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ART. I.—SAVONAROLA.

FEW men have excited such strong sympathies and equally strong antipathies among divines, historians and poets, and been submitted to such contradictory judgments both in the Roman Catholic and Protestant communion, as Jerome Savonarola, the leader and martyr of an unsuccessful politico-religious reform movement in Italy, and one of the most prominent and remarkable of the mediæval forerunners of Protestantism. He has been extravagantly lauded by the one as an inspired prophet, reformer and wonder-working saint, and as unjustly condemned by others as a priest-demagogue, a deluded fanatic, or a hypocritical impostor. It is still an unsettled question whether he resembled more St. Bernard or Arnold of Brescia, Luther or Thomas Münzer, Charles Borromeo or Gavazzi. He was burned as a heretic and schismatic under the excommunication of one pope, and almost canonized by another. Luther, Flacius, Beza, Arnold hailed him as a witness of the truth in the dark night of popery and as the prophet of the reformation; while latter Protestants, as the skeptic Bayle, the pietistic Buddeus,* and the liberal Roscoe, the enthusiastic admirer of Lorenzo de' Medici, assigned

* Buddeus, however, retracted in latter life the unfavorable view which he had maintained in his *exercitatio historico-politica de artibus tyrannicis H. Savonarolæ*.

him a place among impostors or fanatics. In our own age he found new, though more moderate and discriminating apologists, mostly on the Protestant side, in such biographers as Rudelbach and Hase. Poetry also has revived and idealized his memory through the immortal epos of Lenau, which bears the name of the monk of San Marco.*

Fra Girolamo Savonarola was born September 21, 1452, at Ferrara of a respectable family, originally from Padua. He received a careful education according to the standard of his age with his five brothers and two sisters. He was destined for the medical profession, in which his grandfather, Michael Savonarola, the physician of Nicholas, Prince of Este, had acquired great distinction. But his serious religious disposition pointed him to a different direction. Even in his boyhood he loved retirement and avoided the gardens of the ducal palace, the favorite play ground of the youth of Ferrara. In his twenty-third year the growing conviction of the corruption of the world and the Church in his vicinity, drove him from the house of the parents to a Dominican convent at Bologna, where he hoped to work out the problem of his salvation. Two days after the arrival he wrote to his father: "I could not support the enor-

* The documents on the Life of Savonarola have been published in great part by *Quetif*, Paris, 1674, and more recently by the learned Dominican *Marchese* in *Archivio storico Italiano*. Tomo VIII. Firenze 1850, and by *Giudici* in *Appendice alla storia dei municipi Italiano*. Firenze 1850. The following are the most valuable biographies of Sav. *Pacifico Burlamacchi* (died 1619): *Vita del P. Girolamo Savonarola*, ed. Mansi, Lucca 1761 (in *Miscellanea St. Baluzii*, vol. 1). *Joan. Franc. Pico*. *Mirandulæ Principe* (nephew of the more celebrated scholar Giovanni Pico de Mirandola): *Vita R. P. Hieron. Savonarolæ*. 1530, ed. Quetif (with other documents), Paris, 1674. *Bartoli*, *Dominicano: Apologia del P. Savon*. Firenze 1782. *A. G. Rudelbach*: *Hieronymus Savon. und seine Zeit*. Hamburg, 1835. *Fr. Carl Meier*: *Girol. Savon., aus grossentheils handschriftlichen Quellen dargestellt*. Berlin. 1836. *Carl Hase*: *Neue Propheten. Drei historisch-politische Kirchenbilder*. Leipzig, 1851. p. 97—144, and p. 304, ff. (Compare also Hase's *Church Hist.* § 293, p. 380 ff. of the seventh edition). *F. T. Perrons*: *Jérome Savon., sa vie, ses predications, ses écrits, d'après les documents originaux et avec des pièces justificatives en grande partie inédites*. Paris and Turin, 1853, 2 vols. *R. R. Madden*: *The Life and Martyrdom of Savon*, 2nd ed., London, 1854. 2 vols. Compare also an instructive and judicious article on Savon. in the *London Quarterly Review*, N. 197, for July, 1856. The main facts are also incidentally noticed in the historical works of Guicciardini, Nardi, Commines, Roscoe and Sismondi. Of Lenau's *Savonarola* the third edition appeared at Stuttgart, 1849.

mous wickedness of most of the people of Italy. Every where I saw virtue despised, vice in honor. When God, in answer to my prayer, condescended to show me the right way, could I decline it? Oh, gentle Jesus, may I suffer a thousand deaths rather than oppose thy will and show myself ungrateful for thy goodness." Then he asks his father to forgive him the secrecy of his departure, or flight rather, which had cost him bitter torment, and assures him that he would not return to the world, to be Cæsar. "As a man of strong mind, I beseech you, comfort my mother, and both of you send me, I entreat you, your blessing."

Even at that early period of life, he seems to have looked upon Rome as the source of the corruption in the Church, if Rians, the editor of Savonarola's poems (which are not of much importance), is right in his calculation as to the date of the poem *de ruina mundi*. For there, in the fifth stanza, he makes the bold assertion that the downfall of Rome was necessary to a reformation.

"La terra è sì oppressa da ogni vizio
Che mai da se non leverà la soma,
A terra se ne va il suo capo Roma,
Per mai non tornar al grande offizio."

At first Fra Girolamo wished to occupy a very humble position and performed the meanest services in the convent. But his superiors made better use of his talents and soon employed him as a teacher of what was then called philosophy and natural science. His favorite studies were the writings of Thomas Aquinas, the standard divine of the Dominican order, of St. Augustine, and the Bible. The last he knew in great part by heart.* There are still four copies of the Scriptures in different libraries at Florence, with annotations from his hand. His fervid imagination was captivated by the prophets of the Old Testament, and the Revelation of St. John. He made their terrible de-

* So says his personal friend and biographer, Count Giovanni Francesco Pico de Mirandola, in *Vita R. P. Fr. Hier. Sav.* c. 4: ut totum fere sacrorum canonem et memoria teneret et profunde exacteque (quantum homini licet) intelligeret.

nunciatory language his own, and felt it his duty to apply it to the prevailing vices and corruptions of the age. He became convinced that he was a divinely commissioned prophet and soon mistook his own inferences from the Scriptures for divine inspirations.

His first pulpit efforts, however, were by no means encouraging. The number of hearers, attracted by his growing fame as one of the most learned and pious members of the Dominican order, dwindled down to twenty-five, so that he retired for a period and reassumed the humble office of a reader. But suddenly, at Brescia, the hidden power of his eloquence broke forth and made an extraordinary impression. He preached on the Apocalypse, of which it has been said : *aut insanum inveniet aut faciet*. He declared that one of the twenty-three, or rather twenty-four elders was commissioned to reveal to him the terrible judgment which should shortly fall upon Italy and especially upon the city of Brescia. At first, however, he gave his announcements of the approaching doom and reformation not as revelations, but as the conclusions of his reason from the Scriptures.*

From this time he soon rose to the position of the first pulpit orator of Italy, and wielded an extraordinary influence over his hearers till the year of his downfall. His voice was rather harsh, his gesticulation at first somewhat awkward ; † but his speech was full of passion, fire, and earnestness, surging up from the inmost depth of his soul and flowing forth, in true Italian style, from his eyes, his hands, his features, as well as from his lips. He spoke with authority, as one who believed to be entrusted with a divine commission. The fervid imagination of his Italian admirers, as we learn from Burlammacchi, in speaking of the

* "Non perrivelazione, ma per ragione delle Scritture." So he confessed himself in the trial as regards his first reformation sermon at San Gemignano.

† Pico, however, gives him also a good voice and agreeable manner : "Pronunciabat voce libera et acuta, non fervido solum, sed ardenti vultu, gestuque venustissimo. Ita vero illabebatur in auditorum aures, imo vero in præcordia, ut attentos eos extra se pacem raperet."

days of his glory in Florence, beheld angels hovering over him on the pulpit, and the holy Virgin herself giving force to his benedictions, palms of martyrdom adorning his head, and even blood welling from his side !

In the thirty-eighth year of his age, A. D., 1490, (according to others, in 1489), he was sent by his superiors to Florence as teacher of the novices of the convent of San Marco. It is still full of recollections of his fame, and possesses besides considerable artistic interest by the frescoes of Fra Beato Angelico, who there embodied his prayers in pictures of angelic beauty. Here commences properly Savonarola's career as a politico-ecclesiastical reformer. To understand it fully, we must call to mind the actual condition of Florence at that time.

The republic of Florence, the city of Dante, surpassed in the fourteenth century all Italian cities in wealth, power and culture. Villani represents in its history the history of all Italy. Machiavelli furnished in his Florentine history a practical manual of political science. In the beginning of the fifteenth century a commercial house, the celebrated Medici family, rose gradually and almost imperceptibly to princely dignity and influence by enormous wealth and prudence, and made the beautiful city on the banks of the Arno, the centre of the reviving classical literature and art. Cosimo de' Medici (died 1464), who as a Rothschild of his age, indebted to him nearly all the crowned heads of Europe, including the Pope, and patronized, at the same time, on the most liberal scale, the sciences and arts, both from policy and taste, was the first to exercise monarchical power under republican forms, although the people, jealous of their sovereignty, banished him for one year (1434). After his sickly son, Piero, his highly gifted grandson, Lorenzo the Magnificent, confirmed and increased the power of that house. Roscoe regards him as the most extraordinary man of his age, especially as a statesman.*

* The Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, called the Magnificent. Bohn's edition, page 9.

He gave up the commercial business, married a princess Orsini, and was himself called "principe," in the duplicity of the Italian and Roman language. Yet he wrote to his first born: "Although thou art my son, remember that thou art only a citizen of Florence." After the failure of the Pazzi conspiracy; which gives us a fearful picture of the Italian state of morals at the time, an archbishop and even a pope being the prominent actors in its criminal schemes, he maintained his temperate, but undisputed sway to his death in 1492, and left it to the less prudent and less vigorous hands of his son, Piero II., while his younger son, Giovanni, was crowned already in his thirteenth year with a cardinal's hat and destined to ascend as Leo X, the papal throne, at the most critical period of its greatest power and greatest danger. The nephew of Lorenzo likewise attained the pontifical dignity as Clement VII.

Such then was the condition of Florence when Savonarola began his career as a preacher of repentance and republican agitator. The liberty of the people was sold to a highly gifted family of bankers; the public treasury embarrassed by reckless expenditure; heathen literature and secular culture flourished more than ever, but in connection with all sorts of sensual enjoyments; the outward forms of religion were observed, but the inward condition of the Church was rotten to the core, and only too faithfully represented by the worldly and immoral popes, who immediately preceded the Reformation. We may apply to this Medicean age the words which Lenau puts into the mouth of Savonarola:

"Die Künste der Hellenen kannten
Nicht den Erlöser und sein Licht,
D'rum scherzten sie so gern und nannten
Des Schmerzes tiefsten Abgrund nicht."

With this Medicean family and with the cotemporary pope Alexander VI, who in wickedness surpassed all his predecessors in the latter days of Avignon and during the age of the "pornocracy" in the tenth century, Savonarola

entered into a conflict of life and death. The two leading ideas of his mind and passions of his heart were the reformation of the Church, and the liberty of Italy. By them he shook the Florentine commonwealth to its base; by them he prepared himself a tragical death, and acquired an immortal name among the martyrs of reform before the reformation.

The mendicant friar opened his activity first in a close hall, then in the garden of San Marco. The growing multitude of hearers compelled him to preach in the church. On the first of August, 1491, he began a series of sermons on his favorite Apocalypse, and derived from it the practical theme: The Church of God must and will be renewed; but before this God will inflict heavy judgments upon Italy; both will take place in the present generation. This he announced with the confidence of divine inspiration. He uncovered the abyss of corruption, that yawned under the splendor of this modern heathenism. He spared no class and condition of society, but attacked with special severity the vices of the clergy and the monks. "Ye know nothing of the Scriptures," he tells them, "ye do not even know grammar; and this would be tolerable, if you were of good life and did set a good example. You keep concubines, ye do worse, ye are notorious gamblers; ye lead lives more flagitious than the seculars, and it is an awful shame that the people should be better than the clergy. I speak not of the good, but of the bad. Give up your mules, give up your hounds and your slaves; waste not the things of Christ, the gains of your benefices on hounds and mules. And the same I have to say to the bishops. If you do not yield up your superfluous benefices which you hold, I tell you, and I proclaim to you, (and this is the word of the Lord), you will lose your lives, your benefices and all your wealth, and ye shall go to the mansion of the devil." "Your sins," he says in another sermon, "make me a prophet. Hitherto I was the prophet Jonas, who exhorted Nineveh to repent. But I tell you, if you do not listen to me, I shall become the prophet Jere-

miah, who announced the downfall of Jerusalem and then wept over the ruins of the city. For God will renew his Church, and that has never been done yet without blood." Every image, every word, every event in the prophets of the Old Testament, and the Revelation of John, he applied directly and immediately to his age and country, as if it had all been revealed for the special benefit of Florence, of Rome, of Italy, at the end of the fifteenth century. In an exegetical point of view, his wild allegorical interpretations of prophecy are absolutely worthless. But as specimens of an impassioned Italian eloquence and effectual practical application, they are remarkable.

It was, however, not so much a doctrinal, as a practical and disciplinary reformation which Savonarola aimed at. Wycliffe, Huss, Wesel, Wessel, Goch, and several other mediæval forerunners of the reformation, made a much nearer approach to the doctrinal positions of Protestantism. He felt himself in harmony with the traditional creed of the Roman Catholic Church, as much so as the leaders of the reformatory councils of Pisa, Constance and Basle. He held the holy Virgin in high veneration as the patroness of Florence. His views on practical piety were monastic and ascetic. The severe rigor of the law predominates largely in his sermons, over the winning power of the Gospel. Even in his uncompromising antagonism to the pope and the Roman corruptions, he proceeded more from moral, than dogmatic principles. But we must make allowance for his age and position. The ultimate tendency of his work looked evidently to a thorough reformation of the Catholic Church, which twenty years after his death broke forth with such irresistible force in Germany and Switzerland.

A year after his settlement in Florence (1491) Savonarola was elected prior of the Convent of San Marco. Contrary to custom, he refused to pay a visit on this occasion to the head of the State. This was the more improper as Lorenzo, and his grandfather, Cosmo, were liberal patrons of the Convent. He feared the friendship of Lorenzo more than his enmity. He regarded him as the chief represen-

tative of that polished worldliness, which he hated with all the rigor of an ascetic, and as the enemy of the liberty of the people. He directed the arrow of his denunciatory eloquence occasionally to the palace of the Medici and undermined their power. Lorenzo employed all the means of courtesy and prudence to secure the favor of the influential prior; but his tempting offers and indirect bribes were rejected with scorn. In his last sickness he sent for him and asked absolution at his hands. For he was accustomed to pay the Church all the respect which decency and prudence seemed to demand. Savonarola required from him faith, a restitution of all his ill-gotten gains, and the restoration of liberty to Florence. Lorenzo complied with the first two conditions; at the third demand he turned the face to the wall in silence, and the friar withdrew. Politian, however, who was present, says nothing of the last condition, which rests only on the authority of Burchiellacci and may be a latter addition. According to Politian's account, the prince promised in the strongest terms to amend his life, and received the blessing of the Prior, making the responses in the firmest and gentlest tone.

Lorenzo died, April 8, 1492. His son Piero, had neither his talents nor his moderation. In the same year (Aug. 2) the infamous Cardinal Borgia, a man of uncommon energy and sagacity, and still greater vices, ascended the papal throne as Alexander VI. He had shamelessly bought the triple crown and soiled it with perjury, murder, and incest.* Savonarola at first acquiesced with the rest of Florence in the sovereignty of the new ruler. Perrens quotes a passage which reads almost like adulation of Piero, and contrasts strongly with his harsh demeanor to Lorenzo. But he continued in the style, if not with the

* It is distinctly asserted by the distinguished historian, Guicciardini, and others, that Alexander, together with his two sons, kept criminal intercourse with his daughter, Lucretia Borgia. But W. Roscoe, while he denounces this pope as "the scourge of Christendom and the opprobrium of the human race," (*Life of Lorenzo*, p. 336), has undertaken the defence of his infamous daughter. (*Life of Leo X*, Bohn's ed. p. 323, ff.)

authority, of the old prophets, to chastise the sins of the government and to announce in a time of profound peace, the approaching judgment of God over the tyrants of Italy. "The divine word," says Roscoe, "descended not amongst his audience like the dews of heaven; it was the piercing hail, the sweeping whirlwind, the destroying sword."* "Eccegladius Domini super terram cito et velociter," was his oft repeated text, which, however, is not found in this form in the Bible. "I will tell you, he will come in a storm, in the form of Elijah, and the storm will shake the mountains. Over the Alps he will come against Italy, as Cyrus, of whom Isaiah writes."

Soon afterwards, in August, 1494, Charles VIII. of France, crossed the Apennines with a powerful army, but not, as Savonarola hoped and urged, to free Florence and to reform the Church, but to take possession of the vacant throne of Naples. Piero de'Medici concluded a disgraceful treaty and surrendered all the fortified places to the enemy during the war. Florence rose in fury. Piero and all his faction were declared rebels and traitors. They fled from the city and took refuge in Bologna.

This was the crisis, which raised Savonarola to the height of power. He called an assembly of the people to the cathedral and became by common consent the lawgiver of Florence. He laid down four great principles as the ground-work of the new order of things, 1) Fear God; 2) Prefer the good of the republic to your own; 3) A general amnesty; 4) A general council framed on the model of that of Venice, but without a doge. His political and social views he derived substantially from Thomas Aquinas, who had spent much profound thought on the science of government. Like St. Thomas, Savonarola was no enemy to monarchy, but only to despotism. He regarded monarchy as founded in the government of God, the primacy of Peter, and the order of nature—even bees follow a queen. But the peculiar condition of Florence call for a republic. God alone, he said, will be thy King, O Florence, as he was the

* Life of Lorenzo de'Med., p. 293.

King of Israel, and rebuked them for their desire to have an earthly king, as if he had forsaken them. In this theocracy or christocracy, the principle of love to God and charity to the neighbor, prayers and paternosters should rule. All the exiles were called back with the exception of the Medici.

The people exclaimed, *Viva Christo, Viva Firenze*, and entrusted Savonarola in the beginning of 1495 with the organization of the commonwealth on the basis of the ancient Florentine republic and his own theocratic ideal. It comprehended at that time about four hundred and fifty thousand souls, according to curious statistical returns published by Roscoe. About three thousand two hundred of them constituted the Great Council, (*Consiglio Maggiore*), i. e., the citizens with the right of suffrage and of taking part in public affairs. The Select Council (*Consiglio degli Scelti*) consisted of eighty members, who were elected half-yearly from the Great Council and entrusted with the legislative power. The executive power rested in the Signory. It was supreme under the control of the Great Council and under Jesus Christ, the only sovereign, who, together with the holy Virgin took special care of Florence and its new constitution. Savonarola's office and position was anomalous and undefined, but only the more influential on that account. It resembled that of the judges in Israel, or of a Roman censor with dictatorial power. He was properly the agent and representative of Christ, the oracular organ of the theocracy. He ruled from the pulpit, his throne, and from his monastic cell the Signory and the Council, and inspired into it his fervid, ascetic and religious enthusiasm. As to the details of the administration he gave himself no concern. "My mind," he confessed afterwards, "was always engaged in great and general affairs, the government of Florence and the reformation of the Church, and cared but little about small things."

The power which this monk exerted as the prophet, legislator and judge of this theocratic republic, during more than three years, is extraordinary, and admitted even by

the sober historian, Guicciardini, and the shrewd politician, Machiavelli. The latter, who bases the civil government on purely secular interests, attributes his ruin to popular envy and jealousy, which rises against any person of too elevated a position. The whole population was carried away by his sermons and put them into practice. The theocratic republic had its *pacieri* or peace-officers, who kept order and silence in the church and on the streets; its *correttori*, who inflicted punishments on the delinquents; *limosinieri*, who made collections for religious objects; *lustratori*, who attended to the cleanliness of the crosses and other objects of worship; and even young inquisitors, or boy-censors, who watched over the conduct of men and women, including their parents and the negligent magistrates, stole into houses, seized cards, chessboards, bad books and musical instruments, and burned them up. Ill-gotten gains were restored. Deadly enemies embraced each other. Secular amusements, even the favorite horse-races on St. John's day, were given up. Many women left their husbands to enter a convent, others married with a vow of continence either for a time or forever; Savonarola declared that in a perfect state marriage would cease altogether in Florence. Fasting was a pleasure. The communion, heretofore celebrated hardly once in a year, became the daily food of the faithful. Crowds from the city, and the country, even from Pisa and Leghorn, flocked to the cathedral, where the seats were built up in an amphitheatre, and where the pulpit bore the inscription: "Jesus Christ, King of the city of Florence," to hear their spiritual leader thunder against the *Tiepidi* or the lukewarm; the *Arrabiati*, who were infuriated at his doctrines; the *Compagnacci*, or libertines, who detested his austerities and longed for the return of the gay times of the Medici; against luxury, usury, covetousness, sensuality, gambling, splendid and immodest apparel. Frequently in the midst of their devotions they rushed to the public squares, crying *Viva Christo*, dancing in circles, and singing the hymns of Savonarola and his disciple, Girolamo Benivieni. The celebra-

brated painter, Fra Bartolomeo, also a Dominican of San Marco, cast all his naked figures into the fire, and was disposed at times to give up painting altogether as in itself sinful. A cotemporary remarks, "The whole people of Florence went crazy from love to Christ." "And yet," replied Savonarola, "there is no higher wisdom than this folly for Christ's sake." But how easily such a frantic zeal for religion turns over into downright profanity, may be seen from the procession on Palm Sunday in 1496, which was to take the place of the carnival. Not less than 8000 children with red crosses, and grown persons clad in white, like children, went dancing before the tabernacle in the public place and chanting the wildest Christian Bacchanalia:

" Non fu mai più bel solazzo
 Più giocondo ne maggiore,
 Che per zelo e per amore
 Di Giesù divenir pazzo,
 Ognun grida com' io grido
 Semper pazzo, pazzo, pazzo."

In a sermon of the following Monday in the holy week, Savonarola sanctioned all this sacred revelry by the example of David dancing before the ark; of Elijah running and dancing before the King when the rain came down; of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, when they were charged with intoxication; of St. Paul, when accused of madness by Festus; yea of Christ himself, of whom the people said, "He is beside himself," (Mark 3, 21).*

Such an extravagant enthusiasm could, in the nature of the case, not last long. The Italians are a most excitable and changable people. They had long lost the virtues necessary to secure and enjoy the freedom of law and the law of freedom. The natural spirit of Florence reacted against the rule of a monastic theocracy and conspired with a powerful ally, the pope, against Savonarola.

A more striking contrast than is presented to us in Savonarola and the cotemporary Alexander VI, can hardly be

* Predica 41, sopra Amos.

imagined. It was impossible that the most rigorous monk and the most dissolute pope could long remain at the head of two neighboring States. The Dominican reformer directed the severest blows of his denunciatory eloquence to what he abhorred as the source of all the corruptions of the Church, the Romish Babylon and its monstrous representative. The cunning pope tried at first to silence him by tempting bribes, and offered him the archbishopric of Florence with the prospect of a Cardinal's hat. The monk replied: I wish no other red hat, but the hat of martyrdom.* Then Alexander cited him to Rome, first by polite invitation, then by peremptory demand. Savonarola refused, assigning as excuses, sickness, engagement and the danger of assassination on the way. The pope, in October, 1496, prohibited him to preach and threatened him with excommunication. Savonarola suspended his sermons for a short time, but following the impulse of his spirit and encouraged by his ardent admirers, he ascended the pulpit again. Still bound in the chains of the Romish system he labored to reconcile his open rebellion against Alexander with the doctrine of absolute obedience to the successor of St. Peter, and bewildered himself and his hearers by sophistical distinctions. "Who has inhibited my preaching? You say, the pope. I answer you, it is false. But here are the briefs. I deny that they are of the pope. You say, the pope cannot err. This is true, but it is equally true that a Christian, as far as he is a Christian, cannot sin. Yet many Christians sin, because they are men. Thus the pope, as far as he is pope, cannot err; when he errs, he is not pope. If he commands that which is wrong, he does not command it as pope. It follows, then, that this brief, which is such a wicked brief, is not from the pope. It is of the devil, not of God. I say, and you know it, that I am manifestly sent by God to tell you this distinctly; and I must preach, though I have to contend against the

* "so non voglio cappelli, non mitre grande nè piciole; non voglio se non quello che tu hai dato alli tuoi Santi; la morte, uno cappello rosso, uno cappello di sangue."

whole world, and I shall conquer in the end." He thus laid claim to a commission superior to that of the pope, and appealed from the infallibility of Alexander to the infallibility of his private judgment. With manifest allusion to him he declared, "The popes disdain the more decorous vice of nepotism ; they publicly call their bastards by the name of sons." He spoke also, like Crysostom, of the Herodias dancing and demanding the head of John the Baptist.

In the meantime, however, the affairs at home and the political aspect of the country turned rather against him. The Franciscans, always jealous of the Dominicans, sided with the pope in the attempt to ruin him. A plague broke out in Florence, (June, 1496), for which he knew no miraculous cure, except works of charity. Perrens charges him with a want of Christian courage and self-denial in avoiding exposure and shutting himself up in his cell ; but other authorities say, that he refused the many places of retirement offered to him, and remained to console the afflicted, the secular as well as the brethren. Charles VIII, of France, from whom he had hoped in vain a regeneration of Italy and the Church, was compelled to withdraw soon after the conquest of Naples, as the Italian States, led by the pope, united against him. Florence became very unpopular on account of her French alliance, and was threatened by invasion from the neighbors. The Medicean party made an effort to regain its power, and united with the Arrabiati (the malignants) against the common object of their hatred. At one time they desecrated the pulpit with filth and placed a dead ass on the preacher's seat. Then a conspiracy was formed, supposed to have its centre in Rome. It was discovered in time, and ended with the summary execution of the five leaders of high rank, (Aug. 21, 1497), without their being permitted to appeal to the Great Council. But the friends of the Medicean faction meditated revenge, and threatened the life of Savonarola, who had not lifted up his voice for mercy. His friends found it necessary to give him a military guard on his way to the pulpit.

Encouraged by these circumstances, the pope threw off

all his temporizing lenity. In May and again in October, 1497, he hurled the sentence of excommunication against Savonarola on account of heretical doctrines and obstinate rebellion to the holy see. The sentence was to be publicly read in the churches.

Savonarola, encouraged by a new Signory elected January 1st, 1498, and consisting mainly of the Frateschi, his partisans, celebrated mass in great splendor, gave the holy elements to the magistrates, ascended the pulpit and commenced his last course of sermons, on Exodus, while the Arrabiati beat drums around the cathedral, threw stones and endeavored to interrupt the services in every way. He denied the charge of heresy, declared the sentence of excommunication null and void and appealed from the earthly pope to the heavenly head of the Church. "I lay down this axiom, there is no man that may not deceive himself. The pope himself may err. You are mad if you deny it. How many wicked popes have there been who have erred. How many constitutions have popes issued, annulled by other popes; how many opinions of popes are contrary to those of other popes. . . Our doctrine has enforced holy living; their doctrine leads to all evil doings, to luxuriant eating and drinking, to avarice, concubinage, to the sale of benefices, to many lies and to all wickedness. Christ! on which side wilt thou be?—on that of truth or of lies? of the excommunicated or of the blessed? . . . The Lord will be with the excommunicated, the Devil with the blessed." He is said to have declared that he would rather go to hell than to ask absolution from such a pope.

At the same time he prepared himself for the worst, and exhorted men, women and children to be ready to die for Christ. "If you ask me," he said in a sermon at the end of March, "what will be the end of this conflict, I say: Victory. If you ask more particularly, I answer: Death. The master after having used the hammer, casts it off. So he did with Jeremiah, whom he permitted to be stoned at the end of his preaching. But Rome can not extinguish this fire, and if it should be extinguished, God will kindle

another, and it is already kindled every where, although they do not know it."

At the carnival of that year the most gorgeous religious processions were held and an auto-da-fe celebrated in the presence of the Signory; marble busts of female beauties, ancient and modern, splendid copies of Petrarca and Boccaccio were publicly committed to the flames, amidst the sound of trumpets, the ringing of bells and the chanting of the *Te Deum*; then followed another procession and wild dances of friars, priests, and laymen of every age, "whirling round in fantastic reel, to the passionate and profanely-sounding hymns of Jerome Benivieni."

Alexander was furious, and menaced Florence with the terrible interdict, if the city permitted the excommunicated monk to preach. The Signory endeavored to conciliate him. But Savonarola boldly appealed to Christendom and wrote letters to the emperor of Germany, the kings of France, Spain, England and Hungary, urging them earnestly to call a free Council for the reformation of the Church and the deposition of a pope, who was no pope, but guilty of sacrilegious simony and the most monstrous vices, who was no Christian, but an absolute infidel and atheist.* Of these fatal letters one was intercepted by the Duke of Milan and forwarded to Rome. On the 13th of March the pope dispatched a new bull imperatively commanding the Signory to execute the former decrees. The Council was divided; the Piagnoni and the Arabbiati contested every point. Finally they entreated the monk, for the sake of the peace of Florence, to cease from preaching.

At this juncture, Savonarola thought proper to obey, and preached a farewell sermon in the confident hope that the Lord would soon compel him to ascend the pulpit again.

* Ad Imperatorem: Affirmo ipsum non esse Christianum qui nullum prorsus putans Deum esse, omne infidelitatis et impietatis culmen excessit. Ad Reg. Hisp.: Scitote enim hunc Alexandrum VI. minime pontificem esse, qui non potest non modo ob simoniacam sacrilegamque pontificatus usurpationem et manifesta ejus scelera; sed propter secreta facinora a nobis loco et tempore proferenda quae universus mirabitur et execrabitur orbis. See the Italian translation of these two Epistles in full in Rudelbach's biography of Savon. p. 462 ff. The Latin original was first published by Perrens.

But he was mistaken. His own indiscretion and the fanaticism of his disciples precipitated his fate. He solemnly appealed, on the balcony of the church of St. Marc, with the host in his hand, to a judgment of God, and proposed, according to the superstition of the age, the ordeal of fire or other miraculous tests, such as the raising of a dead body, whereby the Almighty himself might decide the momentous question concerning the truth or falsehood of his preaching and prophecy. Other accounts state that the first challenge proceeded from the Franciscans, who always jealous of the Dominicans, were his most bitter enemies. At all events, one of them, Fra Francesco di Puglia, preacher of the church of Santa Croce, (now the pantheon of Italian geniuses), was willing to stand the ordeal of fire. Savonarola, whose courage in action was by no means equal to his courage in word, vacillated, and then declined the perilous appeal. But his devoted friend and partizan, Fra Domenico Buonvicini, the aged prior of the Dominican Convent at Fiesole, eagerly accepted the challenge. Other monks of St. Mark, and even women and children declared themselves ready to risk their lives for what they regarded the cause of God. As Fra Francesco would not condescend to confront any other adversary than Savonarola, a Franciscan convert, Giuliano di Rondinelli, took his place as the champion of the Franciscan order and the cause of the pope, against Fra Domenico, the champion of the Dominican order and the divine mission of Savonarola.

The midday hour of the seventh of April, 1498, the same day, in which Charles VIII of France suddenly died, was fixed upon for the terrible trial, by which the following propositions of Savonarola, drawn up in legal form, were to be sanctioned or condemned by the miraculous interposition of God. 1) The Church of God must and shall be reformed after being scourged (flagellato). 2) After the visitation of divine judgments, Florence, like the Church, will attain to great prosperity. 3) The infidels will be converted to Christianity. 4) These things will take place in the present generation. 5) The papal excommunication

is null and void, and those who disregard it, do not sin.* Two piles of wood, covered with pitch and oil and charged with gunpowder, were erected on the place of the Signory and divided by a narrow path, through which the two champions should pass in quick succession. The Signory awaited the spectacle on a lofty balcony; a loggia was provided for the monks; an immense crowd of spectators covered the ground, the roofs and the windows in every direction; five hundred soldiers, besides several hundred Compagnacci and Frateschi kept order. Savonarola, before he proceeded to the place of the ordeal, celebrated mass at St. Mark's, but expressed some doubts, in his short discourse, as to its issue, or as to whether it actually would take place, God not having revealed it. The two rival orders marched in solemn procession from opposite directions with crosses and torches and chanting the 68th Psalm: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him, flee before his presence. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice." Savonarola, in his priestly robes, bore the host and placed it on the altar, at which Fra Domenico knelt in humble devotion. The Signory gave the signal to proceed to the trial.

But now, when the fire was kindled and the assembled multitude was raised to the pitch of anxious expectation, there arose a singular altercation about the question, whether the two champions should carry the cross or the host into the flames, as the Dominicans proposed, while the Franciscans raised a cry of horror at such a sacrilegious exposure of the Saviour's body. The fierce dispute was protracted till evening, when in the midst of growing tumult and confusion, suddenly a torrent of rain descended from heaven and extinguished the flames!

This disgraceful failure deprived Savonarola for ever of

* We have condensed the eight propositions into five, leaving out nothing essential.

the popular favor, which belongs to the changing vanities of life. The spell of his power was broken. The whole fury of the disappointed crowds burst upon him. He who shortly before had been almost idolized, was now mercifully denounced as a "poltroon, hypocrite, impostor and false prophet." With difficulty, and amid curses and peltings, he returned with the broken procession, and only the body guard and the supposed miraculous power or inherent sacredness of the host he bore, saved him from the execution of mob-judgment. For the last time he entered the gates of San Marco and for the last time he ascended the pulpit to give an exposition of the events of the day to a few hearers and to dismiss them in peace.

On the following day, which was Palm Sunday, the Arabiati, assisted by hundreds of low ruffians, besieged the convent and fought with the Dominican monks till midnight, while Savonarola lay on his knees before the altar. At length the Signory sent commissioners with peremptory orders to seize him, together with Domenico Buonvicini and Silvestro Maruffi. On his way to the palace he was grossly insulted and mockingly asked: "Prophecy, who it was that smote thee." Some ruffian kicked him behind, and said: "There is the seat of his prophetic power."

On the 9th the Signory commenced the examination of the prisoners and continued it till the 19th, with the exception of Easter day. According to the cruel custom of the age, Savonarola was submitted to the torture, which, as Perrens remarks, he had himself proposed to obstinate gamblers. With his delicate and sensitive frame, he broke down at once and confessed all they asked, that his prophecies were no inspirations, but his own calculations or inferences from the Scriptures, and that ambition and love of power were the only motives of his actions. But as soon as the agony was over, he revoked his admissions. The repetition of the horrid process and the intervening intermissions wrung forth the same contradiction of confession and recantation, on which it was impossible to frame a legal process. A villanous notary by the name of

Francesco Ceccone, who had been involved in the last conspiracy in favor of Piero de Medici, offered his services at the price of four hundred scudi (although he received only thirty in the end), for the infamous work of manufacturing a minute report, which was substituted for the genuine record and published to wondering Florence. The charge of this forgery rests not only on the authority of Savonarola's admiring biographers, Burlamacchi and Pico de Mirandola, but also on that of the impartial Nardi and the grave Guicciadini, and is confirmed by the process itself as published by Quetif, and more recently by Guidici. On the 19th of April the report was read to Savonarola; he answered in ambiguous phrase: "What I have written is true," or like Pilate: "What I have written, I have written." When one of his apostate disciples, Malatesta Sacramoro, witnessed against him: "Ex ore tuo credidi, et ex ore tuo discredo," he deigned no reply. He asked the brethren of San Marco to take good care of the novices, to keep them in the fear of God and the simplicity of Christian life, and to pray for him now, when the prophetic Spirit of God had almost entirely forsaken him.*

He was confined to his prison without further examination for a month. During this time, he wrote a commentary on the penitential Psalm 51, and a part of Psalm 31, with a broken and contrite spirit, accusing himself of pride and ambition, but crying out of the depth of his misery to the infinite mercy of God and finding peace in the merit of the Redeemer. "Misery," he says, "surrounds me and besieges me like a strong army; my friends have gone over to the enemy; all that I see and hear, wears the color of sadness. The recollection of my friends and spiritual children fills me with grief; the thought of my cell and my studies pains me; the weight of my sins depresses me. Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me out of the hands of mine enemies? Who will fight for me, protect and help me? Whither shall I fly? I will fly to the Invisible and

* "Lo Spirito della profetia m'ha al tutto abbandonato," as Burlamacchi, or "quem Spiritus pene prorsus deseruit," as Pico de Mirandola reports.

lead him as a host against anything visible. The Lord is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. (Ps. 91: 2.) In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. (Ps. 31: 1.) This is comfort indeed. Let sorrow, with all its host, press against me; let the world rise up against me. I confide in God, and my refuge is with the Most High. In thee, O Lord, have I trusted. Therefore I pray thee first of all, to deliver me from my sins; for the sins are the greatest tribulation, and the source of all other tribulations. Take away, O Lord, my sins, and I am free of all tribulation. In thee, O Lord, do I trust; deliver me by thy righteousness, and not my own; for I seek mercy, and offer not my righteousness. . . . No man is justified before God by the works of the law. . . . Thy mercy is thy righteousness for us, O Lord; but it would not be mercy, if it came from the merit of works. Deliver me through thy righteousness, even thy Son, Jesus Christ, who is the righteousness by which man is justified." This is evidently a very near approach to the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. Hence Luther re-published Savonarola's exposition of Psalm 51 in 1523, and accompanied it with a very commendatory preface, in which he undertook to canonize the excommunicated author, though the popes and papists should burst.*

The pope was highly rejoiced and congratulated the Signory on their vigorous measures against the rebellious impostor, but wished them, after having tried him for all the political crimes, to forward him to Rome that he might be tried for his religious offences. He absolved all those who were engaged in the outrages on the convent of Saint Mark on Palm Sunday, even if guilty of homicide, and

* "Das ist," says Luther, "ein Exempel der evangelischen Lehre und christlichen Frömmigkeit. Denn hier siehst du ihn einhertreten nicht als einen Predigernönch im Vertrauen auf seine Gelübde, Ordensregeln, Mönchskutte, Messen und die guten Werke seines Ordens, sondern im Vertrauen auf Gottes Barmherzigkeit, als einen gemeinen Christen. . . . Es durfte zwar der damalige Antichrist sich die Hoffnung machen, das Andenken dieses so grossen Mannes würde verlöschen, auch unter dem Fluche sein; aber siehe, er lebet, und sein Gedächtniss ist im Segen. Christus canonisirt ihn durch uns, sollten gleich die Päpste und Papisten miteinander darüber zerbersten."

promised restoration and plenary indulgence to all the Piagnoni who should repent of their errors. But the Signory, which in the mean time had been newly elected, after disfranchising two hundred members of the Great Council, friendly to Savonarola, humbly asked permission to punish him by a public execution at Florence, that the deluded people might be thoroughly disabused. The real reason was their fear that he might reveal at Rome the political events of Florence. Alexander yielded to this request, whereupon they basely thanked him for his "divine virtue and immense goodness." He condemned Savonarola by what is called the *oraculum rivæ vocis*, on the ground simply of Ceccone's falsified records sent to him, as a heretic, schismatic, persecutor of the holy Church and seducer of the people, and appointed the General of the Dominican order, Giovacchino Turriano, a mild but very old man, and a Spanish doctor of merciless severity, Francesco Romolino, as the two commissioners to preside in his name over the execution of an inviolable priest. Alexander is reported to have remarked: "Die he must, though he were John the Baptist," and Romolino declared on his arrival at Florence: "We shall make a fine blaze, for I have the sentence of condemnation (*la sententia formata*) safe in my hands."

On the 20th of May a new examination took place before the papal commissioners, of which Nardi gives an account.* Romolino questioned him two days about his heresies and schisms, the vituperations of Alexander and connections with cardinals inimical to him, his letters to the kings concerning the General Council and the deposition of the pope, his pride and madness and factious turbulence in Florence. Savonarola showed the same wonderful struggle between the weakness of the flesh and the courage of the spirit. He admitted all and recanted all. He confessed on the torture what he denied afterwards. He imploringly prayed to Jesus to forgive him his treasonable weak-

* Signor Guidici has published, from the Magliabecchian Library, the "Processo di Frate Girolamo Savonarola," in the *Appendice alla Storia Politica dei Municipi Italiani*, 1850.

ness. "God thou hast caught me," (colto), he said before his inquisitors in the chamber of suffering, "I confess I have denied Christ, I have told lies. O Signory of Florence, bear me witness, that I have denied him from fear of torture ; if I must suffer, better that I suffer for the truth. What I have said, I received of God—God, grant me repentance for having denied thee from fear of torture." This is the key to the whole process.

On such contradictory testimony of a strong weak man the sentence of death was pronounced, May 22, on Fra Girolamo and his two faithful followers, Fra Domenico, the prior of the Dominican convent at Fiesole, and Fra Silvestro Maruffi, a visionary somnambulist. Girolamo spent the last night in fervent prayer, meditation and quiet rest, smiling and talking in his sleep. In the morning of the execution, the 23rd of May, the day before the Ascension of 1498, he partook of the holy communion and implored the Saviour, who shed his blood for him, to forgive him any sins known or unknown, which he had committed since his baptism, and any scandal he had occasioned to the city and people of Florence. To a priest, who asked him whether he was ready to die, he replied: "My Lord was willing to die for my sins, why should I not cheerfully give my poor life from love to him."* The piazza de' Signori was crowded by spectators. The prisoners were stripped of their sacerdotal robes, and left with only a long wollen shirt—their feet naked. When at this ceremony of ignominious degradation the bishop of Vasona, a Dominican and former pupil of Savonarola, pronounced, in the name of the pope, the awful words: "I separate you from the Church militant and the Church triumphant." Savonarola said: "From the Church militant, but not from the Church triumphant, for that is out of thy power." Romolino read the sentence of death, in which heresy was

*Or more fully according to the account of Picus: "Nonne ob eum emoriar ego libentissime, qui pro eo quo me hominem peccatis infectum amore complectebatur, voluit innocentissime mori? Nonne ego animam hanc ejus gratia libenter effundam, qui nec pro millesima eorum unquam, quae pro me tulit, parte satisfacere possim?"

mentioned as the only crime, and offered at the same time plenary absolution, in the pope's name, which was humbly accepted. Then the sentence of the Signoria was read, based partly on the alleged crimes of the falsified records, partly on the degradation of the monks by the papal commissioners.

The prisoners were now successively tied to gibbets, erected in the form of a cross, and committed to the flames. Silvestro died first, exclaiming with a loud voice: "Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit." Then followed Domenico, who was convinced to the last of the innocence and the divine mission of his friend. Savonarola had to witness the sufferings of his friends, of which he was the cause, and to hear the insulting taunts of his enemies: "Now, monk, is the time to perform miracles." He prohibited his fellow sufferers from making any confession of their innocence, preferring to die in silence, like the Lamb of God carried to the slaughter. As he ascended the steps of the scaffold, he recited the Apostles' Creed. He cast once more a silent glance at the people. For a moment the flames were blown aside and exposed the bodies untouched, which the few remaining partizans regarded as a miracle. While his arm was burning, his right hand was seen raised as in the act of pronouncing the benediction. Some young wretches threw a volley of stones at the gibbets.

The ashes were carried to the bridge and cast into the Arno. Yet some real or supposed relics of bones and splinters of the gibbets became the treasures of succeeding generations, and his admiring biographer, Pico, reports various miracles performed after his death, which he attributes exclusively to this cause, that he was hated by the wicked and beloved by the holy. The manner of Savonarola's death, his crucifixion between two monks, the character of Alexander VI, as compared with Caiaphas, his temporary friendship with Florence, resembling the friendship of Herod and Pilate, etc., gave rise, as in the case of St. Francis of Assisi, to a disgusting and almost blasphemous comparison of the Dominican monk with the Saviour

of the world. With great poetic beauty, but still exceeding the limits of historical truth, Lenau thus describes the last moments of his hero:

“ Diess Antlitz auf dem Sterbensgange
Ist nicht des Sünders Angesicht,
Der an dem steilen Todeshange
Voll Schwindelangst zusammenbricht;

Auch ist es nicht das eh'rne Trotzen
Fanatikers, voll Gluth und Kraft,
Dem noch die Todesblicke strotzen
Von Flüchen wilder Leidenschaft.

Sein Antlitz is ein hoher Friede,
Sein Schweigen seliges Gebet,
Ein Rauschen nach dem Heimathliede,
Das tröstend ihm herüberweht.

Nun ist sein Auge hell erglommen,
Und blühend sich die Wange malt:
Das ist der himmlische Willkommen,
Der auf den Dulder niederstrahlt.

Und als er zum Schaffote schreitet,
Und mancher seiner Freunde jetzt
Nach ihm die Arme weinend breitet,
Spricht er den Trauernden zuletzt:

Verbrennt man mich, seid unerschrocken;
Wenn meine Asche treibt der Wind,
So denkt, dass diess nur Blütenflocken
Vom schönen Frühling Gottes sind.”

With Savonarola died the ecclesiastical reform, and the republican liberty of Florence, which became the prey of the Grand Dukes of Medici. Two descendants of this house, Leo X, who once fled before the face of Savonarola, and Clement VII, ascended the papal throne and opposed and promoted the Protestant reformation, while another descendant, Catharine of Medici, is inseparably connected with the horrible massacre of St. Bartholomew. The most dissolute state of morals took the place of ascetic rigor in Florence, and for some time there seemed to be no greater crime, than to have believed the great preacher of San Marco, and to have desired a reformation of the Church of

Rome.* Still he retained a few faithful friends, as his biographers, Pico de' Mirandola, and Burlanmaechi, and the celebrated painter, Fra Bartolomeo, who, on returning from the scene of execution, drew a halo of glory round the picture of Savonarola, which still hangs in his cell at San Marco, with the inscription: *Vir apostolicus*. In the Dominican order a reaction took place in his favor, and he was revered as a prophet, moral reformer and martyr. Even his canonization was demanded, and is said to have been contemplated by Julius II. The Jesuits declared their willingness to give him a place in the supplementary volume to the *Acta Sanctorum* for May, provided the superiors of the Dominican order would procure the permission of the Roman see. But it would puzzle even their scholastic subtlety to reconcile the excommunication and execution of Savonarola by one infallible pope, with his canonization by another. On the other hand, Luther also, as already stated, from an imperfect knowledge of his works, has boldly undertaken to canonize him in the name of Protestantism. We have already remarked, that Savonarola contemplated no doctrinal reformation, in the sense of Luther, or Zwingly, or Calvin, but a moral and disciplinary, a monastic and ascetic reform of the Roman court, the clergy and the people, like the leaders of the Great Councils of Pisa, Constance and Basil. Nevertheless his proper place, especially in view of his conflict with Rome, is among the many forerunners of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century.

Savonarola wrote a great number of works in Latin and in Italian, sermons, religious and political tracts, epistles, and poems. Even Bayle, who regards him as a false prophet, admits that several of his writings are full of unction and piety. His sermons on the Apocalypse, Haggai, Amos, Ezekiel, Zechariah, the Psalms and the Book of Exodus were mostly taken down and published by his admi-

* "Ne'quali tempi pareva," says Nardi, "che nessuno vizio fusse piu vergognoso o repressibile, che l'haver creduto al Frate ò desiderato la riforma de' costumi nella corte Romana"

ners, but give us even in their imperfect state an idea of the power he once wielded from the pulpit. His "Compendium Revelationum" (compendio di rivelazioni) written in 1495, is important for his inner history and his claim to prophecy, which it asserts and defends at length. He derives his prophetic mission directly from God, who alone knows the future, and indignantly rejects all arts of divination, especially astrology. Then in a visionary dialogue with the Tempter he suggests and labors to refute every possible objection to his supernatural gift, in a manner that reminds one of the French proverb: "Qui s'excuse, s'accuse." His predictions, he says, cannot proceed from divination and astrology, which he rejects; nor from a disordered imagination, which is belied by his profound knowledge of philosophy and the Scriptures; nor from the deception of the Devil, who knows not the future and opposes the good of his preaching; nor from foolish dreaming women, for he seldom conversed with a female. He confidently appeals to the fruits of his preaching as the crowning test of his higher mission. Rudelbach has devoted a long chapter of his biography (p. 281-333) to the consideration of this confident claim of Savonarola; and comes to the conclusion that he may be called a prophet in the same sense as Joachim of Floris, St. Brigitta, and other monks of the middle ages, who witnessed against the corruptions of the Church, and foretold some kind of a reformation. But such predictions may be mostly explained as rational inferences from the Scriptures and the signs of the times on the ground of an extraordinary power of divination. Most of Savonarola's prophecies are so loose and general, that they exclude themselves from the test of events. His most specific prophecies, concerning the intentions of Charles VIII of France, the speedy conversion of the Turks and Moors, of which he stated he could give the year, the month and even the day, and the promise to Florence of an age of unexampled prosperity after her tribulations, have manifestly proved idle dreams of a pious imagination. He himself notices the objection that he had prophesied many things which

were untrue, and helps himself by the subtle distinction between what he spoke as man, and what he spoke as prophet. The Holy Spirit, he said, did not always dwell in the prophet! The prediction of a reformation is the only one which was fulfilled, but neither in his own age, as he confidently asserted, nor for Florence and Italy, which rejected it, nor in the manner which he desired. His ascetic treatises on the Lord's Prayer, and on the Simplicity of Christian Life, contain much that is sound and edifying. His most mature theological production is the "*Triumph of the Cross*, (*Triumphus crucis, sive de veritate fidei*) of the year 1497.* It is a defence of the Christian religion against the skeptical tendencies, which arose with the revival of letters, especially in Italy, among the higher classes, including prelates, cardinals and popes. He represents Christ as the conqueror, with the crown of thorns, bearing in his left hand the cross and the instruments of martyrdom, holding in the right the Holy Scriptures, riding on a triumphal car, preceded by the patriarchs, prophets and apostles, surrounded by the martyrs and great teachers of the Church, and followed by the innumerable host of believers.

P S.

Mercersburg, Pa., March, 1858.

* The author of the article in the Lond. Quart. Rev., above referred to, in correcting Dr Madden, informs us that an English translation of this work was published at Cambridge in 1661, under the title: *The Truth of the Christian Faith; or the Triumph of the Cross of Christ*. By Hier. Savonarola. Done into English out of the Author's own Italian copy (*Trionfo della Croce*.) The fine poetic Preface is omitted.