

# THE LITERARY GARLAND.

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## MARCO VISCONTI:

A STORY OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY, TAKEN FROM THE CHRONICLES OF THE AGE,

AND RELATED BY TOMMASO GROSSI.

### TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

THE tale, of which the above forms the title, is one of a style of which many instances are now to be found in the literature of Italy.

Till the commencement of the present century, Italian romances generally founded their principal pretensions to interest on the wild extravagance of their incidents, and the flowery texture of their narrative. The more unreal and improbable the adventures through which the hero was conducted, the more popular the romance; provided only that these adventures were related in language easy and graceful, although it might sometimes be overloaded with the ornaments of style. Many were mere chronicles of the puissant deeds of some imaginary knight, like Amadis de Gaul, or Palmerin of England; in others were detailed the exploits of some bandit, "gloomy and grand;" whilst, throughout all, few were exempt from that familiar strain of immorality, whose corrupt stain so disfigures the otherwise brilliant pages of Boccaccio.

The writings of Sir Walter Scott, which were of so much service in infusing a more sound and healthy spirit into the literature of Britain, were productive of little less influence in Italy, through means of their various translations. The consequence was the formation of a new class of fictitious narratives, wherein the spirit and style were in a great measure modelled on those of our distinguished countryman, and which have happily superseded these inane productions of which mention has been made. These are

generally founded on historical incidents, and, displaying diligent research and intimate acquaintance with past records, are, in most cases, highly illustrative of the manners and customs of the period in which the action of the story is laid. At the head of this class—for strict attention to what is technically called the *costume* of the piece, for vivid painting of incident, and for powerful delineation of character—ranks "I Promessi Sposi"—"The Betrothed Lovers"—of Alessandro Manzoni. Of the rest, the most popular are "Ettore Fieramosca," by the Marquis d'Azeglio; "The Battle of Benevento," by Guerazzi; "The Nun of Monza," by Rossini; and Grossi's "Marco Visconti." Few of these have been translated into our language, and of that in particular on which we are now about to enter, no version that I am aware of has yet been presented to the English reader.

In the present translation, while the narrative and sentiment of the Italian story are strictly adhered to, yet an effort has been made to present these in language less formal and awkward than could be given, if trammelled by a rigid adherence to that of the original.

The author commences with a dedication of his work to Manzoni, "with the reverence of a disciple, with the affection of a friend;" and I trust that the reader will find it, even under the veil of a translation, by no means unworthy of its connection with the name of the first romancist of modern Italy. HCCOMEST.