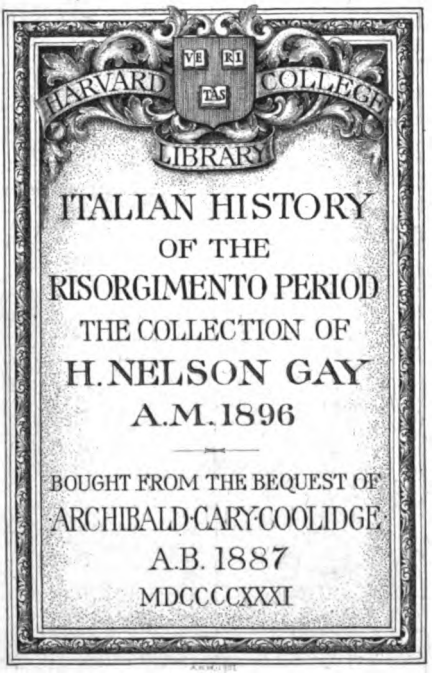

Dall'Ongaro

THE

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No. CCXVIII.

JANUARY, 1868.

Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur.

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TO THE

HUNDRED AND FIFTH VOLUME

OF THE

North American Review.

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2. *Fantasie Drammatiche e Liriche di* FRANCESCO DALL' ONGARO. Firenze: Successori Le Monnier. 1866.
3. *Poesie di* F. DALL' ONGARO. Trieste: Tipografia Marenigh. 1840.

IN the month of March, 1848, news came to Rome of the insurrection in Vienna, and a multitude of the citizens assembled to bear the tidings to the Austrian ambassador, who resided in the ancient palace of the Venetian Republic. The throng swept down the Corso, gathering numbers as it went, and paused in the open space before the Palazzo di Venezia. At its summons, the ambassador abandoned his quarters, and fled without waiting to hear the details of the intelligence from Vienna. The people, incited by a number of Venetian exiles, tore down the double-headed eagle from the portal, and carried it for a more solemn and impressive destruction to the Piazza del Popolo, while a young poet erased the inscription asserting the Austrian claim to the palace, and wrote in its stead the words, "Palazzo della Dieta Italiana."

The sentiment of national unity expressed in this legend had been the ruling motive of Francesco Dall' Ongaro's life, and had already made his name famous through the patriotic songs that were sung all over Italy. Garibaldi had chanted one of his *Stornelli* when embarking from Montevideo in the spring of 1848 to take part in the Italian revolutions, of which these little ballads had become the rallying-cries; and if the voice of the people is in fact inspired, this poet could certainly have claimed the poet's long-lost honors of prophecy, for it was he who had shaped their utterance. He had ceased to assume any other sacred authority, though educated a priest, and at the time when he devoted the Palazzo di Venezia to the idea of united Italy, there was probably no person in Rome more unpriestly than he.

Dall' Ongaro was born in 1808, at an obscure hamlet in the district of Oderzo in the Friuli, of parents who were small freeholders. They removed with their son in his tenth year to

Venice, and there he began his education for the Church in the Seminary of the Madonna della Salute. The tourist who desires to see the Titians and Tintorettos in the sacristy of this superb church, or to wonder at the cold splendors of the interior of the temple, is sometimes obliged to seek admittance through the seminary, and it has doubtless happened to more than one of our readers to behold many little sedate old men in their teens, lounging up and down the cool, humid courts there, and trailing their black, priestly robes over the springing mould. The sun seldom strikes into that sad close, and when the boys form into long files, two by two, and march out for recreation, they have a torpid and melancholy aspect, upon which the daylight seems to smile in vain. They march solemnly up the long *Zattere*, with a pale young father at their head, and then march solemnly back again, sweet, genteel, pathetic spectres of childhood, and re-enter their common tomb, doubtless unenvied by the hungriest and raggedest *biricchino*, who asks charity of them as they pass, and hoarsely whispers "Raven!" when their leader is beyond hearing. There is no reason to suppose that a boy, born poet among the mountains, and full of the wild and free romance of his native scenes, could love the life led at the Seminary of the Salute, even though it included the study of literature and philosophy. From his childhood Dall' Ongaro had given proofs of his poetic gift, and the reverend ravens of the seminary were unconsciously hatching a bird as little like themselves as might be. Nevertheless, Dall' Ongaro left their school to enter the University of Padua as student of theology, and after graduating took orders, and went to Este, where he lived some time as a teacher of belles-lettres.

At Este his life was without scope, and he was restless and unhappy, full of ardent and patriotic impulses, and doubly restrained by his narrow field and his priestly vocation. In no long time he had trouble with the Bishop of Padua, and, abandoning Este, seems also to have abandoned the Church forever. The chief fruit of his sojourn in that quaint and ancient village was a poem entitled *Il Venerdì Santo*, in which he celebrated some incidents of the life of Lord Byron, somewhat as Byron would have done. Dall' Ongaro's poems, however,

confess the influence of the English poet less than those of other modern Italians, whom Byron infected so much more than his own nation, that it is still possible for them to speak of him as one of the greatest poets and as a generous man.

From Este, Dall' Ongaro went to Trieste, where he taught literature and philosophy, wrote for the theatre, and established a journal in which, for ten years, he labored to educate the people in his ideas of Italian unity and progress. That these did not coincide with the ideas of most Italian dreamers and politicians of the time, may be inferred from the fact that he began in 1846 a course of lectures on Dante, in which he combated the clerical tendencies of Gioberti and Balbo, and criticised the first acts of Pius IX. He had as profound doubt of Papal liberality as Nicolini, at a time when other patriots were fondly cherishing the hope of a united Italy under an Italian pontiff; and at Rome, two years later, he sought to direct popular feeling from the man to the end, in one of the earliest of his graceful *Stornelli.*

"PIO NONO.

"Pio Nono is a name, and not the man
Who saws the air from yonder Bishop's seat;
Pio Nono is the offspring of our brain,
The idol of our hearts, a vision sweet;
Pio Nono is a banner, a refrain,
A name that sounds well sung upon the street.

"Who calls, 'Long live Pio Nono!' means to call,
Long live our country, and good-will to all!
And country and good-will, these signify
That it is well for Italy to die;
But not to die for a vain dream or hope,
Not to die for a throne and for a Pope!"

During these years at Trieste, however, Dall' Ongaro seems to have been also much occupied with pure literature, and to have given a great deal of study to the sources of national poetry, as he discovered them in the popular life and legends. He had been touched with the prevailing romanticism; he had written hymns like Manzoni, and, like Carrer, he sought to poetize the traditions and superstitions of his countrymen. He found a richer and deeper vein than the Venetian poet among his native

hills and the neighboring mountains of Slavonia, but we cannot say that he wrought it to much better effect. The two volumes which he published in 1840 contain many ballads which are very graceful and musical, but which lack the fresh spirit of songs springing from the popular heart, while they also want the airy and delicate beauty of the modern German ballads. Among the best of them are two which Dall' Ongaro built up from mere lines and fragments of lines current among the people, as in these later years he has more successfully restored us two plays of Menander from the plots and a dozen verses of each. "One may imitate," he says, "more or less fortunately, Manzoni, Byron, or any other poet, but not the simple inspirations of the people. And 'The Pilgrim who comes from Rome' and the 'Rosettina,' if one could have them complete as they once were, would probably make me blush for my elaborate variations." But study which was so well directed, and yet so conscious of its limitations, could not but be of the greatest value; and Dall' Ongaro, no doubt, owes to it his gift of speaking more authentically for the popular heart than any other living poet. That which he has done since shows that he studied the people's thought and expression *con amore*, and in no vain sentiment of dilettanteism, or antiquarian research, or literary patronage.

It is not to be supposed that Dall' Ongaro's literary life had at this period an altogether objective tendency. In the volumes mentioned there is abundant evidence that he was of the same humor as all men of poetic genius must be at a certain time of life. Here are pretty verses of occasion, upon weddings and betrothals, such as people write in Italy; here are stanzas from albums, such as people used to write everywhere; here are didactic lines; here are bursts of mere sentiment and emotion. In the volume of *Fantasie*, published at Florence in 1866, Dall' Ongaro has collected some of the ballads from his early works, but has left out the more subjective effusions. Nevertheless, these are so pleasing of their kind, that we may give here at least one passionate little poem, and not wrong the author.

"If, with delight and love aglow,
Thou bendest thy brown eyes on me,

They darken me to all I know,
To all that lives and breathes but thee.

"And if thou sufferest me to steal
Into my hand the silken skein
Of thy loose tresses, love, I feel
A chill like death upon my brain.

"And if to mine thou near'st thy face,
My heart with its great bliss is rent;
I feel my troubled breathing cease,
And in my rapture sink and faint.

"Ah! if in that trance of delight
My soul were rapt among the blest,
It could not be an instant's flight
To heaven's glory from thy breast."

This is well, we say, in its way, for it is the poetry of the senses, and yet not coarse; but we must take something else that the poet has rejected, from his early volume, because it is in a more unusual spirit than the above-given, and because, under a fantastic name and in a fantastic form, the poet expresses the most tragic and pathetic interest of the life to which he was himself vowed.

"THE SISTER OF THE MOON.

"Shine, moon, ah shine! and let thy pensive light
Be faithful unto me:
I have a sister in the lonely night
When I commune with thee.

"Alone and friendless in the world am I,
Sorrow's forgotten maid,
Like some poor dove abandonéd to die
By her first love unwed.

"Like some poor floweret in a desert land
I pass my days alone;
In vain upon the air its leaves expand,
In vain its sweets are blown.

"No loving hand shall save it from the waste,
And wear the lonely thing;
My heart shall throb upon no loving breast
In my neglected spring.

"That trouble which consumes my weary soul
No cunning can relieve,
No wisdom understand the secret dole
Of the sad sighs I heave.

"My fond heart cherished once a hope, a vow,
The leaf of autumn gales!
In convent gloom, a dim lamp burning low,
My spirit lacks and fails.

"I shall have prayers and hymns like some dead saint
Painted upon a shrine,
But in love's blessed power to fall and faint,
It never shall be mine.

"Born to entwine my life with others, born
To love and to be wed,
Apart from all I lead my life forlorn,
Sorrow's forgotten maid.

".Shine, moon, ah shine! and let thy tender light
Be faithful unto me:
Speak to me of the life beyond the night
I shall enjoy with thee."

It will here satisfy the strongest love of contrasts to turn from Dall' Ongaro the poet to Dall' Ongaro the politician, and find him on his feet, and making a speech at a public dinner given to Richard Cobden at Trieste, in 1847. Cobden was then, as always, the advocate of free trade, and Dall' Ongaro was then, as always, the advocate of free government. He saw in the union of the Italians under a customs-bond the hope of their political union, and in their emancipation from oppressive imposts their final escape from yet more galling oppression. He expressed something of this, and, though repeatedly interrupted by the police, he succeeded in saying so much as to secure his expulsion from Trieste.

Italy was already in a ferment, and insurrections were preparing in Venice, Milan, Florence, and Rome; and Dall' Ongaro, consulting with the Venetian leaders Manin and Tommaseo, retired to Tuscany, and took part in the movements which wrung a constitution from the Grand Duke, and preceded the flight of that cowardly and treacherous prince. In December he went to Rome, where he joined himself with the Venetian refugees and with other Italian patriots, like D'Azeglio and Durando, who were striving to direct the popular mind toward Italian unity. The following March he was, as we

have seen, one of the exiles who led the people against the Palazzo di Venezia. In the mean time the insurrection of the glorious Five Days had taken place at Milan, and the Lombard cities, rising one after another, had driven out the Austrian garrisons. Dall' Ongaro went from Rome to Milan, and thence, by advice of the revolutionary leaders, to animate the defence against the Austrians in Friuli. One of his brothers was killed at Palmanuova, and another severely wounded. Treviso, whither he had retired, falling into the hands of the Germans, he went to Venice, then a republic under the presidency of Manin; and here he established a popular journal, which opposed the union of the struggling Republic with Piedmont under Carlo Alberto. Dall' Ongaro was finally expelled, and passed next to Ravenna, where he found Garibaldi, who had been banished by the Roman government, and was in doubt as to how he might employ his sword on behalf of his country. In those days the Pope's moderately liberal minister, Rossi, was stabbed, and Count Pompeo Campello, an old literary friend and acquaintance of Dall' Ongaro, was appointed minister of war. With Garibaldi's consent the poet proceeded to Rome, and used his influence to such effect that Garibaldi was authorized to raise a legion of volunteers, and was appointed general of those forces which took so glorious a part in the cause of Italian independence. Soon after, the Pope fled to Gaeta, and when the Republic was proclaimed, Dall' Ongaro and Garibaldi were chosen representatives of the people. Then followed events of which it is a pang keen as a personal grief to read: the malign force which has to-day done its worst to defeat the aspirations of a generous nation interposed then with fatal success. The troops of the French Republic marched upon Rome, and, after a defence more splendid and heroic than any victory, the city fell. The Pope returned to be that evil the world knows to his people, and all who loved Italy and freedom turned in exile from Rome. The cities of the Romagna, Tuscany, Lombardy, and Venetia had fallen again under the Pope, the Grand Duke, and the Austrians, and Dall' Ongaro took refuge in Switzerland.

Without presuming to say whether Dall' Ongaro has been mistaken in his political ideas, we may safely admit that he

was no wiser a politician than Dante or Petrarch. He is an anti-Papist, as these were, and like these he has opposed an Italy of little principalities and little republics. But his dream has been, unlike theirs, of a great Italian democracy, and in 1848–49 he opposed the union of the Italian patriots under Carlo Alberto, because this would have tended to the monarchy which has since proven so fatally dependent upon France. It is to be supposed that many of his hopes were wild; but the schemes of the coldest diplomates are scarcely to be called wise. His projects may have been untenable and unstable; but they have not yet been tried, and in the mean time the most solemn treaties, established upon the faith of the firmest governments, have been repeatedly broken.

But it is not so much with Dall' Ongaro's political opinions that we have to do as with his poetry of the revolutionary period of 1848, as we find in it the little collection of lyrics which he calls *Stornelli*, or "Starlings," perhaps because of their simple and familiar character. These commemorate nearly all the interesting aspects of that epoch; and in their wit and enthusiasm and aspiration we feel the spirit of a race, at once the most intellectual and the most emotional in the world, whose poets write as passionately of politics as of love. Arnaud awards Dall' Ongaro the highest praise, and declares him "the first to formulate in the common language of Italy patriotic songs which, current on the tongues of the people, should also remain the patrimony of the national literature. . . . . In his popular songs," continues this critic, "Dall' Ongaro has given all that constitutes true, good, and — not the least merit — novel poetry. Metre and rhythm second the expression, imbue the thought with harmony, and develop its symmetry. . . . . How enviable is that perspicuity which does not oblige you to re-read a single line to evolve therefrom the latent idea!" And we have no less to admire the perfect art which, never passing the intelligence of the people, is never ignoble in sentiment or idea, but always as refined as it is natural.

We do not know how we could better approach the readers whom we wish to win for our poet, than by first offering this lyric, written when, in 1847, the people of Leghorn rose in arms to repel a threatened invasion of the Austrians.

"THE WOMAN OF LEGHORN.

"Adieu, Livorno! adieu, paternal walls!
Perchance I never shall behold you more!
On father's and mother's grave the shadow falls.
My love has gone under our flag to war;
And I will follow him where fortune calls;
I have had a rifle in my hands before.

"The ball intended for my lover's breast,
Before he knows it, my heart shall arrest;
And over his dead comrade's visage he
Shall pitying stoop, and look whom it can be;
Then he shall see and know that it is I:
Poor boy! how bitterly my love shall cry!"

The Italian editor of the *Stornelli* does not give the closing lines too great praise when he declares that "they say more than all the lament of Tancred over Clorinda." In this little flight of song, we pass over more tragedy than Messer Torquato could have dreamed in the conquest of many Jerusalems; for, after all, there is nothing so tragic as fact. The poem is full at once of the grand national impulse, and of purely personal and tender devotion. It is very human; and that fluttering, vehement purpose, thrilling and faltering in alternate lines, and breaking into a sob at last, is in every syllable the utterance of a woman's spirit and a woman's nature.

Quite as womanly, though entirely different, is this lament, which the poet attributes to his sister for their brother, who fell at Palmanuova, May 14, 1848.

"THE SISTER.

(Palma, May 14, 1848.)

"And he, my brother, to the fort had gone,
And the grenade, it struck him in the breast;
He fought for liberty, and death he won,
For country here, and found in heaven rest.

"And now only to follow him I sigh;
A new desire has taken me to die, —
To follow him where is no enemy,
Where every one lives happy and is free."

All hope and purpose are gone from this woman's heart, for whom Italy died in her brother, and who has only these artless, half-bewildered words of regret to speak, and speaks them

as if to some tender and sympathetic friend acquainted with all the history going before their abrupt beginning. We think it most pathetic and natural, also, that even in her grief and her aspiration for heaven, her words should have the tint of her time, and she should count freedom among the joys of eternity.

Quite as womanly again, and quite as different once more, is the lyric which the reader will better appreciate when we remind him how the Austrians massacred the unarmed people in Milan, in January, 1848, and how later, during the Five Days, they murdered their Italian prisoners, sparing neither sex nor age.*

"THE LOMBARD WOMAN.

(Milan, January, 1848.)

"Here, take these gaudy robes and put them by;
I will go dress me black as widowhood;
I have seen blood run, I have heard the cry
Of him that struck and him that vainly sued.
Henceforth no other ornament will I
But on my breast a ribbon red as blood.

"And when they ask what dyed the silk so red,
I 'll say, 'The life-blood of my brothers dead.'
And when they ask how it may cleansed be,
I 'll say, 'O, not in river nor in sea;
Dishonor passes not in wave nor flood;
My ribbon ye must wash in German blood.'"

The repressed horror in the lines,

"I have seen blood run, I have heard the cry
Of him that struck and him that vainly sued,"

is the sentiment of a picture that presents the scene to the reader's eye as this shuddering woman saw it; and the heart of woman's fierceness and hate is in that fragment of drama with which the brief poem closes. It is the history of an

* "Many foreigners," says Emilio Dandolo, in his restrained and temperate history of *I Volontarii e Bersaglieri Lombardi*, "have cast a doubt upon the incredible ferocity of the Austrians during the Five Days, and especially before evacuating the city. But, alas! the witnesses are too many to be doubted. A Croat was seen carrying a babe transfixed upon his bayonet. All know of those women's hands and ears found in the haversacks of the prisoners; of those twelve unhappy men burnt alive at Porta Tosa; of those nineteen buried in a lime-pit at the Castello, whose scorched bodies we found. I myself, ordered with a detachment, after the departure of the enemy, to examine the Castello and neighborhood, was horror-struck at the sight of a babe nailed to a post."

epoch. That epoch is now past, however; so long and so irrevocably past, that Dall' Ongaro comments in a note upon the poem: "The word 'German' is left as a key to the opinions of the time. Human brotherhood has been greatly promoted since 1848. German is now no longer synonymous with enemy. Italy has made peace with the peoples, and is leagued with them all against their common oppressors."

We have still another of these songs, in which the heart of womanhood speaks, though this time with a voice of pride and happiness.

"THE DECORATION.

"My love looks well under his helmet's crest;
He went to war, and did not let them see
His back, and so his wound is the breast:
For one he got, he struck and gave them three.
When he came back, I loved him, hurt so, best;
He married me and loves me tenderly.

"When he goes by, and people give him way,
I thank God for my fortune every day;
When he goes by he seems more grand and fair
Than any crossed and ribboned cavalier:
The cavalier grew up with his cross on,
And I know how my darling's cross was won!"

We think this unaffected, fresh, and good. The poem, like that of *La Livornese* and *La Donna Lombarda*, is a vivid picture: it is a liberated city, and the streets are filled with jubilant people; the first victorious combats have taken place, and it is a wounded hero who passes with his ribbon on his breast. As the fond crowd gives way to him, his young wife looks on him from her window with an exultant love, unshadowed by any possibility of harm;—

"Mi menò a moglie e mi vuol tanto bene!"

This is country and freedom to her,—this is strength which despots cannot break,—this is joy to which defeat and ruin can never come nigh!

It might be any one of the sarcastic and quick-witted people talking politics in the streets of Rome in 1847, who sees the newly elected Senator—the head of the Roman municipality, and the legitimate mediator between Pope and people—as he passes, and speaks to him in these lines the dominant feeling of the moment:—

"THE CARDINALS.

"O Senator of Rome! if true and well
You are reckoned honest, in the Vatican,
Let it be yours His Holiness to tell,
There are many Cardinals, and not one man.

"They are made like lobsters, and, when they are dead,
Like lobsters change their colors and turn red;
And while they are living, with their backward gait
Displace and tangle good Saint Peter's net."

An impulse of the time is strong again in the following *Stornello*, — a cry of reproach that seems to follow some recreant from a beleaguered camp of true comrades, and to utter the feeling of men who marched to battle through defection, and were strong chiefly in their just cause. It bears the date of that fatal hour when the king of Naples, after a brief show of liberality, recalled his troops from Bologna, where they had been acting against Austria with the confederated forces of the other Italian states, and when every man lost to Italy was as an ebbing drop of her life's blood.

"THE DESERTER.

(Bologna, May, 1848.)

"Never did grain grow out of frozen earth;
From the dead branch never did blossoms start:
If thou lovest not the land that gave thee birth,
Within thy breast thou bear'st a frozen heart;
If thou lovest not this land of ancient worth,
To love aught else, say, traitor, how thou art!

"To thine own land thou couldst not faithful be, —
Woe to the woman that puts faith in thee!
To him that trusteth in the recreant, woe!
Never from frozen earth did harvest grow:
To her that trusteth a deserter, shame!
Out of the dead branch never blossom came."

And this song, so fine in its picturesque and its dramatic qualities, is not less true to the hope of the Venetians when they rose in 1848, and intrusted their destinies to Daniele Manin.

"THE RING OF THE LAST DOGE.

"I saw the widowed Lady of the Sea
Crownéd with corals and sea-weed and shells,
That her long anguish and adversity
Had seemed to drown in plays and festivals.

"I said: 'Where is thine ancient fealty fled? —
Where is the ring with which Manin did wed
His bride?' With tearful visage she:
'An eagle with two beaks tore it from me.
Suddenly I arose, and how it came
I know not, but I heard my bridegroom's name.'
Poor widow! 't is not he. Yet he may bring —
Who knows? — back to the bride her long-lost ring."

The poor Venetians of that day dreamed that San Marco might live again, and the fineness and significance of the poem could not have been lost on the humblest in Venice, where all were quick to beauty and vividly remembered that the last Doge who wedded the sea was named, like the new President, Manin.

We think the *Stornelli* of the revolutionary period of 1848 have a peculiar value, because they embody, in forms of artistic perfection, the evanescent as well as the enduring qualities of popular feeling. They give us what had otherwise been lost, in the passing humor of the time. They do not celebrate the battles or the great political occurrences. If they deal with events at all, it is with events that express some belief or longing, — rather with what people hoped or dreamed than with what they did. They sing the Friulan volunteers, who bore the laurel instead of the olive during Holy Week, in token that the patriotic war had become a religion; they remind us that the first fruits of Italian longing for unity were the cannons sent to the Romans by the Genoese; they tell us that the tricolor was placed in the hand of the statue of Marcus Aurelius at the Capitol, to signify that Rome was no more, and that Italy was to be. But the *Stornelli* touch with most effect those yet more intimate ties between national and individual life that vibrate in the hearts of the Livornese and the Lombard woman, of the lover who sees his bride in the patriotic colors, of the maiden who will be a sister of charity that she may follow her lover through all perils, of the mother who names her new-born babe Costanza in the very hour of the Venetian Republic's fall. And we like the *Stornelli* all the better because they preserve the generous ardor of the time, even in its fondness and excess.

After the fall of Rome, Italy, as we have seen, was no better than a cage for birds of their note; and the poet did not

long remain unmolested even in his Swiss retreat. In 1852 the Federal Council yielded to the instances of the Austrian government, and expelled Dall' Ongaro from the Republic. He retired with his sister and nephew to Brussels, where he resumed the lectures upon Dante, interrupted by his exile from Trieste in 1847, and thus supported his family. Three years later, he gained permission to enter France, and up to the spring-time of 1859 he remained in Paris, busying himself with literature, and watching events with all an exile's eagerness. The war with Austria broke out, and the poet seized the long-coveted opportunity to return to Italy, whither he went as the correspondent of a French newspaper. On the conclusion of peace at Villafranca, this journal changed its tone, and being no longer in sympathy with Dall' Ongaro's opinions, he left it. Baron Ricasoli, to induce him to make Tuscany his home, instituted a chair of comparative dramatic literature in connection with the University of Pisa, and offered it to Dall' Ongaro, whose wide general learning and special dramatic studies peculiarly qualified him to hold it. He therefore took up his abode at Florence, dedicating his main industry to a course of public lectures on ancient and modern dramatic literature, and writing those wonderful restorations of Menander's "Phasma" and "Treasure," which have been heretofore noticed in an article on "Recent Italian Comedy." * He has written much on many subjects, and always beautifully. His prose has a peculiar delightfulness; and his poems in the Venetian dialect are among the most charming in that winning patois. A Boston publisher has reprinted one of the popular romances in which he represents the humble life of his native province, and his dramas have nearly all been translated into French and German.

As with Dall' Ongaro literature had always been but an instrument for the redemption of Italy, even after his appointment to a university professorship he did not forget this prime object. In nearly all that he has since written, he has kept the great aim of his life in view, and few of the events or hopes of that dreary period of suspense and abortive effort between the conclusion of peace at Villafranca and the acqui-

* North American Review for October, 1864.

sition of Venice have gone unsung by him. Indeed, some of his most characteristic *Stornelli* belong to this epoch. After Savoy and Nice had been betrayed to Napoleon, and while the Italians waited in angry suspicion for the next demand of their hated ally, which might be the surrender of the island of Sardinia or the sacrifice of the Genoese province, but which no one could guess in the impervious Napoleonic silence, our poet wrote: —

"THE IMPERIAL EGG.

(Milan, 1862.)

"Who knows what hidden devil it may be
Under yon mute, grim bird that looks our way? —
Yon silent bird of evil omen, — he
That, wanting peace, breathes discord and dismay.
Quick, quick, and change his egg, my Italy,
Before there hatch from it some bird of prey, —

"Before some beak of rapine be set free,
That, after the mountains, shall infest the sea;
Before some ravenous eaglet shall be sent
After our isles to gorge the continent. —
I 'd rather a goose even from yon egg should come, —
If only of the breed that once saved Rome!"

When, in 1859, by virtue of the popular vote, the Romagna ceased to be part of Saint Peter's patrimony, and became a province of the kingdom of Italy, the Pope is credibly reported to have turned, in one of his frequent bursts of anger, to a crucifix, with the words of the Psalm, "Clamavi ad te, et non exaudisti me!" "So far," says Dall' Ongaro, who relates this in a note to the following poem, — "so far history. The rest deserves confirmation." And when the reader remembers how many reasons the poet had, as priest and patriot, to know and hate church-craft, and considers how different, after all, is the Christ of church-craft from the Christ of the Gospels, we think he will forgive his seeming profanity for his actual wit.

"THE PLEBISCITE.

"When all Bologna rose and with one voice
Chose Victor Emanuel her king and chief,
Mastai turned to Jesus on the cross:
'I knock and knock,' he said, 'and you play deaf.'

"And to his vicar Jesus Christ replies:
'Why, you ask me impossibilities!
Ask for a donkey that shall bend its knees,
Ask a Madonna that shall wink its eyes;
And if these things do honor to our part,
I will oblige you, and with all my heart.
But to reduce Romagna to thy reign,
And make its People become Herd again,
Is not so light a miracle as you 'd make it;
I know of no one who could undertake it.'"

The flight of the Grand Duke from Florence in 1859, and his conciliatory address to his late subjects after Villafranca, in which by fair promises he hoped to win them back to their allegiance; the union of Tuscany with the kingdom of Italy; the removal of the Austrian flags from Milan; Garibaldi's crusade in Sicily; the movement upon Rome in 1862; Aspromonte, — all these events, with the shifting phases of public feeling throughout that time, the alternate hopes and fears of the Italian nation, are celebrated in the later *Stornelli* of Dall' Ongaro. Since the last was written, Venice has fallen to Italy; but thicker clouds have gathered about the destiny of Rome, for within a month we have seen the failure —

"Ahi, quanto a dir qual' era è cosa dura!" —

of Garibaldi's rash heroic enterprise. The great line of prose which unites us to Europe, and commonly bears us the prices of the markets and the gossip of the courts, thrilled with a touch of unwonted poetry the other day, when it reported the vanquished champion of humanity as looking "old, haggard, and disappointed," on his return from the rout at Monte Rotondo; and we fear that his long-tried friend and comrade could not have the heart to sing now as he sang in 1862, after the affair of Aspromonte: —

"TO MY SONGS.

"Fly, O my songs, to Varignano fly!
Like some lost flock of swallows homeward flying,
And hail me Rome's Dictator, who there doth lie
Broken with wounds, but conquered not, nor dying:
Bid him think on the April that is nigh,
Month of the flowers and ventures fear-defying.

"Or if it is not nigh, it soon shall come,
As shall the swallow to his last year's home,

As on its naked stem the rose shall burn,
As to the empty sky the stars return,
As hope comes back to hearts crushed by regret; —
Nay, say not this to his heart ne'er crushed yet!"

We Americans, however, whose right and duty it is not to lose faith in the triumph of a just cause, can, even in its gloomiest hour, accept as prophecy these words from one who believes that liberty can triumph only through the submission of the Church to secular law, and the abolition of all her privileges: —

"WILLING OR LOATH.

"Willing or loath, the flames to heaven tend,
Willing or loath, the waters downward flow,
Willing or loath, when lightning strokes descend,
Crumbles the cliff, and the tower's crest sinks low;
Willing or loath, by the same laws that send
Onward the earth and sun, the people go.

"And thou, successor of Saint Peter, thou
Wilt stop the sun and turn us backward now?
Look thou to ruling Holy Church, for we
Willing or loath fulfil our destiny;
Willing or loath, in Rome at last we meet!
We will not perish at the mountain's feet."

We have already noted the more obvious merits of the *Stornelli*, and we need not greatly insist upon them now. Their defects are equally plain; one sees that their simplicity all but ceases to be a virtue at times, and that at times their feeling is too much intellectualized. Yet for all this we must recognize their excellence, and the skill as well as the truth of the poet. It is very notable with what directness he expresses his thought, and with what discretion he leaves it when expressed. The form is always most graceful, and the success with which dramatic, picturesque, and didactic qualities are blent, for a sole effect, in the brief compass of the poems, is not too highly praised in the epithet of novelty. Nothing is lost for the sake of attitude; the actor is absent from the most dramatic touches, the painter is not visible in lines which are each a picture, the teacher does not appear for the purpose of enforcing the moral. It is not the grandest poetry, but it is true feeling, admirable art.

W. D. Howells.