A TALE OF THE PASSIONS.*

After the death of Manfred,[1] King of Naples, the Ghibellines[2] lost their ascendency throughout Italy. The exiled Guelphs[3] returned to their native cities; and not contented with resuming the reins of government, they prosecuted their triumph until the Ghibellines in their turn were obliged to fly, and to mourn in banishment over the violent party spirit which had before occasioned their bloody victories, and now their irretrievable defeat. After an obstinate contest the Florentine Ghibellines were forced to quit their native town; their estates were confiscated; their attempts to reinstate themselves frustrated; and receding from castle to castle, they at length took refuge in Lucca, and awaited with impatience the arrival of Corradino[4] from Germany, through whose influence they hoped again to establish the Imperial supremacy.

The first of May[5] was ever a day of rejoicing and festivity at Florence. The youth of both sexes, of the highest rank, paraded the streets, crowned with flowers, and singing the canzonets[6] of the day. In the evening they assembled in the *Piazza del Duomo*,[7] and spent the hours in dancing. The *Carroccio*[8] was led through the principal streets, the ringing of its bell drowned in the peals that rang from every belfry in the city, and in the music of fifes and drums which made a part of the procession that followed it. The triumph of the reigning party in Florence caused them to celebrate the

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anniversary of the first of May, 1268, with peculiar splendour. They had indeed hoped that Charles d'Anjou,[9] King of Naples, the head of the Guelphs in Italy, and then *Vicare*[10] of their republic, would have been there to adorn the festival by his presence. But the expectation of Corradino had caused the greater part of his newly conquered and oppressed kingdom to revolt, and he had hastily quitted Tuscany to secure by his presence those conquests of which his avarice and cruelty endangered the loss. But although Charles somewhat feared the approaching contest with Corradino, the Florentine Guelphs, newly reinstated in their city and possessions, did not permit a fear to cloud their triumph. The principal families vied with each other in the display of their magnificence during the festival. The knights followed the *Carroccio* on horseback, and the windows were filled with ladies who leant upon gold-inwoven carpets, while their own dresses, at once simple and elegant, their only ornaments flowers, contrasted with the glittering tapestry and the brilliant colours of the flags of the various communities. The whole population of Florence poured into the principal streets, and none were left at home, except the decrepid and sick, unless it were some discontented Ghibelline, whose fear, poverty, or avarice, had caused him to conceal his party, when it had been banished from the city.

It was not the feeling of discontent which prevented Monna[11] Gegia de' Becari[12] from being among the first of the revellers; and she looked angrily on what she called her "Ghibelline leg," which fixed her to her chair on such a day of triumph. The sun shone in all its glory in an unclouded sky, and caused the fair Florentines to draw their *fazioles*[13] over their dark eyes, and to bereave the youth of those beams more vivifying than the sun's rays. The same sun poured its full light into the lonely apartment of Monna

Gegia, and almost extinguished the fire which was lighted in the middle of the room, over which hung the pot of *minestra*,[14] the dinner of the dame and her husband. But she had deserted the fire and was seated by her window, holding her beads in her hand, while every now and then she peeped from her lattice (five stories high) into the narrow lane below,—but no creature passed. She looked at the opposite window; a cat slept there beside a pot of heliotrope, but no human being was heard or seen;—they had all gone to the *Piazza del Duomo*.

Monna Gegia was an old woman, and her dress of green *calrasio*[15] shewed that she belonged to one of the *Arti Minori*.[16] Her head was covered by a red kerchief, which, folded triangularly, hung loosely over it; her grey hairs were combed back from her high and wrinkled brow. The quickness of her eye spoke the activity of her mind, and the slight irritability that lingered about the corners of her lips might be occasioned by the continual war maintained between her bodily and mental faculties.—"Now, by St. John!"[17] she said, "I would give my gold cross to make one of them; though by giving that I should appear on a *festa*[18] without that which no *festa* yet ever found me wanting."——And as she spoke she looked with great complacency on a large but thin gold cross which was tied round her withered neck by a ribbon, once black, now of a rusty brown.——"Methinks this leg of mine is bewitched; and it may well be that my Ghibelline husband has used the black art to hinder me from following the *Carrocio*[19] with the best of them."——A slight sound as of footsteps in the street far below interrupted the good woman's soliloquy.—"Perhaps it is Monna Lisabetta, or Messer[20] Giani dei Agli,[21] the weaver, who mounted the breach first when the castle of Pagibonzi[22] was taken."—She looked down, but could see no one, and was about to relapse into her old

train of thoughts, when her attention was again attracted by the sound of steps ascending the stairs: they were slow and heavy, but she did not doubt who her visitant was when a key was applied to the hole of the door; the latch was lifted up, and a moment after, with an unassured mien and downcast eyes, her husband entered.

He was a short stunted man, more than sixty years of age; his shoulders were broad and high; his legs short; his lank hair, though it grew now only on the back of his head, was still coal-black; his brows were overhanging and bushy; his eyes black and quick; his complexion dark and weather-beaten: his lips as it were contradicted the sternness of the upper part of his face, for their gentle curve betokened even delicacy of sentiment, and his smile was inexpressibly sweet, although a short, bushy, grey beard somewhat spoiled the expression of his countenance. His dress consisted of leather trowsers and a kind of short, coarse, cloth tunic, confined at the waist by a leathern girdle. He had on a low-crowned, red, cloth cap, which he drew over his eyes, and seating himself on a low bench by the fire, he heaved a deep sigh. He appeared disinclined to enter into any conversation, but Monna Gegia, looking on him with a smile of ineffable contempt, was resolved that he should not enjoy his melancholy mood uninterrupted.—"Have you been to mass, Cincolo?"—she asked; beginning by a question sufficiently removed from the point she longed to approach.—He shrugged his shoulders uneasily, but did not reply.—"You are too early for your dinner," continued Gegia; "Do you not go out again?"—Cincolo answered, "No!" in an accent that denoted his disinclination to further questioning. But this very impatience only served to feed the spirit of contention that was fermenting in the bosom of Gegia.—"You are not used," she said, "to pass your May days under your chimney."——No answer.—"Well," she

continued, "if you will not speak, I have done!"—meaning that she intended to begin—"but by that lengthened face of thine I see that some good news is stirring abroad, and I bless the Virgin for it, whatever it may be. Come, if thou be not too curst, tell me what happy tidings make thee so woe-begone."—

Cincolo remained silent for awhile, then turning half round but not looking at his wife, he replied,—"What if old Marzio the lion[23] be dead?"—Gegia turned pale at the idea, but a smile that lurked in the good-natured mouth of her husband reassured her. "Nay, St. John defend us!" she began;—"but that is not true. Old Marzio's death would not drive you within these four walls, except it were to triumph over your old wife. By the blessing of St. John, not one of our lions have died since the eve of the battle of Monte Aperto;[24] and I doubt not that they were poisoned; for Mari, who fed them that night, was more than half a Ghibelline in his heart. Besides, the bells are still ringing, and the drums still beating, and all would be silent enough if old Marzio were to die. On the first of May too! Santa Reparata[25] is too good to us to allow such ill luck;—and she has more favour, I trust, in the seventh heaven than all the Ghibelline saints in your calendar. No, good Cincolo, Marzio is not dead, nor the Holy Father, nor Messer Carlo of Naples;[26] but I would bet my gold cross against the wealth of your banished men, that Pisa[27] is taken—or Corradino—or—" —"And I here! No, Gegia, old as I am, and much as you need my help (and that last is why I am here at all) Pisa would not be taken while this old body could stand in the breach; or Corradino die, till this lazy blood were colder on the ground than it is in my body. Ask no more questions, and do not rouse me: there is no news, no good or ill luck, that I know. But when I saw the Neri, the Pulci, the Buon-

delmonti,[28] and the rest of them, ride like kings through the streets, whose very hands are hardly dry from the blood of my kindred; when I saw their daughter crowned with flowers, and thought how the daughter of Arrigo dei Elisei was mourning for her murdered father, with ashes on her head, by the hearth of a stranger—my spirit must be more dead than it is if such a sight did not make me wish to drive among them; and methought I could scatter their pomp with my awl for a sword. But I remembered thee, and am here unstained with blood."

"That thou wilt never be!" cried Monna Gegia, the colour rising in her wrinkled cheeks:—"Since the battle of Monte Aperto, thou hast never been well washed of that shed by thee and thy confederates;—and how could ye? for the Arno[29] has never since run clear of the blood then spilt."—"And if the sea were red with that blood, still while there is any of the Guelphs' to spill, I am ready to spill it, were it not for thee. Thou dost well to mention Monte Aperto, and thou wouldst do better to remember over whom its grass now grows."—"Peace, Cincolo; a mother's heart has more memory in it than thou thinkest; and I well recollect who spurned me as I knelt, and dragged my only child, but sixteen years of age, to die in the cause of that misbeliever Manfred. Let us indeed speak no more. Woe was the day when I married thee! but those were happy times when there was neither Guelph nor Ghibelline;—they will never return."—"Never,—until, as thou sayest, the Arno run clear of the blood shed on its banks;—never while I can pierce the heart of a Guelph;—never till both parties are cold under one bier."—"And thou and I, Cincolo?—" "Are two old fools, and shall be more at peace under ground than above it. Rank Guelph as thou art, I married thee before I was a Ghibelline; so now I must eat from the same platter

with the enemy of Manfred, and make shoes for Guelphs, instead of following the fortunes of Corradino, and sending them, my battle-axe in my hand, to buy their shoes in Bologna."[30]—"Hush! hush! good man, talk not so loud of thy party; hearest thou not that some one knocks?"—

Cincolo went to open the door with the air of a man who thinks himself ill used at being interrupted in his discourse, and is disposed to be angry with the intruder, however innocent he might be of any intention of breaking in upon his eloquent complaint. The appearance of his visitor calmed his indignant feelings. He was a youth whose countenance and person shewed that he could not be more than sixteen, but there was a self-possession in his demeanour and a dignity in his physiognomy that belonged to a more advanced age. His figure though not tall was slight; and his countenance though of wonderful beauty and regularity of feature, was pale as monumental marble; the thick and curling locks of his chesnut hair clustered over his brow and round his fair throat; his cap was drawn far down on his forehead. Cincolo was about to usher him with deference into his humble room, but the youth staid him with his hand, and uttered the words "*Swabia, Cavalieri!*"[31] the words by which the Ghibellines were accustomed to recognize each other. He continued in a low and hurried tone: "Your wife is within?"—"She is."—"Enough; although I am a stranger to you, I come from an old friend. Harbour me until nightfall; we will then go out, and I will explain to you the motives of my intrusion. Call me Ricciardo de' Rossini of Milan, travelling to Rome. I leave Florence this evening."

Having said these words, without giving Cincolo time to reply, he motioned that they should enter the room. Monna Gegia had fixed her eyes on the door from the moment he had opened it with a look of impatient curiosity; when she

saw the youth enter she could not refrain from exclaiming —"Gesu Maria!"[32]—so different was he from any one she had expected to see.—"A friend from Milan," said Cincolo. —"More likely from Lucca," replied his wife, gazing on her visitant:—"You are doubtless one of the banished men, and you are more daring than wise to enter this town: however, if you be not a spy, you are safe with me."—Ricciardo smiled and thanked her in a low, sweet voice:—"If you do not turn me out," he said, "I shall remain under your roof nearly all the time I remain in Florence, and I leave it soon after dusk."

Gegia again gazed on her guest, nor did Cincolo scrutinize him with less curiosity. His black cloth tunic reached below his knees and was confined by a black leather girdle at the waist. He had on trowsers of coarse scarlet stuff, over which were drawn short boots, such as are now seen on the stage only: a cloak of common fox's fur, unlined, hung from his shoulder. But although his dress was thus simple, it was such as was then worn by the young Florentine nobility. At that time the Italians were simple in their private habits: the French army led by Charles d'Anjou into Italy first introduced luxury into the palaces of the Cisalpines.[33] Manfred was a magnificent prince, but it was his saintly rival who was the author of that trifling foppery of dress and ornaments, which degrades a nation, and is a sure precursor of their downfall. But of Ricciardo—his countenance had all the regularity of a Grecian head; and his blue eyes, shaded by very long, dark eyelashes, were soft, yet full of expression: when he looked up, the heavy lids, as it were, unveiled the gentle light beneath, and then again closed over them, as shading what was too brilliant to behold. His lips expressed the deepest sensibility, and something perhaps of timidity, had not the placid confidence of his demeanour forbidden such

an idea. His appearance was extraordinary, for he was young and delicate of frame, while the decision of his manner prevented the feeling of pity from arising in the spectator's mind: you might love him, but he rose above compassion.

His host and hostess were at first silent; but he asked some natural questions about the buildings of their city, and by degrees led them into discourse. When mid-day struck, Cincolo looked towards his pot of *minestra*, and Ricciardo following his look, asked if that was not the dinner. "You must entertain me," he said, "for I have not eaten to-day." A table was drawn near the window, and the *minestra* poured out into one plate was placed in the middle of it, a spoon was given to each, and a jug of wine filled from a barrel. Ricciardo looked at the two old people, and seemed somewhat to smile at the idea of eating from the same plate with them; he ate, however, though sparingly, and drank of the wine, though with still greater moderation. Cincolo, however, under pretence of serving his guest, filled his jug a second time, and was about to rise for the third measure, when Ricciardo, placing his small white hand on his arm, said, "Are you a German, my friend, that you cease not after so many draughts? I have heard that you Florentines were a sober people."

Cincolo was not much pleased with this reproof; but he felt that it was timely; so, conceding the point, he sat down again, and somewhat heated with what he had already drank, he asked his guest the news from Germany, and what hopes for the good cause? Monna Gegia bridled at these words, and Ricciardo replied, "Many reports are abroad, and high hopes entertained, especially in the North of Italy, for the success of our expedition. Corradino is arrived at Genoa,[34] and it is hoped that, although the ranks

of his army were much thinned by the desertion of his German troops, that they will be quickly filled by Italians, braver and truer than those foreigners, who, strangers to our soil, could not fight for his cause with our ardour."—"And how does he bear himself?"—"As beseems one of the house of Swabia, and the nephew of Manfred. He is inexperienced and young, even to childishness. He is not more than sixteen. His mother would hardly consent to this expedition, but wept with agony at the fear of all he might endure: for he has been bred in a palace, nursed in every luxury, and habituated to all the flattering attentions of courtiers, and the tender care of a woman, who, although she be a princess, has waited on him with the anxious solicitude of a cottager for her infant. But Corradino is of good heart; docile, but courageous; obedient to his wiser friends, gentle to his inferiors, but noble of soul, the spirit of Manfred seems to animate his unfolding mind; and surely, if that glorious prince now enjoys the reward of his surpassing virtues, he looks down with joy and approbation on him who is, I trust, destined to fill his throne."

The enthusiasm with which Ricciardo spoke suffused his pale countenance with a slight blush, while his eyes swam in the lustre of the dew that filled them. Monna Gegia was little pleased with his harangue, but curiosity kept her silent, while her husband proceeded to question his guest. "You seem to be well acquainted with Corradino?"—"I saw him at Milan, and was closely connected with his most intimate friend there. As I have said, he has arrived at Genoa, and perhaps has even now landed at Pisa: he will find many friends in that town?" "Every man there will be his friend. But during his journey southward he will have to contend with our Florentine army, commanded by the Marshals of the usurper Charles, and assisted by his troops.

Charles himself has left us, and is gone to Naples to prepare for this war. But he is detested there, as a tyrant and a robber, and Corradino will be received in the Regno[35] as a saviour: so that if he once surmount the obstacles which oppose his entrance, I do not doubt his success, and trust that he will be crowned within a month at Rome, and the week after sit on the throne of his ancestors in Naples."

"And who will crown him?" cried Gegia, unable to contain herself: "Italy contains no heretic base enough to do such a deed, unless it be a Jew; or he send to Constantinople[36] for a Greek, or to Egypt for a Mahometan.[37] Cursed may the race of the Frederics[38] ever be! Thrice cursed one who has affinity to that miscreant Manfred! And little do you please me, young man, by holding such discourse in my house." Cincolo looked at Ricciardo, as if he feared that so violent a partisan for the house of Swabia would be irritated at his wife's attack; but he was looking on the aged woman with a regard of the most serene benignity; no contempt even was mingled with the gentle smile that played round his lips. "I will restrain myself," he said; and turning to Cincolo, he conversed on more general subjects, describing the various cities of Italy that he had visited; discussing their modes of government, and relating anecdotes concerning their inhabitants, with an air of experience that, contrasted with his youthful appearance, greatly impressed Cincolo, who looked on him at once with admiration and respect. Evening came on. The sound of bells died away after the *Ave Maria*[39] had ceased to ring; but the distant sound of music was wafted to them by the night air, and its quick time indicated that the music was already begun. Ricciardo was about to address Cincolo, when a knocking at the gate interrupted him. It was Buzeccha,[40] the Saracen,[41] a famous chess-player, who was used to parade about

under the colonnades of the Duomo,[42] and challenge the young nobles to play; and sometimes much stress was laid on these games, and the gain and loss became the talk of Florence. Buzeccha was a tall ungainly man, with all that good-natured consequence of manner, which the fame he had acquired by his proficiency in so trifling a science, and the familiarity with which he was permitted to treat those superior to him in rank, who were pleased to measure their forces with him, might well bestow. He was beginning with, "Eh, Messere!" when perceiving Ricciardo, he cried, "Who have we here?" "A friend to good men," replied Ricciardo, smiling. "Then, by Mahomet, thou art my friend, my stripling." "Thou shouldst be a Saracen, by thy speech?" said Ricciardo. "And through the help of the Prophet, so am I. One who in Manfred's time——but no more of that. We won't talk of Manfred, eh, Monna Gegia? I am Buzeccha, the chess-player, at your service, Messer lo Forestiere."

The introduction thus made, they began to talk of the procession of the day. After a while, Buzeccha introduced his favourite subject of chess-playing; he recounted some wonderfully good strokes he had achieved, and related to Ricciardo how before the *Palagio del Popolo*,[43] in the presence of Count Guido Novello de' Giudi,[44] then *Vicare* of the city, he had played an hour at three chess-boards with three of the best chess-players in Florence, playing two by memory, and one by sight; and out of three games which made the board, he had won two.[45] This account was wound up by a proposal to play with his host. "Thou art a hard-headed fellow, Cincolo, and make better play than the nobles. I would swear that thou thinkest of chess only as thou cobblest thy shoes; every hole of your awl is a square of the board, every stitch a move, and a finished pair, paid

for, check-mate to your adversary; eh! Cincolo? Bring out the field of battle, man." Ricciardo interposed, "I leave Florence in two hours, and before I go, Messer Cincolo promised to conduct me to the *Piazza del Duomo*." "Plenty of time, good youth," cried Buzeccha, arranging his men; "I only claim one game, and my games never last more than a quarter of an hour; and then we will both escort you, and you shall dance a set into the bargain with a black-eyed Houri, all Nazarene as thou art. So stand out of my light, good youth, and shut the window, if you have heeding, that the torch flare not so."

Ricciardo seemed amused by the authorative[46] tone of the chess-player; he shut the window and trimmed the torch, which, stuck against the wall, was the only light they had, and stood by the table, over-looking the game. Monna Gegia had replaced the pot for supper, and sat somewhat uneasily, as if she were displeased that her guest did not talk with her. Cincolo and Buzeccha were deeply intent on their game, when a knock was heard at the door. Cincolo was about to rise and open it, but Ricciardo saying, "Do not disturb yourself," opened it himself, with the manner of one who does humble offices as if ennobling them, so that no one action can be more humble to them than another. The visitant was welcomed by Gegia alone, with "Ah! Messer Beppe, this is kind, on May-day night." Ricciardo glanced slightly on him, and then resumed his stand by the players. There was little in Messer Beppe to attract a favourable regard. He was short, thin, and dry; his face long-drawn and liny; his eyes deep-set and scowling; his lips straight, his nose hooked, and his head covered by a close scull-cap, his hair cut close all round. He sat down near Gegia, and began to discourse in a whining, servile voice, complimenting her on her good looks, launching

forth into praise of the magnificence of certain Guelph Florentines, and concluded by declaring that he was hungry and tired.—"Hungry, Beppe?" said Gegia, "that should have been your first word, friend. Cincolo, wilt thou give thy guest to eat? Cincolo, art thou deaf? Art thou blind? Dost thou not hear? Wilt thou not see?—Here is Messer Giuseppe de' Bosticchi."[47]

Cincolo slowly, his eyes still fixed on the board, was about to rise. But the name of the visitant seemed to have the effect of magic on Ricciardo. "Bosticchi!" he cried—"Giuseppe Bosticchi! I did not expect to find that man beneath thy roof, Cincolo, all Guelph as thy wife is—for she also has eaten of the bread of the Elisei. Farewell! thou wilt find me in the street below; follow me quickly." He was about to go, but Bosticchi placed himself before the door, saying in a tone whose whine expressed mingled rage and servility, "In what have I offended this young gentleman? Will he not tell me my offence?"—"Dare not to stop my way," cried Ricciardo, passing his hand before his eyes, "nor force me again to look on thee—Begone!" Cincolo stopt him: "Thou art too hasty, and far too passionate, my noble guest," said he: "however this man may have offended thee, thou art too violent." "Violent!" cried Ricciardo, almost suffocated by passionate emotion—"Aye, draw thy knife, and shew the blood of Arrigo dei Elisei with which it is still stained."

A dead silence followed. Bosticchi slunk out of the room; Ricciardo hid his face in his hands and wept. But soon he calmed his passion and said:—"This is indeed childish. Pardon me; that man is gone; excuse and forget my violence. Resume thy game, Cincolo, but conclude it quickly, for time gains on us—Hark! an hour of night sounds from the Campanile."[48] "The game is already concluded," said

Buzeccha, sorrowfully, "thy cloak overthrew the best check-mate this head ever planned—so God forgive thee!" "Check-mate!" cried the indignant Cincolo, "Check-mate! and my queen mowing you down, rank and file!"—"Let us begone," exclaimed Ricciardo: "Messer Buzeccha, you will play out your game with Monna Gezia.[49] Cincolo will return ere long." So taking his host by the arm, he drew him out of the room, and descended the narrow high stairs with the air of one to whom those stairs were not unknown.

When in the street he slackened his pace, and first looking round to assure himself that none overheard their conversation, he addressed Cincolo:—"Pardon me, my dear friend; I am hasty, and the sight of that man made every drop of my blood cry aloud in my veins. But I do not come here to indulge in private sorrows or private revenge, and my design ought alone to engross me. It is necessary for me to see, speedily and secretly, Messer Guielmo Lostendardo,[50] the Neapolitan commander. I bear a message to him from the Countess Elizabeth,[51] the mother of Corradino, and I have some hope that its import may induce him to take at least a neutral part during the impending conflict. I have chosen you, Cincolo, to aid me in this, for not only you are of that little note in your town that you may act for me without attracting observation, but you are brave and true, and I may confide to your known worth. Lostendardo re sides[52] at the *Palagio del Governo;*[53] when I enter its doors I am in the hands of my enemies, and its dungeons may alone know the secret of my destiny. I hope better things. But if after two hours I do not appear or let you hear of my welfare, carry this packet to Corradino at Pisa: you will then learn who I am, and if you feel any indignation at my fate,

let that feeling attach you still more strongly to the cause for which I live and die."

As Ricciardo spoke he still walked on; and Cincolo observed, that without his guidance he directed his steps towards the *Palagio del Governo*. "I do not understand this," said the old man;—"by what argument, unless you bring one from the other world, do you hope to induce Messer Guielmo to aid Corradino? He is so bitter an enemy of Manfred, that although that Prince is dead, yet when he mentions his name he grasps the air as it were a dagger. I have heard him with horrible imprecations curse the whole house of Swabia." A tremor shook the frame of Ricciardo, but he replied, "Lostendardo was once the firmest support of that house and the friend of Manfred. Strange circumstances gave birth in his mind to this unnatural hatred, and he became a traitor. But perhaps now that Manfred is in Paradise, the youth, the virtues, and the inexperience of Corradino may inspire him with more generous feelings and reawaken his ancient faith. At least I must make this last trial. This cause is too holy, too sacred, to admit of common forms of reasoning or action. The nephew of Manfred must sit upon the throne of his ancestors; and to achieve that I will endure what I am about to endure."

They entered the palace of government. Messer Guielmo was carousing in the great hall. "Bear this ring to him, good Cincolo, and say that I wait. Be speedy, that my courage, my life, do not desert me at the moment of trial."—Cincolo, casting one more inquisitive glance on his extraordinary companion, obeyed his orders, while the youth leant against one of the pillars of the court and passionately cast up his eyes to the clear firmament. "Oh, ye stars!" he cried in a smothered voice, "ye are eternal; let my purpose, my will, be as constant as ye!" Then, more calm, he folded

his arms in his cloak, and with strong inward struggle endeavoured to repress his emotion. Several servants approached him and bade him follow them. Again he looked at the sky and said, "Manfred," and then he walked on with slow but firm steps. They led him through several halls and corridors to a large apartment hung with tapestry, and well lighted by numerous torches; the marble of the floor reflected their glare, and the arched roof echoed the footsteps of one who paced the apartment as Ricciardo entered. It was Lostendardo. He made a sign that the servants should retire; the heavy door closed behind them, and Ricciardo stood alone with Messer Guielmo; his countenance pale but composed, his eyes cast down as in expectation, not in fear; and but for the convulsive motion of his lips, you would have guessed that every faculty was almost suspended by intense agitation.

Lostendardo approached. He was a man in the prime of life, tall and athletic; he seemed capable with a single exertion to crush the frail being of Ricciardo. Every feature of his countenance spoke of the struggle of passions, and the terrible egotism of one who would sacrifice even himself to the establishment of his will: his black eyebrows were scattered, his grey eyes deep set and scowling, his look at once stern and haggard. A smile seemed never to have disturbed the settled scorn which his lips expressed; his high forehead, already becoming bald, was marked by a thousand contradictory lines. His voice was studiously restrained as he said: "Wherefore do you bring that ring?"—Ricciardo looked up and met his eye, which glanced fire as he exclaimed—"Despina!" He seized her hand with a giant's grasp:—"I have prayed for this night and day, and thou art now here! Nay, do not struggle; you are mine; for by my salvation I swear that thou shalt never again escape me."

Despina replied calmly—"Thou mayst well believe that in thus placing myself in thy power I do not dread any injury thou canst inflict upon me,—or I were not here. I do not fear thee, for I do not fear death. Loosen then thy hold, and listen to me. I come in the name of those virtues that were once thine; I come in the name of all noble sentiment, generosity, and ancient faith; and I trust that in listening to me your heroic nature will second my voice, and that Lostendardo will no longer rank with those whom the good and great never name but to condemn."

Lostendardo appeared to attend little to what she said. He gazed on her with triumph and malignant pride; and if he still held her, his motive appeared rather the delight he felt in displaying his power over her, than any fear that she would escape. You might read in her pale cheek and glazed eye, that if she feared, it was herself alone that she mistrusted; that her design lifted her above mortal dread, and that she was as impassive as the marble she resembled to any event that did not either advance or injure the object for which she came. They were both silent, until Lostendardo leading her to a seat, and then standing opposite to her, his arms folded, every feature dilated by triumph, and his voice sharpened by agitation, he said: "Well, speak! What wouldst thou with me?"—"I come to request, that if you can not be induced to assist Prince Corradino in the present struggle, you will at least stand neutral, and not oppose his advance to the kingdom of his ancestors." Lostendardo laughed. The vaulted roof repeated the sound, but the harsh echo, though it resembled the sharp cry of an animal of prey whose paw is on the heart of its enemy, was not so discordant and dishuman as the laugh itself. "How," he asked, "dost thou pretend to induce me to comply? This dagger," and he touched the hilt of one, that was half con-

cealed in his vesture, "is yet stained by the blood of Manfred; ere long it will be sheathed in the heart of that foolish boy."

Despina conquered the feeling of horror these words inspired, and replied: "Will you give me a few minutes' patient hearing?"—"I will give you a few minutes' hearing, and if I be not so patient as in the Palagio Reale,[54] fair Despina must excuse me. Forbearance is not a virtue to which I aspire."—"Yes, it was in the Palagio Reale at Naples, the palace of Manfred, that you first saw me. You were then the bosom friend of Manfred, selected by that choice specimen of humanity as his confidant and counsellor. Why did you become a traitor? Start not at that word: if you could hear the united voice of Italy, and even of those who call themselves your friends, they would echo that name. Why did you thus degrade and belie yourself? You call me the cause, yet I am most innocent. You saw me at the court of your master, an attendant on Queen Sibilla,[55] and one who unknown to herself had already parted with her heart, her soul, her will, her entire being, an involuntary sacrifice at the shrine of all that is noble and divine in human nature. My spirit worshipped Manfred as a saint, and my pulses ceased to beat when his eye fell upon me. I felt this, but I knew it not. You awoke me from my dream. You said that you loved me, and you reflected in too faithful a mirror my own emotions: I saw myself and shuddered. But the profound and eternal nature of my passion saved me. I loved Manfred. I loved the sun because it enlightened him; I loved the air that fed him; I deified myself for that my heart was the temple in which he resided. I devoted myself to Sibilla, for she was his wife, and never in thought or dream degraded the purity of my affection towards him. For this you hated him. He was ignorant of my passion:

my heart contained it as a treasure which you having discovered came to rifle. You could more easily deprive me of life than my devotion for your king, and therefore you were a traitor.

"Manfred died, and you thought that I had then forgotten him. But love would indeed be a mockery if death were not the most barefaced cheat. How can he die who is immortalized in my thoughts—my thoughts, that comprehend the universe, and contain eternity in their graspings? What though his earthly vesture is thrown as a despised weed beside the verde,[56] he lives in my soul as lovely, as noble, as entire, as when his voice awoke the mute air: nay, his life is more entire, more true. For before, that small shrine that encased his spirit was all that existed of him; but now, he is a part of all things; his spirit surrounds me, interpenetrates; and divided from him during his life, his death has united me to him for ever."

The countenance of Lostendardo darkened fearfully.—When she paused, he looked black as the sea before the heavily charged thunder-clouds that canopy it dissolve themselves in rain. The tempest of passion that arose in his heart seemed too mighty to admit of swift manifestation; it came slowly up from the profoundest depths of his soul, and emotion was piled upon emotion before the lightning of his anger sped to its destination. "Your arguments, eloquent Despina," he said, "are indeed unanswerable. They work well for your purpose. Corradino is I hear at Pisa: you have sharpened my dagger; and before the air of another night rust it, I may by deeds have repaid your insulting words."

"How far do you mistake me! And is praise and love of all heroic excellence insult to you? Lostendardo, when you first knew me, I was an inexperienced girl; I loved

but knew not what love was, and circumscribing my passion in narrow bounds, I adored the being of Manfred as I might love an effigy of stone, which, when broken, has no longer an existence. I am now much altered. I might before have treated you with disdain or anger, but now these base feelings have expired in my heart. I am animated but by one feeling—an aspiration to another life, another state of being. All the good depart from this strange earth; and I doubt not that when I am sufficiently elevated above human weaknesses, it will also be my turn to leave this scene of woe. I prepare myself for that moment alone; and in endeavouring to fit myself for a union with all the brave, generous, and wise, that once adorned humanity, and have now passed from it, I consecrate myself to the service of this most righteous cause. You wrong me, therefore, if you think there is aught of disdain in what I say, or that any degrading feelings are mingled with my devotion of spirit when I come and voluntarily place myself in your power. You can imprison me for ever in the dungeons of this palace, as a returned Ghibelline and spy, and have me executed as a criminal. But before you do this, pause for your own sake; reflect on the choice of glory or ignominy that you are now about to make. Let your old sentiments of love for the house of Swabia have some sway in your heart; reflect that as you are the despised enemy, so you may become the chosen friend, of its last descendant, and receive from every heart the praise of having restored Corradino to the honours and power to which he was born.

"Compare this prince to the hypocritical, the bloody and mean-spirited Charles. When Manfred died, I went to Germany, and have resided at the court of the Countess Elizabeth; I have, therefore, been an hourly witness of the great and good qualities of Corradino. The bravery of his spirit

makes him rise above the weakness of youth and inexperience: he possesses all the nobility of spirit that belongs to the family of Swabia, and, in addition, a purity and gentleness that attracts the respect and love of the old and wary courtiers of Frederic and Conrad.[57] You are brave, and would be generous, did not the fury of your passions, like a consuming fire, destroy in their violence every generous sentiment: how then can you become the tool of Charles? His scowling eyes and sneering lips betoken the selfishness of his mind. Avarice, cruelty, meanness, and artifice, are the qualities that characterise him, and render him unworthy of the majesty he usurps. Let him return to Provence, and reign with paltry despotism over the luxurious and servile French; the free-born Italians require another Lord. They are not fit to bow to one whose palace is the change-house of money-lenders, whose generals are usurers, whose courtiers are milliners or monks, and who basely vows allegiance to the enemy of freedom and virtue, Clement,[58] the murderer of Manfred. Their king, like them, should be clothed in the armour of valour and simplicity; his ornaments, his shield and spear; his treasury, the possessions of his subjects; his army, their unshaken loves. Charles will treat you as a tool; Corradino as a friend—Charles will make you the detested tyrant of a groaning province; Corradino the governor of a prosperous and happy people.

"I cannot tell by your manner if what I have said has in any degree altered your determination. I cannot forget the scenes that passed between us at Naples. I might then have been disdainful: I am not so now. Your execrations of Manfred excited every angry feeling in my mind; but, as I have said, all but the feeling of love expired in my heart when Manfred died, and methinks that where love is, excellence must be its companion. You said you loved me;

and though, in other times, that love was twin-brother to hate,—though then, poor prisoner in your heart, jealousy, rage, contempt, and cruelty, were its handmaids,—yet if it were love, methinks that its divinity must have purified your heart from baser feelings; and now that I, the bride of Death, am removed from your sphere, gentler feelings may awaken in your bosom, and you may incline mildly to my voice.

"If indeed you loved me, will you not now be my friend? Shall we not hand in hand pursue the same career? Return to your ancient faith; and now that death and religion have placed the seal upon the past, let Manfred's spirit, looking down, behold his repentant friend the firm ally of his successor, the best and last scion of the house of Swabia."

She ceased; for the glare of savage triumph which, as a rising fire at night time, enlightened with growing and fearful radiance the face of Lostendardo, made her pause in her appeal. He did not reply; but when she was silent he quitted the attitude in which he had stood immoveably opposite to her, and pacing the hall with measured steps, his head declined, he seemed to ruminate on some project. Could it be that he weighed her reasonings? If he hesitated, the side of generosity and old fidelity would certainly prevail. Yet she dared not hope; her heart beat fast; she would have knelt, but she feared to move, lest any motion should disturb his thoughts, and curb the flow of good feeling which she fondly hoped had arisen within him: she looked up and prayed silently as she sat. Notwithstanding the glare of the torches, the beams of one small star struggled through the dark window pane; her eye resting on it, her thoughts were at once elevated to the eternity and space which that star symbolized: it seemed to her the spirit of Manfred, and

she inwardly worshipped it, as she prayed that it would shed its benign influence on the soul of Lostendardo.

Some minutes elapsed in this fearful silence, and then he approached her. "Despina, allow me to reflect on your words; to-morrow I will answer you. You will remain in this palace until the morning, and then you shall see and judge of my repentance and returning faith."—He spoke with studious gentleness. Despina could not see his face, for the lights shone behind him. When she looked up to reply, the little star twinkled just above his head, and seemed with its gentle lustre to reassure her. Our minds, when highly wrought, are strangely given to superstition, and Despina lived in a superstitious age. She thought that the star bade her comply, and assured her of protection from heaven:—from where else could she expect it? She said therefore, "I consent. Only let me request that you acquaint the man who gave you my ring that I am safe, or he will fear for me." —"I will do as you desire."—"And I will confide myself to your care. I cannot, dare not, fear you. If you would betray me, still I trust in the heavenly saints that guard humanity."

Her countenance was so calm,—it beamed with so angelic a self-devotion and a belief in good, that Lostendardo dared not look on her. For one moment—as she, having ceased to speak, gazed upon the star—he felt impelled to throw himself at her feet, to confess the diabolical scheme he had forged, and to commit himself body and soul to her guidance, to obey, to serve, to worship her. The impulse was momentary: the feeling of revenge returned on him. From the moment she had rejected him, the fire of rage had burned in his heart, consuming all healthy feeling, all human sympathies and gentleness of soul. He had sworn never to sleep on a bed, or to drink aught but water, until his first cup of wine was

mingled with the blood of Manfred. He had fulfilled this vow. A strange alteration had worked within him from the moment he had drained that unholy cup. The spirit, not of a man, but of a devil, seemed to live within him, urging him to crime, from which his long protracted hope of more complete revenge had alone deterred him. But Despina was now in his power, and it seemed to him as if fate had preserved him so long only that he might now wreak his full rage upon her. When she spoke of love, he thought how from that he might extract pain. He formed his plan; and this slight human weakness now conquered, he bent his thoughts to its completion. Yet he feared to stay longer with her; so he quitted her, saying that he would send attendants who would shew her an apartment where she might repose. He left her, and several hours passed; but no one came. The torches burnt low, and the stars of heaven could now with twinkling beams conquer their feebler light. One by one these torches went out, and the shadows of the high windows of the hall, before invisible, were thrown upon its marble pavement. Despina looked upon the shade, at first unconsciously, until she found herself counting, one, two, three, the shapes of the iron bars that lay so placidly on the stone. "Those grates are thick," she said: "this room would be a large but secure dungeon." As by inspiration, she now felt that she was a prisoner. No change, no word, had intervened since she had walked fearlessly in the room, believing herself free. But now no doubt of her situation occurred to her mind; heavy chains seemed to fall around her; the air to feel thick and heavy as that of a prison; and the star-beams that had before cheered her, became the dreary messengers of fearful danger to herself, and of the utter defeat of all the hopes she had dared nourish of success to her beloved cause.

Cincolo waited, first with impatience, and then with anxiety, for the return of the youthful stranger. He paced up and down before the gates of the palace; hour after hour passed on; the stars arose and descended, and ever and anon meteors shot along the sky. They were not more frequent than they always are during a clear summer night in Italy; but they appeared strangely numerous to Cincolo, and portentous of change and calamity. Midnight struck, and at that moment a procession of monks passed, bearing a corpse and chaunting a solemn *De Profundis*.[59] Cincolo felt a cold tremour shake his limbs when he reflected how ill an augury this was for the strange adventurer he had guided to that palace. The sombre cowls of the priests, their hollow voices, and the dark burthen they carried, augmented his agitation even to terror: without confessing the cowardice to himself, he was possessed with fear lest he should be included in the evil destiny that evidently awaited his companion. Cincolo was a brave man; he had often been foremost in a perilous assault: but the most courageous among us sometimes feel our hearts fail within us at the dread of unknown and fated danger. He was struck with panic;—he looked after the disappearing lights of the procession, and listened to their fading voices: his knees shook, a cold perspiration stood on his brow: until, unable to resist the impulse, he began slowly to withdraw himself from the Palace of Government, and to quit the circle of danger which seemed to hedge him in if he remained on that spot.

He had hardly quitted his post by the gate of the palace, when he saw lights issue from it, attendant on a company of men, some of whom were armed, as appeared from the reflection their lances' heads cast; and some of them carried a litter hung with black and closely drawn. Cinculo[60] was rooted to the spot. He could not render himself any reason

for his belief, but he felt convinced that the stranger youth was there, about to be carried out to death. Impelled by curiosity and anxiety, he followed the party as they went towards the Porta Romana:[61] they were challenged by the sentinels at the gate; they gave the word and passed. Cincolo dared not follow, but he was agitated by fear and compassion. He remembered the packet confided to his care; he dared not draw it from his bosom, lest any Guelph should be near to overlook and discover that it was addressed to Corradino; he could not read, but he wished to look at the arms of the seal, to see whether they bore the imperial ensigns. He returned back to the *Palagio del Governo:* all there was dark and silent; he walked up and down before the gates, looking up at the windows, but no sign of life appeared. He could not tell why he was thus agitated, but he felt as if all his future peace depended on the fate of this stranger youth. He thought of Gegia, her helplessness and age; but he could not resist the impulse that impelled him, and he resolved that very night to commence his journey to Pisa, to deliver the packet, to learn who the stranger was, and what hopes he might entertain for his safety.

He returned home, that he might inform Gegia of his journey. This was a painful task, but he could not leave her in doubt. He ascended his narrow stairs with trepidation. At the head of them a lamp twinkled before a picture of the Virgin. Evening after evening it burnt there, guarding through its influence his little household from all earthly or supernatural dangers. The sight of it inspired him with courage; he said an *Ave Maria* before it; and then looking around him to assure himself that no spy stood on the narrow landing place, he drew the packet from his bosom and examined the seal. All Italians in those days were conversant in heraldry, since from ensigns of the shields of the knights they

learned, better than from their faces or persons, to what family and party they belonged. But it required no great knowledge for Cincolo to decypher these arms; he had known them from his childhood; they were those of the Elisei, the family to whom he had been attached as a partisan during all these civil contests. Arrigo de' Elisei had been his patron, and his wife had nursed his only daughter, in those happy days when there was neither Guelph nor Ghibelline. The sight of these arms reawakened all his anxiety. Could this youth belong to that house? The seal shewed that he really did; and this discovery confirmed his determination of making every exertion to save him, and inspired him with sufficient courage to encounter the remonstrances and fears of Monna Gegia.

He unlocked his door; the old dame was asleep in her chair, but awoke as he entered. She had slept only to refresh her curiosity, and she asked a thousand questions in a breath, to which Cincolo did not reply: he stood with his arms folded looking at the fire, irresolute how to break the subject of his departure. Monna Gegia continued to talk: "After you went, we held a consultation concerning this hot-brained youth of this morning; I, Buzeccha, Beppe de' Bosticchi who returned, and Monna Lissa from the Mercato Nuovo.[62] We all agreed that he must be one of two persons; and be it one or the other, if he have not quitted Florence, the *Stinchi**[63] will be his habitation by sun-rise. Eh! Cincolo, man! you do not speak; where did you part with your Prince?"—"Prince, Gegia! Are you mad?—what Prince?" "Nay, he is either a Prince or a baker; either Corradino himself, or Ricciardo the son of Messer Tommaso de' Manelli; he that lived o'th' Arno, and baked for all that Sesto,[64] when

* The name of the common prison at Florence.

Count Guido de Giudi was *Vicario*. By this token, that Messer Tommaso went to Milan with Ubaldo de' Gargalandi,[65] and Ricciardo, who went with his father, must now be sixteen. He had the fame of kneading with as light a hand as his father, but he liked better to follow arms with the Gargalandi: he was a fair, likely youth, they said; and so, to say the truth, was our youngster of this morning. But Monna Lisa will have it that it must be Corradino himself——"

Cincolo listened as if the gossip of two old women could unravel his riddle. He even began to doubt whether the last conjecture, extravagant as it was, had not hit the truth. Every circumstance forbade such an idea; but he thought of the youth and exceeding beauty of the stranger, and he began to doubt. There was none among the Elisei who answered to his appearance. The flower of their youth had fallen at Monte Aperto; the eldest of the new generation was but ten; the other males of that house were of a mature age. Gegia continued to talk of the anger that Beppe de Bosticchi evinced at being accused of the murder of Arrigo dei Elisei. "If he had done that deed," she cried, "never more should he have stood on my hearth; but he swore his innocence; and truly, poor man, it would be a sin not to believe him." Why, if the stranger were not an Elisei, should he have shewn such horror on viewing the supposed murderer of the head of that family?—Cincolo turned from the fire; he examined whether his knife hung safely in his girdle, and he exchanged his sandal-like shoes for stronger boots of common undressed fur. This last act attracted the attention of Gegia. "What are you about, good man?" she cried. "This is no hour to change your dress, but to come to bed. To-night you will not speak; but to-morrow I hope to get it all out from you. What are you about?" "I am about to leave you, my dear Gegia;

and heaven bless and take care of you! I am going to Pisa." Gegia uttered a shriek, and was about to remonstrate with great volubility, while the tears rolled down her aged cheeks. Tears also filled the eyes of Cincolo, as he said, "I do not go for the cause you suspect. I do not go into the army of Corradino, though my heart will be with it. I go but to carry a letter, and will return without delay." "You will never return," cried the old woman: "the Commune will never let you enter the gates of this town again, if you set foot in that traitorous Pisa. But you shall not go; I will raise the neighbours; I will declare you mad——"— "Gegia, no more of this! Here is all the money I have: before I go, I will send your cousin 'Nunziata to you. I must go. It is not the Ghibelline cause, or Corradino, that obliges me to risk your ease and comforts; but the life of one of the Elisei is at stake; and if I can save him, would you have me rest here, and afterwards curse you and the hour when I was born?" "What! is he——? But no; there is none among the Elisei so young as he; and none so lovely, except her whom these arms carried when an infant—but she is a female. No, no; this is a tale trumped up to deceive me and gain my consent; but you shall never have it. Mind that! you will never have it; and I prophecy that if you do go, your journey will be the death of both of us." She wept bitterly. Cincolo kissed her aged cheek, and mingled his tears with hers; and then recommending her to the care of the Virgin and the saints, he quitted her, while grief choaked her utterance, and the name of the Elisei had deprived her of all energy to resist his purpose.

It was four in the morning before the gates of Florence were opened and Cincolo could leave the city. At first he availed himself of the carts of the *contadini*[66] to advance on his

journey; but as he drew near Pisa, all modes of conveyance ceased, and he was obliged to take by-roads, and act cautiously, not to fall into the hands of the Florentine out-posts, or of some fierce Ghibelline, who might suspect him, and have him carried before the Podesta[67] of a village; for if once suspected and searched, the packet addressed to Corradino would convict him, and he would pay for his temerity with his life. Having arrived at Vico Pisano,[68] he found a troop of Pisan horse there on guard: he was known to many of the soldiers, and he obtained a conveyance for Pisa; but it was night before he arrived. He gave the Ghibelline watch-word, and was admitted within the gates. He asked for Prince Corradino: he was in the city, at the palace of the Lanfranchi.[69] He crossed the Arno, and was admitted into the palace by the soldiers who guarded the door. Corradino had just returned from a successful skirmish in the Lucchese[70] states, and was reposing; but when Count Gherardo Doneratico,[71] his principal attendant, saw the seal of the packet, he immediately ushered the bearer into a small room, where the Prince lay on a fox's skin thrown upon the pavement. The mind of Cincolo had been so bewildered by the rapidity of the events of the preceding night, by fatigue and want of sleep, that he had over-wrought himself to believe that the stranger youth was indeed Corradino; and when he had heard that that Prince was in Pisa, by a strange disorder of ideas, he still imagined that he and Ricciardo were the same; that the black litter was a phantom, and his fears ungrounded. The first sight of Corradino, his fair hair and round Saxon features, destroyed this idea: it was replaced by a feeling of deep anguish, when Count Gherardo, announcing him, said, "One who brings a letter from Madonna Despina dei Elisei, waits upon your Highness."

The old man sprang forward, uncontrolled by the respect

he would otherwise have felt for one of so high lineage as Corradino. "From Despina! Did you say from her? Oh! unsay your words! Not from my beloved, lost, foster-child."

Tears rolled down his cheeks. Corradino, a youth of fascinating gentleness, but, as Despina had said, "young, even to childishness," attempted to reassure him. "Oh! my gracious Lord," cried Cincolo, "open that packet, and see if it be from my blessed child—if in the disguise of Ricciardo I led her to destruction." He wrung his hands. Corradino, pale as death with fear for the destiny of his lovely and adventurous friend, broke the seal. The packet contained an inner envelope without any direction, and a letter, which Corradino read, while horror convulsed every feature. He gave it to Gherardo. "It is indeed from her. She says, that the bearer can relate all that the world will probably know of her fate. And you, old man, who weep so bitterly, you to whom my best and lovely friend refers me, tell me what you know of her." Cincolo told his story in broken accents. "May these eyes be for ever blinded!" he cried, when he had concluded, "that knew not Despina in those soft looks and heavenly smiles. Dotard that I am! When my wife railed at your family and princely self, and the sainted Manfred, why did I not read her secret in her forbearance? Would she have forgiven those words in any but her who had nursed her infancy, and been a mother to her when Madonna Pia died? And when she taxed Bosticchi with her father's death, I, blind fool, did not see the spirit of the Elisei in her eyes. My Lord, I have but one favour to ask you. Let me hear her letter, that I may judge from that what hopes remain:—but there are none—none." "Read it to him, my dear Count," said the Prince; "I will not fear as he fears. I dare not fear that one so

lovely and beloved is sacrificed for my worthless cause." Gherardo read the letter.

"Cincolo de' Becari, my foster father, will deliver this letter into your hands, my respected and dear Corradino. The Countess Elizabeth has urged me to my present undertaking; I hope nothing from it—except to labour for your cause, and perhaps through its event to quit somewhat earlier a life which is but a grievous trial to my weak mind. I go to endeavour to arouse the feelings of fidelity and generosity in the soul of the traitor Lostendardo: I go to place myself in his hands, and I do not hope to escape from them again. Corradino, my last prayer will be for your success. Mourn not for one who goes home after a long and weary exile. Burn the enclosed packet, without opening it. The Mother of God protect thee! DESPINA."

Corradino had wept as this epistle was reading, but then starting up, he said—"To revenge or death! we may yet save her!"——

A blight had fallen on the house of Swabia, and all their enterprizes were blasted. Beloved by their subjects, noble, and with every advantage of right on their side, except those the church bestowed, they were defeated in every attempt to defend themselves against a foreigner and a tyrant, who ruled by force of arms, and those in the hands of a few only, over an extensive and warlike territory. The young and daring Corradino was also fated to perish in this contest. Having overcome the troops of his adversary in Tuscany, he advanced towards his kingdom with the highest hopes. His arch enemy, Pope Clement IV, had shut himself up in Viterbo,[72] and was guarded by a numerous garrison. Corradino passed in triumph and hope before the town, and proudly drew out his troops before it, to display to the Holy

Father his forces, and humiliate him by this show of success. The Cardinals, who beheld the lengthened line and good order of the army, hastened to the Papal palace.[73] Clement was in his oratory, praying; the frightened monks, with pale looks, related how the excommunicated heretic dared to menace the town where the Holy Father himself resided; adding, that if the insult were carried to the pitch of an assault, it might prove dangerous warfare. The Pope smiled contemptuously. "Do not fear," he said; "the projects of these men will dissipate in smoke." He then went on the ramparts, and saw Corradino and Frederic of Austria,[74] who defiled the line of knights in the plain below. He watched them for a time; then turning to his Cardinals, he said, "They are victims, who permit themselves to be led to sacrifice."

His words were a prophecy. Notwithstanding the first successes of Corradino, and the superior numbers of his army, he was defeated by the artifice of Charles in a pitched battle. He escaped from the field, and, with a few friends, arrived at a tower called Asturi,[75] which belonged to the family of Frangipani,[76] of Rome. Here he hired a vessel, embarked, and put out to sea, directing his course for Sicily, which, having rebelled against Charles, would, he hoped, receive him with joy. They were already under weigh, when one of the family of the Frangipani seeing a vessel filled with Germans making all sail from shore, suspected that they were fugitives from the battle of Taglicozzo,[77] he followed them in other vessels, and took them all prisoners. The person of Corradino was a rich prey for him; he delivered him into the hands of his rival, and was rewarded by the donation of a fief near Benevento.

The dastardly spirit of Charles instigated him to the

basest revenge; and the same tragedy was acted on those shores which has been renewed in our days. A daring and illustrious Prince was sacrificed with the mock forms of justice, at the sanguinary altar of tyranny and hypocrisy. Corradino was tried. One of his Judges alone, a Provençal, dared condemn him, and he paid with his life the forfeit of his baseness. For scarcely had he, solitary among his fellows, pronounced the sentence of death against this Prince, than Robert of Flanders,[78] the brother-in-law of Charles himself, struck him on the breast with a staff, crying, "It behoves not thee, wretch, to condemn to death so noble and worthy a knight." The judge fell dead in the presence of the king, who dared not avenge his creature.

On the 26th of October, Corradino and his friends were led out to die in the Market-place of Naples, by the seaside. Charles was present with all his court, and an immense multitude surrounded the triumphant king, and his more royal adversary, about to suffer an ignominious death. The funereal procession approached its destination. Corradino, agitated, but controlling his agitation, was drawn in an open car. After him came a close litter, hung with black, with no sign to tell who was within. The Duke of Austria and several other illustrious victims followed. The guard that conducted them to the scaffold was headed by Lostendardo; a malicious triumph laughed in his eyes, and he rode near the litter, looking from time to time, first at it and then at Corradino, with the dark look of a tormenting fiend. The procession stopped at the foot of the scaffold, and Corradino looked at the flashing light which every now and then arose from Vesuvius,[79] and threw its reflection on the sea. The sun had not yet risen, but the halo of its approach illuminated the bay of Naples, its mountains, and its islands. The summits of the distant hills of

Baiæ gleamed with its first beams. Corradino thought, "By the time those rays arrive here, and shadows are cast from the persons of these men,—princes and peasants, around me, my living spirit will be shadowless." Then he turned his eyes on the companions of his fate, and for the first time he saw the silent and dark litter that accompanied them. At first he thought, "It is my coffin." But then he recollected the disappearance of Despina, and would have sprung towards it: his guards stopped him; he looked up, and his glance met that of Lostendardo, who smiled—a smile of dread: but the feeling of religion which had before calmed him again descended on him; he thought that her sufferings, as well as his, would soon be over.

They were already over. And the silence of the grave is upon those events which had occurred since Cincolo beheld her carried out of Florence, until now that she was led by her fierce enemy to behold the death of the nephew of Manfred. She must have endured much; for when, as Corradino advanced to the front of the scaffold, the litter being placed opposite to it, Lostendardo ordered the curtains to be withdrawn, the white hand that hung inanimate from the side was thin as a winter leaf, and her fair face, pillowed by the thick knots of her dark hair, was sunken and ashy pale, while you could see the deep blue of her eyes struggle through the closed eyelids. She was still in the attire in which she had presented herself at the house of Cincolo: perhaps her tormentor thought that her appearance as a youth would attract less compassion than if a lovely woman were thus dragged to so unnatural a scene.

Corradino was kneeling and praying when her form was thus exposed. He saw her, and saw that she was dead! About to die himself; about, pure and innocent, to die ignominiously, while his base conqueror, in pomp and glory,

was spectator of his death, he did not pity those who were at peace; his compassion belonged to the living alone, and as he rose from his prayer he exclaimed, "My beloved mother, what profound sorrow will the news thou art about to hear cause thee!" He looked upon the living multitude around him, and saw that the hard-visaged partisans of the usurper wept; he heard the sobs of his oppressed and conquered subjects; so he drew his glove from his hand and threw it among the crowd, in token that he still held his cause good, and submitted his head to the axe.

During many years after those events, Lostendardo enjoyed wealth, rank, and honour. When suddenly, while at the summit of glory and prosperity, he withdrew from the world, took the vows of a severe order in a convent, in one of the desolate and unhealthy plains by the sea-shore in Calabria; and after having gained the character of a saint, through a life of self-inflicted torture, he died murmuring the names of Corradino, Manfred, and Despina.

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EDITORIAL NOTES

[1] Manfred of Swabia (c. 1232-66, reigned 1258-66), king of Sicily, and son of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen (1194-1250, reigned 1220-50). After the death of his half-brother Conrad IV (1228-54, reigned 1237-54), Manfred became regent on behalf of his nephew Conradin and had himself crowned king of Sicily in 1258. During his reign, he tried to maintain the Hohenstaufen family's control over Sicily and Italy, facing the opposition from the papacy and Charles d'Anjou (1226-85). Charles eventually defeated Manfred at the Battle of Benevento in 1266, becoming King of Naples and Sicily as Charles I.

[2] Ghibellines, members of one of the two main political factions in Italian communal history. They supported the Holy Roman Emperor's intervention in local politics as opposed to the Pope's. They supported Manfred's, and later Conradin's, claim to the throne.

[3] Guelphs, members of one of the two main political factions in Italian communal history. They supported the Pope and Charles d'Anjou against the Holy Roman Emperor.

[4] Conradin (1252-68), Duke of Swabia (1254-68) and Manfred's nephew. When Manfred usurped his throne in 1258, he was compelled to return to Germany. After Manfred's defeat at the Battle of Benevento (1266), the Ghibellines invited Conradin back into Italy to reclaim his right to the throne. He entered Italy in September 1267, acclaimed by the Italians, but was defeated by Charles d'Anjou at Tagliacozzo on 23 August 1268. He was sentenced to death and executed in Naples on 29 October 1268.

[5] May Day, festivity in Europe, usually celebrated on the first day of May, dedicated to the return of spring.

[6] *canzonets*: a borrowing from Italian (etym. *canzonetta*), a little or short song (*OED*).

[7] Piazza del Duomo, square in the heart of Florence, where the church of Santa Reparata stood until 1375.

[8] *Carroccio* (Italian): a large war chariot used in medieval Italy, bearing the standards of the communes engaged in battle. Also used as ceremonial chariot and displayed during processions and civic ceremonies.

[9] Charles d'Anjou (1226-85), king of Naples and Sicily as Charles I from 1266 to 1285 after the Battle of Benevento (1266).

[10] *Vicare* (Italian): erroneous spelling of the Italian word *vicario* (vicar).

[11] *Monna* (Italian): syncopated form of the Italian word *Madonna*, an honorific used in Medieval Italy before female nouns as a mark of courtesy or respect.

[12] *Becari*: possible misspelling of the Italian surname *Beccai*, deriving from *beccaro* or *beccaio* (butcher). In medieval Florence, the *arte de' beccai* (Butchers' Guild) was one of the *arti minori* (minor guilds). The guild is mentioned several times by Giovanni Villani in his *Croniche* (1537), a key historical account of Florentine history, which Mary Shelley read — along with the historical writings of J.-C.-L. Sismondi and L.A. Muratori — between 1820 and 1821.

[13] *fazioles*: erroneous spelling of the Italian word *fazzuolo*, a veil used to cover the heads of women. Shelley probably had in mind the lexical variant *fazolus*, a latinized form attested in Venice from the thirteenth century, since she uses the same term when describing Venetian women in her "Recollections of Italy" (1824): "the dark eyes and finely-shaped brows of the women peeping from beneath their fazioles".

[14] *minestra* (Italian): a soup or thick stew usually served as first dish in a meal.

[15] *calrasio*: possibly Shelley's misspelling of the late Latin word *coloratio*, the root of the modern Italian term *colorazione* (colouring).

[16] *Arti Minori* (Italian): the minor guilds. Together with the *arti maggiori* (major guilds), they formed the foundation of the economic and trade organization in medieval Florence. The *arti minori* were less prestigious and powerful than the major guilds and comprised various tradespeople, including craftsmen, artisans, merchants, and butchers ('*beccai*').

[17] St. John, patron saint of Florence. The Baptistry of St. John was erected in 1059 in front of the church of Santa Reparata.

[18] *festa* (Italian): celebration, festival.

[19] Misprint for *Carroccio*.

[20] *Messer* (Italian, obsolete): honorific used before male nouns as a mark of respect.

[21] The family name *Agli* was typical of the city of Florence. Its presence is documented in Villani's *Croniche*.

[22] The Castle of Pogibonzi (Shelley's misspelling in the text) was located in present-day Poggibonsi, Tuscan town near Siena. The castle was erected on the orders of Manfred in 1252 and became a Ghibelline stronghold. Shelley is referring to the Florentine Guelphs' attack of Poggibonsi in 1267, as documented in Villani's *Croniche* (1537, bk 7, ch. 21), and in J.-C.-L. Simonde de Sismondi's *Histoire des républiques italiennes du moyen âge* (1809–18), (1818, bk 3, ch. 21:367-68).

[23] Possible reference to the heraldic lion (the *marzocco*) symbolizing the city of Florence and associated with the Guelph party.

[24] The battle of Montaperti (Shelley's misspelling in the text), 4 September 1260, was fought near Siena between the Guelph army of Florence and the Ghibelline army of Siena.

[25] Santa Reparata, co-patron saint of the city of Florence.

[26] Messer Carlo of Naples, *i.e.* Charles d'Anjou.

[27] Pisa, Italian city in the region of Tuscany, and a Ghibelline stronghold at the time.

[28] The Nerli (Shelley's misspelling in the text), the Pulci, and the Buondelmonti were prominent Guelph families mentioned in Villani's *Croniche*.

[29] Arno, one of the most important rivers in central Italy and the principal river of Tuscany.

[30] Bologna, Italian city in the region of Emilia-Romagna, well known in medieval times as a centre for trade, craftsmanship, and leatherworking, including shoemaking.

[31] "*Swabia, Cavalieri!*" (Italian): "Swabia, Knights!". Sismondi cites the expression "Souabe Chevaliers!" as a battlecry used in support of the Hohenstaufen dynasty (Sismondi 1818, bk 3, ch. 21:350).

[32] *Gesu Maria!*: Shelley's misspelling of *gesummaria*, Italian colloquial interjection, variant of the expression *Gesù e Maria!* (Jesus and Mary!).

[33] Cisalpine, term used to indicate the regions in northern Italy, literally the territories "on this side of the Alps" from the perspective of Rome.

[34] Genoa, Italian city and seaport in the region of Liguria. In early 1268, Conradin passed through Genoa during his campaign to reclaim the kingdom of Sicily from Charles d'Anjou.

[35] *Regno* (Italian): kingdom.

[36] Constantinople, present-day Istanbul, Turkey. It was restored in 1261 as the capital of the Byzantine Empire.

[37] At the time, Jews, Greeks and Muslims were minority groups that suffered hostility and persecutions from both the Pope and Charles d'Anjou.

[38] Reference to the "Frederics" in the Hohenstaufen dynasty: Frederick I Barbarossa (1122-90), Holy Roman Emperor from 1155 to 1190; his son Frederick V of Hohenstaufen (1164-70), Duke of Swabia from 1167 until his death; Frederick II (1194-1250), king of Sicily from 1198 to 1250, and Holy Roman Emperor from 1220 to 1250; and Frederick I of Baden (1249-68), Duke of Austria from 1250 to 1268.

[39] *Ave Maria* (Italian): Hail Mary, traditional Catholic prayer in honour of the Virgin Mary.

[40] Buzeccha, historical character mentioned in Giovanni Villani's *Croniche* (1537, bk 7, ch. 12).

[41] *Saracen*: term used in medieval Europe to refer to Muslims or people from the Islamic world.

[42] *Duomo* (Italian): cathedral.

[43] *Palagio del Popolo* (Italian): The Palace of the People (*palagio*: northern Italian variant and obsolete form of the word "palazzo"). Shelly is probably referring to present-day Palazzo del Bargello, which was erected in Florence between 1255 and 1261 to house the Captain of the People, an administrative figure in charge of public authority in medieval Italy. When the construction was concluded, the palace came to serve as the seat of the *Podestà*, the chief officer and executive of the city government.

[44] Count Guido Novello Guidi (1227-93) (Shelley's misspelling of the surname in the text), Italian politician, member of one of the most prominent Ghibelline families in Florence in the second half of the thirteenth century. He was Manfred's vicar in Tuscany and was forced to leave Florence after Manfred's defeat in the Battle of Benevento.

[45] For this anecdote, Shelley closely draws from Giovanni Villani's *Croniche* (1537, bk 7, ch. 12:66).

[46] Misprint for *authoritative*.

[47] Reference to the Guelph family of the Bostichi (Shelley's misspelling in the text), mentioned in Giovanni Villani's *Croniche* (1537, bk 6, ch. 33:48).

[48] *Campanile* (Italian): bell tower.

[49] Misprint for *Gegia*.

[50] Guillaume Étendard (1217-71), mentioned as "Guielmo lo Stendardo" by Giovanni Villani (1537, bk 7, ch. 4:63), was a French admiral and general who served Charles d'Anjou. He took part in the Battle of Benevento against Manfred and in the Battle of Tagliacozzo (1268) against Conradin.

[51] Elisabeth of Bavaria (c. 1227-73), Conradin's mother and former wife to the Emperor Conrad IV. She supported Conradin in asserting his claim to the throne of Sicily.

[52] *re sides*: *re-sides*, hyphen not present (probably effaced) in the copy-text.

[53] *Palagio del Governo* (Italian): Palace of the Government. Shelley is likely referring to the Palazzo del Popolo, which served as the seat of the city government at the time.

[54] *Palagio Reale* (Italian): Royal Palace. Shelly is probably referring to Castel Capuano (Naples), royal residence in the second half of the thirteenth century.

[55] *Queen Sibilla*: Helena Doukaina (1242-71), daughter of Michael II, despot of Epirus (c. 1206-68, reigned 1230-68), and queen of Sicily as the second wife of Manfred from 1259 to 1266. While all of Shelley's historical sources mention Manfred's second wife, Shelley misnamed her as 'Sibilla' after Sismondi (1818, bk 3, ch. 21:352) and Muratori (1744, bk 7:371). Shelley also refers to Manfred's second wife as Sibilla in her article "Giovanni Villani", published in the fourth issue of *The Liberal*, p. 193.

[56] A reference to the river in purgatory, mentioned by the character of Manfred in Dante's *Divine Comedy*: "l'ossa del corpo mio sarieno ancora | in co del ponte presso a Benevento, | […] Or le bagna la pioggia e move il vento | di fuor dal regno, quasi lungo 'l Verde, | dov'e' le trasmutò a lume spento" (trans. "The bones of my body would still be | at the bridge, near Benevento, […] | Now the rain wets them, and the wind moves them | beyond the realm, almost beside the Verde, | where he transported them with extinguished light"), *Purg*. III.127-32.

[57] Frederick II and his son Conrad IV.

[58] Clement IV (c.1200-68; pope 1265-68). He continued the policy of Urban IV (c.1195-1264; pope 1261-64) by remaining faithful to the house d'Anjou. He confirmed the sentence of excommunication ordered by his predecessor against Manfred and invited Charles d'Anjou into Italy after Manfred had declared himself king. Clement's support of Charles was decisive in the defeat and killing of Manfred in the battle of Benevento (1266).

[59] *De Profundis* (Latin): out of the depths. Opening words of the Latin version of *Psalm* 130, whose subject is repentance. The expression is commonly used in the Catholic funeral liturgy as a prayer for the dead.

[60] Misprint for *Cincolo*.

[61] Porta Romana, the southernmost gate in Florence's city walls. The reference is anachronistic, as Porta Romana was constructed around 1326. Villani also mentions the gate in his *Croniche* (Villani 1537, bk 9, ch. 257:159-60).

[62] *Mercato Nuovo* (Italian): New Marketplace, area in Florence created to supplement the existing market, used in medieval times for trade and commercial activities.

[63] Carcere delle Stinche (Shelley's misspelling in the text), medieval prison in Florence, located near the present-day Piazza della Repubblica. The reference to the prison is anachronistic, as its construction was authorised in 1297 (Wolfgang 1960, 155) and the first inmates were incarcerated in 1304 (Villani 1537, bk 8, ch. 74:116 [sic]).

64 Sesto di Oltrarno, district covering the area south of the Arno River.

65 Gangalandi (Shelley's misspelling in the text) is both the name of a Ghibelline family mentioned by Villani (1537, bk 4, ch. 2:24) and Sismondi (1818, bk 2, ch. 17:329) and the name used to designate the lands owned by the Gangalandi family in Tuscany.

66 *contadini* (Italian): farmers.

67 *Podesta* (Italian): Shelley's misspelling of *Podestà*, chief officer and executive of the city government in Italian communal history.

68 Vicopisano (Shelley uses Villani's spelling in the text), town in Tuscany, near Pisa.

69 *the palace of the Lanfranchi*: the Lanfranchi were a Pisan Ghibelline family, mentioned by Villani (1537, bk 7, ch. 120:89). Shelley likely refers to one of the palaces owned by the family at the time, and not to present-day Palazzo Lanfranchi, which became the residence of the Lanfranchi family in 1539.

70 Lucchese, area near Lucca, city in Tuscany.

71 Count Gherardo Donoratico (Shelley uses Villani's spelling of the surname in the text), Pisan aristocrat and supported of Conradin. According to the historical sources, he was beheaded in Naples after Conradin's execution in 1268 (Villani 1537, bk 7, ch. 29:71; Muratori 1744, bk 7:385; Sismondi 1818, bk 3, ch. 21:389).

72 Viterbo, city in central Italy, northwest of Rome, where Clement IV set his permanent residence in 1266.

73 Palazzo dei Papi (the Palace of the Popes) in Viterbo, completed around 1266.

74 Frederick I of Baden (1249-68), Duke of Austria from 1250 until his death in 1268. He supported his cousin Conradin during his Italian campaign and fought with him in the Battle of Tagliacozzo.

75 Torre Astura (Shelley uses Villani's spelling), fortified tower near Rome belonging to the Frangipane family.

76 The Frangipane family (Shelley uses Sismondi's and Muratori's spelling of the name) was an aristocratic Roman family. According to historical accounts, Giovanni Frangipane captured Conradin at Torre Astura as he attempted to flee toward Rome, and handed him over to Charles d'Anjou (Sismondi 1818, bk 3, ch. 21:385; Muratori 1744, bk 7:384).

77 The Battle of Tagliacozzo (Shelley's misspelling in the text) was the final conflict in the Angevin-Hohenstaufen struggle for the control of Southern Italy. It was fought on 23 August 1268 on the plain of Tagliacozzo, east of Rome, between the armies of Charles d'Anjou and Conradin. The battle ended with the decisive defeat of Conradin's forces.

78 Robert of Béthune (1249-1322), count of Flanders from 1305 to 1322. In 1265, he married Blanche d'Anjou (?-1269), daughter of Charles d'Anjou.

79 Vesuvius, volcano that rises above the Gulf of Naples.