Pasquale Villari

3 October 1827—8 December 1917

THE first week of Italy's last December was dark indeed, and, as the second opened, darkness was deepened by the extinction of one of her brightest stars. Pasquale Villari's light had shone so long that it will be missed the more. Not only Italians but many English friends and countless English readers will mourn the loss of one of whom Mr. G. P. Gooch in his *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* has said that he alone of the Italian historians of recent times has gained not only a European reputation but a European public. Pasquale Villari, born on 3 October 1827, had fought in the streets of Naples for the futile revolution of 1848, had witnessed the disillusion of all the hopes of young Italy after the field of Novara, and yet, when still in his full powers, had lived to see Italy free and united. He would have been the last to be discouraged by a hard knock, and would have looked bravely forward to a new and glorious *risorgimento*, which should gather in her few outlying districts, and above all cleanse her from the coarse materialism, mainly of alien growth, which he had long denounced, and which has been the blot on her recent prosperity.

Villari's life history, though long, may be shortly summarized. His childhood was passed in a substantial house, no. 48 Via Sette Dolori, at Naples, and in a villa at Apagola. His father, Matteo Villari, a lawyer, died of cholera in 1837, but Pasquale, also a victim, fortunately recovered. The failure of the revolution of 1848 caused his withdrawal from Naples. He lived quietly in Florence from 1849 to 1859, giving private lessons to foreigners and working at a biography of Savonarola, to whose poems he had been attracted as a boy at Naples, reading them in his attic on the sly. His criticism of Perrins's work on Savonarola in the *Archivio Storico* of 1856 brought him into notice, and probably led to his appointment as professor of the philosophy of history at Pisa in 1859. The first volume of his own life of Savonarola appeared in 1860 and the second in 1861. In 1862 he was given the chair of history at the new Istituto di Studi Superiori, and he represented his government in the educational section

of the International Exhibition in London. A remarkable pamphlet on the failures of the Italian campaign of 1866, followed later by his *Lettere Meridionali*, gave him political reputation.

Elected to the Chamber of Deputies for Bozzolo in 1867 and for Guastalla in 1870, he was disqualified on technical grounds, and first sat for Guastalla in 1870, and then for Arezzo in 1873, 1874, and 1880. He was raised to the Senate in November 1884, and became vice-president in 1897 and 1904. His one ministerial office was that of minister of public instruction in the Rudini government from February 1891 to May 1892. In January 1910 he received the high distinction of the Collar of the Annunziata. Numerous admirers, Italian and foreign, had in 1899 contributed to a foundation bearing his name for prizes awarded for post-graduate research. The university of Oxford enrolled him as an honorary D.C.L. on the occasion of Lord Goschen's inauguration as chancellor in 1904. His wife, an English lady, Miss Linda White, predeceased him in 1915, leaving an only son, Luigi Villari, who already bears an honourable name as journalist, author, and soldier.

Villari's three chief works, and those best known in England by translations, are his *Savonarola*, his *Machiavelli*, and *The Two First Centuries of Florentine History*. Of these the *Savonarola* is the most popular, and, perhaps, the most characteristic. His earliest book, it took ten years of his life, and glows with the fire of a youthful martyrologist. His researches were wide, if, as is natural, not yet complete. He first gave their true value to the writings of Savonarola's contemporaries and worshippers, which must always form an important element in the preacher's biography. Villari, on this subject, was eminently a pioneer, and all subsequent works, whether of allies or opponents, have had to reckon with him.

The fourth centenary of Savonarola's death in 1498 raked up the embers of controversy which from the first his biography had lit. Perhaps no modern historical book has been so fiercely discussed, for it is not only a matter of individual taste but of party traditions and beliefs. Protestants strove to prove that Savonarola was a precursor of the Reformation, and, much to Villari's indignation, Savonarola in the great monument at Worms sits with Hus and Wyclif at Luther's feet. The Franciscans, who had largely contributed to Savonarola's death, were more or less quiescent, but the Jesuits made him the object of their denunciation for his disobedience to the Pope. Secularists, conservative or radical, indifferent to his doctrines or his practical piety, flung themselves into the fray over his character as the reformer of the Florentine constitution. Nationalists held him up to scorn as the opponent of a united Italy and as the ally of

the French invader. Men of letters and lovers of the arts abused him for the destruction of precious books and pictures on the pyre of the vanities. Dominicans stoutly defended one of the greatest figures of their order. Amid this turmoil Villari took a dignified and almost silent part, contenting himself with printing in collaboration with his pupil, E. Casanova, a selection from Savonarola's sermons and other works. For one moment only his indignation got the better of him, and he wrote in the *Archivio Storico Italiano* a courteous but severe rebuke to the editor for what he thought a one-sided approval of Dr. Pastor's somewhat intemperate attack upon his hero. It is by no means necessary to agree with Villari's estimate of Savonarola as a religious or as a political reformer, but it must be confessed that for originality and life his book still holds the field against all rivals.

Notwithstanding the great merits of his *Savonarola*, the *Life of Machiavelli* is, perhaps, Villari's best book. He now had the experience of his first great work behind him, his mind was riper, his method surer. Above all the subject kept a curb on his emotions. He set himself down resolutely to write with scrupulous impartiality, and Machiavelli's character, no *nidus* for any germ of hagiology, enabled him to keep his pledge. He must, of course, make the best of one who, with all his faults, was the now recognized prophet of Italian unity, who had not only formulated the theory, but had personally on a minute scale set up the machinery, the model national army, which nearly 400 years later converted the theory into a working scheme. Villari regarded the army even more from a political and social than from a military point of view. The army had not indeed won the nation's unity, for victory was largely due to French and then to Prussian aid; but it was the great public school of Italy, bringing together the youths of every province, giving them a common discipline and a national outlook. Thus then Machiavelli's cause and his character, his noble ends and his repulsive means balanced each other, and Villari's critical sense suffered from no disturbing emotions. His book, too, has this merit that, fond as he was of philosophizing and moralizing, he avoided the temptation of making his hero the peg for disquisitions on political science; he wrote a straightforward biography, from which the reader can draw for himself such lessons as he pleases. His own conclusions are well stated in a review¹ of Lord Morley's Romanes lecture of 2 June 1897, and Greenwood's article in *Cosmopolis*, August 1897. He here holds that the two moralities, public and private, are distinct, and that the latter logically followed in national affairs would lead to blind

¹ *Nuova Antologia*, 16 October 1897.

chance and peril to the state, but that the public conscience is gradually attracted by the private.

Villari's third great work, *The Two First Centuries of Florentine History*, had not quite so favourable a reception as the other two. There was a gap of many years between the lectures which form the basis of the earlier and later portions of the work, and from an artistic point of view the composition as a whole somewhat suffers. In a subject so obscure new documentary evidence frequently entailed reconsideration and readjustment. Villari was indeed always ready to allow for new developments in matters of detail, though he was reluctant to withdraw from positions which he regarded as essentials. On the whole, however, the author might justly claim that more often than not the fresh discoveries did but confirm his original ideas on the general character and progressive development of Florentine history.

The inevitable question arises : Will Villari live ? The answer depends less on his own merits than on accidents. Should a writer arise with the advantage of later and fuller knowledge, and with an equally arresting personality, Villari's work would doubtless be superseded in Italy. In England this would be more difficult, for the new author must find a translator with the intimate knowledge of the historian's mind, and with the literary gift which Signora Villari possessed. Working in the closest companionship with her husband, and having a more than mere verbal knowledge of his text, she could afford herself a freedom upon which the ordinary translator could scarcely venture. The question of living is, perhaps, not really important. To have lived is often more vital than to live. Every historian, as every saint, has had his iconoclasts, but he has not lived in vain, for he will have provided the materials out of which the iconoclasts will fashion their own idols. Villari himself, in his Inaugural Address to the Historical Congress at Rome in 1903, has said :

Historical studies are naturally connected with the existing political and social conditions. Society changes from age to age, and as fast as it turns to us another of its thousand facets we are obliged to re-make history under a new aspect. This is the reason why, even when it was written by men of the highest ability, we have to reconstruct it afresh.

In this same address Villari dwelt on the defects of Italian historical study in recent times. Whereas, he said, in the collection and editing of documents much admirable work had been done in the last half-century, these documents had not been sufficiently used for what he terms synthetic history, whether political or constitutional ; editors there were in plenty, but of writers very few. This is a criticism which must often have occurred to English readers who have given any close study to modern

Italian historical work. With ourselves synthetic history is apt to be too rapidly turned out; our ambition is usually not to collect material, but to write a book. The Italian from modesty or indolence prefers to hide his talents in a napkin marked 'Unpublished Documents'. The other defect to which Villari called attention was the prevailing ignorance of foreign history, often the necessary complement of the students' own work. This he thought was due to the exciting national events of their own age, which absorbed their attention in the past of their own country. On neither of these counts could Villari himself be impeached. His knowledge of foreign writers and of foreign history was very wide, as may be proved by reference to his essay on the subject, *La Storia è una Scienza?* Research was for him not an end in itself, though he never wearied in the delving required for the foundations of his superstructure. As befitted a professor of the Studi Superiori and a minister of public instruction his aims were to educate and edify. Hence arose his efforts to popularize history, to create a reading public, to fill the gap between school-books, which are read and thrown away, and those intended for professional historians. For this purpose he would have nothing to do with historical hacks; the volumes must be entrusted to the best men, to Orsi, Balzani, his own pupil Salvemini and himself; they must not be mere mechanical abstracts, but should be written with spirit and lucidity. This project took shape in the *Collezione Villari* and the *Biblioteca Villari*. He himself wrote *Le Invasioni barbariche* and *L'Italia da Carlo Magno alla Morte di Arrigo VII*, while excellent volumes were contributed by the authors mentioned above, by Errera and Buzzolaro. The series, however, has not been so extensive as Villari contemplated, and Italian historians could raise no better monument to their old leader than the fulfilment of his scheme.

Historical studies in Italy have long suffered from a surfeit of societies and academies. From 1864 onwards Villari took a leading part in the attempt to co-ordinate their work, to give it a common aim and provide for mutual aid. At the Congress held at Naples in 1879 he presented a scheme for a central committee which should serve as a clearing house for the collection and publication of the output of the various societies, and utilize the *Archivio Storico Italiano* as its organ. Provincial rivalries or indolence thwarted the realization of the project, but in 1883 the ministry of public instruction did actually found the Istituto Storico Italiano on the lines suggested by Villari, though the results were disappointing until at the fourth Historical Congress in 1889 he again urged the necessity of co-operation between the societies and the Istituto, and this time with more effect.

Villari's educational activity ranged far beyond the higher

historical studies. During his visit to England in 1862 he had visited English and Scottish schools, and his first pedagogic work was on public education in Great Britain. Thus it was natural that in the Menabrea government of 1869 he was made general secretary to Angelo Bagnoni, minister of public instruction, who had no expert knowledge of education. Here he had a free hand, and during his seven months of office initiated numerous reforms. An upper normal school was established at Naples to train masters for the *ginnasio* and the *liceo*; the passage from the lower to the higher of these institutions was regularized; concessions were made to any commune which built elementary schools subject to strict hygienic and pedagogic rules. Owing to this experience Villari was no novice when he himself became minister of public instruction in February 1891. His appointment was hailed with enthusiasm, but the results were somewhat disappointing, a not unusual experience with ministers of education: There are crises in national history when economy is more essential than even education, and this was one. Italy was on the verge of bankruptcy, and Rudini was clutching at every expedient to avert it. Large schemes for both primary and secondary education were pressed upon Villari, but they entailed yet wider social reforms, and he had not the wherewithal to satisfy the idealists. After all the form of education must in some measure depend on the material which it is meant to mould. In a famous speech the minister drew a picture of the Neapolitan urchin who begs a *soldo* of the inspector of compulsory education, because he is starving: the inspector threatens the parents with a fine, but they too have nothing on which to live: with the alphabet the little starveling learns that the law is equal for all, that liberty produces all possible and imaginable blessings: he goes home to find that his mother has burnt her bed for firing and has not a crust to give him, and later on that the sanitary reformers have destroyed the family hovel and forgotten to provide a new one: might the lad not ask for less learning and more pity?

In university education there were difficulties of another kind. On presenting a bill for the reorganization of the Istituti d'Istruzione Superiore (28 May 1891) he said, "There is something rotten in the State of Denmark", and that is the lack of a spirit of discipline and insufficient moral education; with such deficiencies no system succeeds, and therefore a new system is not enough.' Many professors in fact were neglecting their duties, and had almost ceased to lecture; an epidemic of rioting was spreading from university to university. Villari did not believe in the herding of all classes and all intellects under the so-called classical education prevalent in Italy. He wished to

make the classical education more severe, so as to divert the majority towards agriculture, commerce, and industry. 'In modern society', he said, 'the workman has become almost the principal personage, and the richest, the strongest nation is that which succeeds in making the best workman.' He had, perhaps, witnessed in a neighbouring country the results of gratuitous literary education, which emptied the fields and workshops to fill the cafés. A literary education was in his belief the highest, but it must be of the best and for the best; above all it must be alive. Educationalists are apt to lapse into pedantry, but for Villari this was impossible; his aim was always to bring the life that was in the subject or the author into contact with the life that might lie dormant in the learner. As he despised sham research, so he deprecated useless research. In his article *La Storia è una Scienza?* he gives as an example of the latter a youth who spent two years in the study of a wretched dialect poem of the seventeenth century, and ended by discovering its sources in two miserable French poems. Life was the secret of Villari's success as a teacher; a pupil has written of him that as he spoke he opened a window and let air and light into the mind.

Villari met with no striking success in his parliamentary career, nor even in his short ministry, in spite of his sound common sense and expert knowledge. He confesses that he was often called an Anglophil, and indeed his references to our system of insurance of labour, the success of our Land Acts in checking Irish emigration, the generous versatility of our colonial policy, give some colour to the impeachment. He believed, however, that our parliamentary system was ill-suited to the Latin nations, steeped as they were in the principles of the French Revolution, and realized that even in Great Britain modern developments were outgrowing it. The Italian party system in its burlesque exaggeration, its greed for patronage, its indifference to social reform, ran counter to his sense of proportion, his honesty, his philanthropy. Even in England he would never have been a successful party man. For all that he was a real power in the nation, and his cry for social betterment met at times with a practical response, though governmental ears might be hard of hearing. He has been well called the conscience of Italy, a conscience which had no self-deceit and no flattery, a conscience which raised no objections to disagreeable duties. To the nation's credit it sometimes obeyed its conscience, and rarely resented its denunciations. This conscience worked through the agency of pamphlets, which took indeed the form of journalistic articles in the *Perseveranza*, the *Giornale d'Italia*, the *Politecnico*, the *Corriere*, and very frequently the *Nuova Antologia*. Villari had all the qualifications of the perfect pamphleteer. Everything

that he wrote he really felt, while on the other hand he had from early youth, as he tells us in his article on his brother-in-law, Domenico Morelli, the critical, analytical, investigating spirit. His style was vivid, trenchant, simple, free from superfluous ornament, possessing the real quality of rhetoric, that is, the art of persuasion. In some of his pamphlets, notably in that on the sulphur workers of Girgenti, his literary gift is seen to even greater advantage than in his greater works. His first important pamphlet, *Di chi è la colpa?* created an immediate sensation throughout Italy, so much so that one Erba, vendor of a popular beverage, had it reprinted as a wrapper to his bottles. The defeats of Custozza and Lissa in 1866 had, in spite of the territorial gains of the war, caused deep depression and acute resentment. There was a fierce cry, as is usual in Latin countries, and indeed elsewhere, for a victim, whether traitor or scapegoat. Villari proved that the fault was not in the individual, but in the national system; Italy was not yet educated up to her task. To this theme he returned again and again in later articles. In 1872 he wrote that, whereas in Germany social and economic progress had preceded national union, in Italy political revolution had come before social and industrial; owing to diplomatic and military aid from outside liberty had been won too rapidly and easily, and therefore social reform had to be introduced too quickly and experimentally; education lagged behind political advance, and hygiene behind education. In an article written in 1898 on Savonarola and the present day he compares the heroism and self-sacrifice of the *Risorgimento* with the low standard of more modern times, and quotes Sir James Hudson as saying that in Italy men fall to pieces. Hidden idealism, thought Villari, was the reason why through all ages Italy had endured such vicissitudes, why sometimes she rose to unexampled superiority, only to lapse with equal suddenness into unworthy degradation. Much later in *La Nostra Politica*² he gives more definite reasons for the contrast, holding that the promoters of the wars of liberation were really a minority confined to the bourgeoisie and a few of the aristocracy, that after the too rapid success the real heroes remained heroes, but those whom they had inspired fell back to the personal interests of yore, but should a crisis ever come they would be once more heroes. Italy, he believed, unlike northern nations, depended on sentiment and imagination to rescue her: out of from 33,000,000 to 34,000,000 inhabitants only 8,000,000 to 10,000,000 really formed the new Italy, and counted in the balance of nations: the masses should have been assimilated by higher education and social reforms, which were always postponed and only conceded in scraps: hence arose con-

² *Giornale d'Italia*, 4 October 1910.

tinuous tumults, obstacles to all progress industrial, commercial, agricultural: hence all discipline had gone, the government was always weak and a prey to parties, while not the least consequence of the failure was the colossal emigration. This article was perhaps the last of the formal Jeremiads, for in that on the Tripoli campaign³ Villari contrasted the extraordinary enthusiasm uniting all classes and north and south with the general indifference shown in the Wars of Liberation. Will Italy, he concludes, do her duty by her victory? will she try to reconcile the differences of race and religion?

Tuscany had been Villari's home since he was twenty-two, but his heart was still in the south. In 1859 he disseminated clandestine literature in Naples, and he witnessed Garibaldi's entrance on 7 September 1860. His *Lettere Meridionali* on the grievances of the south were collectively printed in 1875, and he constantly returned to this subject, to boy slavery in the sulphur mines, to the latifundia of Sicily and southern Italy, to brigandage, the Mafia and the Camorra, to the barbarous treatment of convicts in the Lipari Islands, to the poisonous water-supply and the horrible housing conditions of the poor in Naples. Painfully real to those who have witnessed on a smaller scale the destruction of slum districts in certain English towns is his description in *Nuovi tormenti e nuovi tormentati* (1890), of the replacement of the old hovels either by cafés, restaurants, theatres, palatial shops and houses, or else by huge blocks of model lodging-houses with no space, no air, no sun, but elaborate cooking arrangements for occupants who had nothing to cook, and a hygienic system which required the temperament of a Job and the technique of a sanitary plumber. As with us, of course, clerks walked in where paupers feared to tread.

In his article, *La Nostra Politica*, of 1910, already quoted, he repeats his indictment of the treatment of the south from the day of its liberation. The north had sent its refuse to administer the old Bourbon kingdom, it had combated the Camorra and the Mafia by Camorra and Mafia: firm justice was the one thing needed, and which the south never got. Northerners were too busy and prosperous to enter the administration, the army or the navy, thus they were flooded by southerners who were only elected to win favours; every measure was spoilt by party, local, or personal interests, and yet the improvement of the south, moral, hygienic, and economic, was the life and death question for all Italy.

The oppressed, wherever they were to be found, could claim Villari as their champion, the casual labourers of Romagna, the straw-working women of Tuscany, the quarrymen of Carrara,

³ *Dopo la Guerra, Corriere*, 24 October 1912.

wood-cutters in the Casentino, harvesters stricken by fever in the Maremma, and peasants by *pellagra* in the Mantovano. This was no mere philanthropy ; it was forced on Villari by the two grave modern dangers of Italy, emigration and socialism. It was argued, indeed, that emigration was a boon, that much money was sent back to fructify in Italy, that emigrants returned with hoarded wealth and settled down again in their own districts. Villari replied that they left the districts where labour was most needed, and returned to urban centres already overcrowded, or that, if they resettled in their country houses, they became petty tyrants or drifted away from the *malaise* of a life to which they had become unaccustomed. Again and again he expresses his fear of the consequences of the rapid spread of socialism in Italy. He saw that as it grew in volume in England, in Switzerland, or Germany it lessened in violence, that the more moderate elements gained the lead, while the more fantastic disappeared ; this he ascribed in England to the readiness of both parties to meet genuine grievances half-way. In Italy, on the contrary, socialism, from being badly handled by the governing classes, was in danger of degenerating into anarchy. He used the example of the riots at Milan and the revolt in Sicily to illustrate its progress. At first its existence was disbelieved and derided, then was regarded as a mysterious horror, the very thought of which must be put away ; when disturbances broke out no precautions had been taken to check them, they were hurriedly suppressed with unnecessary violence, and then, worst of all, an amnesty was granted to the guiltiest propagandists. Nursed in the teeming industrial population of the rich north Italian towns, socialism was spreading to the poor countryside of Naples and Sicily, where theoretical Marxian collectivism found material in the land hunger of the peasantry. The young hot-heads from the universities, who posed as the intellectual leaders of the new doctrines, were pure idealists, who had never mingled, as their English contemporaries had done, with the lower classes, who knew nothing of their real grievances or needs, or of their uncontrolled passions, who preached that any means, even the artificially produced ruin of their converts, were justified to stimulate revolt, and who, if they did come into authority in this commune or in that, exaggerated all the faults of the bourgeoisie which they had supplanted. The Bolshevism of Russia of to-day is the precise fulfilment of the fate which Villari used to fear for Italy.

Chief among the causes of Italian unrest was, in Villari's opinion, the decay of religion. He was no papalist, and he detested the ultra-catholic press, but he had deep religious feeling, and he held that the exclusion of religion from secular

education was a fundamental fault. In the cities there was an entire lack of religion of any sort, while the country districts, dominated by reactionary priests, remained under a cloud of barbaric superstition. Even the upper middle classes, who were professedly catholic, made religion no part of their everyday life; they treated it as the baggage which travellers on a walking tour send on by parcel post to their destination, only too glad to be relieved of its weight. Villari was no violent reformer, he did not wish for the overthrow of the papacy, believing that reconciliation was not impossible, and arguing in 1910 against the pinpricks which he attributed to Sonnino. His ideal would have been reform in a modernized Savonarolist sense, alike ethical and spiritual, such as might have been secured at the close of the fifteenth century, if only Savonarola could have converted the papacy to his own catholic principles.

It would be difficult to class Villari as a politician. He was not afraid of the people, indeed he attributed the troubles of Italy to the chronic exclusion of the lower classes from Roman times to the present. Yet he feared a wave of democracy which would break all barriers. In a review of Lord Bryce's book on *The American Commonwealth*,⁴ he wrote that America offered the sole material for a judgement on the new democracy, but that the author was too optimistic, and that its full dangers would appear when population had increased and all ground was occupied, that at present they were veiled by unexampled prosperity. It is characteristic of Villari that he was never content with lifeless facts or abstract theories; he always draws educational lessons from them. Thus in a recent short study on Marsilius of Padua (1913) he marks the contrast between the centralized, all-including, all-compelling state and the loose federation of feudal and communal units, which Marsilius would replace by it. He concludes by applying this contrast to the modern transition from the constitutionalism of England with its barriers of groups and classes, all representing valuable interests, and the level flood of democracy flowing from the French Revolution, based upon equality, and making the most vital problems of state depend upon an accidental numerical majority. To check this flood from spreading disaster he imagines a league of European nations founded on resistance either to the reaction of the east or the domination of the United States; meanwhile all that could be done was to study the problem how democracy can be saved from its own excess, how equality is to be reconciled with liberty and justice.

In the last public utterance by Villari which I have read he seems a truer prophet. On 18 January 1914 he inaugurated

⁴ *Nuova Antologia*, 16 November 1911.

a new series of lectures upon Dante in the Casa di Dante at Florence. Here he discussed the possibility of reconciling Dante's imperialism with his nationalism, showing that Dante firmly believed in Italy as a nation, but that in his day Italy as a state was beyond all practical politics. Thus between 1848 and 1861 Dante was not popular, because the immediate aim was to build up the lesser unity of the state, but, that once laid on sure foundations, Dante again found favour, because Italy could then take her share in the brotherhood of nations for the common liberty. Thus Dante was an internationalist rather than an imperialist in the modern sense, rising, as Villari writes in an article on Dante's *De Monarchia* in 1911, together with his fervid worshipper Mazzini, above the more practical national heroes, Bismarck and Cavour, as being international patriots, champions of the freedom of all mankind.

Of very present interest are Villari's annual addresses to the meetings of the society 'Dante Alighieri', held each year at a different Italian or Sicilian town. The object of this society was to maintain or to expand, by means of schools and charitable institutions, Italian culture in Italian populations outside Italy, whether in the Trentino or Istria and Dalmatia, in Brazil or Argentina, in Malta or among labourers employed on the Simplon tunnel or other such enterprises. Each year from 1897 to 1903 Villari, who succeeded Bonghi as president, gave a detailed account of the successes and needs of the society. The travels which he made beyond the Italian frontiers gave him a store of information of the highest value, showing the ebb or flow of Italian population and culture, the hostility of Austrian or Slav, the comparative favour of Hungary at the one port of Fiume, the contempt of the prosperous, well-fed Swiss, the renegade action of the clergy in *Italia irredenta*, and the passionate devotion of the unredeemed population to the motherland. The society was professedly non-political, but it must be confessed that such a frontier-line is perilously indistinct.

Enough has been said to show that Villari was no mere historian of the far-off past; the next generation may regard him as the surest authority on his own time. His articles form a precious commentary upon the troubled years that elapsed from the unity of Italy almost to the outbreak of the present war. Everything which he wrote for the last half-century of his life, even if it might be on Dante, on Marsilius, or on the vexed question as to whether history is a science, contained a contribution, greater or less, to this commentary. He had no personal, local, or political interest to make him swerve. Straightforwardly, in language at once reproachful and persuasive, he told Italy and her government of her faults and failings. Italy in return has done him justice;

she did not resent his reproaches, and in the latest years of his life was yielding to his persuasion.

It is to be hoped that Villari has left materials which may serve as an autobiography. Of his early life and education he has given a fairly full account in his articles on his brilliant young comrade, Luigi Vista, slain in the streets in 1848, on his inspiring teacher, Francesco De Sanctis, the close friend of after years, and of his sister's husband, the artist, Domenico Morelli. Like other young Neapolitans he was trained in the decadent ultra-purist school of the Marchese Puoti, in which imitative phrase, drawn from the Italian classics from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, was the end and aim of literary education. Its one merit was its horror of Gallicism, which had threatened, and, indeed, still threatens the purity of Italian prose. It is possible that Villari owed to this training more than he would admit, even as many of us would have missed that of the Latin and Greek verse, which we are apt to write off as a valueless asset. From this somewhat deadening education he was drawn by Luigi Vista to the little class which gathered round De Sanctis, of whose life-giving power as a teacher none can doubt, whatever view may be held of his merit as a literary critic or a Dantist. It is impossible to read Villari's books or pamphlets without being reminded of the three great literary commandments of his master — 'The style must be natural, the author must be sincere, even as the man must be honest.' Of Villari's life after those early years next to nothing is to be found in his own writings. The present article owes much to a biography and bibliography written by Francesco Baldasseroni in 1907, and to an account of his secretaryship and ministry of public instruction, published by Carlo Fiorilli in the *Nuova Antologia*, 16 October 1907.

Others will speak of Villari's personality with more intimate knowledge than the writer of this notice. This much may be said, that he could combine the dignity and reserve of the Tuscan of olden days with the vivacity, wit, and humour of the southerner. He was peculiarly modest and a most courteous opponent; in spite of his outspoken denunciations of wrongdoing or neglect. His life was of the simplest, whether in his home at Florence or in a quiet hotel in the Italian or Tyrolese mountains. Italy, or any other nation, might well be proud of such a union of historical and literary gifts, of political wisdom and foresight, and of deep religious feeling for suffering humanity. F. Maggini, in a notice of his article on the *De Monarchia*, has truly said: 'Every time that a word of Pasquale Villari's is to be heard, we may be sure that it is a word with life therein.'

E. ARMSTRONG.