Droops to the earth! Alas! the tempest's
 rage
 Is on thee now. Thou tremblest, and thy
 heart
 Can scarce contain the heavings of its woe.
 I feel thy burning tears upon my breast,
 I feel, and cannot dry them. Dost thou
 claim
 Pity from me, Matilda? Oh! thy sire
 Hath now no power to aid thee, but thou
 know'st
 That the forsaken have a Father still,
 On High. Confide in him, and live to days
 Of peace, if not of joy; for such to thee
 He surely destines. Wherefore hath he
 poured
 The torrent of affliction on thy youth,
 If to thy future years be not reserved
 All his benign compassion? Live! and
 soothe
 Thy suffering mother. May she to the arms
 Of no ignoble consort lead thee still!—
 Gonzaga! take the hand which thou hast
 pressed
 Oft in the morn of battle, when our hearts
 Had cause to doubt if we should meet at
 eve.
 Wilt thou yet press it, pledging me thy faith
 To guide and guard these mourners, till
 they join
 Their friends and kindred?
Gon. Rest assured, I will.
Car. I am content. And if, when this
 is done,
 Thou to the field returnest, there for me
 Salute my brethren; tell them that I died
 Guiltless; thou hast been witness of my
 deeds,
 Hast read my inmost thoughts—and
 know'st it well.
 Tell them I never, with a traitor's shame,
 Stain'd my bright sword.—Oh! never—
 I myself
 Have been ensnar'd by treachery. Think
 of me

When trumpet-notes are stirring every
heart,
And banners proudly waving in the air,
Think of thine ancient comrade ! And the
day
Following the combat, when upon the field
Amidst the deep and solemn harmony
Of dirge and hymn, the priest of funeral
rites,
With lifted hands is offering for the slain
His sacrifice to heaven ;—forget me not !
For I, too, hoped upon the battle plain
E'en so to die.

Anton. Have mercy on us, Heaven !

Car. My wife ! Matilda ! Now the hour
is nigh,

And we must part.—Farewell !

Mat. No, father ! no !

Car. Come to this breast yet, yet once
more, and then

For pity's sake depart !

Anton. No ! force alone
Shall tear us thence.

(A sound of arms is heard.)

Mat. Hark ! what dread sound !

Anton. Great God !

(The door is half opened, and armed men enter, the chief of whom advances to the Count. His wife and daughter full senseless.)

Car. O God ! I thank thee. O most
merciful !

Thus to withdraw their senses from the
pangs

Of this dread moment's conflict !

Thou, my friend,

Assist them, bear them from this scene of
woe,

And tell them, when their eyes again un-
close

To meet the day—that nought is left to
fear.

Notwithstanding the pathetic beauties of the last act, the attention which this tragedy has excited in Italy, must be principally attributed to the boldness of the author in so completely emancipating himself from the fetters of the dramatic unities. The severity with which the tragic poets of that country have, in general, restricted themselves to those rules, has been sufficiently remarkable, to obtain, at least, temporary distinction, for the courage of the writer who should attempt to violate them. Although this piece comprises a period of several years, and that, too, in days so troubled, and so "full of fate," days in which the deepest passions and most powerful energies of the human mind were called into action by the strife of conflicting interests ; there is, ne-

vertheless, as great a deficiency of incident, as if "to be born and die" made all the history of aspiring natures contending for supremacy. The character of the hero is pourtrayed in words, not in actions; it does not unfold itself in any struggle of opposite feelings and passions, and the interest excited for him only commences at the moment when it ought to have reached its climax. The merits of the piece may be summed up in the occasional energy of the language and dignity of the thoughts; and the truth with which the spirit of the age is characterized, as well in the development of that suspicious policy distinguishing the system of the Venetian government, as in the pictures of the fiery Condottieri, holding their councils of war,

Jealous of honour, sudden and quick in quarrel.

ITALIAN LITERATURE.

No. IV.

Caius Gracchus, a Tragedy, by Monti.

THIS tragedy, though inferior in power and interest to the *Aristodemo* of the same author, is, nevertheless, distinguished by beauties of a high order, and such as, in our opinion, fully establish its claims to more general attention than it has hitherto received. Although the loftiness and severity of Roman manners in the days of the Republic, have been sufficiently preserved to give an impressive character to the piece, yet those workings of passion and tenderness, without which dignity soon becomes monotonous, and heroism unnatural, have not been (as in the tragedies of Alfieri upon similar subjects) too rigidly suppressed. The powerful character of the high-hearted Cornelia, with all the calm, collected majesty which our ideas are wont to associate with the name of a Roman matron; and the depth and sublimity of maternal affection more particularly belonging to the mother of the Gracchi, are beautifully contrasted with the softer and more womanish feelings, the intense anxieties, the sensitive and passionate attachment, embodied in the person of Licinia, the wife of Gracchus. The appeals made by Gracchus to the people are full of majestic eloquence, and the whole piece seems to be animated by that restless and untameable spirit of freedom, whose immortalized struggles for ascendancy give so vivid a colouring, so

exalted an interest, to the annals of the ancient republics.

The tragedy opens with the soliloquy of Caius Gracchus, who is returned in secret to Rome, after having been employed in rebuilding Carthage, which Scipio had utterly demolished.

Caius, in Rome behold thyself! the night
Hath spread her favouring shadows o'er
thy path;

And thou, be strong, my Country! for thy
son,
Gracchus, is with thee! All is hush'd
around,

And in deep slumber, from the cares of day,
The worn Plebeians rest. Oh! good, and
true,

And only Romans! your repose is sweet,
For toil hath given it zest; 'tis calm and
pure,

For no remorse hath troubled it. Mean-
while,
My brother's murderers, the Patricians,
hold

Inebriate vigils o'er their festal boards,
Or in dark midnight-councils, sentence me
To death, and Rome to chains. They
little deem

Of the unlook'd for and tremendous foe,
So near at hand!—It is enough. I tread
In safety my paternal threshold.—Yes!
This is my own! Oh! mother! Oh my
wife!

My child!—I come to dry your tears. I
come

Strengthened by three dread Furies. One
is Wrath,

Fir'd by my Country's wrongs; and one
deep Love,

For those, my bosom's inmates; and the
third—

Vengeance, fierce Vengeance, for a bro-
ther's blood!

His soliloquy is interrupted by the entrance of Fulvius, his friend, with whose profligate character, and unprincipled designs, he is represented as unacquainted. From the opening speech made by Fulvius (before he is aware of the presence of Caius) to the slave by whom he is attended, it appears that he is just returned from the perpetration of some crime, the nature of which is not disclosed until the second act. The suspicions of Caius are, however, awakened, by the obscure allusions to some act of signal, but secret vengeance, which Fulvius throws out in the course of the ensuing discussion.

Ful. This is no time for grief and feeble
tears,
But for high deeds.

Caius. And we will make it such.
But prove we first our strength. Declare,
what friends
(If yet misfortune hath her friends) remain
True to our cause ?

Ful. Few, few, but valiant hearts.

Oh ! what a change is here ! There was a
time,
When, over all supreme, thy word gave law
To nations and their rulers ; in thy pre-
sence
The senate trembled, and the citizens
Flock'd round thee in deep reverence. Then
a word,
A look from Caius, a salute, a smile,
Fill'd them with pride. Each sought to
be the friend,
The client,—aye, the very slave, of him,
The people's idol ; and beholding them
Thus prostrate in thy path, thou, thou
thyself,
Didst blush to see their vileness !—But thy
Fortune
Is waning now, her glorious phantoms melt
Into dim vapour, and the earthly god,
So worshipp'd once, from his forsaken
shrines,
Down to the dust is hurl'd.

Caius. And what of this ?
There is no power in Fortune to deprive
Gracchus of Gracchus. Mine is such a
heart,
As meets the storm exultingly ; a heart
Whose stern delight it is to strive with fate,
And conquer. Trust me, Fate is terrible,
But because man is vile. A coward first
Made her a deity.

But say, what thoughts
Are foster'd by the people ? Have they
lost
The sense of their misfortunes ? Is the
name
Of Gracchus in their hearts, (reveal the
truth,)

Already numbered with forgotten things ?

Ful. A breeze, a passing breeze, now
here, now there,
Borne on light pinion, such the people's
love !

Yet have they claims on pardon, for their
faults
Are of their miseries ; and their feebleness
Is to their woes proportioned. Haply still,
The secret sigh of their full hearts is thine,
But their lips breathe it not. Their grief
is mute ;

And the deep paleness of their timid mien,
And eyes in fix'd despondence bent on earth,
And sometimes a faint murmur of thy
name,

Alone accuse them. They are hush'd, for
now,

Not one, nor two, their tyrants ; but a
host,

Whose numbers are the numbers of the
rich,

And the patrician Romans. Yes! and
well

May proud oppression dauntlessly go forth,
For Rome is widow'd! Distant wars en-
gage

The noblest of her youth, by Fabius led,
And but the weak remain. Hence every
heart

Sickens with voiceless terror; and the peo-
ple,

Subdued and trembling, turn to thee in
thought,

But yet are silent.

Caius. I will make them heard.

Rome is a slumbering lion, and my voice
Shall wake the mighty. Thou shalt see.

I came

Prepar'd for all; and as I track'd the deep
For Rome, my dangers to my spirit grew
Familiar in its musings. With a voice
Of wrath, the loud winds fiercely swell'd;
the waves

Mutter'd around; Heaven flash'd in light-
ning forth,

And the pale steersman trembled: I the
while

Stood on the tossing and bewilder'd bark,
Retir'd, and shrouded in my mantle's folds,
With thoughtful eyes cast down, and all
absorb'd

In a far deeper storm! Around my heart,
Gathering in secret, then my spirit's pow-
ers

Held council with themselves—and on my
thoughts

My country rose,—and I foresaw the snares,
The treacheries of Opimius, and the senate,
And my false friends, awaiting my return.

Fulvius! I wept! but they were tears of
rage!

For I was wrought to frenzy, by the
thought

Of my wrong'd country, and of him, that
brother,

Whose shade, through ten long years hath
sternly cried

“Vengeance!”—nor found it yet.

Ful. It is fulfilled.

Caius. And how?

Ful. Thou shalt be told.

Caius. Explain thy words.

Ful. Then know, (incautious that I
am!)

Caius. Why thus

Falters thy voice? Why speak'st thou not?

Ful. Forgive!

E'en friendship sometimes hath its secrets

Caius. No!

True friendship, never!

Caius afterwards inquires what part
his brother-in-law, Scipio Emilianus,
is likely to adopt in their enterprises.

His high renown,
The glorious deeds, whereby was earn'd his
name

Of second Africanus; and the blind,
 Deep reverence paid him by the people's
 hearts,
 Who, knowing him their foe, respect him
 still;
 All this disturbs me: hardly will be won
 Our day of victory, if by him withstood.
Ful. Yet won it *shall* be. If but *this*
 thou fear'st,
 Then be at peace.
Caius. I understand thee not.
Ful. Thou wilt ere long. But here we
 vainly waste
 Our time and words. Soon will the morn-
 ing break,
 Nor know thy friends as yet of thy return;
 I fly to cheer them with the tidings.
Caius. Stay!
Ful. And wherefore?
Caius. To reveal thy meaning.
Ful. Peace!
 I hear the sound of steps.

Their conversation is interrupted by the entrance of Cornelia, with the wife and child of Caius. They are about to seek an asylum in the house of Emilianus, by whom Cornelia has been warned of the imminent danger which menaces the family of her son, from the fury of the patricians, who intend, on the following day, to abrogate the laws enacted by the Gracchi, in favour of the plebeians. The joy and emotion of Gracchus, on this meeting with his family, may appear somewhat inconsistent with his having remained so long engaged in political discussion, on the threshold of their abode, without ever having made an inquiry after their welfare; but it would be somewhat unreasonable to try the conduct of a Roman (particularly in a tragedy) by the laws of *Nature*. Before, however, we are disposed to condemn the principles which seem to be laid down for the delineation of Roman character in dramatic poetry, let us recollect that the general habits of the people whose institutions gave birth to the fearful grandeur displayed in the actions of the elder Brutus, and whose towering spirit was fostered to enthusiasm by the contemplation of it, must have been deeply tinged by the austerity of even their virtues. Shakespeare alone, without compromising the dignity of his Romans, has disencumbered them of the formal scholastic drapery which seems to be their *official* garb, and has stamped their features with the general attributes of human nature, without effacing the impress which distin-

guished "the men of iron" from the nations who "stood still before them."

The first act concludes with the parting of Caius and Fulvius in wrath and suspicion, Cornelia having accused the latter of an attempt to seduce her daughter, the wife of Scipio, and of concealing the most atrocious designs under the mask of zeal for the cause of Liberty.

—Of liberty

What speak'st thou, and to whom? Thou
 hast no shame,
No virtue, and thy boast is—to be free!
Oh! zeal for liberty! eternal mask
Assum'd by every crime!

In the second act, the death of Emilianus is announced to Opimius, the consul, in the presence of Gracchus, and the intelligence is accompanied by a rumour of his having perished by assassination. The mysterious expressions of Fulvius, and the accusations of Cornelia, immediately recur to the mind of Caius. The following scene, in which his vehement emotions, and high sense of honour, are well contrasted with the cold-blooded sophistry of Fulvius, is powerfully wrought up.

Caius. Back on my thoughts the words
 of Fulvius rush,
Like darts of fire. All hell is in my heart!
 (*Fulvius enters.*)
Thou com'st in time. Speak! thou perfidious friend!
Scipio lies murder'd on his bed of death!
Who slew him?

Ful. Ask'st thou me?

Caius. Thee!—thee, who late
Did'st in such words discourse of him, as
 now
Assure me thou'rt his murderer. Traitor,
 speak!

Ful. If thus his fate doth weigh upon
 thy heart,
Thou art no longer Gracchus, or thou
 ravest!
More grateful praise, and warmer thanks,
 might well
Reward the generous courage which hath
 freed

Rome from a tyrant, Gracchus from a foe!

Caius. Then he was slain by thee!

Ful. Ungrateful friend!
Why dost thou tempt me? Danger menaces
 Thy honour, Freedom's wavering light is
 dim;

Rome wears the fetters of a guilty senate;
One Scipio drove thy brother to a death
Of infamy; another seeks thy fall;
And when one noble, one determin'd stroke,

To thee and thine assures the victory,
wreaks

The people's vengeance, gives thee life and
fame,

And pacifies thy brother's angry shade ;
Is it a cause for wailing ? Am I call'd

For *this* a murderer ? Go !—I say once
more,

Thou art no longer Gracchus, or thou
ravest !

Caius. I know thee now, barbarian !
Wouldst thou serve

My cause with crimes ?

Ful. And those of that proud man,
Whom I have slain, and thou dost mourn,
are *they*

To be forgotten ? Hath oblivion then
Shrouded the stern destroyer's ruthless
work,

The famine of Numantia ?—Such a deed,
As on our name the world's deep curses
drew !

Or the four hundred Lusian youths be-
tray'd,

And with their bleeding, mutilated limbs,
Back to their parents sent ? Is this forgot ?

Go, ask of Carthage !—bid her wasted
shores

Of him, this reveller in blood, recount .
The terrible achievements !—At the cries,
The groans, th' unutterable pangs of those,
The more than hundred thousand wretches,
doom'd

(Of every age and sex) to fire, and sword,
And fetters, I could marvel that the earth
In horror doth not open !—They were foes,
They were barbarians, but unarm'd, sub-
dued,

Weeping, imploring mercy ! And the law
Of Roman virtue is, to spare the weak,
To tame the lofty ! But in other lands,
Why should I seek for records of his
crimes ?

If here the suffering people ask in vain,
A little earth to lay their bones in peace ;
If the decree which yielded to their claims
So brief a heritage, and the which to seal,
Thy brother's blood was shed ; if this re-
main

Still fruitless, still delusive, who was he
That mock'd its power ?—who to all Rome
declar'd

That brother's death was just, was need-
ful ?—Who,

But Scipio ?—And remember thou the
words,

Which burst in thunder from thy lips e'en
then,

Heard by the people ! Caius, in my heart
They have been deeply treasur'd.—He
must die,

(Thus didst thou speak,) this tyrant ! We
have need

That he should perish !—I have done the
deed.

And call'st thou *me* his murderer ?—If the
blow

Was guilt, then *thou* art guilty. From
thy lips

The sentence came. The crime is thine
alone.

I, thy devoted friend, did but obey

Thy mandate.

Caius. Thou, my friend! I am not one
To call a villain friend. Let thunders,
fraught

With fate and death, awake, to scatter
those,

Who, bringing liberty through paths of
blood

Bring chains!—degrading Freedom's lofty
self,

Below e'en Slavery's level!—Say thou not,
Wretch! that the sentence and the guilt
were mine!

I wish'd him slain—'tis so—but by the axe
Of high and public justice; that, whose
stroke

On thy vile head will fall. Thou hast dis-
grac'd

Unutterably my name—I bid thee tremble!

Ful. Caius, let insult cease, I counsel
thee,

Let insult cease! Be the deed just or guilty,
Enjoy its fruits in silence. Force me not
To utter more.

Caius. And what hast thou to say?

Ful. That which I now suppress.

Caius. How! are there yet,
Perchance, more crimes to be reveal'd?

Ful. I know not.

Caius. Thou know'st not!—Horror
chills my curdling veins;

I dare not ask thee further.

Ful. Thou dost well.

Caius. What saidst thou?

Ful. Nothing.

Caius. On my heart thy words
Press heavily. Oh! what a fearful light
Bursts o'er my soul!—Hast thou accom-
plices?

Ful. I have.

Caius. And who?

Ful. Insensate! ask me not.

Caius. I must be told.

Ful. Away!—thou wilt repent.

Caius. No more of this, for I *will*
know.

Ful. Thou wilt?

Ask then—thy sister.

Caius. (*alone*) Ask my sister!—what!
Is she a murderess?—Hath my sister slain
Her lord?—Oh! crime of darkest dye!—

Oh! name
Till now unstain'd, name of the Gracchi,
thus

Consign'd to infamy!—to infamy?
The very hair doth rise upon my head,
Thrill'd by the thought!—Where shall I
find a place

To hide my shame, to lave the branded
stains

From this dishonour'd brow?—What
should I do?

—There is a voice whose deep tremendous
tones

Murmur within my heart, and sternly cry,
“ Away!—and pause not—slay thy guilty
sister !”

Voice of lost honour, of a noble line
Disgrac'd, I will obey thee!—terribly
Thou call'st for blood, and thou shalt be
appeas'd.

(To be continued.)



PATRIOTIC EFFUSIONS OF THE
ITALIAN POETS.

WHOEVER has attentively studied the works of the Italian Poets, from the days of Dante and Petrarch, to those of Foscolo and Pindemonte, must have been struck with those allusions to the glory and the fall, the renown and the degradation of Italy, which give a melancholy interest to their pages. Amidst all the vicissitudes of that devoted country, the warning voice of her bards has still been heard to prophesy the impending storm, and to call up such deep and spirit-stirring recollections from the glorious past, as have resounded through the land, notwithstanding the loudest tumults of those discords which have made her

Long, long a bloody stage,
For petty kinglings tame,
Their miserable game
Of puny war to wage.

There is something very affecting in these vain, though exalted aspirations after that independence, which the Italians, as a nation, seem destined never to regain. The strains in which their high-toned feelings on this subject are recorded, produce on our minds the same effect with the song of the imprisoned bird, whose melody is fraught, in our imagination, with recollections of the green woodland, the free air, and unbounded sky. We soon grow weary of the perpetual *violets* and *zephyrs*, whose cloying sweetness pervades the sonnets and canzoni of the minor Italian Poets, till we are ready to "die in aromatic pain;" nor

is our interest much more excited, even by the everlasting *laurel* which inspires the enamoured Petrarch with so ingenious a variety of *concetti*, as might reasonably cause it to be doubted whether the beautiful Laura, or the emblematic Tree, were the real object of the bard's affection; but the moment a patriotic chord is struck, our feelings are awakened, and we find it easy to sympathize with the emotions of a modern Roman, surrounded by the ruins of the Capitol; a Venetian, when contemplating the proud trophies won by his ancestors at Byzantium, or a Florentine amongst the tombs of the mighty dead, in the church of Santa Croce. It is not, perhaps, *now*, the time to plead, with any effect, the cause of Italy; yet cannot we consider that nation as altogether degraded, whose literature, from the dawn of its majestic immortality, has been consecrated to the nurture of every generous principle and ennobling recollection; and whose "choice and master-spirits," under the most adverse circumstances, have kept alive a flame, which may well be considered as imperishable, since the "ten thousand tyrants" of the land have failed to quench its brightness. We present our readers with a few of the minor effusions in which the indignant, though unavailing regrets of those, who, to use the words of Alfieri, are "Slaves, yet still *indignant slaves*,"* have been feelingly portrayed. The first of these productions must, in the original, be familiar to every reader who has any acquaintance with Italian literature.

* Schiavi siam, ma schiavi ognor frementi.—ALFIERI.

VINCENZO DA FILICAJA.

Italia, Italia! O tu cui feo la sorte, &c.

ITALIA! thou, by lavish nature grac'd
With ill-starr'd beauty, which to thee hath been
A fatal dowry, whose effects are trac'd
In the deep sorrows, graven on thy mien;

Oh! that more strength, or fewer charms were thine,
That those might fear thee more, or love thee less,
Who seem to worship at thy Beauty's shrine,
Then leave thee to the death-pang's bitterness!

Not then would foreign herds have drain'd the tide,
Of that Eridanus, thy blood hath dyed.

Nor from the Alps would legions, still renew'd
Pour down; nor would'st thou wield an alien brand,
Nor fight thy battles with the stranger's hand,
Still doom'd to serve, subduing, or subdued.

VINCENZO DA FILICAJA.

Quando giù dai gran monti bruna bruna, &c.

WHEN from the mountain's brow, the gathering shades
Of twilight fall, on one deep thought I dwell:
Day beams o'er other lands, if here she fades,
Nor bids the Universe at once farewell.

But thou, I cry, my Country! what a night
Spreads o'er thy glories one dark sweeping pall!
Thy thousand triumphs won by valour's might,
And wisdom's voice—what now remains of all?

And see'st thou not th' ascending flame of war,
Burst thro' thy darkness, reddening from afar?
Is not thy misery's evidence complete?
But if endurance can thy fall delay,
Still, still endure, devoted one! and say,
If it be victory thus, but to retard defeat!

CARLO MARIA MAGGI.

Io grido, e griderò finche mi senta, &c.

I CRY aloud, and ye shall hear my call,
Arno, Tesino, Tyber ! Adrian deep,
And blue Tyrrhene ! Let him first rous'd from sleep,
Startle the next ! one peril broods o'er all.

It nought avails that Italy should plead,
Forgetting valour, sinking in despair,
At strangers' feet !—our land is all too fair,
Nor tears, nor prayers, can check ambition's speed.

In vain her faded cheek, her humbled eye,
For pardon sue ; 'tis not her agony,
Her death alone may now appease her foes.
Be theirs to suffer who to combat shun !
But oh ! weak pride, thus feeble and undone,
Nor to wage battle, nor endure repose !

ALESSANDRO MARCHETTI.

Italia! Italia! ah! non più Italia! appena, &c.

ITALIA! oh! no more Italia now!
Scarce of her form a vestige dost thou wear;
She was a Queen with glory mantled;—*Thou*,
A slave, degraded, and compell'd to bear.

Chains gird thy hands and feet; deep clouds of care
Darken thy brow, once radiant as thy skies;
And shadows, born of terror and despair,—
Shadows of death, have dimm'd thy glorious eyes.

Italia! oh! Italia now no more!
For thee my tears of shame and anguish flow,
And the glad strains my lyre was wont to pour
Are chang'd to dirge-notes; but my deepest woe
Is, that base herds of thine own sons the while,
Behold thy miseries with insulting smile.

ALESSANDRO PEGOLOTTI.

Quella, ch'ambi le mani entro la chioma, &c.

SHE that cast down the empires of the world,
And, in her proud, triumphal course through Rome,
Dragg'd them, from freedom and dominion hurl'd,—
Bound by the hair, pale, humbled, and o'ercome,—

I see her now, dismantled of her state,
Spoil'd of her sceptre ; crouching to the ground
Beneath a hostile car, and lo ! the weight
Of fetters, her imperial neck around !

Oh ! that a stranger's envious hand had wrought
This desolation ! for I then would say,
“ Vengeance, Italia ! ” in the burning thought,
Losing my grief ; but 'tis th' ignoble sway
Of vice hath bow'd thee !—Discord, slothful ease,
· *Theirs* is that victor car ; thy tyrant lords are these.

FRANCESCO MARIA DE CONTI.

THE SHORE OF AFRICA.

O Peregrin, che muovi errante il passo, &c.

PILGRIM ! whose steps these desert sands explore,
Where verdure never spread its bright array ;
Know, 'twas on this inhospitable shore,
From Pompey's heart the life-blood ebb'd away.

'Twas here betray'd he fell, neglected lay,
Nor found *his* relics a sepulchral stone,
Whose life, so long a bright, triumphal day,
O'er Tyber's wave supreme in glory shone !

Thou, stranger ! if from barbarous climes thy birth,
Look round exultingly, and bless the earth,
Where Rome, with him, saw Power and Virtue die !
But if 'tis Roman blood that fills thy veins,
Then, son of heroes !—think upon thy chains,
And bathe with tears the grave of Liberty.
