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SAVONAROLA.

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Truly, time has its revenges.

On the night of the 8th of April, 1498, there surged through the streets of this old city a wild mob of furious men. The light of torches and lanterns gleamed on a tumultuous sea of halberds, crossbows, helmets and cuirasses; and shouts of ferocious joy rent the air. In the midst of this frantic throng, borne along by its fury, rose the commanding form of the prior of the monastery of San Marco, Fra Girolamo Savonarola, the brave monk who from his pulpit in the cathedral had dared to denounce the abominations of the church at Rome and the infamous life of its head, Alexander Borgia. For several hours the mob had been storming the monastery walls, which were stoutly defended by the few monks who had not deserted their leader in his extremity; but at last, on the promise of safe conduct from the signory (governors of the city), Savonarola delivered himself into the hands of their mace-bearer. But in vain the guards endeavored to protect him from the violence of the people by holding their crossed arms and shields above and about him. He was assailed with showers of stones, spears were thrust at him; they scorched his face with their torches. Thus, heaped with every possible indignity, he passed through the streets of his cherished city to his prison in the grim Palazzo Vecchio. There for forty days he lay, in the intervals of his agonizing tortures, in a dark and narrow cell in the topmost height of the palace tower. The papal commissioners came from Rome on the pretence of giving him a trial, but with secret instructions from the Pope "to get him put to death even were he a St. John the Baptist."

On the 23d of May, Alexander Borgia accomplished his nefarious purpose. The mock trial was ended, and Savonarola was brought out into the great square before his prison-palace to meet his doom. His priestly robe was stripped from him, a mark of peculiar degradation, which even at that last supreme moment to which he clung keenly; and thus unfrocked, he was pronounced a schismatic and a heretic, and sentenced to be hanged and afterward burned. The lofty courage which had been his through all the years of his bold contest against the false and hypocritical religion of his day, did not now forsake him, and he mounted the scaffold with a firm step. "The Lord has suffered as much for me," were his last words; and soon the flames had hidden from sight all that was mortal of the great Savonarola. Even his ashes were gathered together and thrown into the Arno, that no one might possess any relic or remembrance of the abhorred monk.

Thus was stilled for ever the voice of the

mighty preacher and reformer of his day, the one voice which, in spite of all the thunders from Rome, never ceased to send forth its daring charges against the corruption of the papal throne. Pope Alexander had now nothing more to fear; he could go on in his course of crime unbridled; his powerful enemy was silenced, and silenced in ignominy and contempt.

And now behold the tardy justice which four hundred years have brought. To-day I have stood in the great audience chamber of the Palazzo Vecchio, and watched them placing in its position of honor, among the rich old frescoes and sculptures of that historic building, a colossal statue of the martyr monk, Girolamo Savonarola. Yes, in the very palace where he suffered his cruel tortures, and before which he met his ignominious death, he is at last held up to honor, and Florence dares to do it!

Passing through one of the principal streets of the city not many days ago, my eye was caught by a large placard headed "Honors to Savonarola," and I stopped to see what such a bold announcement might mean. The notice began by calling the attention of the citizens to the pilgrimage which, at the instigation of the Archbishop of Florence, has just been made from all

parts of Tuscany to Rome, to pay homage to the Pope. "Now, O Florentines," it continued, "you cannot forget the crimes which have been in all ages committed by the Papacy; let us then, as a protest against this movement and against the dark deeds of those who are the enemies of our country and our liberty, unite in procession and place a crown at the feet of Girolamo Savonarola, who was a victim of papal imposture and lying. Let there be no excitement, no disorder. We trust to your patriotism and good sense that all shall be done in a dignified and solemn manner." I marvelled to read such daring, outspoken words in this Catholic city, and eagerly waited to see what would be their effect. In response to the call, there gathered on Sunday morning before the old monastery of San Marco, a crowd of quiet, but eager-faced men. Forming in orderly procession, they marched through the long, palaced streets to the Palazzo Vecchio, the same streets by which four hundred years ago had passed that wild rabble of fanatics, madly hurrying to his doom the noble, heroic monk. But now how different was the scene! Upon their banners was inscribed, in all loyalty and affection, the name of Savonarola, and every heart was beating high in enthusiastic devo-

tion to his memory. The procession passed through the high, pillared court of the palace, and ascending the stairs over which Savonarola, with his body fainting from the cruel rack, had so often passed, they entered the stately Sala del Cinquecento, and placed with reverent feeling at the feet of the statue a wreath of bay with this inscription, "To Savonarola, victim of Pope Alexander VI." There was no excitement, no disturbance, for those who had gathered to witness the ceremony were too much in sympathy with the feeling which called it forth. And to-day all Florence has flocked to gaze at the statue of him whom she once so cruelly wronged, whose life was spent in her service, and who died in his efforts to give her and all Italy a purer faith.

The tall, impressive figure of the monk stands the central object in the lofty Sala. He is represented in the dress of his order, the Dominican; his raised right hand holds a crucifix, as was his wont in preaching; his left rests on the "marzocco," or seated lion, the emblem of the city he loved so devotedly. The eager pose of the figure, and the deep-set earnest eyes which look out from under his monk's cowl, seem as if they would again to-day rouse his beloved Florentines to their dangers and their duties.

Is not the placing of this statue in its position of honor another of the many proofs which are coming to our eyes daily that Italy is stepping forward and out of her old bondage to the Papacy? There is a new life stirring among these people.

The recent address of the Pope to the pilgrims who gathered in St. Peter's, proves plainly that he realizes it, and dreads its coming power. He tells them that there are many in the land who are endeavoring with the utmost zeal to weaken and even extinguish in the Italian people the homage and love due the visible Head of the Church; that he is called the enemy of the prosperity of Italy; that his divine authority is every day thrown into the mire by the works of an unbridled press; and that there are even those who threaten the occupation of the Vatican itself, to force him into a still harder prison, or into exile. His devoted sons should not merely grieve over the sad condition of their Holy Father, but they must do all in their power to alleviate it. He assures them that true and lasting prosperity is to be hoped for Italy only in the constant profession of the Catholic faith, and in sincere devotion to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, "who is the first and purest glory of your country." He urges them to guard jealously, at whatever cost, the precious treasure of their faith, to unite in religious associations, and wage with him the sharp warfare against the enemies who surround him and them. Above all things they must obey strictly the Roman

