

mysterious manner, I could have wished him to take an active part in public life, especially as he could have been of such great service to this unhappy country of ours. However, I soon saw that Signor Piero was not to be shaken in his resolve, and at present I should very much doubt the wisdom of seeking to influence him. He is most impatient to enter upon his new life, and I have allowed him to entrust his property to me, to be disposed of as he has already appointed. The act of transfer was signed this afternoon before a local notary, and to-morrow Signor Piero will give me those instructions in writing, which he has already imparted to me by word of mouth. Perhaps, at the same time, he may tell me something about the date of his departure from this place, and about the order he intends to join. As a matter of fact I have no right to assert that he intends to join any religious order. But be that as it may, the arrangements Signor Piero has made, certain vague allusions to the future he has uttered, and which I will repeat to you when we meet, and, above all, his great grief, and the wonderful nature of the events which have led to this change in him, inspire me with hope, most revered Signora Marchesa, that your affliction may bear such fruit that, seeing it, you will rise up and praise God, as you have hitherto praised Him in all His dealings with you, without seeing, and through faith alone. I am filled with hope that it may bear such fruit as to dispel certain doubts, certain suspicions and fears concerning your son-in-law's religious fervour which have reached my ears, and which are not entirely devoid