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SAVONAROLA, THE MARTYR MONK OF FLORENCE.

BY THE EDITOR.



GEROLAMO SAVONAROLA.

On a bright July day I stood in the vast and shadowy Duomo of Florence, where, four hundred years ago, the great Savonarola proclaimed, like a new Elijah, to awe-struck thousands, the impending judgments of Heaven upon their guilty city. I went thence to the famous Monastery of San Marco, of which he was prior. I paced the frescoed cloisters where he was wont to con his breviary, and the long corridors lined on either side with the prison-like cells of the cowed brotherhood. I stood in the bare, bleak chamber

of the martyr-monk, in which he used to weep and watch and write and pray. I sat in his chair. I saw his eagle-visaged portrait, his robes, his rosary, his crucifix, his Bible—richly annotated in his own fine clear hand—and his MS. sermons which so shook the Papacy. The same day I stood in the dungeon vaults of the fortress-like Palazzo del Podesta, lurid with crimson memories, where the great Reformer was imprisoned; and in the great square whence his brave soul ascended in a chariot of flame from the martyr's funeral pyre; and I seemed brought nearer to that heroic spirit who, amid these memory-haunted scenes, four centuries ago spoke brave words for God and truth and liberty, that thrill our souls to-day.

The age in which Savonarola lived was one of the most splendid in the history of European art and literature. Even during the darkness of the middle ages, the lamp of learning was fanned into a flickering flame in many a lonely monkish cell, and the love of liberty was cherished in the free cities of the Italian Peninsula. But with the dawn of the Renaissance came a sunburst of light that banished the night of ages. The fall of Constantinople scattered throughout Western Europe the scholars who still spoke the language of Homer and of Chrysostom, and taught the