

(From the Montreal Literary Garland.)

THE ENVIOUS ARTIST.

"Base envy withers at another's joy
And hates that excellence it cannot reach."

Of all the evil passions which make their dwelling place in the human soul, marring the divine image impressed upon it, changing its sweet affections and its noble impulses to hate and bitterness, and kindling in its secret cells an ever-burning and consuming fire, there is none more fearful and more dark than that of envy. It is the master passion which the great bard has represented, as moving Satan to destroy the bliss of Paradise, and it mingled with an unrighteous love of mammon, in the breast of the arch traitor, whose name of immortal infamy, is inscribed upon the history of that dark transaction which gave our blessed Lord to the hands of his murderers. It is the skeleton in many a wretched home,—the upas tree in the fair garden of friendship, poisoning with its deadly breath the moral atmosphere around it, and destroying with the mildew from its branches, every plant of beauty and of fragrance that springs up within their fatal shadow.

May a fond hope has been blighted by its demon power, true friendship has it broken, warm affections chilled, trusting hearts repulsed—it has withered the flowers of genius, darkened the early dawn of joys that promised to expand into the radiance of full and perfect day, and pointed with the saddest moral, many a melancholy tale of individual life and suffering. These thoughts have naturally suggested themselves, from reflecting on the history of two brother artists of the sixteenth century, whose works and whose genius were the boast and glory of their age, but the beauty of whose lives was marred by the cherished indulgence of this unworthy passion, which reigned supreme in the breast of one, and rendered subservient to its selfish and ignoble cravings, every good feeling and high aspiration of his better and nobler nature.

At the period referred to the art of painting, which the great masters of the preceding age had raised to such a height of perfection, was sunk into the lowest stages of degeneracy, when Ludovico Carracci, the son of a butcher of Bologna, but who from his early years had devoted himself to the study of the art, conceived the thought of founding a school for its renovation from the degradation into which it had fallen. In his youth, he had been pronounced fit only to grind the colours it was his

desire to use, but as his mind developed, its true powers became apparent, and it was found, that though seemingly sluggish in its conceptions, it was only so through the depth and profundity, which forbade it to be dazzled by effect, or to attempt by rapid action, aught which long and careful study had not well matured. Therefore was he slow to give utterance to beautiful ideas, till they had become as actual realities to his soul.

Unsatisfied with the limited study of those works of art contained within his native city, he travelled abroad to inspect with a critical and admiring eye, the productions of the greatest masters, every detail of style, of colouring, of expression, he keenly marked, and they furnished the key, by which his penetrating mind unlocked the storehouse of the artist's conceptions, and gained possession of his thoughts, deriving thence the power to execute those works, which have placed his name in the same galaxy where that of Titian, and of his own impassioned teachers, Tintoretto, and Fortana, shine. It was Ludovico's aim to catch from the paintings of those masters whom he made his study, every peculiarity worthy of perpetuation, and combine with them a close observation of nature, giving to the whole as he impressed them on his own glowing canvass, the hue of his individual genius. Avoiding thus, the stigma which some were inclined to cast upon his school—that it was one of mere imitation, that it created no new era in the art, but only persevered by fresh and happy combinations, the peculiar traits and excellences of the old masters—a stigma utterly unjust,—since his was no servile imitation, but a graceful and beautiful mingling into one school the charms of all, making his own, a model for all,—or as an acute writer has more happily expressed it, "he pressed the sweets from all the flowers; or, melting together all his rich materials, formed one Corinthian brass."

Upon these principles Ludovico founded his celebrated *academia*, emphatically styled *degli incamminata*, the opening a new way, for through its influence and teachings he fondly trusted to effect a thorough renovation of the noble, and now degraded art to which he had dedicated his genius. But where should he find minds competent to aid him in the executing of this great and dazzling project? he had long looked around for them in vain, when on his return from Florence, he discovered in two young relatives, whose origin was as humble as his own, those, whom his profound discern-