

A PRINCESS OF THE ITALIAN REFORMATION

GIULIA GONZAGA

1513—1566

HER FAMILY AND HER FRIENDS

BY

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"LADIES OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE," "THE LIFE OF LOUIS XI.,"

"ISABELLA OF MILAN," ETC.

"Giulia Gonzaga, che le luci sante
E i suoi pensier siccome strali al segno
Rivolti a Dio, in lui viva, in se morta
Di null' altro si cibà, e si consorta."

TASSO

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INTRODUCTION

AT the name of Giulia Gonzaga there rises before us a vision of romance and beauty, set forth against that sumptuous background of pomp and pageant—the later Renaissance in Italy. To us in these prosaic days, it seems a time of fantastic illusions and dramatic episodes, when splendid knights in velvet and brocade, glittering with silver armour and plumed helmets, rode forth to battle as to a tournament. They besieged and scaled picturesque citadels perched upon blue olive-clad hills, or towering over verdant meadows and silvery streams; with sculptured cannons they battered against city gates, superb with armorial bearings; they bore classic names—Vespasian, Hercules, Cæsar, Coriolanus, Rodomonte—and if by chance they fell—with their shining arms, by the side of their mighty steeds—they were magnificent even in death.

In reading their tangled story, it often appears to be quite a secondary matter on which side they fought—whether for Emperor, or Pope, or King of France, for themselves, or even on some trivial pretext concerning the boundary of a petty State. To add to our sense of unreality, these stately warriors all wrote poetry—like everybody else—and it became almost a point of chivalry for the victor to console the vanquished hero with a sonnet or an epigram—to set him free and send him rejoicing on his way.

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The visionary scenes rise before us like pictures in some tapestry, and we scarcely wonder at an interlude in which a Gonzaga princess of enchanting beauty narrowly escapes being carried off to the Sultan by a horde of invading Corsairs. Or again, when, between a siege and a battle, the magnificent Lord of Sabbioneta commands a city to rise from the dust, and, in three brief years, we see it complete in Palladian splendour, enclosed within geranium-coloured walls, with streets of colleges and frescoed palaces, with stately churches and carved triumphal arches.

It may well seem that to this romantic period belong the earlier years of Giulia Gonzaga's eventful life: her marvellous childhood, when already her beauty and talent had been sung by many a poet; her triumphal visit to Rome as one of the bevy of fair damsels in the train of Isabella d' Este; and her marriage at the age of thirteen to the most splendid of the Colonna princes. Left a widow at fifteen, the Countess of Fondi barely avoids paying the penalty of her far-famed loveliness when the Corsairs of Barbarossa make a raid on her palace to carry her to the Sultan. We thrill with horror at the hair-breadth escape of the "Ninfa fugitiva" and her terrible flight, bare-foot and half-clad, through the darkness of the night, with only one faithful attendant. To avenge this insult, all Christendom was roused to action, and "a thousand swords were ready to spring from their scabbards."

Foremost amongst the champions of Giulia is the young Cardinal Ippolito dei Medici, her constant and devoted servant until his tragic death, which brought to a close that most pathetic of love-stories. For Giulia Gonzaga henceforth the days of romance are over, and

INTRODUCTION

in the prime of her youth and beauty she turns away from the pomps and pageants of this mortal life.* The Colonna princess forsakes her beautiful home at Fondi, her splendid Court which was looked upon by poets, artists, and philosophers, as bringing back the "Golden Age," to seek the seclusion of a cloister at Naples.

Now all is changed, and the later part of Giulia's story leads us from the world of Romance to the stern realities of an awakened Faith and religious persecution. We see our noble lady in a new phase of her character—first an earnest pupil of the Reformed doctrines, then an heroic champion and supporter of her friends who are called upon to suffer for their Faith. With splendid courage, she refuses to seek safety in flight, and barely escapes the martyr's last ordeal in the cruel flames of the Inquisition.

Her only link with the world, where she had once reigned so brilliantly, remains in her guardianship of her beloved nephew, Vespasiano Colonna Gonzaga, whose flamboyant story carries us back to the most sumptuous era of the Renaissance in Italy.

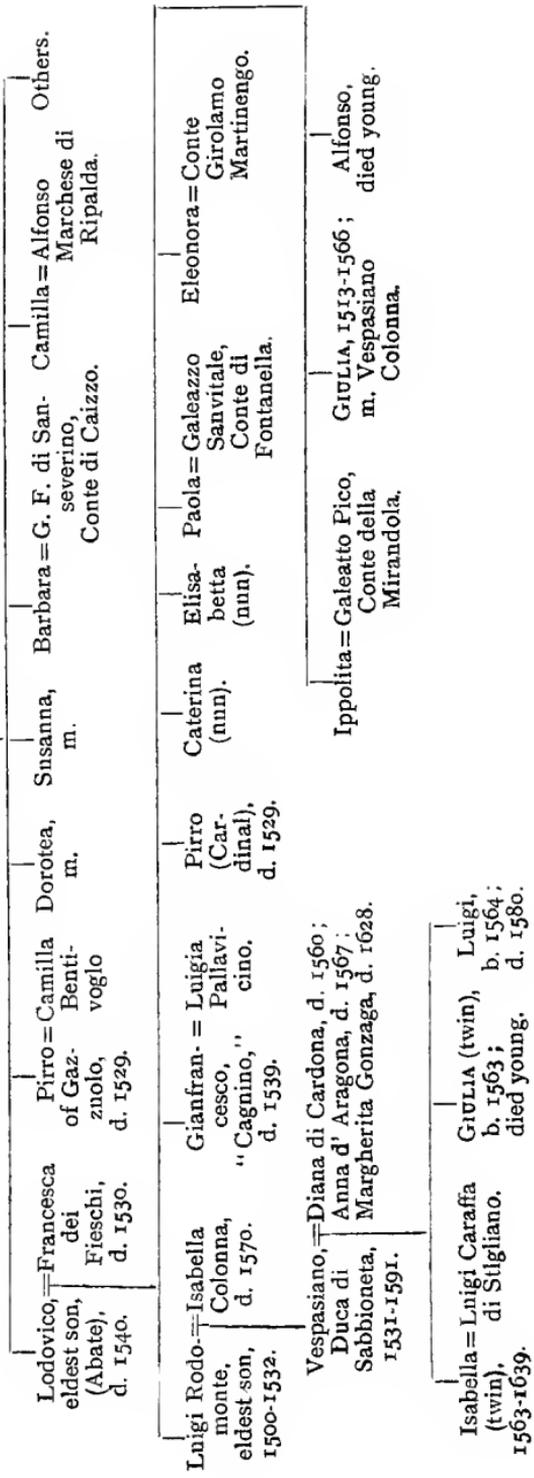
* When Ippolito died in 1535, Giulia Gonzaga was not yet twenty-two.

GENEALOGY TABLE—I

GONZAGA DI BOZZOLO E SABBIONETA

Lodovico III., = Barbara of Brandenburg,
1414-1478.

Gian Francesco = Antonia del Balzo,
of Bozzolo, 1443-1496. 1441-1538.

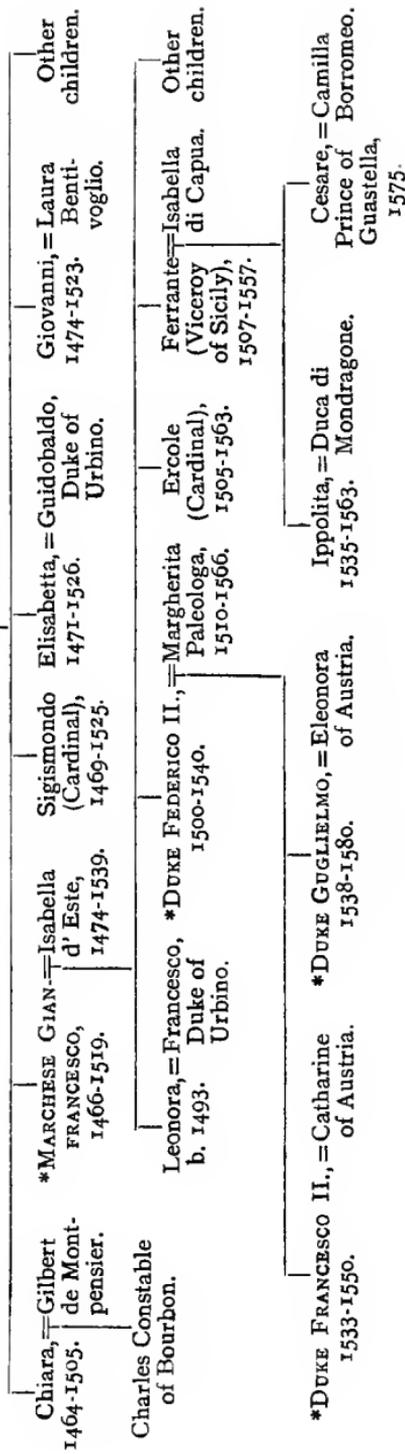


GENEALOGY TABLE—II

GONZAGA DI MANTOVA

*MARCHESE LODOVICO III., =Barbara of Brandenburg.
1414-1478.

*MARCHESE FEDERICO I., =Margaret of Bavaria.
1441-1484.



* Reigning princes of Mantua.

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Also a great number of letters written to Giulia Gonzaga by personal friends, amongst whom the most notable are Vittoria Colonna, Bernardo Tasso, and above all, Pietro Carnesecchi.

A large collection of Giulia's own letters, on which volumes might be written. These include 81 more important letters, from which I have largely quoted; and 129 others, unedited, written between the year 1533 and her death in 1566.

A PRINCESS OF THE ITALIAN REFORMATION

CHAPTER I

Concerning the Gonzaga family—Lodovico III., Marchese of Mantua, divides his estates, leaving Bozzolo and Sabbioneta to his second son Gianfrancesco, who marries Antonia del Balzo—Giulia Gonzaga is their granddaughter—Her early life and education—Story of Antonia del Balzo—A wedding feast described by Matteo Bandello.

AT the beginning of the sixteenth century the Gonzaga family held a high position amongst the rulers of Northern Italy. They had reigned in Mantua for nearly two centuries since the first Lodovico Gonzaga had been chosen Vicar-General by the Emperor. The family had risen still higher in importance when a son of Gianfrancesco, the first Marchese of Mantua, married Barbara of Brandenburg. This Lodovico III. was persuaded by his wife to divide his States amongst his sons: the eldest, Federico, succeeded him in the title and the domains of Mantua; while Gianfrancesco, his mother's favourite, received Bozzolo and Sabbioneta.* He married Antonia del Balzo, and of this charming and accomplished lady we shall hear much hereafter, as she survived most of her grandchildren.

Their eldest son Lodovico, who succeeded his father in

* See Genealogy I.

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1496, married Francesca Fieschi, daughter of Gian Luigi Fieschi, Lord of Genoa, and to them was born the peerless Giulia Gonzaga, the subject of this Memoir. The date of her birth was 1513,* and she was one of a large family of sons and daughters. The eldest, Luigi, was born in Mantua on August 15 in the year 1500, and was of such splendid strength and stature that he was distinguished by the name of "Rodomonte." The next son was called Pirro, and the third Gianfrancesco, to which was added "Cagnino," to distinguish him from his kinsmen of the same name. As for the sisters, there were Paola, Ippolita and Leonora, Caterina and Elisabetta, all beautiful and accomplished; but we are told that Giulia, one of the youngest, far surpassed them in every way. Their early home was in the Castello of Gazzuolo, well situated above the steep banks of the Oglio, a typical slow-flowing river of the plains of Lombardy.

This branch of the Gonzaga family was famous, even in those gallant days, for the splendid valour of the men and the beauty of its women. This last they owed in a great measure to the mother of Lodovico, Madonna Antonia del Balzo, who was not only beautiful, but accomplished in art and letters, retaining her wonderful charm and influence to extreme old age. She was the daughter of Pirro, Prince of Altamura, heir of Des Baux, a Provençal family so ancient as to dim the glory of all other boast of long descent, for they claimed as their ancestor King Baldassare, one of the three Magi, and proudly bore upon their coat-of-arms the Star of Bethlehem. Her husband, Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, had died in 1496, and the widowed Marchesa made her home chiefly with her eldest son, Lodovico, the father of Giulia to whom she was specially devoted, and

* "Amante," Giulia Gonzaga, p. 4.

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who early learnt to share her grandmother's tastes in literature. Madonna Antonia was an intimate friend of Isabella d'Este, and we find in their letters many interesting allusions to the books they both loved. As Antonia said in one of her letters: "At this time, when I am often unwell, and not able to go out much, I like to have books read aloud to me, and thus pass the time pleasantly. . . . Monsignore Lodovico especially loves the French romances, and is glad to have them, as he has a youth in his household who is writing a book about Orlando, and hopes to find some new incident in them. . . ."*

There is a charming letter of dedication to Madonna Antonia by Matteo Bandello at the head of one of his *novelle*.† In it he gives a delightful account of the wedding at Casalmaggiore of Camilla, the youngest and most charming of her seven daughters—an excellent musician, who was wont to accompany her sweet voice on the viol. Her elder sisters were all married to noble gentlemen of Mantua or Milan; but the bridegroom on this occasion was a very great lord of the Kingdom of Naples—Alfonso Castriotti, the Marchese Tripalda. The wedding took place in the month of June, 1517, and was probably one of the most striking events of Giulia's young life. This is the story of it, as told by the lively friar:

"Il Bandello a l'Illustriss. et Eccellentiss. Hevoina Madama la Signore Antonia Bautia, Marchese di Gonzaga.

"Sal.

"At the most honourable and sumptuous wedding at Casalmaggiore, in the Diocese of Cremona and your Castello, so magnificently celebrated, when the virtuous

* The poet Lodovico Ariosto, who wrote the "Orlando Furioso."

† Matteo Bandello, Novella VII. in Book I.

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Signora Bamilla, your daughter, took for her husband the valiant Baron, the Lord Marchese de la Tripalda—to this wedding, I say, the Signora Camilla herself deigned to invite me, being in Milan, with a most kind and friendly letter. . . . And to give greater authority to this letter, there were five lines written by your hand, commanding me that I should not fail to come, because no excuse of mine would be accepted. This would have been quite enough to make me fly and take post with all haste, even if I had been at that time grievously ill. But behold, another letter was given to me . . . written by the two really true magnanimous heroes, your sons, the Signor Federico and the Signor Pirro, who threatened to deprive me of all their favour, with other penalties . . . if I did not come at once. Constrained by so many dear and sweet commands, I put aside all other cares, and hastened to come to Casalmaggiore.

“What shall I say of the kind reception and most affectionate and flattering welcome which I received from you all? But indeed this is not my first acquaintance with the charming courtesy, the true friendliness, and splendid generosity of this most excellent and heroic house of Gonzaga, which I have known for so long. When I arrived, I found that already a great company of noble lords, barons, and distinguished persons had come to honour this wedding, and they were all most splendidly lodged according to their rank, with noble hospitality. The festivities had already commenced, and those who wished to dance could most readily satisfy their desire, to the sound of various musical instruments played by most excellent musicians. There were also a variety of games, in which those assembled took the greatest delight. Conjurers and buffoons were also present, and provided great

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amusement by their performances, so that the time passed most pleasantly. The heat being very great out of doors, as is usual at this season of the year, I was sitting near you one day at the hour of noon, when you rose and took me by the hand, beckoning to the Signor Pirro and the bride to follow you, and you led us into a hall on the ground-floor, marvellously cool and pleasant. Many great lords and ladies followed you, and when all had entered and were conveniently seated, you chose a moment of silence, and said: 'I have brought you here, my friends, into this cool hall, not only on account of the great heat, but also because of the crowd of so many people, and I thought it would be more pleasant here. It came into my mind, and may seem well to you, that we should leave the musicians in the other hall, and find here some pleasing subject of conversation to pass away the hour of noonday heat. If, therefore, there should happen to be any of you who have at hand some good story, not too much known, and would kindly relate it, I believe that this honourable company would gladly stay and listen.'

"Everyone replied that this was a most admirable idea, and that it ought to be carried out. Signor Pirro declared that Madama had indeed given most excellent advice, and he turned towards a Burgundian gentleman, by name Edmond Orflec, who had long fought in Italy and served under Signor Pirro, asking him if he would tell the story of which he had already spoken at Bozzolo. The Burgundian needed no pressing, and at once began to relate his tale, which filled his hearers with amazement and pity to such a point that few of the men and none of the ladies could restrain their tears of sympathy and compassion. And because the story was somewhat long . . . I took notes of it, and wrote it out more fully when I returned

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to Milan. . . . I wish to dedicate it to your most noble name, and will place it with my other *novelle*. . . . It will remain to the world a testimony of my service and devotion to you and to all your illustrious house. And I commend myself with all reverence to your good grace, and pray our Lord God that He will grant you the fulfilment of all your desires. I pray you remain in good health."*

After this interesting event, we must return to the Castello of Gazzuolo, where Giulia Gonzaga, not yet five years old, had already begun her serious education. The little girls shared the classical teaching of their brothers, and were taught Latin and Greek, some branches of the "humanities" and the "art of poetry" by learned tutors, who never failed to remind them that they had the privilege of reading the poems of Virgil in the very land in which they were written. They were carefully trained in the methods of the famous teacher, Vittorino da Feltre, who had been so successful with their ancestors, and the cultured Cecilia Gonzaga was held up to them as a lofty and shining example. One of the most famous professors who taught the Gonzaga children was Messer Giovanni Buonavoglia of Mantua, who held the Chair of Eloquence at Novilana, near Pesaro. It was his boast in later years that it was he "who led the Signor Luigi Rodomonte to the Castalian fountain, and taught him that 'art of poetry' in which he became so great a proficient that his verses won praise from the greatest poets of the day." Ariosto speaks of the young prince as "beloved alike by Mars and the Muses." †

* Matteo Bandello, *Novella VII.*, Book I.

† "Orlando Furioso," Canto XXXVII., stanza viii.

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This eldest and dearest loved brother of Giulia was no less gifted in body than in mind, and if his tutors found him an apt and brilliant pupil in his studies, he was still more distinguished by his strength and stature—his magnificent personal qualities. He was so strong with his hands that he could break a horseshoe with them or tear a cord asunder; with one hand he could raise and throw an iron ball which other men could not lift, and he had been seen to leap across the Castle moat, where it was twenty-four feet wide. There was no horse which he could not easily tame; no one could beat him in racing, in wrestling, or the game of *pallone* and other sports. He was always first in the hunting-field, and was invincible in tournaments.

If his sisters could not share these more active pursuits, they learnt to ride almost as soon as to walk, and theirs was the delight of hunting in that wild, open country, or the still dearer joy of hawking by those misty river-banks where the herons and the wild-fowl had their home. Nor were more womanly tasks forgotten: the young girls were taught the pleasing art of the dance; they became proficient in music and singing; their mother, the gentle Francesca, watched over their lessons in the delicate arts of needlework and embroidery, while their religious education was entrusted to the Sisters of the Convent of Santa Maria, near by.

From all that we hear about her, Giulia Gonzaga seems to have excelled the other wonderful maidens of the Renaissance whose fame has reached us. It is said of her at the time that "Nature had bestowed upon her the most rare gifts alike of body and soul; the charm which shone forth in her words and deeds was accompanied by a modesty and grace which drew all hearts to

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her. Not only did she distinguish herself in her classical studies, in music and song, but she had such a wonderful talent that she learnt all new things with amazing rapidity. . . .”

The learned Professor, Giovanni Buonavoglia, thus mentions her in a well-known Latin poem: “. . . But Giulia far surpasses all her sisters. Her modesty cannot hide her talents and her charms ; she is ever ready with witty sayings, yet ever full of courtesy. She can sing the sweetest melodies ; she is as devoted to learning as a Minerva, and with the talent of an artist she is also able to reproduce the many beauties of Nature.” Of her unrivalled beauty we shall have occasion to give full testimony later.

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CHAPTER II

Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga at Mantua to attend funeral of the Marchese Francesco—Happy family life at Gazzuolo—Gallant adventures of Luigi—His visit to England with the Emperor Charles V.—His poetry—Talent and beauty of the young Giulia Gonzaga—She is invited to accompany the Marchesa Isabella d' Este to Rome.

A VERY charming account is given of the peaceful happy life of the Gonzaga family in their home at Gazzuolo. Under the watchful care of Madonna Antonia, the children's education was carried on with brilliant success by the most famous teachers of the day, while at the same time the ardent pursuit of all outdoor sports was encouraged. Yet in their isolated country life, constant echoes from the world beyond did not fail to reach them. Their father Lodovico had outlived his days of active travel and warfare, of which he had taken his full share, and had no great taste for Courts or cities. Still, he was anxious that his sons should play their rightful part alike in peace and war, and he lost no opportunity of sending his eldest son on great occasions as his representative. Thus when, in April, 1519, there occurred the death of his kinsman, the Marchese Francesco Gonzaga, Luigi Rodomonte went in state to Mantua to pay due respect to the departed prince by attending his funeral, and at the same time to honour and show sympathy with his cousin Federico, the new lord of Mantua. There was

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a great procession from the old Castello in which Luigi rode with a company of nobles and gentlemen on April 4, when the young Marchese received the sceptre of office at the great gate of the Cathedral, and afterwards made a solemn progress through the city, his steward riding in front of him with a naked sword held aloft, while the people shouted "Viva Gonzaga!" to an accompaniment of drums and trumpets. Meantime, the body of the late ruler, clad in the garb of a friar, had been carried to the Church of San Francesco, and a week later was placed on a raised bier surrounded with lighted torches and hung with banners, while all the princes of his house assembled to do honour to the head of their family, and the ceremonies were concluded the next day by a most eloquent funeral oration given by Ambrogio Fiandino, Suffragan Bishop of Mantua.

The next record we have is a letter from Luigi, giving his father a full account of the splendid tournament held in Mantua on February 19, 1520, when he greatly distinguished himself and carried off high honours for a youth of barely twenty.

It was in this same year that he had his first taste of real war, in the service of the League formed by Pope Leo X. and Charles V., Emperor, to drive the French from the Duchy of Milan. The following year, when the Marchese Federico was made Captain-General of the Papal forces, Luigi received a command under him, and fought under the Gonzaga banners. He was present at the recovery of Parma and Piacenza for the Holy See and also at the taking of Milan for the Emperor.

In this terrible war which raged between the Emperor and the King of France, in which Italy was the battlefield, it was most sad and unfortunate that the House of Gon-

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zaga was divided in its allegiance. Long years before, Luigi's father Lodovico and his brother Federico had been sent to the Court of Charles VIII. of France to learn the art of war and the courteous ways of chivalry in the service of that prince. It was fortunate that later events and the advice of his wise mother, Madonna Antonia, induced Lodovico to choose and faithfully continue in the service of the Emperor Charles V., but his brothers Federico and Pirro remained on the side of France—a disaster for them. It was in 1498 that his mother arranged a suitable wedding for her eldest son Lodovico with the eighteen-year-old Francesca di Fieschi, of a noble family of Genoa. After their marriage the parents of Giulia chiefly resided at the Castello of Gazzuolo until, in 1521, there was a fresh division of property amongst the family, and Lodovico took the title of Marchese of Sabbioneta, while Gazzuolo fell to the share of his brother Pirro, who married Donna Emilia Bentivoglio of Bologna.

Giulia was nine years old when they moved to Sabbioneta, and they all became very fond of this country home, where they had more freedom to enjoy their hunting and hawking and other sports and pastimes. The sunniest and pleasantest rooms in the old Castello were given up to Madonna Antonia, who was always the beloved queen and ruler in everything. Nothing was ever done without her advice, for she was as wise in counsel as she was charming in conversation. She was very fond of literature and especially delighted in the old French romances. She often borrowed books from the Marchesa Isabella d' Este, and it was a great delight to the young girls to read aloud to their grandmother those charming stories of olden days, "The Story of

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Godefroi de Bouillon," and the fine romance of "King Arthur and the gallant Knights of the Round Table." But her taste was not confined to such tales, for she was a devoted admirer of the poet Dante, and the "Epistles of St. Jerome" was also a favourite book of hers. Her grandson Luigi shared all these tastes when he was at home, and he, as well as his father, began collecting books very early, so that in time they had quite a fine library. But Luigi was not much at Sabbioneta to enjoy it, for soon after he went there his father thought it well to send him to the Court of the Emperor Charles V. in Spain. His gallant adventurous spirit took the greatest delight in this opportunity of visiting so noble a prince and so distinguished a company as he found assembled at the city of Valladolid.

Wherever he went, Rodomonte was always so remarkable for his marvellous strength of body and unrivalled skill in all games and sports, which have been celebrated alike in poetry and in prose, that it is not easy to write down the story of his exploits. The poet Muzio was one of those who sang the praise "of him who could cast the great stone and raise the mighty bar, who could lightly spring beyond the farthest limits of others, whose wrestling none could resist, and in all such adventures there was no man who could hope to rival him. He rose above others, as the lofty tree above the humble shrubs." Also Curzio Gonzaga, in "Il Fido Amante." But so high was the favour of this valiant youth with the Emperor that we can scarcely wonder it should arouse envy and jealousy among the courtiers. They found a gigantic Moor, of monstrous build and strength, a noted wrestler who was the champion everywhere he appeared; and he was persuaded to challenge the Italian noble whom no one at the

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Court could beat. I have before me at this moment a most interesting letter from a noble gentleman, who told the lord of Sabbioneta the whole adventure which followed :

“ Illmo Signor eccellmo Lodovico di Sablonete.

“ It has seemed to me well that you should learn the whole truth in this matter to the greater glory of your most gallant and valiant young son. When he received the challenge of this gigantic and terrible Negro, we, his friends, considering his immature youth and smaller experience, would have had Signor Luigi refuse the contest, but he eagerly and gladly accepted it. At the time and place appointed, there was a great company assembled to behold this wrestling. On the struggle itself I will not dwell, save to tell you that with the most marvellous skill and courage our young champion seized his mighty foe, and seven times, one after the other, cast him down on to the breast of his mother earth. You may picture the amazement of the spectators, who, like the Negro himself, made quite sure that this David could never stand up against such a Goliath. But at the time, your son Luigi was compared to Hercules wrestling with the giant Antæus, and with a like result, wherein we do see the righteous judgment of God * most clearly displayed in the victory of his most Christian champion. His fame has not only spread through our country of Spain, but has been noised abroad to foreign parts, and the English ambassadors have written to tell their most famous King, Henry VIII., of all they have seen and heard about this young hero. This is the more interest-

* Thus described by Dante, “De Monarchia,” Book II., viii. 78-83, x. 87-89.

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ing, as we hear that the Emperor, who is soon to pay a visit to the English Court, has promised to bring this brave Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga in his train. . . .”

We have a very full account later from Luigi himself of this State visit to England with the young Emperor, who was so near his own age, having been born at Ghent on February 24, 1500. They landed at Dover on May 6, and were received with great magnificence in London, and with splendid feasts and entertainments at Greenwich and also at Windsor Castle. The Emperor was warmly welcomed by Queen Katharine, his aunt, the daughter of the great Queen of Spain, Isabel. He had much serious business with King Henry VIII., and was able to borrow from him a large sum of money to carry on the war with France, on condition of signing an agreement to marry his young cousin, the Princess Mary of England. But these affairs of State did not interfere with splendid tournaments and hunting in the forests of Windsor, and in both these pursuits Luigi appears to have won the highest honours from both sovereigns. There was one incident of his single-handed contest with a wild boar which was thought worthy of an eclogue by the poet Muzio.

Meantime a rebellion in Spain broke out against the Emperor, who returned thither with the young Gonzaga, landing at Santandar on July 6. On this occasion Rodomonte wrote a sonnet to encourage his lord, who received his poetical tribute with much friendliness:

“ L' anima altera dal celeste Impero
D' imbraccia al suo Fattor sincera, e pura
Volsè giù gli oochi a la sua dolce cura,
Da cui giammai non parte il bel pensiero.

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E disse : 'o figliuol mio, figliuol mio vero
De le mie glorie nato, e di natura
Chiaro splendor, questa vita aspra, e dura
Non ti travii dal tuo dritto sentiero.
Svegliati, e mira il grave peso, e tante
Fatiche, ov'io morendo ardito entrasti
Qual Ercol sotto il faticoso Atlante.
Frena il tumulto Ibero, e i gran contrasti
Con quella lingua, e con quel bel sembiante,
Con cui giunto a l' ardir lode acquistasti.' '*

SONNET I.

The rebellion in Spain was very soon put down, and the young sovereign was received with much honour and reverence by most of his subjects. An unfortunate incident occurred soon after this, when Pirro, now Lord of Gazzuolo, followed the example of his brother Federico Gonzaga of Bozzolo, and took arms on the side of France. There may have been excuses for him—although that particular branch of the family was always loyal to the Emperor—for the French nobles and officers they had occasion to meet were so much more courteous and pleasant to live with than the proud Spaniards or the rough Germans, whom the elder Pirro always declared were “insupportable.” But this revolt was a most serious

* “The lofty soul of the Emperor (Maximilian, who died 1519), sincere and pure from the heavenly embrace of his Creator, turns to look down upon his dear charge (his grandson Charles) whom his loving thoughts never leave. And he says : ‘Oh, my son, my true son, born to my glory and with a nature of such clear splendour, this life so rough and hard will not draw you away from the straight road ! Awake and consider the heavy burden and the many labours which I, dying, cared to undertake, like Hercules under the weight of Atlas. Bridle tumultuous Spain and the great rebellion with the same language and the same splendid aspect with which I dared to arrive, and acquire my fame.’ ”

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matter for him, as, on hearing of it, the young Emperor declared that the estates of both Federico and Pirro were confiscated; and by a deed, signed January 13 at Valladolid, he bestowed upon their nephew Luigi, as a reward for his good service, the lands of his uncle Pirro. The property of Federico of Bozzolo was given to the young Marchese of Mantua, who had at once claimed them as former fiefs of his branch of the family. All this added much to the dissensions amongst the Gonzaga; but Luigi was far too generous to profit by this gift, and his only thought was to hold the lands on behalf of his young cousins. His father quite agreed with this intention, and his mother wrote Luigi a most charming letter in praise of his generous feeling.

Some little time before Lodovico had received a visit at Casalmaggiore from Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, and he with his large company, were entertained with the greatest kindness and hospitality. For this Sforza made a very base return, as he resolved to get possession of this property of Lodovico's, and in order to do so left a number of his soldiers behind under pretext of protecting the inhabitants from the French. In this way he gradually became complete master of it all, notwithstanding the complaints and solemn protest of Lodovico Gonzaga. A much pleasanter visitor arrived about the same time, who stayed first at Casalmaggiore and then at Sabbioneta. This was the poet Giovanni Buonavoglia, who was the most interesting and delightful guest, and wrote a beautiful Latin poem, in which he described in glowing words the almost pastoral life at Sabbioneta, and, above all, the unapproachable charm of Madonna Antonia del Balzo: "Born of a race of kings, her majestic rule was one of wisdom and piety; beloved of Minerva and the Muses,



Photo. Anderson.

Ambrandt Photogramme.

FAMILY OF LODOVICO GONZAGA—Marchese of Mantua.

ANCESTOR OF GIULIA.

Andrea Mantegna.

Mantua.

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her beauty and her virtues were inherited by her children and descendants. A mother of heroes, amongst whom he mentions her grandson Luigi—another Achilles—as wearing at the same time the wreath of Apollo. The maidens of her household were radiant stars, and to hear them sing was like listening to the heavenly choir.”

We have now reached the eventful winter of the year 1524, when Giulia had attained the age of twelve years. Her family had always remained on friendly terms of intimacy with the ruling Gonzagas of Mantua, as we have already seen on various occasions. As early as 1520 Giulia had written a letter to the young Marchese Federico, sending him a new piece of music. As this is the first of her many letters preserved to us, I will give it in full :

“ CASALMAGGIORE,

“ October 23, 1520.*

“ Il^{mo} et Ex^{mo} Signor. . . . Hearing that Your Excellency has great pleasure and takes much delight in musical matters, and especially in new things, desiring, therefore, to please you, I send enclosed a *mottetto* which has been composed by Mons. Sebastiano Testa, servant of the most Reverend Monsignore de Mondovì . . . this *mottetto* not being yet in the hands of anyone. . . .”

In the following spring this little girl of barely nine years old, sent another piece of new music to the Marchese of Mantua, the first one having been graciously received.

The widowed Marchesa, Isabella d' Este, had found her position much changed since her husband's death, and circumstances had now given a fresh impulse to her love of travelling. Her second son Ercole, to whom she was

* Arch. Gonz. Mantova. See Appendix for original, note 1.

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greatly devoted, had already been made a Bishop at the age of fifteen; but his mother's ambition was not yet satisfied, and she had set her heart upon obtaining a Cardinal's hat for him. Her efforts had been in vain during the last months of Leo X.'s life, but now she hoped to have more success with the new Pope, Clement VII. She therefore resolved to make another journey to Rome, where the Duke of Urbino had offered her the use of his palace. Isabella was well aware that on her popularity depended her great success in obtaining all that she wished; and in order to attain this she had a way of surrounding herself with "a glittering train of beautiful women,"* amongst whom a "Delia" or a "Brognina" would at times become notorious. We may be sure that the astute Marchesa had long had her eye upon the young cousin, who was already spoken of for her surpassing charm and loveliness.

Thus it came about that at Christmas, 1524, there arrived at Sabbioneta an amazing letter from Isabella d' Este—nothing less than a warm invitation that Giulia should join her in a visit to the Eternal City. We may imagine the excitement in that quiet household, and the solemn family conference which took place to decide this important question. What might not be the result of this journey for their beautiful child, who might thus achieve some splendid marriage, for the Marchesa was well known to be a great matchmaker? The anxious fears of the girl's gentle mother would be soothed by the news that another cousin, the charming Camilla Gonzaga of Novel-laria,† would also be of the party; while Madonna Antonia,

* Addington Symonds.

† Her praises were sung by Molza and Bembo. She married later Count Alessandro di Porto, of Vicenza.

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with the wise experience of long years, would point out that every bird must leave the nest in time, and that it is the nature of youth to long for change and movement. Giulia could be trusted to do justice to her admirable home-training.

As for the young girl herself, eager and thoughtful beyond her twelve years, to her the prospect must have seemed to throw open the gates of stirring life and adventure. It would be hard to say farewell to her loved ones, and she would long be haunted by the familiar memories of her home—the broad expanse of flowery meadows, the river softly rippling by under the shadow of bending willows and tall whispering poplars, while far away on the distant hillside, towns and castles glimmered out of the blue mist. But she would cross those mysterious mountains, she would see what lay beyond; and there was joy passing words in the thought that she would travel to Rome itself—that marvellous city of her dreams!

In truth, Giulia was somewhat lonely at this time, for her three brothers had gone out into the world, and one by one her sisters had met with their appointed fate. “*Chi è nata bella è nata maritabile.*” First, Paola had become the bride of Signor Galeazzo Sanvitale, Lord of Fontanellato; then came the turn of Ippolita, who married Galeotto Pico, Conte della Mirandola; and Leonora the Conte Girolamo Martinengo. Marriage had snatched them away from her with inevitable devouring force, akin to death, or so it seemed, for the home where they were so happy and beloved henceforth knew them no more. Two other sisters, Caterina and Elisabetta, became nuns in the Convent of San Vincenzo, in Mantua; but the cloister had no attractions for Giulia.

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When at length the die was cast, and the eager child rode forth to Mantua with her father and mother, she prepared to take leave of them with gallant courage and wild expectation, little dreaming what would befall her ere she saw them again.

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CHAPTER III

The journey to Rome : By the River Po to Ferrara, where they are received by Duke Alfonso I. d' Este—Onwards to Ravenna and Rimini—Warm welcome at Pesaro and Urbino by the Duchess-Dowager Elisabetta Gonzaga and the Duchess Leonora, daughter of Isabella d' Este—On the journey beyond Loreto they receive news of the Battle of Pavia (February 24, 1525)—Arrival in Rome—Interview with Pope Clement VII.—Life in the Colonna Palace.

NOT until the darkest months of winter had passed away, and the coming of February heralded the approach of more hopeful weather, did Isabella d' Este, the widowed Marchesa of Mantua, set forth on her journey to Rome. It is difficult for us to realize at the present day what a serious matter travelling was to the ladies of the Renaissance. We cannot wonder that riding was looked upon as an indispensable accomplishment, for a long land journey was made entirely on horseback, day after day, in all weather, except in the case of those who, from age or infirmity, were compelled to use horse-litters. On this occasion, however, as Isabella was bent upon paying a visit to her old home at Ferrara by the way, the River Po was available for crossing the plains of Lombardy. The Marchesa had sent on most of her attendants a month before with the heavy baggage, and she took only her ladies and her secretary, Giovanni Francesco Tridapale, with a suite sufficient for protection and comfort.

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To Giulia Gonzaga, in the heyday of youth and health, it was a glorious adventure thus to set forth with that gay company through a strange and, to her, untravelled land, towards that ancient city of renown, the home of art and learning, the central shrine of Christendom. Her childhood seemed to have been left behind, for this was her first experience of being treated by her companions as a full-blown lady, her words listened to with respect and attention, and every wish forestalled by the gallant gentlemen who formed the suite of the Marchesa. The great lady was kindness itself, called Giulia her dear young cousin, and would constantly invite the child to sit by her side. The young girl made great friends at once with Camilla Gonzaga, who was a few years older and had much more experience of Courts, so that she was able to give many useful hints.

The journey as far as Ferrara was by river, in a stately bucentaur, and they were fortunate in having a prosperous voyage. Here, in the ancient city, a welcome awaited them of grave and stately hospitality, for Duke Alfonso was devoted to his sister Isabella; but there were no festivities or amusements of any kind, for the Court was in mourning, and life had been very quiet and dull since the death of the Duchess Lucrezia,* to whom her husband was greatly devoted. Still, there were many interesting things to see for a country maiden like Giulia: the great Castello itself, a splendid medieval fortress, with its massive walls and great corner towers; the beautiful Duomo, with San Giorgio and the dragon over the portal, and the warrior-saint in his shining armour seen everywhere—the patron of the Ferrara Princes.

However, after three days, they were glad to continue

* Lucrezia Borgia, who died in 1519.

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their journey, and the broad river was again their highway until they came to the great swampy reaches which form the delta of the Po. Then they had to make their way across the shallow lagoons in rude flat-bottomed boats, such as have been used there from time immemorial. Beyond this, they were able to ride along the narrow strip of sandy ground which encloses the shallow, swampy reaches from the sea, until before them rose the wonderful Pineta, the dark, silent pine-forest, through which they at length reached that old city of classic fame, and entered Ravenna by the great Porta Serrata. Here they made a brief stay in that dream city, haunted by legends of the past. Those gorgeous basilicas, with their rich mosaics; those processions of splendid princes and Magi and white-robed virgins would ever dwell in Giulia's mind, for they so vividly recalled to her the teaching of Messer Buonavoglia. He was an ardent worshipper of Dante, and he ever held that it was here, in these solemn pictures, that Dante had drawn his inspiration for the great company of the redeemed, moving in rhythmical circles through the central Rose of Paradise.

From Ravenna they set forth on horseback, and for some miles the way led them through the great Pineta, with its shady groves and mysterious silence, from whence they rode forth along the sandy dunes and the misty shore, where the sea-birds made their home, and where they clustered round in flocks, wailing their sad, melancholy cry. Passing through Cervia, they reached Rimini as the dusk was closing in, and were hospitably received in the Palace of the Malatesti, who were kindred of theirs through an ancestress, Paola,* as the Marchesa Isabella

* Paola Malatesta, who died in 1453, married Gianfrancesco II., first Marchese of Mantua, 1395-1444.

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reminded Camilla and Giulia. But another and a deeper interest was aroused ; for was not this the scene of that most tragic story of the great poet ?—the drama of Paolo and Francesco, who loved too well where love should have had no place, and to whom Dante sternly metes out unswerving justice, and places them within the dread portals where all hope is left behind, but, with a touch of pitiful mercy, leaves them together.

The next morning they set out early on the way to Pesaro ; first a beautiful ride along the coast, then crossing a chain of hills which descend towards the sea ; while again it was late in the day when they reached their destination. A splendid welcome awaited them. They were met some distance outside the gates of the city by a gallant company of young knights, with Signor Guidobaldo, a charming boy of eleven, at their head ; he had ridden forward to receive with perfect courtesy his grandmother, the Marchesa Isabella. Her daughter Leonora, Duchess of Urbino, was awaiting her at the entrance of the palace in the great piazza, and with her was the Dowager-Duchess Elisabetta ; but the Duke Francesco Maria was away on military service, as General of the Venetian Army. The whole party were most sumptuously entertained ; but the first evening they saw nothing of the two Duchesses, as they were so fully engaged in the joy of pouring out their hearts to the Marchesa. The great reception-rooms of the ancient palace were most beautifully painted with coloured friezes, while the chimney-pieces and columns were marvels of sculpture.* There was also a great library, full of rare books. On the second evening after their arrival they had a delightful pastoral play, with very good music, and afterwards finished the evening with dancing.

* By Ambrosio Baroccio and Francesco di Giorgio, of Siena.

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It was with great regret that the company turned away from these pleasures; but Madonna Isabella could not be persuaded to stay any longer, and on February 19 they continued the journey onwards towards Loreto, the pilgrim shrine, passing Sinigaglia on their way. The whole of this adventure—her first taste of the joys of travel—would live in Giulia's memory as an ever-changing vision of delight. She had long heard of Loreto, and it was with intense interest that she saw rising before her the picturesque hill-town, famed for so marvellous a legend. As they entered the great church and made their way towards the lowly "Casa Santa"—that house of Our Lady at Nazareth said to have been so miraculously transported hither—it was strange beyond all words to think of the untold hosts of the sick and sorrowful who had trodden that well-worn path, to pray for help or pay their vows.

After Loreto the journey continued across the mountains, and they travelled through Foligno, Spoleto, Terni, and Narni, where they crossed the Bridge of Augustus on the Flaminian Way. One thing would stand out in vivid relief: it was in this part of their travels that a tremendous piece of news fell upon them like a thunder-clap. An exhausted messenger, who had ridden night and day, brought word that a great battle had been fought before Pavia on February 24, with terrible loss of life. The Imperial troops had won a most decisive victory, while the defeat of the French King, François I., was so complete that he himself had been taken prisoner. It was a fearful moment of anxiety, for they all had friends in one army or the other. Giulia knew that Luigi was in Spain with the Emperor, but her uncles, Pirro and Federico Gonzaga, were fighting on the French side, and the report received was that they were taken prisoners.

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Madonna Isabella had many friends on that battlefield, and was only eager to hasten onwards to Rome and obtain more certain news. Every mile was now bringing them nearer to that wonderful and famous city, but such was their impatience that the longed-for goal of their desire seemed to flee before them.

“When you gain the summit of yonder hill you will discover Rome,” they were told. Eagerly they climbed the steep ascent, unconscious of fatigue, but no city appeared. “You will see it from the next,” was the cry; and so on from height to height. But at length they perceived a cluster of hills with green pastures on their summits, enclosed by thickets and groves of ilex, while here and there a white building caught a gleam from the setting sun. Then domes and towers began to rise from the mist of the valley, and the Marchesa pointed out the magnificent roofs of the Vatican, with San Pietro rising proudly above them. Every moment the glorious scene expanded before them, until, winding round the last hill, all Rome was suddenly outspread before their longing gaze. With what a feeling of awe would they ride down the hill, cross the bridge over the Tiber, pass through the long avenue, enter the city of the Cæsars by the Porto del Popolo, and behold, as in a vision, the domes, the churches, the obelisk, the long perspective of streets and palaces beyond, all aglow in the ruddy gold of a sunset sky!

In the grand palace of the Duke of Urbino, at the right of the Corso in Rome, everything was prepared for her comfort, as the Marchesa Isabella had sent her servants a month in advance with all the heavy baggage. It was close to the very ancient and sacred Church of “Santa Maria, in Via Lata,” which is said to have been built over the very house in which St. Paul lodged when he was in

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Rome. In this church is a little chapel, where legend says that St. Luke wrote his Gospel and painted the effigy of the Mother of God.

It was the first day of March when they reached Rome, and found all the Papal Court, as well as His Holiness Pope Clement VII. himself, in a state of the greatest excitement at the news of the Imperial victory at Pavia. The Marchesa had to mourn the death of many friends, but at the same time she was very proud of the important part which her nephew, Charles, Duke of Bourbon, had taken on the side of the Emperor. He was the son of her sister-in-law, Chiara Gonzaga, who married the gallant Duke of Montpensier. The Pope had been so strongly on the side of the French that he felt alarmed at this great success of the Imperial party, and possibly this made him more anxious to secure the support of Mantua, for he showed himself most friendly to Madonna Isabella, who received a warm welcome from him, although recent events had left him in a state of painful excitement.

It was a wonderful experience for the young girl to find herself indeed in Rome, the city of her dreams. How wonderful must have been the strange, mysterious glamour of that ancient city to an eager child who had been taught to look upon it, not only as the Sacred Throne of Holy Church, but as the true home and centre of classic story! She could stray back into the past, and feel that the heroes of old were rising in stately procession before her, and, above all, in the hours of solitude and silence would the magic vision be vouchsafed to her. As she looked down from a high window in that great palace upon the Via Lata* below, flooded with silvery moonlight, she could imagine that Cæsar was on his way from the Forum

* Now called the Via del Corso.

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yonder, with all the gorgeous pageant of an Imperial triumph over the barbarians. And surely that white-robed company, passing onward with noiseless steps, could be none other than the solemn procession of the Vestal Virgins on their way to the Temple of Vesta, whose Abbess—the *Virgo Vestalis Maxima*—had but this moment saved from death the trembling criminal she met, with a single word and uplifted hand! But I must not dwell longer upon classic Rome the beloved, and her deathless fame, but will go back to the story of Giulia, whose unspoken enthusiasm would be little shared, for the Marchesa, her ladies-in-waiting, and all the friends she met, seemed to be entirely engrossed in the present.

The recent Battle of Pavia, with the crushing defeat and captivity of the French King and the triumph of the Emperor, was the one topic of conversation. Madonna Isabella more especially had to mourn the loss of many friends, stricken down by the scythe of Death on that fatal field. A kinsman of Gonzaga descent, Charles, Duke of Bourbon, was in high command of the Imperial troops, and won the highest honours of the day. The Spanish soldiers sang his praises in one of their camp ballads :

“Calla, calla, Julio Cesar, Annibal y Scipion
Viva la fama di Borbon !”

A cousin of Giulia, Federico da Bozzolo, who had been taken prisoner, bribed his guards and made his escape, and there was a rumour that his uncle Pirro had done the same. Lodovico Gonzaga wrote from Sabbioneta to his son Luigi, who had missed this chance of war and distinction, being at the Court of Spain, desiring him to congratulate the Emperor on the success of his arms, and to pray for a continuance of his favour.

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As soon as the Marchesa was settled in Rome, she lost no time in advancing the cause for which she had travelled so far. In reply to her earnest request, His Holiness Pope Clement invited her to a private audience in his palace at the Vatican. This was arranged for March 9, a week after her arrival, and such prompt courtesy gave her every reason to hope for success.

When the eventful day arrived, Isabella d' Este set forth with as much state as possible in her fine chariot—a novelty in Rome—and drove up the Via Lata, through the crowded streets westward, and across the Tiber, leaving the sombre mass of Sant' Angelo to the right, until the magnificent basilica of San Pietro rose in majesty before her, and she reached the palace of the Vatican. Here she alighted before the colonnade, and was ushered through long corridors and up more than one splendid staircase, until she finally arrived in the private audience-chamber and the presence of His Holiness.

The Marchesa knelt before the successor of San Pietro, and kissed his signet-ring; then, as she raised her eyes to the august being before her, she saw a handsome man of middle age, with a fine intellectual countenance and hair slightly tinged with grey. The only doubtful feature was the mouth, which lacked firmness and decision, and there was a curious shifty look about the dark eyes. A most characteristic conversation was carried on between the Pope Clement VII. and the Marchesa of Mantua, both experienced and astute in diplomacy. He was most gracious and full of tact, asked the right questions concerning her family, inquired about the incidents of her journey from Lombardy, and all the time managed to express his immense interest in his visitor personally. Madonna Isabella kept up the ball of conversation with

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admirable skill, and at last found an opening to convey delicately to His Holiness the object of her journey. He knew her son Ercole, who had been a Bishop since he was fifteen, and had been so popular at Bologna as coadjutor to his uncle, Cardinal Sigismondo Gonzaga. Medici and Gonzaga had ever been such warm friends, would not His Holiness take this early opportunity after his election to the Chair of San Pietro,* to bestow a Cardinal's hat upon her most pious and distinguished son Ercole?† There was a pause which with less talented speakers might have been awkward. But the Pope had so charming a way of assenting to everything up to a certain point, and then gently changing the subject, that his practical refusal was more graceful than a mere consent of most men. He was profuse in his expressions of delight in the coming of the Marchesa and her ladies to Rome; he graciously offered boundless hospitality; Madonna Isabella must consider herself and her household to be his guests. He would send ample supplies of all the necessaries of life and most of the luxuries—meat and game and fish, corn and milk and fruit, from his own farms, and the choicest wines from his cellar. What could the Marchesa do but express her profound gratitude for the Pope's bounty, and inwardly resolve to bide her time, for in the end her persistence was certain to meet with its reward?

The indomitable Marchesa was not at all disappointed with the result of the interview, for she felt sure of ultimately obtaining her desire. Madonna Isabella certainly was the most wonderful person to gain everything she set her heart upon, as she soon had another oppor-

* Clement VII. was elected Pope in October, 1523.

† Ercole Gonzaga was now eighteen.

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tunity of proving. She had a quiet time during Lent, and attended all the services during Holy Week, when she and her ladies had plenary indulgence bestowed upon them all, as it happened to be the year of Jubilee, although there were few visitors to the Eternal City on account of the war raging in Italy. But immediately after Easter, everybody of note came to call upon the Marchesa, who had been so extremely popular on the occasion of her first visit to Rome in 1514, when the pleasure-loving Pope Leo did the honours for her in the most splendid style, as she was never weary of telling her companions. Of course there were changes after eleven years, and many of her friends were no longer there, but Cardinals and great nobles all vied with each other in providing for her the most delightful entertainments. On May Day, for instance, she went to a magnificent banquet at the great palace of Cardinal Pompeo Colonna, where she had the honour of meeting His Holiness, who attended Mass at the Church of the SS. Apostoli close by. In the afternoon the company was much amused at seeing the May-Day revels and sports held within the sacred precincts, and they had little time to notice the beautiful view from the lovely gardens which are high up on the Quirinal Hill. Madonna Isabella was most enthusiastic in their praise, and added with a sigh: "Ah, my Lord Cardinal, had I the good fortune to dwell in this Paradise, nothing should tear me away from Rome before the end of the summer!"

"Madonna, you have only to speak the word, and my palace with its gardens is entirely at your disposal," was the urbane prelate's courteous reply. "It was built in the days of boundless hospitality, and is far too enormous for my humble needs. You will be doing me a true

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service if you will deign to take up your abode here." We may imagine the Marchesa's air of startled surprise, followed by expressions of the most profuse gratitude for the princely offer which she was so perfectly ready to accept. She was delighted to move from the somewhat noisy Via Lata to the magnificent palace, which had once been the dwelling of the Popes, and was almost as spacious as the Vatican, with its great courts and endless succession of halls and chambers, one more stately than the other. But the gardens were the crowning joy of all to Giulia Gonzaga, for was there ever anything to equal the loveliness of the grounds behind the Colonna palace?

Through the long years surely that fair scene would rise in beauty before the young girl. She would see the golden sunlight pouring down upon classic temples, forsaken altars, and broken columns, through shadowed paths and dark groves of ilex and cypress; she would tread again the stately walks with lichen-covered statues and rare antique vases on either side, while here and there an empty carved sarcophagus lies half hidden by a tangle of myrtle and climbing roses. The winding path leads to some sunny yard set forth with lemon jars, and stone pots of carnations, and in the centre a sparkling fountain guarded by Neptune and his trident, surrounded by attendant mermaids and Cupids riding on dolphins. Beyond is a fair terrace shadowed by majestic stone pines, where stands a pillared loggia, and from the balustrade of this wonderful Belvedere, there lies outspread a glorious view indeed. Through the shimmering mist, the hillocks and dells of the Roman Campagna stretch out until they seem to reach the pale blue distant slopes of the Alban and Sabine hills.

It was in the midst of these enchanting scenes that

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Giulia was destined to spend some of the happiest hours of her life; for here it was that, during her first summer in Rome, Madonna Isabella received all the most brilliant and learned of her friends—poets, philosophers, artists, Cardinals, and Princes. They came to make merry in their hours of leisure, in gala mood and gala dress: they were splendid in scarlet, silk, and ermine; in satin and brocade; in plumed hats and jewelled ornaments and priceless lace which far outshone even the rich costumes of the Marchesa and her ladies.

APOLOGIA.—At this point of the history of Giulia, I must ask the indulgence of all the serious students of scientific history, if I pass for a time into the realms of "Historical Romance," in my earnest endeavour to recreate the atmosphere of this most interesting period of the Renaissance. May I be forgiven for devoting all my historical and philosophical study to the task of realizing and reproducing the actual life and surroundings of the young girl in that eventful year of her stay in Rome.

Under the semblance of her diary, I would seek to call up a living picture of those bygone dwellers in the Colonna Palace, with their pageantry and their prejudices, their outlook upon life, their thoughts and their aspirations.

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CHAPTER IV

Pages from the Day-Book of Giulia Gonzaga : Her life in Rome, at the Colonna Palace, June, 1525—Literary gatherings of distinguished men : the Bishops Chiericati, Sadoletto, and others ; Pietro Bembo, Paolo Giovio, the poet Molza, etc.—Discussions on many subjects—Visit to the Salviati—Maria, wife of Giovanni delle Bande Nere—Luigi Rodomonte is enthusiastic about Ariosto, and tells the story of the “Orlando Furioso”—Other events in that winter of 1525-26.

DAY-BOOK OF GIULIA GONZAGA.

*At the Colonna Palace in Rome,
This seventh day of June, 1525.*

IN this new and wonderful life of mine, I think that the least I can do is to set down, day by day, that which most delights me, of exciting news, of learned discussion in poetry, or art, or more serious philosophy. Thus I would keep a record of this marvellous experience for the sake of my dear ones at home in our quiet Sabbioneta—above all, in the hope that it will rejoice the heart of my well-beloved Madonna Antonia.

In the shady groves of these once famous gardens of Cæsar, I could almost have imagined to-day that, after a sleep of a thousand years, the spirits of Lucullus and Sallust, and other classic spirits of the past, had returned to their ancient haunts. For in very truth they seemed to live again in the illustrious guests who have come here

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together at the bidding of the Most Excellent Madonna Isabella, Marchesa of Mantua.

With such a galaxy of talent as I have this day seen, I scarcely know where to begin my record. But honour to whom honour is due: I will give first place to the Church. There was present Monsignor Chiericati, Bishop and Nuncio, high in the favour of His Holiness, a man of fine presence and sonorous voice. Messer Paolo Giovio says of him, that "he is the sweetest of all his friends." It was most interesting to hear him pour out his pious anxiety about the teaching of that arch-heretic Luther, "whose doctrine has so many roots in the earth already that a thousand persons could not pull them up." He preaches that the Sacrament of the Altar is not to be worshipped, but only celebrated in memory of Christ. Another dignitary of the Church was warmly welcomed by the Marchesa, Monsignor Jacopo Sadoletto, Bishop of Carpentras, whose post as Papal Secretary keeps him in Rome, to his great content. He was full of wise and witty talk, and, I am told, is also a poet; but it seems to me that everyone of any culture writes poetry more or less. Monsignor is a great friend of the Colonna family and a devoted admirer of that accomplished lady, Madonna Vittoria Colonna, who married the Marchese di Pescara, a favourite General of the Emperor, and about whom I have often heard from my brother Luigi. Another friend of his was here to-day, Signor Domenico Venier, the Venetian Ambassador, who, hearing my name, asked to be presented to me, and was most kind in his enthusiasm for the splendid valour of my dear brother.

Monsignor Tommaso Inghirami, the librarian of the Vatican, a learned scholar, chanced to sit by my side, and he told me much concerning the marvellous antiquities

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recently discovered, and also promised to show me the treasure of books and manuscripts under his care. These were some of the more serious and important members of our company, but there were others who brought exciting news, or charmed us with their sparkling wit and brilliant talk until the echoes rang with our merry laughter. . . . First I must set down the Venetian lord, Monsignor Pietro Bembo, who has written such lively dialogues, and whose talk is as charming as his book. He was long a faithful and devoted cavalier at Asola, where Caterina Cornara, late Queen of Cyprus, held her mimic Court, and was strangely happy in her dream of greatness, after the substance had departed.* In her honour, Monsignor Pietro Bembo has named his vivid sketches the "Asolani."

Last, but not least, I must tell of Messer Paolo Giovio, a great friend of Madonna Isabella, and the very life of our company. I wish that I could remember the half of his witty sayings. To-day the Marchesa asked him to suggest a new motto for her, as she loves to have some striking and appropriate words in her rooms and on her ornaments, even sometimes embroidered on her gowns. After a little thought, Messer Paolo was ready with :

"Sufficit unum in tenebris."

This was greatly applauded after he had most courteously explained the meaning of it to the uninitiated. When the great candelabra with many branches is used in the solemn services of Holy Week, one candle after another is reverently extinguished, until at length only one solitary light is left burning. This signifies "Faith shining forth in the surrounding darkness." In the discussion which followed,

* Caterina Cornara died at Asola, July 10, 1510. See "Ladies of Italian Renaissance," Christopher Hare. (Harper and Brothers.)

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Monsignor Inghirami suggested that the motto recalled that line of Virgil, "Unum pro multis."

The art of Apollo was represented for us by the poet Molza, who had recently come to Rome from Bologna, bringing letters to Madonna Isabella from her son Ercole, the budding Cardinal.* He had written: "Knowing, dear mother, how you love the company of learned men, I ask you for my sake to receive Molza most kindly, and I am sure that he will soon make you and all your ladies love him for his own sake." The poet was persuaded to read us a new sonnet of his own, and with charming grace and courtesy to me, the youngest of the party, he chose some lines in which the gallant audacity of my brother Luigi in the chase was celebrated under the name of Alceo:

"Altro non fu, che de l' unghiute branche
Non temesse dell' Orso, e che agli assalti
Del setoso Cinghiar non desse loco.
Ovunque Alceo volgeasi era sicuro
Per tutto intorno da nojose Fiere.
Perchè con tal valor, con sì bell' arti
Alto sorgea fra gli altri, come suole
Fra l' umile vermene eccelso abete."

My cousin Camilla Gonzaga di Novellara was much delighted with this and other praise of the Gonzaga, and her congratulations were the warmest of any, by which the poet was so moved that he devoted himself entirely to the fair Camilla for the rest of the afternoon. As I watched them, a curious train of thought was started in my mind. Why is it that some women have such an extraordinary power of fascination over all the men who approach them? Of course, in a certain way, Madonna

* The object of Isabella d' Este's visit to Rome was to obtain a Cardinal's hat for this boy Ercole.

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Isabella, even at her present advanced age,* attracts men of letters and talent by her own bright intelligence and appreciation, her unfailing tact and courtesy, so that as a charming hostess she is always the centre of an interesting circle. But it is something apart from this which I mean. For instance, amongst Madonna's ladies-in-waiting there is La Brognina, who is no longer young or really beautiful—and I do not think she is even clever; but whenever she appears, the men flock round her like flies. There must be something alluring about her, and such women, which I do not in the least understand, although I can see clearly that she has a gift of such insidious flattery, of such lowly, adoring deference, that she can make any man believe himself to be the wisest and noblest of human beings! I know that strange tales are whispered about La Brognina, and it is even said that Madonna had to dismiss her . . . but after the death of the Marchese Francesco she was recalled by her mistress, who could not live without her. To me La Brognina is always kind, although she laughs at me in a good-natured way as a “young frozen Diana, who will thaw and wake up some day!”

It would be useless to pretend that I am not aware of my pleasing appearance,† but I would far rather be admired for my mind than for my face. Indeed, good looks are so common in our family, both with brothers and sisters, that we take the admiration of strangers as a matter of course. I notice here that people eagerly ask to be presented to me; they look at me with interest, perhaps hazard a veiled compliment; but the conversation usually

* Isabella d' Este was fifty-one, having been born in February, 1474.

† Even at this early age, the fame of Giulia's surpassing beauty had spread through Italy.

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flags, and my admirers mostly slip away to join the merry group round La Brognina, or turn to Camilla and the other ladies. I am afraid that I am not a social success, but in truth I do not know where my fault lies. This very afternoon Madonna Isabella, who had been most kind in selecting and arranging my costume, sending her own waiting-maid to dress my golden curls in some new fashion, was evidently disappointed, and, turning to me with an impatient movement, bade me sing a ballad of Lombardy. Taken by surprise at this sudden request, a desperate fit of shyness came over me at the thought of singing before this august assembly; all eyes seemed to be fixed upon my burning cheeks, and I could not utter a note.

The Marchesa quickly turned towards Camilla Gonzaga, who happened to have brought her viol, and was quite prepared. She at once sang a most charming canzone of Monsignor Pietro Bembo, to her own accompaniment, and was warmly applauded. Her voice is much more powerful than mine, and better suited to outdoor singing. For the moment I had been overwhelmed with confusion, but everyone was so kind, especially my cousin Camilla herself, that I soon recovered my courage, and resolved that I would never again be taken unawares.

Meantime, refreshments were served to us in the shady loggia and under the trees, by noiseless attendants in woodland dress. They brought marzipan and sweetmeats, chestnut cakes and other dainties, wafers, sugared almonds, and pine-seeds. Nor were cooling drinks wanting, for they were served in great stone jars, and iced wines—Malvoisy, Trebbiano, and Falernian. These were poured out into silver goblets, and handed round to the company. When this light repast was over, it seemed to me that the talk became more intimate and personal.

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Just below us, on the slope of the hill, amid a tangle of wild roses, a carved antique sarcophagus was lying half buried and forgotten. It suddenly caught the eye of Madonna Isabella, who called attention to it with warm admiration, and expressed an eager desire to have it for her own tomb. But the Bishop of Carpentras pointed out that the splendour of the monument had been disastrous to its first owner, whose ashes had probably been cast to the winds. "For my part," he added, "I would rather choose a more simple memorial, and thus be left in peace, by offering no temptation to the spoiler."

"Nay," exclaimed the Marchesa, "I would never content myself with less than the best and most splendid. And as for a monument, give me a fame so great that it shall outlive the decay and destruction of time."

"Ah, Madonna, what is fame?" asked Monsignor Pietro Bembo. "A mere empty breath which profits us nothing. What care I how men may speak of me when mine ears are sealed in dust? Give me a merry time, with wealth and honour and many friends, while I dwell in the land of the living, and I am well content."

After some further discussion, Messer Paolo Giovio suggested that each one of the company should choose that past character whose fame was most to be envied. This met with warm approval, and the Marchesa was called upon to lead the way. She made smiling reply:

"If I am to be the earliest sacrifice, my good friend, at least you will select some resplendent name whose reflected glory would make me worthy of that sarcophagus?"

"You have set me a hard task, Madonna," said Messer Paolo, with a deep obeisance. "Your own fame is so transcendent that not amongst women of mortal birth may I hope to find your peer. For that I must needs

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travel to Olympus, and there, amid the immortals, I would make choice of the Lady Minerva, Goddess of Wisdom, as alone worthy of Madonna's envy."

This delicate compliment was welcomed by an outburst of applause, followed by a somewhat embarrassed silence, for after that flight of rhetoric and flattery there seemed little more to be said. It was La Brognina who gallantly came to the rescue.

"As the ladies are expected to choose first, I will venture to tell you my choice," she exclaimed in her high, ringing notes. "There is no one whose renown I envy as I do that of the fair Helen of Troy, whose beauty was so surpassing that for her sake men were willing to sin, to betray their country, to fight, and to die."

Although one might blush for her sentiments, and tremble at her audacity, it was easy to see that such outspoken insolence was one reason of this lady's undoubted popularity. After this, Camilla Gonzaga followed suit, declaring in her soft, sweet voice that, as the Siege of Troy had been alluded to, she had always deeply admired the devotion of Andromache and the constancy of Penelope, and would like to claim them both. It was the kind of choice which might have been expected from my cousin's gentle nature. As she turned to look at me with an encouraging smile, I resolved to assert my presence of mind. I was about to claim Iphigenia as the supreme object of my envy and admiration, when I was startled by the voice of Bishop Francesco Chiericati, a great friend of Madonna Isabella, who had arrived late, and had taken a place by my side:

"May I, as one of the oldest present, be permitted to suggest the name of a lady whose character would be a fit subject for the admiration of this fair maiden, the youngest

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of our company?" He paused, and then continued, amid murmurs of assent: "To my mind, Signora Giulia is a living symbol of that mysterious Beatrice, beloved of the great poet Dante, yet ever unconscious of his adoration. And for my own choice, as the sunflower unhidden may worship the orb of day, so may I in all humility proclaim that in my eyes the fame of Dante far surpasses that of any mortal king or conqueror, saint or hero, whatsoever."

The dear old Bishop had always shown me much kindness, but never before had his charming courtesy proved a more welcome shield for my shy inexperience. Madonna Isabella seemed pleased at the high compliment paid me, and I had to endure some light raillery from her ladies. Of the conversation which followed I remember little, although I think that Homer and Virgil, Cæsar and Marcus Aurelius, all had special devotees of their fame. We sat out in the delicious coolness, listening to the song of nightingales, watching the dancing fireflies, and enjoying the scented dusk, until the shades of evening began to close in around us, and we were summoned to the stately banquet which closed the pleasures of the day.

In Rome, this fifteenth day of June, 1525.

I have this day had a most interesting experience, which I will set down at once, lest I forget it. During the great summer heat of this last week we have scarcely passed beyond the precincts of the shady Colonna gardens. But the Marchesa grew weary of such seclusion, and this afternoon she announced her intention of paying some state visits to friends in the city. I had the privilege of joining her, with two other ladies, and we set forth after our siesta for a drive in the gorgeous chariot which Madonna has had built for her, and which always excites

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so much sensation. Attended with suitable pomp, we drove slowly, in a kind of triumphal progress, up the busy Via Lata, then westward towards the Borgo, across the Tiber, and through the Porta Santo Spirito into the long Via Lungara, which lies between the river and the Janiculan Hill. Here we soon reached the gates of the fine Palazzo Salviati, the present abode of the illustrious Signor Jacopo Salviati, Papal Secretary, whose wife, Madonna Lucrezia dei Medici, was a daughter of the great Lorenzo the Magnificent, and sister of Pope Leo X. They are in high favour with their kinsman Pope Clement, and the Marchesa told us that their son, Cardinal Giovanni Salviati, had immense influence with His Holiness.

We were courteously welcomed by the Salviati, delightful and cultivated people, very handsome and distinguished looking. While the host devoted himself to the service of the Marchesa, Madonna Lucrezia talked to me with the greatest kindness, asking how I enjoyed my life at Rome, and inquiring eagerly about my grandmother Madonna Antonia, for whom she has the warmest admiration. Then she led me across the splendid camera to a window, where sat apart her daughter Maria, the wife of the famous Giovanni dei Medici, leader of the Black Bands, to whom she introduced me with a few friendly words. I was much attracted by this lady, who was tall and slight, and very handsome, although no longer quite young,* with great, dark sad eyes which seemed to be the home of a tragedy. We had had a long, quiet conversation together, for I had often heard my brother Luigi Rodomonte speak with admiration of this Medici warrior, and I was deeply interested in hearing about him from the lips of his wife. Madonna Maria told me how he was

* Maria Salviati was then barely twenty-six.

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unfortunately wounded by an arquebuse just before the Battle of Pavia, and was in such serious danger that, by the Pope's special command, the surgeons removed him by boat to Piacenza. He was now slowly recovering from his wound, but had been advised to complete his cure by going to the mud-baths of Abana, near Padua.

"There is no one like my Giovanni!" she exclaimed. "None can equal him in courage and audacity. Have you heard how the French King vowed that if the leader of the Black Bands had fought by his side on that fatal day of Pavia, he would never have been taken captive, and the fortunes of Europe might have been changed?"

There was a note of passionate pride in her words, and I could not refrain from adding: "At least, for so gallant a soldier, it would have been victory or death."

"You are right, dear Signora," was the sad reply. "My husband's indomitable spirit places him constantly in such deadly peril, that whenever I see a messenger coming from the seat of war, I tremble, and feel as though a sword were about to pierce my heart."

At this moment we were interrupted by the coming of a little boy, the only son of Maria and Giovanni, who had been sent for at the request of Madonna Isabella. He was a handsome child, but not in the least like his beautiful mother, and it seemed to me that for his age, barely five, he was strangely confident and self-possessed, and he made his obeisance to the visitors in silence, with the most sedate and dignified courtesy. The Marchesa was delighted with little Cosimo, but when we took our leave shortly after, I could think of nothing but that momentary poignant self-revelation of Madonna Maria. What a terribly anxious time it must be for the loving wife of a soldier, always away in distant wars, in constant deadly

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peril! It is true that I had been accustomed from my earliest childhood to know that my brothers and most of my kinsmen were soldiers engaged in frequent wars; but the thought was so familiar that it seemed only natural for the women to live at home, in uncertain hope from day to day. But this passionate, absorbing love for one implacable warrior, doomed by his own recklessness, was quite another matter. Would not poor Maria Salviati have been happier if her lot had placed her in some quiet convent where such passion was unknown? Such were some of my dim questionings; but there was no answer to them. The common lot of woman seemed so far from me.

I lived in hopes of meeting Madonna Maria again, but before long I was told that she had left the palace of her parents at Rome, where in hot weather there was always much sickness in the lower part of the city, and she was in constant anxiety about the health of her precious little Cosimo: she had taken him to one of the Medici castles in the Mugnone, Giovanni's favourite mountain-home at Trebbio, where the boy would grow strong in the fresh bracing air and country life.

This second day of July, 1525.

I have had the great happiness these last few days of a passing visit from my dear brother Luigi, on his way back from the Court of the Emperor in Spain. How much we had to hear and to tell each other of all that had taken place since last we met! I need not say how proud I am of his brave deeds and of the admiration which he receives on all sides, with his gallant carriage and brilliant talk, his handsome sunny face and splendid stature. But in the happy distraction of my thoughts I must not forget to give some account of a delightful entertainment

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in the Colonna gardens, given by the Marchesa in honour of Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga.

Most of the former guests whom I have already described were present, and to them were added the young Cardinal Salviati and his mother Madonna Lucrezia, who told me that she remembered the like pleasant meetings with her father, the Magnificent Lorenzo dei Medici, in the Careggi gardens. On this special occasion Luigi, as a rare and honoured visitor, was to select the subject of our conversation, and his choice of the poet Ariosto was warmly welcomed. It so happens that this famous writer is the centre of interest at the moment, for his play of the "Cassaria" has just been printed and published in Rome. I am told that this work is not quite suitable for my reading, but that it is a comedy in imitation of Plautus, in the plot and characters, full of comical intrigues and cross purposes, with farcical episodes of mistaken identity. The scene is laid at "Sybaris" (Ferrara, where it was first acted in 1508).

But I must return to Ariosto himself, and all that was said about him on that heavenly afternoon in the Colonna gardens. The Marchesa herself was graciously pleased to open the discussion by relating the story of her close friendship with the poet. She told how, when she was recovering from illness at Mantua, after the birth of her son Ferrante,* Ariosto had been sent by the Cardinal d' Este to congratulate her.

"I had been interested with regard to the great poem which he was then writing, the 'Orlando Furioso,'" continued Madonna, "the more so because I heard that it carried on the story of the 'Orlando Innamorato,' by Matteo Boiardo, and contained the same characters.

* In 1507.

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You, my young friends, will begin to think that I was in the Ark with Noah, when I tell you that in 1491, twenty-four years ago, that delightful poet Boiardo presented me with the manuscript of his poem, which I possess to this day. Imagine my joy when I found that Ariosto had brought his 'Orlando Furioso' with him, and, at my urgent summons, he came to my bedside, and read it aloud to me during the three precious days of his stay in Mantua."

At these words there was a murmur of interest and delight not unmixed with envy.

My brother Luigi gave voice to the general feeling when he exclaimed:

"Madonna Illustrissima, there is no one like you! Artists and poets and all famous men vie with each other in claiming you as the source of their inspiration and in laying their treasures at your feet."

This was a compliment which went straight to the Marchesa's heart, and she responded by holding out in her hands a superb volume of white vellum, embossed with gold, announcing that this was one of the first copies of the "Orlando Furioso," printed at Ferrera in 1516, which the poet himself had brought to Mantua to present to her. Then, in her sweet musical voice, she read aloud those famous opening lines:

"Le donne, i cavalieri, l' arme, gli amori,
Le cortesie, l' audacie imprese io canto. . . ."

"How goodly and beautiful does he make that chivalrous world of knights and ladies! Does he, indeed, hold it to be a glorified mirror of our own times?" she asked. "I love

* "I sing of ladies and knights, of arms and loves,
Of courtesies and daring deeds. . . ."

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to think of that peerless Angelica, who has set the world on fire by her beauty, and who so mysteriously finds her way to the camp of Charlemagne. How fascinating is the story of Orlando's love for her, and how tragic his sudden madness when he discovers her devotion to Medoro! In truth, if Boiardo gives the outline of the story, it is our Ariosto who clothes it with life and beauty."

Madonna paused for a moment, overcome with her enthusiasm, then she turned with a smile to my brother: "Signor Luigi, I will leave you to continue the tale, for are you not yourself 'Rodomonte,' the type of that defiant and untamable King of Sarza, Rodomonte, the Champion of Islam, the hero of many a gallant deed?"

Applause and laughter greeted this touch of humour, and my brother gaily rose to the occasion. I would not wish to seem prejudiced, but never have I heard so splendid a tribute of devoted love and admiration as my dear Luigi paid to his friend. My only regret was that Ariosto himself could not hear it! But, as we were reminded, the sensitive poet had been sent to the wilds of the Garfagnana, with the uncongenial task of ruling a rebellious province. As he himself wrote: "This is a deep trench in which I dwell, whence I move not a foot without climbing the steep sides of the woody Apennines." Luigi told a delightful story of how, when Ariosto was reluctantly trying to put down the brigands, they became the hunters and took him prisoner. But when they discovered that he was the famous poet, they took him to a courtly dwelling-place, and feasted him with a sumptuous banquet, showing him all love and reverence, and finally setting him free without any ransom.

Other charming anecdotes were told of him—how he delighted in long walks alone, when he would become so



John Mansell

Rembrandt's Photogravure

LODOVICO ARIOSTO (reputed).

Titian.

National Gallery.

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absorbed in his thoughts that he took no note of time. One summer day when he was at Carpi, he set forth on a morning stroll in light velvet slippers, and quite unconscious of the world around him, he walked on all day until at eventide he found himself at Ferrara. These may seem trivial matters, although they show us the man as he is in his daily life.

Most striking was Luigi's profound knowledge and keen appreciation of his friend's great poem. We followed with breathless interest the whole career of his Orlando; his friends and his foes whom we learnt to love or hate, while the main story was lightened with wars and loves of all time and glowing romance. There rises before us that magic castle where each approaching traveller sees his beloved at a window, hears the familiar voice . . . but day and night pursues in vain a fruitless search, for all is witchcraft and delusion. So again with the magic garden of Alcida, another form of the Circe myth. And those adventures of the fair Angelica: how she is saved at the critical moment by the coming of that most lovable and perfect maiden warrior, Bradamante, in her snow-white armour. And again, when Angelica is carried off to the Hebrides and exposed on a barren rock in her naked beauty to a devouring sea-monster, we tremble with fear until she is duly rescued. We have a delicious touch of the poet's humour when, months afterwards, the heroine of this adventure, wishing to reward a shepherd, gives him a precious coronet which she has brought from her father's Court in China, and *always* kept with her in her wanderings. "But where she kept it when she was chained naked to the rock, I cannot tell," says Ariosto.

Perhaps the most charming episode of all was Astolfo's flight, by way of Ethiopia, through the Earthly Paradise,

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situated on a mountain near the equator, even as far as the sphere of the moon, in a chariot of fire, under the guidance of St. John. Here in a secluded valley, are all the things lost on earth—fame which is being devoured by Time, unaccepted prayers or vows, and the tears and sighs of lovers. The vast empires of old are there, as a heap of blown-out bladders, still full of the echoes of past war and tumult. Astolfo finds that the flattering verses written in praise of princes look like burst cicalas, and the alms left to be given after death are but a heap of worthless refuse. Most strange of all, there is a row of bottles of all sizes, containing the lost wits of every man on earth who cannot take charge of them himself. Astolfo is startled to find his own bottle, and also the larger one of Orlando's, which he carries back to earth with him, and is thus able to restore the famous hero to reason.

Here we reach the climax of our story, the "Orlando Furioso," which is so well known throughout the world that I will say no more about it. When Luigi had ended his discourse there was a storm of applause, and some interesting discussion followed. Monsignor Bembo courteously prayed my brother to recite one of his beautiful poems, which he modestly declined, to my great disappointment, "not having it with him." I longed to quote one from memory.

After this all too brief visit of my brother Luigi, I seem to find little of interest to record in my youthful day-book for some months. The great heat of that early autumn brought sickness and anxiety, and early in October, Madonna Isabella received news of the death of her brother-in-law, Cardinal Sigismondo Gonzaga, at Mantua. She lost not a moment in vain regrets, but ordered her chariot and drove at once to the Vatican to

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implore that the Pope would bestow on her son Ercole the vacant dignity. But His Holiness was never to be taken by surprise; he temporized in the most courteous manner, and only when pressed to extremity, did he write a vague promise to give Ercole the Cardinal's hat on the first opportunity. The death of Cardinal Sigismondo was a great blow to his sister, Madonna Elisabetta, Dowager-Duchess of Urbino, and this most beloved lady, who was in delicate health, never recovered from the shock. She passed away in January, 1526, to the great sorrow of her many friends. I had seen her once as a child, and her sweet gentleness won my heart. Perhaps the most touching memorial of her is contained in the charming book of Baldassare Castiglione, the "Cortigiano," where the noble Duchess figures as the hostess and the inspiration of that unrivalled coterie.

The Marchesa had always been her intimate friend, and I am sure that she felt the loss, but she never gives way to her feelings in a manner to disturb her placid equanimity or imperil her carefully-guarded health.

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CHAPTER V

The Day-Book of Giulia Gonzaga (*continued*) : Vittoria Colonna in Rome, after the death of her husband, the Marchese di Pescara—Her story and her sonnets—The great lord, Vespasiano Colonna, son of Prospero Colonna, is a suitor for the hand of Giulia Gonzaga—The splendid wedding takes place on June 26, 1526—Account of the journey across the Campagna to the Castello of Pagliano.

This fourteenth day of December, 1525.

I MUST not omit to set down an incident which has given me the greatest pleasure. There has been much excitement lately in Rome from the coming of Madonna Vittoria Colonna, the widowed Marchesa di Pescara, who has so recently lost her husband. She has been lately a constant subject of conversation with her kinsman, the Cardinal Colonna, and his brother, the Lord Vespasiano Colonna, who has paid several visits to Rome, sometimes to this Colonna palace, but more often to the splendid Palazzo Cancellaria in the Piazza Paradiso, close to the Campo de' Fiori, that delightful market-place. I must mention that the Cardinal's brother is a most interesting and accomplished gentleman; he seems to like my society, and has always shown me as much courtesy and respectful attention as though I were really a grown-up signora.

This is the story of Madonna Vittoria as I have heard it.

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She was the daughter of Fabrizio Colonna, Grand Constable of Naples, and was betrothed as a child to Ferrante Francesco d' Avalos. She was brought up in the Island of Ischia by the accomplished Costanza d' Avalos, and married the young Marchese di Pescara in 1509, when they were both nineteen. She was absolutely devoted to her young husband, who, like Giovanni dei Medici, was constantly engaged in distant wars, and had other matters to occupy his thoughts. Brognina one day inadvertently told the story of the infatuation of Pescara for our Marchesa's beautiful lady-in-waiting, Delia, which his loving wife never suspected, but she was hushed at once. The influence of Vittoria over her husband seems to have restrained him in a moment of temptation, when he seems to have listened to hints of secret treachery, when she wrote :

“ Consider well what you are doing. . . . I care not to be the wife of a King,* but rather of a faithful and loyal man ; for it is not riches, titles, and kingdoms, which can give true glory, infinite praise, and perpetual renown to noble spirits desirous of eternal fame, but faith, sincerity, and other virtues of the soul. . . .” The Marchese di Pescara fought with distinction at the Battle of Pavia last February, but has been ill since, and was taken worse lately at Milan. On receiving the news, Madonna Vittoria set forth in anxious haste from Naples, but on reaching Viterbo, she was met with the fatal news of his death. In the sudden despair of her broken heart, the poor lady had not the courage to continue her sad journey, and her first thought was to escape from the world and take refuge in a convent, and she remembered that in Rome, close by, was the Religious House of Santa Chiara.

* The Kingdom of Naples had been offered to Pescara as a bribe.

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This is connected with the Church of San Silvestro in Capite, where the Baptist's head is a treasured relic.

Overwhelmed and crushed with grief, the widowed lady made her way to this convent, where so many noble ladies of the Colonna family have taken their vows in past days. But now comes the curious part, which I heard from the lips of Monsignor Jacopo Sadoletto, the Bishop of Carpentras. He is an intimate friend of Madonna Vittoria, for whom he has the greatest admiration, and he felt that it would be a disaster to the whole civilized world if this accomplished poetess were suffered to bury herself in the monastic life. He at once hastened to Pope Clement, whose secretary he then was, and laid the matter before him, imploring his assistance to prevent the withdrawal from society of one who was its greatest ornament. The Pope quite agreed with Sadoletto, and caused a Brief to be prepared without delay and sent to the Abbess and nuns of San Silvestro, in which His Holiness permitted them to receive into their home and to console "*omnibus spiritualibus et temporalibus consolationibus*" the Most Excellent Marchesa di Pescara, but in which it was expressly forbidden to them, "under pain of the greater excommunication," to permit the noble lady to take the veil "*impetu potius sui dolores, quam maturo consilio circa mutationem vestium vidualium in monasticas.*" This Brief, of which a copy was shown to us by Monsignor Sadoletto, was dated on December 7, just a week ago.

Madonna was so keenly interested in the story that she expressed a strong desire to pay a visit of sympathy and condolence to the unfortunate Lady Vittoria. "It would only be a fitting return for the kindness shown to me by

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the Colonna family," she said. With the Marchesa, to form a desire was to take steps at once to realize it. The chariot was ordered for that afternoon, and as no one expressed a strong desire to go on so sad a mission, to my great contentment Madonna took me with her. We had not far to drive—up the Via Lata, and then, turning to the right, down the Via delle Convertite, until we came to the fine Church of San Silvestro in Capite, adjoining the convent. The portress admitted us into a little waiting-chamber with a barred lattice on one side, but when she heard the inquiry for the Signora Vittoria Colonna she assured us that the widowed lady saw no one. However, Madonna Isabella was not to be so easily discouraged. She requested to be taken at once to the presence of the Lady Abbess, and, on hearing her name and dignity, the timid lay-sister hastily obeyed, and I was left behind, forgotten by them both. Through a narrow window of the gloomy cell, I had caught a glimpse of a sunny garden beyond, and when the portress returned I begged to be allowed to wait there until my lady's return. The good woman kindly consented, only imploring me not to walk beyond the secluded corner or to pass in sight of the convent windows.

This was a delightful adventure for me, and I tried to fancy myself a cloistered nun, as I paced slowly up and down in the sunshine between the orange-trees in Etruscan pots, and the snowy hyacinths, which filled the air with sweetness. I had reached my boundary at the corner, when of a sudden, a shadow crossed my path, and I found myself looking into the startled blue eyes of a tall woman draped in heavy mourning, who had noiselessly approached, wrapped in the deepest thought. She drew back at the

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sight of an intruder, but almost unconsciously continued the low words which she was repeating to herself :

“ I only write to vent that inward pain
On which my heart doth feed itself, nor needs
Aught other nourishment. . . .”*

As I listened I felt certain that my first surmise was right—surely this was the dear Lady Vittoria pouring forth her impassioned lay of regret. But for the intense sympathy reflected in my face, I must have looked like a Niobe turned to marble silence. I did not move; I made no futile excuse for my intrusion . . . and at length the vision spoke to me.

“ Who are you, my beautiful child? Do you dwell here ?” she asked in a sweet, thrilling voice.

My reply seemed to come from far off, constrained by a will beyond my own :

“ My name is Giulia Gonzaga, of Sabbioneta, of the house of Madonna Antonia del Balzo. I am but a stranger in Rome, a guest of Madonna Isabel of Mantua, in the Colonna Palace.”

“ Ah, I remember ; I have heard of you,” she began ; then, after a pause, added : “ The sun of my life has set while it is still early dawn for you. Farewell, dear child, and never forget that Love must be our master-spirit. Such is my perfect trust—ay, and though he slay me, yet will I kiss his flaming sword.”

A shadowy smile, a parting wave of the hand, and the lady of my dreams was gone . . . to haunt me evermore with her stately presence and the heavenly music of her words. . . .

* Beginning of the first of her sonnets to her husband’s memory, which Vittoria Colonna wrote in the Convent of San Silvestro.

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Hitherto, in all the gay and courtly entertainments, which I enjoyed to the full, and in which I received all the attention and admiration which a grown-up lady might expect, I was in truth, with all my quick intelligence, only a child at heart. My life had been like a rippling stream, gaily dancing over smooth pebbles through flowery meadows in the sunshine. But now the scene was about to change: there were ravines to cross, unseen perils to meet, and the broad flowing river could never return to the free, careless grace of the mountain stream from whence it rose.

For me, the awakening to womanhood came with a sudden shock. I have already alluded to the frequent visits paid by the Lord Vespasiano Colonna to his brother the Cardinal in Rome. His invalid wife, the Lady Bianca Appiano, had died the previous summer, and he possibly found it a lonely life in that grim fortress-castle of the Campagna, where his only daughter Isabella had been placed with a kinswoman for her education. In any case, Madonna Isabella welcomed him with eager hospitality, and it so chanced that, during the spring months of the year 1526, my Lord Colonna was a frequent and honoured guest, a most devoted and generous friend. The Marchesa could not express a wish that was not gratified at once. It might be a visit to newly-discovered antiquities, when some priceless marble or mosaic would be offered for her acceptance; or, again, if she suggested a pilgrimage to some famous sanctuary or ancient palace of the Eternal City, all its treasures would be spread out before us and explained with learning and eloquence. Another day it might be a select hunting or hawking party at La Magliana or some other splendid demesne near Rome, and the beautiful wild creatures would give us matchless sport.

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But I found most delightful of all, those long sunny days when we set forth on a gay ride in the early morning, along the Appian Way and through the fair stretches of the Campagna until, as we reached the border of some wooded dale, a magic banquet would suddenly appear beneath the shady trees, where we would spend the noon-tide hour in feasting and song.

By some curious chance—or was it a deep-laid plot of La Brognina and Camilla my cousin?—there seemed to be always a vacant place by my side, where the Lord Vespasiano was wont to ride and beguile the way with interesting talk. He told me many stories of the past in those classic scenes; he was an authority upon beasts and birds and all things connected with the country; and he ever spoke with such charming deference, not as though teaching me, but merely recalling to my memory facts which I already knew. So the time glided smoothly by, in one round of pleasant festivities, until one summer day I was bidden to attend the Marchesa in her private reception-room. How well I remember every detail as if it were but yesterday, in that fair chamber, rich with the treasures which my cousin had already collected in Rome or received as presents, with long windows opening towards the beautiful gardens, and a splendid view of the city below. Madonna rose from her couch as I entered, and came forward to meet me with outstretched hands.

“My dear cousin, I offer you my warmest congratulations! You have made a great conquest,” she exclaimed, in a tone of triumph.

I drew back in vague alarm, and asked faintly:

“What do you mean, Madonna mia?”

“Do you act the part of ignorance, my pretty Giulia?” she laughed. “Am I to look upon you as a child in sim-

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plicity? Surely, after playing your fish with so much discretion, you cannot be greatly surprised that you have landed him at last?"

I stood mute with dismay, for, alas! I understood her meaning, although I was absolutely innocent of the design she suspected.

"Your face is too transparent for deceit, my dear child; your blushes have betrayed you," said the Marchesa calmly. "Yes, this very day, the Lord Vespasiano Colonna, head of that great house, Duke of Traetto, Count of Fondi, the Lord of Gennazzano, Pagliano, and many other stately castles and rich possessions—he has asked for your hand in marriage, and I have sent a messenger to Sabbioneta to make known this high honour to your father, the Signor Lodovico Gonzaga."

The blow had fallen. As in a flash of insight, I realized that I had only been a counter in the Marchesa's game of ambition. Why had this great lady seen fit to take me in her train and set me off to the best advantage, save in the hope that she might have the reflected glory of arranging a splendid match for me? This was the sword of Damocles which had hung over me from my earliest days; the common lot of woman was upon me, and I must go the way my sisters had gone before me. My case was hopeless. Who would take my side, or even listen to my protest? With what consummate skill had Madonna passed off her responsibility to my own people! Her message to Sabbioneta was no mere asking their consent; it was the proclaiming of her own triumphant success. I could not even turn to my brother Luigi for help; I remembered too vividly his calm decree that for a girl the only choice lay between marriage and the cloister.

I knew that my case was hopeless, but some wildness

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in my blood drove me to futile rebellion, and I breathed one desperate prayer that I might be inspired with words which would appeal to the arbiter of my fate. Half falling on my knees before her, I clasped her hands with an imploring cry :

“Madonna mia, have pity on me! Indeed, I have no vocation for marriage. . . . I know that all my kinsfolk will be against me, that the world will call me mad to refuse so magnificent a position ; but . . . I would sooner die ! . . . You alone can help me, Madonna, for you have the wisdom to understand, even if you cannot sympathize with me. Say that you cannot spare me,” I urged impetuously ; “let me stay in your service as your faithful lady-in-waiting for ever and ever . . . like La Brognina . . .”

“No, no, not like her,” was the whispered interruption, as my cousin raised me in her arms and drew me to a seat by her side. “This is tragic indeed,” she continued. “I never dreamed that my little Giulia could be in such deadly earnest—a rebel against the very foundations of society ! You know how it is my way to collect all that is rare and unique, and perhaps I ought to secure you for my museum ! But I dimly perceive a better way. Tell me, Giulia : you have no fault to find with my Lord Vespasiano, for you have been most friendly with him ?”

“Indeed, Madonna,” I hastily replied, “there is no one in whose society I take greater pleasure ; he is a most courteous and accomplished gentleman. But . . .”

“But of course that is not love, you would say. Then why not continue on those terms ?” she asked quietly. “At the present day there is nothing more usual than those political ‘marriages only in name’ for the future, when either bride or bridegroom are very young ; and

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you are barely thirteen yet. The Colonna Prince, as you know, is nearly eight lustres older than yourself—beyond the period of violent passion—while you have not reached the age of its awakening. Why not meet upon that neutral ground of a platonic affection? Vespasiano Colonna is the soul of chivalry, and will await the day when Galatea shall step down from her cold marble pedestal and be transformed into a living woman of flesh and blood.”

Then she went on to mention the name of her beloved Elisabeth Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino, “whose blessed soul may the Lord have in His keeping,” and other noble ladies who were in like case, and famed in history.

But at this last remark my heart rebelled; for of the world one asked, not fame, but silence and oblivion.

When once my consent had been obtained, all befell as I expected. My relations far and near were delighted with this great alliance, which would add to the glory and honour of our family. I already seemed to have won golden opinions from the House of Colonna, and was most courteously welcomed into their august circle, while Madonna Isabella treated me with the utmost kindness and affection, as a personal triumph of her successful diplomacy.

Of the crowded days which followed I seem to retain only the dim memory of a flamboyant and distracting dream. Costly wedding gifts were lavished upon me by the Colonna and Gonzaga family, and I recollect my naïve delight in the beautiful jewels, and above all in an exquisite rope of pearls specially selected for me by the Lord Vespasiano. My cousin Camilla, La Brognina, and the other Court ladies were most friendly and considerate; but as I kept much apart, and had no girlish confidences

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to bestow, I fear they thought me proud and elated by my prospects. When the marriage contract was drawn up, in which I was treated with princely generosity, my dowry being 70,000 ducats, a special messenger was sent with full particulars by the Mantuan Ambassador at Rome to the Duke Federico Gonzaga of Mantua as head of our house. In the midst of all this excitement my letters of congratulation from home were my greatest comfort and support. My mother, full of anxious pride, gave me advice on the due ordering of a great household, warning me against extravagance, and bidding me study my husband's tastes and wishes in all things, thus making his will and pleasure the rule of my life. My father, who was more at home with the sword than the pen, wrote a letter in which pride at my elevation and sorrow for my loss contended for the mastery. He deeply regretted that the unfortunate contest and family dissensions about the lordship of Casalmaggiore would prevent his coming to Rome for my wedding, but that my uncle Pirro Gonzaga would take his place and give me away. . . .

The most precious greeting of all was that from my beloved *avola*,* Madonna Antonia. She gave no good advice, no sermon on my duties; she did not even allude to my personal feelings. The dear lady simply expressed her perfect trust that in my new life I should show myself worthy of my name and lineage; that the strong character and many talents which were my heritage would enable me to take a high place amongst those noble ladies, already so renowned, of the Colonna family. Of Madama's devoted love for me I was so well assured that many words were not needed to express it.

I must not omit to mention one touching little gift

* Grandmother.

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which I received with much gratitude. The Lady Vittoria Colonna had not forgotten our meeting, and she sent me a copy of the last poem she had written, beginning thus :

“ Amor, tu sai, che mai non torsi il piede
Dal carcer tuo soave, nè disciolsi
Dal dolce giogo il collo, nè ti tolsi
Quanto dal primo di l' alma ti diede. . . .” *

The eventful wedding-day, which had been fixed for June 26,† rises before me as a strange exotic scene of gorgeous magnificence, of which I was the shining centre, and where I played my part as in some bewildered dream. At the last moment an unlooked-for joy awaited me—the arrival of my dear brother Luigi, who had ridden night and day across the plains of Italy that he might do honour to his favourite sister. His coming was the one touch of simple home affection which I needed to give me courage for my adventure, and his satisfaction was so complete and outspoken that it seemed to disperse all the mists of doubt and fear.

What a splendid figure he was, standing head and shoulders taller than most men, with rich chestnut curls clustering round his noble brow, his smiling blue eyes full of genial merriment—an Apollo and Hercules in one! It was small wonder that Isabella Colonna, my step-daughter-to-be, who then saw him for the first time, watched him with admiring eyes, and henceforth looked upon Luigi as her ideal of manhood. He took leave of

* “Thou knowest, Love, I never sought to flee
From thy sweet prison, nor impatient threw
Thy dear yoke from my neck ; nor e'er withdrew
What, that first day, my soul bestowed on thee. . . .”

† Of the year 1526.

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us soon after the stately ceremony was over, and before the sumptuous festivities were at an end.

I look back upon our wedding journey to my future home at Pagliano as an adventure of delight, for the first shyness of my new position had soon worn off in the calm atmosphere of affection and unfailing courtesy with which my Lord Vespasiano surrounded me. Our three days' travel through that marvellous Campagna was like a royal progress, for we were passing chiefly through the hereditary domains of the great Colonna family. Each day we started at dawn to avoid the great heat, and in that fresh, balmy air of early morn, all the world was full of strange glamour. With what interest I listened to the thrilling story of olden days, told by my lord with familiar knowledge and keen personal pride in the deeds of his ancestors! Thus we passed down the Appian Way, by those ancient tombs so pathetic in their mute reminder of the forgotten dead, and onward towards Castel Gondolfo, where the midday siesta was arranged in a woody glade. Here tents had been already pitched by the attendants, and a banquet was spread for us in the shade. Not until the sun was sinking towards the west did we continue our ride, turning abruptly upward in the direction of Marino, where we spent the night in one of the Colonna palaces. It was a delightful holiday excursion, not alone for me, but for Isabella, who was our constant companion, and enjoyed the novelty of seeing her stately father unbend for our amusement.

Fortunately, the young girl had taken a strong liking for me as a friend of her own age, and from the first, I was most careful not to arouse her jealousy in any way by asserting my precedence as the Princess Colonna. For, in very truth, was it not all make-believe, and was

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not my married dignity only a myth and a delusion in this "wedding for the future," as the Marchesa had rightly called it? When we were alone together, Isabella was never weary of asking questions about my brother Luigi, and it is possible that the glamour which surrounded him in her girlish fancy, cast some reflected charm upon me, his sister. In any case, we were the best of friends, and it was with deep regret that we found this pleasant journey drawing to a close when we made our last halt at Genazzano, only six miles from Pagliano. Here was another fine Colonna castle, but my chief interest was in the famous pilgrim shrine of the Madonna del Buon Officio. We were guided by an Augustine monk into the chapel, where the lights were kept ever burning in honour of the Sacred Image, which he told me had come down from heaven and had performed many miracles. He prayed me to come again on the Festa Day, September 8, when I might see the marvellous concourse of pilgrims from all parts of the world, and I might possibly be so blest as to witness some amazing miracle. When I turned to ask the Lord Vespasiano's consent, I was struck by the coldness of his manner and his want of interest in the whole miraculous story. This was my first hint of a new phase in his character—a freedom of thought and absence of superstition which both startled and interested me. I took so keen an interest in all new and advanced opinions that, in days to come, this became a fresh bond between us.

At length we were approaching Pagliano, the mountain home where I was to reign as a queen. I could scarcely control my excitement as there rose before me, in the ruddy glow of sunset light, a rocky summit crowned by the impregnable Colonna fortress. Overshadowed on the

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left by the great peak of the Serrone, standing forth like a mighty pyramid from its mountain chain, Pagliano seemed to be perched like an eagle's nest on an isolated hill rising steeply from the broad plain of the Sacco, and commanding all the country round. Clothed almost to the heights with a primeval forest of oaks and chestnuts, all the lower slopes were rich with vineyards and silvery olives, through which we made our slow ascent after fording the swift torrent which came foaming down from the mountain. At the entrance of the scattered town, a warm reception awaited us from my lord's vassals; but as we rode upwards, my eager gaze was fixed on the splendid palace, built of dark tufa, in a great square quadrangle, standing grandly on the edge of the wild hillside, with a marvellous view over the misty Campagna.

As I was lifted across the threshold, according to the bridal custom, the Lord Vespasiano, in most courteous language, welcomed me as lady and mistress of his stately home. There were only two floors, but they were of vast extent, and the many chambers were furnished with rich treasures of art, hung with rare tapestries from Flanders, and the ceilings were painted in fresco with gold and azure. In the lofty entrance-hall there were trophies of war and of the chase—old armour and flags which had figured in many a battle, heads of wild beasts and splendid antlers. Then an ancient kinswoman who was in charge of that great household, conducted me to the beautiful southern suite of rooms where Madonna Beatrice had lived for years in seclusion, and which were henceforth to be at my absolute disposal. She pointed out how they had been entirely renewed and beautified with richly embroidered hangings for the windows and the carved bedstead, with priceless caskets of Venetian work,

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wonderful carved chests painted by skilled artists, finely sculptured woodwork panelling on the walls, and chairs inlaid with ivory.

But that which delighted me most was the choice musical instruments—an organ from Cremona, a viol, and a silver lyre—while in painted recesses in the walls, were illuminated manuscripts and precious vellum-bound books from the printing-press of Aldo Manuzio at Venice and the monastery of Subiaco. Everything that heart could desire had been made ready for me, and not a wish that I could express was left ungratified by my peerless, chivalrous husband.

I love to dwell upon those happy days of peaceful enjoyment; all too brief—a lull before the coming storm of war. It was my special privilege to be the constant companion of the Lord Vespasiano in the early morning rides, so fresh and delicious on that wooded mountain-side, when together we visited the nearer farms and vineyards on his great estate, or he would take a pride in pointing out to me every nook and corner of the mighty citadel, and seemed ever to have some fresh thrilling story of the past. My lord would tell me how this tower or bastion was attacked and gallantly defended; how the enemy's artillery had been dragged up the high, steep rock in the darkness of the night, only to be discovered and hurled down into the ravine below, before even a breach had been made in the walls. As I listened to him, I learned to look with respect and almost awe upon this gallant Colonna Prince who, past middle life and of uncertain health, had still the heart of a warrior and a hero. Perhaps too much so for my peace of mind, for this mirage of happiness was all too short.

The end of Giulia's Day-Book.

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CHAPTER VI

The political situation of Italy in the year 1526—The Colonna Raid upon Rome—The Pope, Clement VII., takes his revenge—Rivalry between Spain and France—The Pope's double-dealing—Overwhelming invasion of Italy and sack of Rome, May, 1527—A time of unspeakable horror—Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga protects Isabella d' Este, and helps the Pope to escape from Rome—Death of Giulia's husband, Vespasiano Colonna, March, 1527—His will, Pagliano defended by Luigi, who becomes betrothed to Isabella Colonna.

IN those troubled days for Italy it was not probable that the most warlike of the Colonna, the son of the famous Prospero, the modern "Quintus Fabius Maximus," would long remain in the peaceful seclusion of his mountain castle of Pagliano. A few words will be useful to explain the political situation at that moment.

When Charles V. had released the King of France from captivity in March, 1526, after signing the Treaty of Madrid, François I. was no sooner free than he broke all his promises, and formed a League against the Emperor, in which he was joined by the time-serving Pope, by Venice, Milan, and other States. Charles was furious at this breach of faith, and more enraged with Clement VII., who had professed to be close friend and ally. He sent to Italy a special agent, Don Ugo de Moncado, with secret directions to detach the Pope from the League by any means in his power, and the first result of this mission

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was the arrival at Pagliano of a dark, stern-looking Spaniard on some mysterious mission. An atmosphere of gloom and unrest seemed to fill the palace, and there were many private gatherings of Colonna kinsmen, until, on the fatal morning of September 18, an armed company of vassals set forth from the castle, and soon after arrived the astounding news that Moncada had drawn the Colonna brothers and the Cardinal himself * into an armed invasion of Rome to bring the Pope to his senses. They had met with scarcely any opposition, and Clement VII., in mortal terror, had fled to the fortress of Sant' Angelo, leaving the Vatican to be sacked by the soldiers. It seems that the Pope was hated in Rome by the populace for his cruel extortion; he had recently put taxes on the wine and fruit, on all things sold in the market, and even "on the poor women who washed their clothes in the Tiber!" When the Lord Vespasiano returned to Pagliano in triumph, he was able to announce that the Pope had promised to renounce the League, and to call back his troops from Milan as well as the galleys he had sent to Genoa. As security for his good faith, he had given as hostages a young Salviati, and Filippo Strozzi, "a most unfriendly deed," as his wife Madonna Clarice had good cause to complain, for, in the light of after events, she vowed that "Strozzi was basely and foully sent like an innocent lamb to the slaughter." The lady had "great power of tongue," but her words were true, for as soon as Pope Clement was out of danger, he broke every pledge, and so risked the lives of his hostages.

In spite of his sworn amnesty, the Pope sent a strong force into the territory of the House of Colonna to

* Cardinal Pompeo, cousin of Vespasiano Colonna.

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ravage it with fire and sword, destroying fourteen castles and villages, with a base and terrible massacre of the unfortunate vassals—men, women, and children. Everywhere was ruin and desolation, and this atrocious cruelty, “worse than the Turks in Hungary,” was by order of the Holy Father of the Church! Faith was shaken to its very foundations. How was it possible to honour the “Vicar of Christ,” or to believe him infallible who could commit such barbarous crimes? Surely there was deep cause for that new spirit of reform, concerning which so much was heard in Germany and other lands!

But even in this present world such treachery was destined to meet with due punishment, and a terrible Nemesis was at hand for the Pontiff who had so shamed his sacred office. It would be too long to set down the tangled politics of those anxious months which followed; the fierce struggle and rivalry between the young Emperor and the young King of France—the wars and counter-wars—and the fatal deceit and vacillation of the Pope, who continued to make treaties only to break them. Luigi Rodomonte fought bravely in the service of Charles V.; but on one occasion, near the Pieve di San Jacopo, he was suddenly attacked by an overwhelming force of the enemy. He made a gallant defence, prepared to die rather than yield; but the opposing commander, Marcantonio Martinengo, in admiration of his valour, appealed to Luigi to consider the inequality of the contest, and to spare the lives of his brave followers. Thus abjured, Luigi gave up his sword, and was conducted with all honour to the Castle of Soncino, but was promptly set at liberty. Such friendly deeds of chivalry were by no means unusual in this war of Italian against Italian, to serve a foreign cause. There often seemed to be some-

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thing unreal about it all ; an encounter was at times so like a glorified tournament. The opposing captains might be real friends and kindred spirits, writing stanzas in praise of each other, rivals in splendour and in magnanimity.

Luigi was not to blame in this adventure, for as Boccalini wisely says : " He yielded to adverse fortune, believing, like many Captains, ancient and modern, that in this is more honour and glory than to sacrifice his people and himself. . . . To avoid adversity is prudence, and the leader who has this gift will seldom or never fail. For with prudence and the ' Signor Dio ' for his guide, he will always on all occasions be superior to others. . . . " *

It was in December, 1526, that there came to Giulia sad news of the death of that dauntless Giovanni delle Bande Nere, who, in the service of his kinsman, Pope Clement, was fighting on the French side. The young Condottiere was defending with reckless valour the crossing of the Po, when he was wounded by one of those modern falconets which he despised, borne through the snow to Mantua, where, with heroic courage, he died a hero's death in the house of Lodovico Gonzaga. Giulia felt the deepest pity for his devoted young wife, Maria Salviati, whom she had met in Rome. Poor lady ! Her forecasts of fear had indeed been realized, and the sword had pierced her heart.

It was a sad and anxious winter for the country ; yet when the glamour of early spring dawned over the heights of Pagliano, Giulia could look back upon many joyous sunny days. She was again the Lord Vespasiano's constant companion in his morning rides through that wild,

* Letter of Francesco Boccalini from Sabbioneta, written November 15, 1526.

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beautiful land, where the lark sang his *cento novelle antiche*, where the almond-tree burst forth into blossom, and the shivering grey leaves of the olive gleamed like silver in the changing light. Then in quick succession came the flowering season of the peach, the apple, the pear, the fig-tree, and the red pomegranate; while the earth smiled back upon man with her rich treasures—the white mountain heath, the yellow broom, the gum cistus, the caper-flowers, narcissus, lilies and asphodel, foxgloves and roses. If the Colonna lord smiled at his bride's girlish enthusiasm for all this beauty, he too loved it, for he was a son of the soil, and his native hills were very dear to him.

Yet this brief halcyon time was but the lull before the storm which was gathering around, and was to bring such a terrible awakening. In her letters from home, Giulia had learned that her brother Luigi was in command of an Italian company in the Imperial army led by Charles Duke of Bourbon, who had joined the motley horde of barbarians brought from Germany by Frundsberg. Luigi and the other leaders were in a most painful position, as there was no money forthcoming from the Emperor to pay all these rough soldiers, who loudly demanded "pay or pillage," and who were, in fact, masters of the situation. The Pope, terror-stricken, played fast and loose with both sides, and did nothing but make treaties and break them. His duplicity caused the final catastrophe, when the army, maddened by false hopes, starving and demoralized, insisted upon marching against Rome. We are all familiar with that awful tragedy, when Charles de Bourbon was struck down at the first assault, and upon Luigi Gonzaga fell the task of leading the way through the walls of Rome, by the Porta Aurelia and the Setti-

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mania, until he took possession of the Borgo San Pietro. Pope Clement fled in terror to the Castel Sant' Angelo, and was accompanied by the Cardinals and other prelates, amongst whom was Luigi's brother, Pirro Gonzaga. The soldiers, mad with triumph after all their sufferings, were beyond all control ; and then followed that fearful sack of the Eternal City, of which the very thought fills one with shuddering horror. A later account from her cousin Camilla told Giulia how they fared at the Colonna palace, which was full of refugees. The Marchesa was in no serious alarm for herself, as the leader, Charles de Bourbon, was her nephew, while her son Ferrante and Luigi Gonzaga were also in the Imperial army. But it was a time of terrible uncertainty until late on that fatal Sunday, May 5, when Camilla saw her brother Alessandro crossing the Piazza, and he first brought news of Bourbon's death. Then Ferrante Gonzaga arrived, to the great joy of his mother, who had not seen him for three years. Her friends secured the safety of the Marchesa, but those who had taken shelter under her roof were compelled to pay a heavy ransom.

It was a great comfort to the young Colonna Princess to hear that her brother utterly refused any share of the spoils ; indeed, he spent all that he possessed in paying ransom for his friends and those whom he pitied. As the Venetian envoy wrote : " The generous conduct of Signor Luigi is beyond all praise."* Gandolfo Porrino wrote a poem on the subject.

A week later the Marchesa and her household made their escape ; she had attained the object of her visit to Rome, having won by her indomitable perseverance a Cardinal's hat for her son Ercole, at the price of 40,000

* M. Sanuto, " Diarii," xlv. 207.

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ducats! It was Giulia's brother Pirro who was sent with it by the Pope; and Madonna also contrived to carry away many spoils from the pillage of the city—she did so love beautiful things.

It was a sad time for her old friends. The poet Molza lost everything in the great disaster, and barely escaped with his life. Paolo Giovio was in like sad case, and never recovered from the loss of his precious manuscripts. He welcomed the coming of Cardinal Colonna, on May 10, as that "of an angel from heaven." For at this crisis the Lord Vespasiano, full of the deepest sympathy, had offered most generous help, and had implored the Cardinal to spare neither money nor influence in rescuing the hapless victims of the barbarian soldiery, and to do his best to put a stop to bloodshed and pillage. The Colonna prince was indeed so full of pity and horror that he forgot his own wrongs, and devoted himself to the rescue of the unfortunate Pope. He took a leading part in the Conference held at Orvieto for that purpose, and the Emperor, startled at the overwhelming triumph of his arms and the reprobation of the Christian world, was eager to make terms.

It was at this time that, in order to make some amends for that ill-judged and deeply-regretted raid upon the Pope, it occurred to Vespasiano Colonna to select the young Signor Ippolito dei Medici, son of Giuliano, and favourite nephew of Clement VII., as a possible husband for his daughter and heiress Isabella. He had met the young prince in Rome, and had been much attracted by him. Now, also, the Sack of Rome had been fatal to Ippolito's prospect of being Lord of Florence, which had expelled the Medici. However this scheme was first thought of, it remained a fixed idea with the Lord Vespasiano until his death.

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This terrible Sack of Rome had, indeed, far-reaching effects. The Gonzaga's friend, Signor Baldassare Castiglione, who had gone to Spain as the Pope's Nuncio, was so horrified at this event, which came upon him like a thunder-clap, that he never recovered the shock, and died some months later of a broken heart. In the words of the Emperor himself: "I tell you that one of the finest gentlemen in the world is dead." In this sad story I can but dwell upon that which touches the kinsmen and friends of Giulia, who was indeed thankful to know that her dear Lady Vittoria Colonna was safe in her beautiful Island of Ischia, whither her brother Ascanio had taken her before the troubles began.

Giulia had taken up her abode with Isabella in their southern domain of Trajetto for the winter months, when she heard from her brother Pirro, recently made Cardinal and Bishop of Modena,* that Luigi Rodomonte had been ill with the fever which raged in Rome, and had scarcely recovered, when he was entrusted with the task of conducting the Pope from Sant' Angelo to a place of safety. Her brother arrived in the dead of night at the gate of the Castello, on November 21, 1527, accompanied by thirty horsemen and many arquebusiers; and when Pope Clement appeared, Luigi met him with the deepest respect, and made him a present of a splendid horse which he was induced to ride. Thus guided and protected, they left the city by the Porta del Popolo, crossed over the Ponte Molle, and onward by Ronciglione and Viterbo to Montefiascone, where he rested for a while, and at length reached Orvieto in safety on December 8. The delicate courtesy and devoted kindness of Luigi

* See letter of Giulia to Bocalini, written November 4, 1537, from Trajetto.

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Gonzaga made a great impression upon the Pope, and was destined to have important results in the future.

The army of the League had attacked the Kingdom of Naples by sea and land, so that it behoved all friends of the Emperor to fight on his behalf. Giulia's husband, the Lord Vespasiano Colonna, had taken part in this campaign, and came home to her early in March, 1528, stricken unto death. On the twelfth of the month he made his will, in which he formally gave his consent to the marriage of his daughter Isabella to the Signor Ippolito dei Medici, nephew of the Pope, on condition that any sons born should take the name of Colonna. He appointed Giulia a dowry of 30,000 ducats, and the ultimate inheritance of his realm, and property which he left to her during her life and widowhood. . . .

Strengthened by the last rites of the Church, and full of tender love and thoughtful kindness for his wife and daughter, he passed away. With deep sorrow Giulia grieved for the loss of a dear friend, a charming and devoted companion, who had raised her on a pinnacle of greatness and fulfilled her every desire. But in truth she blamed herself that she could not mourn for her lord as he deserved. It may be urged on her behalf that she was still so young, not quite sixteen, but many a woman has known love, and passion, and despair before that age. . . . Henceforth she adopted for her emblem the flower of the amaranth, with the motto "Non moritura."

As it befell, she had but little time for mourning, for scarcely had the last solemn funeral ceremonies come to an end, and the Lord Vespasiano Colonna been laid to rest with his ancestors in the Church of St. Andreas, before all the young widow's courage was needed to defend her home, which was claimed by Colonna kinsmen and attacked

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by her foes the Orsini. The first to arrive was Sciarra Colonna, who, although nominally an adherent of the Pope, yet had a strong desire to obtain Pagliano for himself; and Ascanio also asserted his right as the nearest male heir. Isabella and Giulia had retreated to the Castello, which was well fortified and gallantly defended; so that before Sciarra had begun his attack, Napoleone Orsini, the Abbate of Farfa, marched against Pagliano with a strong force of men-at-arms, and took Sciarra Colonna prisoner by surprise. Now, this Napoleone Orsini was an enemy both of the Emperor and the Pope, who, on hearing of the ladies' dangerous position, decided to send them help. He had always declared that he owed his life and safety to the courteous and gallant Luigi, and in this moment of danger to his sister, he chose Luigi as leader of the relieving force.

The Gonzaga captain gladly accepted the command, and with splendid skill and valour came to the rescue; but it was only after hard fighting that he at length defeated the Orsini, reconquered the lands, and rescued Sciarra, who promptly saw the error of his ways. As for Luigi Rodomonte, he was the hero of the hour, and it was natural that Isabella Colonna should see in him another Orlando, a Paladin of romance. Luigi was from the first flattered and attracted by her evident admiration, and he soon yielded to the charm of her fresh young girlhood, and became deeply devoted to her. Giulia felt it her duty to remind Isabella that by her father's will, she was destined to marry Signor Ippolito dei Medici, but she indignantly rejoined:

“Can there be any question between him and your brother? Surely, if my father had lived he would have decided that the hero who saved our lives and our

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dominions had the greater claim upon my hand. And, moreover, Giulia," she continued, with a mischievous smile, "you must remember that when the Lord Ippolito came here as my father's guest he had no eyes for anyone but you, and that he talked poetry—Virgil, Ariosto, and I know not what—with you the whole evening."

Giulia could have pointed out that some courtesy was due to her as the hostess, but she did not contest the matter, for she could not offend her sister-in-law by replying that *she* had no literary tastes whatever, and that it would have been impossible for an accomplished scholar to carry on a conversation with her. However, Luigi loved Isabella as she was, with her merry laugh, her talent for practical matters, and her skill in all games and outdoor pursuits—riding, hunting, and hawking. Giulia was quite ready to help him in every way with his suit, and when their intimacy became a matter of talk and remark, she advised Luigi that they should send for their brother, Cardinal Pirro, and learn from him whether he could obtain the Pope's consent to the marriage. Pirro eagerly accepted the invitation, and his coming was a great comfort to them all; he brought most friendly letters from the Pope, who expressed in general terms his confidence in Luigi and affection for him. He was also the bearer of information which gave great satisfaction to Giulia. The Signor Ippolito, who was an intimate friend of his, had assured him that nothing would induce him to carry out the project of marriage with Isabella Colonna, as "he had set his devotion upon a noble lady of surpassing beauty and talent, who so far excelled all other as the sun's clear rays surpass those of the twinkling stars."

Luigi was already in no doubt as to the young Prince's feeling towards Isabella; had it been otherwise, he was

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far too generous and loyal-hearted to steal away the girl's love. Thus it became only a question of policy, and the two young lovers agreed to be content for the present with a solemn engagement and marriage contract. This proved to be of so much importance that I will copy the exact words :

“ I, Isabella Colonna, declare, confess, and swear by the Omnipotent God that I have taken for my legitimate spouse the Illus. Sig. Luigi de Gonzaga ; and thus I have given my vow to take no other husband while his Lordship lives, as Holy Mother Church commands. And this I have done and promised in my Palace of Pagliano, in the Salvarobba, espousing his Lordship with the ring. In the presence of witnesses . . . on this sixteenth day of April, 1528.

“ I, ISABELLA COLONNA, with my own hand.

“ I, FRANCESCO BOCCALINI, of Mantua.

“ I, PARIS BIONDI, of Mantua.

“ I, GIACHETTO FAVISINO, of Alessandria.”

It is doubtful how far the Pope knew of this secret agreement ; but when Cardinal Pirro returned to him at Orvieto, he lost no opportunity of keeping His Holiness in friendly disposition towards Luigi. Both Jacopo Salviati and Fabio Petrucci wrote him the most encouraging letters at this time, and also sent him orders from the Pope to defend Pagliano against Sciarra Colonna, who was collecting troops to attack the citadel. This was a task after his own heart, satisfying at once his love and his duty ; but obedience was more trying when he heard from Fabio Petrucci that he was “to waste no more time at Pagliano, but was wanted for active service

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elsewhere." With such a command no delay was possible, but it was a sad parting for them all; the future was uncertain, if not threatening, and the two young girls felt helpless and unprotected, although the Pope had been persuaded to send a company of 800 foot-soldiers, under Girolamo Matteo, to protect the Colonna dominions.

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CHAPTER VII

1529-1532

Luigi Rodomonte wounded at Viterbo—Death of Giulia's mother, Francesca Fieschi Gonzaga—Death of Giulia's brother, Cardinal Pirro Gonzaga—Her father takes orders, and is known as the "Abate" Lodovico—Luigi attends the coronation of the Emperor Charles V. at Bologna—Marriage of Luigi Rodomonte and Isabella Colonna—Birth of Vespasiano Colonna—Death of Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga, wounded at Vicovaro—His will.

LUIGI RODOMONTE, having fortified Pagliano to the best of his ability, appears to have been engaged in a skirmish at Viterbo, where he was taken ill with inflammation and fever in consequence of a neglected wound. The friends who were with him, amongst whom was the Cardinal Ippolito dei Medici, sent at once to Rome for the famous surgeon, Messer Tommaso Cademosto, but unfortunately he was unable to obey the summons, as he was in close attendance upon a great lord.* However, he sent full directions for the treatment of the sick man, who soon made progress towards recovery. Some weeks later we find that Luigi was able to travel as far as Fontanellato, a place in Lombardy, to the north-west of Parma, on the way towards the little village of Soragna, where he was tenderly cared for by his sister Paola, the wife of Galeazzo Sanvitale. He had scarcely recovered before he went to

* Letter of Cademosto, from Rome, on August 19, 1529.

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the help of a kinsman, Uberto Pallavicini, Marchese di Gibello, who was attacked by Lodovico Rangone, and there followed a hopeless tangle of conflicting interests, rendered more deadly by being amongst kinsmen and neighbours. In this petty warfare Luigi could gain neither honour nor reputation.

At the beginning of the next year (1530) Giulia had the misfortune to lose her mother, and soon afterwards her second brother, the Cardinal Pirro Gonzaga, who returned to his home at Sabbioneta, only to die there, struck down in his splendid and promising youth. He passed away on January 28 of that fatal winter, and Giulia's heart yearned for home, with the solace of her own people. But disturbing events made this impossible. When it had become known that Ippolito dei Medici was made a Cardinal, and thus renounced his claim to the hand of Isabella, the Colonna family loudly clamoured that she must take a husband from amongst her own kinsmen, lest her vast inheritance should go to some alien house. They even sent an appeal to the Emperor to enforce this. But meanwhile strange events took place.

Lodovico Gonzaga, Giulia's father, in his first grief for the loss of his wife, had taken priestly orders, and was already known as the Abate Lodovico. On the death of the young Cardinal Pirro, it seemed to him natural that he should claim all the benefices held by his son—the Abbey of Acquaneira, the living of Sospiro, and others—for at that moment Clement VII. was believed to be dying. But the Pope, who had in fact cheated Death of his prey and was rapidly recovering, lost no time in bestowing all the endowments of Pirro upon the Cardinal Ippolito.

The sad tale of mortality in the Gonzaga family was

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not yet complete. A few months later, in March, 1529, Giulia's uncle, the elder Pirro Gonzaga, passed away at Gazzuolo. He was the beloved youngest son of Madonna Antonia, and his loss was a terrible blow to her, who had already suffered so much. He had, unfortunately, taken part against the Emperor, who confiscated his estates and bestowed them upon Luigi Rodomonte. But this young prince, the very soul of generosity, at once declared that he simply held them as a sacred charge for the sons of Pirro, to whom he proved a most watchful and devoted guardian when their mother, Emilia Bentivoglio, was taken from them before the end of the year. Carlo, the eldest son, was a special favourite of Luigi, whom he strongly resembled in many ways. A splendid youth, of magnificent stature and strength, he, like Rodomonte, was without a rival in every game; and wonderful tales are told of his childish prowess—as when he parted two fierce sheep-dogs who were fighting, grasping them by the jaws, and tearing them asunder by force. As Tasso has said of these two cousins: "In our days, like unto the early Heroes, were Luigi and Carlo Gonzaga."*

Besides Carlo, his brother Federico, and his two charming little sisters Isabella and Lucrezia, were under the special care and guardianship of their cousin Luigi. He had taken advantage of a new league between the Emperor and the Pope, to make his peace with this latter,

* In his Sonnet cxxxvii. Tasso says :

"Luigi, e Carlo, incontro il ciel le fronti
Ben potevate alzar, qual Capaneo,
Che l' alte mura scosse, onde cadeo
Quando i fulmini di Giove ebbe si
E potevate monti imporrè a monti
D' Encelado non meno, e di Tifeo ; . . ."

(" Works of Tasso," printed in folio in Florence, vol. ii., p. 428.)

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and to persuade His Holiness to forgive the Pallavicini who had taken arms against him.

The next great event was the coming of Charles V. to Italy for his long-deferred coronation. He landed, on August 12, 1529, at Genoa, where Luigi met him, and was received with great favour, being in his company as far as Piacenza, with Cardinal Ippolito dei Medici, his cousin Alessandro, and many other great nobles. Meanwhile great preparations were being made at Bologna, which had been chosen for the important ceremony, and Luigi returned to his new home at Rivarolo.

In the midst of all his arduous warfare and many engrossing duties, Luigi found leisure to show his devotion to the Muses. At this very time, a letter was written to him by the learned Ambrogio Fiandino, in which he hails him as a *Mecænas*, and professes the greatest admiration for a sonnet of Rodomonte, composed in honour of Giovanni delle Bande Nere. Fiandino also sends to his patron an edition of *Phædrus*, which he has recently annotated. But the most delightful and valuable of Luigi's poetical works was the sonnet which he sent to Isabella, his beloved and true wife, a little later, when she was persecuted on every side by suitors.*

In this he tenderly comforts and applauds her, comparing her life to a voyage in a tempest-tossed barque, which, beset by storms, will reach a beautiful shore and a safe haven in due time. He compares her to *Ippodamia* (or *Briseis*) who, taken prisoner by *Achilles*, becomes his bride, as in the days when he himself took *Pagliano* by force of arms and wedded his dear lady. Then he exhorts her to continue in her constancy and to imitate *Penelope*, who,

* Appendix, note 2, Sonnet VII. (The marriage of Luigi and Isabella was still a secret.)

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surrounded by many suitors, never gave up her hope of Ulysses' return, and undid at night the web which she had spun by day.

Isabella Colonna was greatly pleased and flattered by this charming homage ; she was quite willing to look upon herself as another Penelope. In truth, this encouragement came at a fortunate moment, when a fresh suitor had appeared for her hand, more formidable than all the others. This was Ferrante Gonzaga, the son of Isabella Marchesa of Mantua ; he had left the army before Florence—where he and Luigi were in command under the Prince of Orange—and had gone to Bologna to make a direct appeal for the hand of the heiress to the Emperor, who received him favourably. This news soon reached Luigi, who at once sent his brother Cagnino* with the authentic documents of his marriage contract, which he was immediately to make known to all the great people assembled at Bologna. A sharp contest ensued, for Don Ferrante disputed the legality of the marriage, and the case had to be tried before the Emperor and the Pope. Luigi himself obtained permission to leave his company, and hastened to Bologna, where he was present at the splendid ceremony of the solemn coronation of Charles V. on February 24, 1530. This day had been chosen as the Emperor's birthday and the day of the victory at Pavia. By all accounts it must have been a magnificent pageant.

The ancient city was gaily decorated with triumphal arches and garlands of flowers, laurel, and myrtle, while the windows were hung with tapestry and brocades. The streets were guarded by soldiers, amongst whom the Burgundian companies were resplendent in white armour

* Gianfrancesco Gonzaga.

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over velvet doublets of red, green, and yellow. The procession from the Palazzo to the Church of San Petronio was led by the rector and doctors of the famous University in their purple robes, fur collars, and gold chains, followed by all the Bishops in violet copes and mitres; then came the Cardinals in scarlet silk and lace, in attendance on the Pope, who was carried in his golden chair of state by his guard in red liveries.

The coming of the Emperor was proclaimed by a resounding flourish of trumpets, and he was preceded by heralds from all parts of his world-wide dominions on which the sun never sets, and from all other countries. The orb of the world, the regal sceptre, the sword of state, and the Imperial crown on a golden cushion, were borne before His Majesty by dukes and princes in gorgeous array; and he himself followed, wearing his stately robes of empire and a flowing mantle of gold brocade, while on his head was the iron crown of Lombardy. As for the ceremony itself, it was impressive beyond all words, as the young Emperor was solemnly invested by the Pope with the Imperial insignia. He then kissed the feet of His Holiness, and a mighty shout rent the air as the heralds proclaimed him "Emperor of the Romans and lord of the whole world." Trumpets, bells, and guns announced the completion of the great event to the waiting crowds, and the whole city rang with acclamations—"Evviva Carlo Cesare, Imperator Gloriosissimo!"

When all the ensuing festivities were at an end, the Emperor went on to Mantua, where he had promised to bestow the title of Duke on Federico Gonzaga, the son of Madonna Isabella. By his special request Luigi accompanied him, and he wrote to Isabella that "on the

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25th day of March, when he entered the city, he wore a *sopraveste* of azure blue satin, made in squares of alternate colours, one showing a Scorpion embroidered, and the other an inscription: 'QUI VIVENS LÆDIT MORTE MEDETUR.'” It was supposed to be the property of the scorpion to heal the poison, when it is killed and placed upon the wound. He wished it to be understood that he would kill anyone who offended him,* a defiance of those who would dispute his marriage.

It was very soon after this that, by command of the Pope, and at the instance of Don Ferrante, Isabella Colonna was summoned to a formal examination at Cività-Castellana,† in the presence of Giambatista Mentebuona and Don Diego de Sota. She was most closely questioned, but remained constant in her declaration that she would have no other husband than Luigi. All the particulars were taken down, written in the Spanish language, and signed on March 28, 1530; but Isabella was left to return home in suspense. Cardinal Ippolito sent a kind letter by his secretary, Claudio Tolomei, to Luigi, promising all the help he could give.‡ Meantime Don Ferrante had evidently given up all hope of pressing his own suit, for we hear later that he had found another heiress, Isabella of Capua, daughter of the Duke of Termoli, whom he married secretly.

Luigi had returned to his duties in the camp before Florence, and it was here that he found time to write that

* Paolo Giovio thought this a little bombastic, but quite pardonable, considering all the circumstances (“Dell’ Imprese Militari,” p. 122).

† A hill-town near Borghetto and Monte Soracte, about forty miles from Rome.

‡ Letter of Claudio Tolomei, lib. vi., carte 225.

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beautiful poem in sixteen stanzas, "In Praise of his Lady," which was so much admired throughout all Italy. In a beautiful allegory, the poet describes himself as a weary pilgrim wandering in the dark and lonely forest by night, and hopelessly lost until a bright distant star appears to him and guides him on his way. "Ma bella Stella," on whom his life depends, and who awakens in his soul so many beautiful thoughts, is the emblem under which he pays all homage to his Isabella. What maiden would not find it in her heart to envy such devotion, expressed with so much beauty and harmony?

It was not until the early days of the year 1531 that at length the marriage of Luigi and Isabella was made absolutely secure and placed beyond all doubt, by the signature of both the Emperor and the Pope in token of its validity. Luigi was then duly proclaimed Duke of Trajetto and Count of Fondi, and it was a strange irony of fate which made Giulia a dowager-duchess at the age of eighteen. Now that the desire of her heart was attained in the successful issue of her brother's marriage, she felt free to carry out her long-deferred visit to the dear home of her childhood, for she could now be spared for a while by the married lovers at Pagliano.

Notwithstanding all the sad changes which had taken place amongst her own people, it was a great joy to find herself once more with her beloved grandmother, Madonna Antonia, to whom the years had been most kind; for now at the age of ninety, she was but little changed since the child Giulia left her, and she welcomed her beloved granddaughter with the same keen interest and loving sympathy. She was living at Gazzuolo, where she had so often stayed with her youngest son Pirro, and after his lamented death she had adopted his little daughters.

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The charming Lucrezia, not quite nine years old, must have vividly recalled to Giulia all the bright freshness and eager tastes of her own happy childhood. Her education was being carried out under the watchful care of Madonna Antonia, and Giulia had the pleasure of meeting an old friend, Messer Matteo Bandello, established in the household as tutor in Latin, eloquence, and philosophy. This pleasing writer was at that time engaged in preparing some of his *novelle* for the printing-press. This is a copy of the letter, in which he dedicated one of his elegant stories to his young pupil Lucrezia.* It is too long to quote in full, but the following is a summary :

*“To the Most Illustrious Signora, Lucrezia Gonzaga,
of Gazzuolo.*

“Salutation. . . .

“Being moved to set down these tales of ancient days, . . . once when I was with Madama Isabella of Mantua, sister of your grandmother,† she commanded me to take up Livy and read to her the story of Tarquin and Lucrezia with her death ; which, to obey her, I did, for she, Lucrezia Bentivoglio (as you know), is well acquainted with Roman history. When I had read it . . . the subject was discussed . . . M. Capilupi gave great praise to Lucrezia, but M. Equicola said that she was mad to kill herself. They were still disputing, when the noble and learned cavalier, Count Baldassare Castiglione arrived, to whom Madama told what I had read, and the subject of their discussion. . . . She thought I would go to the

* Part II., No. XXI., *Novelle di Matteo Bandello*.

† This was Isabella d' Este's half-sister, Lucrezia Bentivoglio, whose daughter Emilia married Pirro Gonzaga, the father of little Lucrezia. See *Genealogy*, No. 2.

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Sacristy and point out what St. Augustine had said on the subject in his learned book of 'The City of God,' but as Castiglione had come, she prayed him to give his opinion. . . ."

In short, he was persuaded to tell the story, adding descriptive and light touches, and deciding in favour of Lucrezia's deed. Bandello assures us that he has simply written down what the eloquent and learned Castiglione said. Then he adds that he has also composed "stanzas" in praise of his pupil Lucrezia, but if they are never published, at least she will be made immortal by the dedication to her of this *novella*.

It added much to the pleasure of Giulia's visit to meet Messer Bandello and to have long talks with him about their family, to whom he was devoted, especially her uncle Pirro and her brother Luigi, to both of whom he has dedicated some of his *novelle**—the highest compliment he can pay, for in all this changing world he had the assured confidence that his works would live for ever.

It was a disappointment to Giulia that she saw but little of her father, who remained at Sabbioneta. Since he entered the profession of the Church so late in life, he had become the most priestly of priests, and in his devotion to his sacred office he seemed almost to have forgotten that he ever had the cares of a family. Still, as the Abate Lodovico he retained his pride in the house of Gonzaga, and was ever a faithful and true friend.

Summoned home by an urgent request from her brother, Giulia returned at once by the shortest route to Pagliano, deferring until some future time her hoped-for visit to

* *Novelle*, Bandello.

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Madonna Renée of France, now Duchess of Ferrara, who had expressed an earnest wish to make her acquaintance. In that beautiful April weather they were able to ride for many hours in the day, taking only a noontide rest; they were all well mounted, and Giulia had a strong escort, on account of the disturbed state of the country; on this her brother Luigi had insisted, with the jesting remark that "she would need armed protection in passing through the dominions of so many of her suitors, lest they should kidnap her."*

However, the journey was safely accomplished, and Giulia was warmly welcomed by Isabella and Luigi, who, to obey the Pope's summons, had already made his preparations for departure, and shortly set forth, having first tenderly committed his wife to his sister's loving care. At the last moment of farewell, while his horsemen waited in the courtyard, Isabella presented him with a wonderful golden ring, on which two eyes were carved by a master-hand; and this mystic design was so much admired that various epigrams were later composed in its honour by three well-known poets—six in Latin by Angelo Colocci,† seven in Italian by Molza,‡ and one by Aonio Paleario.§

It was during this summer of 1531 that Giulia and Isabella took up their abode at Fondi, their favourite home henceforth—a Colonna dominion, beautifully situated on the Appian Way, half-way between Rome and Naples. They had but rare news of Luigi, who had been sent on outpost duty by the Pope, and had found much trouble in

* In that year, 1531, Giulia was only eighteen, in the prime of her youth and that marvellous beauty famous throughout Europe.

† "Poesie, Italiane e Latine di Monsignor Angelo Colocci."

‡ "Opera del Molza," t. iii., p. 316.

§ "Aonii Palearii Opera," p. 711.

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quelling the petty quarrels amongst his captains after their brief period of idleness.

Meantime, Isabella was in delicate health; but at length the long months of waiting and anxiety came to an end, and on December 6, 1531, a son was born to her, who received the name of Vespasiano Colonna, after his grandfather. The baptism of his heir was a splendid function for Luigi Rodomonte, and one of the sponsors was his sister Giulia, who was destined to play so important a part in the child's future life.

But the ladies did not long enjoy the presence of Luigi, who, before the end of December, was sent by the Pope on an embassy to the Court of Charles V. in connection with the proposed war against the Turks.

“ . . . all' alta impresa
Italia, Francia e la Romana Chiesa.”

Unfortunately, this great enterprise came to nothing, as these States only sought their own interests. In April Luigi had returned to Italy, and wrote home from Rivalta, near Mantua, where his cousin Carlo had joined him. He was next heard of at Ferrara, where he had stayed on his journey to Rome, and had a few days of delightful converse with that excellent poet, Messer Ariosto, who was preparing his great poem, “*Orlando Furioso*,” for the printing. Luigi was specially charmed with Canto XXVI., in which Malagigi explains the prophetic figures carved on the tomb of Merlin, and points out the symbols of the most distinguished nobles of the coming time. Amongst these, the highest praise is given to Luigi Rodomonte, as warrior and poet, in the lines :

“ Luigi da Gazolo il ferro caldo
Fatto nel collo gli ha d' una ferita,

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Che con l' arco gli diè Febo, quand' anco
Marte la spada sua gli mise al fianco."

But this was not all, for in Canto XXXVII. he pays the most charming homage to the splendid valour, the rare gifts, the fidelity in love, of Luigi, whose "fame rings through Parnassus." Isabella, his wife, also comes in for her share of warm appreciation, and Luigi was so full of gratitude and heartfelt admiration that he took up his pen and wrote that famous poem in praise of the great Ariosto, which has since been printed as an introduction to the "Orlando Furioso."* In this he protests, with true humility, that as yet he has done no deeds worthy of such praise, and looks forward to better times :

"Servare queste rime, e questo onore
A miglior tempo : or troppo il merto eccede,
Che d' uopo sia, chio troppo in alto saglia,
Se debbo far, che un vostro verso vaglia."

He hopes there will soon be an opportunity for a glorious death or a splendid triumph over the proud Turk, for he trusts that he will be placed in command of a company to fight against the fierce infidel.

In August he was sent with a body of 400 Papal infantry to enlarge and strengthen the fortifications of Ancona, which was looked upon as the strongest outpost of Christendom against the Turks.† Luigi was to see that the walls of the city were made good at all points, and that strong bastions were built to make the place impregnable. The citizens had rendered willing help, but they were unpleasantly surprised on September 20 by the

* There is a fine edition with this poem, bound in vellum, at Parma, in possession of the Conte Garimbeci.

† "Notizie Istoriche della Città d' Ancona," Saracini, bk. xi., p. 338.

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coming of a hostile army under the command of Monsignor Bernadino dalla Barba, also by command of the Pope, who, with his usual crooked policy, now proposed to take possession of Ancona for himself. Rodomonte was quite unprepared for this act of duplicity, as the last letter he had received from the Papal Secretary had only given orders to prepare for defence of the city against the Turks, who were said to have already advanced as far as Gallipoli with 150 ships.*

Taken thus by surprise, Luigi had no choice but to obey the fresh orders of His Holiness; and he went with the Governor to meet the elders of the city, and had the painful task of proving to them that resistance was useless, while he could only seek to soften the blow by persuading them that their city would be safer under the Pope's protection. Thus was Ancona added to the dominions of the Church, and Monsignor dalla Barba left there as Governor.

It was on a stormy December day that a courier arrived at the palace with news that the Lord Luigi Gonzaga, in the moment of victory, when he was entering the conquered city of Vicovaro, had been wounded by an arquebus in the left shoulder, and was in serious danger. Then, coming quickly on the heels of the first, who had been delayed on the way, another messenger arrived with the fatal tidings that all was over. How terrible in their cruel simplicity were those words, which rang like the trump of doom!—"Our great Captain, the Most Noble Lord Gonzaga, was borne to the Palazzo Pubblico of the city, and there, having dictated his last testament and taken farewell of his friends, he died of his wounds, fortified by

* See Letter of Gio. Battisto Sango to Luigi Gonzaga ("Lettere di Principi," vol. i.).

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the sacred rites of Holy Church, on the third day of December of this year of grace, 1532."

Giulia had to weep not only for her own irreparable loss, but for the ruined hopes of her father Lodovico, and this last bereavement of her beloved Madonna Antonia, to whom her gallant grandson Luigi was as the apple of her eye.

The dead warrior was borne to Fondi, where the funeral procession passed through the streets and reached the Cathedral porch, with banners of conquered foes trailing in the dust and all the pomp of stately woe. Giulia knelt by the side of Isabella, her widowed sister-in-law, during the last sad rites, and together they rode to the Palazzo, where the loving sister heard from the lips of Isabella the whole sad story, as she clasped the orphan babe Vespasiano in her arms. More fortunate than Luigi's sister, his wife had been near enough to be summoned at the first alarm of danger, and hers was the rare privilege of being with their hero to the last. In death, as in life, he thought only of others, and his sole anxiety was for the happiness of those he left behind. Most pathetic was the earnest care which he had devoted to his will, in the framing of which he overcame the agonizing pain of his wound and forgot himself with heroic valour, to think only of the welfare of those who depended upon him. By a supreme effort he recalled all who had shown him loving service, leaving special bequests to all his captains, his humble friends, and his servants, mentioning them all by name, and taking into account their deserts and their need. In the codicil, with touching affection, he warmly recommended Isabella to the love of his sister, and Giulia to hers. His widow was to be guardian to the Illustrissimo Signor Vespasiano, his infant son, unless she married

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again, in which case his father the Signor Abate Lodovico was to have sole charge of the boy his heir.

“Thus, on the third day of December of the year 1532, was my beloved brother Luigi Gonzaga, *detto* (called) Rodomonte, taken, at the age of thirty-three.” Words can tell but a small part of the honour and reverence, the devotion and love, in which he was held by all men. Amongst the many who have made the world resound with his praise, we have the loving testimony borne by his friend Matteo Bandello in the introduction to one of his *novelle* (the story of Philip of Burgundy),* and those beautiful lines of the poet Torquato Tasso, in which he speaks of Luigi as “the great glory of Italy, the terror to the foe . . .” “he of the strong heart and the wise counsel . . . who feared no danger and welcomed a noble death.” Marco Guazzo joins in his praise: “Con grandissimo duolo di tutti gli nomini segnalati, e di tutti gli uomini quai alla virtù sono amici l’alma al suo fattore divotissimamente rese . . .”†

* Novella, xxxix.

† “Istorie di Marco Guazzo,” fogl. 104.

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CHAPTER VIII

1532-1533.

Description of Fondi, where Giulia Gonzaga Colonna held her Court—Unique literary and artistic centre—The friendship with Vittoria Colonna—Poets and historians unite in praise of Giulia—Quotations from Ariosto, Tasso, Flaminio, Molza, and others—A “Golden Age”—Her portrait painted by Sebastiano del Piombo—The friendship of Giulia with Ippolito dei Medici—The story of his life—He is made Cardinal—He is present at the marriage of Catherine dei Medici with the son of François I.

THE picturesque medieval city of Fondi is so intimately connected with the history of Giulia Gonzaga during the most flamboyant years of her life that we cannot pass on without a brief description. It was in the summer of 1531 that the young Countess made her home in this ancient city, so beautifully situated in the fertile Terra di Lavoro, at the foot of the forest-clad Monte Passignano, and near enough to the sea to enjoy its life-giving breezes. The whole neighbourhood is rich in classical memories, which centre in this “Fundi” of the Romans, placed on the Appian Way, and guarded by its massive cyclopean walls. Here was born the Empress Galleria, wife of Vitellius, and the famous Vitruvius, whose fountain stands beyond the Eastern Gate. The site of the Villa of Varro is pointed out on a rising hill near by, and Horace once

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jested about the Prætor.* The family of Livia, the wife of Augustus, came from here; the Emperor Galba was born in the neighbourhood; and the low, hilly tract between Fondi and the sea at Sperlonga was the *Cæcubus ager*, one of the most celebrated wine districts of the Romans. These are but a few of the earlier legends, which are not only of classic fame. The old Cathedral is said to date from soon after the journey of St. Paul from Pozzuoli to Rome, when he rested here. St. Thomas Aquinas taught theology in the Dominican Convent, where his cell is untouched, and in the garden still flourishes the orange-tree believed to have been planted by him. This ancient Church of San Pietro, built on the site of a temple to Jupiter by Nicolo di Roma in 1180, glories in a marvellous pulpit of mosaic, with columns supported on the backs of two lions and two rams, and with four eagles on the capitals above. There were other interesting churches—San Bartolommeo and San Nicolò Pellegrino—and convents, of which the most noted was the Olivetan Monastery of San Magno, outside the walls, built by Prospero Colonna.

Situated half-way between Rome and Naples, fourteen miles from the port of Terracina, and about two miles from the coast at Sperlonga, Fondi was most convenient of access, and was greatly beloved by Giulia, not only for its legends, its ancient story, and its beautiful surroundings, but, above all, that it was her own domain, and there she dwelt in the midst of her subjects. After a most eventful history, the State had been bestowed by Ferdinand

* “Fundus, Aufidio Lusco prætore libenter
Linquimus, insani ridentes præmia scribæ,
Prætextam, et latum clavum, prunæque batillum.”

Sat. I., v. 34.

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of Spain, in 1504, with the title of Count of Fondi, upon Prospero Colonna, the father of Vespasiano, who had left it to his young widow. Here it was that during the next few years Giulia held her splendid Court, so famous in the history of the Renaissance. The presence of this beautiful and cultured lady made it an almost unique literary and artistic centre. Many came hither with the sole intention of paying homage to the Countess herself; others who were travelling from Rome to Naples, or onwards to Calabria, rested on the way to make her acquaintance and enjoy the gracious hospitality of her palace. All were courteously received and introduced to the presence of the great lady by her secretary, Gandolfo Porrino, a native of Modena, who had himself no small fame as a man of letters.

Amongst her most interesting visitors was the Marchesa di Pescara, Vittoria Colonna, who in later years had so much in common with Giulia in religious matters. A charming letter has been preserved in which Vittoria writes to recall with delight her first visit to Fondi, and the marvellous courtesy which she met with from her illustrious and beloved Signora, whose affection and kindness were beyond all praise. This was written at Viterbo on December 8 (probably of 1546), just before Giulia's visit to Lombardy: "It will be well for my Signora to visit her native land—she who is so well informed concerning her heavenly country." Then she is grateful to Giulia for sending her the 'Exposition concerning St. Paul' (by Valdés), which she much desired and so greatly needs, and for which she thanks the Signora again and again when she receives it.

There is also a letter from Juan Valdés himself, written [on September 18, 1535, to the Cardinal Ercole

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Gonzaga, in which he says: "I remained one day in Fondi with that Signora, of whom I can but say that it is a great pity that she should not be queen of all the world, although I believe that God has thus provided, in order that we poor creatures should enjoy her divine conversation and courtesy, which is not inferior to her beauty."

But these allusions point to the more serious side of the brilliant company which gathered around and sought to honour her in every way with their concert of praise and admiration. We find the poets Bernardo Tasso, Marcantonio Flaminio, Francesco Maria Molza, Francesco Berni, Gandolfo Porrino, Claudio Tolomei, and many others, writing odes, sonnets, and long poems to the glory of this surpassing lady; while others, like the Bishop Vittorio Soranzo, Francesco Berni, Paolo Giovio (who stayed at Fondi on his way to Urbino), Matteo Bandello (the novelist), Falco, Signora Margherita Pelletta (who also wrote madrigals), and Ippolito dei Medici, pour out their adulation in prose. Besides these, we have the testimony of Ariosto:

"Behold her whose fame to-day spreads throughout the world . . . for her unsurpassed grace and beauty, Giulia Gonzaga, who, wherever her feet may tread, and whatever her serene eyes may behold . . . yields to none other in loveliness, but, as though she descended from heaven, is proclaimed with rapture as a goddess!"*

In his "Bellezze del Furioso di L' Ariosto," Orazio Toscanella is no less enthusiastic. "If it may appear to some that this praise of Ariosto is too hyperbolic, I would point out how the Magnifico M. Antonio Magno declares that in all his travels, and amongst all the most

* "Orlando Furioso," Canto LXVI.

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beautiful ladies in the world whom he has seen in Italy, in France, in Germany, and in Spain, indeed he affirms and vows that he has never beheld any one who could approach Giulia in beauty and grace. . . .”*

And Messer Giovanni Betussi, in his edition of Boccaccio’s “Donne Illustre,” says that “the fame of Giulia’s divine beauty was like unto that of Helen in the days of Greece. She was a paragon of such infinite loveliness . . . that neither picture nor words could ever reproduce the vivacity of her eyes, her charming speech, the nobility of her heart, nor the greatness of her soul; these and all other qualities being combined in Her.”†

Falco, in his dedication of the “Rimario,” speaks in stronger language, dazzled by his lady’s divine and marvellous beauty, but still more by her wisdom, her accomplishments and her infinite courtesy. Matteo Bandello, the delightful writer of *novelle*, cannot say enough in her praise himself, but is greatly impressed by the passionate admiration of another lady, Margherita Pelletta, whose madrigals set the Countess Giulia upon a pinnacle of charm, and beauty, and virtue, above all women in her own age or any other.

This is only a very brief selection from the literature of the day, which we cannot close without a quotation from Tasso, who has a whole chapter in praise and admiration of Giulia Gonzaga.‡ He sings of “her fair curly hair, lightly waving in wandering curls . . . above the high serene forehead . . . the two clear and luminous windows which open beneath the dark and tranquil eyebrows, and in

* Libro di M. Giovanni Boccaccio delle Donne Illustre, ecc. In Vinegia MDLVIII.

† Bandello, *Novelle*, Parte iii.^a, p. 61. Lucca: Busdrago. 1554.

‡ For Tasso’s poem in Italian, see Appendix, note 3.

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this dark terrestrial prison can discern the marvels of God . . . the mouth which surpasses rubies and pearls in colour and beauty . . . the delicate neck white as snow. . .” Then rising to a higher strain of fancy, Tasso exclaims: “As her feet pass over the grass, flowers spring up, and those who see her declare that she is of Spring the sister or the daughter” (reminding us of Botticelli’s *Primavera*). “Blessed spirits rejoice in her radiance . . . and he who listens to her angelic voice will hear no such divine words amongst other mortals. . .” “The glorious name of Giulia will live so long as the sun spreads forth his golden rays.” I will end this chorus of praise with the words of Porrino: “Her gentle ways and her smiles revealed a garden of roses and violets—a terrestrial and celestial paradise. . . That was indeed the true Golden Age . . . and happy were they of Fondi and Trajetto!”

After the lapse of centuries, even such eloquent testimony as this may leave us a little unconvinced as to the lady’s surpassing beauty—like to another Helen of Troy. But at least we cannot doubt that beyond the cold perfection of a classic statue, our Countess of Fondi possessed the elusive gift of charm. The tender sympathy, the keen insight, the quick responsive glance, the delicate courtesy, and natural unconscious grace, so well expressed in the “*Cortegiano*” as *sprezzatura*—all these were hers in a supreme degree.

But amongst the throng of votaries who laid their homage at the feet of Giulia, there was one who was far more welcome than all the others. This was Ippolito dei Medici, the nephew of Pope Clement VII., whom we have already heard of as a suggested suitor for Isabella Colonna, the daughter of Vespasiano. This young prince is so intimately associated with Giulia Gonzaga, that her

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story would be incomplete without his. He was the son of Giuliano dei Medici and a noble lady of Urbino, born about 1510. He was taken to Rome at the age of three, when Pope Leo X., another uncle, was so delighted with his beauty and spirit, that he commissioned Raphael to paint the child playing at his feet, on the wall of a *sala* in the Vatican palace. When Ippolito lost his father, on March 17, 1516, the Medici family appear to have warmly adopted him and educated him with the greatest care, "not only in Letters, but as the son of a prince, in riding, the use of arms, and the art of music for which he showed great facility, learning to play upon various instruments and accompanying them with a charming voice, being dowered by Fortune with supernatural talent so that he was the admiration of all his teachers."

Concerning his musical talent, Giovio writes thus: "He became a delightful performer on the lute, greatly skilled with the violin, excellent on the flute, and unequalled with the cornet; he had an excellent touch for the monocord . . . in fact, there was no instrument from whence he could not bring forth delicious harmony and touch the hearts of his hearers, whether the music were joyful and pleasing, or whether it were sad and terrible."*

He was equally successful in his other studies, becoming a very good classical scholar, while his Italian poetry rivalled that of any writer of his day.

At the age of fourteen, Ippolito and his cousin Alessandro were sent by Clement VII. to Florence, in order that under the guidance of Cardinal Passerini they might govern the city. Then it was that Ippolito began to show his lofty and ambitious character, for he wished to appeal to the imagination of his compatriots as the successor of

* Paolo Giovio.

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the great Lorenzo, and to bear the title of *Il Magnifico*. He only remained three years at Florence, and after the revolution of 1527, retired for a time to Lucca, where he eagerly pursued his studies until he was recalled to Rome the following year by Clement VII., who was devotedly attached to him. It was now the Pope's ambition to arrange some great marriage for this youth of eighteen, and, after various higher flights, he at last entered into negotiations with his former foe, Vespasiano Colonna, for the hand of his daughter Isabella. Meanwhile, Ippolito himself held aloof from all these projects; he had so many delightful pursuits, and life was altogether so splendid and interesting to him, that he had no wish for any change which marriage might bring. It has been suggested by some of his biographers that he had already seen the beautiful Giulia, the wife of Vespasiano Colonna, in all the radiance of her early girlhood, and that, worshipping her from afar, he had made her his ideal.

So it came about that when, on January 10, 1529, Clement VII. felt himself to be seriously ill and in danger of death, with no provision made for his beloved nephew, he resolved to raise him to the dignity of a Cardinal, with the title of San Prassede; and at the same time made him Legate of Umbria and Vice-Chancellor of the Church. Later he was appointed administrator of the Bishopsrics of Casale and Lecco, and there were bestowed upon him the rich Abbeys of Tre Fontane in the Campagna, of Santa Sabba, and of Grottoferrata near Frascati, once a Greek monastery.

Now Vespasiano Colonna had died in the preceding March, so that at this time Giulia, at fifteen, was a widow. It would be very interesting to know whether Ippolito

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fully realized, that by accepting these ecclesiastical honours, he was raising an impossible barrier between them—whether high position and great wealth had too much attraction for him, or whether he unwillingly yielded from affection to his uncle?

Of his passionate affection for Giulia, unchanged till the day of his death, and of his bitter regret for their parted lives, we can have no doubt. We have a touching illustration of this in the young Cardinal's letter in dedication of his great work, the "Translation of the Second Book of the *Æneid* into Italian Blank Verse,"* to the Most Illustrious Signora Giulia Gonzaga; he compares his sorrow to the woes endured at the destruction of Troy:

"As to one oppressed by sore grief, the example of a greater sorrow may bring alleviation, so it has been with me. Finding no other remedy in my suffering, I turned my mind towards the Burning of Troy, and weighing that disaster against mine, I felt assured, without doubt, that no greater evils befell within those walls than those which I endured in my inmost heart. Seeking in a measure to lighten these, while I lamented the woes of Troy I have revealed mine own. There I send this to you because it shows you a true image of my despair, when neither sighs, nor tears, nor my deep sorrow have ever revealed it to you."†

We have many instances of Ippolito's loyal and loving service to his lady. He had a most earnest desire to possess a portrait of her, and in the summer of 1532 he obtained Giulia's permission to send the famous painter, Sebastiano del Piombo, to Fondi, that he might paint a

* See Appendix for original Italian, note 4.

† First published in Rome, 1538, signed only Il Cavaliere Errante.

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picture in oils of her. We can fix the time exactly, as there exists a letter of Sebastiano, dated June 8, 1532,* in which he says: "I believe I am starting to-morrow, and am going as far as Fondi, to paint a lady, and I think I shall stay there fifteen days; do not trouble to write to me or send me anything until my return. . . ."

And in another letter, of July 15, 1532, he writes: "On returning from Fondi I found that our poor Benvenuto had died" (Benvenuto dalla Volpaia, a celebrated artistic clockmaker).

In his "Life of Sebastiano," Vasari says: "In the course of one month he painted this portrait, which, on account of the celebrated beauty of the lady and the talent of the artist, came forth as a divine picture."† We have various poems in honour of this event, by Molza, Porrino, and others. Ippolito was greatly pleased with the result, and this portrait of Giulia was his most precious treasure. He was an excellent judge of art and a most devoted patron of artists. At the coronation of Charles V. in 1530, at Bologna, where the young Cardinal was such a splendid figure, he sent for Titian and obtained for him a commission to paint the Emperor in complete armour; and the picture gave His Imperial Majesty so much pleasure that he paid 1,000 scudi for it, and ordered another portrait from the great painter on his return from Hungary.

During his short and brilliant life, the Cardinal dei Medici showed himself to be indeed a worthy descendant of Lorenzo the Magnificent, as a splendid patron of art—another Mecænas. All contemporary historians unite in

* "Les Correspondants de Michel Ange Sebastiano del Piombo." Paris: Librairie de l'Art. 1890.

† See remarks on the portraits of Guilia, p. 274.

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his praise. Ammirato tells us that he dwelt in a magnificent palace in the Campo Marzio, where he held a Court which was believed to consist of three hundred people of all countries. Here he entertained with princely generosity a great company of artists, musicians, poets, and men of letters, and he was not only their patron but their rival in all the arts. "Here were also Moors from Barbary, chieftains in their own land, who, in their mastery of horsemanship . . . and all other Moorish exercises, were marvellous to behold. Here you might see Tartars who could draw the bow and strike the lance with unrivalled skill; and here were Indians who, partly by the vigour of their limbs, and partly by the dexterity and agility of the whole body, surpassed all other men in games of wrestling and fencing. These were also excellent swimmers, and could remain so long under the water that no one believed they would ever rise again. He had selected a bodyguard of Turks as men prompt and skilful in the handling of arms."

Adjoining the palace in the Campo Marzio was a great garden, in which plants and trees from all lands were collected, and in which there was a menagerie of wild animals and rare birds such as had never before been seen in Italy. Amongst these was a tame lion, given to him by François I., and an immense bear, presented by Caterina Cibo, Duchess of Camerino. Added to this, Sansovino tells us that Ippolito had a magnificent show of precious horses and dogs, that he gave wonderful theatrical entertainments and sumptuous tournaments—in short, that "through the splendour of his life he acquired an illustrious name throughout Italy." He also insisted that the medical teaching of Hippocrates should be made use of in time of war, and so keen was his enthusiasm for

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architecture that he founded a club for the study of Vitruvius, which met twice a week in Rome and was called "La Virtù."

Even his uncle, Pope Clement, was somewhat dismayed at his munificence, and desired Ippolito's Maestro di Casa to remonstrate with him and ask him to dismiss some of his attendants, only to receive this reply: "Let His Holiness be told that I do not keep them at my Court because I require their services, but for the reason that they have need of mine." Paolo Giovio, who relates this, adds that he cannot give enough praise to the generosity of the Cardinal, his nobility of spirit, and charming manners—indeed, he sums up his character as "royal-minded."

Clement VII., who had soon recovered from his serious illness of January, 1529, remained greatly devoted to the splendid young Cardinal, and sent him as his Legate on every important mission where magnificence was desirable. When the Emperor came to Italy in 1530, it was Ippolito who had the honour of receiving him, and who spent four weeks in his company during the State festivities at Mantua. Here, on Sunday, March 27, an accident occurred out hunting "which might have caused the death of an Emperor and a Cardinal," as the Venetian Ambassador wrote. Charles V. had already killed a wild boar, and was chasing a wounded stag, when his horse rushed so violently against that of Ippolito as to throw both riders to the ground. Happily, neither of them were much hurt, and after this incident they were more friendly than ever. We have already seen the important position which the young Cardinal had taken at the coronation ceremonies at Bologna. Two years later he was again sent by the Pope as Legate to Germany, with a magnificent

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retinue "suitable to a great king,"* and he was received with the highest honour both by the Emperor and by his brother Ferdinand, King of the Romans. Lintz was at this time threatened by the Turks, and the Cardinal dei Medici, with princely munificence, raised and paid a company of 8,000 Hungarians, riding at their head in Hungarian costume.

It was in this dress that he was subsequently painted by Titian; he was always most unwilling to appear in Cardinal's robes.

On his return from Hungary, he was summoned by his uncle, Pope Clement VII., to accompany him to France for the marriage which he had arranged, of Caterina dei Medici with young Henri, the second son of King François I. We have a very full and entertaining account of the journey, which the Pope would fain have avoided on the "plea of his age."† However, when he understood that his presence was a diplomatic necessity, he made up his mind to it, and was most genial and pleasant to his travelling companions, amongst whom was Madonna Maria Salviati, the widow of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, in whose care Caterina had been placed.

The Papal company was welcomed with princely state at Marseilles by military honours and salvoes of artillery which made the city shake. The wedding took place on the Feast of SS. Simon and Jude (October 28) in the presence of a splendid assembly; and after a Low Mass, the boy and girl (the bridal pair) stood hand in hand on a carpet of gold brocade, and listened to a long oration from Hymen and nuptial songs in their honour, delivered by classical nymphs. The wedding supper was held in the *sala* of the Consistory, where three tables

* Ammirato Opuscoli.

† Clement VII. was then fifty-four.

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were placed for the chief guests, the Queen of France entering on the arm of Admiral Chabot. At the first table sat Pope Clement, the Queen, and the young bride. The second was for the King, the Duke of Angoulême (the bridegroom), and the Cardinals, amongst whom were the Reverendissimo Ippolito dei Medici and his friends Salviati and Ridolfo. At the third table were placed the Dauphin,* with Bourbon, Lorena, and other barons of France.† The rest of the company were entertained in another chamber at many tables.

His Holiness appears to have been the life of the party; he spoke excellent French, and jested loudly with King François, who was also in high spirits, and made splendid presents to many of the guests. Cardinal Ippolito refused to accept anything except one splendid tame lion, which he could not resist the joy of adding to his menagerie.

The dowry of Caterina was to be 30,000 gold ducats,‡ besides magnificent clothes and precious jewels. In November of the same year, 1533, Cardinal Ippolito was sent to represent his uncle, the Pope, as sponsor to the infant son of the Duke of Ferrara and his wife, Renée of France. The later story of Ippolito's life, adventures, and death will be told in the course of Giulia Gonzaga's history.

* François, who died in 1536.

† See Memoir of Antonio Sacco.

‡ Very little of this was ever paid by Clement VII.

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CHAPTER IX

1534

The Barbary Corsairs raid the Mediterranean coasts—Attempt of Kheyr-ed-din, better known as Barbarossa, to carry off the beautiful Countess of Fondi to the Sultan, Suleyman II.—He lands at Sperlonga with his corsairs, and reaches Fondi at night—The hair-breadth escape of Giulia Gonzaga, and her flight through the darkness—Her city and palace sacked, and many of her people massacred—Cardinal Ippolito dei Medici heads the avenging army—Expedition of the Emperor Charles V. against Tunis and the Corsairs.

IT was in the year 1534 that befell the most amazing and striking incident in the life of Giulia Gonzaga, Countess of Fondi, and widow of Vespasiano Colonna. It is probable that by many people she is only remembered as the heroine of this almost incredible adventure. The fame of this great lady's wonderful beauty appears to have spread beyond the confines of Europe, and even to have reached the storied cities of Asia and the deserts of Africa, kindling the imagination of Mohammedan chieftains.

At this period the Ottoman Empire was ruled by the Sultan Suleyman II., whose position and boundless self-conceit are best described in his own words, written in reply to a craven appeal from François I. when a prisoner in Spain :

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“I, who am the Sultan of Sultans, the Sovereign of Sovereigns, the distributor of crowns to the monarchs of the surface of the globe; I, the shadow of God on the earth, the Sultan of Padishah, of the White Sea, the Black Sea, Rumelia, Anatolia, Caramania, Rum, Sulkadr, Diarbekr, Kurdistan, Azerbaijan, Persia, Damascus, Aleppo, Cairo, Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, all Arabia, Yemen, and other countries, which my noble ancestors conquered, and which my august Majesty has likewise conquered with my flaming sword; I, Sultan Suleyman Khan, son of Sultan Selim Khan, son of Sultan Bayazid: you who are Francis, King of France, you have sent a letter to my Porte, the refuge of Sovereigns. . . . Night and day our horse is saddled and our sword girt on . . .”*

This magnificent potentate, the terror of Christendom, whose outposts he had recently defeated at the fatal Battle of Mohács, in Hungary, while his pirate galleys ravaged the coasts of the Mediterranean, had taken into his service the great Barbary Corsair of Algiers, Kheyr-ed-dīn, better known in Europe as Barbarossa.† No name ever struck such terror into the heart of dwellers on the shores of Spain and Italy. Many a gallant ship had fallen a prey to his devouring galleys, and many a Christian slave pulled at his oars or languished in the prisons of Barbary. Everything prospered with this invincible Kheyr-ed-dīn, the most daring of pirates; his fleet increased until he had a large number of galiots cruising perpetually through the summer season, harassing the coast and taking innumerable prizes, while the number of his fighting men was largely increased by the Moors whom he rescued from persecution in Spain.

* J. B. Bury, L.S.D.

† See Appendix, note 5.



Photo Kunst.

Rembrandt's Engraving.

CARDINAL IPPOLITO DEI MEDICI AND THE ARTIST.

Sebastiano del Piombo.

National Gallery.

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This was the famous Corsair who, having entered the service of the Sultan and devoted the previous winter to reconstructing the Turkish navy, set forth on his work of destruction in July, 1534, with his fleet, said to carry 2,000 men, in eighty-four galleys. Starting from the Golden Horn, he first attacked Messina and burnt some ships; then, passing on to the coast of Calabria, he surprised Reggio, and carried off ships and slaves; then he sacked San Lucido, taking 800 prisoners, and putting to the sword most of the inhabitants. The Corsairs next reached Cetraro de Monaci, to which they set fire, burning seven galleys recently built by the Imperial Viceroy, Señor Toledo, and taking rich spoil of wives and maidens. The pirate ships passed boldly in sight of Naples, causing great terror, and disembarked at the little island of Procida,* which they laid utterly desolate. This new "Attila" soon after reached Sperlonga, the fishing village, eight miles distant from Fondi, where he killed the commander of the fort, and enslaved or massacred most of the inhabitants.

If rumour speaks truly, Giulia Gonzaga was the prey he aimed at. He had formed the base, unthinkable scheme of carrying her off as a unique present for the seraglio of the Sultan, Suleyman II.,† and the plot would have been successful had it not been for the watchful devotion of a faithful servant. At Sperlonga, on that fatal night, Barbarossa found a traitor who showed him the way through the wood, and by a stealthy night march, a strong body of armed men, under the command of their leader,

* Three miles in length.

† The fame of Giulia's surpassing beauty had spread not only through Europe, but as far as Asia. She was called the "Nuova Elena."

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reached the Via Appia some hours before dawn. The inhabitants of Fondi were all in peaceful security, for no one suspected the neighbourhood of the pirates, and the bridges were down when Barbarossa and his host broke through the gate towards the Levant, and so entered the city. He met with no opposition; the Podestà of Fondi, Messer Steccacio, had not the courage to make any resistance, and basely fled to secure his own safety. The Bishop, the Reverendissimo Giacomo Pellegrino, also heard the alarm; and made good his flight. Swiftly and silently the Corsair made his way straight to the palace, and when he found that his prey had escaped, he vented his fury upon Giulia's unprotected household and her unfortunate people. The looting went on during four terrible hours, and, as elsewhere, many of those who were spared from the sword were bound together and driven to Sperlonga to be shipped as slaves. To add to the horrors of the scene, there was a conflagration in the streets when pillage had done its work. Even the Cathedral of San Pietro, so rich in memories and treasures, did not escape the profaning hand of the spoiler: tombs were robbed, and the ashes of the dead were scattered, amongst these being the remains of Prospero and Marc Antonio Colonna.

Most heartrending of all was the awful disaster which befell the nuns in the little Benedictine Convent near by, on a hill above the Strada Appia Nuova.* In his hot pursuit, Barbarossa believed that Giulia had taken refuge there, and the Turks broke into that sacred home of religion, and, enraged at not finding their expected prey, they massacred most of the helpless Sisters.

And, meantime, where was Giulia? Whither had she

* Built on the ruins of a Pagan temple, and enclosing the site of the Villa of Varro.

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fled from the deadly peril which threatened her? Suddenly aroused from sleep at the dead of night by a faithful servant, her pursuers already within the palace, prompt and desperate action was her only chance. Clad as she was in her night attire, with only time to snatch up a silken coverlet, she is believed to have escaped through the window, from whence she reached a secret draw-bridge which could be raised or lowered at will, and which led to the *maschio* (a part of the fortification) of the citadel adjoining. Here was a dark passage which brought her to the courtyard, where, by good fortune, horses were obtained, and she and her companion reached the open country. It appears most probable that Giulia sought a refuge in her Castello of Campomidele, about four miles distant, built high up on a hill, and strongly fortified with solid walls and towers. Moreover, the way thither lay through thick forests, where there was more shelter for hiding from pursuit.

Vallecosa, where the Colonna princess had another feudal castle, has a local tradition that here was her hiding-place, but Campomidele has the stronger claim. In a charming poem by Muzio Giustinopolitano, called "La Ninfa Fugitiva," we have a vivid description of the fears and emotions aroused by that fearful night-ride in the heart of the fugitive lady. It is dedicated to "Monsignor Hyppolito Cardinal de' Medici."* Here the picture rises before us of the beautiful nymph, who so far excelled other beauties in loveliness, fleeing for more than her life, half-clad, barefoot, with her long tresses unbound and waving in the breeze, as she urged her horse upward through the steep forest-way. We watch her hurrying through the darkness of that fearful night, starting at the

* Appendix, "La Ninfa Fugitiva," note 6.

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murmur of whispering leaves, and trembling with icy horror as the rustle of a crackling branch sounded in her ears like the tramp of pursuing feet. What strange visions would rise before her in the dim, mysterious darkness—visions so far removed from her peaceful, sheltered life that they would ever haunt her in the days to come!

Amongst the wild legends which have clustered round this terrible night adventure, there is one which no serious biographer of Giulia Gonzaga can pass over in silence, for it has been repeated at the present day* by writers who must be entirely ignorant of this noble lady's spotless life and gentle character. It was actually supposed that, as a recompense for the devotion of her old retainer, his mistress caused him to be stabbed! This fable no doubt had its origin in the fact that the beautiful Giulia was set up as the world's ideal of perfect modesty and chastity (to which subject her latest biographer has devoted a whole chapter). Thus to the popular mind she was another Artemis, and the luckless mortal who chanced to look upon her beauty, justly merited the fate of Actean.

The Countess of Fondi, overwhelmed with grief and horror at the cruel events of that fatal night, lost no time in seeking to deliver her unfortunate subjects, and her thoughts naturally turned to Cardinal Ippolito as their champion. Although the hope of her capture can only have been a secondary object, we find another poet writing:

“ Giulia, più che mortal cosa divina,
Credasi cagion fu che Solimano
Mandasse a depredar nostra marina.” †

* See Appendix, note 7.

† Il Paterno, in his “Trionfo della Castita.”

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After leaving Fondi, Barbarossa sought to surprise the hill-town of Itri, about seven miles distant, another feudal possession of Giulia's, but the inhabitants made so gallant a defence that the Corsairs were compelled to retreat. They were more successful at Terracina, which they reached without encountering any resistance, and the ancient hill-city, so famous for its splendid situation and for the ruined Palace of Theodoric, met with the usual fate of pillage and massacre. In this case, also, the Bishop, Alessandro Argoli, was fortunate enough to make his escape.

We can scarcely believe that this terrible raid on the coast of Italy, so far exceeding in its widespread disaster any preceding attack, should have had for its main object the capture of the beautiful Countess of Fondi. Yet this is the positive statement of the most trustworthy historians of the period.* There is also an interesting letter preserved in the Archives of Modena, dated from Rome, August 10, 1534, by Francesco Saraceno to Ercole d' Este, in which, as news of the day, he says that Barbarossa had attempted to seize Donna Giulia, "*donarli al Turco,*" and that she barely escaped on horseback to a distant rocky fortress. "These men of Barbarossa then destroyed and burnt Fondi."

When Giulia's messenger reached Rome, His Holiness Pope Clement VII. was dying* — almost *in extremis*. It was Cardinal Ippolito who aroused the other Cardinals

* Summonte, "Dell' istoria della citta e regno di Napoli," vol. iv., p. 146. Napoli, 1675. Sansovino, "Ritratto delle più nobili e famose citta d' Italia," p. 31. Venezia, 1555. Segni, "Storia Fiorentina," vol. ii., p. 36. Milano, 1805. (These are only a few of the authorities.)

† Clement VII. died on September 25, 1534.

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to fierce indignation and moved them to immediate action. A strong company was hastily collected from the Papal army, and under the command of the Lord Ippolito himself, set forth at once to avenge these cruel wrongs. Unfortunately, it was too late for immediate action, as the Corsairs had lost no time in setting sail from Sperlonga with all their plunder and a cargo of slaves, to the number of a thousand, collected from Fondi and the other towns and villages on the coast. These pirate raids had long been the terror of those Southern shores, but never before had ravage and destruction been carried out on so vast a scale. All Italy was now aroused to fierce wrath, and the people of Naples alone, made a donation of 250,000 ducats to the Emperor Charles, solely that he might rid the land of these hateful infidels and destroy their power for ever.

Cardinal Ippolito did all in the power of devotion and princely generosity to relieve the misery of the unfortunate people, and himself saw to the defences of Fondi: the fortifications were strengthened, trusty guardians were appointed to every post of importance, and fresh measures were taken for the public safety. Not until then did he give back the keys of the city to Giulia.

Meantime, the Corsair leader, elated and triumphant with success, set forth on a bolder expedition—nothing less than the conquest of the King of Tunis. During three centuries, since the ruin of the African Empire of the Almohades, this old Carthaginian domain had been ruled by kings of the dynasty of the Beni Hafs (1228-1534). They had been recognized by the kingdoms of Europe, and merchants from Genoa, Pisa, and Venice had traded in their port. But the present ruler, Muley Hassan, twenty-second of his line, had waded to the throne through

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the blood of his kinsmen, was cowardly as well as cruel, and fled from his city at the mere approach of the terrible Barbarossa. When he attempted a feeble attack with the help of some Arab tribes, the Turkish guns were too much for him, and Tunis was added to the Ottoman Empire.

Muley Hassan appealed to the Emperor Charles V., who was already pledged to avenge the wrongs of Italy, and who clearly saw that if Tunis became a nest of pirates, his realm of Sicily would be in constant danger. Already the coast of Algiers was in the power of the Corsairs, but the harbour of Tunis was the key of the situation, and he was only too glad to take up the cause of the exiled king. All that winter, great preparations were made for the coming expedition. Toledo, Viceroy of Naples, caused a galley to be built at his own expense, and a number of great lords, more especially in Southern Italy, followed his example. The attempted outrage upon the Countess of Fondi appears to have been the match which set aflame the widespread enthusiasm. The great Andrea Doria, Doge of Genoa, already the rival of Kheyr-ed-dīn, for each held a supreme position on his own side of the water, was grimly ready to meet his old foe again. The new Pope, Paul III., sent twenty-two galleys under Virginio Orsini, which joined with those of Genoa and the rest of the Italian fleet at Naples in May. The Emperor joined them at Palermo on June 11 with a great company of Imperial troops from Spain and Germany, and the powerful armada of more than 300 ships set sail for Africa, arriving after a prosperous voyage of three days. The supreme command was given to the Marchese del Vasto, and the first attack was on the Goletta, the twin towers which guarded the channel of Tunis. The

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post of danger was always claimed by the Knights of Malta and their great carack *S. Anna* (which they had sent with four other galleys) was moored close to the fortress in which their heavy cannon soon made a breach, and they gallantly rushed through to plant their banner on the battlements. In spite of desperate sallies by the besieged, in which the flower of Italy's nobles were slain, the defenders were driven back into the city, and Goletta was taken by the Christians, with its forty guns and stores of ammunition and weapons.

Barbarossa came out with a great army to face the foe, but his Berbers refused to fight, and the thousands of Christian slaves in the Citadel broke their chains and turned against their tyrants with desperate courage. Placed thus between two fires, the Corsair chief was compelled to retreat, and with great difficulty made his way to Bona, where he had left many of his ships. The unfortunate city of Tunis suffered the usual terrible penalty of defeat, and for three whole days was given up to barbarous plunder and massacre.

Before Charles V. left in August, he had concluded a treaty with Muley Hassan, which they both duly swore to on Cross and sword. Goletta was to belong to Spain; the ruler of Tunis was to pay tribute, to free all Christian slaves, to renounce piracy, and to offer annual homage of six Moorish horses and twelve falcons. All this looked well on the signed parchment, but in point of fact it was absolutely without value; for even if the renegade king should wish to keep his word, the fierce Moslems would never yield allegiance to him or to an "infidel" Emperor.

But the Christian world was elated by this transitory success, and Charles V. was hailed with enthusiasm as having conquered the invincible Barbarossa, set free

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thousands of Christian slaves, and saved Europe from the dominion of the dreaded Turk.

We cannot wonder that Giulia Gonzaga should have watched the progress of this expedition with intense interest, and several letters written to her from Tunis during the siege have been preserved. One of these, which is now at Rome in the Biblioteca Vallicellana, was addressed to her secretary; while another, sent direct to her, was written at Tunis on August 7, 1535, by Francesco Miranda, Chancellor of the Prince of Sulmona. This is the precise title :

“Copy of a letter sent to the Illustriss^{ma} Sign^{ra} Giulia Gonzaga Colonna, containing: the taking of the Goletta with full particulars; the taking and sack of Tunis with full particulars, executed by His Cæsarean Majesty; the method and order of His Majesty’s encampment in Tunis; the night Parliament held in Tunis by Barbarossa with the Arabs, Moors, Janissaries, and renegade Christians; 18,000 Christian slaves set free by order of His Cæsarean Majesty; entrance of His Majesty into Tunis and flight of Barbarossa; the prayers of the Moors to the Emperor and to the King of Tunis for their salvation; offer of the King of Tunis to Cæsar to save Tunis; amount of money found in Tunis by means of a renegade Christian and given by His Majesty to the Marchese of Vasto; promises of Arabs and Moors concerning the taking and death of Barbarossa.”

The Countess of Fondi was indeed avenged on the terrible Corsair chief.

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CHAPTER X

Trouble between Giulia Gonzaga and Isabella Colonna concerning the will of Vespasiano Colonna—Isabella is at strife with her husband's relations—Cardinal Ippolito dei Medici is sent from Florence on an embassy to the Emperor at Tunis—He pays a visit to Giulia at Fondi, and passes on to Itri—Here he is poisoned by the treachery of Duke Alessandro of Florence—Giulia is with him in his last hours till his death, on August 10, 1535—Her bereavement an undying sorrow to Giulia—Deeply mourned by all, he is borne to Rome and buried with stately funeral honours.

A SAD home-coming indeed had it been for Giulia Gonzaga Colonna, to find her beautiful Fondi ravaged and her beloved people mourning for their lost ones! But with a brave heart she set herself gallantly to the task of restoration, showing princely generosity in her gifts, and bearing everywhere hope and comfort to the bereaved as she told the story of the mighty armada sent forth to conquer the pirate host and redeem the captives of Barbary.

The Countess of Fondi had other troubles of her own at this time, for ever since the death of her brother Luigi Rodomonte there had been constant irritating domestic strife with his widow. Regardless of her husband's dying legacy of peace and love when, in the codicil to his will, he so tenderly "recommended his sister to the affection

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of his wife," Isabella had never ceased to maintain a hostile attitude towards Giulia. Her grievance really dated from the death of her father, Vespasiano Colonna, when he left "*mia mogliera donna et patrona in tutto lo stato predetto et ancor del Regno, sua via durante, servando lo habito de vidua. . .*" That her father's young widow should be left in so splendid a position was intolerable to the daughter—ultimate heiress of a girl about her own age, who showed no disposition to marry again—and she made desperate efforts to have the will set aside. Meantime she gave as much trouble as possible, was always in money difficulties through her extravagance, neglected to pay the income due to Giulia from various estates, and carried on a worrying course of ceaseless litigation.

Isabella appears to have quarrelled with all her Colonna relations. She was certainly of a grasping disposition, for she had been barely six months a widow when she determined to visit the dominions of her husband in Lombardy and assert her right to them. On June 9, 1533, she set forth from Fondi, with a train of thirteen ladies and a strong escort, and had a prosperous journey to Gazuolo, where she was most kindly welcomed by Luigi's aged grandmother, Madonna Antonia del Balzo. The whole family seem to have shown her every honour and attention, but from all accounts she was by no means popular amongst her husband's relations. Her manner was proud and overbearing; as a Colonna princess, she looked down upon the House of Gonzaga, and she was also strangely obstinate in various eccentric ways. Thus, instead of following the usual custom of Christendom by keeping Friday as a fast, she gave much trouble by her peculiar devotion of fasting with Lenten fare, in the

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company of her ladies, on Tuesdays.* This in itself might be a small matter, but the Lady Isabella showed utter disregard for all counsel.

She soon left *Gazzuolo*, and insisted upon setting up her Court at *Sabbioneta*, where she attempted to rule the State as supreme mistress, although in point of fact she had no legal rights there, the father of Luigi, the Abate *Lodovico Gonzaga*, being still alive. The only person to whom she appears not to have been wanting in courtesy was *Federico*, Duke of *Mantua*, who paid her a state visit with great pomp at *Sabbioneta*. She certainly left no good impression behind amongst her husband's kinsfolk when she at length returned to *Fondi*, where *Giulia* appears to have been ever ready to receive her sister-in-law, and to welcome with the warmest affection her little nephew *Vespasiano*. He was not yet four years old, but was a splendid child for his age, and already the likeness to his father, *Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga*, was quite striking, with his golden hair, his fair complexion, and his beautiful blue eyes. In this little boy, who was destined in the coming years to be the delight and interest of her life, *Giulia Gonzaga* already loved to trace farther resemblance to her dearly-loved brother in the precocious intelligence and bright, happy temper.

On the other hand, his mother *Isabella* seems to have come home in a disappointed, fretful mood, and to have been more aggressive and trying than usual. An interesting letter of this period throws some light upon the complicated subject of the dispute between the sisters-in-law. It is dated from *Fondi*, June 3, 1535, and is addressed to *Don Ferrante Gonzaga*, a favourite cousin

* "*Vita di Luigi Gonzaga*," *Affo*, *Irenio*. (*Isabella* did not return to *Fondi* until May, 1534.)

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of the Countess of Fondi. He was made Viceroy of Sicily.

In this Giulia alludes to the difficulties raised with respect to her husband Vespasiano's will: "They say that the feudal possessions could not be left to me without the consent of the vassals before the death of Signor Vespasiano, or else that Donna Isabella had 'redeemed' that consent. . . . I believe—indeed, I am certain—that my Lord did not hold this view, because I see clearly that he wished to leave me all. But if it were otherwise, as he left five thousand ducats *da vivere* to his daughter, as accepted by the Signor Luigi my brother, and that the rest was mine, it follows that the rest of the income would belong to me. If Donna Isabella demanded some confirmation from His Majesty I cannot show it, because the documents of Fondi are lost and that notary is dead. A Procuration was found which was made in Gaeta, but not this one. But I know that when my brother went to Court he took a Procuration from Donna Isabella. But in any case I do not desire to take her State, but only a means of living for myself; and my lawyers can bear me witness that, when they told me I could claim a great deal, I always said that I was willing to be content with less than my rights, as your Lordship can see in the division which, amongst others, I was willing to make with Donna Isabella. Hearing now that your Lordship is coming to Naples, I am very pleased, having seen what kind interest you have always taken in my affairs . . . and I pray that you will try to arrange matters for me in some way, for I shall be content with anything you do; and if there is need of His Majesty's help, I hope to obtain it through your Lordship and the 'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo nostro. . . .'"

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This last allusion is no doubt to the Cardinal Ippolito, who would have so little opportunity of serving his beloved lady any more, as his tragic story was so soon drawing to an end.

Meantime a temporary arrangement had already been made between these two ladies, and an agreement had been signed by them both on May 24, 1535, by which Isabella promised to pay 2,500 ducats a year, in three divisions, to her sister-in-law while the matter was being tried, and without prejudice to her rights. On the other hand, Giulia agreed to this arrangement also without prejudice to her claims. This was to hold good during the absence of Isabella from May to September in the Abruzzi, and until the lawsuit was decided one way or the other.

In the absence of her sister-in-law during those three summer months, Donna Giulia probably looked forward to a peaceful, happy time, and no foreboding warned her of the coming tragedy which would overshadow her outlook upon life, and make her regardless henceforth of worldly honour and of all that wealth and greatness can bestow.

We are told that the devotion of the young Cardinal Ippolito for the Countess of Fondi had become stronger than ever after the anxieties and perils of her escape from Barbarossa. This was shown in many ways, but perhaps more especially in his anxiety to show favour to anyone who was brought to his notice or recommended by Donna Giulia. Thus, when the poet Molza feared that he was in disgrace with the Cardinal, it only needed a word of intercession from Giulia to obtain his forgiveness. The eagerness and haste with which Ippolito had collected the Papal troops and led them against the Corsairs, his

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generous help in her time of trouble when Fondi was left wasted and despairing, and his chivalrous sympathy, had touched her heart more deeply than ever. We may imagine how gladly the Countess welcomed her dear friend as a passing guest at Fondi when he arrived from Tivoli, passing through Albano, with a large retinue, towards the end of June, on his way to Tunis with a special embassy to the Emperor Charles V.

It would take too long to describe the tangled web of politics at Florence, the whole story of Duke Alessandro dei Medici, and the hatred and indignation with which he was looked upon by his subjects. We gather that the Cardinal was the bearer of an appeal against the evil doings of his cousin, and was also probably excited by the ambition of taking part in the crusade against the Turks. In any case, after a brief stay at Fondi, where his gallant youth and brilliant talent made him the life and spirit of the whole Court, he took leave of the Countess and passed on to her neighbouring city of Itri, beautifully situated on a mountain-side, taking up his abode in the Monastery of San Francesco. Here he proposed to await the coming to Gaeta of a galley bound for Tunis, as it was urgent that he should have audience with the Emperor before he again set sail for Europe.

We have various conflicting accounts of all that happened during that stay at Itri, but there is no doubt that it was a troubled and anxious time for the young Cardinal. The death of the Medici Pope, Clement VII., and the election of Alessandro Farnese, Paul III., had made a great difference in the position of Ippolito. He was no longer the privileged nephew to whom all things were permitted and who could do no wrong. A few months before this, one of his favourite adherents, Conte Ottavio della Genga, had

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been suddenly arrested by the Papal authorities on some trifling pretence, and Ippolito had shown his indignation by moving with all his Court to a villa outside Rome. When the Pope had made amends and sent apologetic messages by the Emperor's Ambassador, the Medici Cardinal condescended to return to his palace, and, as Varchi tells us, "so great was the affection and respect in which the Cardinal Ippolito was held by all the Roman nobility, that on the day when he rode back to Rome with all his stately retinue, there was no gentleman of any rank who did not go forth to meet him outside the city, in order to accompany him first to the presence of the Pope and then to his own palace."*

We are told that the political exiles from Florence (known as the *fuorusciti*) had selected seven leading men of their number to send to Itri in order that they might accompany the Cardinal to the presence of the Emperor. It is believed that the Duke of Florence, hearing of this, determined to lose no time in getting rid of this dangerous cousin, whose very existence was a menace to him. We have the fullest and most circumstantial accounts of the manner in which a deadly poison was conveyed to Itri, how the house-steward Giovanni Andrea was bribed to administer it, and how he bided his time for a convenient moment to carry out his fatal design.

Meantime the Cardinal was eagerly hastening on his preparations for departure, but still found time to pay frequent visits to Giulia at Fondi. The poet Molza, who was at the Court there, writes at this time: "Our Cardinal is now at Itri, with a greater desire to pass into Africa than ever Rodomonte had to come to Italy. And I have offered myself to him to do the same. But possibly His Illus-

* Varchi, "Storia Fiorentina," bk. xiv.

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trious Lordship has need of men who will carry swords and lances rather than the pen, and thinks that young Soranzo and I had better stay at home this time. Keep well and love your Molza."

The poet had just received a sonnet from Ippolito full of enthusiasm for his expedition to Africa, and the "true and glorious honour which he hoped to find as the price of his valour on that ancient storied shore." But a more distant journey awaited the gallant young prince.

Ippolito appears to have been taken ill on August 2, and although there seemed no great cause for anxiety, various friends hastened from Rome to join him. To one of these, Bernardino Salviati, the Prior of Rome, he confided that he believed he was poisoned by Giovanni Andrea. This was on August 6, immediately after he had taken a small bowl of chicken-broth for his dinner, which immediately caused violent pain. The steward was at once arrested and imprisoned in the Citadel of Itri by order of the town notary. He took the matter lightly at first, remarking that he hoped the doctors would not treat his master for poison, but "give him soothing and canonical drugs." Varchi says that later he made a full confession. Everything was done that was possible, and a messenger was sent to Rome in order to obtain from the Pope a certain *olio da caravita* which was believed to be a powerful remedy against poison. But it was remembered afterwards that this was not sent.

The news of the Cardinal's illness reached Giulia when she was at Mass in the Cathedral of Fondi, and without a moment's delay, she at once rode forth in such breathless haste, that it was long before Molza and other members of her suite could overtake her, on the long, straight road towards Itri. We can dimly imagine the turmoil of her

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feelings. In those bygone days of pomp and prosperity, the young Countess* had upheld her pride and had striven to regard the Lord Ippolito as merely her courteous friend, her brilliant companion, her gallant champion and defender. But now the veil was torn aside, and the touchstone of peril and disaster had revealed to herself the deep, undying love which was the master-key of all her being. But this was the time for action, not for thought; and as she breasted the steep hill on which Itri stands, she nerved herself to courage and endurance, for all her horizon was bounded by the sick-chamber within those grey walls of San Francesco.

There we cannot follow her; the sweet and intimate converse held in those last lingering days between the two fine natures "whose love had known no earthly close," is not for us to intrude upon. It would ever remain a precious memory to the one left behind . . . for whom henceforth the pomps and vanities of this world would be no more than a passing show. With delicate sympathy the historian Paolo Giovio, who was then at Itri, says: "To the Lord Ippolito, death was less bitter in that he was near to Donna Giulia, who ministered to him with all virtuous tenderness."

The young Cardinal, tormented by a "*piccolissima e lenta febbre*" but unconquered by pain or weakness to the last, fortified by the rites of the Church, passed away about noon on Monday, August 10, 1535. Suddenly called from the joyous, splendid life which had been his—brightened by all that high estate, and friends, and letters, and learning, and warlike energy, could add to its glory—Ippolito met death with the gallant fortitude of a hero on the battlefield. Once more it was the immemorial tragedy

* Giulia was only twenty-two at this time.

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whose sad lament echoes through the ages—of beautiful youth cut off in its splendid prime. Many a bereavement had Giulia endured before, but this was indeed her crown of sorrow.

Great was the lamentation throughout all Italy for the death of the young Cardinal dei Medici, and especially in Rome, where he had been so striking and splendid a personality, beloved by all men for his chivalrous courtesy and his princely generosity. The deepest sorrow for his loss was felt, not only by his personal friends—the great nobles, the men of letters, poets, and artists—but it was shared by the populace of the Eternal City. Never had such a demonstration of universal mourning been seen as on the arrival of the Cardinal's funeral procession in Rome.* In solemn pomp his body had been borne on the shoulders of his Moorish household servants, in the midst of a great company of mourners, courtiers, friends, men of letters, his chief captains and soldiers with trailing banners, along the ancient Appian Way, through the Porta San Giovanni, to the Cardinal's own palace. Here the bier was joined by the nobles, Cardinals, and great dignitaries of Rome, who, followed by a multitude weeping and tearing their clothes, passed on to the Church of San Lorenzo and San Damaso, near the Campo de' Fiori, and here was laid to rest all that was mortal of the great Cardinal Ippolito dei Medici. An epitaph was placed on the left side of the sepulchral chapel, enumerating his virtues and marvellous talents.† But we find his greatest monument in the chorus of praise and grief which arose on all sides. Here we find him spoken of as the new Mecænas, whose loss to art and

* Ammirato, "Opuscoli," vol. iii.

† Forcella, "Iscrizione delle chiese ed altre edifizii di Roma" vol. v., p. 174.

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letters is irreparable as the example of all virtues, the rival as well as the patron of poets and musicians, of such infinite charm that he was beloved as much as he was admired, a most gallant soldier, a skilled diplomatist—and all this when he had but reached his twenty-fourth year.

Had his life been prolonged, it was believed by his friends that he would have attained to the Papal throne, and displayed to the world a splendid successor of Leo X., with the warlike vigour of a Julius II. Or, after the death of his cousin Alessandro, he might have proved such a Duke of Florence as would rival and excel the glories of Lorenzo the Magnificent. The position of Cardinal Ippolito was already too exalted for safety, as was proved by his sudden death. The honours bestowed upon the poisoner, Giovanni Andrea, by Duke Alessandro, appear to have left no doubt of his complicity, and, before long, both the instigator and his tool met with a violent death. Alessandro was murdered by his cousin, and Andrea was put to death by his fellow-citizens of Borgo San Sepulcro in horror of his crime. As for Pope Paul III., he reaped the success of the fatal event which he did not greatly mourn, for he lost no time in bestowing all the wealth and episcopal endowments of Cardinal Ippolito upon his own nephews.

Meantime, there was one true mourner whose undying love had changed for her the aspect of all worldly things. Giulia Gonzaga returned to her palace and took up once more the burden of her daily life, but she devoted most of her time to prayer and meditation. In this great sorrow her heart and affections were utterly detached from the world of state and pomp to which she was so soon to be summoned back.

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CHAPTER XI

The Emperor Charles V., after taking possession of Tunis, appoints Ferrante Gonzaga, Governor of Sicily—He travels on to Naples, and invites the Countess of Fondi to his Court—The Emperor finds a husband for the rich young widow, Isabella Colonna, in the son of his General at Pavia, Charles de Lannoy, Prince of Sulmona, February, 1536—Giulia Gonzaga takes up her abode in the Convent of San Francesco delle Monache, in Naples—She listens to the preaching of Ochino, and becomes an earnest pupil of the Reformer, Juan Valdés—At her suggestion he writes his famous "Alfabeto Cristiano"—Other works of Valdés—His religious assemblies at Chiaja—Letter of George Herbert on the writings of Valdés.

WE have already followed the victorious course of Charles V. until he had completely taken possession of the city of Tunis, and avenged the wrongs of the Christians upon the unfortunate Turks. He remained in Africa for some time to enjoy his triumph and strengthen his position before he set sail for Sicily, an island in which he was always greatly interested. Here he arrived on August 17, and remained for ten weeks, resting after his arduous labours, and seeing to the general government as well as strengthening the fortifications of the harbours. When he took his departure early in November he appointed Signor Ferrante Gonzaga,* son of Francesco and Isabella d' Este of Mantua, as Viceroy of the Kingdom of Sicily. The Emperor arrived on November 25 at

* See Genealogy of Gonzaga family, No. 2.

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Naples, where he made a triumphant entry, and was hailed as conqueror of the terrible Barbarossa, and proclaimed champion of Christendom. On November 25, 1535, Charles V. made a solemn entry into Naples, passing under the arch of the Porta Capuana, "artistically transformed with symbols, commemorating the glory of the conqueror, lord of a mighty realm on which the sun never sets." Wonderful indeed were the preparations, consisting of statues and pictures by the finest sculptors and artists of the day, as well as Latin verses by at least two poets.* In a letter written by Paolo Giovio, who was then at Naples, we have a very interesting appreciation of the Emperor, who was now thirty-five years of age and still unmarried: "His Majesty has given judgment against certain barons who have ill-treated the people, amongst whom are Carafi, Caraccioli, and others. And not to appear melancholy he has (*fatto maschero*) worn a mask, and paid a visit to Lucrezia Scaglione, who is more beautiful than ever, and has two beautiful daughters, married. There are also three beautiful maidens, amongst whom he might choose a bride—Diana di Cardona, Govella Coscia, and Cornelia Gennara. . . . But the truth is that His Majesty is as cold as the *tramontana* (north wind), and flies from all occasion of sinning even in thought."†

It was a wonderful galaxy of fair ladies, besides all the great nobles, which was gathered together at Naples to do honour to their feudal lord. But His Majesty's first and most pressing desire appears to have been to meet the far-famed Countess of Fondi, who had so narrowly escaped the Corsair raid.

* Miccio, "Vita di Pedro de Toledo."

† Letter to Monsignor di Carpi, December 28, 1535.

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A most gracious invitation was at once sent, praying that the Signora Giulia Gonzaga Colonna would vouchsafe to visit the Emperor at Naples. From so high a prince, her feudal lord, this was, in fact, a command which the lady had no choice but to obey. Isabella, who, since her return from the Abruzzi, had found the Court at Fondi terribly dull, was delighted to accompany her sister-in-law, and with a retinue suitable to their rank, the two ladies travelled to Naples about the middle of December. Here they were received with great honour, and at the splendid Court held by the Viceroy, Don Pedro de Toledo, for the glory of his prince, Isabella Colonna was quite in her element. Giulia had the pleasure of meeting many of her old acquaintances, amongst whom were the charming sisters, Maria d' Aragona, married to the Marchese del Vasto, Vittoria Colonna's adopted son (her husband's nephew), and the bright and high-spirited Giovanna d' Aragona, the wife of Vittoria's brother, Ascanio Colonna.

Neither of their husbands were very satisfactory; Maria had a rival whom Alfonso d' Avalos preferred, but his wife was too proud to make any complaint. She simply replied to her indignant friends: "I have no doubt that time and my love and the voice of duty will bring my husband back to me. . . ." Her constancy was justified, and after three years his eyes were opened, and he returned to his wife and became once more her devoted lover. Indeed, his jealousy caused quite an unpleasant scene at an entertainment given by the Viceroy Toledo. As for the other sister, Giovanni, her husband Ascanio had given himself up entirely to the study of astrology and alchemy, in which he wasted his whole fortune.

Another friend of Giulia deserves special notice—the

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poetess Veronica Gambarà, who had recently shown her strong admiration for the young Cardinal Ippolito and her tender sympathy for his loss, both in prose and verse. This lady belonged to the older group of noble ladies, remarkable for their well-preserved beauty and culture, who had formed part of the literary society of Isabella d' Este. Veronica had lost her husband, Gilberto I., Lord of Correggio, in 1518, and ever since had worn "the garments of mourning, while in her stable she kept four horses blacker than night as a suitable emblem of her undying grief." But more welcome still to the young Countess of Fondi would be the meeting with her trusted adviser and devoted cousin, Ferrante Gonzaga, recently made Viceroy of Sicily, who had accompanied the Emperor to Naples, bringing with him his wife, Isabella da Capua, the heiress he had married when disappointed about Isabella Colonna.

Amongst the great ladies who added brilliance to the Court of Naples at this time, we find the Princess of Salerno, the Princess of Stigliano, the poetess Maria Cardona, wife of Ferrante d' Este, Dionora Sanseverino, Isabella Brisegna, and many others, all of them worthy of note, and some of whom we shall meet again in the coming most interesting phase of Giulia's life. As for the Emperor, he might be "cold as the *tramontana*" so far as he was personally concerned with all these fair ladies, but he was keenly alive to their value as an asset in the payment of his debts. Thus, how could he better recompense one of his valiant generals than with the hand of some rich young widow, who would feel it an honour to have her matrimonial affairs arranged with great magnificence by His Supreme Majesty himself? Amongst the gallant company of young nobles who had

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accompanied him to Naples, there was no one to whom Charles V. owed more than to Philippe de Lannoy, the son of that Charles de Lannoy who had fought so valiantly at Pavia, and to whom François I. had yielded up his sword. As Viceroy of Naples, the elder Lannoy had rendered the most important services to the Imperial cause, and had ultimately died of the plague in Rome, after that terrible Sack of the Eternal City, of which he had striven to mitigate the horrors. His son Philippe had also distinguished himself as a general of cavalry, having fought in Germany against the Duke of Saxony with courage and ability. He had already been made Prince of Sulmona, a district lying between Aquila and Naples, whose chief town is famous as the birthplace of Ovid, in the midst of the picturesque scenery which he describes in such glowing terms. Near Sulmona is the famous hermitage from which the holy man San Pietro da Morrone was taken by force to be made Pope under the name of San Celestino.

The lady selected as a bride for this fortunate young soldier was the sister-in-law of Giulia, Isabella Colonna, daughter of Vespasiano Colonna, and widow of Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga. We have no reason to suppose that the young lady was not perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, for she certainly had no desire for perpetual widowhood, and always sought to grasp all the worldly pleasure and position within her reach. But there are a few words on the subject preserved in the Archives of Modena which may tend to show that she had not much choice in the matter.* “The Signora Isabella, being unable to contradict the will of her superiors, has yielded

* Letter from Matteo Casale to Alessandro Guarino, Ducal Councillor, February 19, 1536.

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to their desire, and will marry the Signor, Prince of Sulmona.”

This wedding took place on February 27, 1536, and in a letter written to the Duke of Ferrara, we have a full account of the splendid banquet given on the occasion, in the palace of the Lord Sanseverino, Prince of Bisignano, to which the Emperor and all his Court were invited. The ceremony itself was performed in the presence of Charles V. with all magnificence. He gave the bride as a dowry the picturesque castle and estate of Caramanico in the Abruzzi, not far from her husband's Principality of Sulmona. Amongst the guests who were present, we must notice Persio Crescensi, whom we shall meet again as Isabella's secretary.

Unfortunately the difficulties concerning the rights of Giulia and her sister-in-law were not settled, and continued for years to be a source of trouble and anxiety. One immediate result of this marriage was that the clause in the will of Luigi Gonzaga with regard to his son now took effect, and the five-year-old Vespasiano was placed under the guardianship of his grandfather, the Abate Lodovico Gonzaga, who came forth from his religious retreat to accept the solemn charge, and took up his abode once more with his aged mother, Antonio del Balzo, in the palace of Gazzuolo.

Having satisfactorily arranged a suitable marriage for Isabella Colonna, it would have greatly pleased the Emperor if he had been able to do the same for the beautiful Countess of Fondi, who was at this time still in the very prime of life, although so much had happened to her in her twenty-three years. But Giulia had already given a practical form to her earnest desire that she might forsake the pomps and vanities of this world. Before the

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end of December, 1535, she had applied to Pope Paul III. for a Brief, permitting her, "as a secular person," to live henceforth in the Convent of San Francesco delle Monache,* close to the church of the same name (founded by King Robert in the year 1325, "where dwelt certain nuns, not cloistered, who distributed daily the King's alms").

Charles V. had such strong religious feelings of his own, that he had every respect for those of others, and appears to have shown his kindness and sympathy in every way, until the young widowed princess obtained the permission to take up a life of uncloistered prayer and meditation in the Convent of San Francesco. It is interesting to know that the Emperor and Giulia constantly met in the Cathedral, where at this time Fra Bernardino Ochino was preaching those wonderful sermons which His Majesty was wont to say, "would draw tears from stones." In Lent of the previous year, when the friar had been giving a course of sermons in Rome, the Cardinal Ippolito had been amongst those who were deeply impressed by them. In a letter from Agostino Gonzaga we read: "This preacher is a man of most holy life, and his teaching is devoted to making plain the Gospels. His one desire is to teach men how to walk in the footsteps of Christ, and he teaches with the deepest sincerity, and the most moving voice. He never fears to speak hard truths to his hearers for their good, while his words of rebuke are chiefly aimed at those in high position, so that all Rome flocks to hear him. The Reverendissimo Medici never misses one of his sermons at which many of the Sacred College are always present.

* Now called the Rotunda. See Arch. St. Nap., "Catalogi degli edifizii sacri delle citte de Napoli," 1883, p. 293, Series XIII.

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. . . We are all delighted beyond measure with his teaching. . . . The Signora Vittoria Colonna is a constant disciple of this friar, in whose words she recognizes a revival of the true and holy life of San Francesco."

This Bernardino Ochino was a Franciscan friar of Siena, and for three years was general of his order; he is described as "fiery, proud, austere," with a large pale face, and long shaggy beard. Wherever he preached, his sermons created the greatest enthusiasm, and Cardinal Bembo wrote from Venice: "I am prayed by divers gentle souls in this city that you would be pleased to persuade your Padre Fra Bernardino of Siena to come hither next Lent and preach in the Church of the Holy Apostles, to the reverence and honour of our Lord God; which thing they greatly desire to obtain his reverence. Nor they alone, but all the citizens are in infinite expectation of hearing him." After his request had been granted, the Cardinal expresses his admiration of the friar's eloquence and piety, adding "that he had never heard such preaching."

It was after hearing a sermon of Ochino that the Signora Giulia Gonzaga was so moved one day that she could not control her emotion, and came weeping out of the Church of San Giovanni Maggiore. It so happened that she was observed by a friend of hers, a certain Spanish gentleman of great learning and piety, Señor Juan de Valdés, formerly Papal chamberlain, who had occasionally been one of her guests at Fondi, and who was now secretary to the Viceroy.* Seeing the lady's trouble and agitation, Valdés accompanied her to her home, where she earnestly questioned him with regard to the teaching which they had just heard. In the light of

* See Appendix, note 8.

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after-events, it is very interesting to remember that this religious conversation is believed to have been the origin of that beautiful work which had so great an influence on the early disciples of the Italian Reformation, and which is known by the name of the "Alfabeto Cristiano." Of this work and its devout author we shall have more to say later. At this time Juan de Valdés was chiefly known by a curious "Dialogue," published some years before with the famous "Lactancio" of his brother Alfonso.

In this "Dialogo de Mercurio y Caron" there was an attack upon the abuses of the Church, Mercury and Charon being made to discuss with the souls of the departed their religious life and the affairs of the world.* But to return to the meeting of the princess with Valdés, a brief account will be necessary to show the deep impression made upon Giulia by the words which she had just heard. She found relief in taking counsel with one whom she already revered for his piety and learning. She spoke of her hopes and her endeavours. "Within me there is a battle. . . . Ochino's words fill me with the love of Paradise, but at the same time I feel the love of this world and of its glory. How shall I escape from this conflict, and to which shall I yield? Should I make both inclinations agree, or must I give up one?"

Valdés comforts her with the assurance that this turmoil of the spirit is the first sign of the growth of grace within her. He does not hope to lead her to perfection at once, but wishes her to arrive there by degrees, neither weakened by haste nor kept back by negligence.

"The Law has wounded you, the Gospel will heal you. My only fear is that you will try to regulate your Christian

* See Appendix, note 9.

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life in such a manner that those around you will not perceive the change. . . .”

Giulia confesses that she still loves certain idle pastimes, to lay aside which would, she fears, lead to melancholy. . . .

Valdés replies: “You must lay aside these gradually, and the more you learn of Divine things, the less you will be drawn towards those of passing shows. But you must make your choice between God and the world. This is the way of perfection: Love God above all things and your neighbour as yourself.”

Then follows a brief discussion on the value of monastic life, which Valdés asserts is only of use when adopted from the pure love of God. “As fire is needed to give heat, so living faith can alone produce charity. Faith is the tree, charity is the fruit. . . .”

Giulia asks concerning the way of salvation, and receives the reply: “Three ways lead to that heavenly knowledge: the light of Nature, which teaches us the omnipotence of God; the Old Testament, which shows us the Creator as the hater of iniquity; and, last and greatest, the way of light—the master-way—the love of Christ. . . .”

Giulia asks concerning alms, and is told: “There is no other rule than that of charity; love God, and you will know how to give your alms.” Then, about prayer, he says that “spoken prayer often kindles and elevates the mind to earnest prayer of the soul. . . .”

Giulia: “One word more. You speak of Christian liberty. How am I to use it?”

Valdés: “The true Christian is free from the tyranny of the law, from sin and death, and is absolute master of his affections and desires. He is free as regards the spirit,

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acknowledging no other superior than God; while, as to the body, he is the servant of all for Christ's sake."

This is only a very slight sketch of the conversation between Giulia and Valdés, which was the foundation of that book of Christian teaching, the "Alfabeto Cristiano," so valuable in spreading the principles of reform in Italy. We are especially struck with the almost heroic humility of the great lady, Giulia Gonzaga, who was willing—nay, eager—to cast aside all the pomp and glory of her high estate, and appear before the world as a lowly pupil hanging upon the words of her Christian teacher. Like her visionary ancestor, the Magi-King Balthazar, Giulia was willing to brave every peril in search of the *Truth*, and when the guiding star had led her to the manger-throne of Bethlehem, she adored the Christ in simple faith.

Her stirring life of romance and adventure, of varied study, and intellectual intercourse with the finest spirits of the day, had mellowed and enriched her mind; while through loss and sorrow she had early* won a rare fortitude, which was in time to come to be put to the proof by cruel persecution. Eager and strenuous in all things, hers was the spirit of that early mystic who saw in a vision an angel bearing in one hand a flaming torch, and in the other a vase of water—with the first to burn down the bowers of Paradise, and with the other to extinguish the flames of Hell, that henceforth men be not guided by hope or fear, but solely by the love of God.

From this time forth Giulia Gonzaga devoted her life to active works of charity. She passed her days in visiting the sick in hospitals, tending them with her own hands; in relieving the poor, and especially caring for the little

* In this year, 1536, Giulia was barely twenty-three.

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children. "Avoiding the acquaintance of mere worldly persons, she took part in the meetings of a select society, mostly under the influence of Valdés, who considered religious subjects and made a constant study of the Holy Scriptures—that volume of heavenly refreshment, the aliment of the perfect." As Ariosto's biographer says: "Hora spende tutto il tempo in pensier santi, rivolgendole Scritture sacre con puro e sincero petto."*

Juan de Valdés took up his abode in the quarter of Chiaja, which was then completely in the country, although so near Naples; and here it was his custom to receive on Sundays a certain number of his most intimate friends, on that lovely shore overlooking the Bay of Naples, perhaps the most beautiful spot in the world—at least, so it seemed to the loving memory of those who were privileged to meet there. The day began with a simple breakfast, after which the friends walked in the garden and enjoyed the exquisite scenery. They then returned to the house, where Valdés read aloud some "Divine Consideration" which he had been thinking of during the week, and concerning which he trusted that he had a clearer illumination of heavenly truth. After dinner, when the servants were dismissed for the afternoon, religious subjects were suggested by one of the company, and discussed with him.

From these conversations sprang that wonderful book, "Le cento et dieci divine consideratione." It was first written in Spanish, then translated into Italian, and for some time was circulated amongst his followers in manuscript. It was published at Basle in 1550, and it is very interesting to find that it was translated into English by

* Simon Fornari in "La spositione sopra l' Orlando Furioso." In Firenze, 1549.



Photo. W. & G. Grey

Combrandi Photogravure

GIULIA GONZAGA (reputed).

Sebastiano del Piombo.

In the Longford Castle Gallery
By kind permission of Lord Radnor.

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Nicholas Ferrar, and published at Oxford in 1638, enriched with full notes by George Herbert. Ferrar had met with the book while travelling in Spain, and sent it to his friend, who thus writes from—

“BEMBERTON, NEAR SALISBURY,

“September 29, 1632.

“. . . I wish you by all means to publish it [“The Divine Considerations”], for these three eminent things observable therein: First, that God, in the midst of Popery, should open the eyes of one to understand and express so clearly and excellently the intent of the Gospel in the acceptation of Christ’s righteousness (as he showeth throughout all his CONSIDERATIONS)—a thing strangely buried and darkened by the Adversaries and their great stumbling-block.

“Secondly, the great honour and reverence which he everywhere bears towards our dear Master and Lord, concluding every ‘Consideration’ almost with His holy name and setting forth His merit so piously; for the which I do so love him, that were there nothing else I would print it, that with it the honour of my Lord might be published.

“Thirdly, the many pious rules of ordering our life, about mortification and observation of God’s kingdom within us, and the working thereof, of which he was a very diligent observer. . . .

“GEORGE HERBERT.”

It will give some idea of the sincerity and earnestness of the teaching of Valdés to quote one of the many letters which he wrote to the Signora Giulia Gonzaga, sending her, as was his custom, his last work in manuscript—those Epistles of St. Paul translated from the Hebrew into Spanish, with his own illuminating notes :

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“To the Most Illustrious Lady Giulia Gonzaga.

“ Being persuaded, Illustrious Lady, that the continual reading of the Psalms of David, which I sent you last year, translated from Hebrew into Spanish, has formed your mind to so pious and confident a trust in God that you can leave everything in His hands as David did; desiring that you may go forward, and that there should be formed in you a mind as firm, perfect, and constant as that of St. Paul in the things belonging to the Gospel, I now send you these Epistles of St. Paul translated from Greek into Spanish, the continual reading of which will, I feel sure, contribute greatly to your progress in spiritual edification, provided however, you do not read from curiosity or vanity, as men do who are without piety, thinking thereby to serve God: setting themselves to read St. Paul as a Spaniard would do to speak Greek, with the view of pleasing a Greek Emperor . . . you should imitate St. Paul inasmuch as you see that he imitates Christ. Strive to be more like Christ and like God, and thus recover the image and likeness of God in which the first man was created. . . . I only wish you to hold up David and St. Paul as patterns, so long as your mind is not able to take as your patterns Christ and God.”

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CHAPTER XII

Desire for reform of the Church in Italy, but not for separation from Rome—Earnest awakening of religious zeal, in which great ladies take part : Giulia Gonzaga, Vittoria Colonna, Renée of Ferrara, Costanza d' Avalos, Isabella Briseigna of Manrique, and others—Wonderful results of the teaching of Valdés at Naples—Effect of his religious works (110 Considerations, etc.) upon Giulia Gonzaga, Cardinal Pole, Pietro Carnesecchi, Sadoletto, Contarini, Morone, Bernardino Ochino, Peter Martyr, and the whole circle of Vittoria Colonna at Viterbo—Death of Juan Valdés, in 1541, at Naples.

THE burning need of religious reform was no new feeling in Italy in the days of Giulia Gonzaga. In the fourteenth century another brave and pious woman, St. Catherine of Siena, had dared to write : “ You turn the Ten Commandments into one—‘ Bring us money !’ Rome is a gulf of hell, where the Devil presides and sells the benefits which Christ acquired by His Passion, whence comes the proverb :

“ ‘ Curia romana non petit ovem sine lana ;
Dantes exaudit ; non dantibus ostia claudit.’ ”

And a preacher, ending his sermon with the usual appeal for “ abundant alms,” made the finest involuntary satire : “ You ask me, dearest brethren, the way to Paradise ? The monastery bells teach it you with their ringing cry, ‘ Give ! give ! give !’ ” (or in the more rhythmical Italian, “ Dan-do ! dan-do ! dan-do !”).

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As Addington Symonds* well states the point: "Italian reformers became convinced of the necessity of a return to the simple elements of Christianity in creed and conduct. They considered a thoroughgoing reform of the hierarchy of all Catholic institutions to be indispensable. They leaned, moreover, with partiality to some of the essential tenets of the Reformation—notably the doctrine of justification by faith and salvation by the merits of Christ, and also to the doctrine that Scripture is the sole authority in matters of belief and discipline. Thus both the Cardinals Morone, Contarini, and others . . . who imbibed the teaching of Valdés in Naples, fell under the suspicion of heterodoxy on these points. But it was characteristic of the members of this school that they had no will to withhold allegiance from the Pope as Chief of Christendom. They shrank with horror from the thought of encouraging a schism, or of severing themselves from the communion of Catholics."

Most memorable in the early days of the Italian Reformation were those soul-stirring meetings for religious study and discussion held by Valdés in his beautiful retreat at Chiaja. Here were gathered together all the most cultured, the most devout, and the noblest characters of the day: great ladies—Giulia Gonzaga; Vittoria Colonna, an occasional visitor, and ever in constant touch with all the writings of Valdés; Costanza d' Avalos, Duchess of Amalfi; her kinswoman, Caterina Cibo, Duchess of Camerino, niece of three Popes (Innocent VIII., Leo X., and Clement VII.); Isabella Brisegna Manrique, wife of Garzia Manrique, Governor of Piacenza, and sister-in-law of the famous Inquisitor Manrique, and others. Amongst the goodly company of men, we find

* "Renaissance in Italy."

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Pietrantonio di Capua, Archbishop of Otranto; Pietro Paolo Vergerio, Bishop of Capo d' Istria; Bartolommeo Spadaforo of Messina, a friend of Vittoria Colonna; Marcantonio Flaminio, the well-known poet, who translated various books of Valdés into Italian; his friend, Gian Francesco d' Alois (Il Caserta); Giangaleazzo Caracciolo, nephew of Paul IV.; Donato Rullo, a friend of Cardinal Pole; Mario Galeotto, an Academician; Don Placido de Sanguine, Principal of the Academy of Sereni; Pietro Martire Vermigli, and many others, amongst whom not the least important was Pietro Carneseccchi, who paid a visit to Giulia Gonzaga in 1540, and was by her introduced to Valdés. D. Germano Minadois and Sigismondo Mignoz, Governors of the Hospital for Incurables, Giulia's most-beloved charity, must also be mentioned as earnest disciples of Valdés.

With what loving affection those who were privileged to join these peaceful reunions of his looked back upon them in after days, may be gathered from a letter of Giacomo Bonfadio, the historian, written to the Protonotary Carneseccchi who was then at Florence, after the death of Valdés:

"To Monsignor Carneseccchi.

LAGO DI GARDA.

". . . I hear that you have been ill. . . . May God preserve your life as the Romans took care of that statue which fell from heaven, and He will do it for the benefit of many, so that one of the brightest lights of Tuscan virtue may not be extinguished. I beseech you, therefore, my lord, with God's help, attend to your recovery and enjoy your wonted cheerfulness, as in the days when we were at Naples. Would that we were now in that happy company! I know your ardent longing for that fair country,

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and how often Chiaja and the beautiful Posilipo are in your thoughts. I cannot deny that Florence is beautiful, but the charm of Naples, with its lovely shore and eternal Spring, far excels. There Nature rules with more entrancing sway, filling the land with joy and gladness. If you were now at the windows of that lonely tower, so often praised by us, looking round upon those sunny gardens and beyond on the spacious bosom of that smiling sea, a thousand vital spirits would refresh your heart. I remember when you left, how you promised to return and prayed me also to do so.

“ Would to God that we could recall those happy days ! But where should we go now that Signor Valdés is dead ? This has been a great loss for us and for the world ; for Signor Valdés was one of the rare men of Europe. The writings which he has left us give full proof of this. He was, without doubt, both in words and actions and in all his counsels, a most perfect man. He devoted an atom only of his mind to the care of his feeble, emaciated body ; the greater part of his most pure intellect was always raised to the contemplation of truth and of divine things. . . .

“ GIACOMO BONFADIO.”

There was one of Valdés' disciples who perhaps spread his doctrines more than any other. This was the Friar Bernardino Ochino, whose sermons had such marvellous influence, as we have already seen, and who was the special guide and teacher of Vittoria Colonna. Three years after the Emperor had listened to him with so much veneration in the Advent of 1536, he was invited to return to Naples in 1539 to preach during Lent in the Cathedral dedicated to San Gennaro, and his saintly reputation drew

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crowds to hear him, until the stately building was filled almost to suffocation. He had now waxed bolder in his preaching, thundering in strong, impassioned language against luxury and vice, and then with soft, persuasive eloquence dwelling on the truths of the Gospel, and the joy and happiness of walking in the love of God and in the ways of holiness. He touched upon points which had hitherto been considered too sacred for outspoken words—of justification, faith, works, the power of the Pope, purgatory. Men began to see that in the Gospel all were invited to share its blessings. “Then the unlearned artisan, and even the women, ventured to converse upon the words of the Bible and to compare one text with another. . . .” * This spiritual awakening spread so much that numbers began to consult the Scriptures as the sole authority in matters of faith.”

This was remarkable freedom of speech for one who had been elected Vice-General of his Franciscan Order the previous year. The Viceroy of Naples, Toledo, was much disturbed, and he caused a number of books which he suspected of evangelical and heretical tendencies to be collected in bundles and burnt publicly before the gate of the Archbishop’s palace. In order to crush all liberty of conscience, he also issued a decree forbidding all religious books published within the last twenty-five years to be reprinted. But these repressive acts were only distant threatenings of the coming storm of persecution.

Meantime the abode of Valdés at Chiaja was a haven of peace, and a meeting-place for many kindred spirits to hold religious converse together. Here Giulia Gonzaga came for those intervals of rest so soothing after her stirring life,

* “Storia di Antonino Castaldo,” *apud* Giannone, “Storia di Napoli,” lib. xxxii., p. 179.

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to which she thus alludes in one of her letters to Juan de Valdés: "Many years have I lived in the manner I describe . . . and during this time, as you know, various things have befallen me, enough to disturb a tranquil spirit, and more especially a soul so disquieted as mine." To this same source of refreshment she never failed to bring all her friends who came to visit her at Naples, and here many earnest men drew their inspiration for the Reformed doctrines, which they preached not in Italy alone, but when driven thence by persecution throughout all Europe. We have seen how Pietro Carnesecchi, destined in the end to suffer a martyr's death for his faith, was here introduced to Valdés, and took him henceforth for his spiritual teacher. It was the same with Fra Bernardino Ochino, and also with a great friend of his, whose name is most familiar to us in England.

Pietro Martire Vermigli, of Lucca, better known as "Peter Martyr," so called by his parents, as before his birth he was consecrated to St. Peter Martyr (put to death by the Arians). He early joined the Austin Canons at Fiesole, and became well versed in the Scriptures; then he was made Abbot of Spoleto, and afterwards Prior of the great house of San Pietro *ad aram* at Naples. Here it was that he met Valdés, and was greatly influenced by him. He was a marvellous preacher, and the people thronged to hear him; but when he explained the First Epistle of the Corinthians, on which the doctrine of Purgatory was supposed to be founded, as simply a figurative allusion to the entire consumption of all merit outside Christ, the Viceroy took alarm, and he was forbidden to preach. But Pietro appealed to Rome, and had such powerful friends that the prohibition was removed, and he was made Vicar-General of his Order. After Valdés' death, Pietro Martire was taken seriously ill with fever, of which his friend

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Benedetto Casano died, and he left Naples to become Prior of San Frediano at Lucca. In later years, when threatened with cruel persecution, he joined in the flight of Fra Bernardino Ochino, and ultimately came to England, where, in the reign of Edward VI., he was made Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford.

Knowing Pedro de Toledo's strong feeling against all Reformed doctrine, we are not surprised to hear that through his brother, Fra Gia de Toledo, the Archbishop, those devout gatherings at Chiaja were at length put an end to. Not long afterwards, in 1541, the great teacher Valdés himself was taken ill with fever, which his delicate frame could not resist, and to the deepest sorrow of his friends and disciples, he passed away to his rest. Pietrantonio di Capua, Archbishop of Otranto, attended him on his death-bed with loving reverence and affection.

It will be convenient to mention here in order the works of Valdés, upon which rests his great reputation as a leader of the Reformation in Italy. He was first known by a curious "Dialogue" written in 1521, when he was in Spain, and published with the famous "Lactantio" of his twin-brother, Alfonzo de Valdés, which was so bitterly opposed by Baldassare Castiglione, as champion of the Church and her rulers. In this "Diálogo de Mercurio y Caron" there was an attack upon abuses, political and religious, Mercury and Charon being made to discuss with the souls of the departed their religious life and the affairs of the world which they had just left. A strange procession we watch advancing towards the banks of the Styx: Bishops, cardinals, kings, theologians, all still full of their earthly pomp, and each one quite unconsciously being brought into an atmosphere of truth, reveals the whole of the motives and desires of his life, and a terrible revelation it usually is! On the other hand, there are some few, mostly

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women, whose works on earth are worthy of all praise. But the last who comes by, a nun, would have been questioned by Mercury had not Charon hastily checked him. "Do you not see it is a woman and a nun? If she once begins, there will be no end to it!"

It was not long after this book was published that we find Juan de Valdés glad to make his escape from Spain, where more severity to any idea of reform was shown than in any other country, the Inquisition having been established there as early as 1477, chiefly then with regard to Moors and Jews. Valdés was still in favour with the Emperor, who obtained his appointment as secretary to Pietro de Toledo when he was made Imperial Viceroy of Naples. He was a man of great learning and literary facility, and for several years—between April, 1534, and September, 1536—he devoted himself to a scientific study of the Spanish language, under the title of "Diálogo de la lengua." It was at this time that the society of Giulia Gonzaga and her friends encouraged him to more definite religious teaching, and he wrote the "Alfabeto Cristiano," in the form of question and answer between Giulia and himself, which has already been alluded to, and which was circulated in manuscript amongst his friends as a precious gem of Christian teaching. It was translated from Spanish into Italian by Marcantonio Magno, who managed the business affairs of Giulia Gonzaga. This was the full title :

"Alfabeto Cristiano,
che insegna la vera
via d'acquistare
il lume dello Spi-
rito Santo."

"Stampata. l'anno MDXLVI."

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We know very little about this Marcantonio Magno, but he had two sons, Celio and Alessandro, who were both fair poets. He was himself a man of literary tastes, and some of his letters are preserved.

As for the great work of Valdés, the "Cento e dieci divine consideratione," this also was passed from one hand to another in manuscript copies, and was not published until about twenty years later, when Pietro Paolo Vergerio, Bishop of Capodistria, carried the precious manuscript safely to Hamburg in 1558. As we have seen, it was translated into English by Nicholas Ferrar. "In this beautiful work Valdés preaches such purity of intention and thought, such sacrifice of mere distinction of rank and honour, such quiet suffering of injury, such a manner of beholding Christ in God, and again God in Christ, as clearly to show that the religion of Valdés—his religion of the heart—was indeed the religion of the New Testament. It was so in its spiritual meaning, and this brought him to receive the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, in a deeper and more intimate manner than that of Luther. . . . This Valdés taught to others in the name of his Divine Master, in the dwelling-house, or walking by the way, and often for those who had an ear to hear, by parable. . . ."

Other works of Valdés were translations of the Psalms from the original Hebrew, the Gospel of St. Matthew, and the Epistles to the Romans from the Greek. Of this last, it is interesting to know that Michelangelo loved to hear it read aloud in the company of Vittoria Colonna in the Convent of San Silvestro at Monte Cavallo. Almost all these writings of Valdés were dedicated to the Lady Giulia Gonzaga, to whom he owed so much for her unflinching interest and keen sympathy. To this devout

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evangelical mystic, "Justification by Faith" was the expression of the fact that only by self-abnegation could men receive the Divine illumination, and thus conform to the image of God in which they were made.

We find one of the most startling illustrations of the enthusiasm aroused by the teaching of Valdés in the immense success of a book written by one of his disciples, "Il Beneficio della morte di Cristo." This is believed to have been the work of a Benedictine monk—Benedetto of Mantua—who dwelt in his monastery at the foot of Mount Etna.* At the monk's request, Marcantonio Flaminio, the distinguished poet, revised the "little golden book," as Vergerio called it, which was first given to friends in manuscript in 1540, and printed later at Venice and at Rome in 1544, to the number of 40,000 copies, and spread broadcast throughout Italy. "Nothing was ever printed so simply pious and simple, or so adapted to teach the weak and ignorant, especially in the matter of 'Justification by Faith.'"[†]

The book consists of six chapters, and begins with man's state before he sinned, describes his condition afterwards, points out the purpose of the Jewish dispensation, and asserts that "Justification, remission of sins, and our entire salvation depend upon Christ alone." Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Hilary, Augustine, and Bernard are quoted, to show their works contain the same joyful truth of a free salvation without the works of the Law. The "Beneficio" was put upon the Index in 1549 by Monsignor della Cosa, Nuncio at Venice. A bookseller at

* The authorship has been disputed, for some writers maintain that "Trattato utilissimo del Beneficio di Cristo crucifisso . . ." by Aonio Paleario, is the same book.

† Vergerio.

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Venice, Antonio Gadaldino, was treated as a "thorough heretic, for he sold many copies of this most pernicious book which taught Justification by Faith alone, imputed through the merits of Christ in the Lutheran style . . . so precious to the heretics that they printed it many times, and the said Gadaldino not only sold, but also reprinted it."

It has been called the "Credo" of the Italian Reformation, and the Inquisition made such a determined effort to stamp it out, that for some time it was believed that every copy had been destroyed.* If this was the dealing of that dread tribunal against the written and printed word, far more terrible was its sentence against the brave men and women who dared to proclaim their faith. Deeply as the loss of Valdés was felt by his friends, they cannot fail to have realized later that he had been taken from the evil to come, and the dark days of approaching persecution, for only the next year, 1542, the Inquisition was started in Rome.

One immediate result of the death of Valdés was that many of his disciples joined for a time the famous reunion at Viterbo, carried on much in the same manner as the earlier Oratorio of Divine Love which had been started before at Rome, under the very eyes of the Pope. At this time Vittoria Colonna had taken up her abode in the picturesque hill-town, only thirty miles from Rome; a healthy change from the closer air of the Eternal City, and noteworthy for its high battlemented towers, but, above all, for the Benedictine Convent of St. Catherine of Alexandria, which Vittoria made her home for the next three years, 1541-1544. Here she found herself in the

* A most precious original copy was discovered in the Library of St. John's College, Cambridge, and several others are in existence.

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midst of a circle of earnest thinkers who were deeply interested in Church reform and the new influences of the teaching of Valdés and others, without ceasing to be, in many cases, loyal sons of the Church. Her most intimate friend at this time was Cardinal Pole, whom the Pope had made Legate, and Governor of Viterbo, including the province of ancient Etruria, which had been bequeathed to the Papal See by Matilda, Countess of Tuscany, in 1115. Their friendship was already of some years' duration, for when Reginald Pole went to Rome in 1536, he saw that the Lady Vittoria was injuring her health by too much fasting and mortification of the flesh, and he reminded her of St. Paul's admonition to Timothy—"Corporalis exercitatio admodum valet ad pietatum"—and that "the Christian is bound to take care of the tabernacle of his body until it pleases God to release him from it."

"So that lady began to mitigate the austerity of her life, and brought it little by little, to a reasonable and honest moderation." As Vittoria wrote later to Giulia Gonzaga about the Cardinal: "I, therefore, who owe the health of my soul and that of my body to his Illustrissimo Reverendissimo, for the one through superstition and the other through ill-government stood in peril, I could not but wish, as your Excellence may imagine, to be able to serve him. . . ."—Dated December 8, 1542. (The service proved to be the adoption of Pole as her son.)*

It was at the palace of the Cardinal that were held the daily gatherings of a most distinguished company for the study of religious doctrine, and one of the books which they discussed with interest and delight was the

* Miller, "Carteggio di Vittoria Colonna," Appendix I., p. 239. Ferrara.

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“Beneficio,” which set forth so clearly the teaching of Valdés. As the Cardinal himself says: “The rest of the day I spend in the good and useful company of Signor Carnesecchi, and our Messer Marcantonio Flaminio . . . who gives me a portion of that food which does not perish, in such a manner that I do not remember ever having received greater consolation and edification. . . .” Pole once said to Vittoria: “Believe as firmly as if your salvation depended on Faith alone; act as if good works were all-sufficient.”

Pietro Carnesecchi was born in 1508 of a noble Florentine family. He was educated in Rome in the house of Cardinal Dovizzi, and entered the Papal service. Under Clement VII. he was made “Protonotary Apostolic,” and his influence was so great that it was commonly said that “he was Pope rather than Clement.” As we have seen, a visit to Giulia Gonzaga in 1540 brought him into the society of Valdés, whom he had known at Rome. In later days, Carnesecchi plays so large a part in the life of the Countess of Fondi, that we shall meet him again. Much of the information we have with regard to the Reformed movement is taken from the archives of the great trial of Carnesecchi before the Inquisition of Rome, for most of his companions at Naples and Viterbo were condemned by that stern tribunal, whether they were living or dead.

Marcantonio Flaminio, mentioned above in Pole’s letter with such warm praise, was born in 1498 at Imola. He was educated with great care by his learned father, Giannantonio, to whom we are indebted for twelve volumes of Letters, the Lives of many saints of the preaching order, a “Dialogue on the Education of Children,” a “Treatise on the Origin of Philosophy,” a Latin Grammar,

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and other works. Under such a teacher, Marcantonio was early distinguished for his learning, and at an early age his Latin poems attracted the attention of Leo X., who was anxious to keep him at his Court. The young poet made the acquaintance of Castiglione at Urbino in 1515; he continued his studies at Bologna, and returned in 1519 to Rome, where he became an intimate friend of Molza, and served under the "Datario" Giberti, with whom he travelled through Italy. Being obliged to leave Rome on account of his health, he went to Naples in 1539, where he numbered amongst his friends Giulia Gonzaga, Ochino, Vergerio, Carnesecchi, and the other disciples of Valdés. He soon devoted himself to active propagation of the Reformed doctrines, and when he went to Viterbo, after the death of Valdés, he kept up an interesting correspondence with Giulia, to whom he dedicated his translations of their master's works. Flaminio's friend, the poet Francesco Caserta, famous alike for his goodness and his talent, also joined the band of religious students, and remained faithful to the end, sealing his faith by martyrdom in 1564.

One of the most important members of the reunion at Viterbo was Cardinal Contarini, a great friend of Vittoria Colonna, who wrote many letters to him. He was a man of such high distinction that Paul III. made him a Cardinal at his first creation in 1534, and he also had formed one of the Company of Divine Love in Rome. This was never forgotten by Caraffa, who soon began to suspect his former associates of heresy, and when he became Pope under the name of Paul IV., he turned upon them all the terrors of the Inquisition. Gasparo Contarini was one of that band of prelates who laboured with all his energies to reform the Church from within.

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He tried to stir up Paul III. to this work by assuring him that "the Papacy was a monarchy, not a tyranny." In the summer of 1536 the Pope was induced to appoint a commission of nine to report on needful reforms. One of these was Giovanni Morone, who, as Nuncio in Germany, had declared that if the Church was to be saved in that country, reform was absolutely necessary. Contarini, Sadoletto, Pole, and Federigo Fregoso were amongst the number, and it has been well said that "such a union of scholarship and holiness of life, with zeal for practical reform, was most rare in any Church congress." Unfortunately, this work met with no success.

In November, 1538, Contarini, who was Papal Secretary, travelled to Ostia with the Pope, and wrote to Pole: "Our good old man made me sit by his side, and talked about reform, so as to raise our hopes. . . ." But they were never realized, although Cardinal Contarini was sent to the Colloquy; for no concord was possible between Rome and evangelical Germany, and Contarini, who was the real soul of the movement, left with despair in his heart at this failure of his efforts at conciliation. He was rewarded with the government of Bologna, but he had become suspect to the Catholic party, and he died the next year, August 24, 1542—"one of the noblest figures in an age of great men, and the blessing of the peacemaker was his." On hearing of his death, Paul III. remarked with deep feeling: "We have lost a great Cardinal—*pazienza!*"

Cardinal Sadoletto, Bishop of Carpentras, a native of Modena, had been one of the literary stars at the Court of Leo X. His broad-minded views expressed in his Commentary on the Romans, and his friendship with Erasmus, but, above all, the part he took in these meet-

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ings at Viterbo with Vittoria Colonna, brought him under the sentence of the Inquisition, but, fortunately for him and many of his friends, merciful Death spared them the shame and agony of a heretic's punishment.

Of Cardinal Federigo Fregoso, Archbishop of Salerno, we have a most delightful account in the "Cortegiano" of Baldassare Castiglione, in which he is one of the wisest and most pleasing speakers, full of the ardent hopes and the chivalry of gallant youth. He was one of that famous council of nine to consider the reform of the Church, and we find his name given in the Trial of Carnesecchi, amongst the roll-call of "heretics," the accusation being that he "visited the Marchesa Pescara" (Vittoria Colonna). There were others whom we have not space to mention, but those selected were the leading spirits, and will give a good idea of the peaceful Platonic assembly at Viterbo, as compared with the militant action of the Reformers on the other side of the Alps.

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CHAPTER XIII

Concerning the Reformation in Italy—Renée Duchess of Ferrara, Olympia Morata, and others—Life of Caterina Cibo, who died 1557 at Florence—Persecution and flight of Bernardino Ochino, Peter Martyr, and others—Giulia Gonzaga, a guiding spirit of the cause at Naples—Death of Madonna Antonia del Balzo, 1538, and the Abate Lodovico, father of Giulia—She then becomes the guardian of her nephew Vespasiano, son of her brother Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga.

IN the early history of the Reformation in Italy there is one point deserving of more notice than it usually receives. We may almost say that wherever a company of earnest seekers after truth were gathered together, there we shall find that they centred round some pious woman of high birth and character. Take the well-known instance of Ferrara; there Renée of France, wife of the Duke Ercole, gave her protection and hospitality to her own countrymen and others who were driven from their homes by the violence of religious persecution. Before leaving France she had taken great interest in these new doctrines, and had made the acquaintance of various teachers, but especially of Calvin, who visited her at Ferrara and gave her a taste of stronger Protestant teaching than was heard elsewhere in Italy. But her husband soon showed himself in nervous dread of these dangerous visitors, for he was a fervent Italian and a firm ally of the Pope, and his opposition was a constant trial to the

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Duchess. She became a great friend of Vittoria Colonna, who more than once brought the friar, Bernardino Ochino, to preach in the Duomo of Ferrara, where everyone crowded to hear him. Renée always remained his friend, even after his flight, when the Lady Vittoria and so many others abjured all acquaintance with him. In alluding to the Court of Ferrara at this time, we cannot avoid mentioning Olympia Morata, that accomplished and devoted young girl, who, as a companion to the young Princess Anna, first acquired that knowledge of the Gospel which supported her through all the hardships and sufferings which she was called upon later to endure.

But more interesting to us as a friend of Giulia Gonzaga, and a disciple of Valdés, was Caterina Cibo, the niece of three Popes, Innocent VIII., (and, by her mother, of) Leo X., and Clement VII. She was also the sister of a Cardinal and a Bishop. She was born in 1501 in the Villa of Panzani, near Florence, but was educated for some years in Rome, the very seat of Catholicism; was taught Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and at the age of twelve was betrothed to Giovanni Maria Varano, afterwards Duke of Camerino.

Caterina's troubles began in the first year of her marriage, when Camerino* was attacked by Sigismondo, a nephew of her husband, and a long and troublesome war followed. After the birth of her daughter Giulia in 1523, the Duchess went to Rome, where she was well received by her uncle Clement VII. who had just become Pope. Here she first began to take an interest in the subject of Reform, and used all her influence to save various advanced thinkers from persecution. She was at Camerino after her husband's death, when "one July day, in 1528, there came a

* About forty miles south-west of Ancona, on the way to Foligno.

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Capuchin friar, who went through the city with a crowd of children, crying with a loud voice, 'Misericordia'!" The preacher took up his abode in the palace of the Duchess Caterina, and from that time she declared herself openly on the side of the reform of the Church, and became one of the most advanced leaders of the Protestant movement of that time.

The Duchy of Camerino had been settled on her after the death of the Duke, but here in the Castello she was attacked by her husband's nephew, who succeeded in taking it by surprise. When the Duchess was in his power, he used every persuasion to induce her to give him her daughter in marriage. But this Caterina absolutely refused, as Giulia was betrothed to Guidobaldo, the son of the Duke of Urbino. As persuasion had failed, young Varano tried force, and threatened to kill her at once if she persisted in her refusal. But she, "with a strong heart and courage worthy of eternal fame, not only remained firm, but seeing that he stood over her with a drawn sword in his upraised arm, she fell on her knees, raised her veil, and leaning her neck towards her assailant, she recommended her soul to God." Meantime the city had been roused, Varano thought better of his plan, and retired from the city, taking Caterina with him. However, he had gone scarcely two miles when he was overtaken, the Duchess was rescued, and he barely succeeded in making his escape. In a letter to her brother the Cardinal, Caterina Cibo says that "it seems like a dream . . . that sixty persons should attack Camerino and take me prisoner without any interference, should set me free without saying a word to me, and escape without being caught by anyone . . . and for this I render thanks to God that all has ended so well."

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This gallant lady kept her word and carried out her promise, for in 1534 her daughter was married to Guidobaldo della Rovere, the grandson of Isabella d' Este, of whom we are told, as a child, when his parents the Duke and Duchess of Urbino were exiles at Mantua: "Their little son . . . is the cleverest and most charming child in the world. He talks boldly of all the great things he will do, and says, 'If Pope Leo had come by himself, he could never have taken my father's State!' and says other things which make us all marvel, since he is only just two years old." *

We are told that "Caterina Cibo was not only adorned by her outward beauty . . . which did not count as compared with her marvellous goodness and brilliant talent. She knew four languages—Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and our Tuscan—and understood them thoroughly, and was not only a student of letters and humanities, but also of sacred theology, as for this purpose she acquired the Hebrew language that she might study the sacred Bible in Hebrew, and she made use of the commentaries of the doctors in Greek, besides applying herself to philosophy, so that she was a mirror of learning and religion." † She gave up Camerino to her daughter- and son-in-law, ‡ and spent the the rest of her life at Florence, where she continued to enjoy the society of learned and religious men. Marcantonio Flaminio was a great friend of hers, and from his correspondence we gather that the Duchess had adopted the teaching of Valdés, held by Giulia Gonzaga and Vittoria Colonna on the subject of "Justification by Faith," and she asked Carnesecchi to recommend evangelists to her.

* Letter of Ippolito Calandra to Francesco Gonzaga.

† Serdonata in his "Life of Caterina Cibo."

‡ Paul III. soon took possession of Camerino.

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In the Trials of the Inquisition a special accusation was made against Caterina Cibo—"Ducissa Camerini hæretica sectatrix hæreticorum et doctrix monialium hæreticorum," the nuns whom she thus led astray being those of St. Martha outside Florence. Other charges against her were that Ochino dedicated to her certain religious dialogues, in four of which she is made to take part. It was in her house, as we shall see, that Ochino renounced the cowl, and wrote the famous letter to Vittoria Colonna. Fortunately for the brave lady, she died before the darkest hour of the Inquisition, in 1557, at Florence.

We have already seen the religious activity of Vittoria Colonna, Marchesa of Pescara, alike at Rome and at Viterbo. Yet earnest and devoted as she was, this great lady shrank from any action or expression which would place her outside the pale of the Roman Church, and she at once gave up any friends who, by flight or otherwise, became suspect; there is, therefore, somewhat of the irony of fate in her condemnation for heresy, in the Trials of the Inquisition, held after her death. The unorthodoxy of all her religious friends is brought up against her; the views held by her brother Ascanio, by the Cardinals Pole, Morone, Bembo, Contarini, and other less exalted persons, are used as evidence against her, until the mere fact of "having visited the Marchesa di Pescara" is almost enough to warrant a charge of heresy, so that even the poor nuns of St. Catherine of Viterbo did not escape. Of her true piety and deep religious feeling we have many records in her letters, her sonnets, and perhaps, above all, in a beautiful Latin prayer—a touching petition for peace and happiness which is too characteristic to forget.

We now return to Naples, where Giulia Gonzaga was so

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long the leading spirit of the religious movement, and was well supported by other pious and devoted women. Amongst these was Costanza d' Avalos, a cousin of Vittoria Colonna, and wife of Alfonso Piccolimini, Duke of Amalfi—spoken of as “a lady of great piety and a disciple of Valdés at Naples.” Her life had not been a happy one. Her husband was a man wanting in firmness and strength of character, who found himself unable to do justice to the important position of Captain-General of Siena, and he was dismissed in 1541. His career was now at an end, and he spent his remaining years in stately exile, making his home in the island of Nisida, near Naples. This was the “Nesis” of Strabo, an ancient volcanic crater, and Cicero gives us a touching account of the retirement in a villa here of Brutus, after the assassination of Cæsar,* and of the parting of Brutus and Portia. Here Costanza dwelt with her young children Inigo and Vittoria, and wrote poetry, “rich in noble sentiments and in Christian piety”; while she was able to join the religious meetings of Giulia Gonzaga in the city. After the example of her more famous cousin, she spent her later years of widowhood in the Convent of Santa Chiara at Naples, so rich in memories of many noble families.

We have already made acquaintance with Giulia's dearest friend, Isabella of Brisegna, the wife of Garzia Manrique, the Spanish Governor of Piacenza, who was so cruelly persecuted by her husband. Of Giulia's loving care and provision for her and of her despairing flight we shall hear later. Not only were the great ladies attacked for their religious views, but there was no escape for even the humblest friends of the Countess of Fondi. In the

* “Phil.” x. 4.

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Trial before the Inquisition at Rome of Lorenzo Tizzano, who was for a time *Cappellano procuratore* of the Convent of Santa Francesco, the habitual residence of Giulia, we find him compelled to confess that a certain Lucrezia Poggiola, a servant of the Signora, had "often and in many places held converse with him on matters of religion, showing her Lutheran views, and the same did Sister Caterina of the said monastery, and other women. . . ." From other sources we find suspected of heresy, Sister Camilla Caracciolo, who was "compelled to formally make abjuration, and suffer salutary penitence; and also Sister Isabella Loffreda, aged nineteen, accused of serious heresy, against whom sentence was pronounced . . . of cruel torture . . . and other salutary penitence, and she made full abjuration, at the little door of the Chancel of the said Monastery. . . ."

Worthy of mention is the Countess Lucrezia Pico, widow of Claudio Rangone, who, at Modena as early as 1537, was discovered to have in her possession "an heretical book, without any name of author or publisher, treating on the Christian faith." This was seized, and as the lady had influential friends and could not be punished openly, her enemies spread cruel and malignant reports about her.

It was in the year 1542 that Fra Bernardino Ochino and Peter Martyr took the despairing step of flight from their native land and the scene of their labours, to the dismay and grief of their followers. Ochino had been preaching in Venice, where the Papal Nuncio had orders to watch him closely; but when his friend Giulio Terenziano, a teacher of theology and a pupil of Valdés, was thrown into prison on account of his religious opinions, the friar could no longer restrain himself. In a sermon

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before the Senate and chief men of Venice he cried aloud in anguish: "Oh, sirs, what remains for us to do? To what end do we waste and consume our lives? If in thee, O most noble City of Venice, Queen of the Adriatic—if in thee, I say, those who announce to you the truth are here imprisoned, shut up in houses of torture, loaded with chains and fetters, what place then remains to us, what other field is free for the truth? Would to God we might but preach the truth freely! How many blind eyes would be opened, and how many stumbling in the dark would be illuminated!"

From that moment Ochino knew that a sword hung over his head. He went to Verona, and there, as General of his Order, he assembled all those whose office it was to preach, and began a course of lectures on the Epistles of St. Paul. But he was at once cited to Rome to give an account of his doctrine. He knew too well what this meant; but he made an effort to obey, travelling via Bologna, where he had a few words with the good Cardinal Contarini on his deathbed, and then sadly passed on to Florence. Here he met Peter Martyr, who strongly advised flight as his only hope of safety, reminding him of those words: "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another."* With great anguish of soul, they both resolved to leave Italy; and, interesting as were the friar's adventures, I can only briefly touch upon them. He was well received at Ferrara by the Duchess Renée, but was not safe there. She strongly advised him to escape, and he travelled to Geneva—the refuge of the persecuted—where he preached with great success, and later visited England for a time. The day before he left Florence, Ochino wrote a most pathetic letter to his great

* St. Matt. x. 23.

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friend, Vittoria Colonna, which shows his character in its weakness and its strength :

“ August 22, 1542.

“ ILLUSTRIOUS LADY,

“ I am now in the outskirts of Florence, in no small anxiety of mind. I have been cited to Rome, and, against all persuasion, I set forth with the intention of going there. But, hearing every day fresh accounts of their mode of proceeding [the Inquisition], I have been prevailed upon, by Peter Martyr and others, not to go, lest I should be obliged either to deny Christ or be crucified. The first I will not do ; for the last I am willing, through the grace of Christ, but in His own good time. To go willingly to die I have not courage ; God, when He chooses, can find me wherever I am. . . . Besides, what can I do in Italy ? Preach as a suspected person, and preach Christ obscurely, under a mask ! . . . For this and other reasons I am compelled to go away ; for I see that they would examine me by torture, to make me deny Christ, or else put me to death. If St. Paul were in my place, I think he would act in the same way. . . .

“ Your Ladyship knows what I am, and my doctrine may be known from those who have heard me. . . . It would have been extremely grateful to me to have your opinion and that of the Rev^{mo} Monsignor Pole, or a letter from you. . . . Pray to God for me ; I desire more than ever to serve Him by the help of His grace. I salute you all. . . .”

But Vittoria Colonna and Cardinal Pole had no pity for a ruined man, and, horrified by the scandal of Ochino's flight, they only thought of saving themselves by hurrying back into the fold of orthodoxy. The great lady, who had

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looked upon the friar as a saint, wrote thus a little later to Cardinal Cervini: "It grieves me to think that the more he seeks to excuse, the more he accuses himself; and when he thinks he is saving others from shipwreck, he is only exposing them the more to the deluge, he being out of the Ark which saves and secures."* The Pope was furious, and many friends, who considered forsaking Rome to be a mortal sin, mourned for Ochino as a fallen angel. He himself was broken-hearted. At the age of fifty-five, in failing health from his ascetic life and constant labours, losing all that he loved and desired, exile was to him far more bitter than death.

The loss of her trusted friends by death and exile was a terrible blow to the Signora Giulia Gonzaga, but with gallant courage she rose to the occasion. With unflinching love and charity, she was ever ready to help the fugitives for their faith, with her money and influence, and was henceforth looked upon as the guiding spirit in this centre of the Italian Reformation.

But another and a most welcome duty was to be laid upon her, which would prevent her from entirely giving up all worldly duties and greatness for many years to come. This was nothing less than the guardianship of her beloved nephew, Vespasiano Colonna.

As we have seen, on the marriage of his mother with the Prince of Sulmona, the child was removed to the care of his grandfather, the Abate Lodovico Gonzaga. This was early in 1536, and no one rejoiced more than Madonna Antonia del Balzo, the mother of Lodovico, then in her ninety-fifth year. The coming of this precious child, the last and most beloved of her numerous descendants, was

* December 4, 1542. From Santa Caterina, Viterbo (Postscript of Vittoria's letter).

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a final joy to this wonderful old lady, who retained all her faculties and enjoyment of life to the last. She lived two years afterwards, and passed away, full of years and honours, in 1538. Her granddaughter Giulia, who resembled her in so many ways, felt her loss very bitterly; one more link with the past was gone from her, who had already known so many losses.

Madonna Antonia was laid to rest in the Church of San Pietro, where her sepulchral inscription may still be seen.* Two years later she was followed to the tomb by her son Lodovico, on June 14, 1540. In his will the Abate Lodovico Gonzaga left the guardianship of the young Vespasiano to his daughter, Giulia Gonzaga Colonna, as by her second marriage Isabella, Princess of Sulmona, had lost all right to the care of him. But she was not a woman to submit, without a bitter contest, to a decree which would give the charge of her son to Giulia, her rival. The long and irritating lawsuit between the two ladies had ultimately been decided in favour of Giulia Gonzaga, who was willing to make great concessions. But the dispute had left ill-will behind, and Isabella now made a furious fight for the guardianship of her son. Pope Paul III. was appealed to by both sides, and he wrote a diplomatic letter, saying how "greatly I desire peace both for your own repose and for the good memory of the boy's father, who deserved so well of His Holiness Clement VII. and of the *Sede Apostolica*."

The case was ultimately decided in the Court of Justice, and the verdict of the magistrate was in favour of the Countess of Fondi. This result was due in great measure to the devoted influence and assistance of Don Ferrante Gonzaga, who had secured the best legal pleading, placing

* See Appendix, note 10.

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the claim of Giulia beyond all doubt. As for Isabella, this was not her only lawsuit, for she appears to have lived in a constant state of disquiet and litigation. As early as June 28, 1533, a letter to the Duke of Ferrara remarks: "Nothing else is talked of but the case of these Lords Colonna of Rome against the Signora Isabella Gonzaga. . . ." The Pope seems to have interfered, and Signor Ascanio gave some security. But there was no settled peace between the Princess of Sulmona and her father's kinsmen; for again, on March 7 of the year 1566, we read in a letter from Rome: "Signora Isabella leaves at once, with all her family, for Rome, where she comes to plead against Signor Marcantonio Colonna concerning certain castles which are in the Campagna of Rome, and which have been for many years consigned to the Papal Envoy; for she has licence from the King, and a promise from the Pope that she shall receive justice."

As for her husband's relations in Lombardy, Isabella offended them so deeply by her ill-advised attempt to assert her rights, almost immediately after Luigi Rodomonte's death, that they prayed her never to return.

It was with great delight and satisfaction that Signora Giulia undertook the charge of her dearly beloved nephew, upon whom, having no children of her own, she bestowed more than a mother's love. It was her hope and ambition to bring him up with so noble a training and education as to be worthy of his father and of the House of Gonzaga. When the case had been decided in her favour, Giulia lost no time in sending her Procurator, Messer Marcantonio Magno, to the Court of the Emperor, to obtain for Vespasiano the investiture of his States in Lombardy, appointing as Surrogates Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga and

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his brother, Don Ferrante Gonzaga, then Viceroy of Sicily. This investiture was granted by Charles V., duly signed and sealed on September 6, 1541, and the heir's succession to all the dominions of his father Luigi and his grandfather Lodovico was proclaimed.

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CHAPTER XIV

1541—Giulia Gonzaga at Naples, devotes herself to the education of Vespasiano, her nephew and her ward—She is painted by Titian—Giulia writes to Charles V. on behalf of Vespasiano—He is appointed page to the Archduke Philip—Marriage schemes for him—Giulia visits her home in Lombardy, 1546—Her stay at Gazzuolo ; many changes—Madonna Antonia, Lodovico Abate, Cagnino, and other relations, are dead ; also her friend Isabella d' Este—Letter from Vittoria Colonna ; her death, 1546—An attempt to establish the Inquisition at Naples is met with insurrection of the people.

WHEN, in the spring of 1541, Giulia Gonzaga Colonna had obtained the assured possession of her nephew, she left her rooms in the Convent of San Francesco, where she had dwelt for nearly five years, ever since her coming to Naples in the winter of 1535, and took up her abode in a spacious palace of the Borgo delle Vergine, which she had taken on her coming to Naples, and where she kept up her establishment for the sake of her many friends and her servants. She felt that in the freedom of her own home she could devote herself with more enthusiasm to the education of the young Vespasiano. At this time he was a very handsome, clever boy, of splendid stature and strength for his age ; he was not yet ten years old, having been born in December, 1531. He resembled his father in many ways, especially in his taste for literature and



Rembrandt. Hologra. 16.

GIULIA GONZAGA—Countess of Fondi.

Painter unknown.

Hof Museum, Vienna.

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languages. Thus we find Gondolfo Porrino writing this eulogy of the boy :

“So che con voi non bisogna esser losco
Che secondo che qui gli avvisi e hanno
Siete buon Greco, buon Latino e Tosco.”

He is also highly praised in the writings of Giammichele Bruto, who says of the young prince that “he distinguished himself in poetry, oratory, philosophy, mathematics, horsemanship, and the use of arms.” Another high testimony to the growing proficiency of the youth is given by Bernardino Rota, who says: “He appears to me at the present day a type of antique excellence, combining military science with that of letters, so that we foresee he will be no less brave and ardent a captain in war than wise and gentle a prince in time of peace.” Then Rota continues: “We do not wonder that such fruit springs from such a root, more especially brought up and nourished under the care of Giulia Gonzaga, of whose high praise I may not speak, but can only pass it by in silence; for if I were to say little, it would not do justice to her merit, and if I were to say all that she deserves, it is beyond my power, and I must leave it to more eloquent pens than mine.”

It was for the sake of her dearly-loved nephew that Signora Giulia had left the peaceful seclusion of the Convent, and returned to the brilliant world of art and literature which welcomed her with enthusiasm. Once more she held a stately Court, and in her Neapolitan palace there gathered around her a company of poets, artists, musicians, and philosophers, who revived the golden days described in the “Cortegiano” by Castiglione at the Court of Urbino, but with a large proportion of religious thinkers. Amongst the members of this splendid

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literary society, who all vied with each other in proclaiming in verse or prose the honour and glory of their beautiful hostess, were the most famous men of the day. Amongst these I will only name Annibale Caro, a friend of Molza, introduced by a madrigal; Claudio Tolomei, who paid his tribute in abstruse metaphysical verse; the Platonist, Dionigi Atanagi; and Il Tansillo, a devoted friend and adherent of Giulia, who granted him the unique favour of paying him a visit of a few days in his ancient city of Nola. This he commemorated in a delightful sonnet. Another friend who must not be omitted was Camillo Capilupi, son of the famous Benedetto, and Podestà of Viadana, Ambassador of Charles V., Governor of Monferato and Castellan of the Citadel of Casale. He, too, was a poet as well as a diplomatist, and some lines of his to Giulia are worthy of quotation. It was at this time that Titian appears to have painted the portrait of the Countess of Fondi.

There is a charming letter from Giulia to a very old friend, Ippolito Capilupi, later Bishop of Fano, dated, "Naples, April 25, 1542," in which she says:

"I received yours of the 10th, with the more pleasure as I had been expecting and hoping for it; I tried to believe that you loved and remembered me in silence, but I was glad to receive a proof of it. . . . With regard to my portrait, I do not know whether I ought to rejoice, because if it is as beautiful as you say, it cannot be natural; for it seems as though M. Titiano had wished to show the power of his talent in painting a lady completely beautiful, and as I ought to be, not as I really am. Yet I am pleased that the picture is in the hands of Your Lordship, as I can easily suppose that by means

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of the picture you remember the real person, and that in future you will be more generous with your letters. In the meantime I present and recommend myself to you with all my soul, and pray God that all your desires may be fulfilled." *

This picture had been painted by Titian and given as a present to Ippolito Capilupi, when he was Legate at Venice. In 1542 Giulia Gonzaga was but twenty-nine years of age, although her romantic and eventful story gives the impression of a long lifetime of adventure.

In this circle of interesting people, the youth Vespasiano was warmly welcomed and encouraged to take part in their lively discussions and conversations, in which he delighted them all with his precocious talent and intelligence. But these peaceful years of happy study and development passed away all too quickly, and the time came when his aunt Giulia had to take him from the care of his tutors and send him forth into the world.

There was only one career open to this young prince, that of arms, and Giulia decided to send him if possible to the Court of the Emperor, if she could obtain his first introduction, for he was now thirteen years of age. For this purpose she wrote the following letter, in which we also see how carefully she watched over the interest of her ward, Vespasiano :

"To the Emperor Charles V.

"NAPLES,

"November 5, 1544.†

"It is now some days since I sent Your Majesty the account and decision of Don Lopes de Doria in the

* Arch. Capilupi de Mantova. The picture has completely disappeared.

† Racc, "Marcobruno," p. 58.

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matter of Casalmaggiore; and concerning this, I most humbly entreat that Your Majesty will deign to take notice of the many wrongs which, on this account, Lodovico Gonzaga, my father, has suffered, and which, in consequence, Vespasiano Gonzaga, my ward and the heir of my said father, has also endured . . . and I implore Your Majesty that by reason of our services, and in common justice, the said land should be given to my poor ward, your slave and vassal. And not to weary Your Majesty . . . to whom I appeal, that with his usual liberality he will take this poor boy into his favour, that he may gladly and willingly spend his life in the service of Your Majesty and the Prince, whom he will serve in life and death, not less faithfully than Lodovico my father, and Luigi my brother—grandfather and father to the said Vespasiano—who will serve you for the sake of their blessed memory . . . as is the earnest hope of the present writer. And thus I conclude, humbly kissing the hands and feet of Your Majesty.”

This letter was evidently graciously received, and Vespasiano was offered the coveted position of page of honour to the Prince Philip, son and heir of the Emperor. Giulia has evidently once more sought the help of her devoted friend and cousin, Don Ferrante Gonzaga, for a few months later we find him writing to make arrangements for the journey to Prince Doria, Captain-General of the Imperial navy:

“MANTUA,

“April, 2, 1545.

“The Signor Vespasiano Gonzaga, my nephew, is received into the service of the Prince by His Cæsarean Majesty, and, therefore, towards the end of next May we

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desire to send him to Barcelona; hoping that V. S. will be able to provide one or two galleys, with which he may cross over.

“If it is possible at this time, and you are able to grant to the Signora Giulia Gonzaga, to Vespasiano, and to myself, this favour, we shall remain always your most obliged servants. . . . And with all reverence I kiss your hands.”

The Emperor had not lost sight of this young son of his faithful Luigi, concerning whom glowing reports had reached, through his Ambassador Capilupi, and this appointment as page was looked upon as a high honour, which was eagerly accepted by his aunt Giulia. She made great preparation in order that he might be nobly equipped in arms, horses, and a suitable wardrobe for his new position. The youth was naturally all eagerness and excitement at the prospect of thus taking his part in real life, but we cannot wonder that Giulia, whose love for him was that of a devoted mother, felt the parting acutely. She gave him much good counsel, as is the way of mothers, “bidding him faithfully serve his God and his Prince, holding honour above all things. He must never forget to be modest in speech and brave in action; he must be true and generous, avoiding alike flattery and conceit, and showing knightly courtesy to all men.”*

The gallant deeds of his father, Luigi Rodomonte, had long been household words to Vespasiano, and he was eager to show himself worthy of his name and race. With these excellent intentions, he set forth on his journey to the Court of Spain, and it is interesting to find that in after years he looked back upon this period

* Amante, “Vita di Giulia Gonzaga.”

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as a splendid school of manners and discipline. He there continued his studies in company with Prince Philip's other pages, and distinguished himself in scholarship and literature, while his great stature and wonderful strength for his age gave him great advantages in the trials of horsemanship and arms. The Emperor was a very strict censor of conduct, and in no other Court of Europe would the young Gonzaga have had such careful and exemplary training, great attention being also paid to all religious observances.

Meantime his friends at home had already begun to consider the question of a suitable marriage for this young prince, with his vast inheritance and still greater expectations. The first bride suggested appears to have been Ippolita, the third daughter of Don Ferrante Gonzaga, born in Palermo in the year 1535, brought to Naples as a baby, and cared for with devoted affection by the Signora Giulia. In a letter of April 4, 1537, we find her writing to Don Ferrante: "I have greatly enjoyed seeing these last few days the Princess and that delicious Nini (a little son of Don Ferrante), and, above all, my darling Donna Ippolita, whom I am never satisfied with seeing and kissing." And a week later, Giulia writes in another letter: "Kiss the Nini a thousand times for me, and ten thousand times Donna Ippolita, my *bellissima e saporitissima*," which is weakened by translation into "my most beautiful and most delicious."

Incidentally, this love for children throws a charming sidelight upon the character of Giulia. Her little favourite, Ippolita, grew up to be a beautiful, charming, and highly-cultured girl, receiving the most advanced education, both at Mantua, under the care of her uncle, Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, and at Milan, to which city her father was

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appointed Governor in 1546. A marriage with Vespasiano would probably have been arranged, had it not been for the match-making propensities of Charles V. When Don Ferrante suggested, by his secretary Nuti to the Emperor at Brussels, the name of Giulia's nephew as a bridegroom for his daughter Ippolita, the Emperor informed him that Fabrizio Colonna, Duke of Tagliacozza, had already proposed for the young lady's hand. This marriage was, in fact, carried out in 1548, as we shall hear later.

It was but of short duration, for at the ill-fated siege of Parma, Fabrizio, who was fighting there in the company of Don Ferrante, was seized with malignant fever, and died on August 24, 1551, after barely three years of happy married life. On the later sorrows of the fascinating Ippolita we have no space to dwell at present; but we shall meet her again, for Giulia continued her devoted friend until the end. Vespasiano would, indeed, have been fortunate had he won her for his wife.

There was another lady suggested by his mother, Isabella, who, although she had other children since her marriage with the Prince of Sulmona, still took great interest in her eldest son. She thought that a rich bride would add much to the position of Vespasiano, and had her eyes upon Vittoria Farnese, daughter of Pier Luigi Farnese, and niece of Pope Paul III. Giulia does not appear to have regarded this alliance with much favour; but, in any case, Vittoria herself, with her immense dowry, had more ambitious views, and, after refusing at least one other suitor, she ultimately married Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, entering that city as a bride in the early days of 1548, soon after her father had been assassinated. And of her we read that "she had a long

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and peaceful life." After this, the subject of the youth's marriage remained in abeyance for a time, as he was still so young that there was no immediate urgency.

Meantime, while Vespasiano was away at the Spanish Court, in great favour with the Emperor and Prince Philip, Giulia Gonzaga was persuaded to pay a visit to Lombardy in 1546. One old chronicler remarks that she wished to see her own people "before going down to the tomb," but as the lady—born in 1513—was barely thirty-three at this date, his melancholy forebodings seem somewhat premature. Giulia travelled to Gazzuolo, which her brother Luigi had generously left in possession of his young cousin, Carlo Gonzaga, the son of Pirro, who married Emilia Bentivoglio, the half-sister of Isabella d' Este.* It must have been a sad visit in some respects, for there had been so many changes since Giulia Gonzaga had last seen the old Castello. Her dear grandmother, Madonna Antonio del Balzo, had passed away, her brother Cagnino had also died, and her father, the Abate Lodovico, had soon followed him, all within three years. Giulia was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and splendid festivities were given in her honour. Carlo Gonzaga, who, in person and valour, much resembled her brother Luigi, had always been a great favourite of hers, as well as his two charming sisters, Lucrezia and Isabella, made famous by the praises of Matteo Bandello. During her visit, a son was born to Carlo, and on the eighth day, at the baptismal ceremony, the Countess of Fondi held the infant at the font, and gave him the name of Annibale.

As we shall not have occasion to meet this infant again, it may be interesting to observe that he took Orders,

* See Genealogy, Table II.

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became the forty-ninth Bishop of Mantua, was called "Venerabile," and was sent as Nuncio to France by Pope Clement VIII., to arrange a peace between Henri IV. and Philip II. of Spain. He finally entered the Order of Minori Osservanti, received the name of Francesco, and died in the odour of sanctity.

Since Giulia's last visit to Lombardy much had happened, not only in her own family, but amongst her other relations at Mantua. Federico, who had always been a great friend of hers, and with whom she constantly corresponded, had been promoted to the title of Duke of Mantua by the Emperor, and had married a charming young princess and great heiress, Margherita Paleologa, of Monferrato. But there was one dear and familiar face which Giulia sadly missed: her beloved lady, the Marchesa of Mantua, to whose kindness she owed so much in those far-off days at Rome, had passed away on February 13, 1539, full of years and honours, a most noble and accomplished patron of art, whose loss could never be replaced. Giulia had never ceased to regard this noble lady with special affection, as is proved in her letters, of which I will give one as an example, written less than three years before the death of Isabella d' Este:

"Alla Marchesa di Mantova.

"NAPOLI, DAL MONASTERO,

"5 Ott., 1536.*

"I have so much faith in Your Excellence and in the esteem and affection which you bear to me and mine, that I turn to you without misgiving in any affair where your kindness can help me . . . having complete trust in the

* Arch. St. Mantova.

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gracious devotion which you have always shown to me. In this certainty, I commend myself and my affairs as much as possible to Your Excellence, in that which I desire to obtain from the Signor, my father; and if, as I have no doubt, you consider this just and honest, I pray that Your Excellence will undertake this mission . . . which my Messer Gondolfo (her secretary) will fully explain to you. By this you will do me a singular favour. And in this hope, I kiss the hands of Your Excellence, to whom may our Lord God grant every desire."

When Giulia Gonzaga returned to Naples, she was much distressed to hear of the ill-health of another dear friend, Signora Vittoria Colonna, who had felt such deep sympathy with the religious studies carried on under the guidance of that holy man, Juan de Valdés, by the noble ladies of Southern Italy. Vittoria has always had the reputation of leading the Reformed movement, but in point of fact she never committed herself to anything which could be condemned as heresy, as we have seen in her behaviour to Ochino after his flight, and did not, like Giulia, pour out her wealth and devotion upon the many members of their circle who had to flee to Germany or Switzerland to escape the terrors of the Inquisition. Amongst the Marchese de Pescara's letters, there is a very charming one written to Giulia before the visit to Lombardy,* and dated "Viterbo, December 8":

"ILLUSTRISSIMA SIGNORA MIA,—V. S. (Vostra Signoria) is always so good to me; from the first time that I visited you at Fondi, I have never met with such courtesy

* Archivio Vaticano.

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as yours . . . and your kindness has been the greatest consolation to me . . . receiving from you so much affection and charity. If I, Signora mia, who am so much obliged to your most reverent Ladyship . . . could possibly serve you, it would give me great joy. . . . If the Signora, being absent, can do so much with her Christian courtesy, what would it be if by the grace of God she could possibly be here? That I might have the great consolation of conversing with her . . . for Monsignor is greatly occupied, also M. Flaminio^o; and if it were not for Messer Luigi Priuli and the Signor Carnesecchi, I should fare badly. And certainly it seems suitable that the Signora should revisit her own country of Lombardy—she who is so well-informed concerning the true and Heavenly Country . . . also that it may give her pleasure and that passing by here she might stay for a month or two . . . But this letter is already too long, for the pleasure of writing to you has transported me too much, and I kiss your hands.

“I hear that V. S. has sent me the ‘Exposition concerning St. Paul,’* which was desired so much, and most of all by me, who have such great need of it; for which I thank you indeed, and still more when I shall see it, please God.”

We do not know if this last meeting so much longed for ever took place. In 1546 Vittoria, feeling her end approaching, moved from the Convent of the Benedictines, St. Anna, to the house of her relation, Giulia Colonna, in Rome, and she passed away at the end of February, 1547, at the age of fifty-seven. Towards the last days of her

* Written by Juan Valdés.

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life she wrote these lines, which beautifully express her faith and hope :

“Anima, il Signor viene ; omai disgombrà
Le folte nebbie intorno del tuo core,
Acciò che l' ugge del terreno amore
All' alta luce non faccian ombra.” *

Amongst the many letters of Giulia Gonzaga, there are several written at this time to Don Ferrante Gonzaga—who in 1546 had been appointed Governor of Milan by the Emperor—showing her keen interest in the troubled condition of Italy. She felt deep sympathy for Siena, where the citizens were making desperate efforts to preserve their liberty, and she was much disturbed about the insurrection in Genoa. But the general unrest was soon to touch her far more nearly—in Naples itself.

The death of Henry VIII. on January 28, 1547, and that of François I. on March 31 of the same year, had left England and France in weaker hands, and encouraged both the Emperor and the Pope to more independent assertion. The Inquisition had already been established in Rome since 1542, and Paul III. thought that now would be a good opportunity for extending its powers to Naples. In May of this year (1547) he sent a Brief to that city, “commanding that all cases of heresy be judged by the tribunal of the Inquisition.” The Viceroy, Don Pedro de Toledo, knowing the temper of the people with regard to the Inquisition, did not dare to publish the Brief as usual, by sound of trumpet, but he had it quietly put up on the door of the Archbishop's palace, and then

* “My soul, the Lord appears ; disperse
The clouds that gather round thy heart,
And clear thee from the mist of earthly love,
Lest it o'ershade thy heavenly light.”

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retreated to his castle at Pozzuoli, at the foot of the Monte Nuovo,* to await the result. This was more alarming than he had feared, for the Brief was at once torn down by the people, who refused to give up the ringleaders, and sent a deputation to the Viceroy, carefully chosen by the popular magistrates (the *Eletti*). Antonio Grisone was the spokesman, and with great spirit he pointed out how hateful the very name of the Inquisition was to the people, and he implored the Viceroy not to place upon them this intolerable oppression. Toledo made a most courteous and diplomatic reply, assuring the people that neither the Emperor nor the Pope would oppose their wishes, and finally the deputation returned joyfully to Naples.

But this security did not last long. Some months later another edict, using much stronger language with regard to the Inquisition, was found posted on the gates of the Archbishop's palace. The whole city rose in tumult, and with cries of "To arms! to arms!" rushed to tear down the Pope's Brief. The nobles joined with the multitude in their hatred of the Inquisition, and urged that they should all resist its setting-up to the death, at the same time declaring their faithful allegiance to the Emperor. The Viceroy was furious at this rebellion, and returned to Naples determined to put it down with a strong hand. A certain Tommaso Aniello,† a native of Sorrento, who had

* This Monte Nuovo, 440 feet high, had been thrown up after a great volcanic eruption on Sunday, September 29, 1538. The Viceroy had caused his castle to be built close by after this, in order to encourage the terrified inhabitants to return to Pozzuoli and rebuild their homes.

† A descendant of his, then called "Massaniello," took part in the great tumult in Naples a hundred years later (1647). The family still exists in Sorrento.

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been foremost in tearing down the edict, was arrested, but the people assumed so threatening an attitude that the magistrates thought it prudent to release him.

Pedro de Toledo then sent secretly to Genoa for Spanish troops to occupy the fortress of Castel Nuovo, from whence they entered Naples, fired on the inhabitants, and sacked the city, killing men, women, and children. The Neapolitans rang the great bell of San Lorenzo as a summons to arms, and all was tumult and confusion until the night closed in. The magistrates decided to send an embassy to appeal to the Emperor; but meantime, during the next fifteen days, deadly skirmishes continued between the soldiers and the people, who, however, to show that this was no mere seditious rising, hoisted a banner on the belfry of San Lorenzo with the Emperor's arms, and took the same watchword as their foes—"Spain and the Emperor." It was an unspeakable relief when at last the envoys returned from the Court at Madrid, and the Viceroy was able to assure the excited people that "it was not the intention of His Imperial Majesty to insist on the establishment of the Inquisition, and that he was willing to forget the past on account of their loyalty."

It is interesting to find that Signora Giulia Gonzaga, with many ladies amongst her friends and all her household, was persuaded by those who loved her to take refuge in the island of Ischia during the disturbances in Naples. She writes to Don Ferrante Gonzaga (Ischia, August 13, 1547), expressing her regret that the Signora Duchessa had been ill, and hoping for her recovery:

“. . . I have been in Ischia for the last twenty days, having been induced to come here by all those who love

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me ; and, indeed, we were in a most perilous condition in Naples . . . in the convent where I was staying. I could not remain in San Ermo, and the country round was very unhealthy . . . and it was not safe on account of the number of strangers who crowded there. The great danger for the city was the sacking and pillage, but the people behaved wonderfully. . . . Your Lordship may think otherwise, but to me it seems that the rigour of justice is not good at all times . . . and this time of violence cannot last. I and many ladies are in the Castello, and the rest of my people in another house on the estate ; and the 'Signora Marquesa' shows me the greatest kindness, and does all that is possible for me. I hope to leave as soon as the city has returned to its obedience, as it has always offered to do on hearing the command of His Majesty, thus having conceded much, and I hope all will end well. . . . Having written to you in the past, and perhaps having been too importunate about the establishment of the Donna Ippolita, I will only say that this young girl gives me supreme delight in all things, and more so every day. If the matter is not settled, may the Lord God order all for the best ! . . . I have heard nothing certain yet.* I do not write to the Duchess, as she has not yet replied to my last, and I kiss your hands and hers, and all your sons and daughters, whom may Our Lord satisfy according to your desires.†

* Ippolita Gonzaga was married to Fabrizio Colonna the following year.

† Modena Estense Archivio. Autograph letters written by Giulia herself were hastily, impulsively scribbled. The secretary complained that she did much of his work.

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“ P.S.— . . . Matters in Naples are more troubled than ever, and I do not know what will happen. I hope to return there in ten days.”

[*Autograph.*]

As we already know, all ended well, and Charles V. made no further attempt during his life to establish the Inquisition in Naples.

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CHAPTER XV

Vespasiano Gonzaga Colonna in Spain, 1548—He comes to Italy in the train of the Archduke Philip ; is present at the marriage of Ippolita Gonzaga — He visits Mantua — Duchess Margherita Paleologa, a friend of his aunt Giulia, is Regent of Mantua for two of her sons, Francesco and Guglielmo—Vespasiano first meets Donna Diana di Cardona—The Council of Trent (1549) and the famous compromise, the “ Interim ”—Private marriage of Vespasiano with Diana di Cardona—Death of Pope Paul III. —War of Parma, in which Vespasiano takes part ; he is wounded, and visits Giulia at Naples, 1553 — He fights in Picardy—Giulia’s letters to Diana di Cardona—Vespasiano prisoner in Flanders.

DURING these years which had been so eventful for Giulia Gonzaga in Naples, her nephew Vespasiano had remained in Spain at the Emperor’s Court. But towards the end of the year 1548, Prince Philip had been summoned to Italy by his father, and took young Colonna, who was high in his favour, with him. After a prosperous voyage, they landed at Genoa, and then proceeded to Milan, where, by a curious coincidence, the heir of Spain had promised to attend the wedding of the Lord Fabrizio Colonna with the charming young girl, daughter of Don Ferrante (who was made Governor of Milan in 1546), Ippolita Gonzaga, whom we have already seen suggested as a bride for Vespasiano. However, this marriage appears to have been most satisfactory. Fabrizio was a gallant

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young prince, the nephew of Vittoria Colonna, and Duke of Tagliacozzo, the most important town in a wild, romantic district north of Rome, which is famous for the fatal battle in which the young Prince Conradin was taken prisoner and the flower of Ghibelin chivalry was defeated by Charles I. of Anjou on August 28, 1268. Dante thus alludes to the help given then by Alard, a French soldier returning from the Holy Land :

“ . . . E là da Tagliacozzo
Ove senz' arme vinse il vecchio Alardo.”

Inf. xxviii. 17.

The young bride Ippolita wrote to her father, Don Ferrante Gonzaga, a few days after the wedding: “The obligation which I feel, in the first place towards the Lord God, and then to your Excellence, is such that human language cannot express it, for having given me so handsome and good a husband.” Poor Ippolita! It is sad to remember how very brief was her married happiness. We are told that Girolamo Muzio Giustinopolitano, who was present at the nuptial festivities, hastened to entertain the young married couple with his treatise concerning the institution, the utility, and the duties of matrimony. Amongst the wedding guests present on this occasion was Ippolita's brother Cesare, who later succeeded his father in the Duchy of Guastello, a small town and estate on the banks of the Po, about nineteen miles from Parma, where a bronze statue of Don Ferrante Gonzaga may still be seen in the market-place. Cesare married the sister of San Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan; he was a great friend of Giulia Gonzaga, who wrote to him very frequently after his father's death in 1557. This was the dear little “Nino,” to whom she used to send “her love and a thousand kisses.” Cesare was

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also one of the chief characters in Torquato Tasso's well-known Dialogue, "Il Gonzaga o del piacere onesto," in which he is spoken of with such high praise as a prince of "great talent and mature judgment, of a profound acquaintance with letters, a lover of learned men and poets, whom he provided not only with a subject, but also with the means to continue their writing and poetry."

To return to Vespasiano Colonna. After the wedding festivities were over, he obtained permission from the Archduke Philip to visit his dominions in Lombardy, and set forth with the gentlemen of his suite to the old Castello of Sabbioneta, which he had always looked upon as the home of his family. It was dear to him from early memories, and those happy days of his childhood spent under the care of his grandfather, the Abate Lodovico. Here he was received with all honour and respect by Messer Pietro Antonio Masserotto, the agent and general manager of all his property. The young lord was only seventeen, but he had been so carefully trained for his high position that he was able to go into all the details of his large revenue, and take a complete survey of all his palaces and estates.

The property had been admirably managed under the constant, watchful superintendence of the Signora Giulia Gonzaga Colonna, who had kept up a constant correspondence with Masserotto as guardian to her nephew. Between the years 1542 and 1552, twenty-five of her letters to the agent have been preserved, in which it is most interesting to notice her scrupulous demand for accuracy in the accounts, and at the same time the liberal and generous conduct which she required towards the vassals and tenants. The replies which she receives evidently keep her in touch with all that happens, not

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only in the dominion itself, but in all the neighbourhood; and her commands are given with so much kindness and courtesy that we feel she is writing to a trusted friend.

During Vespasiano's seven years of absence from Lombardy there had been so many changes, as various kinsmen and friends had died, that we do not wonder at his making only a brief stay at Sabbioneta, and gladly accepting an invitation to Mantua from the young Duke Francesco II., who had succeeded his father Federico in 1540. In a letter of his grandmother, Isabella d'Este, to the father of Francesco, dated 1538, we have an interesting allusion to this prince of sixteen :

“ I went yesterday to the Castello [of Mantua] and paid a visit to the Illustrious Duchess [Margherita], your wife . . . whom I found in excellent health. All that I beheld was most pleasing to me. The Marchese [Francesco], who is growing up in beauty like a flower, repeated to me many lines of Virgil, in the presence of the Duchess, his mother, with so much grace and distinctness that it was wonderful. I also saw Signor Guglielmo [born 1538], with his fat baby face, innocent and joyous, and both he and his sweet sister, Donna Isabella [born 1537], are a delightful picture. . . .”*

As for Duke Francesco II., in this very year of his cousin Vespasiano's visit (1549), he married the Archduchess Catherine of Austria, niece of Charles V., but only survived a few months, having, unfortunately, met with an accident, falling into the lake while he was shooting wildfowl from a boat, and the chill brought on a fever. He was succeeded in the Dukedom of Mantua by his younger brother Guglielmo, who had a long and

* Luzio e Renier, “Giorn. Stor.,” p. 36.

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prosperous reign of forty years. His mother, the Duchess Margherita Paleologa, was thus destined to be Regent for two of her sons, who became Lords of Mantua in succession at so early an age. She was a great friend of Giulia Gonzaga, and carried on a correspondence with her for many years. Giulia's father, the Abate Lodovico, and her brother Cagnino had both been present at the wedding of the Princess Margherita with Duke Federico in September, 1531, of which we have a very full description. The bride wore a wedding dress of white satin embroidered with silver, a high collar and sleeves sewn with pearls, a jewelled girdle round her waist, and a white satin cap studded with diamonds. We are assured by one who knew her well that "she was beautiful, gracious, kind, wise, and virtuous." This charming lady had not a very happy married life (which only lasted till 1540), as her young husband was for some years still under the influence of his former mistress, Isabella Boschetti. Of Margherita's later life we shall hear more from the letters of Giulia.

It was during this visit of 1549 to Mantua, that the youth Vespasiano made an acquaintance which was destined to have a baneful influence upon his future life. Don Ferrante Gonzaga, Governor of Milan, was then staying in the lake-girdled city on the banks of the Mincio; he had brought his family with him, and in their company a beautiful girl who was the destined bride of his young son Cesare. Donna Diana di Cardona was a native of Sicily, the daughter of Don Antonio di Cardona and Signora Beatrice di Luna e Aragona. She appears to have been greatly attracted by the handsome young Colonna, so splendid in stature and bearing, the most courtly and delightful of companions, and last, not least,

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a wealthy prince, already lord of his dominions. Her affections had certainly not been touched by the mere boy, Cesare, to whom she was promised, and we may readily believe that she was not slow to welcome the admiration and attentions of Vespasiano Gonzaga. His first love-affair appears to have made such progress that it was with great regret that he tore himself away from the fascinating Lady Diana, to obey the summons of the Archduke Philip who was about to join the Emperor in Flanders.

In this year (1549) Charles V. had attained the very height of his power and greatness, such as no Emperor since Frederick II. had achieved, and looked upon himself as Dictator of Germany. He had sent for his son Philip, who was now twenty-two, in order that he might receive the oath of allegiance from his future subjects, while the private desire of Charles was to secure also his son's succession to the Empire. Like his father Maximilian, Charles was at heart a visionary, and his dream had long been to assemble a General Council with powers to turn the Lutherans back to the old Faith, and to reform the Pope and the Church. Then he looked forward to the day when united Christendom would march under his banners against the Infidel, whom he would utterly conquer, and would himself be crowned in Jerusalem. But, alas! for the dreamer. The glorious vision was never to be realized; his apparent triumph was deceptive, and the future would overwhelm him with a sea of troubles. Many a time had he been warned already that he was fighting against the tendencies of the age. In vain he hoped for Protestant submission to the Council of Trent; the famous compromise, the "Interim," which he had fondly hoped would reconcile Protestant and Pope, left them both unsatisfied. True it conceded clerical marriage,

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the use of the cup by the laity, and a modification of the doctrine of "Justification by Faith"; but, on the other hand, it retained all the seven Sacraments, the worship of the Virgin and Saints, fasts, processions, and other Catholic ceremonies, and reaffirmed the dogma of Transubstantiation. When after years of labour it was proclaimed as an Edict on May 15, 1548, we have a vivid account of the result at Augsburg by an English Ambassador at the Court of Charles V. The ministers of the city refused to say Mass in their churches; "they would rather offend man than God, and were compelled to leave the city, which remained disconsolate. In most of the shops, people were seen in tears; a hundred women besieged the Emperor's gates, howling and asking in their outcries where they should christen their children and where they should marry? For the churches where the Protestants did by thousands at once communicate are locked up, and the people, being robbed of all their godly exercises, sit weeping and wailing at home. . . ."

While the Emperor was thus losing his popularity in Germany, his prestige abroad was departing. France and England had made peace, and would next turn to war upon him; the naval warfare in the Mediterranean against Dragut the Corsair was going against him, and it was but small advantage that before his death in November, 1549, Paul III. dissolved the rival Council at Bologna, and recognized the "Interim." The Emperor returned to Spain with his son Philip, a wiser and a sadder man, while young Vespasiano was free to continue his love affairs in Italy.

We have now reached a very mysterious part of our story. We know not what had passed during the absence of the young Gonzaga prince; but when he returned from

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Flanders, no difficulty appears to have been placed in the way of his courting Donna Diana, and the next we learn about the young people is that they eloped to Piacenza, and were there secretly married. Had Don Ferrante Gonzaga seen reason to change his mind about the young lady, and did he no longer desire her as a bride for his son Cesare? We are left absolutely in the dark on this interesting subject, and can only form our own conclusions in the light of subsequent events, that Don Ferrante may have had private reasons for his tacit acquiescence in this change of bridegrooms. One thing, at least, is certain: the parents of Signora Diana remained in ignorance of the important event until many months afterwards, for a letter exists, dated March 20, 1550, in which the mother, Donna Beatrice di Luna e Aragona, writes from Palermo to her daughter "that she has heard of the marriage only a few days before."

Why this strange secrecy? And no one seems to be surprised or to complain of it. On the contrary, there is a most friendly letter preserved, the first, apparently, which Giulia Gonzaga wrote to her new niece, about the same time as that from Diana's mother:

"To Donna Diana Cardona Gonzaga. [Autograph.]

MODENA,

March 29, 1550.

ILL^{MA} S^{RA}, MY DEAREST AND MOST HONOURED DAUGHTER,—From your letter and from that which I have received from the Captain Chiapino, I have taken great consolation in knowing that Your Highness is well and that you are contented with your husband; and know for certain that one of the greatest desires which I have in this life is to learn that you and Vespasiano love each other, and I shall

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always be satisfied that all the affection which Vespasiano owes, and desires to bear me, is added to that which he should give you ; because, my dear daughter, in this consists the true happiness of all things in this world, when husband and wife love each other and are of one mind, because with this all things will go well, and they will live in peace and content.

“Concerning the Signora Donna Isabella [Brisegna, wife of Garcia Manrique, Governor of Piacenza], I do not know what to say, except that I believe you love her so much that there is no need of my persuasion ; all the same, you must know that she is my very soul, and that what you do for her I will put down to my account. I must also tell you that you should show great courtesy to Messer Joanni Vincencio, who, besides being my most trusted friend, is a person who knows, and is most worthy, faithful, and devoted to you and Vespasiano. . . . I have written to Messer Jo. Vincencio, who will speak to you and you can trust him, and also to S^a Donna Isabella. . . . I can think of nothing else, but I pray you to tell me how you are . . . and let me know . . . and I pray to God that He will grant your heart’s desire, and make and keep you happy for many years with your husband.”

The Donna Isabella referred to in this letter is Isabella Brisegna, a lady living at Naples, who was Giulia Gonzaga’s dearest friend. She married Garcia Manrique, Governor of Piacenza, brother of the Spanish Inquisitor-General, whose views on the subject of the Reformers he shared. Isabella had been an earnest and devoted pupil of Valdés, and she incurred such cruel persecution, that she was compelled later to take refuge at Ravenna, and from thence escaped to Zurich and Chiavenna. Giulia always watched over her

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from afar with the tenderest love, and provided her with a settled income, as she did with so many other refugees for their Faith. When Carnesecchi, in his Trial by the Inquisition, was asked why he called Isabella *la divina*, he replied, "that she was so beautiful and so gracious."

As for Vespasiano, he appears to have been quite untroubled by the idea of anything unusual about his secret marriage, for he next suggests taking his wife to visit her parents in Sicily. He wrote to ask permission of the Emperor, who granted it in a letter from Brussels, dated "April 11, MDL." But this journey was never accomplished, for the young lord was taken ill with a sudden attack of intermittent fever, and was compelled to remain at Sabbioneta. When he recovered, he devoted himself once more to his favourite studies, and, we may hope, also to the entertainment of his wife, although the historians do not mention this. We are not told whether he had any sympathy with the Reformed views of his aunt Giulia, but we may at least infer that her influence had given him a broader tolerance than was usual in those days. For we are interested to find that he received with favour an application from the Jews, who were persecuted elsewhere, for the privilege of establishing in Sabbioneta a printing-press for the publication of Hebrew literature. In taking this liberal and philosophical view, Vespasiano showed himself much in advance of his age, and his generosity was rewarded by the fact that it was always accounted an honour to Sabbioneta to become thus a centre for the diffusion of Oriental learning.

Meantime Pope Paul III. had been succeeded by the Cardinal del Monte as Julius III. on February 7, 1550. The English Cardinal, Reginald Pole, was so high in the voting that at the second scrutiny he had twenty-six votes

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(including his own) when only twenty-seven were required. We are told that in the betting at the "Banker's shops" he went up to eighty. But, in fact, his views on "Justification" lost him the tiara. Julius loved ease and pleasure, and expressed his views of life by writing over the palace which he built :

"Let all honest men enjoy themselves decently, without scruple."

But this was no easy matter in those troublous days, and he soon found himself involved in the famous war of Parma. Duke Ottavio Farnese, feeling himself insecure in his possessions, joined in alliance with the King of France. Pope Julius could not permit this, and commanded him to yield Parma to the Papal troops, under pain of excommunication. Ottavio naturally refused, and then began that long and tedious war, in which Ferrante Gonzaga took the lead on the side of the Emperor. Vespasiano was placed in command under him, and had the misfortune to be wounded in an attack on the city with Troito Rossi, by the gate of San Barnabo, when the Cavaliere Goito, with 100 horsemen and as many arquebusiers, opposed them. The wound did not seem very serious at first, and when, soon after, Prince Philip was returning from Flanders, nothing could prevent Vespasiano from travelling to join the Archduke at Villafranco and paying due homage to him. He was always a favourite with the prince, who took him on to Mantua in his suite on a brief visit to the Regent, Duchess Margherita. Young Gonzaga continued in his lord's company as far as Genoa, and from thence saw him set sail for Spain. Not until then did Vespasiano trouble about his wound, which was greatly inflamed, and at the urgent request of his aunt, he journeyed by sea to Naples, where Madonna Giulia nursed

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and tended him with devoted love. The previous year she had decided to return to the peace and quiet of the convent, and had obtained a Brief from Pope Julius III., signed March 28, 1550, giving her permission "to dwell as a secular person with the nuns of S. Francesco delle Monache." But, as we have seen, she always kept her palace in the Borgo delle Vergine, for the sake of her many visitors and her servants, so she could readily return there to take charge of her nephew.

He made a slow recovery, and seems to have remained at Naples for some time ; but he was at home in Sabbioneta before the winter, as we have an autograph letter written by Giulia Gonzaga to Donna Diana on December 20 :

" MOST ILLUSTRIOUS LADY, MY DEAREST AND MOST HONOURED DAUGHTER,—However much I may say or write, I cannot express sufficiently the love which I bear to you, and, in consequence, the satisfaction which I have in knowing that you are well. If it should please God to make you know some day how much I love and desire to serve you, and how by the first bond of friendship and then by the closer link of kindred, we are knit together. . . . When a letter of yours is late in coming, I say that the Sabbath delays. . . . I will add no more than to say how glad I am that Vespasiano is better, and may God grant that he will recover complete health, and be permitted to live happily for many years, and suffer me to see your mutual content. And with all my heart I recommend myself to you, and pray you to remind Vespasiano that he must be careful of himself."

In April, 1552, the war of Parma came to an end, after a truce between the Emperor and France, by which Ottavio Farnese was to hold the city unmolested for two years.

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It was in July of this same year that Ferrante Gonzaga was removed from the government of Milan, which he had ruled since 1546, but without much success, for the city had been a centre of disaffection. This was a great blow to his relations, Giulia and Vespasiano, who were his devoted friends.

Early in the year 1553 Vespasiano went to Innsbruck, and offered his services to the Emperor in the war against France on the frontier of Picardy. He was graciously received, and obtained the command of 400 horsemen under the banner of the Prince of Sulmona, his stepfather, who had been appointed Captain-General of the expedition. The cavalry was commanded by Emmanuel Philibert, who had just succeeded his father as Duke of Savoy, the infantry being under the orders of Don Francesco d' Este of Ferrara. They did not meet with much success at first; but Terouanne, which they had besieged in April, was compelled to capitulate at the end of two months, with its garrison of 3,000 men and the eldest son of the Constable de Montmorency. Cambray was attacked by the French King, Henri II., but it was gallantly defended and the besiegers driven off. Amongst other successes, Robert de la Marck was taken prisoner, while Hesdin was taken and destroyed by the companies under the command of Emmanuel Philibert. In this campaign we are told that Vespasiano greatly distinguished himself and won much honour.

At length he returned home to Sabbioneta and to his wife Diana, who, with her pleasure-loving Southern nature must have felt very lonely and deserted in that quiet country place during the long and frequent absence of her warrior-husband. We know so little about her life at this time that we cannot omit anything connected with

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her; thus it is important to quote one more letter from Giulia Gonzaga.

“ To Donna Diana Cardona Gonzaga.

“ NAPLES,

“ August 6, 1552.*

“ ILLUSTRIOUS LADY, MY HONOURED NIECE AND DAUGHTER,—I was extremely pleased to receive your letter of last month and to hear that you are well. I thank you for your promise to forward those letters which I wrote before to the Signora Isabella at Piacenza, for which I am very grateful . . . and I pray you to remember to send them by a faithful messenger and to take great care that they are not opened. I am sorry to hear that there have been certain disputes between private individuals of Mantua and the Commune of Rodigo; and if I knew all the particulars and what had happened, I should be happy to do anything to make peace between them. . . . I implore you to behave in this matter with your usual prudence, and to seek in any way to smooth down the matter and calm the minds of the disputants while the controversy is fresh. I am writing also on the subject to Madama di Mantua and to the Reverend Cardinal [who were both Regents of Mantua], but as you have more information and know better what to say, I am sure you will gladly help. In the meantime, may God keep you in health and grant all your desires.”

This letter shows Giulia in the character of a wise ruler who will take any trouble to maintain peace. We also see in her anxiety about sending the letters to Isabella Brisegna how very careful she is to avoid danger to the

* Written by the secretary; not “autograph,” like the two former letters.

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poor lady by having the loving words of religious hope and comfort betrayed to her enemies. It was not long after this that the persecution of Isabella by her Spanish husband, Garcia Manrique, became more than she could endure, and she was driven to flight.

His young wife was not destined to have Vespasiano long at home with her, for in January, 1554, he was again summoned by the Emperor to join his army in the war of Flanders. Here he fought bravely, as usual, but was unfortunate in an engagement, where he rode on in front to lead his men, was surrounded by the enemy, and in the *mêlée* his sword fell to the ground, and he was taken prisoner. He was confined in the Castle of Namur, and we have a letter of his, written on February 12, to request that arrangements may be made to obtain his release. He was soon set free, and, after his return home, received a letter from his mother, Isabella Princess of Sulmona, pressing him to pay her a visit at Fondi. This shows that, notwithstanding his devotion to his aunt Giulia, he kept on most friendly terms with his mother and stepfather.

Various letters from Giulia to her nephew of this period are preserved, in which she expresses her great affection for him, and sends kind messages to his wife. Some are evidently written from the convent, as she speaks of "having his two rooms prepared for him in the palace, which she keeps in her possession." She always addresses him as "*Illustrissimo nepote et figlio carissimo.*"

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CHAPTER XVI

The life and death of Ippolita Gonzaga ; Giulia's devotion to her—
Marriage of a daughter of Isabella Colonna—Story of Count Galeazzo Caraccioli—Other friends of Giulia : Onerata Tancredi, Cardinal Seripando, Pietro Carnesecchi, Margherita Paleologa, etc.—Warlike adventures of her nephew Vespasiano ; he is wounded at Ostia—Tragic death of his wife, Donna Diana di Cardona, after his return to Sabbioneta.

GIULIA GONZAGA, to whom had been denied the joy of home life and the happiness of seeing her children grow up around her, had a true genius for friendship ; those who were in trouble ever turned to her for help and sympathy, as a flower unconsciously turns towards the sun. Never was the proverb "A friend is born for adversity" more justified than in her case. For instance, in the universal outcry which followed upon the flight of Fra Bernardino Ochino from persecution and death, when his warmest supporters forsook him, she almost alone found charitable excuses, and spoke warmly in his praise. We see this in her letter to Don Ferrante Gonzaga, who had reason to feel so deeply grateful to her for the loving devotion with which she watched over his daughter Ippolita.

Her wedding with Fabrizio Colonna, at which Vespasiano was present, has already been mentioned, but her happy married life came to an end all too soon. Fabrizio took part under Don Ferrante in that ill-fated war of Parma,



Sebastiano del Piombo

Rom. rivisti. Photographie

GIULIA GONZAGA (reputed).

WITH ATTRIBUTES OF ST. CATHERINE.

Sebastiano del Piombo.

Formerly in the Bandini Palace, Rome

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where he fell ill of fever, was moved to Viadana, and there all the tender care of his young wife could not save him from death. Prostrated by the sudden blow, poor Ippolita gave herself up to despair, and only the wise devotion of Madonna Giulia saved her life and reason. Amongst the letters of consolation which she received was one from her cousin Lucrezia Gonzaga, which is worthy of quotation:

“Truly he was in the right who declared that all things are good which are according to nature, and what is there more natural to all men than death? . . . This world, Signora, is a very deep and dark vale of tears, full of troubles, and it is a fortunate adventure to leave it happily, as *he* has done. Ah, how many times have I smiled at those who do not know that to lament for the irreparable is rather a sign of folly than of true grief, and that death is not death, but rather the beginning of life! I conclude, therefore, that he alone acts wisely who, being mortal, expects nothing from this life of ours but mortal things.”

We may wonder how much comfort poor Ippolita found in this philosophical advice, or in the wonderful medal engraved in her honour, wherein she is represented as Diana escaping from Avernus towards the moon and stars; but as time passed on, she apparently recovered her peace of mind, and another marriage was arranged for her. This was the usual fate of a young and beautiful widow who had no vocation for the convent. The chosen husband was Antonio Caraffa, Duke of Mondragone, son of the Prince of Stigliano, and for a time all went well. Ippolita was able to carry out her passion for beauty and the fine arts, in the decoration of a splendid new palace at Naples, where the painter Bernardino Campi filled a great gallery with beautiful copies of famous pictures, spoken of

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with admiration by all her contemporaries. This palace was near the Church of St. Ursula, on the way to Chiaja, surrounded by a wonderful garden, described by Torquato Tasso in his Dialogue, "Il Gonzaga o del piacere onesto."

But once more trouble was in store for Ippolita, as serious domestic dissensions arose. Her father-in-law had married again, and his second wife, Lucrezia del Tufo, refused to allow the young couple to remain with them, and they were apparently turned out of the beautiful palace with an insufficient income. Ippolita's husband departed from Naples in disgust, leaving her behind, to the great distress of her father, Don Ferrante, who was already troubled at having lost the Emperor's favour, and who died the same year (1557).

The whole story of Ippolita's troubles is too long to tell; but we learn from Giulia Gonzaga's many letters to Don Ferrante how earnestly she laboured on behalf of her dear Ippolita; how, with infinite tact and patience, she interviewed this unpleasant Princess of Stigliano and tried to make peace. When at last the young wife would have been turned adrift, she found a gallant champion of her good name in the great Countess of Fondi, who insisted upon proper precautions and a suitable chaperone, etc., being provided, to silence any possible gossip. After the death of her father and mother, Ippolita and her little girl* found a peaceful home with Giulia until, a few years later, we learn from a touching and remorseful letter of the Duke of Mondragone, the story of Ippolita's death, at the age of twenty-eight, "watched over and cared for with all motherly affection by the devoted and sorrowing Giulia."

It is interesting to find her playing a mother's part in

* Who married Caraffa, Duke of Nocera.

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arranging the marriage of a daughter of her sister-in-law, Isabella Colonna, now Princess of Sulmona. We have the whole account in a letter of June 28, 1553, to Don Ferrante Gonzaga, and it is curious to be thus behind the scenes in the arrangement of a great marriage in the later Renaissance. A son of the Prince of Stigliano is the proposed bridegroom, and the father is very sharp in his bargaining about the dowry required. The bride is to have 43,000 ducats, and of this 3,000 are to be in jewellery and "movable goods," the rest to be paid all at once, or at least 30,000 ducats of it. Giulia speaks of the young lady as "rather beautiful than otherwise," which is not very enthusiastic praise. "It is unfortunate that Italy is so poor in suitable matches, for the Prince only intends to give his son 12,000 scudi a year, and the lady will not hear of leaving her country." However, at last all is settled, and in October of the same year Giulia writes to the Ducal Secretary: "Praised be God that we have at last seen the end of this marriage!" She hopes that now Donna Isabella will be satisfied.

On another quite different occasion Giulia Gonzaga gave her kindest help and sympathy. Amongst the disciples of Valdés there was a young noble who was attracted to the Reformed doctrine through the teaching of Pietro Martire Vermigli. He was the son and heir of Colantonio Caraccioli, the Marchese di Vico,* and nephew of Cardinal Caraffa. This young Count Galeazzo Caraccioli was born in Naples in 1517, and was a scholar of great promise and high character, the pride of his father's heart. It was a kinsman of his, Gian Francesco di Caserta, who first led him to attend the discourses of Vermigli, and one day he

* This is a city four miles from Castellamare, built on ruins of an ancient Gothic settlement.

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was much struck by a quaint simile of the preacher: "As a traveller may see in the distance a dance taking place, when he is too far to hear the sound of the music, he must think the dancers are out of their mind; but as he draws nearer, and hears the harmony and spirit of the tune, he takes great joy therein, and soon joins in the dance himself. So is it when you observe the change in life and manners of Christians: you think at first that they have lost their reason; but as you gradually learn their thoughts and the power of God's Word, you too will be drawn into the circle and join them." But Galeazzo went even farther than his teachers; for when he had occasion to travel into Germany in the service of the Emperor, he learned from Luther and Calvin that it was not enough for him to accept "Justification by Faith," but that he must also forsake "idolatry," and therefore cast off all allegiance to the Papacy—all outward conformance in superstitious customs.

This was a stern doctrine; for, like the rich young man in the Gospel, Galeazzo had "great possessions." He was idolized by his father and mother; he had married very young, and was devoted to his charming wife Vittoria and his small children; while a peaceful life of culture and happiness, with many congenial friends, seemed temptingly outspread before him. Of all his family, he was the only one disturbed by religious doubts or eager in the search of truth, and every art of persuasion and temptation was used to win him back. In Giulia Gonzaga alone he found encouragement and sympathy, and as time passed on and he found his life intolerable, at variance with those he loved in a matter which to him was one of life or death, it was from *her* support that he gathered courage to make the final sacrifice and give up all for his

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Faith. On March 26, 1551, he took an affectionate leave of his family—for he could not even persuade his wife to join him—and set forth on his lonely pilgrimage to a land of freedom, where he could openly profess his Reformed religion. He first went to Augsburg, where the Emperor Charles V. was at that time, and then on to Geneva, where he was well received by Calvin. He had left all his wealth behind him, except 2,000 ducats which he happened to have with him at the time, and he set to work to earn his own living.

It was in vain that his despairing friends and family implored him to return. He did, indeed, yield once to the entreaty of his father to meet him at Verona, with a safe-conduct from the Pope, and listen to his arguments; and many efforts were made to recall him, especially when his uncle became Pope (Paul IV.), but they failed to disturb the constancy of Galeazzo. In later years, when his son Carlo had become a dignitary in the Roman Church, a strong plea was made to him not to interfere, by his heresy, with his son's promotion; but nothing changed Galeazzo's purpose. He remained at Geneva, where he became an earnest preacher, and the leader and pastor of the Italian Reformed Church there, and died in 1586, after half a lifetime of voluntary exile for his Faith. His friend Caserta had many years before sealed his constancy by his death, being beheaded and burned in the market-place in 1564.

Amongst other friends of Giulia, of whom we shall hear more in later years, for they remained devoted to her until the end, was Onorata Tancredi, a Sieneſe lady of great talent and high character, who had been chosen as companion to Ippolita Gonzaga, and whose letters to many noted people of the day are preserved. Cardinal

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Seripando and Pietro Carnesecchi were fellow-disciples of Valdés, and their friendship was also a source of great comfort to her.

Amongst her constant correspondents were Don Ferrante Gonzaga, whose death in 1557 was a great loss to her; and the Duchess of Mantua, Margherita Paleologa, to whom she writes frequent and most affectionate letters, taking a warm interest in all that happens at Mantua. When Guglielmo, the young Duke of Mantua, marries the Princess Eleonora of Austria, Giulia at once adopts her as a new friend by inheritance.

Of her affection for Isabella di Brisegna we have already spoken. But her nephew Vespasiano, her "more than son," ever remained her dearest and best-beloved. We see from her many letters the deep interest which she takes in his career, and her delight when, between a battle and a siege, he finds time to pay her a visit at Naples, in the palace where "his two rooms are always ready for him." Giulia also takes a most friendly interest in his wife Diana, is always glad to have news of her, and sends kind inquiries and messages; but we cannot help coming to the conclusion that there is not much sympathy, nor are there many interests in common, between them. We hear of the death of Diana di Cardona's mother, Donna Beatrice, in 1553, and there seem to have been difficulties about her will. But, from all we can gather, Vespasiano left his wife to endure a very lonely time at Sabbioneta during his absence fighting in the service of the Emperor.

After the unfortunate incident of his imprisonment in the Castle of Namur, in 1554, we find him engaged the next summer in Piacenza, where, under the leadership of the Duke of Alva, he has the title of Captain-General of the Italian Infantry, he besieges Voliano, and is then sent

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against Turin in order to draw the French away from the siege of Parma. In 1556 he pays a brief visit to his home at Sabbioneta, to look after his estates, and then goes to the camp of the Duke of Alva, General of Philip II. of Spain (his father, Charles V. having resigned the throne). Here with a company of 8,000 infantry, he is sent to fight against Colonna in the service of Pope Paul IV., who had combined with France against Spain. Vespasiano gains a victory and enters Agnani in triumph; then continuing this war in the Campagna, he is sent to Vicovaro, that castle of unfortunate memory, where his father, Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga, met with his death. The place was guarded by Francesco Orsini, but Vespasiano was successful in taking it, and thus avenging his father's death.

He remains faithful to the service of Philip II., and we next hear of him encamped at Monticelli, not very far distant from Tivoli, and from thence is ordered to subdue Palombara, about twenty miles from Rome, at the foot of Mount Gennaro. It is interesting to learn that this young Gonzaga captain, even while under the orders of the stern Alva, showed mercy to the inhabitants, for "he had pity on the women and children, and the old people."

The next expedition was a more important one—the siege of Ostia, the ancient port of Rome, and here there was a more determined resistance, for the siege lasted seven days, and at length, as the besiegers came short of ammunition, it was determined to take the Rocca by assault. Vespasiano encouraged his soldiers to scale the walls, but they were driven back with so much energy that the young leader "found himself obliged," as Faroldi says, "to encourage his men by going at their head with sword and shield, and being the first to leap the moat. He was on the

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brink of this, when there came a shot from an arquebuse which struck him on the upper lip above the mouth and drove the flesh into the nostrils, which brought on such a flow of blood that he was forced to retire." He soon recovered and the wound healed up; indeed, one of his admirers wrote that, "thanks to the admirable skill of the surgeons, his features were not deformed, and this noble cicatrice even increased the dignity of his countenance."

Torquato Tasso was one of those who joined in the chorus of praise of the Gonzaga warrior, and in his dedication to the Dialogo "Il Minturno" he writes: "Vespasiano Gonzaga, after the end of the war between Pope Paul IV. and King Philip II., left for awhile the military career in which he had so highly distinguished himself . . . and returned to Naples, in October of the year 1557, where he stayed with his mother, the most Illustrious Signora Isabella Colonna, Princess of Sulmona. Here he found suitable recreation after the long anxiety of his military labours, in this delightful city with its beautiful gardens and palaces. . . ." In the previous May he had already paid a visit to his home at Sabbioneta, where a medal was struck to commemorate his warlike deeds, in which he was thus addressed: "You alone remained as an example of antique valour and spirit, and are held in immortal and illustrious fame." We hear much of the splendid literary society which gathered round the young prince at Naples, and amongst others who gave brightness to his Court were Il Minturno, Bernardino Rota, Angelo di Costanza, and the Bishop of Sessa, Galeazzo Florimonte. But we have no allusion to his wife, and are left to wonder whether Diana was still left in her lonely castle at Sabbioneta.

We are now drawing near to a terrible and mysterious event relating to this lady—a most striking, and indeed

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astounding incident in the life of so cultured and admirably trained a personage as Vespasiano Gonzaga. There is a curious note of warning from his aunt Giulia, in a letter written at Naples on January 30, 1559:

“MOST ILLUSTRIOUS NEPHEW AND MY DEAREST SON, —I have received your last letter of December, and as it was only to send me good wishes for the festival, I will not write much on this occasion. I will only say that the affection with which you have shown me this attention, was very dear to me; and I pray Our Lord . . . that He may grant you all your desires. I also rejoice in the news you give me of your well-being, and by the grace of God I also am well. And no more but to pray for your happiness and long life.” [So far was written by the secretary, but a postscript is added in Giulia’s own hasty, nervous characters] (Autograph):

“I wish well to the Signora Donna Diana, and therefore I pray you to take care that she controls herself . . . and this will be for your credit as well as mine. The Signora Donna Ippolita is with me now . . . and I pray you to give me news of yourself soon. May God grant you many years of happiness.”

Evidently some cloud hangs over Donna Diana, and she is the cause of anxiety; but all that happened later was so carefully hushed up at the time, that I can only give the story in the words of the latest historian of Sabbioneta:*

“When Vespasiano returned home from a long expedition late in the year 1559, he had already been warned that his wife had broken faith with him and that her lover was his secretary, Annibale Raineri. The unfortunate girl may be

* Chevalier G. B. Intra, “Monografia sopra Sabbioneta.”

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said to have been married only in name, for the prince, her husband, was always away at the wars. Furious at this infidelity which wounded him in his tenderest point, his honour and glory, Vespasiano's only desire was absolute secrecy. After having long thought as to how he could avenge himself without making his dishonour public, he confided in his faithful companion in arms, Pier Antonio Messiroto, and promised to follow his advice in every way. This friend understood what his lord desired, and one evening, in a chamber on the ground floor of the ducal palace, he fought with Annibale Raineri and killed him.

"Then Vespasiano took his wife, led her to the chamber where Annibale was lying dead, and pointing to the body, he gave her a phial containing a deadly poison. 'Drink,' said the cruel husband; 'I spare you a public and infamous death, only for the honour of my family.' Then shutting her up in the chamber, he departed.

"The wretched woman hesitated to swallow the poisoned draught; for two days she remained in mortal anguish, while from time to time, through the keyhole, she heard a well-known voice which called upon her to 'Drink! drink!' On the third day, utterly worn out and exhausted, she raised to her lips the fearful cup and drank.

"Then the door was suddenly opened, and the Princess, in the agony of death, was carried to her bed in the ducal chamber, and the news was at once spread that she had been suddenly seized by a fit of apoplexy, from which she had not recovered. A solemn funeral was prepared, all the Court was put in mourning, and Vespasiano himself appeared in public, overcome with grief.

"But neither the pompous funeral ceremonies of the Princess nor the ostentatious mourning of the Prince deceived

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the citizens ; they were silent from respect, from prudence, from fear ; but the horrible tragedy was known by all, and the tradition was handed down from father to son until our days.”

Vespasiano wrote to his aunt Giulia Gonzaga :

“ SABBIONETA,

“ *November 9, 1559.*

“ It has pleased God to call my wife to Himself ; she died suddenly of apoplexy, without being able to speak a word.”

Is it possible for us to believe in the traditional account of this tragedy ? Does it not seem incredible that a prince of the highest character, distinguished for his culture and refinement, should act in such barbarous fashion ? When we think of his aunt—the Lady Giulia Gonzaga, the saintly leader of a group of pious enthusiasts, whose letters so constantly reveal her tenderness and pity, not only for the sad and suffering but for the sinful—the contrast seems too great to be possible. And yet we have to remember that it was an age of the strangest and most startling contrasts, and that with Vespasiano his ruling passion was the honour of his family.

Incredible as it may seem, a trustworthy and critical historian* assures us that “it would be difficult to give any adequate idea of the frequency of wife-murders in the higher ranks of society at this epoch, the second half of the sixteenth century.” A long list of instances follows. The code of honour or theory of morality, appeared to make it necessary for a husband to punish immorality by at once inflicting the penalty of death upon the erring wife and her lover. Only thus could the stain upon his

* Addington Symonds.

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escutcheon be washed away. There are even instances, as in the case of Violante de Cardona, Duchess of Pagliano,* which occurred this same year (1559), when the husband sends for his wife's brother to assist in doing judgment.

We cannot close the sad story of Diana di Cardona without remembering that a mystery hangs about her from the first. If she was the "Diana di Cardona" mentioned among the beautiful girls at the Court of Charles V. in Naples (1538), she must have been some years older than the youth Vespasiano, who was not yet eighteen † at the time of his unfortunate marriage. Diana was already betrothed to Cesare, the son of Don Ferrante Gonzaga, and her elopement and secret wedding at Piacenza violated all the conventions of the time, when young girls had no voice of their own in such matters. Of her ten years of married life we have only a fleeting glimpse in the three letters written to her by Giulia Gonzaga, already quoted. We know that she lost her mother, Donna Beatrice de Luna e Aragona, in 1553, and we have no record of any friendly visit from kinsfolk or friends, to break the dreary monotony of years of solitude spent in lonely Sabbioneta, while her husband was engaged in distant wars or travel. If she were inclined to be frivolous and light-minded, without engrossing pursuits or occupation, her pleasure-loving Southern nature must have found a constant temptation to grasp at doubtful and dangerous pleasures.

When the terrible Nemesis came upon her like a

* Pope Paul IV. had taken Pagliano from the Colonna family and given it to his Caraffa nephew.

† Vespasiano was born in December, 1531, and was married in 1549.

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thunderbolt, she is not represented as making any defence, any appeal for mercy to the stern judge who carried out his own sentence; and it seems to me that no words can do justice to the overwhelming horror of the prolonged agony which the unhappy woman endured through the slow-creeping days and nights of her ordeal. We seem to feel the awful presence of her dead lover—"a sight to dream of, not to tell"—and we can only marvel that life and reason endured, while that maddening echo of "*Beve! beve!*"* thrilled through every sensitive nerve as the long hours of despair drove her onwards to the fatal end.

With a sigh of pity we turn away from the unfortunate lady who was too frail for her high and difficult position, and for whom "the world went wrong." The whole tragic incident appears to have been buried in oblivion; not a word of allusion is found in any contemporary letters; though, if such existed, it is of course possible that everything incriminating was destroyed. Still, there are various startling points to consider. Thus, how was the sudden death by violence of Annibale Raineri accounted for? It is worthy of notice that a certain Rinaldo Raineri (possibly a kinsman?) is Vespasiano's trusted agent at Sabbioneta for years to come, and many friendly letters to him, from Giulia Gonzaga, prove that he remained her intimate friend.

Meantime, the Lord Vespasiano Gonzaga remains strangely untroubled and apparently free from remorse. He has saved the honour of his name, which with him is a ruling passion, for in his unbounded personal pride and ambition, fame and glory are his watchwords. The painful episode is over, and his life is as flamboyant as ever;

* "*Drink! drink!*"

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indeed, immediately after that fatal ninth of November he begins to carry out a scheme of unrivalled magnificence which has long been in his mind. It is nothing less than the building of a splendid city, which shall carry his name down to posterity, on the site of a straggling village, in the midst of the low-lying marshes, where stood his hereditary Castello of Sabbioneta, the cradle of his race.

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CHAPTER XVII

Vespasiano Gonzaga Colonna resolves to build a city at Sabbioneta, 1559—How the great work was begun, according to the teaching of Vitruvius—The most famous architects, sculptors, carvers in wood, and artists of the day employed—Walls of red brick, stone, and rare marbles for the palaces, colleges, churches, city gates and triumphal arches—In three years the city rises from the ground and is filled with inhabitants, at the command of the Lord Vespasiano—He visits Spain and marries the Princess Anna d' Aragona of the blood royal—Love and sympathy of Ginlia — There are born to him twin daughters, Isabella and Giulia, and a son, Luigi.

VESPASIANO GONZAGA COLONNA is the typical prince of his age and of his country. His ambition to build a city of his own is but the same passionate craving shown everywhere by his countrymen. We still see traces in every little Italian town of the towers which they could not be restrained from building, each one higher than that of his neighbour. They are not only magnificent in their language and their dreams, but in their works they show a wild audacity. A poor noble begins a simple manor-house with a colossal entrance only suitable for giants; he seeks to scale the heavens, and is ruined before he reaches the first floor; while his descendants live in misery within the basement of a palace which is never finished.

But this was also the age of sumptuous building, for

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the wealthy despots of great cities held their power at the price of magnificence, and the just medium between classic simplicity and medieval massiveness, is shown in many a beautiful cathedral and palace of this date. Vespasiano was doubly fortunate in not only having the ambition to build a city, but also the needful wealth and lavish generosity to carry out his purpose.

“Thinking that his fame would be more lasting if he were to build a city than to destroy one with the force of armies, he conceived the magnanimous idea of building one on his hereditary domain, both beautiful and well fortified.” With him the love of letters and of art, above all that of architecture, was a real passion, and “no prince of his day had such a knowledge of civil and military architecture, for he had not only ardently studied all modern books, but was a devoted disciple of the works of Vitruvius, which he always had in his hands during most of his life.” His aim was to build his new Sabbioneta in a style worthy of the ancient Romans, and he called in the most famous architects, sculptors, and artists of the day to assist him in this great work.

Impatient to begin, he turned for help to that ancient Lombard Guild of Builders, a branch of the great Comacine Guild, whose members inherited their place and carried on their knowledge from father to son. The Comacine Masters were early recognized as members of a worldwide Order of Freemasons. To this branch belonged those famous trade-marks, or symbols, the Solomon's Knot—endless, with neither beginning nor end—and the Lion of Judah. Wherever we find these tokens engraved on the stone we know that here is the work of the Lombard Guild. The members were “taught to direct every action to the glory of the Lord, to live faithful

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to God and the Government, to lend themselves to the public good and fraternal charity." There were set statutes for everything, that there "might be no confusion," and all the work undertaken by the Guild was done by the brethren and the novices under them, while manual labourers were employed for the rougher and unskilled work. It is specially enacted that brickmakers and quarrymen must abide by the rules of the Guild, and it is interesting to notice the amount of pay received: thus, a labourer has 3 soldi a day; an ordinary mason, $1\frac{1}{2}$ lire; a carpenter, 1 lira; a "builder" has 15 ducats a month, with supplies of corn, wood, and wine, and an abode for his family—in one instance, this stands in an orchard with quinces. The salary of the chief architect was 10 imperial soldi a day, raised to 10 gold florins a month. If a master does manual work with his men, he is paid extra to his salary as architect.

The rules concerning a *festa* must be strictly kept, and forty-nine of these are specially mentioned. There is a fine of 5 soldi to be paid by any man who works on a *festa*. On November 2, the Feast of the Dead, each master has to offer a wax candle weighing half a pound.

A great workshop, the *laborerum*, is constructed, where all the hewing of stone, the carving of columns, and the cutting of woodwork, is to be done. There is a special *opera fabbrica* (office for architects), where all orders are given for materials, and where payment is made for the work and for the goods. Of this council Vespasiano, the master-builder, is president, and under him work the treasurer, the secretary, and many others. We have an account of many of these orders and the price paid; thus, sheets of parchment for making the designs cost 1 lira a sheet; 104 pounds of linseed-oil are ordered

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at 28 denari the pound. Then follows a long list, "ropes, nails, polishers, water-levels, red paint," etc.

The utmost care is taken in securing the best building materials; a master is specially sent to Carrara to choose the marble, which must be "very white, and without vein or stain of colour." The granite is obtained from Elba, and also some from Sardinia; a certain red stone was brought from Bolsena, and in the quarries of Umbria there was a white stone which could be cut with a saw, and which was most valuable for carving. A stonecutter could polish the slabs until they looked like marble. The River Po, being close at hand, all heavy building materials could easily be brought by water, while the blocks of stone would be unladen from the barges into rough country carts, drawn by strong white oxen. The great mass of the building would consist of bricks, made in kilns near by, thin in shape, somewhat like Roman tiles, and of excellent clay, which baked smooth and hard and of a beautiful deep red colour.

Meantime, the most important work was being done in the *opera fabbrica*, where careful plans were drawn out by the *maestro del disegno*, under the direction of Vespasiano, who prided himself upon his mathematical skill, and who referred in everything to the teaching of Vitruvius. Thus he decided that his city should be built with long, straight, wide streets, crossing each other at right angles, and that the houses should be only of medium height, "to give light and air to my people." For had not the great Vitruvius explained that it was the want of ground which had caused the inconvenient practice of raising the houses to a great height in the air, which was the cause of frequent accidents, so that Augustus and Nero had passed laws against the height of private edifices? The

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new city was to be of hexagonal form, surrounded by walls, with a moat outside, and with two gates and a circuit of about 2,500 metres, the wall measurements being taken with the usual iron yard-measure, made the exact length of the *Calimala canna*,* and thus the great work actually began.

We can vaguely picture to ourselves the busy scene which followed—a whole army of labourers to dig out the foundations; of bricklayers to build the walls, with the red bricks carefully laid in place so as to “break bond” (placed in alternate layers), and cemented together with that wonderful mortar which seems to last for ever. Then the carpenters set to work at their scaffoldings, which make the whole place look like a great wood-yard, for they are not here restricted by the stern rules, which, in a city like Florence, compel them to remove all shavings, sawdust, and litter without delay, and to leave no timber more than a foot's width beyond the wall. Soon we hear resounding the significant music of the trowel, the chisel, the hammer, and the plane, and every nerve is strained to make rapid progress under the eye of the princely master-builder. The houses begin to rise on each side of the broad street; buildings of fine aspect, well-proportioned, and mostly with porticoes. Great works are planned for the vast rectangular Piazza Maggiore, where the most important and beautiful edifices are to be gathered together. Here the great ducal palace of the Gonzaga prince will rise in all its splendour, the beautiful Church of “the Assumption of the Virgin Mary,” various smaller palatial buildings, another church, and, later on, a theatre. At the farther end of the city, near the fortifications, we shall see in due time another great

* The measure of cloth, of the Calimala Guild.

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piazza, close to the Via Giulia; and beyond the great gallery, raised on a portico of twenty-six round arcades in red brick, another palace, "del Giardino," in the midst of a garden, with a shady colonnade and fountained court, where Vespasiano and his Court will be able to fancy themselves in *villagiatura*. At the entrance of the city there was to be first a stone bridge, with two marble boundary stones, one on each side, then a great triumphal arch, and one of the two magnificent city gates which remain to this day—the Gate of Victory and the Imperial Gate.

Meantime, Vespasiano remained at his post, full of eager interest in the building of his city; still, as the months passed on, there came over him a longing for the stir and movement of war—that active military life which he had enjoyed for years past. But the Treaty of Cateau Cambrésis, concluded in April, 1559, had given peace to Europe, and at present there was no demand for his services. There had been many changes during the last few years; Mary of England, who had been accepted as a wife by Philip II., from a sense of duty to his religion and his country, had died in 1558, and Queen Elizabeth had made peace with the French King, who was to hold Calais for eight years. The Emperor Charles V. had also died in 1558, in the Monastery of Yuste, just too soon to see the seal set upon his labours by the Treaty of Cateau Cambrésis, which brought to an end the contest of sixty years. Pope Paul IV., the fiery supporter of the Inquisition, had been succeeded by a man of very different character, Pius IV. (Giovanni Angelo Medici, of a middle-class Milanese family), who was much surprised at his own elevation.

Vespasiano Gonzaga first thought of going to Spain,

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but, as there seemed no opening for him, he paid a visit to Naples, where he was gladly welcomed by his aunt Giulia, and by his mother, the Princess of Sulmona. The next spring he went to Rome in the company of the Duke of Alva, and did homage to Pope Pius IV., who granted him certain favours which he desired for the Church in his State. Then he returned to Sabbioneta, and devoted himself with enthusiasm to the great work, which was being carried out "without sparing pains or expense, as beautiful and perfect as he could imagine."

The vast scheme of the master-builder had indeed grown into reality with the most marvellous rapidity, and seemed almost to rise from the ground like magic. Vespasiano had commanded the city to appear, and within less than three years we find it actually in existence, and his new palace in the Piazza Maggiore is ready to be the scene of a magnificent wedding festival, on the occasion of the marriage of his young half-sister, the daughter of the Prince of Sulmona, with the Count of Potenza. We can picture the wonder and admiration of the guests at the splendid scene which met their eyes—stately churches and porticoes rising in fair symmetry against the blue sky, the richly carved portal and arcades, the graceful columns and arched windows; all the fine arts so indispensable to architecture called into service—painters, sculptors, wood-carvers and inlayers, metal-workers, and artists in fresco and stucco. Thus the new city rose, beautiful in the sunshine, with its massive geranium-coloured walls, its bridges and triumphal gates.

The palace itself was a triumph of Vespasiano's taste and magnificence, and as the glittering cavalcade rode gaily through the broad paved streets into the spacious courtyard, they could not restrain their enthusiasm at

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the sight of the carved portals, the beautiful loggia with its delicate bronze columns, and the magnificent façade covered with frescoes from the base to the cornice. These were admirably executed by Bernardino Campi,* and represented, in the upper part, the Assumption of the Madonna, on an immense scale; and underneath the loggia, between the two central windows, were great angels holding the arms of Vespasiano, while his name and titles were repeated everywhere on the lintels of marble at all the windows. Within the palace there were fresh surprises. A vast marble staircase led to the first floor, full of treasures of art, with a series of splendid chambers opening one out of each other; the ceilings gilt and inlaid, hung with rare tapestries, and adorned with works of art, which Vespasiano and his father had been collecting all their lives.

We have a very full account of the festivities with which the wedding of the young princess was celebrated. There were spectacles of all kinds; comedies were acted, and there was music, dancing, and feasting at sumptuous banquets, for indoor amusements. In the open air, *pallone* was played with unrivalled success through the wide streets of the as yet uninhabited city. A splendid tournament was also set on foot, in which the Lord Vespasiano and his Captain of the Guard, Bartolommeo Majocci, maintained the proud position of defenders of the barrier. That nothing might be wanting to the magnificence of the noble master-builder, "he scattered amongst the spectators great abundance of gold and silver from his own Mint." This privilege of a sovereign was his by hereditary right, and he was not one to forego the smallest

* A pupil of Giulio Romano, who had painted many frescoes in the churches of Cremona.

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of his claims which might add to the dignity of his city, which was all the universe to him. The Mint of Sabbioneta* was under the direction of Andrea Cavalli, the *Maestro della Zecca* of the Calimala Guild, who was also skilled in all metal-working, and had done splendid work in the casting of statues and cannons; and to him also is due the base and capitals of bronze of the column of Pallas on the great Piazza.

The months which followed his sister's wedding festivities were full of arduous labour alike for Vespasiano and for all the army of skilled workmen in his service, for he had set his mind upon completing his city and rendering it habitable as soon as possible, although all the rest of his life would scarcely be long enough to beautify it and add to its treasures. Sabbioneta had risen from the dust at his word, "a noble city adorned with peace and wealth," and now it only remained for him to fill it with inhabitants. This might have been a difficulty to some people, but to this Gonzaga prince it was quite a simple matter. Life was short in those days, and there was no time to waste, so he made a formal proclamation on September 27 in the year of grace 1562 :

"By order of the Most Illustrious and Most Excellent Lord Vespasiano Gonzaga Colonna, Marchese of Sabbioneta, etc. . . . It is his will and command that all the people living under his dominion to whom it is suitable to live the life of citizens—all bourgeois, artists and artisans, men of trades, officials, and others—should leave the country lands and find themselves, with all their families . . . dwelling within our new city before the eighth day

* The coins of Sabbioneta are very rare and beautiful. Those of gold have the arms of Vespasiano, with the "column," and this motto on the reverse : "Fortitudo et laus mea Dominus."

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of the coming month of October. . . . After that date every loiterer shall pay a fine of 100 scudi, or, failing that, shall receive *tre tratti di cordia* . . .” The command is signed by Vespasiano and his secretary, Muzio Capilupi.

Thus it came to pass; no sooner was the town built than it was inhabited. The motto “*Libertas*,” which this prince was so fond of repeating everywhere on his walls, really meant that he was free to do what he liked. But this was not all, for the “*Pericles* of this New Athens” was not satisfied with merely bringing his subjects within his walls; he also “now seeks to make of them rare and admirable scholars,” and that, too, without loss of time. He therefore makes another proclamation on September 6, two days before the people are required to be settled in their new home :

“*Nos, Vespasianus Gonzaga Colonna* . . . having a passionate desire to fill our city of Sabbioneta, recently founded by us, with a considerable number of inhabitants, and also, above all, to adorn and decorate it, not only with the mechanical arts necessary to life, but also with all the ‘*humanities*’ and liberal teaching ‘without which it is not possible to live well’ . . . we have founded a new Literary Academy, where Greek, Latin, and *omnem humanitatem* shall be taught free of expense, with open doors to all comers . . . to the people of Sabbioneta and *alieni*. (By these strangers [*alieni*] is meant people from the neighbouring towns and villages—Cremona, Mantua, Gazzuolo, Casalmaggiore, etc.). . . . A Professor has been chosen amongst the most famous in Italy, to lecture upon and explain Greek and Latin authors every day, except on festivals. . . . He is to receive a large fixed salary.”

The chosen Professor was indeed a famous man, of

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great knowledge and mature age—Mario Nizolio, who had published, a few years before, a treatise against “Philosophers so called,” in which he announced that he established the true principles of all the arts and sciences. It was quite natural that the Professor should inaugurate his teaching with a splendid Latin oration to the honour and glory of his noble patron. This was printed, and still exists, but it is too long to quote.* Indeed, at this time everybody praised him, either in prose or verse, and perhaps the most interesting specimen of the general laudation is a sonnet of Bernardino Baldi :

“ Da queste antiche, e celebrate carte,
Che del tempo vorace, e da gli incendi
Intatte usciro, invitto Duce, apprendi
Le legge di colei, cui serve ogni arte.
E mentre ammiran gli altri a terra sforte
De prischi l' opre, tu con lor contendi :
Tu le sue meraviglie al mondo rendi,
Mentr' ergi appresso al Po gran moli a Marte
Or se si tenne il buon Romano a gloria
Sol de l' aver le sue paterne mura,
Che di terra trovò, cinte di marmi :
Qual di te spiegherà vivace istoria
Eterne todi ad ogni, età futura,
Se Città fondi, e lui pareggi in armi ?”

At this time it seemed as though Vespasiano Gonzaga had attained the very height of his pomp and glory, but he was one of those favourites of Fortune to whom everything succeeds, and higher honours still were in store for him. He had always enjoyed the friendship of the King of Spain, Philip II., since those long past days when he served him as a noble page. On this King's accession to

* Delivered on the Feast of San Niccolò, December 6, 1562, Vespasiano's birthday.

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the throne, the Lord of Sabbioneta was raised to the rank of a Grandee of Spain, with the privilege "of remaining with his head covered in the presence of the Sovereign."

Early in 1564, Vespasiano paid a visit to the Court of Spain, where he was received with great honour, and made the acquaintance of the Princess Anna d' Aragona, the younger sister of the Duke of Segovia, whose great grandfather, Don Arrigo, was a brother of King Ferdinand the Catholic. This lady was, therefore, of royal blood, and cousin in the fourth degree of King Philip II. Her high position was naturally a great attraction to the Gonzaga prince; but Donna Anna appears to have been also "very charming and gentle," and a marriage was arranged between them, which took place with great magnificence in the Cathedral of Valencia on May 8, 1564. Soon afterwards Vespasiano returned with his bride to Sabbioneta, where they were welcomed with a splendid triumphal procession, and were received with enthusiasm on their entry into the city.

A peaceful and happy time followed for Vespasiano; he was devotedly attached to his wife, and together they watched over the continued decoration and beautifying of the wonderful city. Nothing was wanting for their complete satisfaction, when the Princess Anna gave birth to twin daughters. They received the names of Giulia, after the beloved aunt to whom their father was so much indebted, and Isabella, after his own mother. Giulia Gonzaga wrote frequent affectionate letters to her nephew, and took the greatest interest in his wife and the two baby-girls. She was in failing health, and it had been a great trial to her that she was unable to travel so far as Sabbioneta, to see the beautiful city, or make the acquaintance of his wife and children. But in those days there was great mortality amongst children, and little Giulia, her namesake,

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had passed away after a few brief months of existence. When Giulia wrote on November 3, 1565, to Vespasiano, she says :

“ I cannot tell you how thankful I am to hear that my Signora Donna Anna and Donna Isabella are well ; you know how dear they are to me, and I rejoice above all, that you are in good health. May God preserve you all and may He bestow upon my Signora Anna a beautiful boy with every blessing.” The Countess of Fondi takes the greatest interest in all that concerns her nephew, and with a broad view of the interests of her country she is much troubled at the fresh incursions of the Turks near Malta. As we shall see later, her chief thought and care is devoted to her friends who are persecuted for their Faith, and whom she helps with her influence and wealth, being most generous with her money for the support of those who have been compelled to flee from their country.

She constantly sends affectionate messages to Donna Anna, and to the little “ Donna Isabellica ” as she lovingly calls her ; but her days were drawing towards their close, and she was never destined to see the child. However, her hopes were gratified by the birth of a son to Donna Anna on December 27, and she rejoiced to hear that he was called Luigi, after her dearly loved brother, the babe’s grandfather, Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga. There was a magnificent christening feast, and congratulations poured in from all sides, for was not this the attainment and crown of all Vespasiano’s hopes. He had a son and heir to inherit his greatness and carry on his mighty works ; years of happy married life spread out in a vista before him, with a race of heroes growing up around his hearth, destined to carry on to posterity the pomp and glory of the Gonzaga family. Latin epigrams poured in upon the

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proud father, and the fortunate poets received munificent rewards. The Gonzaga prince took fresh interest in his various possessions ; he paid a visit to Fondi in April, and then went on to Rome to claim his grandfather's lands at Pagliano, which had long been usurped by the Caraffa family. The Pope received him well, and sent a band of his cavaliers to escort the honoured guest back to Sabbioneta. On his way he met the Princess Maria of Portugal, wife of Alessandro Farnese, entertained her for a night at his own Castle of Rivarola, and then courteously accompanied her on to Parma.

Full of good-will to all men, he magnanimously settled a dispute with his cousins regarding the possession of Comessaggio, by giving up part of his rights, and dividing the lands with them. He renewed his old friendship with his kinsmen at Mantua, where the young Duke Guglielmo had now come of age, and had married the Princess Eleonora of Austria. On the death of the Emperor Ferdinand, Vespasiano had hastened to pay homage to Maximilian II. on his accession, and obtained the favour that Sabbioneta should be held direct from the Holy Roman Empire, and that he himself should have the right of using the arms of Austria, which he had carved everywhere on his city—an eagle with two heads and the motto, “*Libertas.*” Surely Fortune had nothing more to offer him !

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CHAPTER XVIII

Persecution of the Reformers under the Caraffa Pope, Paul IV.—Giulia and her friends in peril—The colony of Waldenses in Calabria hunted down like wild beasts—Giulia refuses to seek safety in flight—Her letters to Carnesecchi and others—Her generous help to all—The death of Paul IV. (1559) a providence for her—Failure of the Council of Trent—Death of the Cardinals Seripando and Gonzaga (1563)—Milder rule of Pius IV.—He is succeeded by Michele Ghislieri, Pope Pius V., a violent Inquisitor, in January, 1566—Urgent peril of Giulia Gonzaga ; her death, in April, 1566, a merciful escape from the flames of the Inquisition—Her noble character and inspiring letters.

IT would be difficult to find any greater contrast than that between the life and the interests of Vespasiano and his aunt, Giulia Gonzaga. As we have seen, his heart was set upon that worldly honour and greatness of which so large a share was already his, while Giulia had learnt to realize with almost saintly resignation that “here we have no abiding city,” and all her hopes were set upon that heavenly shore to which she was drawing so near. But although she now lived entirely in the convent of San Francesco delle Monache, it was from no wish to shelter herself in peaceful seclusion from the troublous times around her. With her keen sympathy and unshaken courage, Giulia was ever in the midst of the battle, sharing all the dangers and anxieties of her friends, ever strengthening them by

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her words and her example, and supporting them in persecution and exile by her worldly wealth.

The Pontificate of the Caraffa Pope, Paul IV., was a cruel time, when all freedom of thought was stamped out by the Inquisition. The words in which Peter Martyr writes of Lucca might be applied to the persecution of every other centre of Reform. "How can I refrain from lamentations when I think that such a pleasant garden as the Reformed Church at Lucca has been utterly laid waste by cruel persecution? . . ." Then he adds: "These tried and brave soldiers of Christ will not fly, because they are determined by their martyrdom and blood, to open a way for the progress of the Gospel in their native country. . . . Yet this awful catastrophe is to be deplored with tears rather than words."

At Naples many were thrown into prison and not a few were sent to Rome, where, nobly proclaiming their Faith, they were exposed to the last fiery ordeal. Many, as we have seen, were compelled to leave Italy, for it was not given to all to be worthy of the martyr's crown. But when the deadly work was supposed to be accomplished in Naples, the Inquisitors went farther afield on their mission of destruction.

More than two centuries before, certain colonies of the Vaudois, or Waldenses, who had fled from their country on account of religion, had settled in a barren part of Calabria Citeriore, and there, leading peaceful and laborious lives, had "made the desert to blossom like the rose." They numbered about four thousand persons, and their two chief cities were La Guardia and Santo Xisto, on the coast. When rumours of the new reformed doctrine reached them, they were most eager to be taught the more perfect way, as in the course of generations they

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had lost much of the simpler form of worship of their ancestors. As soon as this was known at Rome, two monks were sent by the Inquisition to reduce the Waldenses to obedience to the Holy See. When the people refused, a stern order was put forth for their destruction; companies of soldiers were sent against them, and a number of *banniti* proscribed for crimes were called in to help. The unfortunate people, who had taken refuge in the woods, were hunted like wild beasts, their cities were destroyed by fire and sword, and, after tortures unspeakable, and atrocities too terrible for words, the whole colony of Waldenses was ruthlessly exterminated.

We see in the letters of Giulia Gonzaga what a terrible impression this made upon her; she was powerless to help, but her courage was unshaken. Many of her friends, who had been fellow-pupils of Valdés with her, were in great danger; Cardinal Morone, Priuli, and others, were thrown into prison in Rome, and she never knew who would be the next victim of the Inquisition. She was much grieved on hearing of the death of Cardinal Pole, in 1558, and her letters at this time show how deeply her meditation was fixed on the great change, and on preparation for the passage from the terrestrial to the celestial life. So many of her friends had passed "behind the veil" not very long before, and amongst others she lamented the loss of her devoted friend, the poet Molza, and her former secretary, Gandolfo Porrino. But in the letters which passed between Giulia Gonzaga and Pietro Carneseccchi we find another cause of regret in the last words of Cardinal Pole. Carneseccchi writes: ". . . But that which matters more is a declaration and almost a protestation made by His Reverence that he had always held the Pope, and this one in particular [Paul IV.] to be

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the true successor of Peter and the Vicar of Christ, and that he had always revered and obeyed him as such, nor had he differed from him in anything, nor from the opinion of the Roman Church. . . ." Another letter from Carnesecchi to Giulia in February, 1559, is very important on this subject: ". . . It has pleased me wonderfully that Donna Giulia has not approved the declaration made by the Cardinal of England, being superfluous, not to say scandalous, especially at this time. . . . What a difference from the teaching of Valdés, and how this verifies the proverb, 'The end shows forth the life, the evening praises the day'! Let us, indeed, thank God that our Faith does not depend upon men, nor is it founded upon the sand, but upon the living stone [*pietra*], upon which in the same way have built the Apostles and the Prophets and all the other elect and saints of God, Whom may it please to grant us grace to live and die in the same Faith, to His glory."*

Carnesecchi writes to raise the thoughts of his friend on the subject of Death, and bids her not fear to "tread the way which has been trodden by our Saviour Christ, who in dying has triumphed over death and conquered it, so that it can no more harm us. . . . But why, you may ask, do I reason concerning death? Because we should become so domesticated with the thought of it, that we should no more fear it, not for ourselves or for others. . . . It is but the gate of life, through which, having passed, we are free from all the infinite troubles and labours of this life, and above all we are safe from the danger of sinning and offending God, which is the true death of the soul. . . ." The letter ends with a touching

* This letter was made great use of in the trial of Carnesecchi by the Inquisition.

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allusion to the fact of Cardinal Pole having died six hours after his friend Queen Mary :

“Courage! I only pray God that He will preserve my Donna Giulia, and if He should desire to take her before me, at least may He grant me the favour He has bestowed upon the Cardinal of England, which is that I also may quickly follow my Queen. Amen. Amen.”

In looking through the immense number of letters which have been preserved of Giulia Gonzaga's, we are much struck by the extreme interest which she takes in all the religious questions of the day, and her extraordinary activity of mind. Her incessant correspondence—sometimes she wrote as many as three letters in one week to Carnesecchi—all turns upon the propagation of certain ideas, on the publication of congenial writings, on the use of her influence to advance the career of various prelates, on seeking and obtaining news of friends driven into exile by the Inquisition. A great number of these are written in cipher, for the safety of those who received her letters, as the Inquisition was already suspicious of her as a disciple of Valdés, and kept a strict watch upon her and her friends. We have seen the extreme care she took in sending letters to her dear Isabella Brisegna at Piacenza, and it was the same in all other cases.

A very interesting letter of Giulia Gonzaga has been preserved in a collection of “Letters of Many Brave Women, in which it is clearly shown that they are inferior neither in eloquence nor in knowledge to men.”* It is addressed to Livia Negra, apparently some dependent of hers :

* Gabriel Giolito di Ferrari, MDXLVIII. Carte liv. Venezia.

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“I have learnt with great displeasure that a certain rogue of an alchemist has come to you, and with false persuasion has so perverted your mind as to make you believe that one element can be transmuted into another—that from a branch silver may be made, and that silver can be converted into gold. It is certainly a strange thing that these thieves, beggars, and fools should wish to enrich someone else, and should care more for the poverty and misery of others than for their own beggarly condition! What mad credulity is ours! How infinite is the cupidity of mortals! For what should we do if we had to remain in this world perpetually?*

We cannot inhabit a house for three days in this miserable world without being dissatisfied.

“Truly, we are like drunkards, who, the more they drink, the more their thirst grows; for we cannot remember that we are mortal, and that we have one day to leave all things behind us; for naked we came into this world, and naked we shall depart hence. . . . Would you like me, Madonna Livia, to teach you a true and beautiful alchemy? Lay up for yourself treasure in heaven, where thieves do not break through and steal, where the rust doth not consume, nor the moth gnaw and destroy. That which is acquired by evil means is no gain, but a great and dangerous loss. The promises of the alchemist are like those of the astrologers, who boast that they can foretell future things, and do not even know the present or the past, and yet they dare to profess that they can reveal heavenly matters as if they were ever present at the council of God. I do not really know whether their fraud is more shameful, or our folly in

+ Some alchemists professed to have a magic drug for lengthening life indefinitely.

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believing, as we do, that which is worthy of all contempt. Look within yourself, Madonna Livia, and if your power does not correspond to your desires, at least place a rein upon them, and then you will not devote yourself to alchemy.”

We see clearly from this letter how far advanced the broad intelligence of Giulia was beyond the superstitions of her day, and her splendid courage was equal to her intellect.

During the persecution set on foot by Pope Paul IV. against those who held the new doctrines, Giulia Gonzaga was strongly advised to follow the example of those who had fled to a land of free thought and liberty, but she refused to listen to such advice. She wrote to inform Pietro Carnesecchi of her resolution, and in this letter (which was sequestered), as he declared to his judges of the Inquisition, “La Signora was determined not to leave Naples, as she was strongly pressed to do, that she might avoid the perils of the Inquisition, saying that she would not be moved by imaginary fears, which often proved fallacious . . . yet she quite understood her danger, for she admitted that she knew the ill-will of the Pope and Cardinal Caraffa towards her. . . . There is no doubt that she meant on account of her religious views, knowing that she was in evil case in the opinion of His Holiness on account of her close friendship and intimacy with Valdés.”

Giulia knew how important it was that she should remain at her post as a protection to her friends, and a link with those who had already made their escape and their families. Generous and devoted, she distributed a great part of her fortune amongst the exiles for their Faith, and she willingly gave her support to her own

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servants, Ventura and Paolo, when they appealed to her, and assisted them in their flight to Geneva, which at that time seemed to have become the stationary fortress of the Reformers. In this case there was a doubt whether, if her attendants were arrested, they might not compromise others by want of thought or knowledge. But she dissuaded Carnesecchi from this extreme step, perhaps feeling that it would ruin his career and cut him off from his friends. No doubt she had also great faith in the influence of powerful prelates at Rome, and could not believe that he would be in real peril, as he had neither written nor openly preached the new doctrines.

There are so many letters which passed between these two friends that we can only allude to a few. Thus, on February 25, 1559, Carnesecchi writes "that although Donna Giulia may not always quite agree with his views, yet he has no doubt that she is guided and led by the Spirit of God, and that in consequence, she cannot be suffered to err in a matter of so much importance to her welfare and that of others. The advice which Your Highness has given to the parents of Donna Isabella [Brisegna] to make their retreat with their daughter, appears to me most wise and according to your usual prudence. . . ." In another letter, he expresses his satisfaction at not having followed the example of those who fled :

"I give thanks to God and to Donna Giulia who, I often say, is like a fixed star whose light directs us in our course through the midst of the darkness of this blind world ; and by her example guards us from many dangers, for we might easily have fallen over a deep precipice. . . ." Then follow many letters during the illness of Paul IV., speaking of the hopes and fears of the imprisoned Cardinal Morone and others ; then at last he sends news of the

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Pope's death, and the wild joy with which the populace burnt the offices of the Inquisition and set free the prisoners :

“ Your Ladyship will have heard how the Holy Inquisition has died the same death which it was accustomed to inflict upon others—that of fire. This certainly remains a notable thing, from which it appears the judgments of that Office were not pleasing to the Divine Clemency, and we trust that in the future there may be less rigour and severity than in the past.”

But above all, the death of Paul IV. was a providence for Donna Giulia, for so Carnesecchi records it in a letter sent on September 9, 1559: “ I have rejoiced at the departure of the Pope for all respects, public and private ; but above all, I am most deeply thankful from having heard that if he had not passed away so soon he would have given the death-stroke to Donna Giulia . . . in all that happened we believe that we see the mercy of God, who permitted this in order to save Donna Giulia, and for the love of her, all her friends and servants.”

Next we have an account of the Conclave, when for a time it seemed possible that either Cardinal Morone or Cardinal Gonzaga of Mantua might be elected. But ultimately the choice fell upon Cardinal Medici, not one of the great Florentine family, but of lowly Milanese origin. He took the name of Pius IV., and was in every way a contrast to the Inquisitor and fanatic, the haughty ruler of kings, who had preceded him. Learned, kindly, and of exemplary life, he only wished to live at peace with all men, and he appointed his nephew, Carlo Borromeo, the sainted Bishop of Milan, as his Secretary of State, to look after the interests of the Church, and set an example of piety to the clergy. Soon after the election of Pius IV.,

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the state of Europe made the calling of a General Council absolutely necessary. England was already alienated, Scotland was on the verge of Protestantism, the Huguenots were growing stronger in France, the Confession of Augsburg was recognized in Germany, all Scandinavia was lost to the old Faith, and German Switzerland was a stronghold of Reform.

After endless delay and opposition, the Council of Trent finally opened on January 15, 1562. Amongst the five Legates sent by Pius IV., the Cardinals Gonzaga and Seripando were intimate friends of Giulia Gonzaga, and kept her informed of the proceedings, in which she took the keenest interest. She always maintained an eager hope that with this new Pope, some compromise might be made, alike in doctrine and in Church discipline, which would secure the unity of the Christian Church; but in this she was destined to be grievously disappointed.

Girolamo Seripando, Archbishop of Salerno, formerly General of the Augustinians, an elderly prelate* of great learning and piety, had been for years an intimate friend of Giulia Gonzaga, of whom we find him speaking in the highest terms, in his many letters which have been preserved. In February, 1561, she congratulates him, in an autograph letter, on being made Cardinal, and she thanks God, "to Whom alone is due your promotion, and I pray that you may have health and a long life to fulfil all our fervent hopes . . . and also that you may be able to keep your promise. . . ."† In August of this year, 1561, Seripando hears that the Signora Giulia has been ill with fever, and he expresses his regret to a friend‡ in Naples,

* He was born in 1493.

† This was to publish the religious writings of Cardinal Pole.

‡ Placido di Sangra.

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saying that he also had suffered from fever, and had not recovered until he had left the close city for Posilipo . . . and he sends an urgent message to Giulia, begging her to leave the convent, as in this hot weather she needs "a little air," and if she will not be persuaded (he adds playfully) that the first article he will propose to the Council will be that "ladies be not allowed to live in convents unless they become nuns."

Writing to the same friend in January, 1562, he remarks that "if the Signora Donna Giulia Ill^{ma} approves of a certain work of his, he may be sure that it cannot be harmed by '*nec Jovis ira nec ignes.*'"

In a long letter from Trent, written in December, 1561, Seripando had given a most interesting account of his journey from Naples, of his anxious waiting for the coming of the expected members of the Council, of the difficulty in persuading France and Spain to send their prelates, and other troubles and anxieties; he ends by recommending himself to her special prayers, and implores our Lord God to preserve her in health and happiness.

It would be too long to give an account of the worries and difficulties of this famous Council, of which the Pope himself said "that it resembled the Tower of Babel rather than a Synod of Fathers." It dragged its weary length for many months, and closed in December, 1563, with "an act of submission to the Pope." Pius IV. had been quite willing to insist upon the strictest internal reform of the corrupt clergy, but his triumph was that he maintained the Roman supremacy and the cardinal doctrines of Latin Christianity unimpeached. Meantime Giulia's two friends—the Cardinals Seripando and Gonzaga—had both died at Trent in March, 1563, to

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her great and lasting sorrow. Yet, in the midst of all her own troubles and afflictions, she never failed to keep up her interest in all that happened to others, of good fortune or bad. Thus, on the marriage of her kinsman Duke Guglielmo with the Princess Eleonora of Austria, she wrote a charming letter of congratulation to the bride, deeply regretting that her infirmities did not allow her to travel to Mantua and be present to welcome her.

“To the Duchess of Mantua.

“NAPLES,

“April 16, 1561.

“. . . If ever for my own sake . . . I have been troubled about my failing health and the indisposition from which I suffer, to-day I grieve over it with all my soul, because it is for this reason that I am absolutely unable to be present at Mantua to wait upon the coming of Your Royal Highness to Mantua, and to take part in this universal rejoicing of the Gonzaga family. But as I am not able to amend the defects of nature, nor in any other way has it been possible for me to give proof of my great respect and affection towards you, I have wished at least to send the Mag^{co} mes^r Romano Assago to present my respects to Your Highness, and to say how I rejoice with all my heart at this happy marriage concluded between you and the Signor Duca nostr. Ecc^{mo}.”*

We have already seen how constantly she kept in touch with her nephew Vespasiano, sharing all his joys and sorrows, and most deeply regretting that her delicate health had prevented her from being present on the great occasion of his proclaiming his city open to all inhabitants.

* Archivio Gonzaga, Mantua.

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In March, 1563, at the time when she lost her two dear friends at Trent, another great bereavement awaited her. We have seen with what constant affection she had watched over the chequered life of her dearly loved Ippolita, Duchess of Mondragone, the daughter of her friend, Ferrante Gonzaga. After a brief illness of nine days, this charming lady, at the early age of twenty-eight, passed away from the loving care of Giulia Gonzaga. The following quotations are from a letter written to Vespasiano by Ippolita's husband, full of grief and remorse :

“I remain so afflicted and disconsolate from this most bitter event, which affords me such a sad occasion of writing to Your Lordship, that it is with great difficulty I can send you this most grievous news. My Duchess is dead, and I do not know how I have remained alive yet at the same time buried in eternal sorrow. To relate briefly how it happened. . . . On the first of March she was attacked by a little fever and headache, but on the 7th of the month, she was so much better that she thought of asking the doctor's permission to leave her bed. Then suddenly, at the 18th hour of the same day, she was seized with violent pain, and in the night, about the 7th hour of Wednesday the 8th instant—the most Illustrious Signora Giulia Gonzaga being present, having with her usual devotion kept loving watch from the beginning to the end—my wife passed away from this life, leaving me in despair. . . .” The Duke of Mondragone then alludes to the death of Ercole Gonzaga, Cardinal of Mantua, which had occurred at Trent on March 2, as an additional grief for Giulia.

We have further particulars about Ippolita in some letters written by Il Tansillo to Onerata Tancredi, both

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friends of the Countess of Fondi: “. . . At last God took to himself this noble spirit . . . the Princess having communicated on the Sunday before, when she felt better, as though she foresaw that which would happen. . . . All the circumstances which can deepen our sorrow are combined in this death of Madonna, for she was so young, so beautiful, so brave, and such a rare and wonderful lady, that the whole city of Naples is plunged in grief. I do not speak of myself, although I have received from her grace and favour, more suitable to the greatness of her soul than to my poor worth, and shall hold her memory in eternal honour. May God give her a high place in His glory. . . . It is very sad to see the Duke deprived of her now, when she is dearer to him than ever. But what shall I say of our Signora Donna Giulia, whom I have seen so tenderly watching over the poor girl, during her sad and painful journey hence, and who is now overwhelmed with incomparable sorrow? I could not look upon her without tears . . . and when we think that to this is added other losses of dear friends* . . . which has so afflicted the Signora Donna Giulia that she has indeed need that God should help her. Now she has gone into retirement, and does not receive any visits, because, in truth, she is very far from well. . . . May it please God to preserve her to us for many years, as, indeed, we cannot spare her. . . .”

On March 27 Luigi Tansillo writes again: “I hear that your Signora [Giulia] is bearing her great loss with all the fortitude of her strong and Christian spirit. . . . It is four days since I saw her, and she seemed to me better in health. Our dear Lady is wise with heavenly

* Cardinals Gonzaga and Seripando, and Maria Cardona, Marchesa della Padula, had all died this month.

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wisdom, and she well knows what are the fruits of this world."

Ippolita Gonzaga was mourned for and lamented in so many funereal odes and elegies that they were all collected in a volume,* and published the next year.

With gallant fortitude and Christian courage, Giulia Gonzaga bore up against all these grievous losses of friends and her own increasing ill-health. We find her still taking the keenest interest in all that concerns her friends and relations, constantly writing to her nephew Vespasiano, and most anxious to have news of his health, of his doings, and of his wife, Anna d' Aragona. She sends loving messages to the little Isabellica, and is greatly delighted to hear of the birth of a son and heir to him on December 25, 1565. Cesare Gonzaga, the son of Don Ferrante, is a constant correspondent, and Giulia is on most friendly terms with his wife, the sister of Carlo Borromeo. She even tries to arrange a suitable marriage between two young people of the same reformed religious views, the niece of Cardinal Morone with Andrea Gonzaga, Cesare's brother.

Yet, during these last years of her life, she suffered so much from ill-health that she received constant letters of sympathy and comfort from her many friends and admirers. And still the long death-roll of those who had been her fellow-disciples of Valdés, continued to increase. In 1560 she heard of the death at Padua of Luigi Priuli, the great ally of Cardinal Pole; in 1563, Bernardino Ochino passed away in Moravia, and in 1565 Pier Paolo Vergerio ended his days at Tubingen. All these had found safety in flight from their country, but

* "Rime di diversi eccell. autori in morte delle Illustris Sig. D. Hippolita Gonzaga." Napoli : Scotto. 1564.

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Giulia's last and most devoted religious friend, Pietro Carnesecchi, still lived to comfort and encourage her with his letters.

On December 10, 1565, Pius IV. died, and after a brief conclave Michele Ghislieri was elected Pope, taking the name of Pius V., on January 7, 1566. He was a complete contrast to his predecessor—a stern ascetic, and violent Inquisitor, who now found himself in a position to make the Holy Office far more violent in its measures, he himself spending most of his time inquiring into cases of heresy of ten or twenty years' standing. Giulia Gonzaga had long been strictly watched by him, and for her it was a merciful escape from the most cruel persecution that she passed away from this life on April 19, 1566.

Feeling death approaching, she devoted much care and thought to the making of her will, that she might continue as far as possible her good works and loving care for all who had any claim upon her charity. This document begins in the usual way: "In the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. I, Giulia Gonzaga Colonna, wishing to dispose of my goods and property after my death. . . . In the first place, I offer and recommend my soul to the Lord God Almighty, most merciful Father, and to Jesus Christ His Son and my Redeemer, that He may deign to receive me into eternal life. . . . I institute and make my nephew, the Illus^{mo} Vespasiano Gonzaga, my universal heir . . . with the exception of all the following legacies and charges. . . ." Then she carefully enumerates all the poor friends whom she supports, with minute directions concerning the payments to them and to her dependants and servants, not forgetting several slaves to whom she gives freedom and also provides for their care. She desired to be buried in the

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Church of the Monastery of San Francesco delle Monache, "where I have lived for so many years and at present dwell." It is curious to note that Giulia especially asked for the prayers of Signora Donna Anna d' Aragona, the wife of her nephew Vespasiano. Well, indeed, was it for the dying lady that the near future was hidden from her.

Vespasiano was in Rome when he received the sad news, and he wrote to the Duke of Mantua in these words: ". . . It has pleased our Lord that the Signora Donna Giulia Gonzaga, my aunt, has ended her days in the most Christian manner—called away to the better life, and leaving me stricken with the deepest grief. . . ."

Tasso has some charming lines:

"Giulia Gonzaga . . . che le luci sante
E i suoi pensier siccome strali al segno
Rivolti a Dio, in lui viva, in se morta
Di null' altro si cibà, e si consorta." *

Amongst the many elegies upon the death of this greatly beloved lady, is one worthy of notice by the Magnifico Sertorio Pepe, to whom she left in her will dowries for his two daughters.

In a very different way was Giulia remembered by the Crowned Inquisitor who sat on the throne of St. Peter. It was the uncomfortable custom on the accession of a new Pope for his personal goods to be pillaged by the populace. Pope Pius V. was greatly disturbed by finding that a certain chest containing a number of heretical

* "Giulia Gonzaga . . . who dwelt in the holy light, and whose thoughts like arrows to the mark, turned to God; in Him she lived, in Him she died, by no other was she nourished, with no other did she abide."

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papers had been taken. This, however, was soon found, and contained material which enabled Pius V. to command the sequestration of all Giulia Gonzaga's papers and letters in the Convent of San Francesco. Here the Inquisition found that "Donna Giulia had kept up an heretical correspondence with Pietro Carnesecchi and many others. . . ." The Pope, on seeing these writings, declared that "if he had seen these before her death, *he would have taken good care to burn her alive.*"*

Pietro Carnesecchi had long been a man marked by the Inquisition, and his touching prayer that "he might not long survive his queen" was destined to be realized. Trusting in the friendship and protection of Duke Cosimo, he remained at Florence, but a few months after Giulia's death he was arrested at the table of the Duke by order of the Inquisition, and thrown into prison in Rome on July 4, 1566. Then followed that famous trial which lasted for months, and in which Carnesecchi is but the figurehead, "while the real heroes are the illustrious dead." They had been watched and suspected for years, that noble company who, under the teaching of Valdés, had striven bravely for the reformation of the Church. Some had already suffered, some had fled, and many had died before this process; but the pursuit of heresy ceased not at the grave, and men and women who in life had been most honoured and revered, were arraigned before that dread merciless tribunal and condemned as heretics. The names of Giulia Gonzaga and most of her friends in Naples will be found in that roll-call of martyrs—in will if not in deed. To do full justice to this theme would require another volume. We can only touch upon the

* Il Rabbi, in a letter of June 28, 1566. Appendix, note 11.

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tragic ending of that great trial, when seventeen living heretics were condemned, of whom fifteen were sentenced to imprisonment for life or to the galleys, and Pietro Carnesecchi, in company with the Friar Giulio Maresio, was beheaded, and then burned on the bridge of Sant' Angelo.

CHAPTER XIX

The will of Giulia Gonzaga leaves all her possessions to her beloved nephew Vespasiano — Mysterious fate of his wife, Anna d' Aragona—Vespasiano Vice-Duca of Casale Monferrato—Interesting literary society—He is summoned to Spain by Philip II., and devotes many years to works of fortification and defence of the coast—Made Viceroy of Navarre—Death of his mother Isabella ; he succeeds to the Colonna estates—Returns to Sabbioneta and devotes himself to its greatness and splendour—Laden with honours and dignities, Vespasiano dies in 1591, leaving as heir his surviving daughter Isabella, wife of the Prince of Stigliano — With the death of the Master-Builder fades away all the pomp and glory of his beloved city of Sabbioneta.

THE history of Giulia Gonzaga and her family would be incomplete without a brief account of the later life of Vespasiano, the nephew whom she had adopted and loved as her own son.

We left him at the beginning of the year 1565 on the very pinnacle of his greatness and happiness, when his city of Sabbioneta had risen from the ground, and a son and heir had been born to him to carry on his pomp and glory to posterity. But it is never safe to call any man happy until death has set the seal upon his fate.

Fortunate as this Gonzaga prince was in all else, he was certainly destined to meet with disaster in his marriage arrangements. The Princess Anna d' Aragona, a most interesting and charming personage to whom he



Inst. Morali

Rembrandt's Engraving

GIULIA GONZAGA (reputed).

WITH ATTRIBUTES OF ST. AGATHA.

Sebastiano del Piombo.

In the National Gallery.

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was devoted, had recovered her health after the birth of her son, when, of a sudden, without any apparent reason, during a temporary absence of her husband, she left her home and her children and took up her solitary abode at Rivarolo *fuori*, some miles away. Here she dressed in mourning, was a prey to the most profound melancholy, refused to see anyone—even her husband—but dwelt alone with her secret trouble. After a year of solitude and wretchedness, worn out and wasted away with some consuming grief, she died on July 11, 1567, bearing her secret to the tomb.

Such, at least, is the common report; but it seems to me that it is not difficult to suggest a reason for even such strange conduct as that of the unfortunate lady. We may naturally suppose that the mystery of her predecessor, Diana di Cardona's terrible fate, had been kept from the second wife of Vespasiano. Then, after her boy was born, in her hour of weakness when she was more sensitive and impressionable than usual, suppose that the sudden revelation came upon her, by some chance words overheard, of the tragic event which had taken place in that very palace of Sabbioneta. We can fancy the poor lady overwhelmed with horror, and haunted by the thought of those two days and nights of lingering agony, until the pale spectre of the dead Diana became an ever-present vision to the woman who had taken her place. If this were so, could we wonder that Reason trembled on her throne, and that poor Anna was driven away from her home and all that she loved by an accusing ghost?

Had Giulia lived, we can imagine the young wife seeking comfort and strength from so brave and loving a nature; but, supposing this theory is correct, she was too loyal and too proud to betray her husband's secret to her

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own family—she had no other near friend—and there was nothing for her but to bury the tragic story in her heart, until death came to her as a vicarious atonement.

On this occasion there was no doubt about the depth and violence of Vespasiano's grief; he so far forgot his own greatness and importance that he actually buried himself in a cloister of monks and remained there, sharing their ascetic life and devoting himself to religious observances, for a whole month. Then his kinsman Guglielmo, Duke of Mantua, full of kindness and pity, went to see the sorrowing widower, and persuaded him to return to active life and to enter his service. The two friends travelled together to Casale Monferrato on the River Po (between Pavia and Turin), the capital of the Duchy of Monferrato, which Guglielmo had inherited from his mother, Margherita Paleologa. Here there seems to have been a rebellion, and Vespasiano discovered a plot to betray the city; the rebels were punished, and the Duke left his friend in possession as Vice-Duca.

We must presume that his buoyant nature had somewhat recovered from the unusual fit of depression, for the young lord became very popular during his stay of more than a year in this pleasant city, where there appears to have been a lively literary society. A most interesting account of the conversation at certain supper-parties in Casale is given by one of the guests, Stefano Guazzo, in a book which recalls parts of the "Cortegiano" of Baldassare Castiglione. It was written by command of Vespasiano, who said to Guazzo one night after a specially interesting variety of discussions:

"You ought to preserve the memory of the converse we have had; add to it with your skill the necessary ornaments, and raise thus a temple to the Art of Conver-

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sation." Guazzo assures us that he blushed at the thought of it, but he set to work and wrote a book which has made his name famous.* Most interesting and characteristic of the period as it is, we have only space for a brief account of this work. It is divided into four parts, of which the last is entirely taken up with the account of a certain supper-party at Casale, and this the most curious.

The lady of the house, Madonna Caterina, is surrounded by seven friends when Vespasiano arrives with his cousin, Ercole Visconti. All the company rise at his entrance, and when he has begged them to be seated, there follows a space of silence. Looking round, the princely guest notices that they are a company of ten—one too many, as nine is the number of the Muses—and he offers to retire. Madonna Caterina implores him to remain: ". . . No doubt nine is the number of the Muses, but in such an assembly there should always be a tenth—namely Apollo. . . ." The ice being thus broken, conversation begins, and it is suggested that Vespasiano should be "king" of the evening, being of the highest rank. "No, indeed," he replies. "Consider that I have left my titles at home, and am only a private individual. Let us cast lots for the king and queen of this company."

There was a book upon the table—of course, it was a "Petrarch"—and the Lord Vespasiano opens it at the sonnet which begins: "Oime il bel viso, . . ." the beautiful lines written by the poet on hearing of the death of Laura. He is thereupon proclaimed king, and Madonna Giovanni is declared queen by virtue of the seventh line: "Alma real, dignissima d' impero."

* Stefano Guazzo, "Conversazione Civite de Casale." Translated into English and French. See Appendix, note 12.

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It appears that at the moment of the arrival of the two last guests, the subject discussed was "Solitude," and each person had to point out the spot he, or she, would rather choose in which to lead a solitary life, explaining the reason of the selection. Each person makes an ingenious answer, and the judges—Vespasiano and another lord—have to decide which is best; but as it seems a long affair, they suggest that they had better have supper first, leaving the solitary ones to their fasting and prayers, for the good of their souls. "Not at all," these last argue; "this is our carnival before Lent begins; besides, fasts begin in the morning, not the evening." After supper the conversation becomes more lively. A subject suggested, was to name one thing which is caused by two others. Vespasiano, turning to Madonna Caterina, says: "I present you Confusion, which Hope and Fear have brought forth in my heart."

Thereupon, she replies to him with flattering deference: "I present you with a Crown which Letters and Arms have combined to form."

Ercole Visconti has to pay a forfeit, and is condemned by the queen to answer all the questions and solve all the problems. He is asked: "What is swifter than the wind, or the flight of a bird?" And made answer: "The mind of man, which can fly in a moment from earth to heaven."

"To whom can we most safely reveal a secret?" He replied: "To a liar, because if he says anything he is not believed."

"What is envy most like?"—"To the worm which eats into the wood."

"What burns more fiercely than fire?"—"Love," was the reply.

"What thing resembles death most closely?"—

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“Woman, because, like death, she follows those who flee from her, while she refuses to listen to one who calls her.”

“What other thing is like a woman?”—“A pair of scales, because she also bends towards the side where she receives most.”

“Who are the most unfortunate subjects?”—“Those who have to serve several lords, for several bags are more difficult to fill than one.”

These are only a few of the many subjects discussed. Thus, much is said as to why lovers prefer solitude, whether the eyes or the tongue speak with most eloquence, what is the power of tears, and why it is that women are more ready to weep than men; what is the secret of beauty, and a variety of other topics on which various witty and flattering remarks are made.

We might almost fancy ourselves amongst the “*Précieuses*” of Molière, save for a somewhat broad love of good stories. Here is one which gave great pleasure. A certain Messer Currado having shot a crane, was surprised to see it brought up to table with only one leg and thigh. The cook, Chichibio, is sent for next morning, and his master angrily demands an explanation. Chichibio humbly asks him to look out of the window which commands a view of the lake, and then points out that all the cranes on the water’s edge have only one leg. Thereupon Messer Currado cries aloud, and the cranes fly away, clearly showing both legs. “Oh, master,” exclaimed the cook, “if you had only cried out like that last night, the crane would have put down the other leg and thigh!”

This reply amused Messer Currado so much that Chichibio escaped a beating for having given the tit-bits to his *Brunetta*.

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This book of Guazzo had a most extraordinary success, and all over Italy, France, and England, attempts were made to imitate the lively and fanciful conversation of the "Suppers at Casale." We remember how, in later years, Madelon wanted *impromptus*, and Cathos asked for enigmas, until Molière made the "Précieuses" ridiculous.

Life at Casale was only a brief interlude in the life of Vespasiano, but the account of Guazzo gives a vivid picture of the period. The prince had far more serious work to think of at Sabbioneta, which, after his own personal glory, was the one thing which he cared for in the world. When he was called away to the Court of Spain, he left his cousin, Ercole Visconti, to continue the great work of improving and beautifying his new city. As for his children, he provided the most careful nurses and learned tutors for his son Luigi, and his little daughter Isabella was sent to Naples to be brought up by her grandmother, the Princess of Sulmona. He then went to Genoa, from whence he embarked for Barcelona on September 3 with all his equipage, and, continuing his journey to Madrid, he was received with great honour by King Philip and all the Court. In the early spring of the year 1570, Vespasiano accompanied His Majesty to Cordova, and for a time he appears to have had charge of the young archdukes. But more important work awaited him, for there came news of the Moorish rebellion at Granada, and it was feared that the Turks would support them by an expedition to ravage the coast. The Gonzaga prince was sent to Carthagenas as an expert in the art of fortification, to see to the defences of the citadel and port, which he hoped to make impregnable.

It was while he was on that distant coast that he heard of the death of his mother, the Princess Isabella; and now

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he came into the vast possessions of his grandfather, Vespasiano Colonna. But even this did not entice him away from the service of the Spanish King; he contented himself with sending Federico Zanichelli as his Factor-General, to claim and take charge of all the property and castles in the Campagna, and also of the Duchy of Trajetto, the Countship of Fondi, with other cities and great estates in Southern Italy. The following year, Vespasiano was promoted by Philip to a post of great importance, being appointed Viceroy of Navarre—a high token of trust and esteem. He appears to have given great satisfaction, and to have found plenty of congenial work in his new kingdom. He began with the fortification of Pampluna, where he built a citadel and added a hospital for sick soldiers. Then passing on to the Province of Guipuscoa, he added a new fort to the little city of Fonterabia in April, 1572, and greatly strengthened the defences of San Sebastian, so important from its situation and the commerce of its port.

We next hear of his crossing the seas to Africa that he might fortify Oran, and traces of his defensive work may still be seen above the town of Santa Cruz, which commands the bay of "Marzaelquibir." On his way back he saw to the defences of Gibraltar and Cadiz, and then returned to the Court at Seville, where he was received with enthusiasm by the king. As soon as his son Luigi was old enough, he sent for him to Spain that he might be enrolled as first page to Don Ferdinand, the son of Philip II.

Meantime, Vespasiano had never forgotten his precious city of Sabbioneta, the most beloved of all his possessions, governed during his absence by his cousin, Ercole Visconti, who constantly wrote to consult him about fresh buildings

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and improvements. The Lord of Sabbioneta had long desired to return to his home and his country; but the king could not yet spare this master-builder of fortifications, and now sent him to inspect the realm of Valencia, the coast of Alicante, then to Barcelona, to Peniscola, everywhere building fresh forts, with moats and walls. Always under the first stone of each building was placed a precious medal with the effigy of Philip II. Meantime, fresh honours poured upon Vespasiano from all sides, for his Governor, Visconti, had not been idle, as he had obtained from the Emperor Maximilian II., a diploma, by which Sabbioneta was raised to a Principality, and Vespasiano could have his own Council of Justice, which it was his privilege to enter in state, preceded by two staff-bearers with silver maces.

On the occasion of each new reign he hastens to pay homage, and obtains some fresh honour and dignity for his beloved city. Thus, when Rodolph II. succeeds Maximilian, Sabbioneta is created a Duchy, dependent, as before, only upon the Roman Empire. The mild successors of Charles V. "shelter him under their august shadow, and grant him their protection and that of their imperial eagle," as the diploma states. And this proud captain meekly bows before them, satisfied with the fact that he rules supreme over his city, to which all these concessions are a practical advantage. Yet all this greatness had to be most carefully schemed in order to avoid jealousy, for there were other dukes in his family, and even the Ambassador from Mantua knew nothing of his ducal honour until the imperial diploma was signed on November 18, 1577. Vespasiano had now attained the desire of his heart, and, loaded with honours, he returned to Italy in July of the following year, pleading, with truth, his failing health.

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He was escorted by a fleet of five galleys, belonging to Prince Doria, and reached Genoa in eleven days, having been detained for three days in a port of Provence to avoid a tempest. He greatly desired to visit his daughter Isabella, who appears to have remained at Naples, but as he said, "he could not wrong his first-born, the City!" and he returned at once to Sabbioneta.

The first care of the duke was to enhance his pomp and glory by causing his new arms to be carved all over his city; the imperial eagle (*bicipite*) in a field of gold, and below in golden words on a field azure, the magic words "LIBERTAS," which henceforth he also used on his seals and his money. Then he set to work on completing his fortifications and furnishing them with cannons. We have an interesting account of the way he acquired his artillery, and particulars of all his cannons, which were each specially named. Having thus assured peace at home, he could devote himself entirely to beautifying his city with all the Arts. This had already made good progress under the care of Visconti, for he found the new gallery to contain his many treasures painted in frieze on stucco, in bright colours, representing Naples, Rome, Florence, Genoa, Constantinople, Venice, Augusta, and Antwerp. In front is Sabbioneta, and Mirandola on the other side. The *camino* of the gallery is of the deepest red Venetian marble, and very fine. He next opened in state the second gate of his city, which he called "Imperial," and on it was placed this inscription:

VESPASIANUS DI GONZAGA. DUX SABLONETÆ
POETAM HANC IMPERIALI
NOMINE DECORATAM
CONSTRUENDAM CURAVIT.
ANNO SALUTIS MDLXXIX.

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The other gate of the city was dedicated to "Victory," with another stately inscription. As we have already seen, Sabbioneta had its Mint, where the duke coined his money as a sovereign prince. It also had its library, to which the Gonzaga lord made constant additions; for all his life he had a passion for books, and possibly was not always scrupulous as to the means of obtaining them. We are led to suppose that this was the case by a letter from his friend, Galeazzo Florimont, Bishop of Sessa, in which he writes: "I should be pleased to send you certain books which I possess, and which would interest you, but you soldier lords are so accustomed to pillage that you might not trouble to return them to me."

So great was the duke's love of literature that he not only had a rich collection of ancient works, but encouraged living authors of repute. The famous Doctor of Law, Jacopo Menechio, was so grateful that he presented his patron with a portrait, while philosophers, orators, mathematicians, and poets, all found in him the two qualities of a Mecænas—great earnestness in the encouragement of learning, and generosity in its remuneration. Aldo Manuzio dedicated a work to Vespasiano, and received a gold necklace, while rich presents were given to Francesco Ziletta, Girolamo Bardi, Monaco Camaldolese, Muzio Sforza, and many others. Good musicians were encouraged at his Court, but above all he desired the services of painters, sculptors, and wood-carvers, in whose work he greatly delighted.

Thus, in the ducal palace we still find the suite of fifteen or more reception-rooms, with the most splendid carved ceilings of precious woods, such as cedar, olive, etc., on which garlands of flowers, coats of arms, angels, and *amorini* are carved in relief in the thickness of the

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wood. As Bernardino Baldi says: "In the time of Solomon we know how much precious woods were used, and we have seen this custom renewed, with exquisite taste, by the Most Excellent Vespasiano, Duke of Sabbioneta, who, in the magnificence of his fabrics and the greatness of his soul, is as famous as any of the ancients." But perhaps the most interesting of these carvings in wood were the twelve life-sized equestrian statues of his ancestors, beginning with Luigi, first Captain of Mantua and Vicar of the Empire in 1328, and ending with himself. They formed a most imposing group, with their rich costumes and ancient armour, painted in natural colours in the upper hall at the head of the great marble staircase,* and they are believed to be excellent portraits. Another proof of the duke's devotion to his family is shown in a series of medallions, some in marble and others in stucco, round one of the splendid chambers, representing all the princes and princesses of his family, which are perfectly well preserved to this day, and have immense value for the historian, as we learn from contemporary documents that they are authentic likenesses.

As for the artists, they flocked to Sabbioneta from Cremona, Venice, Mantua, and elsewhere, and perhaps the most famous of the sculptors was Leone Leoni, famous alike for his genius and his jealousy, whose only friend was Michelangelo. To him we owe the splendid bronze statue of Vespasiano, who is represented seated, in a semi-antique costume, with outstretched hand—his look and gesture of such supreme authority that we seem to hear him command his city to rise from the dust. This great work of art formerly stood on the Piazza Maggiore, but is

* Only four remain at the present day, and the colours are faded by time.

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now placed on the tomb of the master-builder, in the Church of Santa Maria Incoronata.

Bernardino Campi, a pupil of Giulio Romano, was a great favourite with the duke, who employed him in much picturesque fresco work, both outside the palace walls and in the great reception-rooms of the Palazzo del Giandino, or the "Casino," near the fortifications at the end of the wide Via Giulia, so called after his beloved aunt. Inside the palace, more especially in the Sala di Giove and the Sala di Saturno, we can still trace the charming designs on ceiling and walls. We see a vivid presentment of the Olympian games, columns, altars, golden statues, Victory on a column, Ariadne asleep, and many scenes from the legends of Jupiter. On a ceiling we make out Phaeton on his car, and on the walls Pallas and Arachne, Saturn turning into a horse, and a bewitching nymph who looks at us with a mocking smile. We pass on from *sala* to *sala*, and the frescoes follow us with the story of Orpheus, and the whole tragedy of the siege of Troy, until at length we reach the splendid gallery which once contained all the priceless treasures of antiques, the pillage of Greece and Rome—busts, statues, bas-reliefs, and sarcophagi—for which Vespasiano was always willing to pay profusely. He once gave Marcello Donati four hundred golden scudi for seven ancient statues of gods and emperors.

Bernardino Campi was only one of many artists employed at Sabbioneta; amongst the others we may mention Camillo Ballino from Venice, a pupil of Titian, who was "welcomed with a smiling face"; Giovanni Alberti of Borgo San Sepulchro, "a bizarre man of uncertain temper"; his brother Cherubino; and Jean de Ville, a Flemish painter who was drowned in the Oglio, and who had a marble tomb raised to his memory.

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To return to the personal affairs of Vespasiano. He had returned from Spain in ill-health, and late in 1580 had a serious illness. On his unlooked-for recovery, he had the terrible grief of losing his only son Luigi, whom he had brought back with him from Spain, and who was barely fifteen years of age. In this deep sorrow for his heir, his thoughts turned to religion: he rebuilt the great Church of Sabbioneta, dedicated it to the "Assumption of the Holy Virgin"; laid the first stone of a Church and Convent of the Cappucini at Bozzolo; gave a palace in his city to the Carmelites of Mantua; and finally began the beautiful Church of Santa Maria Incoronata, "most rare and wonderful," and destined later to be his mausoleum.

In the next year, the duke had recovered his spirits sufficiently to build a fortified Castello at Bozzolo, where he placed a paid garrison, and also made a park with a circuit of two miles, in which he could keep various wild animals for the chase, as the park of Sabbioneta had been destroyed when he rebuilt the city. At the same time he caused a strong tower to be raised at Comessagio, on the river of the same name, and a bridge was constructed for easier communication. Seeing him occupied at his favourite work once more, his vassals appear to have suggested that he should "take a new wife in the hope of another heir." So it came to pass that on May 6, 1582, he married the Signora Margherita Gonzaga, sister of Ferrante II., Prince of Molfelto and Lord of Guastello. She was born in Rome under the Pontificate of Pius IV., when her father, Don Cesare, was Governor of Benevento, and we are told that "she was a maiden of no small beauty and in fresh age."*

There were great festivities at Sabbioneta, but as time

* The bride was about twenty, and Vespasiano fifty-three.

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passed on and there were no children, Vespasiano decided to make his daughter Isabella his heir, and therefore married her to Luigi Caraffa, Prince of Stigliano, a "very rich lord and a handsome youth." He came to Lombardy, and the wedding took place at Bozzolo on November 29, 1584. Within two years, the son so ardently desired was born, and the mighty Duchy of Sabbioneta had an heir, who was welcomed with royal congratulations and many odes. Honours still poured upon Vespasiano, who went to Parma to receive the Order of the Golden Fleece, and soon after was invited to Venice, where his name was inscribed in the Golden Book, and the republic added him to their nobility. He was also offered the command of their armies, but this he courteously refused. His fighting days, however, were not yet ended, for at this time the Archduke Maximilian, brother of the Emperor Rodolph, was chosen King of Poland, and went to fight against Sigismond, who defeated and took him prisoner. Vespasiano was asked to serve in the campaign against Sigismond, and with eager chivalry he "placed himself and his substance at the service of King Philip and the Emperor." As a reward for his services he was made a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, and received the title of "Altezza."

There was only one thing wanting to the greatness of Sabbioneta; it had as yet no theatre, and the duke lost no time in setting the final seal on its glory, for the dramatic art was one of those "without which it was impossible to live well." Vitruvius was still his text-book, and although the famous Palladio, exponent of that style of architecture, had died in 1580, his pupil Scamozzi had just completed the Olympian Theatre at Vicenza according to the master's plans. He was summoned to

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Sabbioneta, where he arrived on May 3, 1588, and was received with great honour. He saw the site, and within eight days he had drawn out the plans for "a theatre capable of holding a great number of people, with one chamber leading to the other . . . suitable for various uses, with orchestra and steps for seats. . . . The *proscenio* and the perspective to represent a great piazza with a noble street in the middle, and other buildings here and there of coloured wood, in imitation of Nature. . . ."

These plans are yet to be seen in the museum of Vicenza, and the Palladian Theatre still exists. The seats of the half-circle are perfect, and also the ducal box formed by a semicircular colonnade, behind which the wall is covered with pictures in monochrome, representing classical heroes.

When Scamozzi departed on May 11, he received, in the name of His Highness, who was absent, thirty doubloons* of Spanish gold, besides all his expenses, the "most generous expressions of esteem and gratitude," and an escort back to Venice. When Scamozzi came again to Sabbioneta to superintend the completion of the theatre, the duke was so pleased with the work that he gave the architect a gold collar, besides his fee, and "held him ever in esteem and under his protection." The theatre had a great loggia with eleven columns, adorned by niches on the cornices, like that of Vicenza. These Corinthian columns with carving are above and below; there is one continuous pedestal, with statues of the divinities of Rome corresponding to each of the columns. We can still look upon the gods in their ancient costume, and "the goddesses in their splendid nakedness."

* A Spanish doubloon was then worth £3 1s. 10d.

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The loggia was for the ladies, and the rows of seats were for the cavaliers, and behind were two chambers. Everything is adorned with frescoes painted by good artists, and the three exterior façades are of such fine architecture, that the whole forms a marvellous reminiscence of the pomp of Roman grandeur.

When this great work was completed, Vespasiano felt that his city had reached the summit of perfection, and that there was nothing more to live for. His health had long been failing, and he rapidly grew weaker, until—with every desire gratified, his greatness supreme, and the succession assured to his grandson—he calmly prepared for his latter end. On February 25, 1591, not yet having completed his sixtieth year, he dictated his last will and testament—a wonderful document of many pages—in which he leaves a legacy by name to each one of those who had loved and served him. No one is forgotten, from the Court barber to his old friend, Monsignore Schizzi of the Cathedral Church of Cremona, to whom, besides 1,500 scudi, he leaves the choice of two sets of tapestry hangings, one of which is to be “the tapestry of the Story of Esther, with silk in the tissue, which I brought back from Madrid.”

Yet “himself” to the last, Vespasiano’s dying thoughts were filled with his own personal fame and glory. His daughter Isabella was solemnly charged to erect a marble sepulchre for his body in the Church of Santa Maria Incoronata. She was commanded to spend upon it 1,500 scudi, “besides the value of the marble blocks, which I myself have already had brought from Rome.” Upon this monument was to be placed the splendid bronze statue of himself, cast by Leoni, and which “is at present on the Piazza of Sabbioneta.”

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The duke passed away on February 26, 1591, the day after he had signed his will, and was entombed according to his decree, in the beautiful Church of Santa Maria Incoronata, upon which a further sum of 2,500 ducats was to be expended to make it a worthy resting-place for the dust of—

“The Most Illustrious Highness, Vespasiano Gonzaga Colonna,
Duke of Sabbioneta and Trajetto, Marquis of Ostiano,
Count of Rodigo and Fondi, Viceroy of Navarre,
Grandee of Spain, Noble of Venice, and
Prince of the Holy Roman Empire.”

With the death of Vespasiano, the pomp and glory of Sabbioneta rapidly faded away; like a dream-city it had risen from the ground at his command, but without his watchful care it had no real vitality. One by one all his cherished institutions came to an end. The Halls of Justice, the colleges, the printing works, were closed; the priceless collection of treasures was dispersed, the walls lost their cannons, and the palaces were deserted, for the inhabitants went back to their old pursuits.

From a splendid ducal city, Sabbioneta in the course of time has become once more a straggling village in a marshy plain, with only the picturesque ruins of its former greatness. Peasant families encamp within the stately palaces of Vespasiano; the geranium-coloured walls still enclose a forsaken city which no one attacks or defends, while silence and desolation reign in the once magnificent Via Giulia, and from the stately Imperial Gate to the Gate of Victory, still proclaiming with blazon and pomp of heraldry, the bygone splendour of its master-builder.

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CONCERNING THE PORTRAITS OF GIULIA GONZAGA

THESE portraits have been a fertile subject of discussion amongst Art critics, more especially as to which was the famous picture painted by Sebastiano del Piombo, in the summer of 1532, at Fondi, as a commission from the Cardinal Ippolito dei Medici (see p. 106).

This honour has been attributed to various important pictures by del Piombo, each of which has its supporters amongst those who have studied the subject.

The whole subject is so involved, and so much has been written about it, that I have thought it well to give in this volume, photographs of the various pictures which have been thought by well-known Art critics to be likenesses of Giulia Gonzaga. They are all extremely interesting, and are undoubted works of Sebastiano del Piombo.

A picture from the Hof Museum, Vienna, is also included—an undoubted likeness of Giulia Gonzaga by an unknown painter. Here Giulia wears a black dress with puffed sleeves, and a widow's veil of yellow silk. (In collection of the Archduke Ferdinand of Tirol, and formerly in the Schloss Ambras, near Innsbruck.)

We have positive authority, from Giulia's own letters, that she was painted by Titian (see pp. 178, 179), but the portrait has entirely disappeared.

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APPENDIX

THE sixteenth century was a time when everyone, with any pretention to culture, wrote poetry. To lovers of Italian literature of the Renaissance, it may be interesting to read selections of the poems written by important characters of my story, for which there would be no space in the Memoir itself. This appendix also gives an opportunity for explaining and entering more fully into other subjects of interest.

Note 1 (p. 17).—Letter of Giulia Gonzaga :

“Casalmaggiore, 23 Ottobre, 1520.

“AL MARCHESE DI MANTOVA,

“Il^{mo} et Ex^{mo} Sig^r mio obl^{mo} Intendendoio che V. E^{mo}. S. ha molto a piacere et si dilecta de cose di musica et max^e cose nove, desideroso farli cosa grata, gli mando qui alligato un mottetto quale ha composto Mons^r Sebastiano Testa servitore del R^{mo} Mons^{re} de Mondovi mio cit. honorar^{mo}, el quale mottetto anchora non e in mano di persona. . . .”

Second letter of Giulia Gonzaga :

“Casalmaggiore, 2 Gennaio, 1521.

“AL DUCA DI MANTOVA,

“Havendo avuto accepto l' altro mottetto qual mandai a V. Ill. S. mi son sforzata farne metere un altro insieme per far piacere ad quella. . . .”

[These two letters are preserved in the Gonzaga Archives at Mantua.]

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Note 2 (p. 84).—Sonetto VII. (Luigi to his Isabella) :

“ Se quella vostra travagliata barca,
Che or or vi parve in sì sicuro porto,
Fortuna irata la respinge a torto
In l' alto mar troppo gravata, e carica ;
Non vi turbate Donna, se ancor varca
Il poco che vi resta, perchè scorto
Tengo il bel lido, ove sarà di corto
Di ricca, e onesta merce lieve, e scarca.
Ragion è se imitaste i duri giorni
Di quella Greca,* a cui 'l gran seme increbbe
D' Achille, sì del primo amor le calse,
Ch' or imitiate l' altra,† a cui più valse
Torre a la notte quel, che 'l giorno accrebbe,
Accidì ch' ogni valor vi fregi, e adorni.”

Note 3 (p. 101).—Bernardo Tasso, in praise of Giulia Gonzaga :

“ Il biondo, crespo, inalletto crine
Che con suavi errori ondeggia intorno,
Mosso da l' aure fresche e pellegrine,
Nè d' altro mai che di se stesso adorno,
Quant' anime del ciel son cittadine
Stringer poria con sì bel nodo intorno,
Che sciorso non saprian dal ricco laccio
Perchè tornin più volte i fiori e 'l ghiaccio.

“ Chi contempla la fronte alta e serena
Di cui le Grazie fan dolce governo,
Onde l' aere turbata si serena
E fugge il freddo e nubiloso vento,
Si sente porre al collo una catena,
Che non so scioglierà forse in eterno,

* Briseis. † Penelope. From “ Poems of Luigi Rodomonte Gonzaga.”

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Ove di man d' Amor scritto si mira
Felice chi per me piange e sospira.

“S' apron due chiare e lucide fenestre
Sotto le nere sue tranquille ciglia,
Onde in questa prigion bassa e terrestre
Scorger si può di Dio la meraviglia.

* * * * *

A quella bocca che perle e rubini
Avanza di vaghezza e di colore. . . .

“Purpurea grana sparsa in picciol colle
Di bianca neve pur caduta allora,
Sembra la guancia delicata e molle
Che foco di virtù pinga e colora ;
Il merito ch' ad ogn' altro il pregio tolle
Il collo e 'l petto, ove valor dimora,
U' castitate alberga e leggiadria.
L' odilo Amor, ch' ivi si nudre e cria.

“Ma l' angeliche voci e le parole
Proprie di Dio e non d' uomo mortale. . . .
Oda parlar costei, nè cerchi poi
Trovar pari dolcezza unqua fra noi. . . .

“Se gira i piedi in questa parte o in quella
Qualor grave e pensosa il passo muove,
Non tanta grazia di benigna stella
Quanto da l' orme lor deriva e piove :
De le sue piante per l' erba novella
Esca e forme di fior leggiadre e nove,
Onde dice ciascun per meraviglia,
Quest' è di primavera o suora o figlia.

“Chiunque costei mira intento e fiso
Diventa pregno de l' eterna luce
Tanto nel dolce suo serano viso
La bella donna ogn' or seco n' adduce ;

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Nè di veder aperto il paradiso
Con quel chiaro splendor, ch' ivi riluce
S' allegran sì gli spriti beati,
Come ne gli occhi suoi di foco armati. . . .

“ . . . poscia ch' avrà mill' anni e mille
Sepolti il tempo, de la costei gloria,
Ardin nel mondo ancor l' alte faville
Nel dotto sen d' ogni purgata istoria ;
E sì come di Cesare e Achille
Si serba ognor fra noi cara memoria
Viva di *Julia* il glorioso nome
Mentre speiglerà il Sol l' aurate chiome.”*

Note 4 (p. 105).—Letter of Cardinal Ippolito to Giulia Gonzaga, with the translation of the Second Book of the “*Æniad*”:

“ILLUSTRISSIMA SIGNORA,—Poichè spesso ad un oppresso ad gran male l' esempio d' un maggiore alleggerisce il martire, non trovando io alla pena mia altro rimedio, volsi l' animo a l' incendio di Troia e misurando con quello il mio, conobbi senza dubbio nissun male entro a quelle mure essere avvenuto che nel mezzo del mio petto un simile non si senta, lo quale cercando in parte affogare, di quel di Troia dolendomi, ho scoperto il mio ; onde lo mando a voi, acciocchè egli per vera simiglianza vi mostri gli affanni miei, poi che ne i sospiri, ne le lagrime, ne il dolor mio ve l' han potuto mostrare giammai.”†

Note 5 (p. 112).—Barbarossa :

This Kheyr-ed-din is the Barbarossa of modern writers ; but his beard was auburn, while that of his elder brother, Urūj, was the true Red-beard, and he was the real Barbarossa.

* “ Stanze di diversi illustri poeti ecc.” raccolte da M. Ludovico Dolci. Venezia : G. Giolito De' Ferrari, 1558, p. 232.

† Il Secondo libro è tradotto da Ippolito de' Medici. In Vinegia per Nicolò d' Aristotile detto Zopino con l' anno di N.S. MDXXXX.

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(Neither of the brothers was ever called Barbarossa by the Turks or Moors.) Both were famous Corsair leaders—the terror of the Mediterranean coast. Urūj died in 1517, while his younger brother, Kheyr-ed-dīn—from whom Giulia Gonzaga had so narrow an escape—lived till 1546, triumphant and successful to the last. “The chief of the sea is dead” was his requiem; and long afterwards, no Turkish fleet left the Golden Horn without her crew repeating a prayer and firing a salute over the tomb at Beshiktish, where lie the bones of Kheyr-ed-dīn, Barbarossa.

Note 6 (p. 113).—Muzio Giustinopolitano dedicated his Eclogue, entitled “La Ninfa Fugitiva,” to Monsignor Hyppolito, Card. de’ Medici, concerning the flight of the Signora Giulia Gonzaga on the coming of Barbarossa:

“ In questi umili accenti
Viene ardita a cantar nostra zampogna
Il periglio, la fuga e lo spavento
D’ un altra ninfa, i cui dolci vestigi
S’ avesse seguitato un altro Apfeo
Fra noi s’ avrebbe una nova Arethusa.
Fuggià da fiere man di fenti ladre
Che venute di là dal gelid ’Istro
Solcando l’ alto mar, trahendo prede
E svenando pastor, gregge et armenti,
Vaghi di riportane eterni pregi
A barbarichi lidi, al bel Petruolo
Corsi eran per spogliar le nostre rive
Del primo onor : fuggia la bella Ninfa
Che splende di belta fra l’ altre belle,
Qual fra i lumi minor la bianca Luna.

“ . . . Addolorata e sola
Fuggià, sparse le chiome a l’ aura, e ignudo
Il santissimo petto e scinta e scalza
Le molli piante per l’ oscura notte

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Per duri sterpi e per deserti monti
Sospinto da timor, da gelosia
Di vita no, di libertà e d' onore.
Et ne fan fede i rivi, ibalzi e itronchi
Che con voce di duol languide e fioche
Tornò più volte a dir, fra queste rupi
E' sia meglio il morir, che stando in vita
Sbramar la rabbia d' affamati cani.
O qual era a sentir il pianto amaro
Qual il dolor, de gli angosciosi huai !
Per te dunque, dicea, forma infelice,
Caduco fior, per te l' eterno frutto
Di mia onestà vedrò caduto e sparso
Fracido in terra a le più sporche belve ?
Tu col tuo van piacer prima cagione
Se 'de 'miei mali : tu il nimico stuolo
Mi tiri appresso : tu nel gran periglio
Di servitù m' hai posta e di vergogna !

* * * * *

“ O quante volte al tremolar de l' ora
Fra le tenere frondi o al suon d' un ste
Mosso da lei col teneretto piede
Tutto di freddo orror si ricoverse,
Parendole sentir per le sue orme
Il romor de' seguenti : e più dappresso
Farlesi d' or in or ; e già alle spalle
Aver la turba e rimaner cattiva.

* * * * *

“ Ninfa ove fuggi ? e perchè 'l dolce viso
Guasti col pianto ? Vuolsi aver più cara
Tanta beltà, per lo cui chiaro grido
Vengono amiche a te l' armate squadre,
Che tu fuggi nemica. Il santo amore
A te l' ha porte con l' aurate penne,

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Amor, perchè ti faccia il gran Tiranno
Tra le reine sue prima Reina.*

Note 7 (p. 115).—This cruel fable was published by a certain Filocolo Alicarnasseo, apparently a bigoted friar, who could not invent and circulate in his book enough scandals against Giulia Gonzaga—a heretic “condemned by the Inquisition.” Ireneo Affo (1741–1747), the learned historian and biographer, says of Filocolo: “Questo frate mente per la gola!”

Note 8 (p. 140).—The father of Juan Valdés was Fernando, Regidor of Cuenca, in Castile; and he had a twin-brother, Alfonso, who long held an important post at the Court of Charles V. Alfonso was a great admirer of Erasmus; but he is chiefly known as writer of the “Dialogo de Lactancio,” to vindicate the Emperor after the sack of Rome, 1527. He died in 1532, and it is interesting to find Thomas Cranmer writing in his praise to Henry VIII., October 20, 1532: “. . . There has died of the plague Waldesius, a Spaniard, the Emperor’s Chief Secretary, who enjoyed his singular favour, . . . when he would have anything well done in the Latin tongue, it was ever put to Waldesius.”

His more famous brother Juan devoted himself to literature, and later became intensely interested in the reforming movement. His dialogue on “Mercury and Charon” compromised him with the Inquisition; he therefore left Spain in 1530, and settled at Naples, where he died in 1541.

His religious influence was very great in Italy; and he also had a circle of enthusiastic “Valdesian scholars” in Spain, Germany, France, and, above all, in England. His books were soon translated into all these languages. His chief works are:

“Dialogo de Mercurio y Caron.”

“Dialogo de la Lengua.” A beautiful study of the Spanish language.

* “Muzio Giustinopolitano.” Egloghe, Venezia, 1550, libro v., p. 125.

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“Alfabeto Cristiano.” Religious dialogue between Valdés and Giulia.

“CX Considerationes.” Celio Secondo Curione prefaces the first edition with a letter, in which he says: “No writer has soared to such a height, nor demonstrated so powerfully, nor reasoned so sweetly, nor with such majesty, nor with such authority, nor with such grace, as our Valdés.”

Valdés also made translations from the Hebrew and Greek into Spanish, and wrote Commentaries on the Psalms, most of St. Paul’s Epistles, those of St. Peter; lastly, the Gospel of St. Matthew, and possibly the other Gospels likewise. Most of these were dedicated to Giulia Gonzaga by a preface nearly five thousand words in length. In the Commentaries, each verse or group of verses is taken and dwelt upon in earnest, thoughtful words.

He also composed treatises on Christian Repentance, Faith, and Life. He wrote a Catechism for children, of which the Spanish is lost; but the Italian translation was again translated by Pietro Paolo Vergerio into Latin, and later turned into German and Polish.

The teaching of Valdés may be clearly traced in the “Beneficio di Cristo crucifisso,” which had an immense circulation in Italy, but was supposed to have been extirpated by the Inquisition, . . . until a copy was found at Cambridge in 1855. The authorship of the little book has been hotly contested.

Note 9 (p. 141).—“Dialogo de Mercurio y Caron” (Dialogue of Mercury and Charon). By Juan de Valdés.

In the form of dialogue, Valdés deals with the corruption of the age. He tells how Mercury has travelled through the world in order to discover a people living according to the laws of Nature and Reason, but he has found only vanity. . . . Charon, the boatman of the Styx, is described as holding converse with his passengers to the other world, and each soul is

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unconsciously compelled to tell the whole truth concerning his past life.

Thus we have a famous preacher, vain of his great reputation, who calmly owned that he never reproved those who were present at his sermons, and that his own glory and wealth were his only aims in life. Then a Duke passes. He confesses that he only lived to enjoy himself and grasp all the money he could squeeze from his vassals; . . . but he had built churches to make sure of heaven, and had bought Papa's Bulls as his passport there. Charon argues with him, and points out that all this is useless. . . . Next follow, first a Bishop and then a Cardinal, who have each used their sacred office for their own selfish purposes, and are much dismayed to learn the vanity of their careless assurance.

Then a soul appears who had been looked upon as a saint on earth, who had led an ascetic life, had been revered for his poverty and self-denial, and believed himself to be in a state of perfection. Charon abruptly asks him if he has charity, as all else is of no avail without it, and the ascetic stands self-condemned.

A theologian follows, who boasts that he could make people believe whatever he pleased . . . while he himself neglected the Scriptures and knew not God. After a long argument he, too, sees his terrible mistake. Another soul is now seen crossing the mountains, who proves to be a single-hearted servant of God; he modestly made answer that he prayed continually, and trusted in Christ that his sins were forgiven.

Next we have a saintly Bishop and, that rare and strange sight, a good King, in the company of a pious Franciscan friar, who had welcomed poverty gladly—had indeed a lowly spirit, and was full of heavenly charity. Then follows the soul of a woman floating joyfully along. When questioned, she made reply that she had studied the Holy Scriptures, and her only desire had been to make her life conform to their teaching. She had a bad husband, but won him over to the love of virtue

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by her example and her devotion. She had scarcely departed when the soul of another woman, a nun, came quickly by. Mercury wished to hear her story, but Charon exclaimed: "Let her alone. Do you not see that it is a woman and a nun? If once she begins to talk she will never leave off!"

This is but a slight sketch of a very interesting work, which also brings in the political affairs of Europe at that time.

Note 10 (p. 173).—This is the sepulchral inscription to the memory of Madonna Antonia dal Balzo in the Church of San Pietro, in Gazzuolo:

"Antoniæ Bauciæ, quam Familiam ab uno ex tribus Magis originem ducere, vetus, & constans fama est, Uxoris Jo: Francisci Marchionis de Gonzaga, Fœminæ lectissimæ, & numero, ac virtute Filiorum, Nepotum, Pronepotum, quos vidit, haud paulo feliciori, & quod Isabella ejus Soror Friderici ultimi Neapolitanorum Regis fuerit uxor, Scipio, & Pyrrhus Fratres Marchiones de Gonzaga Abnepotes Abaviæ de Familia sua optime meritæ P. Vixit ann. XCVII. obiit Anno salutis MDXXXVIII."

Note 11 (p. 254).—Letter of Il Rabbi, June 28, 1566. In this he mentions how all Giulia's letters were seized by the Inquisition. . . .

"Questo papa (Pius V.) per l' occasione di queste scritte ha detto *che se le avesse viste prima che lei fusse morta, CHE L' AVREBBE ABRUSCIATA VIVA!*"

A letter of the Ambassador of the Duke of Florence, of September 7, 1567, repeats the same words of the Pope, that, had he known how serious was her heresy, "he would have burnt her alive."

Note 12 (p. 259).—This book, "Conversazione Civile," of Stefano Guazza, had a most extraordinary success. It was first published in Venice, 1575, and soon became famous throughout all Europe. It was translated into French, and

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published at Lyon in 1579; and the English translation was dated 1586. It was also translated into Latin. These elaborate and artistic conversations enjoyed an immense popularity; and the "Supper at Casale" was imitated in many a famous salon, of which, perhaps, the most successful was that of the Marquise de Rambouillet in her hotel of the street St. Thomas du Louvre; and the tradition was carried on until Molière gave it a final blow in "Les Précieuses Ridicules."