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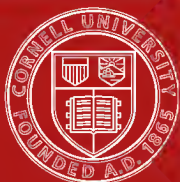


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THE FLORENTINE HISTORY

THE
FLORENTINE HISTORY

WRITTEN BY
NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN BY
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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

SIX translations of Machiavelli's *History of Florence* being already in existence, it may seem superfluous to offer a seventh to the English reader. Without disparaging the merits of other versions, I may claim this advantage for mine, that by accepting the division of each Book into numbered sections, as followed in recent editions of the Italian text, it affords facility of reference to, or from, the original.

N. H. T.

CAREGGI, *March* 1906.

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LETTER DEDICATORY

TO THE MOST HOLY AND BLESSED FATHER OUR LORD
CLEMENT THE SEVENTH HIS HUMBLE SERVANT
NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

[MOST Blessed and Holy Father, from the time when your Holiness, then in a less exalted station, first charged me to write the History of the Florentine people, I have used all diligence, and therewith whatever skill Nature or Experience hath given me, to

CORRIGENDA, VOL. I.

- Page 20, line 10, *after Luna insert Populonia, Fiesole,*
,, 27, ,, 10, *for Ancona read Cremona*
,, 105, ,, 2, *for and read or*
,, 113, ,, 3 from foot, *for Colleagues read Colleges*
,, 123, ,, 14, *for name read names*
,, 258, ,, 16, *for Filippo read Filippo*
,, 282, ,, 10 from foot, *for aquittini read squittini*

LETTER DEDICATORY

TO THE MOST HOLY AND BLESSED FATHER OUR LORD
CLEMENT THE SEVENTH HIS HUMBLE SERVANT
NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI

[Most Blessed and Holy Father, from the time when your Holiness, then in a less exalted station, first charged me to write the History of the Florentine people, I have used all diligence, and therewith whatever skill Nature or Experience hath given me, to satisfy your wishes. And being now come to treat of those times wherein by the death of the Magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici the face of affairs in Italy became changed, and having to discourse of the events that followed thereafter in a fuller and loftier style, suited to their greater dignity and importance, I have thought fit to reduce all that I have written concerning matters of earlier date into a single volume, and present it to your Holiness, that you may begin in some part to taste the fruits of the seed sown by you, whereon I have laboured. >

In reading these writings your Holiness will see in the first place through how many calamities, and how many changes of Rulers and Governments, Italy passed for several ages after the power of the Roman Empire began to decline in the West. You will also see how within that country the Popes, the Venetians, the

Kingdom of Naples, and the Dukedom of Milan obtained foremost place and authority; and how your own native city after withdrawing herself, in consequence of her divisions, from her allegiance to the Emperors, continued still to be divided, until she came to be governed under the shadow of your Illustrious House.

But since I was straitly charged and enjoined by your Holiness so to write of the things done by your ancestors that I might be seen to stand clear of even a suspicion of flattery (feigned or partial praise being as distasteful to you as just commendation is pleasing), I fear lest in describing the worth of Giovanni, the wisdom of Cosimo, the kindness of Piero, the munificence and sagacity of Lorenzo, I may seem to your Holiness to have transgressed your commands. As to this, however, it must stand as my excuse, both with your Holiness and with any other who may object to my descriptions as unfaithful, that as I found the memoirs of those who at divers times have written concerning your ancestors filled with their praises, I had either to speak of them as I there found them, or seem unfriendly if I passed them over in silence. And if behind their admirable actions there lay hidden, as some do aver, an ambition hurtful to the common welfare, not recognising it I do not feel bound to dwell upon it, seeing that throughout my History I have never sought to cloak a dishonourable deed with a specious defence, nor to darken one that was praiseworthy as done with a contrary intent.

How little, indeed, I am disposed to adulation will be manifest in every part of my work, but more especially in the speeches and private conversations, wherein

the sentiments and opinions ascribed directly or obliquely to individual men are in all respects made to accord with the quality and character of the speaker. So that although I have constantly sought to avoid offensive words, as conducing neither to the dignity nor to the truth of History, no one who judges my writings fairly will reproach me as a flatterer, above all when it is seen how little I have said touching the memory of your father, whose short life did not permit him to make himself fully understood, nor supply me with material for illustrating his character. That he gave being to your Holiness is in itself a splendid and glorious distinction, far transcending all the other achievements of his ancestors, and must add as many ages to his fame as untoward Fortune took years from his life.

But while it has been my endeavour, most Blessed and Holy Father, to give by these writings of mine content to all men without offence to Truth, it may yet be the case that I shall give content to none. Nor if this be so shall I account it strange; for no one, I think, can write the History of his own times without offending many. Nevertheless, I shall go on my way with a light heart, in the hope that as heretofore I have been honoured and upheld by your gracious favour, so hereafter I may in like manner be helped and defended by the armed legions of your most righteous judgment. Nor will the courage and confidence wherewith I have hitherto written be wanting for the completion of my task, if life fail me not, and your Holiness withdraw not your countenance from me.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

WHEN first I resolved to write the History of the affairs, foreign and domestic, of the Florentine people, my intention was to begin my narrative from the year of our Lord 1434, at which date the House of Medici, through the merits of Cosimo and of his father Giovanni, obtained greater authority in Florence than any other family in that city. For I thought to myself that Messer Lionardo of Arezzo and Messer Poggio, both of them admirable historians, must have recorded at length all that had taken place before that time. But afterwards, having diligently studied their writings with a view to learn what order and methods they had followed, and by imitating these make my own History more attractive to the reader, I found that while they had been most circumstantial in their account of the various wars waged by the Florentines against foreign Princes and Peoples, as regards civil discords and intestine feuds, and the effects following from them, they had either been wholly silent or had treated them so briefly as to afford the reader neither pleasure nor profit. This course I believe them to have taken, either because they thought such matters too trivial for written record or else through fear of offending the descendants of those persons whom, in writing of them, they would have had occasion to

censure. Both of which reasons, without offence be it said, seem to me unworthy of these excellent writers. For if there be anything in History that at once pleases and instructs, it is the events that are minutely set forth; and if for those who govern republics any lesson be profitable, it is that which points out how the feuds and divisions of a city are caused; for being thus taught wisdom at the cost of others, they may learn to maintain unity among themselves.] But if the example of any republic convey this lesson, most effectively and usefully is it taught us by what we read of as happening in our own State; and if ever the divisions of any republic deserved attention, those of Florence do so in a special degree. For while most other republics of which we have knowledge have been content with one division only, whereby, as chance might determine, their city has been either strengthened or overthrown, Florence, not satisfied with a single division, has been the subject of many. In Rome, as every one knows, after the expulsion of her Kings there arose the division between Patricians and Plebeians which lasted down to the overthrow of the Republic, and the same happened in Athens and in all the other commonwealths which flourished in those remote times. But in Florence there first of all grew division among the Nobles themselves, then between the Nobles and the People, and lastly between the People and the Populace; nay, often it so happened that one of the contending factions prevailing over the other, itself became divided; whence there resulted deaths, banishments, and the extermination of families to an extent unheard of in any other city. And, indeed, to my mind, nothing affords clearer proof of the puissance of

our city than that these divisions, capable in themselves of wrecking the very greatest and most powerful states, are seen constantly to have added to the strength of ours ; for such has been the energy of our citizens, and such their genius for achieving greatness for themselves and for their country, that those who escaped these manifold calamities have been able by their efforts to exalt our city even more than the malignity of the causes which decreased their number has had power to depress her. So that in truth had it been the good fortune of Florence, after she shook off the Imperial yoke, to adopt a form of government which would have kept her united, I know not what republic, modern or ancient, would have been her superior, so greatly must she then have flourished in arms and resources. For after she had driven forth the Ghibellines in such numbers that all Tuscany and Lombardy swarmed with them, we find that in the war against Arezzo, in the year preceding the battle of 1288. Campaldino, the Guelfs and others who still remained led out from our city, of her own citizens, twelve hundred men-at-arms with twelve thousand foot. And at a later date, in the war waged with Filippo Visconti, Duke of Milan, when they had to depend on 1423-1428. their other resources and no longer on their arms, which by this time were exhausted, we learn that they spent three millions five hundred thousand florins during the five years the struggle lasted, and when it ended, not content to remain idle, but desiring more signally to display the vigour of their city, went forth 1430. to besiege Lucca. I can see no reason, therefore, for thinking these divisions unworthy of particular notice.

[But if the celebrated Historians whom I have named were withheld by fear of hurting the memory of those of whom they had to speak, they made a great mistake and showed how little they knew what ambition is, and how strong the desire men have to perpetuate their own name and that of their ancestors. They forgot too how many there have been who, lacking opportunity to win renown by praiseworthy deeds, have sought to become famous by deeds that were shameful ; nor reflected that matters relating to rule and government, since they possess a greatness in themselves, howsoever they may be handled and with whatsoever end undertaken, seem always to bring men more honour than blame.]

These considerations led me to alter my first design and to begin my History from the origin of our city. But as I have no wish to encroach on ground already occupied by others, down to the year 1434 I shall give a particular account of domestic matters only, and say no more of events happening outside the city than may be needed for a right understanding of what took place within. After passing that year I shall speak with fulness of both. [Moreover, that this History may be better understood always and by all men, before treating specially of Florence I shall relate by what causes Italy came into the hands of the potentates who then governed her. All which preliminary matter, both as regards Italy and Florence, shall be disposed of in four Books. The first of these will record briefly all that befell Italy from the decline of the Roman Empire down to the year 1434 ; the second will give an account of the city of Florence from its foundation to the war waged with the Pope after the expulsion of

the Duke of Athens ; the third will end with the death of King Ladislas of Naples in the year 1414 ; and in the fourth we shall again reach the year 1434, from which date onward to the present time the foreign as well as the domestic affairs of our city shall be circumstantially set forth. 3

THE FLORENTINE HISTORY

BOOK I

360-1434

§ 1. THE nations who inhabit the countries to the north of the rivers Rhine and Danube, living in a healthy and prolific region, often so increase and multiply that certain of their number are constrained to quit the land of their birth and seek elsewhere new places of abode. When any of these provinces would rid itself of its excessive population, the method followed is for it to divide into three companies, each containing the same proportion of high and low, rich and poor. This done, lots are cast, the company on which the lot falls goes forth to seek its fortune, and the other two, relieved from the burden of the third, remain behind to enjoy the ancestral possessions.

It was by emigrants such as these that the Roman Empire was overthrown, opportunity being afforded by the Emperors themselves, who, by abandoning Rome, the ancient seat of their authority, and removing to Constantinople, had weakened the Western division of the Empire, as being now less under their eyes, and consequently more open to pillage whether at the hands of their ministers or of their enemies. And in

truth for the overthrow of so great an Empire, founded in the blood of so many valiant men, no less inertness on the part of its Princes and disloyalty in their officers, nor less vigour and stubbornness on the part of its assailants, had sufficed. For it was not one nation but many that wrought its destruction.

After the Cimbri, defeated by Marius in the days of the Commonwealth, the first people who came forth from these northern regions to assail the might of Rome were the Visigoths, whose name in their own tongue signifies the same as Western Goths in ours. These, after many encounters on the frontiers of the Empire, had for a long period, by leave of the Emperors, their seat on the banks of the Danube, and although at divers times and on various pretexts they made repeated attacks on the Roman Provinces, they were constantly kept in check by the Imperial arms. The last Emperor who gained a signal victory over them was Theodosius, by whom they were brought to such complete subjection that, without re-appointing a King of their own, they were content to draw the subsidy the Emperor allowed them, and lived and fought under his standard and command. But when Theodosius died, leaving his sons Honorius and Arcadius heirs to the Empire, but neither to his valour nor his good-fortune, the times changed with the Prince.

A. D. 395.

Three governors had been appointed by Theodosius to rule the three divisions of the Empire. Rufinus in the East, Stilicho in the West, and Gildo in Africa, each of whom, on the Emperor's death, not content to govern any longer as a subordinate, resolved to assume independent power. In attempting this, Gildo and Rufinus were crushed at once. But Stilicho, who knew

better how to dissemble his designs, while winding himself into the confidence of the young Emperors, sought at the same time so to shake their authority that afterwards it might easily be taken from them. Accordingly, to embroil them with the Visigoths, he advised that the customary subsidy should be withheld. And lest these enemies alone might fail to throw the Empire into disorder, he further contrived that the Roman Provinces should be invaded simultaneously by the Burgundians, the Franks, the Vandals, and the Alans, they likewise being northern nations then stirring in quest of new lands. To be better prepared for revenging the wrongful refusal of their subsidy, the Visigoths made Alaric their King, and attacking the Empire, after many vicissitudes, over-ran Italy and took and sacked Rome. After this victory Alaric died and was succeeded by Ataulfus, who, taking A.D. 410. Placidia, sister of the Emperors, to wife, was induced through this alliance to lead an expedition for the relief of Gaul and Spain, which Provinces had been invaded by the Vandals, Burgundians, Alans, and Franks, all of them set in motion by the causes already noticed. Whereupon it happened that the Vandals, who had occupied the district of Spain named Baetica, were strenuously attacked by the Visigoths, and being unable to withstand them, were invited by Bonifacius, who then governed Africa for the Empire, to come and settle there; for the Province having rebelled he feared he might be punished by the Emperor for mismanagement. The Vandals, for the reasons mentioned, readily entered on this new enterprise, and under Genseric, their king, made themselves masters of 429-439. Africa.

Meanwhile Theodosius, son to Arcadius, succeeded to the Empire, and, caring little for the affairs of the West, encouraged these nations to believe they might keep what they had acquired.

§ 2. In this way the Vandals became masters in Africa, the Alans and Visigoths in Spain, while the Franks and Burgundians not only possessed themselves of Gaul, but also gave their names to those portions of it which each of them occupied, so that one district of the country was called Francia, another Burgundia. Their good fortune incited fresh nations to attack the Empire, and a new people named Huns seized upon the province of Pannonia, lying on the hither bank of the Danube, which, after them, is to this day known as Hungary. To make matters worse, the Emperor, finding himself beset on every side, that he might have fewer enemies to contend with, began to make terms now with the Vandals, now with the Franks, the result being to increase the power and reputation of the Barbarians and diminish those of the Empire. Nor was the island of Britain, or, as it is now called, England, safe against this inundation. For its inhabitants, fearing those nations who had seized upon Gaul, and seeing no likelihood of being defended by the Emperor, summoned to their aid the Angles, a people of Germany, who, engaging in the enterprise under their King, Vortigern, for a time befriended the Britons, but afterwards drove them from their homes, establishing themselves in their room, and naming the country Anglia, after themselves. Deprived of their lands and driven desperate by their reverses, the islanders now bethought them that, though they could not defend

their own country, they might yet be able to possess themselves of a country belonging to others. Accordingly, crossing the sea with their families, they occupied the district on the opposite coast, which, after themselves, they named Brittany.

§ 3. The Huns, who, as already mentioned, had settled in Pannonia, combining with the Gepidae, the Herulians, the Thuringians, and the Ostrogoths (for so the Goths of the East are named in their own tongue), again began to move in search of new settlements, and as they could not enter Gaul, that country being defended by other barbaric tribes, came into Italy under their King, Attila, who, not long before, that he might reign alone, had slain Bleda, his brother, and had thereby become so powerful that Andaric, King of the Gepidae, and Walamir, King of the Ostrogoths, were forced to submit to his authority. On reaching Italy Attila laid siege to Aquileia, and continued to beleaguer it without intermission for two years, during which time he laid waste all the country round about and drove away the inhabitants. This it was, as in its place I shall relate, that gave its beginning to Venice. After taking and destroying Aquileia, and many towns besides, Attila turned his arms against Rome, but spared it at the entreaty of the Pope, who inspired him with such reverence that quitting Italy he withdrew to Pannonia, where he died. On the death of Attila, Walamir, King of the Ostrogoths, together with 454. the chiefs of other tribes, rose in arms against his sons Ellak and Ernak, slaying the one and forcing the other to recross the Danube and withdraw with his Huns into their native country. The Ostrogoths and Gepidae

then settled themselves in Pannonia, while the Thuringians and Herulians remained on the further bank of the Danube.

After Attila had left Italy, Valentinian, who was now Emperor of the West, thought to raise that country from its fallen condition, and, for its readier defence against the Barbarians, removed the seat of Government from Rome to Ravenna. The Emperor, residing at Constantinople, had frequently been compelled, by the disasters that had befallen the Western Empire, to concede its possession to others, as a charge involving much danger and cost. Frequently, too, the Romans, seeing themselves abandoned, took upon them, even without the Emperor's leave, to create for their protection an Emperor of their own, or suffered some one in authority to usurp Imperial powers. As now
455. happened ; for, on the death of Valentinian, the Empire was usurped by Maximus the Roman, who forced Eudoxia, the widow of Valentinian, to accept him as her husband. This marriage with a mere citizen Eudoxia, herself of the Imperial blood, could not brook, and burning to revenge the indignity secretly incited Genseric, King of the Vandals and Lord of Africa, to invade Italy, showing him how easy and advantageous its conquest would be. Tempted by hopes of spoil, Genseric came at once, and finding Rome undefended, sacked it, remaining there for fourteen days. Afterwards he took and plundered many other towns of Italy ; and then, laden with booty, returned with his army to Africa. The Romans thereupon came back to Rome, and, to replace Maximus who had been murdered, made Avitus, he too being a Roman, Emperor.

At a later time, when many changes had taken place both in Italy and out of it, and after the death of many Emperors, the Eastern Empire fell to Zeno, that of the West to Orestes and his son Augustulus. And while these last, who had usurped the Imperial station by fraud, were contriving how they might retain it by force, the Herulians and Thuringians, who, as I have mentioned, had on the death of Attila settled on the further bank of the Danube, combining their forces under the command of Odoacer, came into Italy, when the lands they had left vacant were at once occupied by the Lombards, another northern tribe, under their King, Godogus. These Lombards, as I shall presently show, were the last of the foreign plagues by which Italy was visited. On his arrival in Italy, Odoacer ^{476.} defeated and slew Orestes near Pavia, and put Augustulus to flight. After which victory, that the title of authority might change with the holder, renouncing the style of Emperor, Odoacer caused himself to be proclaimed King of Rome, and was the first among the chiefs of those tribes who then overran the world to settle and take up his abode in Italy. For all before him, whether from fear that they might not be able to keep their hold of the country, which could readily be succoured by the Emperors of the East, or for whatever other secret reason, had been content merely to plunder it, and then seek a permanent settlement in other lands.

§ 4. At this time therefore the ancient Roman Empire had come under the control of the following rulers:—Zeno, reigning in Constantinople, was supreme throughout the whole of the Eastern dominions. The

Ostrogoths were masters in Moesia and Pannonia ; the Visigoths, Suevians, and Alans held Gascony and Spain ; the Vandals, Africa ; the Franks and Burgundians, Gaul ; the Herulians and Thuringians, Italy.

75. The Kingship of the Ostrogoths had now descended on Theodoric, nephew of Walamir, who, living on friendly terms with Zeno, the Emperor of the East, wrote to acquaint him that his countrymen thought it most unjust that they, though surpassing all other nations in valour, should be poorer than all in extent of territory ; that consequently it would be impossible for him to keep them shut up within the limits of Pannonia ; and seeing he must suffer them to arm and go forth in search of new lands, he desired to give notice beforehand of what was impending, to the end that the Emperor might avert danger by conceding a grant of territory, wherein, with his favour, they could dwell in greater credit and more at their ease. Upon this Zeno, partly through fear, partly from his desire to expel Odoacer, gave Theodoric leave to attack him and take possession of Italy. On receiving this permission Theodoric immediately quitted Pannonia, which he left to his friends the Gepidae, and coming into Italy
93. slew Odoacer and his son ; whereupon assuming, as Odoacer had before him, the title of King of Italy, he made Ravenna the seat of his Government for the same reasons as had moved Valentinian to establish himself there.

Theodoric was a prince of singular excellence both in war and peace. Constantly victorious in war, in peace he conferred the greatest benefits on the peoples and cities subject to him. He distributed the Ostrogoths throughout the towns of Italy under chiefs of

their own, who were to lead them in battle and administer justice in time of peace. He enlarged Ravenna and rebuilt Rome, restoring to the Roman citizens all their privileges save that of bearing arms. By his personal authority, and without resort to force, he kept the Barbarian princes, who before had encroached on the Empire, within bounds; while to bar the way against any new invaders who might seek to enter Italy, he built towns and fortresses in the country lying between the Alps and the northern shores of the Adriatic. And had not these great services been tarnished in his later years by cruelties into which he was betrayed by suspected attempts on his kingdom, as when he put those most holy men Symmachus and Boethius to death, his memory would in all respects deserve the very highest praise. For not Rome and Italy only but every province of the Western Empire, being freed by his valour and beneficence from the misery they had for so many years endured under successive inroads of Barbarians, began to recover force, and revert to order and a fair measure of prosperity.

§ 5. And truly if ever there were unhappy times for Italy, and for the other provinces overrun by the Barbarians, it was the period that lasted from the reigns of Honorius and Arcadius down to that of Theodoric. For if we reflect how much injury may result to a republic or monarchy from a change in its prince or rulers, not brought about by any foreign foe, but merely by domestic discord, and note how by a few such changes the greatest and most powerful states have been overthrown, we may readily conceive how terrible in those days was the distress of Italy and the

other Provinces of the Empire, when not only their rulers and government, but likewise their laws, their customs and mode of life, their religion, language, and dress, nay their very names were altered ; for the mere thought of any one of these changes, let alone the sight and suffering of all of them together, might well dismay the firmest and most resolute spirit. During this period many cities were destroyed, while others had their origin or increase. Among those that perished were Aquileia, Luna, and Clusium ; among those that came into existence were Venice, Siena, Ferrara, and Aquila, together with other towns and strongholds which, not to be prolix, I omit. Of towns which then grew great from small beginnings, were Florence, Genoa, Pisa, Milan, Naples, and Bologna. The destruction and restoration of Rome, and of various other cities which fell and recovered with the alternations of Fortune, are also to be noted.

Amid this overthrow of antiquity and influx of new races, new languages grew up, as shown in the dialects of France, Spain, and Italy, wherein the blending of the native tongue of the new inhabitants with that of ancient Rome has given rise to novel forms of speech. Changes moreover took place not only in the names of provinces, but also of seas, lakes, and rivers, nay even of men themselves, so that the countries mentioned abound in such new names, altogether unlike those formerly in use. Thus, to select from many other instances, we find the river Po, the lake of Garda, and the Archipelago known by names wholly different from those they bore in ancient times ; and instead of Cæsar or Pompey, men have come to be called Peter, John, or Matthew.

But of all the changes that then come about, the most momentous was the change in Religion. For the traditions of the ancient faith opposing themselves to the miracles of the new, gave rise to the gravest controversies and conflicts between their respective adherents; though had there been greater unity in Christianity itself, the disorders that ensued might have been less serious. But the Churches of Greece, Rome, and Ravenna, each contending with the other, and heretical sects with orthodox, increased in many ways the unhappiness of the world. Of this we have example in Africa, which suffered far more in consequence of the Arian tenets embraced by the Vandals, than from the innate greed and cruelty of that people.

Living, therefore, in the midst of so many persecutions, men bore pictured in their eyes the terror that filled their hearts: since, besides the infinite ills they had to endure, most of them could no longer find a refuge with that God in whom the wretched are wont to put their trust, and, not knowing to what Deity to turn, perished miserably without hope or help.

§ 6. No scant meed of praise, therefore, is due to Theodoric for having been the first to alleviate these great evils, and for having, in the course of the eight-and-thirty years he reigned in Italy, restored the country to such prosperity that hardly a trace of its former sufferings could be recognised. But when, on his death, the kingdom passed to Athalaric, son of 526. his daughter Amalasantha, the malice of Fortune being still unsated, the old troubles soon broke out afresh. For, no long time after the death of his grandsire, Athalaric himself died, and the kingdom

reverting to his mother, she was betrayed by Theodahad, whom she had called in as her associate in the Government. His treachery in putting Amalasantha to death and making himself King rendered him so hateful to the Ostrogoths that the Emperor Justinian was encouraged to believe he could drive him out of Italy, and sent thither an expedition under the command of Belisarius, who had already, by the defeat and expulsion of the Vandals, brought Africa into subjection to the Empire. Belisarius, accordingly, after occupying Sicily, passed thence into Italy and took Naples and Rome. The Goths laying the blame of these reverses on their King, Theodahad, slew him, and chose Witigis in his room, who after many battles was besieged and captured by Belisarius in Ravenna. But before Belisarius could turn his victory to account, he was recalled by Justinian, who sent Johannes and Vitalius, men far inferior to him in valour and conduct, to replace him. Whereupon the Goths took heart and chose Ildibad, the governor of Verona, for their King. He having been assassinated, the Kingdom
541. passed next to Totila, who, after routing the forces of the Emperor, regained possession of Tuscany and Naples, and replaced his governors in almost every one of those provinces which Belisarius had recovered. Justinian now resolved to send Belisarius a second time into Italy. But he, returning with forces of insufficient strength, rather impaired than increased the fame of his former exploits. For while he lay with his army at Ostia, Rome was stormed before his very eyes by Totila, who, finding he could neither hold nor relinquish the city with safety, laid the greater portion of it in ruins, drove out the inhabitants, carried

the senators away with him, and making little account of Belisarius, passed with his army into Calabria, to intercept the reinforcements arriving from Greece. On seeing Rome thus abandoned, Belisarius conceived a design not unworthy of his former renown. Entering the ruined city, he rebuilt the walls with all possible speed, and brought back the inhabitants. But his praiseworthy efforts were defeated by Fortune. For Justinian, being at this very time attacked by the Parthians, once more recalled him, when, quitting Italy at the Emperor's command, he left the country at the mercy of Totila, who again took possession of Rome, but dealt with it less harshly than on the occasion of its first capture; nay, moved by the intercession of St. Benedict, greatly revered in those days for his holy life, rather set himself to restore it. Justinian meanwhile had made terms with the Parthians, and was again planning an expedition for the relief of Italy, but was withheld by the Slavs, a new tribe of northmen, who, crossing the Danube, had invaded Illyria and Thrace. Totila was thus left free to occupy almost the whole of Italy. But when Justinian had vanquished the Slavs he sent an army into Italy under Narses the eunuch, a famous 552. soldier, who on his arrival routed and slew Totila, when the remnant of the Goths who survived this defeat fled to Pavia, where they made Teias their King. After his victory Narses re-occupied Rome, and subsequently defeated and slew Teias in the neighbourhood of Nocera, by which overthrow the very name of the Goths was obliterated in Italy, where, from King Theodoric to Teias, they had reigned for threescore and ten years.

565. § 7. Hardly was Italy delivered from the Goths when Justianian died, being succeeded by his son Justin, who, at the instance of Sophia, his wife, recalled Narses from Italy and sent Longinus to replace him. Following the example of his predecessors, Longinus took up his abode at Ravenna, but departing from their methods gave the government a new form; for instead of appointing governors of provinces, as the Goths had done, he sent to every city and town of importance certain officers, to whom he gave the name of Dukes. In distributing these officers no special distinction was conceded by him to Rome, but abolishing the consuls and senators, whose titles till then had been retained, he made that city also subject to a duke, sent every year from Ravenna, and styled Duke of Rome. For the vicegerent of the Emperors, who, residing at Ravenna, was supreme over the whole of Italy, he reserved the title of Exarch. This subdivision of authority rendered the overthrow of Italy easier, and gave earlier opportunity for its occupation by the Lombards.

§ 8. Deprived of the government of a province which he had rescued by his valour and with his blood, Narses was filled with resentment against the Emperor, and all the more because the Empress, not content with merely recalling him, had added the scornful message that she must have him back to spin wool with the other eunuchs. To avenge this affront he persuaded Alboin, who then reigned over the Lombards in Pannonia, to come and occupy Italy. The Lombards, as has already been noted, had possessed themselves of the lands beyond the Danube

which had been abandoned by the Herulians and Thuringians when these nations were led into Italy by their King, Odoacer. After dwelling there for some time, on the Kingship falling to Alboin, a fierce and daring warrior, they crossed the Danube, and fought and defeated Cunimund, King of the Gepidae, who ruled in Pannonia. Among the spoils of this victory was Rosamund, daughter of Cunimund, whom Alboin taking to wife became lord of Pannonia. And, moved thereto by his savage humour, he made him a cup of the skull of Cunimund, out of which he would often drink in commemoration of his victory. But on being summoned by Narses, whose friendship he had gained when the latter was waging war against the Goths, he left Pannonia to the Huns (who, as I have related, had returned to their own country on the death of Attila) and came into Italy, and finding it parcelled out into many small states, speedily possessed himself of Pavia, Milan, Verona, and Vicenza, with all Tuscany, and most of the Flaminian province now known as Romagna. And since it seemed to him that by these many and rapid victories he had already achieved the conquest of Italy, he held high 572. feast at Verona, and growing merry with much drinking, bade the skull of Cunimund be filled with wine, and offered to Rosamund, his Queen, who sat opposite him at table, saying loud enough for her to hear, that on so joyful an occasion he would have her drink with her sire. Stung by the brutal jest, Rosamund burned to be revenged, and knowing that one of her handmaidens was loved by a certain Almachild, a bold Lombard youth of good family, she persuaded the damsel to contrive that Almachild should mistake

mistress for maid. Accordingly when the youth on the damsel's appointment came by night to seek her in her chamber, believing himself to be with her, he embraced Rosamund, who, presently discovering herself, bade him choose between slaying her husband (when he should have the kingdom and continue to enjoy her favours) or being slain by him as the violator of his wife. Thus urged, Almachild consented to murder Alboin. But when the deed was done, finding they could not secure the kingdom for themselves, nay, were in peril of being put to death by the Lombards by whom Alboin was much loved, taking with them the whole of the royal treasures, they fled to Longinus at Ravenna, who received them honourably.

During these troubles the Emperor Justin died and was succeeded by Tiberius, who, being involved in wars with the Parthians, could send no aid to Italy. To Longinus this seemed a favourable moment to make himself, with the help of Rosamund and her treasure, King of the Lombards and of all Italy. Accordingly he imparted to her his design, urging her to murder Almachild and accept him for her husband. Rosamund, consenting, prepared a cup of poisoned wine, which with her own hand she gave to Almachild as he came thirsty from the bath. But he, when he had drunk half of it, finding his bowels troubled and suspecting the cause, forced Rosamund to drink off the rest; and both dying within a few hours, Longinus was disappointed in his hope of becoming King.

Meanwhile the Lombards assembling in Pavia, which city they had made the chief seat of their Government, chose Cleph for King. He rebuilt Imola which Narses had destroyed, and took possession of Rimini and

almost every other place of strength as far as Rome, but died in his career of victory. So cruel was this Cleph, not merely towards strangers but even to his own Lombards, that, disgusted with the regal power, they would have no more Kings to rule them, but chose instead thirty dukes from among themselves whom all were to obey. It was owing to this resolve that the Lombards never were able to get possession of the whole of Italy, Benevento being the limit of their dominion, while Rome, Ravenna, Ancona, Mantua, Padua, Monselice, Parma, Bologna, Faenza, Forli, and Cesena either resisted them for a long time, or never fell into their hands. For without a King they were less ready for war, and when afterwards they again took to making Kings, from having for a time been free, they had become less obedient and more prone to disputes among themselves. This it was that first arrested their conquests, and in the end drove them out of Italy. Such being the state of affairs with the Lombards, Longinus and the Romans made terms with them on the footing that, laying arms aside, each should enjoy what they possessed.

§ 9. About this time the Popes began to acquire a larger authority than they had hitherto exercised. For the earliest successors of St. Peter, being venerated for their holy lives and for the miracles they wrought, gave by their example such credit to the Christian religion, that princes, to correct the disorders then prevailing throughout the world, were fain to render it obedience. Moreover, when the Emperor, after embracing Christianity, left Rome to reside in Constantinople, the result, as I have already noted, was

to hasten the overthrow of the Roman Empire and quicken the growth of the Roman Church. Nevertheless, since down to the coming of the Lombards all Italy was subject to the Emperor or to Kings, the Popes of those days obtained no authority, save such as reverence for their character or their teaching gave them. In all other respects they obeyed the Emperor or the Kings, who sometimes employed them as their ministers, and sometimes put them to death. When Theodoric, King of the Goths, made Ravenna the seat of his Government, the Popes, no doubt, began to exert greater influence in the affairs of Italy; for Rome being left without a temporal prince, the Romans, for their own protection, were forced to yield them stricter obedience. The authority of the Popes, however, was not greatly enlarged by Theodoric, whose only concession to them was, that the Church of Rome should have precedence over the Church of Ravenna. But after the Lombards came into Italy and the country was parcelled out into many subdivisions, the Pope was led to take more upon him, for as he was almost supreme in Rome, he was treated with so much deference by the Emperor of Constantinople and by the Lombards, that, through him, the Romans came to stand towards Longinus and towards the Lombards on the footing of allies rather than of subjects. And thus by cultivating friendly relations, now with the Greeks, at another time with the Lombards, the Popes continually added to their own importance.

610-641. But after the calamities which, under the reign of Heraclius, overtook the Eastern Empire, when the Slavs (a people of whom I have already spoken) once more invaded Illyria and settled there, naming

the country after themselves Slavonia, and when others of the Imperial Provinces were assailed first by the Persians, next by the Saracens (who under Mahomet issued from Arabia), and lastly by the Turks, the Empire, stripped of Syria, Africa, and Egypt, became so much weakened that the Pope, perceiving he could no longer turn to it as a refuge against oppression, and at the same time recognising the growth of the Lombard power, resolved to look elsewhere for help, and had recourse to France and her Kings. Hence it came that all the wars which from this time forward were waged by the Barbarians in Italy were for the most part occasioned by the Popes, and that the Barbarians, by whom the country was overrun, were commonly called in by them. And this system, continued down to our own day, has kept and keeps our country weak and divided. For which reason, in relating the events that have taken place from those times to our own, we shall no longer concern ourselves with tracing the decay of the Empire, which was now in ruins, but turn our attention to the growth of the Papacy, and of those other Princedoms by which Italy was thenceforth governed until the coming of Charles VIII. of France; and it will be seen how the Popes, at first by their spiritual censures, afterwards by these enforced by arms and combined with indulgences, made themselves feared and venerated, and how by an ill use of both weapons they have now lost their authority and stand completely at the mercy of others.

§ 10. To resume the thread of my narrative, I say that on Gregory III. succeeding to the Popedom, and Aistulf to the kingdom of the Lombards, the latter,

in breach of agreements, seized on Ravenna and made war on the Pope. Whereupon Gregory, for the causes above noticed, looking no longer to the enfeebled Emperors of Constantinople, nor willing to rely on the faith of the Lombards, which had often proved false, had recourse to Pepin, who from being Lord of Austrasia and Brabantia had become King of France, not so much through his own merits as by those of his father, Charles Martel, and of Pepin, his grandsire. For Charles Martel, being governor of that kingdom, 732. had given the Saracens the memorable rout near Tours on the river Loire in which more than two hundred thousand of them were slain. It was therefore through his father's renown, as well as by his own great qualities, that Pepin afterwards became King of France. From him then, as I have said, Pope Gregory sought aid against the Lombards, which Pepin promised to send, but desired first to see him and to do him honour in person. Whereupon Gregory repaired to France, and (such was the reverence then paid to religion) passed unmolested through the territories of his Lombard enemies. On reaching France, he was honourably received by the King, who presently sent him back, and with him an army which besieged the Lombards in Pavia. Aistulf was in consequence compelled to sue for peace, which the Franks granted him at the intercession of the Pope, who desired not the death of his enemy but that he should be converted and live. By the terms of this peace, Aistulf engaged to restore all the towns belonging to the Church whereof he had possessed himself. But when Pepin's soldiers returned to France, Aistulf broke faith. The Pope then sent a second time to Pepin,

who despatched a second army into Italy, routed the Lombards, and took Ravenna, which together with all the towns that had been subject to the Exarch, and in addition those of Urbino and the March, he, against the wish of the Greek Emperor, gave in grant to the Pope. Before the surrender of these towns was completed Aistulf died, whereupon Desiderius the Lombard, who was then Duke of Tuscany, sought to possess himself of the kingdom by force of arms, and asked aid of the Pope, to whom he promised his friendship. On the Pope agreeing to support him, all the other princes gave way. At first Desiderius kept faith and surrendered to the Pope all the towns named in the treaty made with Pepin. From this time forth there came no Exarch from Constantinople to Ravenna, which was left to be governed as the Pope thought fit.

§ 11. On Pepin's death he was succeeded in his kingdom by his son Charles, who from the splendour of his achievements was named the Great. Meanwhile Theodorus I. had come to the Popedom. This Pope fell out with Desiderius, and, being besieged by him in Rome, sought help from Charles, who crossed the Alps, and laying siege to Pavia, captured Desiderius and his sons and sent them as prisoners to France. Charles then went in person to visit the Pope in Rome, where, after proclaiming that the Pope as God's vicegerent was not to be judged by men, he was acclaimed Emperor by the joint voice of the Pope and the Roman people. Thus Rome came once more to have an Emperor in the West. But whereas heretofore it had been customary for the Popes to be

confirmed by the Emperors, these last had now to depend for their election on the Popes. The Empire thus began to lose credit and the Church to gain it, so that her authority over temporal princes grew continually greater.

The Lombards having now been in Italy for two hundred and thirty-two years were foreigners only in name. Consequently, when in the time of Pope Leo III. Charles desired to rearrange the government of the country, he was content they should continue to dwell in those places wherein they had been born and bred, and that the province should after them be known as Lombardy. But that they might hold the name of Rome in respect, he ordained that all that portion of Italy adjoining their territory which had been subject to the Exarchate of Ravenna, should be called Romagna. Moreover he made his son Pepin King of Italy, assigning Benevento as the limit of his dominion, while all the country beyond was retained by the Greek Emperor with whom Charles had made terms of accord.

About this time Paschal I came to the Popedom, when the clergy of the Roman churches, who as being closer at hand were usually present at the Pope's election, in order to grace their dignity by a sounding title began to style themselves *Cardinals*, and to arrogate for themselves, especially after they had excluded the Roman people from all share in choosing a Pope, so much authority, that the Pontificate was seldom conferred on any one outside their body. Accordingly, on the death of Paschal, Eugenius II, Cardinal of Santa Sabina, was created Pope.

Italy, therefore, after it came into the hands of the

Franks, underwent changes in the form of its government, both by reason of the Popes obtaining increased authority in temporal matters, and from the Franks importing the dignities of Count and Marquis in the same way as Longinus, the Exarch of Ravenna, had previously introduced the dignity of Duke. After passing through other hands the Papacy fell to a certain Roman called Osporco, who, thinking his name offensive, altered it to Sergius ; and this was the origin of that change of names which all Popes now make on their creation.

§ 12. Meanwhile Charles the Emperor died, and 814. was succeeded by his son Louis. On the death of Louis, fierce quarrels broke out among his sons, and in the days of his grandsons the Empire was taken from the House of France and transferred to Germany, the first German Emperor being named Arnulf. Nor was it the Imperial title only that the descendants of Charles lost through their dissensions, but along with it the sovereignty of Italy. For the Lombards, recovering strength, set the Romans and the Pope at defiance, when the latter, at a loss to whom to turn for aid, was constrained to appoint Berenger, Duke of Friuli, to be King of Italy. These changes encouraged the Huns, then settled in Pannonia, to invade Italy ; but being met by Berenger they were driven back into Pannonia, or rather I ought to say into Hungary, the Province having been so named by them after themselves.

Romanus at this time was Emperor of Greece, having supplanted Constantine, whose armies he had commanded. And because the Provinces of Apulia

and Calabria, which as I have already said were subject to the Eastern Empire, took advantage of his unsettled authority to revolt from the new Emperor, he, resenting their defection, gave the Saracens leave to pass into these countries, which they accordingly entered and occupied, advancing afterwards to lay siege to Rome. And as Berenger was busied at this time in defending himself against the Huns, the Romans appointed Alberic, Duke of Tuscany, to be their captain, by whose valour Rome was saved from the Saracens, who, abandoning the siege, built themselves a stronghold on Mount Garganus, whence they lorded it over Apulia and Calabria, and harried the rest of Italy. Thus it came that in those days Italy was sorely afflicted, being assailed from beyond the Alps by the Huns, and on the side of Naples by the Saracens. In this tribulation the country remained for many years under three successive Princes of the line of Berenger, during all which time the Pope and the Church were kept in constant alarm, since by reason of the dissensions of the Western Princes and the impotence of the Eastern, there was no one to whom they could look for help. At this time also Genoa and all her coasts were wasted by the Saracens, whose ravages, however, gave occasion to the greatness of Pisa, in which city vast numbers, driven away from their own homes, sought refuge. These events happened in the year of our Lord 931.

Otto, Duke of Saxony, son of Henry and Matilda, a Prince renowned for prudence and valour, being made Emperor, was entreated by Pope Agapetus to come into Italy and deliver it from the tyranny of the Berengers.

§ 13. The States of Italy were now governed as follows:—Lombardy was subject to Berenger III. and Adalbert, his son. Tuscany and Romagna were ruled by an officer of the Western Empire. Calabria and Apulia rendered obedience in part to the Greek Emperor, in part to the Saracens. In Rome two Consuls were appointed yearly from among the nobles, by whom the city was governed in conformity with ancient usage. With the Consuls were joined a Prefect who judged the people, and a Council of Twelve, who every year appointed the governors of subject towns. In Rome and throughout Italy the Pope exercised more or less authority according as he stood well or ill with the Emperor and with such others as were for the time powerful.

The Emperor Otto, coming into Italy, took the 961. Kingdom from the Berengers, who had reigned there for five-and-fifty years, and re-installed the Pope in his dignities. Otto was succeeded in the Empire, first by his son, and then by his grandson, both bearing the same name as himself. In the time of the third Otto, Pope Gregory v. having been expelled by the Romans, the Emperor came into Italy and reinstated him in Rome, when Gregory, to revenge himself on the Romans, took from them the privilege they had before enjoyed of electing the Emperor, and conferred it on six Princes of Germany, to wit, the Bishops of Mentz, Treves, and Cologne, and the Princes of Brandenburg, Saxony, and the Palatinate.

On the death of Otto III., in the year 1002, Henry, Duke of Bavaria, was chosen Emperor by the Electors, and twelve years later was crowned by Pope Stephen VIII. Henry and his wife Simeonda were celebrated for their

devout lives, to which testify the many churches founded or endowed by them, among others the Church of San Miniato near Florence. Henry died in the year 1024, and was succeeded by Conrad of Suabia, after whom followed Henry II. This Henry came to Rome; and because a schism had arisen in the Church from there being then three claimants to the Popedom, he deposed all three, and caused Clement II. to be created Pope, by whom he was crowned Emperor.

§ 14. Italy was now governed partly by Republics, partly by Princes, and partly by Officers appointed by the Emperor. Of these last the highest in rank, from whom the others took their orders, was styled Chancellor. Among the Princes, Godfrey and his wife, the Countess Matilda, daughter of Beatrice cousin of Henry II., were the most powerful. Matilda and her husband possessed Lucca, Parma, Reggio, and Mantua, together with the entire Province now known as the Patrimony of Saint Peter. At this time the Popes were much harassed by the turbulence of the Roman people, who after using the Papal authority to free themselves from the Emperors, had no sooner got possession of the city and reformed its institutions at their pleasure, than they turned against the Popes, who had to endure greater indignities at the hands of their own subjects than from any other power in Christendom. Thus at the very moment when the whole Western world was made to tremble at the Papal censures, the Roman people were in revolt, neither Pope nor people taking thought for anything but how to destroy the credit and authority of the other. Accordingly as Gregory V. had deprived the Roman

people of the right to join in electing the Emperor, so Nicholas II., on coming to the Papacy, excluded them from all share in the creation of the Pope, which privilege he reserved for the Cardinals only. Nor was this enough, for having secured the support of the Princes who, under circumstances presently to be related, were now ruling in Apulia and Calabria, he compelled all officers appointed by the Romans to govern subject towns, to render obedience to him, and even removed some of them from their posts.

§ 15. On the death of Nicholas a schism was caused in the Church by the Lombard clergy refusing to acknowledge Alexander II., who had been elected at Rome, and setting up Cadolo, Bishop of Parma, as Antipope. Whereupon the Emperor Henry, who loathed the Papal authority, notified to Alexander that he must renounce the Papacy, and summoned the Cardinals to Germany to choose another Pope. Whence it came that Henry was the first of all Princes to be taught the strength of the spiritual arm. For the Pope, calling a Council in Rome, deprived him of his crown and kingdom, when, some of the Italian States siding with the Pope and some with Henry, the seed was sown of the Guelf and Ghibelline factions, to the end that Italy, after the Barbarian inundations had subsided, might begin to be torn by intestine feuds. Henry, on being excommunicated, was compelled by his subjects to repair to Italy, and, kneeling barefoot before the Pope, to sue for pardon. This took place in the year 1080. Fresh disputes, however, between the Pope and Henry broke out soon after, in consequence of which the Pope again excom-

municated him. The Emperor then sent his son, also named Henry, with an army to Rome, who with the aid of the Romans, by whom the Pope was detested, besieged him in the Citadel. But on Robert Guiscard coming from Apulia to the Pope's assistance, Henry, without waiting to meet him, withdrew to Germany. The Romans persisting in their stubbornness, Guiscard sacked their city, and reduced it once more to the ruins from which many Popes had raised it. As it was from this Robert Guiscard that the Kingdom of Naples had its beginning, it seems to me not amiss to dwell a little upon his actions and origin.

§ 16. The disputes which, as already mentioned, arose among the heirs of Charles the Great gave opportunity to a new northern tribe, called Normans, to invade France and possess themselves of the tract of country which to this day retains the name Normandy given it by them. A branch of the same tribe coming into Italy at the time when that province was being ravaged by the Berengers, the Saracens, and the Huns, seized upon certain towns in Romagna, in which, while these wars lasted, they valiantly maintained themselves. To Tancred, one of these Norman chiefs, were born many sons, among them William, surnamed Ferrabac, and Robert, surnamed Guiscard. When William succeeded to the Princedom the turmoil throughout Italy had in some measure subsided. Sicily, however, was still held by the Saracens, who made daily descents upon the Italian coasts. William therefore entered into a league with the Princes of Capua and Salerno and with Malochus the Greek, who on behalf of the Greek Emperor, governed Apulia and Calabria, to

attack Sicily, it being agreed among them that if they succeeded each should take a fourth share of the spoil and of the conquered territory. Their enterprise was successful, and after driving out the Saracens they got possession of the island. But after their victory, Malochus, bringing soldiers privily from Greece, laid claim, in the name of the Emperor, to the whole island, conceding to the others their share of the spoil only. This breach of faith William bitterly resented, but, awaiting a better opportunity to wreak his displeasure, he quitted Sicily along with the Princes of Capua and Salerno. When these left him to go to their homes, William, instead of returning to Romagna, marched with his followers into Apulia, took Melfi by surprise, and after defeating the forces of the Greek Emperor, speedily made himself master of nearly all Apulia and Calabria. In the time of Pope Nicholas II. the lordship of these provinces was held by William's brother, Robert Guiscard, who, having many disputes with his nephews regarding the succession, invited the Pope to arbitrate between them, which, from his desire to secure Robert as his champion against the German Emperors and against the turbulence of the Roman people, Nicholas readily agreed to do. Thus it came about, as I have already related, that at the instance of Gregory VII., Robert Guiscard drove Henry from Rome, and brought the Romans to obedience. Robert was succeeded by his sons Roger and William, to whose possessions were afterwards added the city of Naples with all the towns between Naples and Rome, as well as the island of Sicily of which Roger had made himself Lord. Subsequently, however, on William going to Constantinople to wed a daughter of the Emperor,

he was attacked and deprived of his lordship by Roger his brother, who elated by this conquest at first caused himself to be styled King of Italy ; but afterwards, contenting himself with the title of King of Apulia and Sicily, was the first to found and give a name to that Kingdom, which to this day retains its ancient limits, albeit not only the blood but also the nationality of its Princes has many times been changed. For on the failure of the Norman line the country fell into the hands of the Germans, next passed to the French, from whom it went to the House of Aragon, and thence to the Flemings who now possess it.

1088. § 17. Urban II. had now come to the Popedom. Hated by the Romans, and thinking his hold on Italy insecure by reason of the discord prevailing in that country, he turned his mind to an enterprise of noble note. Repairing to France with all his clergy, he assembled a great multitude at Clermont in Auvergne, whom by his denunciation of the Infidels he stirred up to attempt the recovery of Asia from the Saracens. This and other like expeditions were afterwards named Crusades, because all who went on them bore a red cross on their armour and clothing. The leaders of the first Crusade were Godfrey, Eustace, and Baldwin, Counts of Boulogne, and a hermit named Peter, venerated for his wisdom and holy life. Many Princes and Commonwealths gave money towards this enterprise, and many private persons fought for it without pay, so great was the influence of religion over the minds of men moved by the example of those who led them. The adventure began gloriously, all Asia Minor with Syria and part of Egypt falling into the hands of the

Christians. Out of it sprang the Order of the Knights of Jerusalem, which to this day rules and retains the island of Rhodes, now left our only bulwark against the power of the Mahometans. From it also grew the Order of Knights Templar, though this, from the ill lives of the brotherhood, soon came to an end. From time to time it afforded opportunities for many nations and many individual men to win renown. The Kings of France and England joined it in person. The citizens of Pisa, Venice, and Genoa took part in it with great credit. The struggle was maintained with varying fortune down to the time of Saladin the Saracen, whose valour, aided by disputes arising among the Christians themselves, in the end deprived them of all the glory they had gained at the outset, so that after fourscore and ten years they were driven from the country they had so honourably and happily recovered.

§ 18. After the death of Urban, Paschal II. was elected Pope and the Empire passed to Henry IV. Henry came to Rome pretending friendship for the Pope, but afterwards cast him with all his Cardinals into prison, whence he refused to release him until he obtained his consent to deal as he liked with the Churches of Germany. About this time the Countess Matilda ^{1115.} died, leaving all her possessions to the Church. After Paschal and the Emperor Henry were dead, other Popes and Emperors followed, until the Poppedom came to Alexander III., and the Empire to Frederick of Suabia, surnamed Barbarossa. Throughout this period the Popes were sorely tried by the people of Rome and by the Emperors, and their troubles were much increased in the days of Barbarossa, a famous soldier, but so

filled with pride that he could not put up with the Pope's ascendancy. Nevertheless, after his election, he came to Rome to be crowned, and then went quietly back to Germany. But this peaceful mood did not long continue. For having returned to Italy in order to reduce certain Lombard towns which refused him obedience, it happened at the same time that the Cardinal of San Clemente, a Roman by birth, renounced Pope Alexander, and was himself made Pope by some of the other Cardinals. And on Alexander complaining of the Antipope to the Emperor, who was then besieging Crema, Frederick replied that both should come before him, when he would decide which was to be Pope. This reply offended Alexander, who, seeing Frederick disposed to favour his rival, excommunicated him, and fled to Philip, King of France. Frederick, meanwhile, continuing the war in Lombardy, took and destroyed Milan, thereby causing Verona, Padua, and Vicenza to unite against him for their common defence. On the death of the Antipope he set up Guido of Crema in his room. At this time, in consequence of the Pope's absence and of the Emperor having Lombardy on his hands, the Romans had recovered some control over their own affairs, and were requiring obedience from towns that had formerly been subject to them. And when the people of Tusculum refused to acknowledge their supremacy, they went forth in a body to fight them, but were routed by the Tusculans, aided by Frederick, with such slaughter that Rome has never since been populous or powerful. Pope Alexander had at this time returned to Rome, thinking he would be safe there by reason of the enmity between the Romans

and Frederick, and of the wars in which the latter was involved in Lombardy. But Frederick, setting all other cares aside, hastened to besiege Rome, where the Pope would not await him, but sought refuge with William, who, on the death of Roger, had succeeded to the Kingdom of Apulia. Frederick, however, being driven away by the Plague, had to raise the siege of Rome and return to Germany. Whereupon the Lombard towns that were in league against him, with a view to harass Pavia and Tortona which had sided with him, built a fortress whence they could make war on these cities, naming it Alexandria in honour of the Pope and as a slight to the Emperor. Guido, the Antipope, dying at this time, John of Fermo was created in his room, and with the support of the Imperial faction took up his abode at Montefiascone.

§ 19. Pope Alexander had now come to Tusculum, being called thither by the inhabitants in order that his authority might shield them from the Romans. Here he received the envoys sent by King Henry of England to disclaim all blame in respect of the murder of the blessed Thomas, Bishop of Canterbury, whereof the King had been falsely accused. In consequence, the Pope sent two Cardinals to England to search into the truth of the matter, who, though they could not bring guilt home to the King, yet, having regard to the heinousness of the crime, and because the King had not honoured the Bishop as he deserved, ordained him by way of penance to convoke all the barons of his realm and in their presence make oath of his innocence; further, to send forthwith to Jerusalem two hundred men-at-arms paid in advance for a year, and

engage that within three years he himself should go there in person with as strong an army as he could raise; to revoke all Acts of his reign unfavourable to the liberties of the Church; and to consent that any of his subjects might, if he desired, make appeal to Rome. All which terms were accepted by Henry, this great King submitting to a sentence to which at the present day even a private man would feel shame to bow. And yet while the Pope exercised so vast an authority over remote Princes, he could not enforce the obedience of his Roman subjects, from whom, although he undertook to concern himself with ecclesiastical affairs only, he in vain sought leave to reside in Rome. So much more are seeming dangers dreaded when far off than when near.

Frederick had now returned to Italy, and was preparing to resume hostilities against the Pope, when he was warned by all his prelates and barons that they would abandon him unless he made his peace with the Church. In consequence he was compelled to repair to Venice to render homage to the Pope, when a peace was concluded between them. By the terms of this accord the Pope deprived the Emperor of any authority he could claim over Rome, and nominated William, King of Sicily and Apulia, Counsellor and Champion of the Church. Frederick, who could not live without making war, now turned against Mahomet the ambition he could not satisfy against Christ's vicar, and set forth on a Crusade into Asia. But coming to the river Cydnus, tempted by the clearness of its waters, he imprudently bathed therein, and thereby met his death. So that these waters did more for Mahometans than Papal interdicts had done for Christians; for

while the latter only stayed the Emperor's pride, the former quenched it.

§ 20. Frederick dead, the Pope had now only to subdue the contumacy of the Romans. After many disputes as to the appointment of Consuls, it was at last agreed that these, according to ancient usage, should be chosen by the people, but should not enter on office till they had sworn fealty to the Church. In consequence of this agreement, John, the Antipope, fled to Monte Albano, where soon after he died. About this time died also William, King of Naples, and as he left behind him no male issue save his natural son Tancred, the Pope thought to seize his Kingdom. But to this the barons, who desired to have Tancred for their King, would not consent. Celestine III., who was now Pope, in his eagerness to wrest the Kingdom from Tancred, contrived that Frederick's son Henry should be made Emperor, and promised him the Kingdom of Naples if he restored to the Church the territories belonging to it. To simplify matters he brought William's daughter Constance, who was then of mature years, out of a convent, and gave her to Henry to wife. Thus the Kingdom passed from its Norman founders to the Germans. As soon as he had put the affairs of Germany in order, the Emperor Henry came to Italy with his wife Constance and his son Frederick, now four years old, and got possession of the Kingdom without much trouble, for by this time Tancred had died, leaving only an infant son named Roger. Some time after, Henry died in Sicily, and was succeeded in the Kingdom by Frederick, his son, and in the Empire by Otto, Duke of Saxony, who owed his election to

the favour shown him by Pope Innocent III. No sooner, however, had Otto obtained the crown, than, contrary to all expectation, he became the Pope's enemy, and seizing on Romagna made preparations for the invasion of Naples. Whereupon he was excommunicated by the Pope, when all his followers deserted him, and Frederick, King of Naples, was chosen Emperor by the Electors. Frederick came to Rome to be crowned, but the Pope, jealous of his influence, would not crown him, and sought to expel him from Italy as he had expelled Otto. Frederick, in high displeasure, withdrew to Germany, where, after many wars with Otto, he finally vanquished him. In the meantime Pope Innocent had died, who, besides other notable edifices in Rome, built the Hospital of the Holy Ghost. He was succeeded by Honorius III., in whose time, in the year 1218, were founded the Orders of Saint Dominic and Saint Francis. Frederick was crowned by this Pope, and taking to wife the daughter of John, who, as descended from Baldwin, and as residing in Asia with the remnant of the Christians, had retained the style of King of Jerusalem, received with his bride this title from her father as part of her dower. Hence it comes that whosoever is King of Naples styles himself also King of Jerusalem.

§ 21. In those days Italy was thus governed. The people of Rome no longer elected Consuls, but appointed in their place, and with the same authority, sometimes one Senator, sometimes more. The league entered into by the Lombard towns against Frederick Barbarossa still held out, and included Milan, Brescia, Mantua, most of the towns of Romagna, together

with Verona, Vicenza, Padua, and Treviso. On the side of the Emperor were Cremona, Bergamo, Parma, Reggio, Modena, and Trent. Other towns and strongholds in Lombardy, Romagna, and the March of Treviso favoured now one side, now the other, as their interests led them. There had come into Italy in the time of the third Otto, a certain Ezzelino, who, taking up his abode in the country, begat a son who was father of another Ezzelino. This last, being wealthy and powerful, attached himself to Frederick II., who, as I have related, became the enemy of the Pope. Invading Italy at the instance and with the support of Ezzelino, Frederick took Verona and Mantua, destroyed Vicenza, seized on Padua, and after routing the armies of the confederate towns, moved onwards in the direction of Tuscany. Meanwhile Ezzelino had subdued the whole of the March of Treviso, but could not possess himself of Ferrara, which was defended by the Pope's forces in Lombardy under Azzo d'Este. Hence it came that when the siege was raised, the Pope gave Ferrara in fief to Azzo, from whom those who to this day are Lords of that city are descended. Frederick, desiring to make himself master of Tuscany, stayed for a time at Pisa, and in requiting friends and foes in that province sowed such seeds of strife as brought ruin on all Italy. For the factions of Guelf and Ghibelline (names heard of for the first time in Pistoia, the one denoting those who sided with the Church, the other those who took part with the Emperor) were greatly strengthened. Quitting Pisa, Frederick carried havoc and desolation throughout the territories of the Church, until, as a last resource, the Pope proclaimed a Crusade against him such as his predecessors had proclaimed

against the Infidel. Whereupon that he might not, as had happened to Frederick Barbarossa and to others of his predecessors, be suddenly deserted by his followers, the Emperor took many Saracens into his pay ; and the more to bind them to him, and so establish in Italy a strong bulwark against the Church, not likely to be shaken by Papal maledictions, gave them Nocera in the Kingdom of Naples, that having their own rock of refuge they might serve him in greater security.

§ 22. Innocent IV., who was now come to the Papedom, fearing Frederick, fled to Genoa and thence to France, where he convoked a Council at Lyons. At this Council Frederick had meant to be present, but was withheld by the revolt of Parma. Failing to reduce that city by siege, he went off to Tuscany and thereafter to Sicily, where he died. In Suabia he left a son named Conrad, in Apulia another son named Manfred, born out of wedlock, whom he had made Duke of Benevento. Conrad came to take over the kingdom but died on reaching Naples, leaving in Germany a little son named Conradin. Whereupon Manfred assumed the government, at first as guardian to Conradin, but afterwards, giving out that Conradin was dead, proclaiming himself King, contrary to the desire of the Pope, and also of the Neapolitans, whose consent he compelled by force of arms.

While these events were passing in the Kingdom of Naples, Lombardy continued to be torn by the feuds of Guelf and Ghibelline. The Guelfs had for their leader a Legate of the Pope, while Ezzelino, who was in possession of almost all Lombardy beyond the Po, was head of the Ghibellines. And because in the course of the

war Padua had risen against him in revolt, Ezzelino caused twelve thousand of her citizens to be put to the sword. But before the war was ended he too, being fourscore years old, met his death, when all the towns that had been subject to him became free.

As King of Naples, Manfred, like his father before him, was at perpetual enmity with the Church, and kept Pope Urban, fourth of the name, in constant alarm, until at last in order to effect his overthrow the Pope proclaimed a Crusade against him, and betook himself to Perugia, to await the assembling of his forces. But finding these come in slowly and in scant number, he saw that to crush Manfred surer aid was needed, and, turning to France for succour and support, appointed Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis King of France, to be King of Naples and Sicily, and urged him to come to Italy to receive the kingdom. But before Charles could reach Rome, Urban died, and was succeeded by Clement iv., during whose Papacy Charles arrived with thirty galleys at Ostia, having given orders for the rest of his followers to join him by land. While Charles stayed in Rome, the Romans, to do him honour, made him Senator, and the Pope crowned him King of Naples, subject, however, to a tribute of fifty thousand florins to be paid yearly to the Church. It was likewise ordained that neither he nor any other who succeeded him as King of Naples should be eligible for Emperor.

Presently Charles going forth against Manfred defeated and slew him near Benevento, and so became master of Sicily and of the Kingdom of Naples. Conradin, to whom by his father's will the dominions rightfully belonged, assembling a great army in Germany

came into Italy against Charles, but meeting him in battle at Tagliacozzo was routed, and being taken as he fled was recognised and put to death.

1276. § 23. Italy now remained at peace until Adrian v. succeeded to the Popedom, who finding that Charles remained in Rome and governed the city in virtue of his office of Senator, could not brook this encroachment on his authority, but went off to live at Viterbo, whence he sent urgent entreaties to the Emperor Rudolf to come into Italy against Charles. Thus the Popes, at one time in the interests of Religion, at another for their own ambitious ends, never ceased summoning fresh strangers into Italy, and kindling new wars; and no sooner had made a Prince powerful than they repented of it and sought his ruin, nor would suffer another to possess the country which from their weakness they could not keep for themselves. Princes feared them because, whether they fought or fled, in the end they always came off victorious, unless like Boniface VIII. and some others whom the Emperors beguiled by a false show of friendship, they were overthrown by craft. Rudolf did not come into Italy, being detained by a war with the King of Bohemia. Meanwhile Adrian died, and Nicholas III., of the House of Orsini, was made Pope; a daring and ambitious man, whose aim was to weaken by whatever means the power of Charles. On his representations the Emperor Rudolf rebuked Charles for maintaining a governor in Tuscany in the interest of the Guelf party, which Charles after the death of Manfred had re-established in that province. Yielding to the Emperor, Charles withdrew his governors, and the Pope sent his nephew,

who was a Cardinal, to govern on behalf of the Empire. In return for the honour thus done him, the Emperor restored to the Church the province of Romagna of which his predecessors had deprived her. The Pope thereupon created Bertoldo Orsini Duke of Romagna ; and thinking himself now strong and powerful enough to confront Charles, took from him his office of Senator, and issued a decree that henceforward no one of royal blood should be Senator in Rome. The Pope had it also in his mind to take Sicily from Charles, and to that end entered into a secret intrigue with Peter, King of Aragon, which bore fruit in the time of his successor. He had also a scheme for establishing two Princes of his own house, one in Lombardy, the other in Tuscany, with whose aid the Church might be defended from the Germans should they desire to invade Italy, and from the French already in Naples. But while meditating designs like these Nicholas died. He was the first Pope to display openly his personal ambition, and his desire, under pretence of aggrandising the Church, to secure honours and preferments for his own family ; and whereas before his day we find no mention of the nephews or kinsfolk of any of the Popes, after it History grows so full of them that we shall even meet with their children. Nor has anything been now left unattempted by them save that as heretofore they have sought to leave their sons Princes, hereafter it may occur to them to leave them an hereditary Popedom. True it is that up to the present hour the Princedoms they have founded have been of brief duration ; because commonly, from the shortness of their lives, they either leave the work of planting incomplete, or, if they succeed in planting, leave their saplings with such

scant and feeble roots, that when the prop that sustains them is withdrawn they fall before the first gust of wind.

§ 24. Nicholas was succeeded by Martin iv. He, being French by birth, favoured the cause of Charles, who in requital sent forces to assist him in Romagna which was then in revolt. But while the French were encamped against the town of Forlì, Guido Bonatti, the astrologer, ordered the citizens to fall upon them at the exact moment he gave the signal, with the result that the whole French army was taken or slain. About this time the plot contrived between Pope Nicholas and King Peter of Aragon was carried into effect, the Sicilians putting to the sword every Frenchman found in the island, of which Peter took possession, claiming it in right of his wife Constance, daughter of Manfred. While preparing to renew hostilities for its recovery, 1285. Charles died, leaving a son, Charles II., who in the course of the war had been made prisoner in Sicily, and who to obtain his release engaged to surrender himself at the expiry of three years should he not within that time obtain the Pope's consent to the House of Aragon being invested with the Kingdom of Sicily.

§ 25. Instead of coming himself into Italy to restore the Imperial credit in that country, the Emperor Rudolf sent thither an envoy with authority to free all such towns as were willing to pay ransom. Whereupon many cities bought their freedom, and in consequence changed their form of government. Adolf of Saxony next succeeded to the Empire, and Pietro da Morrone,

who took the name of Celestine, was made Pope ; but he being a hermit and a man of saintly life, after holding the Popedom for six months, renounced it, when Boniface VIII. was created.

Fate, foreseeing that a time must come when both French and Germans would withdraw from Italy and the country be left wholly in the hands of Italians, to the end that the Pope, when freed from foreign troubles, should still be unable to establish or enjoy his supremacy, raised up in Rome two great Houses, the Colonesi and the Orsini, who, being close at hand and powerful, might keep the Pontificate weak. Aware of this danger, Pope Boniface set himself to root out the Colonesi, not merely excommunicating them, but even declaring a Crusade against them. Which doubtless did them harm, but harmed the Church still more. For the weapon, which had been righteously used in the defence of our Holy Faith, when through a selfish ambition it was turned against Christians, lost its edge ; so that the excessive eagerness of the Popes to satisfy their greed of power led step by step to their being utterly disarmed. Two Cardinals of the House of Colonna were deprived by Boniface of their Cardinalates, while Sciarra, the head of the family, fleeing from his presence in disguise, was captured by Catalan corsairs and sent to the oar. Being afterwards recognised at Marseilles, he was brought before King Philip of France, who himself had been excommunicated and deprived of his kingdom by Boniface. Reflecting how all who made open war upon the Church, if they came not off losers, at any rate ran great risks, Philip resorted to stratagem, and feigning a desire to make his peace with the Pope, sent Sciarra secretly to Italy, who

coming to Anagni where Boniface then was, and assembling his friends by night, made the Pope prisoner, who though soon after set at liberty by the people of Anagni nevertheless felt this indignity so sorely that he died distraught.

§ 26. It was Boniface who instituted the Jubilee in the year 1300, and provided for its celebration every hundredth year. At this time great disorders were caused by the feuds of the Guelfs and Ghibellines; and because Italy had been abandoned by the Emperors many towns became free, while many were usurped by despots.

Pope Benedict XI. restored their dignity to the Colonna Cardinals, and renewed the Papal blessing on Philip, King of France. Benedict was succeeded by Clement V., who, being a Frenchman, transferred the Papal Court to France in the year 1305. Soon after this Charles II., King of Naples, died, and was succeeded by Robert, his son. Meanwhile the Empire had fallen to Henry of Luxembourg, who, though the Pope was not there, came to Rome to be crowned. His visit caused great disturbance in Lombardy, for he restored to their cities all the exiles, Guelf and Ghibelline alike; whence it followed that as each faction strove to oust the other, the whole Province was torn with feuds which no efforts of the Emperor could quell. Leaving Lombardy he came by way of Genoa to Pisa, where he sought to withdraw Tuscany from King Robert, but meeting with no success passed on to Rome. Here he stayed for a few days only, being driven away by the Orsini backed by King Robert. He now returned to Pisa, and in order to prosecute the war against Tuscany

more securely, and wrest that country with greater ease from the hands of King Robert, he induced Frederick, King of Sicily, to attack Naples. But while indulging hopes at once of seizing Tuscany and depriving Robert of his kingdom, he died, and was succeeded in the Empire by Lewis of Bavaria.

About this time John xxii. came to the Popedom. During his Papacy the Emperor never ceased his attacks on the Guelfs and on the Church, whose chief defenders were King Robert and the Florentines. This led to many wars being waged in Lombardy by the Visconti against the Guelfs, and in Tuscany by Castruccio of Lucca against the Florentines. And since it is to the House of the Visconti that the Duchy of Milan, one of the five Princedoms which afterwards governed Italy, owes its origin, I think I must trace the history of this family from an earlier date.

§ 27. After recovering from her overthrow by Frederick Barbarossa, Milan, to avenge the injuries she had suffered, joined the league formed, as I have already mentioned, by certain cities of Lombardy for their common defence against that Emperor. This confederacy held Frederick in check, and for a time kept alive in Lombardy the party of the Church. In the troubles attending the wars which then ensued, the family Della Torre became most powerful in Milan, and continued to grow in credit while the authority of the Emperors languished in Lombardy. But when Frederick II. came into Italy, and when through the efforts of Ezzelino the faction of the Ghibellines regained strength, Ghibelline leanings began to manifest themselves in all the Lombard towns. Among those who

in Milan adopted the Ghibelline cause were the Visconti, by whom the Della Torre family were banished from the city. Their banishment, however, did not last long, since they were restored to their country under the truce concluded between the Emperor and the Pope. When, after the withdrawal of the Pope with his Court to France, Henry of Luxembourg came into Italy to be crowned at Rome, he was received in Milan by Maffeo Visconti and Guido Della Torre, these two being at that time the heads of their respective Houses. Maffeo, who designed to use the Emperor to drive out Guido, and who reckoned that this would be easy from Guido being of the faction opposed to the Empire, saw his opportunity in the resentment of the people of Milan at the rude behaviour of the Germans, and went about secretly encouraging and inciting every one to arm and throw off the yoke of the Barbarians. When he thought things ripe for his purpose, he caused a riot to be raised by some who were in his confidence, whereupon the whole people took arms against the Germans. No sooner, however, was the riot begun than Maffeo with his sons and all his following hastened ready-armed to Henry, representing that the tumult had been contrived by the Della Torre family, who not satisfied to live in Milan as private citizens, had seized this opportunity for plundering it and making themselves its Lords, so as to find favour with the Guelfs of Italy; but that Henry might be of good heart, since if he chose to defend himself, they (the Visconti) and their followers would answer for his safety. Believing what Maffeo told him, Henry joined forces with the Visconti, and fell upon the adherents of Della Torre who, meanwhile, had hastened to different parts of the town to stay the

rioting. All whom they could lay hands on they slew, the rest they declared outlaws and despoiled of their possessions. Maffeo Visconti, who thus became absolute in Milan, was succeeded by his son Galeazzo and by his grandson Azzo, after whom came Luchino and Giovanni. Giovanni was made Archbishop of Milan. Luchino, who died before him, left sons, Bernabò and Galeazzo. Galeazzo dying soon after, left a son, Gian Galeazzo, styled Count of Virtù, who, after the death of the Archbishop, treacherously murdered Bernabò, his uncle, and became sole Prince of Milan, of which city he was the first to take the title of Duke. He left two sons, Filippo and Gian Maria Agnolo, the latter of whom being slain by the people of Milan, the dukedom remained with Filippo, passing on his death without male issue from the House of Visconti to that of Sforza, in the manner and for the causes which shall in their place be noted.

§ 28. But to resume my narrative, the Emperor 1328. Lewis came into Italy to credit his cause and receive the crown. On reaching Milan, as a pretext for exacting money from the citizens, he made a show of conceding them their freedom, and cast the Visconti into prison, whence however he presently released them at the intercession of Castruccio of Lucca. He then proceeded to Rome, where, as the readiest means to disturb the peace of Italy, he set up Piero da Corvara as Antipope, through whose influence, and with the arms of the Visconti, he hoped to shatter the hostile faction in Tuscany and Lombardy. But at this juncture Castruccio died, and with his death began the Emperor's downfall. For Pisa and Lucca rebelled,

and the Pisans sent the Antipope a prisoner to the Pope in France. Whereupon despairing of success in his Italian enterprise the Emperor returned to Germany. Hardly had he left Italy when King John of Bohemia came there on the invitation of the Ghibellines of Brescia, of which town, as also of Bergamo, he took possession. And because he had come, though he pretended the contrary, with the Pope's consent, the Pope's Legate at Bologna, thinking it a good way to prevent the return of the Emperor into Italy, gave him his support. This changed the whole aspect of Italian affairs. For the Florentines and King Robert seeing the Legate favour the cause of the Ghibellines, became enemies to all with whom the Legate and the King of Bohemia were friends, and were joined by many Princes, both Guelf and Ghibelline; among others by the Visconti, the Della Scala, Filippo Gonzaga of Mantua, the House of Carrara, and the House of Este, all of whom the Pope excommunicated. The King of Bohemia, fearing this league, went off to raise additional forces in his own country. Returning afterwards to Italy with a stronger army, he still found the enterprise so arduous that he again lost courage, and to the great mortification of the Legate, once more withdrew into Bohemia, leaving garrisons in Reggio and Modena only, while commending Parma to the care of Marsilio and Piero dei Rossi, who were very powerful in that city. On his departure Bologna joined the league, and the confederates shared among themselves four towns which had sided with the Church, agreeing that Parma should go to the Della Scala family, Reggio to the Gonzaga, Modena to the House of Este, and Lucca to the Florentines. In the endeavour to get possession of

these towns there arose many disputes, most of which were eventually adjusted by the Venetians.

To many perhaps it may seem strange that, in this record of events happening in Italy, I have so long delayed to speak of the Venetians, whose Republic, both for its institutions and for its importance, deserves to be celebrated beyond every other Italian State. That all wonder may cease when the cause of my silence is understood, I shall go back to a remote period, and make it plain to every one what were the beginnings of their Commonwealth, and why they refrained so long from taking part in the affairs of Italy.

§ 29. When Attila, King of the Huns, besieged Aquileia, its inhabitants, after defending themselves for a long time, at last, despairing of deliverance, fled as they best might, with such of their possessions as they could carry with them, to certain uninhabited shoals in an inlet of the Adriatic Sea. The citizens of Padua, likewise, perceiving the conflagration approach, and fearing that on the fall of Aquileia their turn would come next, transported to a place named Rivalto lying in the same sea, all their most valuable effects, together with their wives, their old men, and their children, retaining for the defence of their city those only who were in the vigour of manhood. In like manner the inhabitants of Monselice, with the people of the neighbouring hills, influenced by the same fears, betook themselves to the same refuge. After Aquileia was taken, and after Attila had destroyed Padua, Monselice, Vicenza, and Verona, the Paduan exiles, with the most powerful of the others,

continued to dwell in the marshes round Rivalto, where also the entire population of the Province anciently known as Venetia, driven forth by similar calamities, sought shelter, being constrained by necessity to relinquish pleasant and fruitful lands, and settle in places sterile, unsightly, and wanting in every convenience. But the great number of those thus suddenly brought together enabled them in a very short time to make these places not merely habitable but delightful, and here, while the rest of Italy was overwhelmed by ruin, after establishing laws and ordinances among themselves, they enjoyed complete security and grew rapidly in credit and power. For besides the settlers already mentioned many fugitives from the cities of Lombardy, most of them to escape the cruelty of Cleph, King of the Lombards, found refuge in the new city, and added so much to its strength that at the time when Pepin, King of France, came, at the instance of the Pope, to expel the Lombards from Italy, and an accord was being arranged between him and the Greek Emperor, neither the Venetians nor the Duke of Benevento would acknowledge themselves subject to either potentate, but asserted their independence of both. Moreover, as necessity had led them to dwell on the water, so it forced them to consider how they might creditably maintain themselves there without recourse to the mainland. Wherefore sailing in their ships over the world they stored their city with all kinds of wares, so that other men who lacked them might frequent their markets; nor for many years did they think of any extension of their dominions, save such as might tend to make their traffic easier. With this object

they possessed themselves of many ports in Greece and Syria ; and because the French Crusaders, when passing into Asia, made much use of the Venetian ships, the island of Candia was assigned to Venice as a recompense. Living on this footing, the name of the Venetians grew to be terrible by sea, and held in reverence throughout Italy, so that there were few disputes in which they were not called upon to arbitrate, as on the occasion when differences arose between the Confederate States regarding the towns to be divided among them, for it was on a reference to the Venetians that Brescia and Bergamo were awarded to the Visconti. But when, pushed on by lust of dominion, they came in course of time to possess Padua, Vicenza, Treviso, and at a later period Verona, Bergamo, and Brescia, together with many towns in Romagna and in the Kingdom of Naples, they gained such a name for power as made them a menace not only to the Princes of Italy, but even to foreign Kings, who thereupon entered into a league against them, and stripped them in a single day of territories which, at infinite cost, it had taken them so many years to gain. And although of late they have got back some portion of these territories, still, as they have recovered neither their reputation nor their strength, they live, like all the rest of the Italian princes, at the mercy of others.

§ 30. Benedict XII., who had now come to the Popedom, finding he had entirely lost his hold on Italy, and fearing that the Emperor Lewis would become its master, resolved to make friends of all who in that country had usurped territories formerly

subject to the Emperor; and that they might have cause to dread the Empire, and unite more closely with himself for the defence of Italy, issued a decree that all the Despots of Lombardy should hold with just title the territories they had usurped. Benedict died immediately after proclaiming this grant, but on Clement vi. being created in his room, the Emperor hearing of the liberality of the late Pope in disposing of territories belonging to the Empire, and not to be outdone in generosity at another's cost, ordained that all the Despots throughout the dominions of the Church should retain their territories with the sanction of Imperial authority. By virtue of this edict Galeotto Malatesta and his brothers became Lords of Rimini, Pesaro, and Fano; Antonio da Montefeltro of Urbino and the March of Ancona; Gentile da Varano of Camerino; Guido da Polenta of Ravenna; Sinibaldo Ordelaffi of Forli and Cesena; Giovanni Manfredi of Faenza; Lodovico Alidosi of Imola; while many others became Lords of other cities, so that of all the territories of the Church hardly one remained without its Prince. This kept the Church enfeebled down to the time of Alexander vi, who in our days restored her authority by the overthrow of the descendants of these Lords. When he made this grant the Emperor was at Trent, whence he gave out that he meant to proceed into Italy. This occasioned many wars in Lombardy, in the course of which the Visconti became masters of Parma. Meanwhile Robert, King of Naples, died, leaving two granddaughters only, children of his son Charles, who had died some time before. King Robert left directions that the elder, who was named Giovanna, should be heir to the

kingdom, and should wed his grand-nephew Andrew, son of the King of Hungary. Andrew had not lived very long with Giovanna when she caused him to be murdered, after which she married another of her cousins, Lodovico, Prince of Taranto. Whereupon Lewis of Hungary, brother to Andrew, came with an army into Italy and drove Queen Giovanna and her new husband from the kingdom.

§ 31. About this time a memorable incident happened ¹³⁴⁷. in Rome. A certain Niccolò di Lorenzo, a notary in the Capitol, drove out the Senators, and with the title of Tribune made himself head of the Roman Republic, restoring its ancient institutions, and governing it with so great a name for justice and conduct, that not neighbouring towns only, but the whole of Italy sent him envoys. Whereupon the ancient provinces of the Empire, seeing Rome thus brought back, as it were, to life, were thrown into a ferment, and moved, some by fear and some by hope, hastened to do her honour. But Niccolò, notwithstanding his great reputation, lost himself from the outset. For dismayed by the responsibilities he had assumed, without being driven away by any one, he secretly fled, and sought refuge with King Charles of Bohemia, who, at the instance of the Pope, and as a slight to Lewis of Bavaria, had been elected Emperor. To gratify the Pope, Charles sent him Niccolò as a prisoner. Some time after, a certain Francesco Baroncelli, imitating Niccolò, usurped the Roman Tribuneship and drove out the Senators, whereupon, as the readiest means for his repression, the Pope released Niccolò from prison, and reinstating him in his office of Tribune,

sent him to Rome, where, resuming his authority, he put Francesco to death. But having incurred the enmity of the Colonna family, he was himself slain no long time after, and the Senators restored.

§ 32. Meanwhile Lewis, King of Hungary, after expelling Queen Giovanna, returned to his own country and was prevailed upon by the Pope, who preferred Queen Giovanna to King Lewis as a neighbour for Rome, to restore her crown to the Queen, on terms that her husband should content himself with the title of Prince of Taranto, and should not seek to be styled King.

It being now the year 1350, the Pope bethought him that the hundred years ordained by Pope Boniface VIII. for celebrating the Jubilee might be shortened by a half, and on his issuing a decree to that effect the Romans, in return for this favour, consented to his sending four Cardinals to reform the Government of the city, and doing as he pleased in the appointment of Senators. The Pope also pronounced Lodovico of Taranto to be King of Naples; whereupon in return for this declaration Queen Giovanna gave Avignon, which was part of her patrimony, to the Church.

About this time died Luchino Visconti, and Giovanni, the Archbishop, was left sole lord of Milan. He waged many wars against Tuscany and his other neighbours, and so became most powerful. On his death he was succeeded by his nephews Bernabò and Galeazzo, the latter of whom died soon after, leaving a son, Gian Galeazzo, who shared the government with Bernabò, his uncle.

At this time Charles of Bohemia was Emperor, and

Innocent vi. Pope. Pope Innocent sent into Italy Cardinal Egidio, a Spaniard by birth, whose energy restored reputation to the Church, not in Rome and Romagna only but throughout the whole country. He recovered Bologna which had been usurped by the Archbishop of Milan, compelled the Romans to accept a foreign Senator whom the Pope was to send them every year, made peace on honourable terms with the Visconti, and defeated and captured Hawkwood, the English free-lance, who, with four thousand of his countrymen, was serving on the side of the Ghibellines in Tuscany. Consequently, when Urban v. came to the Papacy ^{1362.} and heard of all these successes he resolved to visit Italy and Rome, whither also came the Emperor Charles. But after a few months' stay Charles went back to his own country, and the Pope to Avignon. On the death of Urban, Gregory xi. was created Pope. ^{1370.} Cardinal Egidio, too, having died, Italy reverted to her old state of discord, whereof the league formed by several cities against the Visconti was the cause. Wherefore the Pope first sent a legate into Italy, accompanied by six thousand Breton soldiers, then came in person, and in the year 1376 brought back the ^{Jan. 1377.} Court to Rome, after it had been settled in France for threescore and eleven years. Gregory dying, Urban vi. ^{1378.} was made Pope, but soon afterwards Clement vii. was created at Fondi by ten Cardinals, who alleged that Urban had not been regularly elected.

At this time the Genoese, who for many years had lived under the rule of the Visconti, threw off the yoke, and a most momentous war, which divided all Italy, ensued between them and the Venetians for

possession of the island of Tenedos. It was during this war that Artillery, then newly invented by the Germans, was first used. For a time the Genoese had the advantage, Venice being blockaded by them for many months, but in the end victory remained with the Venetians, who through the mediation of the Pope concluded a peace in the year 1381.

§ 33. A schism, as I have said, had arisen in the Church, and because Queen Giovanna favoured the schismatic Pope, Urban incited Charles of Durazzo, a descendant of the royal House of Naples, to undertake an expedition against her. He came accordingly and took from her both crown and kingdom, whereupon she fled to France. The King of France, embracing her quarrel, sent Louis of Anjou into Italy to recover Naples for her, expel Urban from Rome, and make the Antipope master there. But while engaged on
1384. this enterprise Louis died; whereupon his army broke up and withdrew to France. Meanwhile Pope Urban had gone to Naples, where he cast nine Cardinals into prison for siding with France and the Antipope. Presently he took offence because King Charles refused to make one of his nephews Prince of Capua; but dissembling his displeasure, sought leave to reside at Nocera, where he forthwith began to fortify himself and make preparations for depriving Charles of his kingdom. On Charles coming to besiege him in Nocera, the Pope fled to Genoa, where he put the captive Cardinals to death. From Genoa he returned to Rome, and to glorify himself created nine-and-twenty new Cardinals. About this time Charles of
1386. Naples went to Hungary where he was made King,

but soon after was murdered, leaving in Naples a widow and two children, Ladislas and Giovanna. About this time also Gian Galeazzo Visconti put to death his uncle Bernabò and assumed the sole govern- 1385.
ment of Milan, and not content to be Duke of all Lombardy, proposed to seize on Tuscany also. But when he thought he was about to grasp it, and thereafter to be crowned King of Italy, he died. To Urban vi. had now succeeded Boniface ix. The 1389.
Antipope Clement vii. also had died at Avignon, and Benedict xiii. had replaced him.

§ 34. There were now in Italy many men-at-arms, English, German, and Breton, some of them brought there by the Princes who from time to time had come into the country, some sent by the Popes while they dwelt at Avignon. It was with their aid that all the Italian Princes carried on their wars, until Lodovico of Cento, a native of Romagna, raised a company, named after St. George, of Italian soldiers, whose valour and discipline soon transferred to Italian, the reputation which before had belonged exclusively to foreign arms. After his time the Princes of Italy in their wars with one another employed Italian troops only.

In consequence of disputes with the people of Rome, Pope Boniface withdrew to Scesi, where he remained till it was time to celebrate the Jubilee of the year 1400, when, in order that the city might benefit by his presence, the citizens consented to accept once more a foreign Senator, and even allowed the Castle of St. Angelo to be fortified. Returning on these conditions the Pope, to enrich the Church, ordained that

every one entering on a new benefice should pay a year's revenue to the Apostolic Chamber.

Though Gian Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, left two sons, Gian Maria Agnolo and Filippo, the State at his death split up into many fragments. In the disorders which thereupon ensued Gian Maria was slain, and Filippo was for a time shut up in the fortress of Pavia, whence he escaped only through the loyalty and courage of the governor. Among those who had usurped territories belonging to Gian Galeazzo was Guglielmo della Scala, who, being banished from his country, had sought refuge with Francesco da Carrara, Lord of Padua, with whose help he recovered the Lordship of Verona. This, however, he did not long enjoy, being deposed, and afterwards poisoned by order of Francesco. Whereupon the citizens of Vicenza, who had lived securely under the standard of the Visconti, fearing that they too might fall a prey to the Lord of Padua, gave themselves over to the Venetians, who on their behalf entered on a war with Francesco and took from him, first Verona, and then Padua.

1404. § 35. Meanwhile Pope Boniface died, and Innocent VII. was elected, whom the citizens of Rome petitioned to make over the fortresses to them and restore their freedom. On his refusal, the Romans called King Ladislas of Naples to their aid. Afterwards, an agreement being come to, the Pope, who through fear of the people had fled to Viterbo where he made Lodovico, his nephew, Count of the March,
1406. returned to Rome. On his death Gregory XII. was created Pope, binding himself to renounce the Papacy whenever the Antipope did so.

To try whether the divisions of the Church might not be composed, the Antipope Benedict, at the instance of the Cardinals, came to Porto Venere, and Gregory to Lucca, and there discussed many matters, but decided none. Whereupon the Cardinals of both Popes left them, and Benedict went off to Spain, Gregory to Rimini. The Cardinals, with the support of Baldassare Cossa, Papal Legate in Bologna, and himself a Cardinal, now convoked a Council at Pisa, where they created Alexander v., who forthwith ex-communicated King Ladislas, invested Louis of Anjou with the Kingdom of Naples, and in concert with the Florentines, the Genoese, the Venetians, and the Legate Baldassare Cossa, attacked Ladislas, and drove him from Rome. While the war was at its height Alexander died, and Baldassare Cossa was created Pope, assuming the name of John XXIII. Leaving Bologna, where his election had taken place, the new Pope hastened to Rome, and joining forces with Louis of Anjou, who had come with an army from Provence, fought and defeated Ladislas, but through the default of his Condottieri could not follow up his victory. In consequence Ladislas soon recovered strength, and recaptured Rome; whereupon Louis fled to Provence, and Pope John to Bologna, where devising schemes for lessening the power of Ladislas, he contrived that Sigismund King of Hungary should be elected Emperor, and persuaded him to come to Italy. They met at Mantua, where it was agreed between them that a General Council should be held by which the Church might be reunited, and so enabled to withstand the attacks of her enemies.

§ 36. There were now three Popes, Gregory, Benedict, and John, whereby the Church was weakened and discredited. Constance, a town of Germany, was chosen as the place where the Council should meet. This was contrary to the intention of Pope John, and the causes which had led him to propose a Council had
1414. been removed by the death of King Ladislas; nevertheless, having come under an engagement, he could not refuse to attend. Being brought to Constance, he saw after a few months the mistake he had made, and endeavoured to escape, but was taken, cast into prison, and compelled to renounce the Popedom, as did also the Antipope Gregory by his proctor; while Benedict, the other Antipope, refusing to renounce, was condemned as a heretic. In the end, however, being forsaken by his Cardinals, he too was forced to renounce, and Oddo, of the House of Colonna, thenceforth known
1417. as Martin v., was created Pope by the Council. In this way the Church, after being divided for forty years under several Popes, was reunited.

§ 37. Some time before this Filippo Visconti had, as I have related, been shut up in the citadel of Pavia. But Fazino Cane, who during the troubles in Lombardy had made himself Lord of Vercelli, Alessandria, Novara, and Tortona, and had amassed great
1412. wealth, dying without issue, left his wife Beatrice heiress of all his possessions, with directions to his friends to bring about her marriage with Filippo. Through which alliance Filippo, becoming powerful, recovered Milan and all the Lombard territories. Afterwards, to show himself, as is the wont of Princes, grateful for great benefits, he accused his wife of

unchastity, and had her put to death. Being now ^{1418.} grown most formidable, he began, in continuation of the designs of his father, Gian Galeazzo, to meditate wars on Tuscany.

§ 38. Ladislas, King of Naples, had at his death left ^{1414.} to his sister Giovanna, besides the kingdom, a strong army commanded by the chief Captains of Italy, foremost among whom was Sforza of Cotignola, who in those days had a great name for his skill in arms. To escape the scandal of an intrigue with a certain Pandolfello, whom she had brought up in her household, Giovanna accepted as her husband Jacques de ^{1415.} la Marche, of the Royal blood of France, he agreeing to leave her the regal title and the government of the kingdom, and content himself with the style of Prince of Taranto. But no sooner had he arrived in Naples than the soldiers acclaimed him King. This led to dissensions between the spouses, and in the end to wars, wherein now the one, now the other, had the advantage. Eventually the Queen prevailed, and retained the government in her own hands. But afterwards, on her declaring war against the Pope, Sforza, hoping to reduce her to complete dependence upon himself, suddenly threw up her service. On finding herself thus unexpectedly left disarmed, Giovanna, seeing no other remedy, sought aid from Alfonso, King of Aragon and Sicily, whom she adopted as her son ; at the ^{1420.} same time she took into her pay Braccio of Montone, whose military renown was not inferior to Sforza's, and who, moreover, from having usurped Perugia and other towns belonging to the Church, was the Pope's enemy. Afterwards, when peace was restored between

Giovanna and the Pope, King Alfonso, fearing she might treat him as she had her husband, tried secretly to get the fortresses into his keeping. But the quick-sighted Queen was beforehand with him, and fortified herself in the citadel of Naples. Mutual distrust increasing, they at last resorted to arms, when Giovanna, with the help of Sforza, who had now returned to her
1423. service, defeated Alfonso, drove him from Naples, and, cancelling his adoption, adopted Louis of Anjou. War then broke out afresh between Braccio, who took part with Alfonso, and Sforza, who sided with the Queen. In the course of this war Sforza was drowned in crossing the river Pescara, so that Queen Giovanna was once more left disarmed, and must have been driven from her kingdom had she not been succoured by Filippo Visconti, Duke of Milan, who forced Alfonso to retire to Aragon. Braccio, however, nothing daunted at being thus abandoned, continued the contest with the Queen single-handed; until at last the Pope, thinking Braccio's aggrandisement disadvantageous for the Church, took Sforza's son Francesco into his pay, who encountered Braccio at Aquila,
1424. defeated and slew him. Braccio left a son named Oddo, from whom the Pope took Perugia, leaving him, however, the Lordship of Montone. Soon after Oddo also was slain while fighting for the Florentines in Romagna. Niccolò Piccinino then remained the most famous survivor of all who had served under Braccio.

§ 39. But now that the course of our narrative has brought us in sight of the time marked out by me in my Preface (for most of what rests to be told relates

to the wars waged by the Florentines and the Venetians against Filippo, Duke of Milan, concerning which, since they will be fully set forth when we come to treat specially of Florence, I need here say no more), I shall briefly recall to mind what was the condition of Italy as regards her Rulers and her Militia at the period of which I am now writing.

Of the more important States, Queen Giovanna possessed the Kingdom of Naples. Of the towns in the March of Ancona, in the Patrimony of St. Peter, and in Romagna, some rendered obedience to the Pope, while others had been usurped by their Governors or by other despots, as Ferrara, Modena, and Reggio by the d'Este family, Faenza by the Manfredi, Imola by the Alidosi, Forlì by the Ordelaffi, Rimini and Pesaro by the Malatesti, and Camerino by the House of Varano. Part of Lombardy was subject to Duke Filippo, the rest to the Venetians, for all those who had held separate Lordships in this Province, except the House of Gonzaga which ruled in Mantua, had been exterminated. The Florentines were masters of the greater part of Tuscany, but Lucca and Siena lived under their own laws, the former governed by the Guinigi, the latter free. The Genoese, at one time independent, at another subject to the King of France, or to the Visconti, were accounted among the lesser powers, and were little respected.

None of the greater powers we have named was provided with an army of native growth. Duke Filippo, shut up in his closet and never allowing himself to be seen, conducted his wars through his commissaries. The Venetians, after they turned their thoughts landward, laid aside the arms which had

made them famous by sea, and following the usage of the other Italians, entrusted their defence to the hands of strangers. The Pope and Queen Giovanna of Naples, for whom, the first as a priest, the second as a woman, it would have been unseemly to bear arms, were constrained by necessity to do what others did by choice. The Florentines also yielded to a like necessity. For their nobility having been rooted out in their frequent feuds, and the conduct of affairs remaining with men bred to commerce, they too followed the methods and shared the fate of the other Italian States. The arms of Italy accordingly were either in the hands of the lesser Lords, who assumed them through no passion for fame, but as a means to make themselves richer and live more securely; or else in the hands of men without territory of their own, who had been trained to war from boyhood, who knew no other art, and who sought through this to become honoured for their wealth and power. Of these last the most famous were Carmagnola, Francesco Sforza, Niccolò Piccinino (the scholar of Braccio), Agnolo della Pergola, Lorenzo and Micheletto Attendoli, Tartaglia, Giacomaccio, Ceccolino da Perugia, Niccolò da Tolentino, Guido Torello, Antonio da Pontedera, with many others like them. With these may be ranked the chiefs of the Houses of Colonna and Orsini, already spoken of, to whom the Roman Barons gave their adherence, and also certain nobles and gentlemen of Naples and Lombardy, all of whom making war their trade, reducing it to an art, and entering, as it were, into a league and understanding among themselves, so managed matters that in most cases both parties to a war came off with loss. In short, they so

degraded the profession of arms that any ordinary captain with the least spark of ancient valour revived in him might, to the astonishment of all Italy (whose want of discernment alone lent them reputation), have put them to shame. Of these sluggard Princes, therefore, and of these despicable arms my History must be full. But before entering upon it, it will be necessary, as I promised at the outset, to turn back and give some account of the origin of Florence, so that every one may understand fully what was the position of this city in the times of which I am to speak, and how, through all the troubles that for a thousand years had afflicted Italy, it came to be what it was.

BOOK II

§ 1. AMONG other noble and admirable usages followed by the Commonwealths and Kingdoms of antiquity but fallen in our days into neglect, one, which both at first and afterwards gave occasion for many towns and cities to be founded, merits special praise; since nothing is more worthy of a great Prince or well-ordered Republic, nor of more advantage to the country they govern, than the building of new towns wherein men may gather for convenience of tillage or of defence. For the ancients this was easy, since it was their wont to send new inhabitants, to whom they gave the name of *Coloni*; into those lands which they either conquered or found unoccupied. This usage not only led to new towns being built, but also secured the conqueror in the conquered country, peopled waste districts, and maintained a due distribution of population throughout the land. Whence it came that living in a country with more convenience, men multiplied more rapidly, and were at once stronger for defence and better able to attack others. The discontinuance of this custom at the present day, through the perversity of Princes and Commonwealths, has brought about the weakening and decay of provinces, for by it alone, as I have said, can Empire be securely established, or a country be supplied with a plentiful population. The security I speak of results from this,

that the colony planted by a Prince in a territory whereof he has newly taken possession, becomes as it were a fortress and garrison to compel the fidelity of the inhabitants. Nor, indeed, save by this method can a province be kept fully peopled, or its population duly distributed. For as all its districts are never alike generative or healthy, while men abound in one, in another they fall short; and unless means be found to shift them from places where they are in number, and plant them where they are few, very soon the province decays, one part of it becoming a wilderness from the paucity of inhabitants, another impoverished by their excess. And because Nature cannot of herself remedy this mischief, it must be corrected by the efforts of man. For unhealthy districts grow healthy when men settle there in number, rendering the soil wholesome by cultivation, and purifying the air by fire, results which Nature of herself could never achieve. Of this we have instance in the city of Venice, which, though built on a marshy and unhealthy site, was made healthy by the multitudes who all at once crowded into it. Pisa, likewise, from the malign qualities of her air, was never well peopled until Genoa and the Genoese coasts were ravaged by the Saracens, when those thus driven from their ancestral homes flocked to her in such numbers as made her both populous and powerful. But now that this system of sending forth colonies is neglected, conquered countries are held with greater difficulty, uninhabited lands are never peopled, and overpopulated lands are never relieved of their surplus population. From which causes many parts of the world, and of Italy especially, have, as compared with their condition in ancient times, become deserts; and

all because no passion for true glory is felt by our Princes, nor any methods deserving praise followed by our Republics. In ancient times, however, by means of these colonies, many cities were either founded from the first, or being already founded, were enlarged, among others the city of Florence, which taking its beginning from Fiesole, was augmented by colonies from Rome.

§ 2. It seems certain, as shown by Dante and by Giovanni Villani, that the city of Fiesole being seated on the crest of a hill, in order to attract more custom to her markets and afford greater convenience to those who brought her their wares, established her mart, not on the hill itself, but on the plain below, between the foot of the slope and the channel of the Arno. These markets, therefore, and the desire of merchants to have commodious warehouses wherein to store their goods, were, as I conjecture, the occasion of the earliest buildings being erected on this site; and these in time took the form of permanent structures. Afterwards, when, by her victories over the Carthaginians, Rome had secured Italy against foreign foes, the number of these buildings greatly increased. For as men will never put up with inconvenience unless it be imposed by necessity, those whom fear of war constrains to dwell in places that are strong but of difficult access will, when that fear is removed, gladly resort to the more accessible and advantageous sites to which convenience invites them. The security, therefore, which the reputation of the Roman Republic diffused throughout Italy, so increased the number of those buildings whose origin has been noted, that they grew to be a

town, to which in the beginning was given the name of *Villa Arnina*. Then followed the civil wars in Rome, first between Marius and Sylla, next between Cæsar and Pompey, and afterwards between the murderers of Cæsar and those who sought to avenge his death. It was by Sylla, therefore, in the first place, and subsequently by the Triumvirs, who after avenging Cæsar shared the Empire amongst themselves, that colonies were sent to Fiesole, all, or at any rate some of which fixed their habitations on the plain, and near the town which had already been begun. By this addition the place became so well supplied with men and houses, and with all else needed for civil life, that henceforth it could be reckoned among the cities of Italy. As to whence it took the name of *Florentia* opinions differ. Some assert that it was so called after Florinus, one of the leaders of the colony. Others, again, will have it that *Fluentia*, not *Florentia*, was the name it bore at first, and that it got its name in respect of its position near the flowing Arno; and Pliny, who speaks of the '*Fluentini prae-fluenti Arno appositi*,' is cited in support of this view. The inference, however, is not conclusive, since, in the passage referred to, Pliny tells us only where the *Fluentini* dwelt, not why they were so named; moreover, the reading *Fluentini* is probably corrupt, since both Frontinus and Cornelius Tacitus, writing about the same time as Pliny, call the town *Florentia*, and the people *Florentini*. For under the reign of Tiberius, the town being then governed on the same footing as the other towns of Italy, Tacitus relates how certain *Florentine* envoys came to the Emperor, praying that the waters of the Clanis might not be diverted so as to flood their country. Now, since it

would be unreasonable to suppose that the same town was known at one time by two different names, I am convinced that, whatever may have been the reason, it was always called *Florentia*, and further, that to whatsoever cause its origin was due, it grew up under the shelter of the Roman Empire, and in the days of the earliest Emperors first began to be spoken of by historians. Afterwards, when the Empire was scourged by Barbarians, Florence too was destroyed by Totila, King of the Ostrogoths, and was not rebuilt until two hundred and fifty years later by Charles the Great; from which date down to the year of our Lord 1215, it followed the fortunes of those who from time to time had the upper hand in Italy, these being, first, the descendants of Charles, after them the Berengers, and lastly, as has been shown in our general view of Italian History, the German Emperors. During all this period the Florentines, restrained by the superior power of those whose rule they obeyed, could neither increase in number, nor achieve almost anything worthy to be remembered. Nevertheless, in the year 1010, on the day of St. Romulus, observed by the citizens of Fiesole as a solemn festival, the Florentines took and destroyed their town. This they did either with the consent of the Emperors, or at a time when from one Emperor having died and no other having been created, they were left to act with greater freedom.

But when the Popes assumed a larger authority in Italy, and the German Emperors grew feebler, all the Italian towns began to conduct themselves with less respect for the Imperial power, so that in the year 1080, in the time of Henry III., Italy came to be openly divided between the Empire and the Church. Never-

theless, down to the year 1215, the Florentines remained united, rendering obedience to whichever side prevailed, and seeking no extension of dominion for themselves beyond what might secure their safety. But as in the human body those diseases are most dangerous and deadly which are slowest in their approach, so we find that Florence, as she was the last to take part in the feuds of Italy, suffered from them afterwards beyond all others. The occasion of her first division is well known, having been celebrated by Dante and by many other writers. Still I think I must record it briefly.

§ 3. Foremost among the powerful Florentine houses were the Buondelmonti and the Uberti; next to whom came the Amidei and the Donati. In the family of the Donati was a certain rich widow, who, having a daughter of singular beauty, had settled in her mind to wed her to the young knight Buondelmonte, head of the house of that name. This design of hers, whether from thoughtlessness, or from thinking there was no need for haste, she had never yet disclosed, when, to her extreme vexation, it so chanced that Messer Buondelmonte became affianced to a maiden of the house of the Amidei. Still she hoped, with the help of her daughter's beauty, to break off the marriage before it was solemnised; and one day seeing Buondelmonte coming unattended towards her house, she went down bringing her daughter behind her, and as he passed spoke to him, saying: 'Truly I rejoice that you have found a wife, though I was keeping this daughter of mine for you,' and throwing open the door she let him see the damsel. Whose marvellous beauty when he beheld, and bethought him that her lineage and dower

were not inferior to those of his betrothed, the youth was fired with such a passion to possess her, that, regardless of his plighted faith, of the wrong he would do in breaking it, and the mischief he might thereby bring upon himself, he said : ' Since you have kept her for me, and it is not yet too late, I were ungrateful to refuse her.' And losing no time, he forthwith married her. But when the affair came to be known, the families of the Amidei, and of the Uberti who were of kin to them, were filled with resentment, and calling together many others of their connection, they decided that this was a wrong not to be endured without dishonour, nor avenged otherwise than by the death of Buondelmonte. And when some began to talk of the harm that might come of it, Mosca Lamberti broke in, saying : ' Whoso thinks of everything will conclude nothing,' adding the words which have passed into a proverb, '*cosa fatta capo ha.*' The charge of executing vengeance was accordingly committed to Mosca along with Stiatto Uberti, Lambertuccio Amidei, and Oderigo Fifanti, who on the morning of the Feast of the Resurrection posted themselves in the houses of the Amidei, which lay between the Old Bridge and the Church of San Stefano, and as Messer Buondelmonte, thinking perhaps that a wrong done might be as easily forgotten as an alliance renounced, came riding on his white horse across the river, they set upon him and slew him at the base of the statue of Mars which stood at the end of the bridge. This murder divided all Florence, one party siding with the Buondelmonti, the other with the Uberti ; and as both families were strong in men, houses, and towers, they strove with one another for many years, without either of them

being able to drive the other from the city. Their feuds, though never closed by complete reconciliation, were sometimes suspended by truce, and thus, as circumstances determined, at one time died down, at another broke out afresh.

§ 4. Florence continued to suffer from these troubles 1212.
down to the time of the Emperor Frederick II., who being already King of Naples, and desiring to strengthen himself against the Church and secure his authority in Tuscany, favoured the Uberti and their following, by whom, with his support, the Buondelmonti were driven out. Hence it came that our city, like all the rest of Italy, was for a long time divided into Guelfs and Ghibellines. Nor does it seem to me out of place to record here what families ranged themselves with the one, and what with the other of these factions.

Those then who sided with the Guelfs were:—the Buondelmonti, Nerli, Rossi, Frescobaldi, Mozzi, Bardi, Pulci, Gherardini, Foraboschi, Bagnesi, Guidalotti, Sachetti, Manieri, Lucardesi, Chiamontesi, Campiobesi, Cavalcanti, Giandonati, Gianfigliuzzi, Scali, Gualterotti, Importuni, Bostichi, Tornaquinci, Vecchietti, Tosinghi, Arrigucci, Agli, Sizi, Adimari, Visdomini, Donati, Pazzi, Della Bella, Ardinghi, Tedaldi, and Cerchi. Of the Ghibelline faction were:—the Uberti, Manelli, Ubriachi, Fifanti, Amidei, Infangati, Malespini, Scolari, Guidi, Galli, Cappelletti, Lamberti, Soldanieri, Cipriani, Toschi, Amieri, Palermini, Migliorelli, Pigli, Barucci, Cattani, Agolanti, Brunelleschi, Caponsacchi, Elisei, Abati, Tedaldini, Giuochi, and Galigai. Besides these, various families from among the Commons attached themselves on both sides to

one or another noble House, so that the whole city was infected by this feud.

The Guelfs, being driven from Florence, betook themselves to the towns of upper Valdarno where most of their strongholds lay, and there defended themselves as best they could against the assaults of their enemies. But on Frederick's death those of the Florentine citizens who had continued neutral, and who had most credit with the people, thinking it wiser to reunite the city than let it be ruined by remaining divided, succeeded in persuading the Guelfs to forget their wrongs and return to their homes, and the Ghibellines to lay aside their jealousy of their adversaries and receive them back. To the citizens thus united it appeared a fit opportunity for adopting a free form of Government, and providing for their defence before the new Emperor had acquired strength.

§ 5. Accordingly they divided the city into six districts (*Sestieri*), and chose twelve citizens, two for each district, to govern it. Those chosen were named *Anziani*, and were changed once a year. Moreover, to remove occasions for enmity in administering justice, they provided for the appointment of two foreign judges, one of whom was styled *Captain of the People*, the other *Podestà*, to try all causes, civil or criminal, arising between citizens. And since no institutions are stable unless provision be made for their defence, they established twenty standards for the city and seventy-six for the country, under which all their young men were enrolled, every man being bound to come to his colours armed and ready on any call of the Captain or of the Anziani. The devices of these standards they

varied, to distinguish the various kind of arms, the cross-bowmen bearing one ensign, the shield-men another. And yearly at Whitsuntide, with much solemnity, they committed these standards to new bearers, and assigned new captains to each company. And to give dignity to their armies, and supply a central point to which those who were repulsed in combat might retreat, and, rallying, again renew the fight, they provided a great car, drawn by two oxen with red housings, whereon was planted a standard white and red. When they desired to send forth their army to battle, they brought this car into the New Market, and with solemn ceremonies committed it to the leaders of the Companies. To lend further distinction to their expeditions they caused a great bell, which they named the *Martinella*, to be tolled continually for a month before their armies went forth, so that their enemies might have notice to prepare for their defence. For such was the valour of the men of those old times, and so generous their spirit, that whereas nowadays it is thought prudent and praiseworthy to attack an enemy unawares, it was then accounted base and treacherous to do so. This bell they also carried with their armies when they took the field, to sound the hour for relieving guard, and give the other signals usual in warfare.

§ 6. With these ordinances, civil and military, the Florentines laid the foundations of their freedom. But no one could then have foretold what power and authority Florence was in a short time to gain for herself, so as to become not merely the chief city of Tuscany, but even be reckoned among the foremost

cities of Italy. And in truth there is no pitch of greatness to which she might not have reached, had new and often repeated divisions not held her back.

1250-1259. Under this government the Florentines lived for ten years, during which time they compelled the citizens of Pistoia, Arezzo, and Siena to form a league with them, and on their return from besieging Siena took Volterra and destroyed many fortified villages, whose inhabitants they carried off with them to Florence. All these enterprises were undertaken at the instance of the Guelfs, who were now far more powerful than the Ghibellines, partly because the arrogant bearing of the latter while they governed in the time of Frederick made them detested by the people, but also because the party of the Church was better liked than the Emperor's; for with the aid of the Church men hoped to preserve their freedom, while under the Emperor they feared to lose it. The Ghibellines, accordingly, seeing their influence on the wane, could not rest, and only waited an opportunity for recovering their ascendancy. This they thought had come when they learned
1254. that Frederick's son, Manfred, had usurped the Kingdom of Naples, thereby greatly weakening the power of the Church. They, therefore, intrigued secretly with Manfred to have their authority restored, yet could not so conduct matters as to escape detection by the Anziani, who forthwith cited the Uberti to appear before them. These, however, so far from obeying the summons, took arms and fortified themselves in their houses. This enraged the people, who, also armed, and with the aid of the Guelfs, forced the Ghibellines to quit Florence, and withdraw with all their following

to Siena. From Siena they sought assistance from ^{1260.} Manfred, by whose forces, and by the subtlety of Farinata degli Uberti, the Guelfs were routed on the banks of the Arbia with such slaughter, that the remnant who survived fled, not to Florence, deeming it a lost city, but to Lucca.

§ 7. The troops sent by Manfred to aid the Ghibellines were commanded by the Count Giordano, a soldier of great renown in arms in these times. After the victory he accompanied the Ghibellines to Florence, and abolishing the magistracy and every other institution that bore a trace of freedom, compelled the city to render entire obedience to Manfred. These changes, carried out with little tact, gave extreme displeasure to the body of the people, who, from being unfriendly to the Ghibellines, became most hostile; and this in time brought about the utter ruin of that faction. Being recalled to Naples by the exigencies of the Kingdom, Count Giordano left behind him, to govern Florence, the Count Guido Novello, Lord of the Casentino, who convoked a council of the Ghibellines at Empoli, ^{1261.} where all were agreed that to maintain the Ghibelline influence in Tuscany, Florence, which from its people being Guelf was alone likely to revive the party of the Church, must be destroyed. This most cruel sentence passed against so noble a city, no one, whether of her citizens or friends, ventured to oppose, save Farinata degli Uberti only, who frankly and fearlessly withstood it, declaring that but for the hope of living once more in the city of his birth, he never would have risked so many hardships and dangers; nor would he now renounce what he had sought so long, nor reject what

Fortune offered him—nay, would prove himself as deadly a foe to those who should determine otherwise, as he had been to the Guelfs ; and if any man among them, because he feared his native city, should seek its destruction, he himself hoped to defend it with the same valour he had shown in driving out the Guelfs. As Farinata was a man of signal courage, excellent in arms, chief of the Ghibellines, and greatly esteemed by Manfred, his authority put an end to the proposal, and other means had to be devised for securing Ghibelline ascendancy.

§ 8. The Guelfs who had fled for refuge to Lucca, being sent away by the Lucchesi in consequence of the
1262. threats of Count Guido, withdrew to Bologna, whence they were summoned by the Guelfs of Parma to take part against the Ghibellines, on whose overthrow, mainly through their valour, all the possessions of the vanquished were awarded to them. Having thus attained to wealth and honour, on learning that Pope
1265. Clement had called in Charles of Anjou to oust Manfred from the Kingdom of Naples, they sent messengers to Rome offering their services ; whereupon the Pope not only welcomed them as friends, but gave them leave to bear his arms, which always afterwards were borne by the Guelfs on their standard in war, and to this day are used in Florence as their
1266. seal. Subsequently Manfred was dispossessed of his kingdom and slain by Charles, and inasmuch as the Florentine Guelfs had helped to bring this about, their faction strengthened while that of the Ghibellines declined. Whereupon those joined with Count Guido Novello in the government of Florence thought it

prudent to conciliate the people, whom till then they had subjected to every indignity, by making them concessions. But remedies that might have been salutary if used before the need came, being employed late and reluctantly, were not merely unprofitable but even hastened the ruin of those who resorted to them. Thinking, however, to obtain the friendship and support of the people by restoring a part of the honours and authority whereof they had deprived them, they chose six-and-thirty citizens from among the Commons, who in conjunction with two knights brought from Bologna were to reconstitute the government of the city. These commissioners, at their first meeting, divided the entire city into Guilds, and for each Guild appointed an officer to administer justice to its members. And to each Guild they assigned a standard under which all were to assemble whenever the city had need of them. The Guilds were at first twelve in number, seven of the greater and five of the less. The lesser Guilds being afterwards increased to fourteen, there came to be, as there are now, twenty-one Guilds in all.

§ 9. While the thirty-six were considering other reforms in the public interest, Count Guido ordained that an impost should be levied from the citizens for the maintenance of his soldiers; but met with so much opposition that he durst not enforce compliance. Finding his authority shaken, he entered into closer relations with the Ghibelline chiefs, and it was resolved to take back from the people by force what had been imprudently conceded to them. Accordingly, when he knew that his supporters were armed and ready, he caused a tumult to be raised, whereupon the thirty-six,

who were then met in Council, withdrew in great alarm to their houses. But the standards of the Guilds were at once brought out, followed by a throng of armed citizens; and as it was known that Count Guido and his supporters were posted at San Giovanni, the people gathered at Santa Trinità, where they chose Messer Giovanni Soldanieri for their leader. Learning where the people were assembled, Count Guido advanced to attack them; nor did they on their part shun the encounter, but pushing forward met their foes at the spot where the Loggia of the Tornaquinci now stands, and, routing Count Guido, killed or captured many of his followers. Dismayed by this repulse, the Count began to fear that his enemies might attack him by night, and, finding his men disheartened and depressed, put him to the sword. Which idea took such hold of him that, without giving a thought to other means of safety, he resolved on flight, and contrary to the advice of the chiefs of the Party, rode off with all his men-at-arms to Prato. But no sooner was he in a place of safety than his fears left him, and, seeing his mistake and desiring to repair it, he returned on the morrow at daybreak with his followers to Florence, meaning to re-enter by force the city he had quitted from cowardice. In this, however, he failed; for though it might have been difficult for the people to drive him out, it was easy for them to keep him out. Accordingly he had to retire, in shame and vexation, to the Casentino, while the Ghibellines withdrew to their strongholds in the country. The people, remaining victorious, resolved, at the instance of some who loved the public weal, to reunite the city and recall all citizens, whether Guelf or Ghibelline, then in exile. The Guelfs, accord-

ingly, came back, six years after their expulsion ; and the 1267. Ghibellines, being pardoned their recent offences, were likewise restored to their country. These last, nevertheless, were greatly hated both by the Guelfs, who could not forget their banishment, and by the people, who remembered only too well the oppressions suffered under their rule. Consequently neither faction could rest in peace.

While Florence lived on this footing, a rumour came 1268. that Conradin, Manfred's nephew, was marching with an army from Germany to attempt the recovery of Naples. This report filled the Ghibellines with hopes of regaining their ascendancy ; while the Guelfs, having to consider how they might best secure themselves against their adversaries, appealed to King Charles for aid to enable them to protect themselves while Conradin was passing through their country. The approach of troops sent by Charles greatly elated the Guelfs, and so alarmed the Ghibellines that, two days before the arrival of Charles's soldiers, they fled from the city of their own accord and without any violence being used to expel them.

§ 10. When the Ghibellines were gone the Florentines reformed the government of the city, and elected twelve magistrates who were to hold office for two months only, and were named no longer *Anziani* but *Buonomini*. Joined with these was a Council called the *Credenza*, consisting of eighty citizens. In addition, one hundred and eighty Commoners, thirty for each of the six districts (*Sestieri*) of the city, were chosen, who, sitting along with the *Credenza* and the twelve *Buonomini*, were styled the *Council General*. They

instituted, likewise, another Council, consisting of one hundred and twenty members, either commoners or nobles, with whom it lay to give final form to all measures passed by the other Councils, and to distribute the various offices of the State. After establishing this Government, they proceeded to strengthen the Guelf faction with such officers and ordinances as would enable it to defend itself with greater vigour against the Ghibellines, whose property they confiscated and divided into three shares, one of which they assigned to public uses, another to the heads, or captains as they were termed, of the Guelf Party, while the last was awarded absolutely to the Guelfs in compensation for the injuries they had sustained. And to bind Florence still closer to Guelf interests, the Pope appointed King Charles to be Vicar Imperial of Tuscany.

While the Florentines under this new government were maintaining their reputation at home by laws, and
1268. abroad by arms, Pope Clement died; nor was it until
1271. two years later that, after long controversy, Gregory x. was chosen to succeed him. The new Pope, who had lived long in Syria (where he still was at the time of his election), far removed from the contagion of these party humours, did not look on them in the same light as his predecessors had done; so that when he came to Florence, on his way to France, he thought it his duty as a true shepherd to restore union in our city, and succeeded in persuading the Florentines to admit the Syndics of the Ghibellines to confer as to terms for their return. But though terms were agreed on, so frightened were the Ghibellines that they would not come back. For this the Pope blamed the city, and in his anger excommunicated it; and so it remained

while he lived. On his death, however, the ban was removed by Pope Innocent v. 1276.

The Popes have always been afraid of any one who has attained to great power in Italy, even when that power has been fostered by the favour of the Church, and it is from their efforts to lower any such ascendancy that the frequent disturbances and revolutions wherewith the country has been visited have arisen. For the fear of one who had become powerful made them strengthen another who was weak, whom, so soon as he in his turn grew strong, they again began to fear and sought to crush. This it was that made them wrest the Kingdom of Naples from the hands of Manfred and give it to Charles, and afterwards to dread Charles and seek his destruction. Wherefore when the Pontificate fell on Nicholas III. of the House of the Orsini, he, for the reasons I have stated, contrived that Charles should be deprived by the Emperor of the Government of Tuscany; whither, under pretence of serving the Imperial interests, he himself sent his Legate Messer Latino. 1277.

§ 11. At this time Florence was in a very unhappy plight. The Guelf nobles had grown insolent and stood no longer in fear of the Magistrates, so that murders and other outrages were committed daily without the offenders, who were favoured by this or the other noble, being punished. To correct whose insolence the chief citizens thought it well to recall the Exiles, and thus furnished the Legate with an opportunity for reuniting the city. 1280.

On the return of the Ghibellines, instead of twelve Magistrates, fourteen were appointed, seven for each

1281. Party, who were to hold office for a year, and to be chosen by the Pope. This Government had lasted in Florence for only two years when Martin iv. came to the Pontificate, who, being a Frenchman, restored to King Charles all the authority that Pope Nicholas had taken from him. In consequence party feuds at once revived in Tuscany; for the Florentines rose in arms against the Imperial Governor, and to deprive the Ghibellines of their ascendancy, and keep the Nobles in check, instituted a new form of government. In the
1282. year 1282 the Guilds, which from the time they had officers and standards assigned them had come to be greatly considered, took upon them to ordain that in place of fourteen Magistrates three only should be appointed, who were to be named Priors (*Priori*), and were to govern the city each for two months, and who, provided they were merchants or belonged to any of the Guilds, might be either Commoners or Nobles. After the first Magistracy the number of the Priors was altered to six, that there might be one for each of the six districts of the city (*Sestieri*), and this number was retained down to the year 1343, when the districts of the city were reduced to four, and the number of the Priors raised to eight, though meanwhile it had sometimes happened that on an emergency twelve Priors were appointed. It was this Magistracy, as will presently be seen, that brought about the downfall of the Nobles, who, after being excluded from it by the people on various pretexts, in the end were all without distinction disqualified. These changes the Nobles, who were at variance among themselves, did not at first resist; so that while each strove to wrest the Government from the other, all lost it.

A palace was assigned to the new Magistracy as its permanent seat, though before it had been the custom for the Magistrates and Councils to hold their meetings in the Churches. Sergeants and other necessary officers were, moreover, attached to it to support its dignity; and though at first the Magistrates were called simply Priors (*Priori*), afterwards, to give themselves greater distinction, they assumed the further title of Lords (*Signori*). Within the city the Florentines were quiet for a time, during which they made war against the Aretines for having driven out the Guelfs, and gained a famous victory over them at Campaldino. The city ¹²⁸⁹ having now increased in population and wealth, it was thought fitting to enlarge its walls, the circuit of which was extended to their present compass, whereas before they had only included the space between the Old Bridge and the Church of San Lorenzo.

§ 12. Wars abroad and tranquillity at home had well-nigh quenched the factions of Guelf and Ghibelline in Florence; the only jealousies still smouldering being those that in all cities naturally prevail between the Nobles and the Commons; for the latter desiring to live in accordance with, and the former to over-ride, the laws, they cannot long remain on good terms with one another. This hostility did not betray itself while the Ghibellines were still formidable; but no sooner were they subdued than it began to manifest its strength, so that no day passed without some among the Commons suffering wrongs, which, inasmuch as every Noble, with the aid of his friends and kinsfolk, defended himself against the efforts of the Priors and the Captain of the People, neither the laws nor the Magistrates were

able to avenge. To cure this disorder the Syndics
1293. of the Guilds passed an ordinance that every Signory
on entering office should appoint a Commoner as
Standard-bearer (*Gonfaloniere*) of Justice, to whom
a thousand men, enrolled under twenty banners,
were to be assigned, and who, with his standard
and armed followers, was to be in readiness to
vindicate the law whenever called on by the Priors
or by the Captain of the People. The first to be
1295. chosen to this office was Ubaldo Ruffoli, who, displaying
the standard, pulled down the houses of the
Galletti, on the allegation that one of that family had
slain a Commoner in France. This ordinance the
Guilds had found no difficulty in passing, since the
Nobles, owing to the violent feuds which prevailed
among them, paid no heed to a measure directed
against themselves until taught its severity by this
enforcement, which at first threw them into much
alarm, though they soon resumed their habitual insolence.
For as they had always some one of their own
class among the Priors it was easy for them to prevent
the Standard-bearer from executing his office. Moreover,
whereas by law an accuser must always have witnesses
to the wrong done him, none could be got to testify
against a Noble. Hence it came that in a very short
time the city relapsed into its old disorders, and through
the delays of the tribunals in passing sentence and the
difficulty in getting sentences executed, the Commons
had to suffer at the hands of the Nobles the same
injuries as before.

§ 13. While the Commons were thus at a loss what
course to follow, Giano Della Bella, who though of very

high descent yet loved his country's freedom, incited the chiefs of the Guilds to introduce further reforms, and by his advice a new Ordinance was passed enacting that the Gonfalonier should reside with the Priors and have a force of four thousand men at his disposal. It was further ordained that all the Nobles should be deprived of the right to sit in the Signory; that all connected with a criminal should be liable to the same punishment; and that common notoriety might be accepted as legal proof. For these laws, which were styled '*The Ordinances of Justice*,' the Commons obtained great credit, while Giano Della Bella incurred much odium, being hated by the Nobles as having destroyed their power, and at the same time envied by the wealthy Commoners as exercising too great an authority. These feelings showed themselves on the first occasion that offered. It so happened that a Commoner was ^{1295.} killed in a fray at which many Nobles were present, among others, Corso Donati, on whom, as the boldest of the company, the blame was thrown, and who in consequence was arrested by the Captain of the People. In whatsoever way it came about, whether from Messer Corso being really guiltless, or from the Captain fearing to convict him, he was acquitted. This acquittal so incensed the people that, seizing their arms, they rushed to the house of Giano Della Bella, calling on him to take heed that the laws he himself had devised should be observed. Giano, who would gladly have seen Messer Corso punished, did not, as many thought he should, compel the people to lay aside their arms, but exhorted them to go before the Priors, complain to them of what had happened, and pray them to give redress. But the people, to whom it seemed in their

1295. fury that they had not only been wronged by their Captain but were now being deserted by Giano Della Bella, went off, not to the Signory but to the Palace of the Captain, which they seized and sacked. This outrage gave general offence, and those citizens who desired Giano's ruin were open-mouthed in their denunciations, laying the whole blame of the affair on him. There being among the Signors who succeeded those then in office certain men who were his enemies, Giano was charged before the Captain with having incited the people to sedition. While his cause was pending the people armed, and hurrying to his house offered to defend him against his adversaries and against the Signors themselves. Giano, however, would neither put these offers of the populace to the proof, nor trust his life to the magistrates, fearing the fickleness of the former, the hostility of the latter; but to deprive his foes of all opportunity to injure him, and prevent his friends from injuring his country, went into voluntary exile, thinking by this sacrifice to free his fellow-citizens from the fears he caused them, and be done with a city which to his loss and at his peril he had rescued from servitude to the Great Houses.

§ 14. On his departure, the Nobles were filled with hopes of recovering their former ascendancy. Thinking their misfortunes due to their divisions, they made up their differences and sent two of their number to the Signory, which they believed to be favourable to them, to ask that the severity of the laws passed against them might in some measure be relaxed. On this demand becoming known, the minds of the Commons, who feared that the Signory might grant it, were much

perturbed; and thus between the pretensions of the Nobles and the suspicions of the Commons recourse was had to arms. The Nobles under three leaders, Messer Forese Adimari, Messer Vanni de' Mozzi, and Messer Geri Spini, made head at three points—San Giovanni, the Mercato Nuovo, and the Piazza de' Mozzi; while the Commons assembled in great numbers under their standards at the Palace of the Signory, which then stood close by the Church of San Procolo, and, distrusting the Signors then in office, deputed six citizens to take part in the Government. While both sides were thus preparing for the conflict, certain citizens from the Commons and others from the Nobles, and with them some of the Clergy of good repute, intervened as peacemakers, reminding the Nobles that it was their own arrogance and unrighteous government that had led to their being deprived of their honours, and to laws being passed against them; and warning them that their present appeal to arms, and their efforts to regain by force what they had lost through their divisions and evil conduct, could only end in the ruin of their country, and in making their own condition still worse than it was. For they were to remember that in number, resources, as well as intensity of hatred, the Commons went far beyond them; and that the Nobility of descent, by virtue of which they claimed superiority over others, would avail them nothing when they came to blows, but be shown to be a mere empty name, powerless to protect them against their many enemies. On the other hand, they reminded the people that it was imprudent to pursue a victory too far, and dangerous to drive men to despair, since he who has no good to hope for, has

1295. no ill to fear. They should bear in mind that it was the Nobles who had won renown for their city in war, and that therefore it was neither just nor generous to pursue them with so much rancour; the Nobles had readily put up with exclusion from the highest offices of the State, but could never endure that any man should, under cover of the recent Ordinances, have it in his power to drive them from their country; wherefore it would be well for them to modify these Ordinances, and by this concession cause arms to be laid aside; nor should they, confiding in their numbers, tempt the fortune of battle, for it was often seen that many were overmatched by few.

On hearing these counsels, opinions were divided. Many were for joining battle at once, for to fighting it must come sooner or later, and it was better to fight then, than wait till their enemies had grown stronger. If indeed it could be believed that the Nobles would rest satisfied with a relaxation of the Ordinances, it might be well to relax them; but, so overweening was their pride, that they never would rest quiet unless compelled. To others wiser and more sedate it seemed a small thing to relax the laws, but a grave matter to resort to arms; and this opinion prevailing, it was conceded that in accusations brought against a Noble witnesses were not to be dispensed with.

§ 15. Though open hostilities were thus averted, both parties remained full of distrust, and each continued to strengthen itself with towers and arms. Meanwhile the Commons, thinking that the Priors then in office had shown too much favour to the Nobles, made further changes in the Government,

lessening the number of the Signory, in which the Mancini, Magalotti, Altoviti, Peruzzi, and Cerretani retained a paramount authority.

This new Government being constituted, the people, in the year 1298, in order to give the Magistrates 1298. greater dignity and security, after clearing away the houses which had belonged to the Uberti to make room for a Piazza, laid the foundations of their new Palace. At the same time they also began to construct the public prisons. All these buildings they completed in a few years, nor was our city ever in a sounder or more prosperous condition than during this period. For Florence then abounded in men, money, and prestige: she had thirty thousand citizens within her walls fit to bear arms, and seventy thousand in the surrounding country; while all Tuscany, either as having been subjugated by her, or out of friendship, yielded her obedience. And if between Nobles and Commons some resentment and jealousy still survived, no ill consequences came of it, but all men dwelt together in peace and unity. And had not this peace been broken by new feuds springing up within her walls, our city would have had nothing to dread from foes without; for she was now so strong that she feared neither Emperor nor exiles, and might with her own forces have defied all the States of Italy. But disasters which could not overtake her from abroad were brought about by new dissensions at home.

§ 16. There were in Florence two families, the Cerchi 1300. and the Donati, both of them most powerful from their high descent, numbers, and wealth, between whom, from their being near neighbours both in town

1300. and country, disputes had arisen, which were not, however, of so serious a nature as to call for a resort to arms, and might never have been followed by any serious consequences had they not been fed by new causes of offence. Among the first houses in Pistoia was that of the Cancellieri. It so happened that while Lore, son of Messer Gulielmo, and Geri, son of Messer Bertacca, both of this family, were playing together they quarrelled, and Geri was slightly wounded by Lore. This vexed Messer Gulielmo, who, in trying to smooth the matter over by courtesy, only made it worse. He bade his son go to the father of the injured boy and ask his forgiveness. But this civility no whit softened the cruel heart of Messer Bertacca, who, ordering Lore to be seized by his serving men, and stretched, to add to the indignity, on a manger, caused his hand to be cut off, bidding him go back to his father and tell him that wounds were to be healed with iron, not with words. Which barbarity so enraged Messer Gulielmo that he armed his followers to avenge it, and Messer Bertacca arming likewise for defence, not the family of the Cancellieri alone, but the whole city of Pistoia was at feud. And because the Cancellieri were descended from a certain Messer Cancelliere who had two wives, one of them named Bianca, the faction belonging to the branch of the family descended from her took the name *Bianca* (White), while the other to mark contrariety was named *Nera* (Black). The conflicts which ensued between the two factions were attended by much bloodshed and great destruction of property; neither side would give way, but exhausted by their sufferings, and desirous either to end the strife, or to

spread it by engaging others in their quarrel, both ^{1300.} came to Florence, where the Neri, from their intimacy with the Donati, were well received by Messer Corso, the head of that house. Whereupon the Bianchi, to obtain for themselves powerful support against the Donati, had recourse to Messer Vieri de' Cerchi, as of a standing nowise inferior to that of Messer Corso.

§ 17. By this infusion of fresh discord from Pistoia, the old hatred between the Donati and the Cerchi was revived, and soon showed itself so openly that the Priors and other worthy citizens were in constant dread lest they should resort to arms, and the feud spread through the whole city. Accordingly they appealed to the Pope, entreating him to use his authority to correct these growing humours for which they could not themselves provide a remedy. Whereupon the Pope summoned Messer Vieri to Rome, and bade him make peace with the Donati. On receiving this command Messer Vieri feigned great astonishment, protesting that he bore the Donati no ill-will, and since making peace implied a state of war, he knew not why, when there was no war between them, peace should be required. When Messer Vieri returned from Rome without any settlement having been effected, the factious humours rose so high that any trifling accident was likely to make them overflow. As in fact happened. In the month of May, when the Florentines are wont to hold holiday with public revelry throughout the city, it so chanced that certain young men of the Donati, riding forth on horseback with a company of their friends, stopped to look at a

1300. band of damsels dancing opposite the Church of the Holy Trinity, when certain of the Cerchi, they too accompanied by many noblemen, came up, and not observing who were in front of them, in their eagerness to see what was going on, pushed their horses in among the Donati and jostled them. Whereupon the Donati, thinking this meant as an affront, drew their weapons, and the Cerchi being equally ready with theirs, it was not until many wounds had been given and received on both sides that they separated. This fray was the beginning of much mischief. For the whole city, Commons as well as Nobles, took sides, assuming the names of *Bianchi* and *Neri*. At the head of the Bianchi were the Cerchi, with whom were ranged the Adimari, the Abati, some of the Tosinghi, Bardi, Rossi, Frescobaldi, Nerli, and Manelli, all the Mozzi, Scali, Gherardini, Cavalcanti, Malespini, Bostichi, Giandonati, Vecchietti, and Arrigucci, together with many families of the Commons, and all the Ghibellines left in Florence, so that from the multitude of their followers they had almost entire control of the city. On the side of the Neri, the Donati were leaders, having with them the remainder of the families named above as declaring only in part for the Bianchi; with whom were joined all the Pazzi, Bisdomini, Manieri, Bagnesi, Tornaquinci, Spini, Buondelmonti, Gianfigliazzi, and Brunelleschi. Nor was it the city only that was infected by this pestilence, but the whole country as well. The Captains of the Guelfs, and all lovers of the Guelf party and of the common weal, fearing greatly that this new feud might revive the Ghibelline faction and bring disaster on the city, again sent word to Pope Boniface that

unless he wished Florence, which had always been a bulwark of the Church, to become Ghibelline and be destroyed, he must devise some remedy. On receipt of which message the Pope sent Matteo of Acquasparta, Cardinal Portuensis, as his Legate to Florence; but he, finding difficulty in dealing with the Bianchi, who deeming themselves the stronger party stood less in awe of him, quitted Florence in high dudgeon, and laid it under interdict, so that it was left in worse confusion than before he came.

§ 18. While the minds of all were thus perturbed, it happened that at a funeral at which many of the Cerchi and the Donati were present, these fell first to words and then to blows. At the moment nothing further came of this brawl, and both families returned to their houses. On reaching home, however, the Cerchi decided to have it out with the Donati, and went forth with a great body of their retainers to attack them, but were routed by the valour of Messer Corso, and many of them wounded. The whole city now rose in arms; the Magistrates and the Laws had been set at naught by the fury of the Nobles, and the best and wisest of the citizens were filled with anxiety and alarm. As the Donati and their following had, as the weaker party, most cause to be afraid, Messer Corso and the other chiefs of the Neri, in order to provide for their safety, conferred with the Captains of the Guelfs, with whom it was settled that the Pope should now be asked to send some one of royal descent to Florence; for they hoped in this way to get the better of the Bianchi. This conference and the resolution come to, were reported to the Priors, and were

1300. denounced by the adverse party as a plot against the freedom of the city. Seeing both factions prepared for combat, the Priors (of whom Dante Alighieri was at that time one) being well and wisely advised, took heart, and arming the whole body of the people and summoning to their aid many from the adjacent country, compelled the heads of both factions to lay down their arms, sent Messer Corso Donati with others of the Neri into exile, and, to show themselves impartial, banished at the same time certain of the Bianchi. These last, however, on various pleas which were held to be satisfactory, were shortly afterwards allowed to return.

1301. § 19. Messer Corso and his followers, believing the Pope to be well disposed towards them, repaired to Rome, and renewed in person the request they had already made in writing. Charles of Valois, brother to the King of France, was at this time residing at the Papal Court, having been summoned to Italy by the King of Naples to join in an expedition against Sicily. Him, at the urgent instance of the Florentine exiles, the Pope resolved to send to Florence, to remain there till the season arrived for the Sicilian expedition to sail. Charles accordingly came to Florence, and though the faction of the Bianchi now ruling there looked on him with suspicion, yet from his being head of the Guelfs, and sent by the Pope, they durst not oppose his coming, nay, to gain his goodwill conferred on him full powers to deal with the city as he thought fit. But when Charles, on receiving this authority, ordered all his friends and partisans to arm themselves, the people were so afraid that he meant to deprive them of their

freedom, that they too armed, and waited, every man ^{1301.} in his own house, ready to resist should any hostile movement be made.

From having been now for some time at the head of affairs, and from their haughty bearing while in power, the Cerchi and the other chiefs of the Bianchi had come to be detested by all. This encouraged Messer Corso and the other exiled Neri to return to Florence, all the more because they knew Charles and the Captains of the Guelfs to be favourable towards them. Accordingly, while the city from its distrust of Charles was still in arms, Messer Corso, followed by all the exiles and by many others, entered Florence without hindrance from any one. For though Messer Vieri de' Cerchi was urged to go forth against him, he refused, saying that it was for the people of Florence, whom Corso came to attack, to chastise him. But the contrary happened; for Messer Corso, so far from being chastised, was welcomed by the people, while Messer Vieri had to flee for his life. After forcing the Pinti gate, Messer Corso drew up at the Church of San Pietro Maggiore, close by his own house, where, after assembling many of his friends, and being joined by others who rallied to him from their love of change, his first step was to release from prison all who, from whatever cause, public or private, were in confinement. He next compelled the Signors to withdraw as private citizens each man to his own home, and appointed other Commoners of the Neri faction in their places; and for five days he gave over the houses of the chiefs of the Bianchi to be pillaged. The Cerchi and the other Bianchi leaders finding Charles against

1301. them, and the mass of the people hostile, had by this time left the city and retired to their strongholds in the country, and though never before disposed to follow the counsels of the Pope, were now obliged to appeal to him for aid, representing to him that Charles had come to divide Florence, not to reunite it. Upon this the Pope once more sent his Legate, Messer Matteo of Acquasparta, who effected a reconciliation between the Cerchi and the Donati, which he thought to strengthen by intermarriages and new family alliances. But on his proposing that the Bianchi should have a share in the Magistracy, the Neri, who had now the upper hand, would not consent; whereupon the Legate again took himself off, no better pleased nor less angry than on the former occasion, leaving the city under interdict for contumacy.

1302. § 20. Both factions were now living in Florence together, but both were discontented. The Neri, seeing the adverse faction thus close at hand, were afraid it might recover its lost authority and effect their overthrow. The Bianchi, on the other hand, found themselves left without honours or influence. To these grounds for resentment and natural jealousy, fresh offence was added. Messer Niccolò de' Cerchi, going with a company of his friends to his country seat, on reaching the bridge that crosses the Affrico, was set upon by Simone, son of Messer Corso Donati. A fierce encounter ensued, which for both sides had a lamentable issue, Messer Niccolò being slain, and Simone so sorely wounded that he died the following night. This outbreak threw the whole city into new alarms. The Neri, though most to blame, were pro-

tected by those in authority, and before judgment was pronounced it was discovered that the Bianchi had been intriguing with Messer Piero Ferranti, one of Charles's barons, for readmission to the Government. This appeared from certain letters said to have been written to Piero by the Cerchi. Nevertheless it was currently believed that these letters were forgeries, contrived by the Donati to cover the infamy resting on them for the murder of Messer Niccolò. Be this as it may, the whole family of the Cerchi with their following among the Bianchi, of whom Dante the poet was one, were banished, their property confiscated, and their houses razed to the ground. The exiles, together with many Ghibellines who had espoused their cause, scattered themselves over many lands, seeking to mend their fortunes in new fields.

His mission in Florence thus accomplished, Charles departed, and returned to the Pope to carry out his enterprise against Sicily; in conducting which he showed himself no wiser or better than he had been in Florence, and after losing many of his followers went back to France thoroughly discredited.

§ 21. After the departure of Charles, quiet prevailed in Florence. Messer Corso alone was restless. For he thought that the position in the city to which he was entitled had not been accorded him, and saw that the Government, taking a popular form, was conducted by many far his inferiors. Disgusted by this, he sought to screen dishonest designs under an honourable pretext, and spread reports that in administering the public revenues certain citizens had used them for their private advantage. These men, he said, it would be

1304. well to discover and punish. His calumnies were adopted by many who had the same ends as he, and were supported by the ignorance of many others who believed him to be actuated by sincere love for his country. On the other hand, the citizens who were thus traduced, being well thought of by the people, stood on their defence, and the dispute rose to such a height that, when civil methods failed to settle it, resort was had to arms. On one side were Messer Corso, and Messer Lottieri, the Bishop of Florence, with many of the old Nobility and certain of the rich Commoners; on the other side were the Priors with the great body of the people; so that the quarrel raged almost everywhere throughout the city. The Signory, recognising the peril in which they stood, sent for help to Lucca, and very soon the whole people of Lucca arrived in Florence. At their instance, differences were for the time composed and the tumult stayed, the people retaining the government and their liberty, without other punishment being inflicted on those who had promoted disorder.

On hearing of the disturbances in Florence, the Pope, to put a stop to them, sent thither as his Legate Messer Niccolò of Prato, who being esteemed for his rank, learning, and character, soon became so much trusted that free leave was given him to reconstitute the Government as he pleased. As a Ghibelline by birth he naturally desired to restore the exiles, but sought in the first place to gain the goodwill of the people, with which object he revived their ancient Companies, thereby greatly augmenting their power and lessening that of the Nobles. Thinking he had thus secured popular support, he now began to devise

measures for restoring the exiles. But though he tried ^{1304.} various ways to effect this, he not only failed in all of them, but became so distrusted by those in authority that he was obliged to depart, returning to the Pope filled with wrath, and leaving Florence excommunicated and in great confusion.

Nor was it by one factious humour only but by many that Florence was now afflicted, being rent by feuds between Nobles and Commons, between Guelfs and Ghibellines, and between Bianchi and Neri, so that the whole city was in arms and brimming with strife. Moreover, there were many who, desiring the return of the exiles, were displeased at the departure of the Legate. The first to stir up this new cause of discontent were the Medici and the Giugni, who had openly taken part with the Legate on behalf of the exiles.

While strife thus prevailed throughout Florence, a fire, to make matters worse, broke out in the houses of the Abati, standing near the church of Or San Michele, whence it spread to the dwellings of the Caponsacchi, which it consumed, together with those of the Macci, Amieri, Toschi, Cipriani, Lamberti, and Cavalcanti, and the whole of the New Market. Thence it passed to the Porta Santa Maria, burning it completely down. Turning aside from the Old Bridge, it next wrecked the houses of the Gherardini, Pulci, Amidei, and Lucardesi, with so many others besides that the total number destroyed came to not less than seventeen hundred. Many believed the fire to have broken out accidentally while the street fighting raged; but others maintain that it was intentionally kindled by Neri Abati, Prior of San Piero Scheraggio, a dissolute,

1304. ill-conditioned priest, who, seeing the people engaged in combat, thought he could perpetrate a crime they would be too busy to remedy; and to ensure its success set fire to a house belonging to his own kinsmen, where he could do it easily. It was in the year 1304, and in the month of July, that Florence was thus visited at once by fire and sword.

In these grave disorders Messer Corso Donati took no active part; thinking that by thus standing aloof he was more likely to be made the arbiter of both sides when, wearied of strife, they turned to make terms. It was, however, rather from satiety of evil-doing than from any desire to be reconciled, that the combatants at last laid aside their arms. In the end the exiles were not restored, and the party favouring them remained the weaker.

§ 22. The Legate hearing on his return to Rome that disturbances had again broken out in Florence, persuaded the Pope that if he desired to restore union in that city he must summon some twelve of its foremost citizens to his presence, for if the fuel which fed the flames of discord were removed, means might easily be devised to quench them. On this advice the Pope acted; twelve citizens, among whom was Corso Donati, were cited, and obeyed the summons. But no sooner had they quitted Florence than the Legate sent word to the exiles that now, when the city was left without leaders, was their time to return to it. They accordingly mustered in force, came to Florence, and scaling the still unfinished walls, advanced into the town as far as the Piazza of San Giovanni. And here it deserves mention that the very same persons who a short time

before, when the exiles made a peaceful appeal to be restored to their country, had taken their part, on seeing them now in arms and endeavouring to carry the city by force, declared against them, and joining with the body of the people, forced them to return whence they came. So greatly was the public welfare esteemed by these citizens above private friendship. The failure of this enterprise was attributed to the exiles leaving a part of their forces behind them at Lastra, and not waiting for Messer Tolosetto Uberti, who was to have joined them from Pistoia with three hundred horsemen. For they thought that speed rather than force was to win them success. But in enterprises of this sort it often happens that while delay destroys opportunity, haste impairs strength.

The rebels gone, Florence returned to her old feuds. To break down the ascendancy of the Cavalcanti family, the people forcibly took from them their stronghold in the Val de Greve, which had belonged to them from remote times, and which was named *Le Stinche*. And because those who were made captives when this stronghold was taken were the first to be confined to the newly built prison, the name of the place whence these prisoners came was given to the prison itself, which to this day is known as *Le Stinche*. Those at the head of affairs next revived the Companies of the People, whom they provided with banners of their own, for hitherto they had mustered under the banners of the Guilds. To their leaders they gave the title of 'Standard-bearers of the Companies and Colleagues of the Signors,' and ordained that in time of trouble they should aid the Signory with their arms, and in quiet times with their

1307. counsels. To the two *Rectors*, whose office was of old standing, they added an *Executor*, who, in conjunction with the Standard-bearers, was to check any overbearing conduct on the part of the nobles.

Meanwhile the Pope had died: the twelve citizens summoned to Rome had returned, and things might have gone on smoothly enough had not the city been troubled anew by the restless spirit of Messer Corso, who, to make himself more thought of, was always in opposition to those in authority, and to win popularity turned his influence in the direction to which he saw the people incline. He accordingly was ringleader in all discontent and innovation, a rock of refuge for all who had irregular ends to serve. This brought upon him the hatred of many worthy citizens, which grew so strong as to cause open rupture in the Neri party, Messer Corso relying on his own resources and private influence, his opponents looking to the Government for support. But so great was Messer Corso's personal authority that all feared him. Howbeit, to deprive him of popular favour, which in this way may easily be extinguished, a rumour was spread that he was seeking to establish a tyranny, which was the more readily believed from his living in a style far beyond that of any private citizen. This belief was further strengthened on his taking to wife a daughter of Ugucione della Faggiuola, chief of the Bianchi and Ghibelline factions, and most powerful in Tuscany.

1308. § 23. When this alliance became known it emboldened his adversaries to take arms against him, while for the same reason the people would not defend him; nay, for the most part went over to his enemies,

of whom Messer Rosso della Tosa, Messer Pazzino de' 1308. Pazzi, Messer Geri Spini, and Messer Berto Brunelleschi were leaders. These, with their adherents and the great body of the people, assembled in arms under the palace of the Signors, by whose orders a charge was laid before Messer Piero Branca, Captain of the People, against Messer Corso, of seeking with the help of Uguccone to make himself tyrant. Whereupon he was cited to answer, and not appearing was declared rebel, barely two hours intervening between his accusation and his sentence. No sooner was sentence pronounced than the Signors, attended by the Companies of the People arrayed under their standards, went in search of him, when he, no whit daunted by the desertion of so many of his followers, by the sentence passed against him, by the authority of the Magistrates, or by the number of his enemies, fortified himself in his houses, where he hoped to defend himself until Uguccone, whom he had summoned, should come to his relief. He had caused his houses and the streets leading to them to be defended by barricades, behind which his partisans made so stout a resistance that the people, though in great number, could not force an entrance. The conflict accordingly was fierce, many on both sides being slain or wounded. Finding they could not prevail in their attack from the streets, the people now took possession of the houses abutting on those of the Donati, and breaking through the walls, effected an entrance where they were not looked for. On seeing himself thus surrounded by his enemies, Messer Corso, no longer relying on help from Uguccone, and despairing of victory, thought to try whether flight were possible, and with Gherardo

1308. Bordoni and others of his truest and most trusted friends rushing upon his enemies, fought his way through their ranks, and escaped from the city by the Porta alla Croce. He was followed in his flight by many pursuers. At the bridge across the Affrico, Gherardo was slain by Boccaccio Cavicciuli, and at Rovezzano Messer Corso himself was overtaken and captured by a troop of Catalan horsemen in the pay of the Signory. As they led him back to Florence, that he might not have to face his victorious enemies and endure their taunts, he threw himself from his horse, and as he lay on the road his throat was cut by one of his captors. His corpse was carried away by the monks of San Salvi, and buried without mark of honour. Such was the end of Corso Donati, at whose hands both his country and his party had received much good and suffered much ill, and whose memory had been happier had his spirit been less unquiet. Yet he deserves to rank among the greatest men our city has had. True it is that his turbulence made both his country and his faction forget the services he had rendered them, and in the end brought much harm to both, and death to himself. Ugucione coming to succour his son-in-law, learned when he got to Remole that Messer Corso had been attacked by the people, and thinking he could do nothing to help him, and not desiring to incur danger where he could render no assistance, returned whence he came.

§ 24. On the death of Messer Corso, which happened in the year 1308, civil tumults ceased, and the city remained undisturbed until word came that the Emperor Henry was on his way to Italy, bringing

with him all the Florentine exiles, in fulfilment of a 1311. promise to restore them to their country. Whereupon the heads of the Government, reflecting that were they to reduce the number of these exiles they would have fewer enemies to deal with, issued an ordinance recalling all rebels who were not by name forbidden to return. In consequence of which exception, most of the Ghibellines, together with certain of the Bianchi faction, among whom were Dante Alighieri, the sons of Messer Vieri de' Cerchi, and those of Giano della Bella, remained in banishment. Our rulers, moreover, sent to King Robert of Naples for support, and failing to obtain it on the score of friendship, gave up the city to him for five years that he might defend them as his subjects. The Emperor came into Italy by way of Pisa; whence he proceeded through the Maremma to Rome, and there, in the year 1312, was crowned. Afterwards, being determined to subjugate the Florentines, he marched by Perugia and Arezzo to Florence, and encamped his army at the Monastery of San Salvi, about a mile from the city. Here he stayed for fifty days without reaping any advantage, when seeing no likelihood of overthrowing the Government, he went off to Pisa, where he entered into an agreement with Frederick, King of Sicily, to undertake the conquest of Naples. But when he was hastening thither with his army in confident hopes of victory, and when King Robert was looking forward to certain defeat, on 1313. reaching Buonconvento, he died.

§ 25. Soon after this Ugucione della Faggiuola became Lord of Pisa, and presently of Lucca, whither 1313-1314. he had been invited by the Ghibelline faction, and

with the support of these cities wrought much harm to their neighbours. To protect themselves from his attacks the Florentines asked King Robert to send Peter, his brother, to command their armies. Meanwhile Ugucione was continually adding to his power, and by force or fraud had possessed himself of many strongholds in Valdarno and Val di Nievole. But on his laying siege to Montecatini, the Florentines, not wishing the conflagration to spread through the whole of their territories, thought themselves bound to succour that town. Accordingly they assembled a large army and marched into the Val di Nievole, where, encountering Ugucione, they were defeated by
1315. him after a hard-fought battle. In this engagement Peter, brother of King Robert, was slain (though his body was never found), and with him more than two thousand others. Nor was the victory a joyful one for Ugucione, who lost in the fight a son and many of his captains. After this rout the Florentines fortified the towns in their neighbourhood, and King Robert sent them the Count d'Andria, called also Count Novello, to be their captain, but whether in consequence of his haughty bearing, or because it is the nature of the Florentines to fret under all control and become disunited by every mishap, the city, notwithstanding the war it had in hand with Ugucione, divided itself anew
1316. into the friends and the enemies of the King. Foremost among the King's enemies were Simone della Tosa, with the Magalotti and certain others of the Commons who had much to say in the conduct of public affairs. At their instance an appeal was made, first to France and then to Germany, for officers and troops, on whose arrival they might expel Count

Novello, the King's Governor ; but Fortune was against ^{1316.} them, and they could obtain aid from neither country. They did not, however, abandon their endeavours, but continued their search for some one to exalt, and since they could not have him from France or Germany, brought him from Gubbio. For having first got rid of Count Novello, they fetched Lando of Gubbio to Florence to be their *Executor* or *Bargello*, and gave him unlimited authority over the citizens. This Lando was a cruel and greedy knave, who, going about the city with a large retinue of armed followers, took the life of this or the other citizen at the bidding of those who had appointed him ; nay, grew so insolent as to strike base coin with the Florentine die, none daring to oppose him ; to such a pitch of power had the dissensions of Florence carried him. Truly a great but unhappy city, which neither the memory of past divisions, nor fear of Ugucione, nor a King's authority could keep steady ; and truly wretched its fate, raided from without by Ugucione and pillaged from within by Lando of Gubbio !

The old Nobility, the upper class of the Commons, and all the Guelfs were the King's friends and opposed to Lando and his following ; but as the government was in the hands of their adversaries, they could not declare themselves without incurring grave danger. Being resolved, nevertheless, to free themselves from this shameful tyranny, they wrote privily to King Robert, asking him to appoint Count Guido of Battifolle his vicar in Florence. This was at once done, and the King's enemies, though the Signory was on their side, out of regard for the Count's good qualities, did not venture to oppose him. He found, however,

1316. that, from the Signory and the Standard-bearers of the Companies favouring Lando and his party, he possessed but little real authority.

Through Florence, while it was thus afflicted, passed the daughter of Albert, King of Germany, on her way to meet her husband Charles, son to King Robert. This lady was treated with great honour by the King's friends, who represented to her the sad condition of the city and the oppressions of Lando and his backers, so movingly, that before she left, partly through her personal popularity, partly through the influence she exercised from her connection with the King, she succeeded in reconciling the citizens and in sending Lando back to Gubbio, stripped of his authority, but gorged with blood and plunder.

1318. In the course of changes now made in the Government the Lordship of King Robert was prolonged for three years; and because seven Magistrates had been chosen from the partisans of Lando, six were now added from the King's party: so that for a time the Signory consisted of thirteen Priors. Afterwards, however, the old practice of appointing seven only was resumed.

1316. §26. About this time Ugucione was deprived of his Lordship over Pisa and Lucca, and Castruccio Castracani, from a simple citizen of the latter city, became its master, and being a daring and high-spirited youth, and fortunate in all his enterprises, rose rapidly to be chief of the Ghibellines in Tuscany. Wherefore the Florentines, laying aside for many years their civil dissensions, took thought at first how they might check the growth of Castruccio's power, and afterwards, when

they found it grew in spite of them, how they might ^{1316.} protect themselves against it. And in order that their Magistrates might deliberate with better advice and carry out their resolves with greater authority, twelve citizens styled *Buonomini* were appointed, without whose counsel and consent the Signory were to transact no business of importance. Meanwhile the term of King Robert's Lordship having expired, the city, once ^{1322.} more its own master, reconstituted itself under its customary Rectors and Magistrates, and was kept united by its dread of Castruccio, who, after inflicting much injury on the Lords of Lunigiana, laid siege to Prato. Whereupon the Florentines decided to succour that ^{1323.} town, and closing their shops, marched thither in a body, mustering on their arrival twenty thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse. At the same time, to lessen Castruccio's forces and add to their own, the Signory notified by public proclamation that any Gueff exile coming to the relief of Prato should, when the expedition was over, be restored to his country; on the strength of which promise more than four thousand exiles joined the enterprise. The great force, thus rapidly raised, so alarmed Castruccio that, without waiting to try the fortune of battle, he retreated towards Lucca. Upon this a dispute broke out in the Florentine camp between the Commons and the Nobles, the former desiring to pursue and give battle and so make an end of Castruccio, while the latter were for turning back, declaring that enough had been done in putting Florence in peril to save Prato; that, as done of necessity, this was well done, but now, when the need was past, it were unwise, there being so little to gain and so much to lose, to tempt Fortune further. As neither

1323. side would give way, the matter was referred to the Signory, where the same difference of opinion was found to prevail between Commons and Nobles; and this becoming known throughout the city, a mob assembled in the Piazza who, threatening the Nobles in language of great violence, frightened them into compliance. But as many gave their consent with much reluctance and only after great delay, the enemy had time afforded them to retire in safety to Lucca.

§ 27. Which miscarriage so enraged the Commons against the Grandees, that the Signory refused to fulfil the promise that, at their instance and by their order, had been held out to the exiles, who, learning this, determined to anticipate and presented themselves at the city gates, meaning to enter the town in advance of the rest of the army. Their attempt, however, being foreseen, did not succeed, and they were driven off by those citizens who had been left behind in Florence. To try whether they might not obtain by consent what they had failed to effect by force, they now sent eight of their number to remind the Signory of the promises made them and of the risk they had run to obtain the proffered reward. But though the Nobles, who thought themselves bound to discharge this obligation, having personally engaged to make good what the Signory had proclaimed, used every effort on behalf of the exiles, so great was the popular resentment at the expedition against Castruccio not having had the success it might, that they were not listened to, to the great reproach and discredit of Florence.

This breach of faith so offended many of the Nobles that they sought to effect by violence what they could

not by persuasion, and arranged secretly with the exiles that these should come in arms to the city while they themselves would arm on their behalf from within. But the plot being discovered before the day fixed for its execution, the exiles found the city on its guard, and in such readiness to repel assault and quell insurrection, that none ventured to take arms, but all, without reaping any advantage from it, abandoned the attempt. After the exiles were gone, it was proposed to punish those who had brought them; but though all knew who these were, none durst name, far less charge them. Wherefore, that the truth might be revealed without fear or favour, it was decided that each member of the Council should write down the name of those whom he considered guilty, and hand over his written list privily to the Captain. In this way it appeared that Messer Teghiaïo Frescobaldi, Messer Amerigo Donati, and Messer Lotteringo Gherardini were the culprits. These, however, finding a judge perhaps more lenient than their offence merited, were let off with a money penalty.

§ 28. The disorder caused in Florence by the exiles coming to the gates, showed plainly that for the Companies of the People a single leader was not enough, and it was resolved that for the future each company should either have three or four. Two, or three, additional officers, named *Pennonieri* (Bannerets), were accordingly attached to every Standard-bearer, so that on an emergency wherein it was not needed to call out an entire Company, a part might be employed under one leader.

It happens in all Republics that always after a crisis

1323. in their affairs, some of their old laws are repealed and some revived. Hitherto the Signory had been chosen from time to time. But the Priors and the Colleges now in office, possessing great influence, had authority given them to determine what persons should for the next forty months sit as Signors. The names of these persons they put into a bag (*borsa*), from which were drawn every two months the number needed. Howbeit, before the forty months had run, it being suspected by many citizens that their names had been left out, fresh names had to be entered. From this beginning grew the custom of imburasing long beforehand the names of all who were to be drawn as Magistrates—whether within the city or without, for formerly it was only when a Magistracy came to an end that the new Magistrates were chosen by the Councils. These imbursements (*imborsazioni*), or, as they were afterwards termed, scrutinies (*squittini*), being made every three, or at longest every five years, were thought to save the city trouble, and remove occasion for the tumults which, owing to the number of those competing, broke out on every election of a Magistracy. This method, therefore, the Florentines adopted as knowing no other remedy for the inconveniences mentioned, not discerning the evils that underlay a trifling advantage.

§ 29. It was now the year 1325, and Castruccio, having got possession of Pistoia, had grown so powerful that the Florentines, alarmed by his increasing importance, resolved to attack him before he had secured his hold over that city, and to rescue it from its subjection to him. They accordingly got together from among their own citizens and friends a force of

twenty thousand foot and three thousand horse, which they led to Altopascio, meaning to occupy it, and thus prevent Castruccio from sending succour to Pistoia by that road. They succeeded in taking Altopascio and then moved towards Lucca, laying waste the country as they went; but from the little prudence and less loyalty of their captain, Messer Ramondo di Cardona, their advance was slow. For he, noting that in times past the Florentines had been somewhat careless of their independence, surrendering it now to a King, now to the Legate of a Pope, and at other times to other men of meaner quality, bethought him that were they brought into some desperate strait it might well happen that they made him their Lord. Nor did he fail to give frequent hints to this effect, asking to be allowed the same authority in the city as had been given him in the army, and declaring that otherwise he could not secure the obedience a captain must have. When the Florentines would not consent to this, he constantly interposed delays, by which Castruccio profited, since time was in this way given for the reinforcements promised him by the Visconti and other despots of Lombardy, to join him. The enemy being thus strengthened, Messer Ramondo, whom disloyalty had hitherto held back from victory, was now from his incompetence unable to save himself; for advancing slowly with his army he was attacked by Castruccio close to Altopascio, and routed after a fierce encounter in which many citizens were taken or slain. Among the captives were Messer Ramondo himself, who thus received from Fortune the chastisement due to him at the hands of the Florentines for his perfidy and evil counsels. The injury which after this victory Cas-

1325. truccio inflicted on the Florentines in capturing, burning, plundering, and destroying, is not to be told. For many months he rode and ravaged where he listed with none to oppose him, for the Florentines, after so great a disaster, could think of nothing but how to save their city.

§ 30. They were not indeed brought so low that they could not raise large supplies of money, hire troops, and summon friends to their assistance, but none of these measures availing to check a foe so powerful, they were at last driven to accept Charles, Duke of Calabria, son to King Robert, for their Lord, if they would have him come to defend them. For the princes of that line, being accustomed to be masters in Florence, desired her obedience rather than her friend-
1326. ship. Charles, who was then occupied with the Sicilian wars, could not come in person to assume the Lordship, but sent Walter, Duke of Athens, by birth a Frenchman, to represent him, who, taking over the city as his vicar, appointed Magistrates at his own discretion. So modest, however, was his bearing, and so well did he disguise his real disposition, that he was loved by every one. When the wars in Sicily were ended, Charles himself came to Florence with a thousand of his knights and made his entry there in July 1326. His arrival put a stop to the unrestrained pillage of the Florentine territory by Castruccio; but the credit he gained outside the city, he lost within, where wrongs no longer inflicted by enemies had now to be endured from friends. Nothing could be done by the Signory without permission from the Duke, who in the space of a single year wrung from the city four

hundred thousand florins, though under the agreement made with him, not more than two hundred thousand at most were due. Such were the burdens which he, or his father, every day laid on Florence.

To these grievances, fresh fears and new foes were ^{1327.} added. For so alarmed were the Ghibellines of Lombardy by the coming of Charles into Tuscany, that Galeazzo Visconti, and others of the Lombard Despots, by money and promises induced Lewis of Bavaria, who against the desire of the Pope had been elected Emperor, to come into Italy. He came accordingly to Lombardy, whence he passed into Tuscany, and with the help of Castruccio made himself Lord of Pisa. From Pisa, after replenishing his coffers, he proceeded towards Rome. This obliged Charles, who feared for the safety of Naples, to quit Florence, where he left Messer Filippo of Sanguineto as his deputy. After the departure of the Emperor, Castruccio assumed the Lordship of Pisa, and on the ^{1328.} Florentines getting possession of Pistoia by an arrangement with the citizens, he laid siege to it, and prosecuted his attack with such vigour and tenacity, that although the Florentines made repeated efforts to relieve the town, at one time assailing his camp, at another laying waste his country, neither by force nor by stratagem could they turn him from his purpose; so set was he on chastising the rebels of Pistoia, and baffling their Florentine allies. Pistoia, accordingly, was compelled to receive him back as its Lord. But this success, while it gained him extraordinary reputation, was attended by so much hardship and fatigue that he died on his return to Lucca. And since Fortune seldom fails to link one good or evil with

1328. another, it happened that at this very time Charles, Duke of Calabria and Lord of Florence, died at Naples; so that within a brief period the Florentines, contrary to their expectation, were freed from their fears of the one, and from the oppressions of the other. Thus liberated they applied themselves to reform their Government, and doing away with the entire system of the old Councils, instituted two new, one consisting of three hundred citizens chosen from the Commons only, the other of two hundred and fifty, chosen alike from Commons and Nobles. The former of these Councils was named the Council of the People; the other, the Common Council.

§ 31. On reaching Rome the Emperor created an Antipope, and carried out many measures hostile to the Church; but failing to effect many others, he at last departed in discredit and came again to Pisa. Here, either to show their contempt, or because their pay was in arrear, eight hundred of his German horsemen mutinied, and entrenched themselves at Montecchiaro, which stands above Ceruglio. On the Emperor leaving Pisa for Lombardy, the mutineers seized on Lucca, driving out Francesco Castracani, who had been left there by the Emperor; and, to turn their acquisition to profit, offered the town to the Florentines for eighty thousand florins, an offer which, on the advice of Messer Simone dellà Tosa, the Florentines declined. This course would have been most salutary for our city had the citizens adhered to it, but as they changed their mind soon after, it cost them dear. For whereas they might at first have had the town at a low price and yet would not, afterwards, when they

desired to possess it, and were ready to pay a much greater price, they could not have it, whence followed repeated changes in the Government most disastrous to Florence. Rejected by the Florentines, Lucca was ^{1329.} bought for thirty thousand florins by Messer Gherardino Spinola of Genoa; and as men are always more given to covet what they cannot have than to take what is within their reach, no sooner did the citizens of Florence learn that the city had been sold to Messer Gherardino, and for a trifling sum, than they were fired with a passion to possess it; reproaching both themselves for not having bought, and him who had dissuaded them from buying; and to have by force what they would not take at a price, they sent troops to ravage and lay waste the lands of Lucca. Meanwhile the Emperor had left Italy, and the Antipope had been sent by the Pisans a prisoner to France.

From the death of Castruccio, which occurred in the year 1328, down to the year 1340, the Florentines, remaining undisturbed at home, gave their whole attention to their affairs abroad, taking part in many wars, both in Lombardy in connection with the coming of King John of Bohemia, and in Tuscany on the score of Lucca. Moreover, they adorned their city with new buildings, among others with the bell-tower of Santa Reparata, designed by Giotto, the most famous painter of those times. And because in the year 1333 the waters of the Arno had flooded various districts of the city to a depth of over twelve cubits, whereby some of the bridges and many public buildings were swept away, they restored what had been destroyed with much diligence and at great cost.

1340. § 32. With the year 1340 came new causes for change. The ruling citizens had two devices for maintaining and extending their authority: first, by restricting the imbursements for the magistracies, so that these might always fall either to themselves or to their friends; secondly, by taking a chief part in the election of the Rectors, so that they could always count on having decisions in their favour. Such importance indeed did they attach to this last point that sometimes, not satisfied with the two ordinary Rectors, they brought in a third. Thus, at the time I now speak of, they had irregularly conferred unlimited authority over the citizens on Messer Jacopo Gabrielli of Gubbio, with the title of *Captain of the Guard*, who to please those in power wrought daily every kind of iniquity. Among others whom he wronged were Messer Piero de' Bardi and Messer Bardo Frescobaldi, neither of whom, as men of high birth and haughty spirit, could bear to be so treated by a foreigner for the satisfaction of a few powerful citizens. Wherefore, to be avenged, they conspired against Messer Jacopo and his patrons. In this conspiracy many Noble families, together with others of the Commons to whom the tyranny of their rulers was hateful, took part. The plan settled was for each of the conspirators to assemble a number of armed men in his house, and on the morning after the feast of All Saints, when every one would be in church praying for the dead, to make their attack, and after killing the Captain of the Guard and the chief among the ruling citizens, to re-establish the Government under new magistrates and with new ordinances. But since dangerous designs commend themselves less the longer they are meditated

over, conspiracies requiring time for their execution ^{1340.} are always discovered. One of the conspirators, Andrea de' Bardi, on further reflection, was more moved by fear of punishment than by hopes of vengeance, and revealed the plot to his brother-in-law, Jacopo Alberti. Jacopo informed the Priors, and they the officers of the Bargello. And because the case was urgent, All Saints' Day being close at hand, many citizens assembled in the Palace of the Signory, and deeming delay dangerous, called upon the Signors to sound the alarm bell and summon the people to arms. Taldo Valori and Francesco Salviati, the former of whom was Standard-bearer, the latter one of the Priors, being kinsmen of the Bardi, opposed this demand, declaring that it was not desirable to call the people to arms on every trifling occasion, since no good ever came of putting uncontrolled authority into the hands of the mob. Riots, they said, were easy to raise, but hard to quell; the wise course therefore was first to ascertain what offence had really been committed and then punish it by due course of law, and not upon a mere statement to bring ruin on Florence by tumultuary measures for its correction. None listened to this advice, and the Signory was compelled by threatening looks and insulting words to order the alarm to be sounded; whereupon the whole people rushed in arms to the Piazza. The Bardi and Frescobaldi finding their plans discovered, to conquer with glory or die without disgrace, likewise armed themselves, and hoping to be able to defend the district of the city beyond the river where their houses lay, posted themselves on the bridges, and there awaited the reinforcements they looked for from the Nobles

1340. of the surrounding country and other friends. But their plan of defence was baffled by certain of the Commons whose dwellings also lay in that quarter of the town, who armed in support of the Signory. Seeing themselves thus hemmed in, the conspirators withdrew from the bridges and retired to the street in which the Bardi had their houses, as more secure than any other, and this they stoutly defended.

Meanwhile Messer Jacopo of Gubbio, who knew that the whole conspiracy was directed against him, and who feared for his life, remained stupefied and terror-stricken in the midst of his armed retainers near the Palace of the Signory. The other Rectors, however, as they had been less in fault, so showed greater spirit, more especially the Podestà, Messer Maffeo da Ponte Caradi, who, crossing the Rubaconte Bridge and hurrying to the street where the combat raged, fearlessly threw himself among the swords of the Bardi, making signs that he would speak with them. The reverence due to his station, his integrity, and other great qualities at once caused them to stay their weapons and listen to what he had to say. In grave and temperate words he rebuked their conspiracy, showed them the danger they ran unless they yielded to the popular outburst, held out hopes of their being afterwards heard and leniently judged, and promised to do what he could to have their grievances favourably considered. Thereafter, returning to the Palace, he besought the Signory not to press for a victory at the cost of the blood of fellow-citizens, nor condemn them unheard. And so movingly did he plead that leave was given to the Bardi and Frescobaldi to quit the city with their friends, and retire unmolested to

their castles. After their departure, and when the people had laid aside their weapons, the Signory took proceedings against those only of the two families who had actually taken arms; but in order to reduce the power of the Bardi they bought from them their strongholds of Mangona and Vernia, and passed a law that no citizen should possess a castle within twenty miles of Florence. A few months later Stiatta Frescobaldi was beheaded, and many others of his family declared rebels. ^{1341.}

It was not, however, enough for the governing faction to have thus vanquished and crushed the Bardi and the Frescobaldi; since it almost always happens that the more authority men get, the worse use they make of it and the more insolent they grow. Accordingly, though before there had been but one Captain of the Guard to afflict the city, a second with the widest powers was now appointed for the surrounding country, so that no one whom the rulers suspected could be safe whether in Florence or out of it. By this measure all the Nobles were roused to such wrath that they were ready to sell the city, and themselves with it, to be revenged. Waiting their opportunity, it failed not to arrive, and they made the most of it.

§ 33. During the troubles prevailing in Tuscany and Lombardy the city of Lucca had come under the dominion of Mastino della Scala, Lord of Verona, who though he had engaged to hand it over to the Florentines had not done so, thinking that, being master of Parma, he could easily keep it, and making no account of his plighted faith. Wherefore to punish him, the Florentines joined with the Venetians, and

1341. attacked him so vigorously that he well-nigh lost the whole of his territories. But beyond the satisfaction of chastising Mastino, the Florentines drew no advantage from this war. For the Venetians, as all will do who form alliances with others weaker than themselves, on getting possession of Treviso and Vicenza, without a thought for the interests of the Florentines, concluded a peace. But soon after, when the Visconti Lords of Milan took Parma from him, Mastino, thinking himself thereby disabled from holding Lucca longer, decided to sell it. Both the Florentines and the Pisans desired to buy, but the latter, seeing in the course of the negotiations that the others, as being richer, were likely to get it, resorted to force, and with the support of the Visconti proceeded to besiege it. Nevertheless the Florentines did not draw back from the purchase, but settled terms with Mastino, and after paying him part of the price in money, and giving him hostages for the balance, sent Naddo Rucellai, Giovanni, son of Bernardino de' Medici, and Rosso, son of Ricciardo de' Ricci, to take possession, who, forcing their way into Lucca, had it consigned to them by Mastino's agents. The Pisans, however, persisted in their attempt, and spared no effort to take the town, while the Florentines on their part sought to raise the siege. After a prolonged struggle, the Florentines were driven off with loss both of money and reputation; and the Pisans became Lords of Lucca. This reverse, as always happens in like cases, enraged the people of Florence against their rulers, whom they reviled openly in the streets and market-places, denouncing their niggardliness and short-sighted counsels.

At the beginning of this war its administration had

been committed to twenty citizens, who had chosen ^{1342.} Messer Malatesta of Rimini to act as Captain. But he having shown little spirit and less skill in his command, application for help was made by the Florentines to King Robert of Naples, who sent them Walter, Duke of Athens; and, since it was the will of Heaven to prepare the way for impending calamities, he arrived in Florence at the very time when the Lucca expedition had completely broken down. The Twenty seeing the temper of the people, thought by choosing a new Captain to inspire them with fresh hopes, and at the same time lessen, if not remove, the causes that brought blame upon themselves. Wherefore that the people might regard the Duke with reverence, and he defend them with ampler authority, they first appointed him Protector (*Conservatore*), and afterwards Captain-General of their forces. To the Nobles who, for the reasons already stated, lived in perpetual discontent, and many of whom had known Walter when he formerly governed Florence on behalf of Duke Charles, it seemed that the time was now come for quenching the flames of their resentment in the ruin of their country. For they saw no way to tame the people who had afflicted them save by ranging themselves under a Prince who, knowing the worth of the one class and the insolence of the other, would deal with each according to its deserts. Moreover, they entertained the hope that when by their means the Duke had attained the Princedom, their services would be rewarded. Wherefore they were constantly closeted with him, urging him to assume supreme authority, and tendering him all the assistance in their power. To the authority and instance of the Nobles were

1342. joined the persuasions of certain families of the Commons, to wit, the Peruzzi, Acciaiuoli, Antellesi, and Buonaccorsi, who, loaded with debts which they could not meet from their own resources, were eager to discharge them at the expense of others, and emancipate themselves from their creditors by enslaving their country. These counsels kindled the ambitious spirit of the Duke to still greater eagerness for power. At the same time, to have credit with the people for strict justice and integrity, and thereby increase his popularity, he prosecuted those who had conducted the Lucca war, causing Messer Giovanni de' Medici, Naddo de' Rucellai, and Guglielmo Altoviti to be put to death, and fining or banishing many others.

§ 34. These severities struck all citizens of the middle class with dismay, and gave satisfaction only to the Grandees and to the rabble; to the latter because it is their nature to rejoice at mischief, to the former because they saw themselves thereby avenged for the many wrongs they had suffered at the hands of the Commons. Accordingly, when the Duke passed through the streets, the multitude applauded him loudly for his honest heart, and openly besought him to search into and punish the delinquencies of the ruling citizens. Thus the authority of the Twenty waned, while the Duke's reputation grew great, and the fear of him still greater, so that all men to testify their devotion had the ducal arms blazoned on their houses; nor lacked he anything of the Prince save the name. Believing there was nothing he might not now safely attempt, he gave the Signory to understand that he thought it necessary for the welfare of the city that

its Lordship should be conferred on him ; and since ^{1342.} the whole city was agreed as to this, that they too should agree. The Priors, though they had long foreseen the overthrow of freedom, were all of them sorely troubled by this demand ; but in spite of the risk which they knew they ran, not to be wanting to their country, they boldly refused their consent.

As a further sign of his piety and kindly disposition the Duke had chosen for his residence the Convent of the Minor Friars of Santa Croce ; and now desiring to carry out his sinister designs, he caused public proclamation to be made that on the following morning the whole people should assemble before him in the Piazza which lies in front of the Convent. This proclamation alarmed the Priors even more than his former demand had done ; but after conferring with such of the citizens as they knew to be lovers of their country and of its freedom, they decided that as they were too weak to resist the Duke by force, their only remedy was to use entreaty, and try whether they could not move him by their prayers either to abandon his purpose, or at least relax the severity of his rule. Certain of the Priors accordingly waited on him, and one of them spoke to him to this effect :

‘ We come to you, my Lord, moved in the first place by what you have asked of us, and also by the orders issued by you for assembling the people. For to us it seems clear that you are seeking to obtain by irregular means what we have refused to concede you in a way that would be regular. We have no mind to oppose your designs by force, but only to show you how heavy a burden you are taking upon you, how perilous the path on which you are entering ;

1342. so that always hereafter you may remember our advice, as well as the advice of those who, not for your advantage but to wreak their own resentment, give you other counsels. You are trying to enslave a city that has always lived free; for the Lordship which in time past we conceded to the Royal House of Naples was given as to a friend and not as to a master. Have you reflected what the mere name of liberty imports in a city like ours, and that there is a virtue in it which no violence can subdue, no time diminish, no benefits outweigh? Consider, my Lord, what forces will be needed to keep so great a city in thralldom. Those foreign arms which you can always command will not suffice; on native arms you can never rely; for those who are your friends now, and who incite you to take this course, so soon as they have used your authority to crush their enemies, will seek how they may get rid of you and make themselves supreme. The populace in whom you trust changes with every trifling circumstance, so that in a little while you may look to have the whole city for your enemy; which will be the ruin both of it and you. Against this danger you can find no safeguard; for while those Lords who have but few enemies, whom they can easily dispose of by death or exile, may make their power secure, there can be no security where hatred is universal, since you know not from what quarter you may be attacked, and, distrusting every man, can never rid yourself of any. Nay, the attempt to do so would only land you in further dangers, since those who are left would be roused to fiercer hatred, and be all the readier for revenge. Most certain is it that time cannot quench the passion for freedom, for often we

hear of it being revived in a city even by those who had never themselves enjoyed it, who loved it only from the memory left of it by their fathers, and yet when they recovered it held to it stubbornly and at all hazards. Nay, even though their fathers had never transmitted to them this memory, the public palaces, the seats of the magistracy, the standards of the free companies would all recall it; for these are things that must needs be known to the citizens, and be remembered by them with infinite regret. What is it you can do that will outweigh the delights of freedom, and make men cease from longing to revert to their old condition? Though you were to spread the Florentine dominion over all Tuscany, and return day after day to this city triumphant over her enemies, all would be in vain. For all this glory would be yours not hers, and her citizens would gain not subjects but fellow-slaves, the sight of whom would aggravate their own servitude. Though your life were pure, your bearing kindly, your judgments just, all this would not avail to make you loved, and you deceive yourself if you think otherwise; for to him who is used to live untrammelled every chain seems heavy, and every bond chafes. But it were impossible for a government of violence to have a good Prince for its head, for either he must grow to resemble his government, or else be speedily destroyed by it. Be persuaded therefore that you must either hold this city by sheer force, in which case fortresses, guards, and foreign allies are commonly of little avail, or you must content yourself with that measure of authority which we have already accorded. This last course we beseech you to take, reminding you that the only enduring ascendancy is that which

1342. is willingly accepted. Beware then, lest blinded by a little ambition you be led to a point where, unable either to stop short or to climb higher, you must needs fall, to your own great hurt and ours.'

§ 35. These words in no way moved the obdurate heart of the Duke, who answered that he had no intention to deprive the city of freedom, but rather to restore it; for only divided cities were slaves, and only united cities free; and if under his rule Florence were saved from her factions, rivalries, and feuds, he would be re-establishing freedom, not destroying it. And since it was no ambition of his own, but the prayers of many citizens that had led him to assume this task, the Signory would do well to be content with what contented others. As for the risks he ran in making this attempt, he took no thought of them, since it were base to abandon good through fear of ill, and cowardly to withdraw from a noble enterprise because the issue was doubtful. He hoped, however, so to conduct himself, that in a short time they would see that they had feared him too much, and trusted him too little.

The Priors, seeing that no other course was left them, agreed that on the following morning the people should assemble in the Piazza of the Signory, and that by their authority the Lordship of the city should be conferred upon the Duke for a year, on the same terms on which it had been given to Charles, Duke of Calabria. Accordingly, on the eighth day of September of the year 1342, the Duke, attended by Messer Giovanni della Tosa with all his consorts, and by many citizens besides, came to the Piazza, and along with the magistrates

ascended the platform at the foot of the Palace of the Signory, known to Florentines as the *Ringhiera*, whence were read aloud to the people the conditions agreed on between the Priors and the Duke. But when that part of the agreement which limited the Duke's authority to one year came to be recited, the people cried aloud, '*For life, for life!*' and on Messer Francesco Rustichelli, one of the Priors, attempting to speak and to still the tumult, his words were drowned by clamour, so that by popular acclaim the Duke was chosen Lord, not for one year only, but in perpetuity. He was then taken and borne aloft through the Piazza by the crowd, who shouted his name.

It is customary for the officer in command of the Palace Guard to remain in the Palace with barred doors when the Signory is absent. But Rinieri di Giotto, who at this time filled the office, having been corrupted by the Duke's friends, without waiting to be forced, allowed the Duke to enter; and while the Priors betook themselves downcast and discredited to their houses, the Palace was pillaged by the Duke's retainers, the standard of the people torn to shreds, and the ducal ensign displayed over the Palace, to the unspeakable grief and vexation of all good men, and the extreme delight of those who, either through ignorance or malignity, were consenting to it.

§ 36. The Duke having thus possessed himself of the Lordship of Florence, desiring to destroy the prestige of those who hitherto had been the guardians of her freedom, forbade the Priors to assemble in the Palace, assigning them a private dwelling-house in which to hold their meetings. From the Standard-

1342. bearers of the Companies of the People he took their banners, repealed the Ordinances of Justice passed against the Grandees, released the prisoners from the jails, recalled the Bardi and Frescobaldi from exile, allowed no citizen to carry arms, and, more securely to guard himself from those within the city, made friends of those without. To which end he conferred many favours on the inhabitants of Arezzo and of all the other cities subject to the Florentines, and concluded a peace with the Pisans, though made Lord for the express purpose of carrying on war against them. He confiscated the bonds issued to those merchants who during the Lucca war had lent money to the Republic, increased old taxes and imposed new, and stripping the Signory of all authority appointed as his Rectors Messer Baglioni of Perugia, and Messer Guglielmo of Assisi, with whom only and with Messer Cerrettieri Bisdomini he took counsel. The fines he imposed upon the citizens were grievous, his judgments unjust, the affability and integrity he had feigned at first were transformed to pride and cruelty. Many of the Grandees and many of the foremost among the Commons were banished, or put to death, or tortured in unheard-of ways; and that his rule outside the walls of Florence might correspond to that within, he appointed six Rectors for the country districts, who oppressed and plundered the peasantry. Though he had been supported by the Grandees, many of whom he had recalled from exile, he nevertheless regarded them with distrust, since he could not persuade himself that the high spirit proper to noble birth could ever be reconciled to his supremacy. He therefore set himself to conciliate those of the baser sort, with

whose favour, and with the support of his foreign mercenaries, he thought to maintain his tyranny.

Accordingly when the month of May came round, ^{1343.} at which season the Florentines are wont to keep holiday, he made the populace and those belonging to the lesser Guilds be enrolled in several Companies. These he dignified with sounding titles, and presented with banners and gifts of money; after which one band of them marched through the streets in festival procession, while another was drawn up with great pomp and magnificence to receive them. When tidings of his new Lordship spread, many persons of French birth came to pay him court, on all of whom, as being the men he most trusted, he bestowed preferments; so that in a short time Florence not only became subject to the French, but even adopted their usages and dress. For both men and women, regardless of their former homely fashion of living, imitated the foreigners without shame. But worst of all was the violence used both by the Duke and his followers to all women alike.

On seeing the dignity of their government overthrown, their ordinances subverted, their laws violated, all honesty corrupted, all modesty extinguished, the citizens of Florence were filled with resentment, and being themselves strangers to every sort of princely pomp, could not endure the sight of this man surrounded by his armed guards on foot or horseback. And yet the more plainly they saw their shame, the more they found themselves constrained to pay deference to him whom they so bitterly hated. To hatred was added fear on witnessing his frequent resort to bloodshed, and the endless exactions whereby the city was impoverished and devoured. These sentiments

1343. were known to and dreaded by the Duke, who yet would have every one believe that he thought himself beloved. Whence it came that when Matteo di Morozzo, whether to please the Duke, or to extricate himself from danger, revealed to him that the family of the Medici, with certain others, were conspiring against him, he not only made no inquiry into the matter, but put the informer to a miserable death; thereby deterring others who might have warned him for his safety, and encouraging all who might seek his downfall. On the other hand, when Bettone Cini spoke against the imposts that were being laid on the citizens, the Duke caused his tongue to be cut out in so cruel a fashion that he died in consequence. This atrocity redoubled the fury of the citizens, and their hatred of the Duke; for being accustomed to do and to discuss everything with all freedom, they could not bear to have their mouths shut as well as their hands tied. The hatred and resentment thus excited at last reached such a pitch as must have stirred not the Florentines only, who if they know not how to preserve their freedom yet cannot endure servitude, but even the most slavish people with a desire to regain their liberty. Many citizens, therefore, and of all ranks, resolved to risk their lives in an effort to be free. Three conspiracies were accordingly set on foot by the three orders of the citizens—that is to say, by the Grandees, the great Commoners, and the Artisans, the first of whom, besides general grounds for discontent, were disgusted at not having recovered their authority; the second at being deprived of theirs; the third at finding the profits of their handicraft diminish.

The Archbishop of Florence, Messer Agnolo Acci-

aiuoli, who at first had extolled in his sermons the actions of the Duke and thereby obtained for him much favour with the populace, when he saw him made Lord, and recognised his tyrannical methods and bearing, seemed to himself to have betrayed his country; and thinking his only way to make atonement was to salve the wound with the hand that had inflicted it, put himself at the head of the first of the three conspiracies. In this were engaged the Bardi, Rossi, Frescobaldi, Scali, Altoviti, Magalotti, Strozzi, and Mancini. The chiefs of the second conspiracy were Messer Manno and Messer Corso Donati, with whom were joined the Pazzi, Cavicciuli, Cerchi, and Albizi. Of the third conspiracy Antonio Adimari was the head, and with him were the Medici, Bordoni, Rucellai, and Aldobrandini. The conspirators had planned to slay the Duke in the house of the Albizi, whither he was to have come on the feast of St. John to witness the horse-races. But as he did not come, this scheme failed. Their next proposal was to set upon him as he walked through the streets. It was thought, however, that this plan would be difficult of execution, as the Duke always went well armed and well attended, and varied his route from day to day, so that they could never be sure where to find him. Another proposal was to kill him in the Council Chamber. But it was seen that there, even should they compass his death, they would be left in the hands of his retainers. While these various plans were being discussed, Antonio Adimari, in inviting certain Sieneſe friends of his to assist him with men, allowed the secret to escape by naming some who were in the conspiracy, and declaring that the whole city was ready to throw off the yoke.

1343. Whereupon one of the Siense spoke of the matter to Messer Francesco Brunelleschi, not meaning to betray confidence, but believing that he too was in the plot. But Messer Francesco, either fearing for himself, or out of hatred to the others, imparted the whole affair to the Duke, who forthwith caused Pagolo del Marzeca and Simone of Monterappoli to be seized, and they revealing to him the number and quality of the conspirators, filled him with alarm. After advising with his Council, it was decided that it would be better to cite than to arrest those implicated; since if they fled the Duke could easily secure himself against them by proclaiming them outlaws. Antonio Adimari was accordingly summoned to appear. Relying on the fidelity of his companions he at once came forward, and was straightway thrown into prison. The Duke was now advised by Messer Francesco Brunelleschi and Messer Ugucione Buondelmonti to make an armed raid through the city, slaying all who fell into his hands. But thinking his forces too few to contend with so many enemies, he rejected this proposal, and resorted to another device, whereby, if it succeeded, he hoped to rid himself of his adversaries and increase his own strength. It had been his wont to invite the citizens to advise with him on various matters coming before him. Wherefore after calling in those of his soldiers who were quartered in the country, he made out a list of three hundred citizens whom he ordered his messengers to summon, pretending that he wished to consult them, but designing when all were assembled to dispose of them either by death or imprisonment. But the arrest of Antonio Adimari and the recall of the soldiers, which could not be kept secret, so alarmed

the citizens, more especially those privy to the plot, ^{1343.} that the bolder among them refused to obey; and as on reading the list each man learned who else were implicated, they encouraged one another to resist in arms, since it was better to die like men sword in hand, than be led like beasts to the shambles. In a very short time, therefore, those concerned in each of the three conspiracies mutually disclosed themselves, and arranged that on the following day, the 26th of July 1343, they should first raise a riot in the Old Market, and thereafter appeal to arms, and call on the people to free themselves.

§ 37. Next day at stroke of noon, all, as had been arranged, were in readiness, and the cry of '*Liberty*' being raised, the whole city ran to arms, every man mustering in his own quarter of the town under standards bearing the device of the People, which the conspirators had secretly prepared. All the heads of families, whether Nobles or Commoners, being now assembled, swore fidelity to one another and death to the Duke, save only certain of the Buondelmonti and Cavalcanti, and the four families of the Commons who had helped to give him his Lordship, and who now, along with the butchers and others of the rabble, came into the Piazza in arms to support him.

On hearing the uproar the Duke secured the Palace, while his followers who were quartered in different districts of the town took horse to make for the Piazza, which, although they were repeatedly attacked on their way and many of them slain, about three hundred of them succeeded in reaching. The Duke was now in doubt whether to go forth and meet his enemies, or to

1343. defend himself within the Palace. Meanwhile, the Medici, the Cavicciuli, Rucellai, and other families who had been especially wronged by him, fearing that were he to get out, many who had taken arms against him might even yet declare in his favour, to prevent him from sallying forth and obtaining reinforcements advanced boldly and attacked the Piazza. On witnessing the confident bearing of these assailants, the families of the Commons who had sided with the Duke saw that his fortunes were changing, and, changing with them, joined the rest of their fellow-citizens. Messer Uguccone Buondelmonti, however, made his way into the Palace, while Messer Giannozzo Cavalcanti withdrew with certain of his kinsmen to the New Market, where, mounting on a bench, he exhorted the populace who were rushing armed to the Piazza to stand by the Duke, magnifying, so as to work on their fears, the great force at his disposal, and threatening them with death if they persisted in this attempt against their Lord. But when no one either followed him, or chastised him for his insolence, he saw that his efforts were in vain, and not to tempt Fortune further retired to his own house. Meanwhile a fierce conflict was being waged in the Piazza between the People and the Duke's men-at-arms, in which the latter, though helped from the Palace, were at last overpowered, some of them surrendering to their enemies, while others, dismounting from their horses, took refuge in the Palace. While this struggle went on in the Piazza, Messer Corso and Messer Amerigo Donati, heading the second band of conspirators, forced the prison gates, burned the records of the Podestà and of the Public Treasury, sacked the houses of the Rectors, and slew all of the Duke's followers they could lay hands on.

Seeing the Piazza lost, the whole city against him, ^{1343.} and all hope of help at an end, the Duke now tried to propitiate the people by a show of kindness, and causing his prisoners to be brought before him, with fair and friendly words gave them their freedom. He even made Antonio Adimari, though most unwilling to be so honoured, a knight, and removing his own standard from the tower of the Palace, replaced that of the People. All which things being done late, and when the time for them had gone by, stood him in little stead, as wrung from him by compulsion and against the grain. He remained, therefore, in great tribulation, shut up in the Palace; and perceiving at last that from grasping at too much he had lost all, began to fear that within a few days he must die of starvation or by the sword.

To give their Government a settled form, the citizens now met in the Church of Santa Reparata, where they chose fourteen of their number, half from the Nobility and half from the Commons, to exercise in conjunction with the Bishop the amplest authority in reforming the institutions of the city. They likewise chose six other citizens to discharge the duties of Podestà till such time as a new Podestà should be elected.

Many strangers were now come to Florence to the aid of the citizens, among others six envoys from Siena, men much respected in their own country. These sought to make terms between the People and the Duke. But the People would listen to no proposals unless Messer Guglielmo of Assisi, with his son, and Messer Cerrettieri Bisdomini, were given up to them. To this at first the Duke would not consent, but in the end yielded to the threats of those shut up along with him.

1343. There can be no question that a fiercer temper is displayed, and worse cruelties inflicted, on the recovery of freedom than in its defence. Messer Guglielmo and his son stood surrounded by countless enemies. The lad had not yet attained his eighteenth year; yet neither his tender age, his good looks, nor his innocence could save him from the ruthless fury of the mob, who fell upon both son and father—those who could not reach them while living, mutilating them when dead, and, not content to hack them with their swords, rending them with their hands and teeth; for after hearing their cries, seeing their wounds, and touching their torn flesh, that every sense might be sated with vengeance they must needs also taste its flavour. This frenzy, though disastrous to its objects, was the salvation of Messer Cerrettieri; for the populace intent on its cruelties to Guglielmo and his son, forgot all about the other, who, no further inquiry being made for him, remained within the Palace; whence he was rescued at nightfall by certain of his friends and kinsmen.

The mob having glutted its fury with the blood of its victims, it was now arranged that the Duke, on renouncing all rights over Florence, and engaging to confirm this renunciation on reaching the Casentino outside the Florentine confines, might depart in safety with all his followers and effects. All which being settled he quitted Florence on the sixth day of August, accompanied by many of the citizens. On reaching the Casentino, he ratified his renunciation, though with much reluctance; nor would he have kept faith had not Count Simone threatened to carry him back to Florence.

This Duke, as his actions revealed, was covetous ¹³⁴³ and cruel, hard to approach, haughty in his replies. Desiring servility and not goodwill, he sought to be feared rather than loved. Low in stature, of swarthy complexion, and with a long thin beard, his person was no less odious than his character; so that in every way he was detestable. Thus it came that within ten months' time he lost by his own ill conduct the Lordship which the ill counsels of others had conceded to him.

§ 38. The events which had taken place in Florence inspired all her subject towns with hopes of regaining their independence; and Arezzo, Castiglione, Pistoia, Volterra, Colle, and San Gimignano all rebelled, so that at the same moment the city was freed from her tyrant and stripped of her territories; for in recovering her own liberty she had taught her subjects how to recover theirs. In dealing with the lost dependencies, the Commission of the Fourteen and the Bishop thought it wiser to soothe the rebels by gentle methods than to estrange them still further by declaring war. Wherefore feigning to be as well pleased with the freedom of the revolted towns as with their own, they sent envoys to Arezzo to renounce the superiority which the Florentines had exercised over that city, and to conclude a treaty with its citizens, so that if they could not be retained as subjects they might be secured as friends. With the other towns also they made the best terms they could, always keeping on a friendly footing with them, that they, though maintaining their freedom, might still as freemen lend aid to Florence. The course thus prudently taken had

1343. the happiest results, for not many years passed before Arezzo re-submitted herself to the Florentine supremacy, while the other towns returned to their allegiance within a few months. Thus very often we attain our ends sooner, and at less risk and cost, by not pressing them, than by pursuing them obstinately and with violence.

§ 39. Having thus arranged affairs without the city, the Fourteen next turned their attention to those within; and after much wrangling between Grandees and Commoners it was settled that the former should have a third share in the Signory, and a half share of all other public offices. The city, as has been already mentioned, had been divided into six districts (*Sestieri*), so that hitherto there had always been six Priors, one of each district. For although sometimes on an emergency twelve or thirteen were created, when the emergency was over the number of six was always reverted to. Now, however, it seemed desirable to make a reform in this matter, both because the *Sestieri* had been unequally defined, and because in order to give the Grandees their due share of offices it was necessary to increase the number of the Priors. Accordingly they divided the city into four districts (*Quartieri*), and for each district appointed three Priors. They did away with the Standard-bearer of Justice and with the Standard-bearers of the Companies of the People, and in place of the twelve Buonomini created eight Counsellors, four of each class.

The Government being re-established on this footing, the city might have been at rest had the Grandees been content to live with that self-restraint which free

institutions require. But their aim was to do exactly ^{1343.} the opposite. In private life they could brook no equals, in the Magistracies they must be masters, and every day brought with it some fresh instance of their insolence and pride. This gave offence to the Commons, who complained that for one tyrant got rid of they had now a thousand. Insolence on the one side and resentment on the other at last reached such a height that the leading Commoners made complaint to the Bishop of the offensive behaviour of the Grandees towards the Commons, and induced him to support a proposal that the former, while retaining their share of other offices, should give up the whole Signory to the latter. The Bishop was a well-meaning man, but easily swayed, now to one side, now to the other, as when at the instance of his kinsmen he at first favoured the Duke of Athens, and afterwards, on the advice of other citizens, joined in the conspiracy against him. While the Government was being reformed he had favoured the Grandees, but now, moved thereto by the representations of the popular leaders, he thought it right to side with the Commons; and imagining that he would find in others the same facility as in himself, looked to have the matter settled by consent. Wherefore convoking the Fourteen, whose authority had not yet expired, he strenuously urged them to make over the honours of the Signory exclusively to the Commons. This he said would secure the tranquillity of the city, whereas by a contrary course its ruin and their overthrow were assured. His proposal gave great offence to the Grandees, and Messer Ridolfo de' Bardi rebuked him roughly, telling him that he was a man little to be trusted, a fool to have befriended the Duke, a

1343. traitor to have expelled him, and wound up by saying that the honours which the Nobles had won at their peril, at their peril they would defend. And so in great wrath with the Bishop, he and his fellows went off and informed their consorts and all the families of the Nobility of what had passed.

The leading Commoners likewise imparted their designs to the others, and while the Grandees were gathering supporters to maintain their Signors, the People to be beforehand with them rushed in arms to the Palace, shouting out that it was their will that the Grandees should renounce the Signory. Thereupon there was a great tumult and uproar, and inasmuch as the Grandees when they saw the whole People in arms did not venture to take arms to oppose them, but remained every man in his own house, the Priors found themselves deserted. Those among them who were of the Commons tried at first to calm the People by declaring that their colleagues were discreet and worthy men; but this proving of no avail, they eventually, as the least dangerous course, sent them to their houses, which with much ado they reached in safety.

When the four Grandees who were of the Signory quitted the Palace, those other four who had been created Counsellors were also deprived of their office, and four Commoners appointed in their place. To the eight remaining Priors were joined a Standard-bearer of Justice, and sixteen Standard-bearers of the Companies of the People; while the Councils were so modified that the whole Government was brought under the control of the Commons.

§ 40. While these events were happening a great

dearth prevailed in Florence, so that now both the ^{1343.} Grandees and the lower class of Commoners were discontented, the former at the loss of their dignities, the latter from lack of food. This led Messer Andrea Strozzi to think he might overthrow the free institutions of the city. To which end he began to sell his grain at less than the market rate, and thus gathered large crowds round his doors. One morning he made bold to ride forth on horseback attended by some from this rabble, and, calling the People to arms, soon mustered over four thousand followers, with whom he marched to the Piazza of the Signory and demanded entrance to the Palace. But the Signory with threats and blows drove the rioters from the Piazza, and afterwards so terrified them with proclamations, that one by one they all slipped off to their own houses. Thus deserted, Messer Andrea fled, escaping with difficulty from the hands of the Magistrates. This was a foolhardy attempt, and ended as such attempts commonly do. Nevertheless it raised hopes in the minds of the Grandees that they might yet get the better of the People by violence, since it showed that the upper and lower ranks of the Commons were not in accord. Wherefore, not to lose the opportunity of recovering rightfully by force what force had wrongfully taken from them, they began to strengthen themselves in every way they could. Nay, so confident did they grow of victory as openly to provide themselves with arms, fortify their houses, and send, as far even as Lombardy, to their friends for aid. The Commons likewise, in conjunction with the Signory, prepared to defend themselves, and sought help from the citizens of Siena and Perugia. Reinforcements for both sides

1343. came in, and the whole city was in arms. The Grandees of hither Arno posted themselves at three points : at the houses of the Cavicciuli near San Giovanni ; at the houses of the Pazzi and Donati near San Pietro Maggiore, and at the houses of the Cavalcanti near the New Market. The Grandees of the other side Arno were in strength on the bridges, and in the streets leading to their own dwellings. The Nerli held the Carraia Bridge; the Frescobaldi and Manelli the Bridge of the Holy Trinity, while the Rossi and Bardi defended the Old Bridge and the Bridge of Rubaconte. The Commons, on their part, were arrayed under the Standard of Justice, and under the banners of the Companies of the People.

§ 41. Such being the state of matters, the Commons decided to attack at once. The first to advance were the Medici and the Rondinelli, who assailed the Cavicciuli on the side by which their houses are approached from the Piazza of San Giovanni. Here the combat was extremely fierce, the assailants being crushed by stones from the towers, while the defenders were wounded by cross-bow bolts from below. The struggle had lasted for three hours, the throng of assailants growing always greater, when the Cavicciuli, seeing themselves overpowered by numbers, and that no succour came to them, lost heart and gave themselves up to the Commons, who spared their houses and goods, but took from them their weapons, and ordered them to distribute themselves unarmed among the houses of those of their friends and kinsmen who ranked as Commoners. After this first success, a second attack was made on the Donati and Pazzi who, as they

were weaker than the others, were more easily vanquished. 1343. Of the Grandees on this side Arno, the Cavalcanti alone remained. These, however, were formidable both from their number and from the position of their houses. Nevertheless, on seeing all the Standards ranged against them, and learning that the others had been overpowered by three Standards only, they surrendered without making any great defence.

Three districts of the city were now in the hands of the Commons, one only was still held by the Grandees, but that the hardest to reduce, as well from the strength of its defenders as from its position ; for being guarded by the Arno, the bridges fortified as I have described had to be forced. The Old Bridge, which was the first attacked, was resolutely defended, and as its towers were armed, the roadway barricaded, and the barricades manned by the bravest of the Nobles, the Commons were repeatedly driven back with great loss. Seeing that here their efforts were fruitless, they next attempted to cross the river by the bridge of Rubaconte, when, encountering the same difficulties, they left four Standards to watch the two bridges, and with the rest attacked the bridge at the Carraia. Here the Nerli, though they made a gallant resistance, could not withstand the fury of their assailants, both because this bridge, having no towers to defend it, was weaker than the others, and because the Capponi, and other families of the Commons who lived near, joined in the attack. Thus, assailed on all sides, the Nerli abandoned their barricades and gave a passage to the Commons, who next disposed of the Rossi and the Frescobaldi ; whereupon all the families of the Commons on the south side of Arno united themselves with the victors. The

1343. Bardi now stood alone ; but undismayed by the overthrow of their companions, the combination of the Commons against them, and the failure of expected help, they chose rather to fall fighting, and see their houses burned and pillaged, than yield themselves to the mercy of their enemies. So stubbornly indeed did they defend themselves that again and again, in attempting to dislodge them from the Old Bridge and the Bridge of Rubaconte, their assailants were repulsed with great slaughter. In early times a road had been made leading from the Via Romana between the houses of the Pitti to the walls above the hill of San Giorgio. By this road the Commons sent six Standards with orders to assail the houses of the Bardi from the back, and it was this assault that made the Bardi lose heart, and gave the victory to the People. For those who were guarding the barricades in the streets, when they heard that their houses were being attacked, withdrew from the fight and ran to defend them. This allowed the barricades on the Old Bridge to be forced ; when the Bardi, routed on every side, fled for refuge to the Quaratesi, Panzanesi, and Mozzi, while the people of the baser sort, thirsting for plunder, stripped and pillaged their houses, razing and burning palaces and towers with such fury that the worst enemy of the Florentine name would have been ashamed of the savage destruction.

§ 42. The Grandees being thus vanquished, the Commons proceeded to reform the Government. And because there were three classes of citizens, upper, middle, and lower, it was ordained that the upper class should have two Magistrates in the Signory, while the

middle and lower should each have three. The 1343. Gonfalonier was to be chosen now from one class, now from another. All the Ordinances of Justice directed against the Grandees were revived; and to weaken them still further, many of them were dispersed among families of inferior rank. The overthrow of the Nobles was indeed so complete and crushing, that they never afterwards ventured to take arms against the People—nay, constantly grew meeker and more humble. Whence it came that Florence was not only left without arms of her own, but also lost her noble spirit.

After this outbreak the city maintained internal tranquillity down to the year 1353, during which time there befell the memorable pestilence, recorded with so 1348. much eloquence by Messer Giovanni Boccaccio, whereby there perished in Florence more than ninety-six thousand persons. During the same period the Florentines engaged in their first war with the Visconti, a war 1351-135 brought about by the ambition of the Archbishop who then was Lord of Milan. When this war was over, the internal feuds of the city recommenced; for although the nobility had been destroyed, Fortune was at no loss for means to kindle fresh divisions giving rise to new troubles.

BOOK III

A.D. 1353-1414

§ 1. THE grave enmities which naturally prevail between Nobles and Commons, originating in the desire of the former to command and the reluctance of the latter to obey, are the source of all the evils incident to a Republic; for from these opposed humours all the other elements that disturb a city are fed. These it was that kept Rome disunited; and these, if we may compare small things with great, have constantly divided Florence, though the results produced in the two cities have been different. For the dissensions which at first prevailed in Rome between Commons and Nobles were settled by argument, those that prevailed in Florence were decided by combat; those of Rome ended in the passing of a law, those in Florence in the exile or death of many citizens; those of Rome always added to the warlike spirit of her citizens, those of Florence utterly quenched it; and whereas the dissensions of Rome brought that city from equality among her citizens to the greatest inequality, those of Florence have reduced her from inequality to a marvellous equality. This diversity of results must be ascribed to the different ends which the two peoples had in view. For while the Commons of Rome sought only to share with the Nobles in the supreme honours

of the State, those of Florence strove to have the government entirely to themselves, without conceding to the Nobles any part in it. And because the aim of the Roman Commons was the more reasonable, the offence given to the Nobles was less intolerable, so that they yielded readily without coming to open violence, and after some wrangling agreed to the passing of a law which gave satisfaction to the Commons, yet preserved their own authority. On the other hand, because the aim of the Florentine Commons was wrongful and unjust, the Nobles made greater efforts to defend themselves, and these led to banishments and bloodshed. Moreover, the laws passed afterwards were not directed to the general good, but were wholly in the interest of the side that won. And whereas in Rome the Commons, on being admitted to share equally with the Nobles in the Magistracies, in military commands, and in all other offices of authority, became filled with the same spirit as their rivals, it resulted that from their successes the city grew always more valiant, and growing in valour grew also in power. But in Florence, when the Commons prevailed, the Nobles were excluded from the Magistracies, and seeking to recover them, were compelled in their conduct, character, and mode of living, not only to be, but to seem like the Commons. Hence the changes in armorial bearings, and in family names, to which the Nobles had to submit in order to pass as Commoners. In this way the high spirit and martial valour which had belonged to the Nobility were extinguished, and could not be rekindled among the Commons who never had them, so that Florence grew always more poor-spirited and abject. And thus, while in Rome the

valour of the citizens, being changed to pride, raised the city to a pitch of greatness which only a Prince could maintain, Florence, on the contrary, has been brought so low that a wise legislator might readily mould her to any form of government he pleased.) All which will in a measure be apparent on perusal of the preceding Book.

But now having set forth the origin of Florence, the rise of her freedom, and the causes of her divisions, and shown how the feuds between Nobles and Commons ended in the tyranny of the Duke of Athens and the overthrow of the Nobility, it remains that I record the disputes between the upper and lower ranks of the Commons and the various results that followed from them.

1353. § 2. The power of the Nobles quelled, and the war with the Archbishop of Milan ended, it might seem that no cause of quarrel was left in Florence. But the ill-fortune of our city, and its defective institutions, sowed seeds of enmity between the Houses of the Albizi and the Ricci, whereby Florence was no less divided than of old by the feuds of the Buondelmonti and Uberti, or later by those of the Donati and Cerchi. The Popes, while residing in France, and the Emperors, dwelling in Germany, had, to maintain their credit, from time to time sent among us many soldiers of different nationalities, so that at the date I speak of, English, German, and French mercenaries were all to be found in Italy. When the wars in which they served were ended, these men being left without employment, formed themselves into companies of free-lances and levied tribute from this or the other Prince.

In the year 1353, one of these companies came into Tuscany under the command of Fra Moriale, a native of Provence, whose advent greatly alarmed all the Tuscan towns, and not only caused the Florentines to hire troops at the public charge for their defence, but induced many of them, and among others the Albizi and the Ricci, to arm for their own safety. These two families were so fired with mutual jealousy, that the only thought of each was how to crush the other so as to remain supreme in the city. Hitherto they had not come to blows but disputed with one another in the Magistracies and Councils. The entire city, however, being now armed, it so happened that a quarrel broke out in the Old Market, whereupon, as will happen on such occasions, a crowd gathered. The tumult spreading, word was brought to the Ricci that the Albizi were attacking them, and to the Albizi that the Ricci were coming out to fight them. This threw the whole city into commotion, and the Magistrates had much ado to restrain the two Houses from joining in a fray, for which, though begun by chance and through no fault of theirs, they got the blame. This affair, though in itself of little moment, inflamed still further the hatred between the two Houses, and made each seek more diligently for supporters; but inasmuch as the citizens were now by the overthrow of the Grandees brought to such complete equality that the Magistrates were more regarded than formerly, they thought to maintain their quarrel, keeping within the law and avoiding private violence.

§ 3. I have already related how, after the victory of the first Charles, there was created a Magistracy of the

1354. Guelf Party, to which was given great authority over the Ghibellines. This authority in the course of time and changes, and in consequence of the new feuds and divisions of the city, had come to be so completely forgotten that many of the highest offices of the State had been filled by descendants of Ghibelline Houses. Now, however, Uguccone, the head of the Ricci family, sought to renew the old law against the Ghibellines, among whom the Albizi, as was commonly believed, were to be numbered, they having come at a very early date from Arezzo to live in Florence. By reviving this law Uguccone thought to deprive the Albizi of their offices, since it enacted that any descendant of a Ghibelline found exercising a magisterial office was to be punished. Uguccone's intention was seen through by Piero, son of Filippo degli Albizi, who, however, deemed it prudent to support the proposal, since by opposing it he would stand self-confessed as a Ghibelline. This law, therefore, revived in consequence of the rivalry of these two families, rather increased than lessened the reputation of Piero degli Albizi, and was the origin of much mischief. Nor indeed could any law be devised more hurtful to a Republic than one that resuscitated obsolete disabilities. Piero, however, by supporting this law, turned what his enemies had intended for his hindrance into a stepping-stone to greatness. For putting himself forward as leader in the new movement, he continually extended his authority, and became first favourite with the new Guelf Party. For as there were no Magistrates designated by the law to make inquiries as to who were Ghibellines, and the law itself had consequently little efficacy, he had it enacted that the Guelf Captains

should have authority to declare who actually were 1358. Ghibellines, and thereupon warn and admonish them not to take upon them any public office; which admonition should they disregard, they were to stand condemned. Whence it came that afterwards all who in Florence are deprived of the right to hold public office are spoken of as 'admonished' (*ammoniti*).

Growing bolder as time went on, the Guelf Captains began to admonish without distinction, not only those persons to whom the law applied, but any one whom, from whatever selfish or ambitious motive, they thought fit to disqualify; so that from the year 1357, when the 1357-8. law was passed, down to the year 1366, over two hundred citizens had already been admonished. By this means the Guelf Captains and their party grew extremely powerful, since every one, through fear of being admonished, paid court to them, and more especially to Piero degli Albizi, Lapo da Castiglionchio, and Carlo Strozzi, the heads of the party, whose arrogant behaviour, while it gave offence to many, gave double displeasure to the Ricci, who recognised that they were themselves the cause of the disorder whereby they saw the city ruined, and at the same time their enemies the Albizi, contrary to what had been intended, made most powerful.

§ 4. Wherefore Ugucione de' Ricci, coming to be 1366. of the Signory, and desiring to stay the mischief which he and his friends had begun, caused a new law to be passed by which three additional citizens, two of whom should belong to the lesser Guilds, were to be joined to the six Captains of the Guelf Party; by this law it was further provided that all who were declared

1366-71. to be Ghibellines must be certified as such by four-and-twenty Guelf citizens deputed to make inquiry. For a time this enactment greatly checked the power of the Captains, so that the practice of admonishing fell off, and few, if any, were admonished. Nevertheless, the Albizi and Ricci factions kept jealous watch on one another, and any league, enterprise, or policy which the one approved, the other opposed. On this uneasy footing things continued from the year 1366 down to 1371, at which time the Guelf Party again recovered strength.

In the family of the Buondelmonti was a certain knight known as Messer Benchi, who for his services in the war against the Pisans had been received among the Commons, and so made eligible for the Signory. But when he was expecting to sit as one of that body, a new law was passed that no Commoner who had been a Noble should hold this office. This enactment gave great offence to Messer Benchi, who joining with Piero degli Albizi, it was arranged between them to attack the lesser Guilds by admonitions, and so secure the entire government for themselves. Accordingly, supported by the favour in which Messer Benchi was held by the old Nobility, and Piero by a majority of the powerful Commoners, they revived the influence of the Guelf Party, and contrived, by the reforms they introduced into it, to obtain complete control over the Captains and the twenty-four Commissioners. Whereupon admonitions were resumed with even more boldness than at first, and the House of Albizi, as heading the party, continued to increase in power. Meanwhile the Ricci with their friends did what they could to frustrate the designs of their adversaries.

Thus all men lived in the utmost anxiety, every one fearing impending disaster.

§ 5. Wherefore, moved by love of their country, ^{1372.} many citizens met together in the Church of San Piero Scheraggio, and after fully discussing these disorders with one another, proceeded to the Signory, where he who had most authority among them spoke to this effect :—‘ Most reverend Signors, many of us hesitated to meet together by private arrangement though for a public end, thinking we might either be marked as presumptuous, or punished as ambitious ; but on reflecting that many citizens daily, and without scruple, assemble in private houses or under the arcades merely to further their own selfish schemes and not for any object of public utility, it appears to us that since those who thus meet for the ruin of the Republic have no fear, still less ought we, who assemble for the general interest and welfare, have cause to be afraid. As to what those others may think of us we care nothing, since they care nothing for what we think of them. It was the love we bear our country that first brought us together, and now brings us into your presence to speak of an evil which we see already grown very great, and which is constantly increasing in this Republic of ours, and to declare our readiness to aid you in suppressing it. In this attempt, difficult though it seem, you may well succeed if you are willing to lay aside all private considerations, and to use your authority supported by the public force.

‘ My Lords, the universal corruption of all the Italian cities has infected and continues to infect ours ; for from the time when Italy withdrew herself from the

authority of the Empire, her towns, for want of any controlling power to restrain them, have ordered their rule and government on a footing not of freedom, but of factious division. Hence spring all the other evils and disorders from which these cities suffer. And first of all, no friendship or fellowship is to be found among their citizens, unless it be a fellowship in wickedness directed against the city or against individuals. And because everywhere religion and the fear of God are extinguished, no oath or plighted faith is observed any longer than serves the purpose of those who pledge themselves; and none pledge themselves with the intention to keep faith, but only as a means to deceive more easily; for in proportion as fraud is rendered easier and safer, the greater praise and glory does it obtain. For which reason bad men are lauded for astuteness, while good men are despised as fools. And truly in the cities of Italy there is to be found gathered together all that can either corrupt, or be corrupted. The young are indolent, the old lascivious; everywhere, without distinction of age or sex, foul vices prevail, against which good laws supply no remedy, being counteracted by depraved habits. Hence the avarice we note among our citizens, and hence that ambition, not of true glory but of discreditable honours, which in their turn give rise to hatreds, jealousies, and dissensions, to feuds that bring with them death and exile, the oppression of the good, and the exaltation of the worthless. For while evil-doers will cleave to those men who stick at nothing to defend them or procure them honours, the good, confiding wholly in their innocence, perish without honour or defender. Whence also come the attachment to, and

the strength of, factions. For bad men join them from rapacity or ambition, good men from necessity. And worst of all is it to note how the movers and leaders of these factions will grace their aims and objects with venerable names ; for though all of them be sworn foes of true Freedom, it is always under the pretext of supporting a Government of the best, or a Government of the people, that they work her ruin. For the reward they seek from victory is not the honour of having set their city free, but the satisfaction of having got the better of their rivals, and usurped supremacy ; to which when they attain, there is nothing so rapacious, cruel, and unjust they will not venture to do. Hence laws and ordinances are passed, not in the public interest, but for private ends ; and hence war, and peace, and alliances are resolved on, not for the glory of the community, but for the advantage of a few.

‘ But if the other cities of Italy are replete with these disorders, ours beyond all the rest is stained by them ; for our laws, our statutes, and our civil ordinances are, and always have been, framed to accord not with free institutions but with the ambition of that faction which for the time has the upper hand. Whence it follows that no sooner has one faction been driven out and one division quelled, than a new one springs up. For in a city which chooses to be governed by factions rather than by laws, whenever a faction is left unopposed it must of necessity become divided against itself, since it cannot guard itself against those underhand methods which for its own safety it at first introduced. That this is true is plainly shown both by the ancient and the recent divisions of our city. When the

Ghibellines were overthrown, every one believed that afterwards the Guelfs would long continue prosperous and honoured. Yet very soon they split up into the factions of Bianchi and Neri. Nor yet when the Bianchi fell was our city safe from division. On the contrary, we have ever since been contending, at one time as to whether the exiles should be restored, at another in the quarrel of the Commons and the Grandees. And that others might possess what we ourselves could not or would not unite to keep, we surrendered our liberty first to King Robert, then to his brother, afterwards to his son, and finally to the Duke of Athens. But under no Government do we find repose, since we can neither agree to live in freedom, nor yet be content as slaves. Nay, so prone are our institutions to slide into divisions, that while yet living under allegiance to a King, we scrupled not to renounce that allegiance in favour of a base-born knave from Gubbio. Of the Duke of Athens, for the credit of our city, the less said the better, yet his cruel and despotic temper should have made us wiser, and taught us how we ought to live; yet no sooner was he expelled than we were again in arms, and continued to fight one another with more virulence and rancour than before, until our old Nobility was vanquished and surrendered itself at discretion to the Commons. At that time many believed that no occasion for faction or disorder could ever again arise in Florence, since they whose arrogance and intolerable ambition seemed to have been the cause of these feuds had been bridled. Now, however, we see from experience how fallible are men's opinions, how fallacious their judgments. For the arrogance and ambition of the Grandees has not been

extinguished, but only transferred to the Commons, who, as is the wont of ambitious men, are seeking to make themselves supreme in our Republic, and having no means to reach this supremacy save through discord, have divided the city anew, and are reviving the names of Guelf and Ghibelline, names that had died out; and well would it have been for us had they never again been heard of in this Republic!

‘To the end that in human affairs there may be nothing permanent or secure, it has been ordained by Heaven that in all Republics certain fatal families shall be born for their destruction; wherein our Republic beyond any other has abounded. For not one family only but many have afflicted her, as at first the Buondelmonti and the Uberti, then the Donati and the Cerchi, and now, forsooth, the Ricci and the Albizi disturb and divide her.

‘It is with no wish to dismay you that we recall those corrupt usages, those ancient and perpetual divisions of our city, but to remind you of their causes, to show that we remember them as well as you, and to declare to you that their example should not make you despair of quelling these which now prevail. For those old families were so powerful in themselves, and stood in such favour with Princes, that no civil ordinances or institutions had force to tame them. But now when the Empire no longer wields any authority over us, and the Pope is no longer feared, and when all Italy, and our own city with it, is brought to such equality that it can stand alone, the difficulty is much lessened; and this Republic of ours, though old instances might seem to show the contrary, is well able not merely to keep herself united, but also, should Your Lordships favour

the effort, to re-establish herself with good customs and with constitutional methods of government.

'To this endeavour we, moved simply by love for our city and by no selfish aim, urge and exhort you. Though great be her corruption, yet rid us for the present from the distemper that infects, the fury that devours, the poison that is destroying us, and impute old disorders not to the nature of men, but to the circumstances of the times, which being changed, it may be hoped that with better methods our city will enjoy a Fortune less unkind, whose malice may be overcome by prudence, by curbing the ambition of these factions, repealing the ordinances which foster them, and adopting such others as shall accord with true freedom and civil government. And be persuaded to do this now, and through the benign agency of the laws, lest by your delay others be driven to do it by force of arms.'

1372. § 6. Moved by what they of themselves already knew, as well as by the authority and exhortations of those who thus addressed them, the Signory gave authority to fifty-six citizens to devise measures for the public welfare. That a large body of men is better fitted to preserve than to originate good ordinances is a truth not to be denied. These fifty-six citizens turned their minds rather to putting an end to existing, than to removing the causes of future, factions, and consequently accomplished neither object. The causes of future factions they left untouched; while of the existing factions they made one stronger than the other, to the still greater detriment of the Republic. They disqualified three members of the Albizi and three

of the Ricci family, including Piero degli Albizi and Ugucione de' Ricci, for a term of three years from holding any Magistracy save of the Guelf Party; they prohibited all citizens from entering the Palace except at such times as the Magistrates were sitting, and passed a law under which any man who was assaulted, or obstructed in the enjoyment of his possessions, might proceed against the aggressor by laying a charge before the Council and have him declared a Grandee, and as such subject to the disabilities against that class provided. This enactment damped the courage of the Ricci faction and increased that of the Albizi; for though both houses were alike struck at, the Ricci were by far the greater sufferers; since, if Piero degli Albizi was shut out from the Palace of the Signory, the Palace of the Guelf Party, in which he exercised a paramount influence, remained open. So that if, heretofore, he and his adherents had been hot for admonishing, after this rebuff their ardour was redoubled. Nor were fresh causes wanting to stimulate their animosity.

§ 7. Gregory XI. now filled the Papal chair, and ^{1370-8.} living in Avignon governed Italy, as his predecessors had done, through Legates who, brimming over with avarice and pride, grievously oppressed many cities. One of these Legates, who happened at this time to be at Bologna, taking occasion from a dearth then prevailing in Florence, thought to make himself master of Tuscany; and in furtherance of this design not only withheld supplies of grain from being sent to the Florentines, but also, to destroy their hopes of future harvests, came in the early spring with a strong force ^{1375.} to attack them, in the expectation that, finding them

1375. disarmed and famished, he would easily subdue them. Wherein he might perhaps have succeeded had not his troops proved faithless and venal. For the Florentines, for want of better defence, by a payment of a hundred and thirty thousand florins; to his soldiers, induced them to abandon the enterprise. We may begin wars at our pleasure, but cannot at our pleasure end them. This war, originating in the ambition of the Legate, was continued through the resentment of the Florentines, who, entering into a league with Messer Bernabò and with all the cities adverse to the Church, appointed eight citizens to carry on hostilities, with authority to act without appeal, and to spend without rendering account.

Though Ugucione was now dead, this war against the Pope had the effect of resuscitating the Ricci faction, which, in opposition to that of the Albizi, had always favoured Messer Bernabò and thwarted the Church. It was still further strengthened by the circumstance that all the Eight were hostile to the Guelf Party. This led Piero degli Albizi, Messer Lapo da Castiglionchio, Carlo Strozzi, and the rest of that party to combine still more closely to injure their adversaries. Accordingly, while the Eight proceeded with the war, these others went on with their admonitions.

1378. The war lasted for three years, and only came to a close on the death of the Pope. It had been conducted with so much ability, and so entirely to the satisfaction of the whole community that the Eight, whose term of office was only for a year, had every year been continued in their posts; and although they had set at naught the Papal censures, had stripped the

churches of their treasures, and forcibly compelled the clergy to perform the offices of religion, they were commonly spoken of as *The Saints*. So much more did the citizens of these times value their country than their souls; showing the Church that as formerly they defended her as friends, so now they could wound her as enemies; for they caused the whole of Romagna, the March, and Perugia to revolt. 1378.

§ 8. And yet the Florentines, while waging war thus valiantly against the Pope, could not defend themselves against the Captains of the Guelf Party and their adherents, whose audacity was so stimulated by jealousy that, to say nothing of other noble citizens, even the Eight were not safe from their attacks; nay, so arrogantly did they bear themselves as to be more feared than the Signory itself, being approached with greater reverence, and their Palace more regarded than that of the Signors, so that no envoy came to Florence from a foreign state without letters to their Captains. On the death of Pope Gregory the city, though freed from foreign wars, was left in great internal agitation; for while the insolence of the Guelfs was intolerable, their opponents saw no way to put a stop to it. At last it grew plain that to decide whose authority was to prevail there must be an appeal to arms. All the old Nobility and most of the powerful Commoners were on the side of the Guelf Party of which, as I have said, Messer Lapo, Piero, and Carlo were chiefs. On the other side were ranged all the Commoners of the middle class headed by the Eight of the war, Messer Giorgio Scali and Tommaso Strozzi. With these were joined the Ricci, Alberti, and Medici;

1378. while the rabble, as is their wont, sided with the party of the discontented. The Guelf Captains seeing the strength of their opponents, and the great danger to which they would be exposed should an unfriendly Signory seek at any time to lessen their authority, and thinking it of advantage to be first in the field, held a meeting at which the condition of the city and their own position were considered. They recognised that by multiplying admonitions they had incurred so much odium that all Florence was hostile to them; and for this they saw no remedy save by expelling from their country those whom they had already deprived of civil privileges, to which end they must first of all possess themselves by force of the Palace of the Signory, and get the whole Government into the hands of their party, following the methods of the old Guelfs who had lived securely in Florence only because they had driven out all their enemies. All consented to this scheme, but differed as to the time for executing it.

§9. It was now the month of April in the year 1378, and Messer Lapo urged despatch, saying that 'Time was the worst enemy of Opportunity,' and especially so in their case, since it might readily happen that Salvestro de' Medici, whom they well knew to be hostile to their faction, would be Gonfalonier in the next Signory. Piero degli Albizi, on the other hand, counselled delay. He thought they had need of further forces, and these could not be assembled without attracting notice, and were their design disclosed they would be in manifest peril. He therefore advised them to await the approaching feast of St. John, when, as the city would be holding high holiday, great crowds

would flock into it, among whom they could easily bring in as many men as they pleased. To meet the danger they feared from Messer Salvestro, he might be admonished, or, if that course were not approved of, they could admonish some one belonging to the College of his district; in drawing a substitute for whom, since the ballot bags (*borse*) were nearly emptied, it might well chance that either Salvestro or some one of his consorts was drawn, which would disqualify him from acting as Gonfalonier. This advice was accordingly adopted, though Messer Lapo gave his consent unwillingly, protesting that delay was dangerous, that no time was ever found wholly favourable for any enterprise, and that whoso waited till all facilities offered for doing a thing, would either never do it or do it at a disadvantage. And, in fact, though they admonished one of his College they did not succeed in disqualifying Salvestro, for their design was seen through by the Eight, who took care that no substitute was drawn.

Accordingly Salvestro, son of Messer Alamanno de' Medici, was drawn for Gonfalonier. Descended from one of the first families of the Commons, the new Gonfalonier could not bear to see the people oppressed by a powerful oligarchy, and after considering how he might put an end to this tyranny, and finding the people disposed to second him, and many leading citizens ready to join him, he imparted his plans to Benedetto Alberti, Tommaso Strozzi, and Messer Giorgio Scali, who promised to do their best to carry them out. Whereupon they secretly drafted a law which revived the *Ordinances of Justice* directed against the Grandees, diminished the authority of the Captains

1378. of the Guelf Party, and left an opening whereby those who had been admonished might recover their civil privileges. But inasmuch as this law had first to be discussed by the Colleges and afterwards by the Council, in both of which bodies Salvestro was Provost, a dignity which, while it lasts, makes the holder almost absolute in the city, in order that the law might be proposed and carried as nearly as possible simultaneously, he caused the Colleges and the Council to assemble on the same morning, and in the first place submitted to the Colleges, sitting apart from the Council, the measure he had prepared, which, from its novelty, found so little acceptance from a small body of men that he was unable to carry it. Seeing that one way for passing his law was thus closed against him, Salvestro, pretending a call of nature, left the Chamber and unperceived by the others went off to the Council, where, standing up so that all could see and hear him, he said that he believed he had been made Gonfalonier not to judge in private causes, which could well be dealt with by the ordinary Courts, but to keep watch over the State itself, restrain the insolence of the powerful, and temper those laws the operation of which was seen to be ruining the Republic. That he had given much thought to both these matters, and had done what he could to provide for them, but the perversity of certain citizens stood so much in the way of all his righteous efforts that he was powerless to effect any good, since the Council was prevented not only from discussing his plans, but even from hearing what they were. That, consequently, since he could do nothing that would in any way profit the Republic or promote the general welfare, it seemed to him there was no reason for his

retaining an office of which he was either unworthy or was by others believed to be so. Accordingly he asked leave to depart to his own house that the people might put some one else in his place, of better parts or happier fortune than himself. Having thus spoken he quitted the Council Chamber as though to return home. 1378.

§ 10. Those of the Council who were privy to his design, and all such others as desired changes, raised an outcry, whereupon the Priors and Colleges ran in, and seeing their Gonfalonier leaving, detained him by their entreaties and authority, and led him back to the Council, which was now in great disorder. Many distinguished citizens were menaced in most abusive terms; and Carlo Strozzi was with difficulty rescued by the bystanders from an artisan who seized him by the breast of his gown and sought to kill him. But it was Benedetto degli Alberti who carried things furthest, for, on his calling aloud from a window of the Palace on the people to arm, the whole Piazza was speedily filled with armed men. Thus threatened and intimidated, the Colleges gave the consent which before they had refused to entreaty. At this very time the Captains of the Guelf Party were holding a great meeting in their Palace to consider what course they should take to withstand the measures of the Signory, but on hearing the uproar, and learning what the Council had decided, they betook themselves each to his own house.

Let no man introduce changes in a city under the belief that he can afterwards stay them at his pleasure or guide them as he would. Salvestro's intention was

1378. to give the city peace by passing this law, but the affair took another turn. The passions let loose had so possessed every one, that the shops were closed, the citizens shut themselves up in their houses, many persons hid away their goods in the convents and churches; it was evident that all dreaded approaching disaster. The Corporations of the Guilds met, and each appointed a Syndic; whereupon the Priors summoned the Colleges, in conference with whom and with the Syndics of the Guilds they spent the entire day in discussing how the city might be restored to calm and every one be contented. Opinions, however, were divided, and nothing was settled. Next day the Trades brought out their standards; which the Priors hearing of, and fearing what might follow, convoked the Council to devise a remedy. But no sooner was the Council met than a great uproar was heard, and forthwith the standards of the Guilds, attended by a crowd of armed men, appeared in the Piazza. Wherefore, to soothe the Guilds and the populace with hopes, and remove occasion for violence, the Council gave unlimited authority, or, as it is termed in Florence, a *Balia*, to the Priors, the Colleges, the Eight, the Captains of the Guelf Party, and the Syndics of the Guilds, to reform the Government of the city in such manner as might seem best for the general welfare. While this was being arranged for, certain Companies of the lesser Guilds, instigated thereto by some who sought to revenge wrongs recently done them by the Guelfs, separated from the rest, and sacked and burnt the house of Messer Lapo da Castiglionchio, who, when he heard that the Signory were attacking the Guelf Ordinances, and saw the people in arms, and no escape

left save in concealment or flight, had first hid himself ^{1378.} in the convent of Santa Croce, and afterwards fled into the Casentino disguised as a friar. In his exile he was often heard to blame Piero degli Albizi for having postponed to the feast of St. John the attempt to seize the government, and himself for having consented to the delay. Piero likewise, and Carlo Strozzi went into hiding when the disturbances began, thinking that when these subsided they might safely remain in Florence where they had many friends and kinsmen.

The beginnings of mischief are difficult, but its progress easy. After the house of Messer Lapo was burnt, many other houses were pillaged and set on fire, in consequence either of general hatred or private grudge. To have companions who would join with still greater rapacity in plundering the property of others, the rioters forced open the public prisons, and then proceeded to pillage the monastery Degli Agnoli and the convent of Santo Spirito, in which many citizens had hidden away their goods. Nor would the Public Treasury itself have escaped the hands of these robbers, but for the awe inspired by one of the Priors, who, on horseback and attended by a body of armed followers, strenuously opposed himself to the fury of the mob. The popular frenzy being somewhat abated, whether through the influence of the Signory or on the advent of night, the *Balia* on the following morning restored the admonished, but with the reservation, that for three years they should be disabled from holding any Magistracy. They likewise repealed all laws made by the Guelfs to the prejudice of the citizens at large, and proscribed as rebels Messer Lapo da Castiglionchio and his consorts, together with many others who had

1378. incurred the popular displeasure. Thereafter they proclaimed the names of the Priors who were to sit in the new Signory, wherein Luigi Guicciardini was to be Gonfalonier. On the publication of these names it was hoped that disturbances would cease, since it was plain to all that they were peaceable citizens and lovers of public tranquillity.

§ 11. Yet the shops were not opened, nor did the citizens lay aside their arms, but maintained strong guards throughout the town. Consequently the new Priors did not, as was customary, assume office with ceremonial pomp outside the Palace, but inside, and without observing any solemnity; for they thought that in entering on their Magistracy the most useful thing they could do was to restore calm to the city. To this end they caused the shops to be opened, ordered the people to disarm, sent away many of the country folk who had been summoned by the citizens to help them, and established guards of their own in various parts of the city, which, if the admonished could only have kept quiet, would now have been at peace. But as these were not content to wait three years for the recovery of their privileges, the Guilds, with a view to satisfy them, again assembled, and called upon the Signory, in the interest of public peace and well-being, to pass an Ordinance declaring that no citizen who at any time had sat in the Signory or in a College, or who had been a Captain of the Guelf Party or a Syndic of any of the Guilds, could be admonished as a Ghibelline. They also demanded that new names should be imburshed for the Guelf Party, and the existing imbursements burned. These requests being at

once acceded to not only by the Signory but by all the ^{1378.} Councils, it might have been expected that the tumults which had broken out anew would now come to an end. But since men are never satisfied to recover only what is their own, but must needs, out of revenge, take from others what is theirs, some whose hopes lay in promoting disorder persuaded the craftsmen that they never could be safe unless many of their enemies were banished or put to death. Getting word of this, the Signory had the Magistrates and the Syndics of the Guilds brought before them, when the Gonfalonier, Luigi Guicciardini, addressed them to the following effect :—

‘ Had not the Signory, and I with them, been for long familiar with the ill-fortune of our city, whereby it comes that no sooner are foreign wars ended than civil strife begins, we should have marvelled more at the outbreaks we have lately witnessed, and been more displeased by their occurrence. But since the troubles to which we are accustomed give less annoyance, we have patiently put up with the recent riots, begun for the most part through no fault of ours, in the hope that having obtained from us so many and such important concessions, your violence would, as in times past, at last come to an end. Finding, however, that you are not quieted, but on the contrary are seeking to have your fellow-citizens subjected to fresh wrongs and condemned to renewed banishments, our displeasure increases with your misbehaviour. And indeed had we foreseen that during our term of office our city was to be brought to destruction either by our complying with or opposing your demands, we should have shunned the honours of Magistracy by flight or exile. But

1378. thinking we had to deal with men possessed of some kindly feeling, of some love for their country, we willingly undertook this public duty in the belief that your turbulence would assuredly be vanquished by our benignity. Now, however, we find from experience that the more we defer to you, and the greater the concessions we make you, the more arrogant and unreasonable are your demands. If we speak thus plainly we do so, not to offend you, but to lead you to reflect. Let others tell you things that will please you, we must tell you what we think it useful for you to know. On your faith declare what it is that you can honourably ask of us. You sought that the Captains of the party should be deprived of their authority. That has been done. You asked that the names they had imbrued should be burned, and reforms effected. We complied. You desired that the admonished should be restored to their civil privileges. Which has been granted. At your entreaty we pardoned those who had burned houses and pillaged churches. To satisfy you many honoured and powerful citizens have been sent into exile. To please you the Grantees have been restrained by new Ordinances. Where are these demands of yours to end, and how long are you to abuse our generosity? Can you not see that we show more patience under defeat than you after victory? Whither will these divisions of yours bring your city? Have you forgotten that formerly when disunited it was vanquished by Castruccio, a paltry citizen of Lucca, that it was enslaved by the Duke of Athens, a free-lance whom you yourselves had hired? And yet when it was united, neither an Archbishop of Milan, nor yet a Pope

could prevail against it, but, after years of warfare, remained ingloriously defeated. Why then by your discords enslave your city in time of peace, which in war so many enemies left free? What but slavery can you derive from your divisions, and what but poverty from those possessions of ours which you have taken, or are taking from us by violence? For these are the sources whereby our industries nourish the whole city, deprived of which we shall be able to nourish it no longer. As for those who have robbed us of them, they will not know how to keep their ill-gotten gains, and want and misery must await them. Their Lordships of the Signory, therefore, and I too command you, nay, if our honour permits it, we implore you at last to bring your minds to a stay, and to rest satisfied with those Ordinances which we have already passed in your favour. And when you ask anything from us again, let it be asked constitutionally, not with tumult and in arms. For if your demands be reasonable they will be granted, nor will you, to your own hurt and loss, afford occasion to designing men to stab their country under your cloak.'

These words being sincerely spoken stirred the hearts of those who heard them, who gratefully thanked the Gonfalonier for having done his duty by them as an honest Magistrate, and by the city as a good citizen, and promised willing obedience in whatsoever they were called on to do. To afford them opportunity for keeping their promise, the Signory deputed two citizens from each of the higher Magistracies to confer with the Syndics of the Guilds, and thereupon to report to them whether anything could be done to restore public tranquillity.

1378. § 12. But while this inquiry was going on, a fresh tumult broke out, far more hurtful to the Republic than the first. Most of the pillaging and burning that had taken place on the days immediately preceding had been the work of the rabble ; and now when the chief matters in dispute were adjusted and set at rest, those among the rioters who had shown themselves most daring in evil-doing went in fear of being punished for the crimes they had committed, and, as commonly happens, of being deserted by the persons who had prompted their misdeeds. To this fear was joined the hatred felt by the lower orders against the rich citizens and the heads of the Guilds, by whom they thought their labour was insufficiently paid. For when, in the time of the first Charles, the city was divided into Guilds, a Syndic and a Code of Government were accorded to each Guild, and it was provided that the members of each should in civil matters be judged by their Syndic. The number of these Guilds, as has already been mentioned, was at first twelve, but in course of time was increased to twenty-one, and so powerful did they become that in a few years they had usurped entire control over the city. And because some of the Guilds were held in more and some in less honour, they came to be divided into the Greater and the Less, there being seven of the Greater and fourteen of the Less. From this division and from other causes already noticed, grew the arrogance of the Captains of the Guelf Party. For those citizens who from the first had been Guelfs (among whom the Magistracies of the party always circulated), were wont to favour the members of the greater, and to persecute those of the lesser, Guilds and all who took their part. Whence

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originated the many revolts against the Guelfs whereof 1378. I have spoken. And because in creating these corporations several of the industries wherein the humbler craftsmen and the lowest order of the people employ themselves were left without any special Guild of their own, but were affiliated, in accordance with the nature of their occupation, to certain of the other Guilds, it came about that when the artisans engaged in these industries were discontented with their wages, or for any other reason thought themselves aggrieved by their masters, they had no one to whom to turn for redress save the Syndic of the Guild to which they were affiliated, from whom, in their opinion, they did not receive the support to which they were entitled.

Of all the Guilds the one which had, and still has, the largest number of these other industries subordinated to it, was and is the Guild of the wool-trade, which being much more powerful, and exercising a greater authority than all the others, gave and gives occupation and maintenance to the bulk of the populace and the lower class of craftsmen.

§ 13. The craftsmen of this class, including not only those subordinate to the wool-trade, but also those affiliated to other Guilds, were for the causes mentioned filled with resentment, and being, moreover, alarmed ✓ for the consequences of the burning and pillaging of which they had been guilty, met frequently by night to discuss what had happened, and to remind one another of their common danger. At one of these meetings, some one bolder and of greater experience than the rest, to encourage them, spoke to this effect:—

‘Had we now to decide whether or not we should

1378. take arms and fall to burning and plundering private houses and sacking churches, I for my part would think it a question to be well considered, and perhaps my voice would rather be for quiet poverty than for dangerous gains. But since we are already in arms, and since many things have been done amiss, it seems to me that we must deliberate on the footing that we cannot lay our weapons aside, but must see to secure ourselves against the consequences of our misdeeds. And were there none else to teach us this lesson, I doubt not that Necessity herself would have taught it. We see this entire city brimming over with spite and hatred against us. The citizens lay their heads together, the Signory is constantly closeted with the Magistrates. We may take it as certain that they are weaving snares for us, and devising new Ordinances to be thrown at our heads. In our deliberations therefore there are two things we must try for, two ends we must keep in view: first, that it shall be impossible to punish us for what we have done during the last few days; secondly, that henceforth we shall be able to live in greater freedom, and with more contentment to ourselves, than we have lived in the past. But that our old outrages may be forgiven us, we must needs, in my judgment, commit new, multiplying offences, redoubling our burnings and pillagings, and endeavouring to enlist as many as possible as companions in our crimes. For when the offenders are many, none are punished; petty offences are chastised, but great and grave offences are rewarded; and where many suffer wrong, few seek to avenge it. For wrongs that touch all equally are borne with more patience than those directed against individuals. To multiply our offences,

therefore, will secure us a readier pardon, and smooth 1378.
the way to our obtaining whatever we desire as conducive to our freedom. And it seems to me that we shall meet with certain success; for since those who might thwart us are wealthy but disunited, their divisions will give us victory, and their wealth, when it becomes ours, will maintain us. Nor be ye daunted by that boasted antiquity of blood which they cast in our teeth, for as all men are sprung from the same stock, all are of equally ancient descent, and all are fashioned by Nature in the same mould. Strip us naked and we shall all be found alike; clothe us in their garments and them in ours, and be assured we shall seem noble and they the reverse; poverty and riches being the only causes of our disparity.

‘Much it grieves me to hear that many among you are troubled in conscience for what you have already done, and will bear no part in what we have yet to do. If this be so, you are not the men I took you for, else neither conscience nor shame would disquiet you; for those who gain victories, whatever be the means whereby they obtain them, are never put to shame, and of conscience we should make no account. For where, as with us, fear of hunger or of the gaol is urgent, fear of hell neither can nor ought to find a place. And if you note how men make their way in the world you will see that all who attain to great wealth or power, reach them by fraud or force, and after attaining them, whether by deceit or violence, cloak the deformity of their acquisition under some decent disguise; while those who, whether through negligence or stupidity, fail to use these methods, rest always plunged in

1378. poverty or servitude. The faithful servant is a servant always, and the good are always poor. None escape from bondage but the unfaithful and the bold, and none from poverty but the rapacious and the dishonest. For while God and Nature have set man's fortunes within his reach, these are to be won by violence rather than by industry, and by evil arts sooner than by good. Whence it comes that men devour one another, and the weakest goes to the wall. We must, therefore, use force when we have the chance, and no better occasion could ever come to us than now, when the citizens are divided, the Signory in doubt, the Magistrates afraid, and when it will be easy to crush them all before they can agree or make up their minds. We shall then either remain entire masters of the city, or at least have such a share in it, that not only will our past offences be forgiven us, but it will be in our power to threaten our enemies with further injuries. I grant you that this course is bold and hazardous, but, where need compels, boldness is deemed prudence, and when great interests are at stake brave men think little of the risk. Enterprises that begin in peril end in profit. The escape from danger must needs be dangerous; and yet I think that when we see prison, torture, and death being prepared for us, we should fear more from inaction than from any effort to save ourselves; for with the former the evil is certain, with the latter doubtful. How often have I heard you complain of the greed of your masters, the injustice of your Magistrates? Now is the time not merely to emancipate yourselves from them, but to get them so completely in your power that they will have more reason to complain of

and to fear you, than you them. The opportunity ^{1378.} that now offers is fleeting. When it is gone we shall in vain seek to recall it. You see the preparations your enemies are making. Let us forestall their designs. Whichever of us is first in the field will assuredly effect the ruin of his adversary, to his own great advantage. Hence honour may result to many of us and security to all.'

These persuasions kindling still further minds already prone to evil courses, it was resolved to resort to arms as soon as they got more of their companions to take part in their plot; and they bound themselves by oath to stand by one another should any of them be roughly handled by the Magistrates.

§ 14. While these men were thus preparing the overthrow of the Republic, the Signory got notice of their design, and forthwith laid hold of a certain Simone della Piazza, from whom they extracted the whole plot, and ascertained that the following day had been fixed for its execution. Recognising the danger, they summoned the Colleges, and those other citizens who in conjunction with the Syndics of the Guilds were devising measures for keeping the city united. Before all were assembled it was already evening, but on the advice of those whom they had summoned the Signory now resolved to call in the Syndics of the Guilds also, who in their turn recommended that all the men-at-arms then in Florence should be sent for, and orders given to the Standard-bearers of the People to attend next morning in the Piazza with their Companies in arms. It so happened that at the very time when Simone was under torture, and while the citizens were

1378. assembling, a certain Niccolò of San Frediano was employed in repairing the clock of the Palace. Overhearing what was going on, he hurried home, and telling what he had heard, threw the whole neighbourhood into commotion. Forthwith, more than a thousand armed men assembled in the Piazza of Santo Spirito. The news spread to the other conspirators, and the churches of San Piero Maggiore and San Lorenzo, which had been fixed as their places of meeting, were thronged with armed men. When day dawned on the 21st July, no more than eighty men-at-arms had arrived to support the Signory, and not one of the Standard-bearers, who, learning that the whole city was up in arms, were afraid to quit their houses. Of the plebeians the first who entered the Piazza were those who had mustered at San Piero Maggiore, on whose arrival the men-at-arms made no movement. Presently the rest of the populace followed, and meeting with no resistance, called fiercely on the Signory to give up their prisoners. When threats failed to obtain their release, resorting to violence, they set fire to the houses of Luigi Guicciardini; whereupon, lest worse should befall, the Signory let the prisoners go. Their release effected, the mob next seized the standard of Justice from the Captain of the Guard, and displaying it, set fire to the houses of many citizens, directing their violence against all who either on public or private grounds had incurred their hatred. Nay, there were many citizens who to revenge personal wrongs turned the mob against the houses of their enemies. For it was enough for the purpose that a single voice from the crowd should call out '*to such and such a house,*' or even that he who bore the

standard should move in that direction. They likewise 1378.
burned the archives of the Wool Guild. Afterwards, to combine with their many outrages something that might merit praise, they proceeded to confer knight-hood on Salvestro de' Medici and on threescore and three citizens besides, among whom were Benedetto and Antonio degli Alberti, Tommaso Strozzi, with others whom they looked on as friends, though many accepted the honour with much reluctance. And the strangest thing of all was, that some whose houses they had burnt in the morning a little later on the same day they made knights, as happened to Luigi Guicciardini, the Gonfalonier of Justice ; so closely did favour follow on wrong.

While all this rioting went on, the Signory were in dismay, seeing themselves deserted by their men-at-arms, by the Syndics of the Guilds, and by their Standard-bearers, none of whom had come, as had been arranged, to their assistance ; for, of the sixteen Standards, the Golden Lion under Giovenco della Stufa, and the Ermine under Giovanni Cambi, alone were forthcoming, and these stayed in the Piazza but a very short time, for finding they were not joined by any of the others, they too made off.

On witnessing the fury of this unbridled mob, and seeing the Palace abandoned, some citizens remained within doors, while others followed the armed crowd, that by their presence among them they might be better able to protect their own houses and those of their friends. But in this way the importance of the rioters was increased and the authority of the Signory impaired. The tumult lasted the entire day. At nightfall the rioters drew up in front of the Palace of

1378. Messer Stefano, behind the Church of San Barnaba. Their number was now over six thousand, and before daybreak they compelled the Guilds by threats to send them their banners. At dawn they marched, with the Standard of Justice and the banners of the Guilds carried before them, to the Palace of the Podestà, which, on his refusal to surrender it, they attacked and took possession of.

§ 15. Seeing no way to restrain the populace by force, the Signory now resolved to try whether they could not make terms with them, and, in order to learn how they were disposed, sent to the Palace of the Podestà four envoys chosen from the Colleges, who found that the mob leaders had, conjointly with the Syndics of the Guilds and certain other citizens, already formulated the conditions they desired to lay before the Signory. The envoys thereupon returned to the Signory accompanied by four delegates from the populace, who made the following demands: 'That the Wool Guild should no longer be allowed to have a foreigner for its Judge; that three new Guilds should be incorporated—one for the carders and dyers, a second for barbers, doublet-makers, tailors, and other like trades, and a third for common labourers; that these new Guilds should always be represented by two Priors, and the existing fourteen lesser Guilds by three; that the Signory should provide chambers where the three new Guilds might hold their meetings; that for a term of two years no member of any of the new Guilds should be compelled by law to pay any debt of less than fifty ducats; that the Monte should cease to pay interest, and repay only the principal

sum; that all who were in banishment or under sentence should be pardoned, and all who had been admonished restored to their civil rights.' Besides these, they made many other stipulations in favour of individual citizens who had taken their part, and at the same time insisted on certain of their enemies being admonished and sent into exile. All which demands, though at once dishonourable and hurtful to the Republic, were, from fear of worse, immediately agreed to by the Priors, the Colleges, and the Council of the People. But for final sanction it was necessary that they should also have the assent of the Common Council, and as the two Councils could not be held on the same day, the matter had to be postponed to the day following. It seemed, however, for the moment, that the Guilds were satisfied and the populace contented, and a promise was given that so soon as the Ordinance was passed all rioting would cease. But next morning when the Common Council was deliberating, the fickle and unruly mob once more entered the Piazza under the wonted standards, with shouts so loud and menacing that the entire Council, and the Priors too, were terrified. Indeed, one of their number, Guerriante Marignolli by name, influenced rather by fear than by any other personal motive, hurried downstairs on pretence of ascertaining whether the lower door was secured, and fled to his house. As he came forth from the Palace he could not so disguise himself as to escape being recognised by the mob, who, however, did him no harm, though they called out on seeing him that unless all the other Priors quitted the Palace, their children should be slaughtered and their houses laid in ashes.

1378. Meanwhile the Ordinance was passed, the Priors withdrew to their chambers, while the members of the Council descended from the Council-room, but instead of issuing forth from the Palace lingered in the Loggia and about the Court ; for having seen such dishonesty on the part of the populace and such treachery or cowardice in those who should have restrained or repressed them, they were in utter despair for the safety of the city. The Priors, likewise, were bewildered and alarmed, finding themselves deserted by one of their own body, and no one coming forward to offer them advice, far less assistance. While they were thus at a loss as to what it was proper or possible for them to do, Messer Tommaso Strozzi and Messer Benedetto Alberti, whether from their ambition to be left masters of the Palace, or, perhaps, thinking it the wisest course to take, urged them to yield to the popular fury and withdraw as private citizens to their own houses. This advice coming from the very men who had been chief promoters of disorder, though it prevailed with others, roused the wrath of the Priors Alamanno Acciaiuoli and Niccolò del Bene, who, plucking up a little spirit, declared that if the others chose to go they could not help it, but as for themselves they would die sooner than part with their authority before its term had run. These disputes redoubled the alarm of the Signory and the fury of the populace, so that the Gonfalonier, preferring that his Magistracy should close in shame rather than in danger, put himself into the hands of Tommaso Strozzi, who led him out of the Palace and conducted him to his dwelling. The rest of the Priors went off in like manner, one by one ; and

even Alamanno and Niccolò when they found themselves alone, not wishing to be thought more bold than wise, at last took their departure. The Palace then remained in the hands of the populace, and of the Eight of the War who had not yet resigned their Magistracy.

§ 16. When the mob broke into the Palace, the standard of the Gonfalonier of Justice was carried by one Michele di Lando, a wool-carder. Barefooted and scantily clad, with all the rabble at his heels, he mounted the stairs, but, stopping as he entered the audience-chamber of the Signory, turned to the crowd and said: 'This Palace, as you see, is yours: the city is in your hands; what is now your pleasure?' Whereupon all made answer that they would have him for their Gonfalonier and Lord, to govern them and the city as he thought good. Michele accepted the Lordship, and being a man of sense and shrewdness, more beholden to Nature than to Fortune, resolved to quiet the city and put a stop to the rioting. Wherefore, to keep the people occupied, and gain time to make arrangements, he bade search be made for a certain Ser Nuto whom Messer Lapo da Castiglionchio had designated for Bargello; on which errand most of those with him went off. Then to inaugurate with justice the authority he had obtained through favour, he caused it to be publicly proclaimed that burning and pillaging must cease; and as a terror to any who should disobey he set up a gallows in the Piazza. As a beginning of reforms in the city, he dismissed all the Syndics of the Guilds and appointed new, removed all the Priors and Colleges from the Magistracy, and burned

1378. the ballot bags. Meanwhile Ser Nuto was dragged by the mob into the Piazza and hanged from the gallows by one foot, when every one near him lopped off a limb, and in an instant nothing of him was left but the foot whereby he was suspended.

The Eight of the War, assuming that by the departure of the Signory they were left rulers of the city, had in the meantime nominated a new set of Priors. Getting word of this, Michele sent to tell them to be gone at once from the Palace, for he would have all men see that he knew how to govern Florence without advice from them. He then convened the Syndics of the Guilds, and created a Signory consisting of four Priors taken from the lowest class of craftsmen, with two from the Greater and two from the Lesser Guilds. Moreover he made a new scrutiny (*squittino*), and divided the public offices into three shares, allotting one share to the New, another to the Lesser, and the third to the Greater Guilds. For himself he reserved the governorship of Empoli. On Messer Salvestro de' Medici he conferred the rents of the shops on the Old Bridge, and on many other citizens friendly to the populace bestowed other benefits, not so much in requital of past services, as that in all future time they might support him against the popular ill-will.

§ 17. To the Plebeians it seemed that in his reforms Michele had unduly favoured the upper class of citizens, and that they themselves had not obtained such a share in the Government as was necessary to support their authority and secure their safety. Wherefore, incited by their wonted audacity, they again took arms, and assembling tumultuously under

their standards, marched into the Piazza calling upon 1378. the Signory to come down to the Ringhiera and pass further provisions for their security and welfare. Michele noting their insolent demeanour, but not wishing to provoke them further, without entering on the substance of their demands rebuked the manner in which they urged them, and exhorted them to lay aside their weapons, when concessions might be made which the Signory could not without loss of prestige make on compulsion. Upon this the populace went off, in great wrath with the Palace, to Santa Maria Novella, where they set up eight of their number as leaders, with officers and all such other equipment as might confer credit or inspire reverence. Thus the city had now two separate seats of authority, and was subject to two rival governments. The mob leaders next resolved among themselves that eight persons chosen from their Guilds should always reside with the Priors in the Palace, and that all ordinances passed by the Signory must, to be valid, receive their sanction. They deprived Messer Salvestro de' Medici and Michele di Lando of whatever had been granted them at previous deliberations, while on many of their own body they bestowed offices with advances of money wherewith to support their dignity. To give validity to these resolutions, they sent two of their number to lay them before the Signory, with a demand that they should be confirmed by the Councils, it being their intention to obtain this sanction by force if consent were withheld. These envoys unfolded their mission to the Priors with great boldness and even greater insolence, and upbraided the Gonfalonier with the ingratitude and want of considera-

1378. tion he had shown in return for the dignity they had conferred upon him, and the honour they had paid him. But when, after exhausting reproaches, they proceeded to threats, Michele could stand their insolence no longer, and thinking rather of the high office he filled than of his former mean condition, determined to check their presumption in a way that should be memorable; wherefore drawing the sword he carried at his belt, he first wounded their spokesman severely, and then ordered him to be bound and cast into prison. When notified of this, the mob were kindled with rage, and thinking to enforce with arms what without arms they had failed to effect, seized their weapons in fury and tumult and set forth to attack the Signory. Meanwhile Michele, foreseeing what would happen, decided to be beforehand with them, judging it more honourable to confront his enemies than to await them behind walls and be driven out, like his predecessors, to the discredit of the Palace and to his own shame. Accordingly, when he had got together a large number of the citizens, who now began to see their mistake, he mounted on horseback, and with many armed followers rode off to Santa Maria Novella to give battle. The populace, who, as I have said, were come to a like resolve, had begun to move towards the Piazza almost at the very time Michele left it; but taking different routes they did not encounter on the road. Turning back, Michele found that the rebels had occupied the Piazza and were storming the Palace, whereupon he assailed them vigorously and put them to rout, driving some of them from the city, and compelling the rest to throw away their arms and go into hiding.

This victory, whereby the riots were put a stop to, 1378. was wholly due to the valour of the Gonfalonier, who for prudence, courage, and worth surpassed every other citizen of his time, and well deserves to be ranked among the few who have conferred benefits on their country. For had he been of a morose or ambitious temper, the Republic must have utterly lost its freedom and fallen under an even worse tyranny than that of the Duke of Athens. But his honesty never suffered a thought to enter his mind that was contrary to the common welfare, and his prudence enabled him so to manage matters that most of his party gave in to him, while the rest he could control by arms. These qualities at once daunted the populace, and made the members of the Greater Guilds see and reflect how shameful it was that they who had tamed the pride of the Grandees should put up with the stench of the rabble.

§ 18. At the time Michele gained this victory over the mob, the new Signory had already been drawn, but among the new Priors were two men, one of them nicknamed Tria, the other Baroccio, of a condition so mean and abject that there sprang up a universal desire to be freed from such a disgrace. Accordingly, on the first day of September, when the new Priors were to assume office, the Piazza was thronged with armed men, and no sooner had the old Priors left the Palace than a tumultuous cry broke from the crowd that they would have no men of the baser sort to rule them. Whereupon, to pacify them, the Signory deprived these two of their Magistracies and chose Messer Giorgio Scali and Francesco di Michele in their room. They more-

1378. over did away with the Plebeian Guilds, and removed from office all who belonged to them, save only Michele di Lando, Lorenzo di Puccio, and certain others of good repute. Public honours they divided into two shares, assigning one share to the Greater, the other to the Lesser Guilds. As regards the Signory, however, it was decided that it should always consist of five Priors taken from the Lesser Guilds, and four from the Greater, and that the Gonfalonier should be drawn from each class alternately.

This change in the constitution gave the city tranquillity for a time, for the Government was taken out of the hands of the Plebeians of the lowest class, and although the craftsmen of the Lesser Guilds were left more powerful than the great Commoners, these last were fain to submit to this diminution of their authority, in the hope that the others might thereby be withdrawn from favouring the rabble. The change was, moreover, welcomed by all who desired the humiliation of those men who, under the name of the Guelf Party, had by their violence offended so many of their fellow-citizens. And inasmuch as Messer Giorgio Scali, Messer Benedetto Alberti, Messer Salvestro de' Medici, and Messer Tommaso Strozzi were among the supporters of this new form of Government, they remained almost Princes of the City. Nevertheless the changes thus introduced widened still further the division between the great Commoners and the artisans of the Lesser Guilds which had its beginning in the ambition of the Houses of the Ricci and Albizi; and since this division was at various times afterwards attended by the gravest consequences, whereof we shall have to take frequent notice, we shall henceforth speak of the

one party as that of the Great Commoners, and of the other as the Plebeian.

This Government lasted for three years, and was ^{1378-1381.} marked by the many punishments by death and exile which it enforced. For as there were many malcontents both within and without the city, its rulers lived in constant suspicion. The malcontents within the city were, or at any rate were believed to be, always hatching revolutionary schemes. Those without, who had no considerations to restrain them, were, with the support of this or the other Prince or Republic, continually sowing thorns in the way of one party or the other.

§ 19. In Bologna at this time there happened to be a certain Gianozzo of Salerno, a soldier whom Charles of Durazzo, descended from the Royal House of Naples and then meditating an attempt against the throne of Queen Giovanna, had, by leave of the Queen's enemy Pope Urban, placed as his Captain in that city. There were likewise in Bologna many Florentine exiles, who maintained a secret correspondence with Gianozzo and with Charles. This gave the greatest uneasiness to the Florentine rulers, and led them to lend a ready ear to all charges brought against citizens whom they distrusted. While the minds of the Magistracy were filled with these alarms, they received information that Gianozzo, bringing the exiles in his train, was coming to Florence, where it was expected that many within the walls would arm and hand over the city to him. On this report many ^{1379.} citizens were accused. Among the foremost of those named were Piero degli Albizi and Carlo Strozzi,

1379. and next to them Cipriano Mangioni, Messer Jacopo Sacchetti, Messer Donato Barbadori, Filippo Strozzi, and Giovanni Anselmi. All who were charged, except Carlo Strozzi who fled, were arrested: and that none might venture to stir on their behalf, the Signory deputed Messer Tommaso Strozzi and Messer Benedetto Alberti, with a strong force of armed men, to guard the city. On examining those who had been arrested no proof was found to support the charges brought against them, and consequently the Captain had no mind to condemn them. But meanwhile their enemies had so wrought on the people, and roused them to such fury against the accused, that no alternative was left but to sentence them to death.

Neither the greatness of his house, nor the high position he formerly enjoyed, for he had been more honoured and feared, and for a longer time, than any other citizen, was of any avail to save Piero degli Albizi. It is related that long before this, and when he was still at the height of his greatness, on the occasion of a banquet given by him to a number of his fellow-citizens, some one, whether a friend warning him to bear himself more meekly, or an enemy threatening him with the fickleness of Fortune, sent him a silver cup filled with comfits, but with an iron nail hidden among them, which, being discovered and noted by the guests, was interpreted as a hint to him to stay Fortune's wheel; for as she had now carried him to the summit, it was certain that, continuing her revolution, she must presently bring him to the ground. An interpretation verified first by his overthrow, and now by his death.

1380. After sentence had been executed, the city remained in great tribulation, both victors and vanquished being

alike in fear. But the worst results followed from the 1380. fears of those in whose hands the Government rested. For every trifling circumstance led them to inflict fresh wrongs on the Guelf Party by condemning, admonishing, or sending them into exile. To which grievances were added the new laws and ordinances they were continually passing, with a view to strengthen their authority and at the same time injure those whom they suspected. With this object they appointed a Commission of forty-six persons who, in conjunction with the Signory, were to purge the city of all whom they distrusted. This Commission admonished thirty-nine citizens, declared many Commoners to be Grandees, and admitted many Grandees as Commoners; while to meet foreign attacks they took John Hawkwood into their pay, an Englishman of great renown in arms, who had fought for many years in Italy in the service of the Pope and of other potentates. Their dread of hostilities from without arose on learning that several companies of men-at-arms, among whom it was reported there were many Florentine exiles, were being got ready by Charles of Durazzo for his enterprise against the Kingdom of Naples. To provide against this danger, money as well as troops had to be raised, and when Charles came to Arezzo, a sum of forty thousand ducats was paid him by the Florentines on his engaging not to molest them. Charles then proceeded on his adventure, succeeded in seizing the Kingdom 1382. of Naples, and sent Queen Giovanna a prisoner to Hungary. This victory awakened fresh anxiety in the minds of the Florentine rulers, who could feel no security that their money would weigh more with the King than the ancient friendship which had sub-

sisted between his House and the Guelfs whom they had so grievously wronged and oppressed.

§ 20. As suspicion grew, injuries multiplied, which in their turn did not lessen suspicion but increased it, so that the mass of the citizens lived in extreme discontent. Further disquiet was also caused by the arrogant bearing of Messer Giorgio Scali and Messer Tommaso Strozzi, whose authority was greater than that of the Magistrates themselves, for, supported as they were by the favour of the Plebeians, every one feared their violence. Nor was it to peaceful citizens only, but even to the seditious, that this Government appeared oppressive and tyrannical. But since the insolence of Messer
1382. Giorgio had some time or other to be put an end to, it so chanced that one of his familiars accused Giovanni Cambi of treasonable practices against the State. The Captain of the People, finding Giovanni guiltless, decided to visit the accuser with the same punishment that would have been inflicted on the accused had he been found guilty. When neither by entreaties nor by authority could Messer Giorgio obtain his friend's release, he, in company with Messer Tommaso Strozzi, went with an armed band and forcibly rescued him, and at the same time sacked the Palace of the Captain, who to save himself had to flee into hiding. This outrage so exasperated every one against Messer Giorgio that his enemies saw in it their opportunity to crush him, and thus rescue the city not from his hands only, but likewise from those of the Plebeians, to whom for three years his arrogance had kept it in subjection. For this also the Captain supplied a favourable occasion; for when the riot was over he went

before the Signory and said that he had willingly ^{1382.} undertaken the office to which their Lordships had called him, in the belief that he was to serve good masters who would take up arms only to further justice, not to obstruct it. But having seen and had experience of the way in which the city was governed, and its manner of living, he desired, in order to escape danger and loss, to restore to their Lordships the dignity he had accepted as both useful and honourable. The Priors reassured the Captain, and comforted him with promises of redress for past injuries and of security for the future. And some of their number associating with themselves certain citizens whom they knew to be lovers of the public weal, yet less distrusted than others by the ruling powers, were agreed that now, while the entire people were alienated from Messer Giorgio by this last outrage, was a fit occasion to free the city from him and from the Plebeians. And knowing that popular favour is gained and lost through the most trifling accidents, they resolved to use this opportunity before the general resentment subsided. But to insure success they deemed it necessary to have the support of Messer Benedetto Alberti, without which they thought their attempt hazardous. Messer Benedetto was a citizen of vast wealth, of a grave but kindly disposition, a devoted friend of liberty, and most impatient of all despotic methods, so that he was easily led to adopt their views and to join in the overthrow of Messer Giorgio. For the only reason that had induced him to break away from the Great Commoners, and from the Guelf Party, and become the friend of the Plebeians, had been the arrogant behaviour and tyrannical measures of his former

1382. associates. Wherefore, on perceiving that the leaders of the Plebeians were copying the conduct of their adversaries, he for some time past had kept aloof from them and taken no part in the injuries they had inflicted on many citizens. Thus the same reasons which had formerly caused him to side with the Plebeians now led him to desert them.

Having won over Messer Benedetto and the chiefs of the Guilds to their cause, the confederates armed, and Messer Giorgio was taken prisoner, while Messer Tommaso fled. On the day following his capture Messer Giorgio was beheaded, to the so great consternation of his party that none durst stir a finger in his behalf; nay, all vied in promoting his destruction. Seeing himself brought to his death in the presence of the people, who but a short time before had worshipped him, he lamented his unkind fate and the malignity of those citizens who, by their ill-behaviour towards him, had driven him to favour and countenance the rabble in whom there was neither fidelity nor gratitude. And observing Messer Benedetto among those present in arms, he said to him: 'Do you too, Messer Benedetto, consent that this wrong should be done to me, which were I in your place I never would have consented should be done to you? I warn you that this day, as it ends my troubles, begins yours.' Afterwards he reproached himself for having trusted too much to a people whom every act, word, or suspicion influenced and misled. Thus complaining he died, surrounded by armed enemies rejoicing at his fate. After his execution some of his closest friends were also put to death, and their bodies dragged through the streets by the mob.

§ 21. The execution of Messer Giorgio threw all ^{1382.} Florence into commotion, for although in carrying it out many of the citizens had armed to support the Signory and the Captain of the People, many others had armed either through ambition, or from personal jealousy. The city therefore was filled with conflicting humours, every man having his own ends in view, which each hoped to attain before laying his arms aside. The old Nobility (the *Grandeas* as they were styled) could not endure being deprived of public honours, and consequently used every means they could to recover them, and with this object were desirous that authority should be restored to the Captains of the Guelf Party. To the Great Commoners and to the Greater Guilds it was displeasing to have to share the Government with the Lesser Guilds and the lowest class of craftsmen. On the other hand, the Lesser Guilds desired their dignity to be increased rather than diminished, while the lowest class of craftsmen were afraid that the Colleges of their trades might be taken from them.

For a whole year these disputes led to frequent tumults in Florence. At one time the Grandeas, at another the Greater Guilds, at another the Lesser Guilds in conjunction with the populace, and often all of them at once, assembled in arms in different quarters of the city. Many encounters consequently took place either between these factions among themselves, or with the armed retinue of the Palace; for the Signory at one time by yielding, at another by fighting, did what it could to remedy disorder. At last after two Assemblies of the People (*Parlamenti*) had been called, and many Commissions (*Balie*) had been created to reform the

1382. Government, and after many mishaps, troubles, and dangers of the gravest character had befallen, a Government was established under which all who had been banished after the time when Salvestro de' Medici was Gonfalonier, were restored to their country. Simultaneously, all who had received privileges or preferment under the *Balla* of 1378 were deprived of them, and while the Guelf Party had their honours restored, the Corporations of the two new Guilds were dissolved, their officers dismissed, and their members relegated to the Guilds to which they were originally subject. The Lesser Guilds were deprived of their Gonfalonier of Justice, and their share of public honours was reduced from a half to a third, the highest offices being wholly denied them. In this way the Party of the Great Commoners and of the Guelfs reassumed control of the State, while the Plebeians, who had held it from the year 1378 to 1381, lost it on this new order of things being established.

§ 22. This Government, at its beginning, was no less grievous to the citizens and no less violent than that of the Plebeians had been; for many of the Great Commoners who had been noted for their support of the popular cause were banished, together with a large number of the Plebeian leaders. Among the latter was Michele di Lando, whom all the benefits his authority had wrought at the time when the unbridled mob were lawlessly ruining the city, could not save from the rancorous fury of the Guelf Party. For his great services, therefore, his country made him a poor return; and it is because both Princes and Republics so often err in this way, that subjects, discouraged by like

examples, will attack their rulers even before they are made to feel their ingratitude. 1382

These banishments and deaths were, as they had always been, most distasteful to Messer Benedetto Alberti, who denounced them both privately and in public; so that the heads of the State feared him, looking upon him as a close friend of the Plebeians, and believing that he had consented to the death of Messer Giorgio Scali, not because he disliked his methods, but that he might keep the entire Government in his own hands. Afterwards his words and bearing increased their jealousy, and led the whole of the party in power to keep watch upon him so as to find occasion to crush him.

While affairs at home were on this footing, those abroad were so little important that anything which happened was a source rather of alarm than hurt. For at this time Louis of Anjou came into Italy to restore the Kingdom of Naples to Queen Giovanna and expel Charles of Durazzo. His coming greatly disquieted the Florentines, for Charles, as is usual between old friends, asked their aid, while Louis, as those do who court new friendships, requested them to stand neutral. Wherefore to make a show of satisfying Louis, though really to help Charles, they discharged John Hawkwood from their service, but got him an engagement under Pope Urban, the friend of Charles, a device easily seen through by Louis, who thought himself very ill-used by the Florentines. While war was being waged in Apulia between Charles and Louis, fresh troops came from France to the support of the latter. These on arriving in Tuscany were brought by the exiles of Arezzo into that town, and took it from those 1382

1384. who held it for Charles. But while the exiles were scheming to overthrow the Government of Florence as they had that of Arezzo, Louis died, and consequently affairs both in Apulia and in Tuscany took a new turn. For Charles secured the Kingdom of Naples which he had been on the point of losing, while the Florentines, who had been in doubt whether they could defend their own city, repossessed themselves of Arezzo, buying it from the troops who held it for Louis. After securing Apulia, Charles went off to take possession of the Kingdom of Hungary which had fallen to him by inheritance, leaving behind him in
1386. Apulia his wife, with his son Ladislas and his daughter Giovanna, both of whom, as I have noted elsewhere, were still very young. Charles took over his new Kingdom, but not long after was murdered.

§ 23. The accession of Charles to the throne of Hungary was celebrated in Florence with as great rejoicings as were ever witnessed in any city over a victory of its own. Nor was the magnificence displayed in these rejoicings of a public character only, for many private families vied with the civil authorities in the brilliancy of their festivities. But the family which in pageantry and splendour surpassed all others was that of the Alberti, whose shows and tournaments would have done honour not to a private citizen merely, but to any Prince. All this, however, brought upon the family much envy, which, joined to the distrust wherewith Messer Benedetto was already regarded by the Government, was the occasion of his downfall. For those in authority could not feel well disposed towards him, when they saw that at any moment he might by

the popular favour regain his ascendancy and expel them from the city. While they were under these apprehensions, Benedetto being then Gonfalonier of one of the Companies of the People, it so happened that his son-in-law, Filippo Magalotti, was drawn Gonfalonier 1387 of Justice. This redoubled the fears of the chief rulers, in whose view Messer Benedetto was gaining too much strength, and the city thereby incurring extreme peril. Desiring to remedy this without raising a tumult, they induced Bese Magalotti, his kinsman and enemy, to notify to the Signory that Messer Filippo, not being of due age for filling the post, could not and ought not to have it. The matter was inquired into by the Signory, when the Priors, some because they disliked him, and others to avoid dispute, decided that Messer Filippo was not eligible, and Bardo Mancini, a man violently opposed to the Plebeian interest, and most hostile to Messer Benedetto, was drawn instead. No sooner was he invested in his Magistracy than he created a *Balia*, which in reconstituting and reforming the Government banished Messer Benedetto, and admonished all the rest of his family save Messer Antonio. Before going into exile Messer Benedetto called his kinsmen together, and seeing them sorrowful and in tears, said to them: 'Fathers and Elders, you see how Fortune has broken me, and how she threatens you. At this neither do I marvel, nor should you, for thus will it always fare with those who, living among many evil men, seek to be good, and strive to maintain what the majority would overthrow. Love of my country led me to attach myself to Messer Salvestro de' Medici, and afterwards to separate from Messer Giorgio Scali. The same motive made me detest the methods of

1387. those who are now in power, and who, having hitherto found no one to chastise them, are determined that henceforth there shall be none to censure them. Nor am I displeased that by my exile I free them from the fears that possess them, not of me alone but of every one whom they know to be acquainted with their tyrannical and flagitious ways, since from my overthrow others will learn that they too are menaced. I grieve not for myself, for the honours my country gave me when she was free she cannot take from me now that she is enslaved, and the memory of my past life will always yield me more pleasure than the unhappiness that exile brings with it can cause me pain. Yet much I grieve that my country should remain at the mercy of a few, and a prey to their insolence and rapacity. I grieve also for you, because I fear that those ills which as against myself come this day to an end, will begin as against you, and visit you with worse sufferings than they have ever inflicted on me. I pray you, therefore, strengthen your hearts against any mischance, and so bear yourselves that should adversity come upon you, as come it doubtless will, all shall recognise that it comes undeservedly and through no fault of yours.'

1388. Afterwards, that he might create abroad no less a name for goodness than he had gained in Florence, he went on a pilgrimage to the sepulchre of Christ, dying at Rhodes on his return. His bones were brought to Florence, and were buried with every mark of honour by the same men who while he lived had pursued him with every calumny and wrong.

§ 24. Nor was it the family of the Alberti only that

suffered during these civic commotions ; with it many 1387. other citizens were admonished or exiled. Among the exiled were Piero Benini, Matteo Alderotti, Giovanni and Francesco del Bene, Giovanni Benci, and Andrea Adimari, together with many more belonging to the Lesser Guilds. Among the admonished were the Covoni, Benini, Rinucci, Formiconi, Corbizzi, Mannelli, and Alderotti.

It was the custom to create a *Balia* for a fixed term, but those to whom it was given, when they had done what they were appointed to do, were wont, as honourable men, to lay down the office although its term had not expired. Wherefore, when the members of this *Balia* thought they had done what the State required of them, they proposed to resign in accordance with usage. On learning this an armed crowd rushed to the Palace, demanding that the *Balia* before resigning should banish or admonish a great many others, a demand which highly displeased the Signory, who, however, put off the rioters with fair words until reinforcements arrived, when they so dealt with them that the arms taken up in fury were speedily laid aside in fear. Nevertheless, to satisfy in some degree this frantic temper, and reduce still further the authority of the Plebeian craftsmen, they enacted that whereas these last had then a third share of public honours, for the future they should have only a fourth. And to secure that there should always be among the Priors two of their number on whom the Government could rely, the Gonfalonier of Justice was authorised, in conjunction with four other citizens, to make a separate imbursement of selected names, from which two were to be drawn for every Signory.

§ 25. The Government established in 1381 having thus, after it had lasted for six years, come to an end, the city enjoyed a fair amount of internal tranquillity down to the year 1393.

Meanwhile Gian Galeazzo Visconti, who was styled Count of Virtù, entrapped his uncle Bernabò and made himself master of the whole of Lombardy, and having by fraud become Duke of Milan, now thought by force to make himself King of Italy. Accordingly, 1390. in the year 1390 he began a vigorous war against the Florentines, which he prosecuted with fluctuating fortunes, so that often he seemed more in danger of defeat than they, though had he lived they must in the end have been overpowered. Still, they made a courageous and, for a Republic, an admirable resistance, and the war was much less disastrous in its close than alarming during its progress. For after the Duke had taken Bologna, Pisa, Perugia, and Siena, and had got ready the crown wherewith he was in Florence to be crowned 1402. King of Italy, he died. Death thus prevented him from enjoying his past victories, and softened to the Florentines the sense of present defeat.

While this war was being waged with the Duke, Messer Maso degli Albizi, whom the death of Messer Piero had embittered against the Alberti, was made 1393. Gonfalonier of Justice, and party hatred, notwithstanding Messer Benedetto Alberti having died in exile, being still unquenched, he resolved before laying down his office to be revenged on the rest of that family. For this, an occasion offered when a certain person accused of secret dealings with the exiles, on being examined, named Alberto and Andrea degli Alberti as accomplices. They being forthwith arrested, the

whole city was in an uproar. The Signory, arming themselves, called a general Assembly (*Parlamento*) of the People and appointed a *Balia*, through whose agency they banished many citizens, and imbursed new names for the Magistracies. Nearly all the Alberti were among those exiled, and many craftsmen were admonished or put to death. In consequence of these manifold injuries the Guilds and the populace, thinking life as well as honour at stake, rose in arms. One company came into the Piazza, another ran to the house of Veri de' Medici, who on the death of Messer Salvestro had become head of that family. To pacify those who had come into the Piazza, the Signory appointed Messer Rinaldo Gianfigliuzzi and Donato Acciaiuoli, as of all belonging to the Great Commoners most acceptable to the Plebeians, to be their leaders, and committed to them the standards of the Guef Party and of the People. Those who went to the house of Messer Veri besought him to assume the Government, and free them from the tyranny of those citizens who were exterminating all good men and ruining the Commonwealth.

All who have left any record of those times are agreed that had not Messer Veri been more honest than ambitious, he might without hindrance have made himself absolute Lord of the city. For the grievous injuries which, with reason or without, had been inflicted on the crafts and on those who befriended them, had so kindled their minds to vengeance, that nothing but the lack of a head to lead them could have kept them from satisfying their desire. Nor was an adviser wanting to remind Messer Veri of what lay within his grasp; for Antonio de' Medici, who had long enter-

1393. tained a private grudge against him, urged him to assume the headship of the Republic. To whom Messer Veri answered: 'While you were my enemy, Antonio, I never feared your threats, nor now that you are grown my friend will I be misled by your counsels.' Then turning to the multitude he exhorted them to be of good cheer, since if they would be guided by him he was willing to be their defender. And going attended by them to the Piazza, and thence ascending into the Palace, he said to the assembled Signory that he could nowise regret having so lived that the people of Florence loved him, but took it ill they should have formed an opinion of him which there was nothing in his past life to warrant; for never having shown himself either turbulent or ambitious, he knew not why it should be thought that as a turbulent man he would countenance disorder, or as an ambitious man desire to usurp the Government. Wherefore he prayed the Signory that the ignorance of the multitude might not be imputed as a fault in him, since so far as he was concerned he had placed himself with all haste in their Lordships' hands. He reminded them, however, that it would be well to use their advantage with moderation, and be content to enjoy a partial success attended by the safety of the city, rather than seek a more complete victory which might cause its ruin.

Messer Veri was much commended by the Priors, and exhorted by them to persuade the people to lay down their arms, when the Signory would not fail to act as he and other citizens advised. On receiving this promise he returned to the Piazza, and joined his band of followers to the companies led by Messer Rinaldo and Messer Donato. He then told all of

them that he had found the Signory very well disposed 1393. towards them, that many matters had been discussed, though from want of time, and from the absence of the Magistrates, nothing had been settled. He therefore besought them to lay down their arms, and render obedience to the Signory, since they might take his word for it that humility and entreaty were more likely to prevail with that body than insolence and threats. If they consented to be guided by him, he would not be wanting to their interests and safety. By which assurance he induced every one to return to his home.

§ 26. The populace having laid aside their arms, the Signory first of all secured the Piazza, and afterwards enrolled two thousand men from among those of the citizens who they thought could be trusted. These they distributed equally under the standards of the several districts of the city, with orders to be ready to lend assistance whenever called upon. All not enrolled were forbidden to carry arms. These preparations made, they banished or put to death many of the craftsmen who had been more active than their fellows in the late disturbances. At the same time, to give the Standard-bearer of Justice more dignity and importance, they ordained that no one under forty-five years of age should hold the office. For the further strengthening of their authority they made many other provisions, intolerable to those against whom they were directed, and distasteful to all worthy citizens even of their own party, who could not think that to be a good or safe Government which required to be defended by so much violence.

Nor was it only to the remnant of the Alberti family

1396. left in Florence, and to the Medici, who blamed themselves for the people having been deceived, that this excessive violence was odious, but to many others also. The first, however, who ventured to oppose it was Messer Donato, son of Jacopo Acciaiuoli. He, though holding a great position in Florence, being looked on rather as the superior than as the equal of Maso degli Albizi (who from what he had done when Gonfalonier was now almost head of the State), could not live happy when so many were discontented, nor yet, as most men do, turn the common suffering to his private account. Wherefore he determined to make trial whether he could not restore their country to the exiles, or at any rate recover for the admonished the rights of which they had been deprived. Accordingly he went about instilling his views into the ears of this and the other citizen, showing them there was no way but this to quiet the people or quell the spirit of faction, and declaring that he only waited till he was of the Signory to give effect to this desire. And since in human affairs delay brings weariness and haste danger, to escape the former he hazarded the latter. His kinsman Michele Acciaiuoli, and his friend Niccolò Ricoveri were now of the Signory, and this seemed to Messer Donato an opportunity to be used. He therefore requested them to submit to the Councils a law providing for the recall of the exiles. At his instance they broached the matter to their colleagues, who answered that they had no mind to attempt changes where the gain was doubtful and the danger certain. Whereupon Messer Donato, all other methods having been tried in vain, in a fit of passion sent word to the Signory that since they refused to reform the city with

the means at their disposal, he would reform it by 1396.
arms. Which threat of his gave so much offence that, the matter being reported to the leading members of the Government, Messer Donato was cited, and, appearing, was convicted on the evidence of him to whom he gave the message, and banished to Barletta. Alamanno and Antonio de' Medici, with all others of that family descended from Messer Alamanno, were likewise banished, together with many craftsmen of the humbler sort, but well esteemed by the people. These events took place two years after Messer Maso recovered the reins of Government.

§ 27. While the city was in this plight, with many 1397.
malcontents within her walls and many banished men without, Picchio Cavicciuli, Tommaso de' Ricci, Antonio de' Medici, Benedetto degli Spini, Antonio Girolami, Cristofano di Carlone, with other two of humbler birth, but all of them young men of high spirit, and ready to join in any enterprise that would restore them to their country, were among the exiles at Bologna. To whom Pigiello and Baroccio Cavicciuli, who though admonished were still living in Florence, sent word by a private hand that were they to return secretly to the city they would be lodged in a house whence they could issue forth, slay Messer Maso degli Albizi, and call the people to arms, who being discontented would readily be stirred to revolt, and all the more readily since they would be seconded by the Ricci, the Adimari, the Medici, and many other powerful families. Fired by the hopes thus held out, these youths on the fourth day of August 1397 came to Florence, and secretly entering the lodging provided

1397. for them, sent out one of their number to watch Messer Maso, whose death it had been agreed was to be the signal for a general rising. Messer Maso, issuing from his house, stopped at a chemist's shop near the Church of San Piero Maggiore. The man set to watch him ran to inform his comrades, who seized their weapons, but on reaching the place indicated found Maso gone. Nowise disheartened by the failure of this first attempt, they now made for the Old Market, where they slew a man of the faction opposed to them. Then raising tumultuous shouts of *The People—To Arms—Liberty—Death to Tyrants*, they turned their steps towards the New Market, slaying a second man at the corner of the Calimala. Proceeding on their way with the same cries, but finding none arming on their behalf, they betook themselves to the Loggia della Neghittosa, where they mounted on a bench, and soon were surrounded by a great crowd who gathered to look at but not to help them. These they called on in loud tones to arm and come forth from the bondage they so greatly hated; declaring that it was the complaints of their suffering fellow-citizens, far more than their own private wrongs, that had moved them to make this effort. They had been told that many were praying God for an opportunity to revenge themselves, and would act when they had any one to lead them. But now when the opportunity had come, and the leaders were there, they stood staring at one another, stolidly waiting till those who were bringing them liberty were slain and they themselves abandoned to a worse thralldom than before. It was strange indeed that men wont to take up arms on the slightest wrong would not now stir for the gravest, and could endure to see so many

of their fellow-citizens exiled or admonished, when it ^{1397.} was in their power to give back to these their country, to those their civil rights. But their words, though true, no whit moved the multitude, whether from fear, or because the death of the two who had been slain made their murderers hateful. Whereupon these sowers of sedition, finding that neither their words nor their actions influenced any one, and recognising when too late how perilous is the attempt to free a people willing to abide in servitude, withdrew in despair to the Church of Santa Reparata, where they shut themselves in, not with any hope to save their lives, but only to delay their death.

The Signory on the first alarm had armed themselves, and had barred the doors of the Palace, but when they saw how things were going, and learned who the men were that had caused this disturbance, and where they were shut in, they took heart, and gave orders to the Captain to go with a body of armed men and seize them. Accordingly the doors of the church were forced open without much trouble, when some of the rioters were slain, the rest made prisoners. When these last were examined it was found that none besides themselves were incriminated, except Piggliello and Baroccio Cavicciuli, who with the other prisoners were condemned to death.

§ 28. After this attempt another followed of graver ^{1400.} import. The Republic, as we have already noted, was at this time at war with the Duke of Milan, who seeing he could not subdue it by open force, resorted to secret intrigues, and in concert with the Florentine exiles, with whom Lombardy swarmed, contrived a

1400. plot, which was communicated to many within the city, whereby on a fixed day a large company of the exiles fit to bear arms were to advance from the villages nearest Florence, enter the town by the channel of the Arno, and joining their friends inside the walls hasten to the houses of the chief rulers, and putting these to death, reconstitute the Government as they pleased. Among the conspirators within the city was a member of the Ricci family named Samminiato; and because it commonly happens in respect of plots that while a few accomplices are not enough to carry them out, a large number leads to their discovery, it so chanced that where Samminiato looked for a confederate he found an accuser. For on the scheme being imparted by him to Salvestro Cavicciuli, whom his own wrongs as well as those of his kinsmen might well have kept faithful, Salvestro, thinking more of near dangers than of distant hopes, at once revealed the whole business to the Signory, who caused Samminiato to be arrested, and forced him to disclose all the details of the conspiracy. Of his accomplices, however, none was captured except Tommaso Davizi, who, coming from Bologna without notice of what had taken place in Florence, was arrested on the road; on Samminiato's arrest all the others took alarm and fled. After Samminiato and Tommaso had been dealt with as the gravity of their offence deserved, a *Balia* of many citizens was appointed with authority to trace out the other conspirators and secure the safety of the Government. By them six of the Ricci family, six of the Alberti, two of the Medici, three of the Scali, two of the Strozzi, Bindo Altoviti, Bernardo Adimari, and many besides of less note, were declared rebels, while,

with a few exceptions, the entire families of the Alberti, Ricci, and Medici were admonished for ten years. Among the members of the Alberti family not admonished was Messer Antonio, he being thought peaceful and inoffensive. But it so happened that before the suspicions excited by the conspiracy had died down, a certain monk was arrested, who at the time the conspirators were concerting their plans had frequently been seen coming and going between Florence and Bologna. This man confessed that he had repeatedly brought letters to Messer Antonio, who was forthwith arrested, and though from first to last he denied the charge, was convicted on the evidence of the monk, condemned in a fine, and sentenced to be banished to a distance of three hundred miles from Florence. And that the Alberti might not from day to day be raising new dangers for the Government, every member of the family over fifteen years of age was sent into exile.

§ 29. This took place in the year 1400. Two years later Gian Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, died, whose death, as already mentioned, brought the war, after it had lasted twelve years, to a close. Freed from enemies both within and without, the Government now assumed greater authority, and undertaking an expedition against Pisa obtained a signal victory. From 1400 down to 1433 civil tranquillity prevailed, except that in 1412 a new *Balia* was constituted to deal with the Alberti, who had quitted the places of exile assigned them. This *Balia* passed new ordinances strengthening the Government, and punishing the Alberti with fines. During the period mentioned the Florentines engaged

1409-1414. in a war with Ladislas, King of Naples, terminating on the death of the King in 1414. In the course of this contest Ladislas, meeting with reverses, ceded the city of Cortona, whereof he was Lord, to the Florentines; but, recovering strength soon after, renewed hostilities. This second war proved a far more serious contest than the first, and had it not, as in the case of the Duke of Milan, been terminated by the King's death, he too, like the Duke, would have put the independence of Florence in peril. Nor was the issue of this war less fortunate for Florence than that of the other. For Ladislas had already taken Rome, Siena, the March of Ancona, and the whole of Romagna, so that at the time he died nothing was wanting but the fall of Florence to allow him to turn his whole strength against Lombardy. Thus Death was kinder to the Florentines than any other ally, and stronger to save them than any valour of their own.

After the death of King Ladislas the city was at peace both at home and abroad for eight years, at the close of which time, and contemporaneously with the 1422. outbreak of war with Filippo, Duke of Milan, factions renewed themselves. These were never afterwards allayed until the fall of the Government, which maintained itself from the year 1381 down to 1434, conducting many wars with much glory, and adding Arezzo, Pisa, Cortona, Livorno, and Montepulciano to the Florentine dominions. And still greater things would it have achieved had the city kept itself united, and had the old spirit of faction not been rekindled, as in the following Book shall be more fully shown.

BOOK IV

§ 1. CITIES administered as Republics, more especially when their institutions are not well planned, often change their rulers and their form of government, alternating not, as many suppose, between freedom and oppression, but between oppression and licence. For it is but the name of Freedom that is worshipped, whether by the Commons who are the ministers of licence, or by the Nobles who are the ministers of oppression, neither of them being willing to submit themselves to the laws or to the rulers.

True it is that when, to the great felicity of a city, there arises in it (as sometimes, though seldom, happens), a good, wise, and powerful citizen who frames ordinances and laws whereby these humours of the Nobles and the Commons are quieted, or so controlled that they can do no hurt, that city may truly be called free, and its Government pronounced strong and stable; since, resting on good laws and ordinances, it, unlike other States, has no need to be supported by the qualities of any one man.

Many of the ancient Republics being endowed with institutions of this character maintained themselves for a long period under a single form of Government; whereas all those States in which such institutions are and have been wholly wanting, will be found continually changing their Government from the tyrannical to the

licentious, and back again from the licentious to the tyrannical. In such States therefore there neither is nor can be any stability. For each of the two forms of Government has its powerful enemies. Simple men dislike the one, wise men are offended by the other; the one readily works harm, the other with difficulty effects good; under this the bold and arrogant, under that fools, exercise too much authority, while each alike has to be maintained by the ability and good fortune of some one man, who may be disabled by obstruction or removed by death.

§ 2. I say, therefore, that the Government which had its beginning in Florence on the death of Messer Giorgio Scali in the year 1381 was upheld at first by the vigour and capacity of Messer Maso degli Albizi, then of Niccolò da Uzano, after whom the citizens possessed of most authority were Bartolommeo Valori, Nerone di Nigi, Messer Rinaldo degli Albizi, Neri di Gino, and Lapo Niccolini.

King Ladislas being dead, and the State of Lombardy rent by divisions, Florence remained at peace from the year 1414 to 1422, for neither at home nor abroad was there cause for disquiet. The factions, however, which had originated in the feuds of the Albizi and the Ricci, and were afterwards revived with such violent consequences by Messer Salvestro de' Medici, were never extinguished; for although the faction most favoured by the mass of the people had been in power for three years only, and was overthrown in 1381, nevertheless, since a majority of the citizens were imbued with its spirit, it could never be entirely suppressed. True it is that frequent plebiscites (*Par-*

lamenti) and continual persecutions directed against its leaders, from the year 1381 down to 1400, diminished it to almost nothing. The chief families subjected to these attacks were the Alberti, the Ricci, and the Medici, all of whom were again and again reduced in number and plundered of their wealth; while the few among them who still remained in the city were deprived of civil privileges. These repeated blows humbled the party and well-nigh destroyed it. Still with many there survived the memory of wrongs endured, and with it the desire to revenge them, though this, finding no support on which to rest, remained hidden in their hearts. The Great Commoners, though governing the city without opposition, yet made two mistakes which eventually caused their overthrow. From the continued exercise of authority they grew overbearing; while from their ascendancy having lasted so long, and from their jealousy of one another, they came to be less on their guard than they should have been against men who could do them harm.

§ 3. Thus by their perverse behaviour they revived from day to day the popular hatred, and, as they felt no fear, keeping no watch on what was likely to occasion mischief, nay, in their jealousy of each other even fostering the seeds of danger, they brought it to pass that the family of the Medici recovered its authority. The first of the family who began to rise again was Giovanni di Bicci who, having amassed great wealth and being of a kindly and conciliatory disposition, was by a concession of the ruling faction admitted to the highest magistracy; whereupon the ^{1421.} Plebeians, believing they had at last found a champion,

1421. raised such rejoicings throughout the city as filled the minds of the prudent with a reasonable anxiety ; for it seemed to them that the old humours were breaking out afresh. Warnings to this effect were not wanting on the part of Niccolò da Uzano, who said that he saw in Giovanni a man of far greater capacity than Salvestro had ever possessed, and pointed out the danger of strengthening one who already stood so high in public estimation ; for though it was easy to treat disorders at their beginnings, it was hard to heal them after they had been allowed to mature. But Niccolò was not listened to by his colleagues, who, envying his reputation, sought companions for his overthrow.

While Florence was steeped in these humours which had begun secretly to ferment, Filippo, second son of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, who by the death of his brother had become Lord of all Lombardy, thinking himself equal to the attempt desired greatly to regain the Lordship of Genoa, which city at this time lived in freedom under its Doge Messer Tommaso da Campo Fregoso. Success, however, in this or in any other enterprise seemed to him doubtful unless he could first proclaim publicly the conclusion of a new treaty with Florence, the credit of which, he thought, would enable him to carry out his designs. Accordingly he sent envoys to the Florentines to ask their consent. Many citizens, perceiving that such a treaty would be of great benefit to the Duke but of little utility to Florence, advised that it should not be agreed to, but that without entering into any new accord they should continue to maintain with him the same peaceful relations in which they had lived for many years. Others were of opinion that the Duke's offer should be

accepted, but that the treaty ought to contain such conditions as, were he to violate them, would make his hostile intentions clear, so that on a breach it would be open to them to make war on him with more complete justification. After the matter had been discussed at length, a treaty was concluded wherein Filippo undertook not to meddle with territory on this side of the Magra and the Panaro. 1421.

§4. After concluding this treaty Filippo got possession of Brescia and, soon after, of Genoa, contrary to the expectation of those Florentine citizens by whom the treaty had been promoted; for they had reckoned on Brescia being defended by the Venetians, and had supposed that Genoa could defend herself. And inasmuch as under the accord made between Filippo and the Genoese Doge, Sarzana, with other towns on this side the Magra, was relinquished to the Duke on terms that, if at any time he desired to part with them he should make them over to the Genoese, it followed that Filippo had broken his covenant with the Florentines. He had, moreover, entered into an accord with the Pope's Legate in Bologna. These things disquieted the minds of our citizens, and led them in their fear of new evils to bethink them of new remedies. Their uneasiness becoming known to Filippo, whether to justify himself, or to ascertain the disposition of the Florentines, or to lull their distrust, he sent envoys to Florence to express his astonishment that he should have incurred suspicion, and offering to undo anything he had done that could give ground for uneasiness. The only effect of this embassy was to create division in the city. For one set of men, including all among 1422.

1422. the rulers who were held in most esteem, thought it would be prudent to arm and so be prepared to frustrate hostile designs; for if, after these preparations were made, Filippo should remain quiet, then no war would have been begun and peace would have been secured. Many others, however, whether through jealousy of the governing body, or from their dread of war, maintained that a friend ought not to be lightly suspected, and that nothing Filippo had done gave ground for suspicion; while all must see that to appoint the Ten and hire troops plainly meant war, and that a war entered into against so powerful a prince would involve the city in certain ruin without possibility of resulting advantage. For as Romagna lay between, we could never become masters of any acquisition made in Lombardy; nor could we venture to molest Romagna, the Church being so near a neighbour. Howbeit, the counsellors of warlike preparation prevailed over the advocates of peace. The Ten were created, troops were enrolled, and new taxes imposed, and as these last weighed more heavily on the lower classes than on the higher the city was filled with murmurings, every one denouncing the ambition and rapacity of those in power, and accusing them of promoting an unnecessary war in order to serve their own ends and to oppress and trample on the people.

1423. § 5. No open rupture with the Duke had as yet taken place, but a general distrust prevailed. For the Legate of Bologna, fearing Messer Antonio Bentivogli, who having been banished was then at Castel Bolognese, had obtained troops from Filippo, the approach of which to their confines filled the Florentine rulers with

anxiety. But what occasioned most alarm and was the chief cause of war being declared, was the Duke's conduct with regard to Forlì. Giorgio Ordelaffi, Lord of Forlì, left on his death his son Tibaldo under the guardianship of Filippo, and though the boy's mother, distrusting the guardian thus appointed, sent away Tibaldo to her father Lodovico Alidosi, Lord of Imola, she was nevertheless constrained by the people of Forlì to comply with her husband's will, and restore the boy into the Duke's hands. Whereupon Filippo, to escape suspicion and cloak his designs, contrived that the Marquis of Ferrara should, as of his own motion, send troops under Guido Torello to take over the Government of Forlì; in which way the town came into Filippo's power. Word of this affair, and of the advance of the Duke's soldiers to Bologna reaching Florence at the same time, made it easier to decide for war, though that decision was still strongly opposed; Giovanni de' Medici speaking openly against it, declaring that even were they certain that the Duke's intentions were hostile, it was better to await attack than to anticipate it; for thus when war broke out all the powers of Italy, those friendly to the Duke no less than those who favoured Florence, would recognise that the Florentines were not in fault, so that when the Duke's ambition was revealed he would be unable to ask assistance with the same confidence as they. Moreover, they would be animated by a very different courage, and put forth far superior strength, in defending themselves than in the defence of others. To this it was answered that it was unwise to wait at home the attack of an enemy, and advantageous to go out to meet him; for Fortune was kinder to the assailant than

1423. to him who stood on the defensive; and a war carried on in an enemy's country, if more costly, at any rate brought less suffering than a war waged in one's own. Finally, warlike counsels prevailed, and it was resolved that the Ten should use all efforts to rescue Forlì from the hands of the Duke.

1424. § 6. When Filippo saw the Florentines bent on seizing what he was resolved to hold, laying aside all disguise, he sent Agnolo della Pergola with a strong body of troops to Imola in order that the Lord of that city, having to look to his own defence, might think less of protecting his grandson. The Florentine forces were still at Modigliana when Agnolo reached Imola, where, finding the moats round the town frozen over by the extreme rigour of the season, he crossed them by night, and, carrying the city by surprise, sent Lodovico a prisoner to Milan.

On finding Imola lost and war declared, the Florentines marched their troops to Forlì, to which town they laid siege, investing it closely on all sides, and at the same time, to hinder the Duke's forces from combining for its relief, took Count Alberigo into their pay, who from his stronghold of Zagonara made daily forays as far as the gates of Imola. Perceiving that from the strong position which the Florentines had occupied he could not safely succour Forlì, Agnolo della Pergola resolved to turn his arms against Zagonara, judging that the Florentines could not afford to let that fortress be lost, and yet, should they attempt to relieve it, must raise the siege of Forlì and fight at a disadvantage. The Duke's forces having reduced Alberigo to sue for terms, these were granted on his engaging to surrender

the fortress unless relieved by the Florentines within ^{1424.} fifteen days. Tidings of which danger coming both to Florence and to the Florentine camp, the anxiety of all that the enemy should not obtain this victory led to his obtaining one still greater. For, quitting their camp at Forlì in order to succour Zagonara, the Florentines at the very first encounter were put to utter rout, not so much by the valour of the enemy as by the untowardness of the season. For after marching for many hours through deep mud and in heavy rain they had to engage adversaries fresh and vigorous, by whom they were easily vanquished. And yet in this great defeat, renowned throughout all Italy, there died only Lodovico degli Obizzi with two of his men-at-arms, who, falling from horseback, were smothered in the mire.

§ 7. All Florence was sorely afflicted by the news of this reverse, and most of all the great citizens who had advocated the war. For they saw they had to deal with a powerful enemy, while they themselves were left without an army and without allies, and moreover had the people against them, taunting them in the streets with the burdens they had imposed, and with a war begun without reasonable cause. 'Forsooth,' they cried, 'it was to strike terror into the heart of our enemy that these rulers of ours created the Ten! See how they have succoured Forlì, see how they have rescued it from the hands of the Duke! But their schemes are now unmasked, and we know to what ends their measures were directed. Not to defend Liberty, which they look on as their foe, but to swell that power of theirs which God had righteously reduced. This is but one of many enterprises per-

1424. nicious to our city. The war against King Ladislas was just like this. Whither will they now turn for help? To Pope Martin, whom to please Braccio they have ill-treated and insulted? To Queen Giovanna, forced by their desertion to cast herself into the arms of the King of Aragon?' To which jibes were added all such others as are usual with an angry people. Wherefore it seemed good to the Signory to call together many citizens, who with gentle words might soothe the inflamed passions of the multitude. To them Messer Rinaldo degli Albizi, eldest son of Messer Maso, who, as well for his own merits as from regard to his father's memory aspired to be foremost among the citizens of Florence, spoke at length, showing that it was unwise to judge of things by their results, since well-laid plans had often untoward issues, while ill-advised measures sometimes turned out happily. But if unwise counsels were to be approved because they had succeeded, it would only encourage men to blunder; and as such counsels are not always fortunate, the consequences would be disastrous to the public welfare. So likewise it was a mistake to blame a wise design because it had an unhappy issue, since thereby prudent citizens would be discouraged from proffering advice and declaring their opinions. He then explained the need there was to undertake this war, and that had it not been begun in Romagna it must have been begun in Tuscany; and said, that since God had willed that their men-at-arms should be routed, their loss would be the heavier the more they gave way to it; while by showing a brave front to Fortune, and doing what they could to supply a remedy, they would not feel their reverse so sorely,

nor would the Duke be so elated with his victory. Nor ought they to be disheartened by fears of increased outlay or imposts. For it was reasonable to expect that the former would be lessened, and the latter be much lighter in the future than in the past, since far less equipment was needed by him who seeks only to defend himself than by him who undertakes to attack another. Finally, he exhorted them to follow the example of their ancestors, who, never losing courage on any mishap, had always withstood successfully the mightiest princes.

§ 8. Whereupon, reassured by his authority, the citizens took Count Oddo, son of Braccio, into their pay, assigning him as his officer in chief Niccolò Piccinino, bred under Braccio and more renowned than any other who had fought under his banner. With him they joined certain other Condottieri, and remounted the men-at-arms who had lost their horses at Zagonara. A commission of twenty was appointed ^{1426.} to assess the taxes anew, who, seeing the ruling citizens cast down by the late defeat, were emboldened to assess them without fear or favour at the full rate. This assessment gave much offence to the wealthy Commoners, though at first, to seem disinterested, they made no complaint of their own burdens, but found fault with the whole scheme of taxation as unjust, and recommended that some remission should be made. Their proposal, however, got wind, and was defeated by the Council. To give practical proof of the hardship of the tax and make it universally odious, they then contrived that the collectors should enforce payment with extreme rigour, and with authority to put

1426. to death any who resisted them. Whence lamentable consequences followed, many citizens being wounded or slain.

It now seemed likely that the opposed factions would come to blows, and all prudent men dreaded what might result; for it was believed that the great folk, who were accustomed to be treated with deference, would never suffer violent hands to be laid on them, while every one else desired that all should be taxed alike. Wherefore, consulting together, many of the foremost among the citizens came to the conclusion that their only course was to get the Government again into their hands; since it had been their own inertness that had emboldened outsiders to intervene in public business, and had given confidence to those who usually led the multitude. After frequently discussing these matters among themselves, they resolved to reconsider them at a meeting where all of them should be present. Accordingly, having obtained leave from Messer Lorenzo Ridolfi and Messer Francesco Gianfigliuzzi, who were then of the Signory, over seventy citizens assembled in the Church of San Stefano. From this meeting Giovanni de' Medici was absent, whether, as being a suspected person, he was not invited, or because he had no desire to be present in an assembly to whose aims he was opposed.

§ 9. Messer Rinaldo degli Albizi spoke to those assembled. He laid before them the condition of the city, showing them how by their negligence it had fallen into the hands of the Plebeians, from whom in the year 1381 it had been rescued by their fathers. He recalled the iniquities of the Government which

held office from 1378 to 1381, reminding them how ^{1426.} under it all those present had lost, some a father, some a grandsire, and warned them that they were reverting to the same dangers, and the city relapsing into the same disorders. For already the populace had imposed a tax contrived to serve their own interests, and by and by, unless curbed by superior force or led by better guidance, they would create a magistracy to their own liking. This effected, the present rulers would be displaced, the Government which for two-and-forty years had directed affairs with so much glory to the city would be overthrown, and Florence be ruled either at haphazard and as pleased the mob (when one class of the citizens would live under no restraint, the other in constant peril), or else under the tyranny of some one man whom the populace should choose for its Lord. Wherefore he declared that all who loved their country and their good name were bound to bestir themselves, and to recall to mind the dauntless temper of Bardo Mancini who, by the overthrow of the Alberti, rescued the city from the troubles into which it had then fallen. The audacity wherewith the populace were now infected was caused by the Scrutinies (*Squittini*) being too wide. These had been carelessly prepared, and in consequence the Signory was swamped with new and obscure men. He went on to say that the only cure he saw for the present mischief was to restore to the Grandees their civil status, and deprive the lesser Guilds of their influence by reducing their number from fourteen to seven. This would weaken the Plebeians in the Councils, not only because there would be fewer of them, but also because the Grandees, who from their ancient grudge

1426. would do what they could to thwart them, would exercise greater authority. He added that it was politic to use men as suited the times, and whereas their ancestors had used the Plebeians to quell the arrogance of the Grandees, so now when these had been humbled and the others had waxed insolent, it was well with the help of the Grandees to restrain the insolence of the Plebeians; and this was to be effected either by fraud or force. For them the resort to force was easy, since many of their number were of the Council of the Ten, and so able to bring troops secretly into the city.

Messer Rinaldo was much applauded, and his advice approved of by every one present. Niccolò da Uzano among others declared that all Messer Rinaldo had said was true, and that his remedies were good and safe provided they could be used without bringing the city to open division. This might easily be managed if they could persuade Giovanni de' Medici to take part in their plans. For if he consented, the populace, being left weak and without a head, could do no harm; but if he stood out, nothing could be done but by arms, and using arms he thought the attempt dangerous, since they might either fail to obtain a victory or to turn their victory to account. And with modesty he reminded them of the warning he had given them before, and pointed out how they had then declined to apply a remedy to these very disorders when it would have been easy to do so; whereas now, nothing could be attempted without risk of worse mischief, and their only safety lay in gaining over Messer Giovanni. Rinaldo was accordingly commissioned to see Giovanni, and ascertain whether he could be got to take part with them.

§ 10. Messer Rinaldo executed his commission, 1426. using the best arguments he could think of to persuade Giovanni to second the measures proposed, and not, out of favour for the populace, encourage it in courses ruinous alike to the Government and to the city itself. Giovanni answered that he thought it the duty of a good and wise citizen to make no change in the customary institutions of his city, since nothing gave more offence than any tampering with these. Such changes must displease many, and where many are displeased some disastrous outbreak is every day to be feared. It seemed to him that the course resolved on would lead to two most mischievous consequences : for first, it would confer privileges on persons who, from never having enjoyed them, valued them less, and so had less cause to complain of their absence ; and secondly, it would take away privileges from those who, being used to have them, would never rest until they were restored. And since the injury done to the one class of persons would far outweigh the benefit conferred on the other, the author of this change would gain few friends and make many enemies, and these last far more eager to attack him than the others to defend. For men are naturally more prone to revenge wrongs than to repay benefits, the latter savouring of loss, while the former is both pleasant and profitable. Then addressing himself more directly to Messer Rinaldo, he said : ‘ And as for you yourself, were you to call to mind what has taken place lately, and to reflect among what pitfalls men walk in our city, you would be less zealous in furthering this resolve ; for he who recommends it, so soon as by your exertions he has stripped the people of their authority, will, with

1426. the aid of that same people, whom this injury will have made your enemies, proceed to wrest your authority from you; and your fate will resemble that of Benedetto Alberti, who, on the persuasion of some who little loved him, consented to the ruin of Messer Giorgio Scali and Messer Tommaso Strozzi, and soon after was driven into exile by the very persons on whose persuasions he had acted.' He besought him therefore to think better of the matter, and rather seek to imitate his father, who to secure the general goodwill lowered the price of salt, passed a law that any man whose taxes fell below a half-florin might pay them or not as he pleased, and had it enacted that on the days the Council met every man should be safe against his creditors. Giovanni ended by saying that, for his own part, he was for leaving the institutions of the city as they stood.

§ 11. What had passed at this conference coming to be generally known added to the hatred already felt towards the others, but enhanced the reputation of Giovanni, who, however, avoided all manifestations of his popularity, lest he should be thought to countenance those who, under colour of favouring him, sought to bring about changes, and to all who spoke with him he gave it to be understood that his desire was not to foster but to extinguish factions, and, as for himself, that he sought for nothing but the unity of the city. To many of his followers, who would have liked him to play a more stirring part in public affairs, this moderation was distasteful; among others, to his kinsman Averardo, who, being naturally headstrong, kept constantly urging him to crush his enemies and back

his friends, upbraiding him for his coldness and want ^{1426.} of spirit. These, he said, were the causes why his enemies were less careful how they engaged in plots against him, which one day would bring about the ruin of his family and friends. His son Cosimo also incited him to a like course. But, in spite of all such reproofs and prophecies, Giovanni was not to be turned from his resolve. The spirit of faction, however, was now apparent, and the city in open division.

There were in the Palace in the service of the ^{1427.} Signory two Secretaries, Ser Martino and Ser Pagolo, the former a partisan of the Medici, the other of Uzano. On finding that Giovanni would not come to terms, Messer Rinaldo resolved to deprive Ser Martino of his office, thinking that were he removed he could count on having the Palace more in his favour. His design, however, was seen through by his opponents, and not only was Ser Martino maintained in his office, but, to the great hurt and vexation of his party, Ser Pagolo was dismissed. This must at once have led to mischief, had it not been that the city, dismayed by the rout at Zagonara, was wholly occupied with the war in which it was now involved. For while the events of which I have made mention were happening in Florence, Agnolo della Pergola, taking advantage of the weakness of the places themselves, and of the negligence of their defenders, seized on all the towns of Romagna held by the Florentines, with the exception of Castrocaro and Modigliana. At the capture of two of these towns incidents occurred which show how greatly men esteem valour even in an enemy, and detest cowardice and treachery.

1424. § 12. When the Duke's troops attacked the stronghold of Monte Petroso they set fire to it on all sides. Biagio del Melano, the Castellan of the fortress, seeing no chance of saving it, threw down from the walls, at a point where the flames had not yet reached, bundles of rags and straw, and on the top of these his two little children, calling aloud to the enemy: 'Take the gifts I had from Fortune, whereof it is in your power to deprive me; those others that are of the soul, and that touch my name and honour, I give you not, nor shall you take from me.' The besiegers hastened to rescue the children, and offered Biagio ropes and ladders whereby to save himself. These, however, he rejected, choosing rather to perish in the flames than owe his life to the enemies of his country. An example which may well match with the heroic deeds of antiquity—nay, more notable even than these, because rare in the time wherein we live. Everything that the enemy succeeded in saving from the conflagration they restored to the children, who with the greatest tenderness were sent home to their kinsfolk. Nor was the Commonwealth less loving towards them, maintaining them, while they lived, at the public charge.

The other incident, very different in character, happened at Galeata, where the Governor, Zanobi del Pino, not only surrendered the fortress to the enemy without attempting any defence, but also advised Agnolo to quit the mountains of Romagna for the Tuscan hills, where he could carry on the war with less danger and more profit. Disgusted with his baseness and perfidy, Agnolo made him over to his retainers, who, after subjecting him to many other scoffs, would give him nothing to eat but scrolls of paper painted

over with vipers, telling him they meant on that diet to convert him from a Guelf to a Ghibelline; the result being that in a few days he died of hunger.

§ 13. Meanwhile Count Oddo, to try whether he ^{1425.} could bring about an alliance with the Lord of Faenza, or at any rate prevent Agnolo della Pergola from ravaging Romagna unchecked, had entered the Val di Lamone attended by Niccolò Piccinino. The valley was steep and rugged, its inhabitants bred to arms, and here Count Oddo met his death, while Niccolò was made prisoner and sent to Faenza. Yet chance determined that this reverse should obtain for the Florentines a result which success might not have secured. Niccolò so wrought on the minds of the young Lord of Faenza and his mother that he persuaded them to enter into an alliance with Florence, and under this convention Niccolò was set free. He did not, however, apply to his own case the arguments he had used with others; for while bargaining with the city as to his pay, either from the terms proposed to him being too low, or because he had better offers from other quarters, he suddenly marched off from Arezzo where he had been encamped, and passing into Lombardy took service with the Duke.

Dismayed by this desertion and dispirited by repeated defeats, the Florentines now saw plainly that without assistance they could no longer maintain the war. Accordingly they sent envoys to the Venetians praying them to resist, while it was still practicable, the aggrandisement of the Duke, who unless his progress were checked would soon become as dangerous to Venice as now to Florence. This appeal was backed

1425. by Francesco Carmagnola, accounted in these days a most valiant soldier, who at one time had been in the pay of the Duke, but afterwards had thrown up his service. The Venetians, not knowing how far they could trust Carmagnola, for they suspected that the enmity between him and the Duke was merely feigned, were at a loss how to decide. While they hesitated, it so happened that the Duke made an attempt to poison Carmagnola by the hands of one of his servants. The poison, though not potent enough to kill, reduced him to the last extremity. The cause of his sickness being discovered, the Venetians were relieved of their suspicions, and, the Florentines continuing their solicitations, a league was entered into whereby each side agreed to carry on the war at their common cost, on the understanding that all acquisitions made in Lombardy should belong to the Venetians, all those in Romagna and Tuscany to the Florentines, and that Carmagnola should be Captain-General of the League. The war entered upon in pursuance of this agreement was, however, confined to Lombardy, where it was ably conducted by Carmagnola, who within a few months took many strongholds from the Duke, together with the city of Brescia, the capture of which last was in those times, having regard to the methods of warfare then followed, considered wonderful.
- 1426.
1427. § 14. The war begun in 1422 had now lasted for five years, and the citizens of Florence were so wearied of the heavy taxes levied upon them during the whole of this time that they resolved to put things on a new footing. And that all might contribute equally in proportion to their means, a tax on property was

imposed under which every man was rated at half a florin on every hundred he possessed. But the rates being thus fixed by law, and not at the discretion of the taxing officer, bore heavily on the ruling citizens who, even before the law was passed, regarded it with disfavour. Giovanni de' Medici alone spoke openly in its praise, and so secured its being carried. In assessing the tax a return of every man's entire possessions had to be made, and as he who makes the return is said by the Florentines *accatastare*, the tax itself came to be known as the *Catasto*. This measure checked to some extent the tyranny of the powerful, who could no longer as before browbeat their inferiors, and awe them to silence in the Councils. Consequently it was received with much favour by the people at large, but with extreme displeasure by those in power. But because men are never contented, and getting one thing will never rest till they have obtained another, the populace, not satisfied with the equality of taxation secured by the new law, demanded that the past also should be opened up and inquiry made how much less than their share, as fixed by the *Catasto*, had heretofore been paid by ruling citizens, who should forthwith be compelled to make good the deficiency and so brought to an equality with others who, to pay what they did not owe, had been obliged to sell their possessions. This demand alarmed the great folk much more than the *Catasto* itself, and in defending themselves they never ceased to condemn it. This, they said, is a most unjust tax, since it is levied even on movables possessed to-day and lost to-morrow; moreover, there are many persons who have their money hidden away so that the *Catasto* cannot reach it; further, it was only fair that those who

1427. put aside their own business in order to attend to the interests of the Republic should be subjected to lighter public burdens ; it was enough that they gave their personal services, and it would be unreasonable that the city should benefit both by their money and by their labours while others contributed their money only. Those who were in favour of the *Catasto* replied, that if movables changed hands the assessments also could be altered, and by frequent alterations the inconvenience complained of could be cured. The case of those who had secret hoards need not be taken into account, for where money was not yielding a return it ought not to be taxed, and it could not yield a return without being discovered. If their opponents were unwilling to incur trouble gratuitously for the Republic, they might let the Republic alone and give themselves no further concern about it ; loyal citizens would be found who would not think it too great a sacrifice to aid their country as well with their money as with their counsels. So great indeed were the honours and advantages attending upon office, that every man ought to be satisfied with these without seeking to escape from his civil liabilities. The real grievance of the great folk lay elsewhere than they pretended. What afflicted them was, that having now to share the cost equally with others, they could no longer engage in wars without themselves suffering. Had the new system of taxation been thought of sooner there would have been no war with King Ladislas, nor would the present war with Duke Filippo have been begun. For both these wars had been entered on to enrich the powerful, and not from necessity.

The humours thus set in motion were calmed by

Giovanni de' Medici, who showed that it was well to ^{1427.} make provision for the future but not to rake up the past. If formerly their burdens had been unjust, they should thank God that a method had been found for adjusting them, and should try to make this method serve for the reunion of the city and not for its disunion, as would be the case were they to reopen old assessments and make them payable on the same footing with the new. For he who is content with a moderate victory will always get good out of it, while he who pushes things to extremes often comes off with loss. With counsels such as these Giovanni allayed the prevailing excitement, and put a stop to further talk of readjusting past taxation.

§ 15. Meanwhile the war with Duke Filippo went on. A truce had indeed been signed at Ferrara at the instance of the Papal Legate, but as the Duke failed from the outset to observe its conditions the League again took arms, and encountering the Ducal forces at Maclodio defeated ^{1428.} them. After this defeat Filippo renewed proposals of accord, to which the Florentines and the Venetians both consented, the former because they thought they were spending much only to make the others strong, the latter because they saw that Carmagnola, after defeating the Duke, made slow progress, and consequently concluded they could no longer trust him. A treaty of peace was accordingly settled in the year 1428, under which the Florentines recovered all the towns they had lost in Romagna while Brescia remained to the Venetians, to whom the Duke likewise ceded Bergamo with the adjacent country. In this war the Florentines expended three and a half million ducats, thereby augmenting the

1428. power and importance of the Venetians, but increasing poverty and disunion among themselves.

No sooner was peace restored abroad than internal strife recommenced. The Great Commoners could not endure the *Catasto*, and seeing no way to repeal it began to devise methods for swelling the number of its enemies, so as to have more with them in their efforts to upset it. To this end they pointed out to the taxing officers that the law required them to make returns of the property of all persons residing in territory subject to Florence, that it might be seen whether property belonging to any Florentine citizen was included therein. In consequence, all the inhabitants of subject towns were cited to produce within a fixed period inventories of their possessions; and when a deputation from the citizens of Volterra came to the Signory to complain of this, the taxing officers took offence and cast eighteen of them into prison. This treatment greatly incensed the people of Volterra, though, out of regard for the prisoners, they refrained from violence.

§ 16. At this time Giovanni de' Medici sickened, and knowing his disease to be mortal called to him his sons, Cosimo and Lorenzo, and said to them: 'I believe I have now reached the full term of days assigned me at my birth by God and Nature. I die content because I leave you rich, in sound health, and so circumstanced that, following in my footsteps, you may dwell in Florence well esteemed and honoured by all. Nothing helps so much to make me die happy as the consciousness that I have never harmed any man; but on the contrary, so far as I could, have been kind to all; and so I pray

you also to be. If you would live in safety take only ^{1428.} that share in the Government which the laws and your fellow-citizens award you. This will never expose you to envy or danger, since it is what a man arrogates to himself, not what is freely given him, that makes him hated. And you will find that those who covet what is another's commonly lose what is their own, and even before losing it live in perpetual trouble and anxiety. It has been by observing these methods that, among so many enemies and so many disputes, I have not only kept but increased my credit in this city. You too will maintain and increase it if you tread in my footsteps. But should you deviate from them, be assured that your end will be no happier than that of all those others who within our memory have brought ruin on themselves and destruction on their families.'

He died soon after. His loss, as his admirable ^{1429.} qualities merited, was deeply mourned by the whole city. Of a nature most compassionate, he not only gave alms to those who sought them, but often came forward unasked to relieve distress. He lived in charity with all men; the good he loved, the bad he pitied. He sought no honours, yet had all. To the Palace he never went unless summoned. He loved peace and shunned strife, succoured men in their adversity and furthered them in their prosperity. A foe to public waste, he laboured to promote the public welfare. As a Magistrate he was gracious, and, though of no great eloquence, possessed of a singular sagacity. He was of a sad countenance, yet in his conversation witty and agreeable. He died rich in worldly goods, but richer still in an honoured name and in popular esteem. Which inheritance, whether as regards gifts of

1429. fortune or qualities of mind, was not merely maintained but added to by Cosimo, his son.

§ 17. Broken down by their imprisonment, the deputies from Volterra prayed to be released, promising compliance with the demands made on them. Whereupon they were set at liberty, and went back to their country about the time when a new set of Priors was to take office there. Among those drawn for the Magistracy was a certain Giusto Landini, a man of mean origin but popular with the multitude, who had been one of the deputies imprisoned at Florence. Already inflamed against the Florentines, as well by reason of the indignity to his city as of that to himself, he was further incited by Giovanni de' Contugi, a gentleman of good birth who was his colleague in the Magistracy, to use his position as Prior and his favour with the people to cause a rising whereby he might wrest the town from the Florentines and make himself its Lord. Acting on this advice Giusto took arms, raided through the streets, made the Captain who held the town for the Florentines his prisoner, and with the consent of the people proclaimed himself Lord of Volterra. This sudden outbreak greatly vexed the Florentines, who, however, being now at peace with the Duke, and in high spirits from the terms they had obtained, thought the opportunity a good one for recovering the rebellious town, and, not to let it slip, at once sent Messer Rinaldo degli Albizi and Messer Palla Strozzi as Commissaries to conduct the enterprise. Giusto, meanwhile, foreseeing that the Florentines would attack him, sought aid from Siena and Lucca. The Sienese refused, saying they were in

alliance with Florence, while Paolo Guinigi, Lord of Lucca, hoping thereby to recover the favour of the Florentines (which he believed he had lost by showing himself friendly to Duke Filippo in the late war), not only declined to assist Giusto but sent the envoy who brought the request a prisoner to Florence.

The Commissaries meanwhile, that they might take the rebels unprepared, mustered all the men-at-arms at their disposal, and withdrawing a strong force of foot-soldiers from the lower Val d'Arno and the district round Pisa, marched against Volterra. Though abandoned by his neighbours and threatened by the Florentines Giusto did not lose heart, but trusting to the resources of the town and the strength of its position made all arrangements for its defence.

There was then living in Volterra a certain Messer Arcolano, a gentleman well looked on by the nobles of the town, and brother to that Giovanni who had instigated Giusto to assume its Lordship. Calling together friends in whom he trusted he showed them that, in what had befallen, God had come to the rescue of their city in its extreme need, since were they now to arm and deprive Giusto of his Lordship, and then hand over the town to the Florentines, they were certain to remain its rulers and secure for it all its ancient privileges. All consenting, they proceeded to the Palace where Giusto was lodged, and, while the rest remained below, Arcolano with three companions ascended to the great Council Chamber, where, finding Giusto in company with other citizens, they drew him aside as though to speak with him on matters of importance, and while they talked to him of one thing and another, led him into an anteroom, where Arcolano

1429. and his companions fell upon him with their swords. They were not indeed quick enough to prevent him using his weapon and severely wounding two of them before they could despatch him; in the end, however, numbers prevailed, and Giusto was slain and thrown from a window to the ground. Whereupon Messer Arcolano's armed followers surrendered the town to the Florentine Commissaries who lay close by with their troops, and who, without further parley, entered the city. Whence it came that the last condition of Volterra was worse than the first, since, among other measures taken by the Florentines, they cut off the greater part of the surrounding country and placed it under a Governor.

§ 18. Volterra being thus suddenly both lost and recovered, no cause for further warfare would have remained had not ambition again set it afoot. Niccolò Fortebraccio, son of a sister of Braccio of Perugia, had long fought on the side of Florence in her wars with the Duke. On peace being proclaimed he had been discharged by the Florentines, but at the time when the quarrel with Volterra broke out he was still quartered at Fucecchio. The Commissaries to whom that matter was intrusted had accordingly availed themselves of his assistance and that of his men-at-arms. It was commonly believed that Messer Rinaldo, while employed along with him on that enterprise, had urged Niccolò to attack the Lucchesi on any pretext that offered, assuring him that, if he did so, he himself would so manage matters in Florence that an expedition should be sent against Lucca of which Niccolò should have the command. Accordingly when Volterra was taken and Niccolò had returned to his quarters at Fucecchio,

whether at the persuasion of Rinaldo or of his own ^{1429.} motion, he, in the month of November 1429, with three hundred horsemen and a like number of foot, seized on Ruoti di Compito, a fortress belonging to Lucca, whence descending into the plain he secured a rich spoil. On the news of this raid reaching Florence, men of all conditions congregated in knots throughout the city, most of whom were agreed that an enterprise against Lucca ought to be undertaken. Among the chief citizens who approved of it were the adherents of the Medici, with whom Messer Rinaldo joined, either because he thought the attempt advantageous to the Republic, or else moved by personal ambition and the belief that if it succeeded he would have the credit. It was, however, disapproved of by Niccolò da Uzano and those who accepted him as their leader.

It seems almost incredible that in one and the same city the opinions of men as to the expediency of entering on a war should change so suddenly and completely, and that the same citizens and people who, after ten years of peace and prosperity, had condemned the war undertaken against Duke Filippo in defence of their own liberty, should now, when such vast sums had been spent, and at a time when their city was in sore distress, be clamouring for a new war against Lucca in order to destroy the liberty of others; and, again, that those who approved the former war should condemn this. So widely do opinions alter with circumstances, and so much readier are the multitude to lay hands on what is another's, than to guard what is their own; so much more also are men moved by greed of gain than by fear of loss, since loss is not considered unless it be near, while gain is hoped for even when remote.

1429. The continued success of Niccolò Fortebraccio raised the hopes of the Florentines, as did also letters received from their Governors in the neighbourhood of Lucca. For the Governors of Pescia and Vico wrote for leave to take over all the villages that might come forward to make surrender, affirming that in this way the whole country round Lucca would soon be acquired. To these incitements another was added. The envoy sent to Florence by Paolo Guinigi, Lord of Lucca, to complain of the invasion of his territories by Niccolò, and to pray the Signory not to make war upon a neighbouring city which had always been friendly, had some time before been imprisoned by Paolo for conspiring against him, who, though convinced of his guilt, had yet spared his life, and afterwards, thinking the past forgotten, had employed and trusted him. But Messer Jacopo Viviani, for so this envoy was named, more mindful of the peril he had escaped than of the grace shown him, on his arrival in Florence secretly urged the Florentines to proceed with their enterprise. His exhortations, combining with other hopes, induced the Signory to convoke the Council, at which four hundred and ninety-eight citizens were present, before whom the matter was debated by the foremost men of the city.

§ 19. As already said, Messer Rinaldo was among the chief promoters of the war. He set forth the advantages they would gain if it succeeded, the opportunities that now offered. Lucca had been left to them as a prey by the Venetians and by Duke Filippo, while the Pope, entangled in the troubles of Naples, could interpose no hindrance. He showed, moreover, how easily the town might be taken, for having become the

slave of one of its own citizens, and thus lost its natural 1429.
vigour and its ancient zeal for the defence of liberty, it was sure to be surrendered, either by the people to rid themselves of their tyrant, or else by the tyrant through fear of the people. He called to mind the wrongs which the Lord of Lucca had inflicted on the Florentines, and the ill-will he had always borne them, showed how dangerous he might become were war renewed either by the Pope or by the Duke, and wound up by declaring that no easier, nor more advantageous, nor juster enterprise had ever been engaged in by the Florentine people.

In opposition to these views Niccolò da Uzano maintained that Florence had never undertaken a more unjust, or more dangerous adventure, nor one more pregnant with future disaster. In the first place, they were going to attack a Guelf city which had always been friendly to the Florentine people, and had often, at its extreme peril, sheltered Guelf citizens banished from their own country. In the annals of Florence no record could be found of any wrong done her by Lucca while Lucca was free, and if any had been done by those who had enslaved her, as formerly by Castruccio, and now by her present ruler, the blame lay not with her, but with her Tyrant. Could war be made against the Tyrant alone, and not against the citizens of Lucca, it would displease him less, but since this was impossible, he for his part never could consent to a city formerly friendly being stripped of its possessions. Seeing, however, that as men lived now, it mattered little whether a thing were just or unjust, he would not labour that point further, but consider only what was useful for their own city. Those things

1429. he thought could alone be called useful which were unlikely to entail loss. He could not therefore understand how any one should use the word in speaking of the present enterprise, wherein the loss was certain and the gain doubtful. The certain loss was the expenditure it must bring with it. This was seen to be so great as should alarm even a city that had enjoyed long repose, to say nothing of one exhausted as theirs was by a protracted and burdensome war. Among the gains that might come of it was the possession of Lucca, and this he admitted would be a great gain; but they ought not to overlook the risks of the attempt, which to him seemed so formidable as to render it hopeless. Nor were they to suppose that this enterprise would be favourably regarded either by the Venetians or by Duke Philippo, for the former only made a show of consenting to it that they might not seem ungrateful, having recently added largely to their dominions by the help of Florentine money; while the latter would like nothing better than that the Florentines should involve themselves in new wars and expenditure, that he might renew his attacks upon them when they were utterly worn out and exhausted. Nay, even when the enterprise was in progress, and when the prospect of victory seemed fairest, the Duke would be at no loss for ways to succour the Lucchesi, either by secret remittances of money, or by disbanding his own troops and then sending them, as though mere free-lances, to their assistance. He besought them therefore to abstain from this enterprise, and to continue on such terms with the Lord of Lucca as might lead him to make for himself as many enemies as possible within his city, which there was no readier way to

subjugate than by letting it live on under his tyranny, ¹⁴²⁹ and be weakened and afflicted by him. If they managed the matter prudently, Lucca would of itself be brought to such a pass that the tyrant would be unable to retain his hold of it, when, lacking the qualities and knowledge necessary for self-government, it must needs fall into their lap. As for himself, though he saw that the minds of those he spoke to were made up, and his words not listened to, he yet desired to warn them beforehand that they were entering on a war wherein they must spend much and run great risks, and so far from thereby getting possession of Lucca, would liberate it from its tyrant, and from a weak and enslaved but friendly city make it a free city, hostile to them, and in time a hindrance to the growth of their Republic.

§ 20. The enterprise having been spoken for and against, the votes of those assembled were, according to usage, secretly taken, when it was found that of the whole number present only ninety-eight opposed it. The question being thus determined, the Ten were created to conduct the war, by whom horse and foot-soldiers were hired, Astorre Gianni and Messer Rinaldo degli Albizi appointed Commissaries, and an arrangement made with Niccolò Fortebraccio to hand over to the Florentines the towns he had taken, and continue the enterprise as their soldier. Entering the territory of Lucca with their army, the Commissaries, thinking that were the city cut off from the surrounding country, its capture would afterwards be easy, divided their forces, Astorre advancing across the plain towards Camajore and Pietrasanta, while

1429. Messer Rinaldo moved towards the mountains. The efforts of both were unhappy, not from any failure to take towns, but by reason of the accusations brought against each of them while conducting the war. There can be little doubt that as against Astorre Gianni the charges made were well founded. Near Pietrasanta lies a rich and populous valley named Seravezza. Its inhabitants on hearing of the approach of the Commissary went forth to meet him, praying him to receive them as the faithful servants of the Florentine people. Astorre professed to accept their submission, but afterwards sent troops to occupy all the passes and strong places of the valley, and assembling the men of the country in their principal church, made them prisoners. He then allowed his soldiers to sack and ravage the whole district with every circumstance of cruelty and rapine, sparing neither religious houses, nor women whether maids or matrons. These misdeeds were made known in Florence as soon as they occurred, and gave displeasure not only to the Magistrates, but to the entire city.

§ 21. Certain of the men of Seravezza who had escaped the hands of the Commissary fled to Florence, and in every street, and to all they met, recounted their sufferings, until at last, at the instance of many who desired that the Commissary, whether as being a bad man or as belonging to a faction opposed to theirs, should be punished, they went before the Ten and asked to be heard. Being admitted, one of them spoke to this effect: 'We feel sure, my Lords, that our words will obtain your acceptance and excite your pity, when

we tell you how our country has been seized on by your 1429.
Commissary, and after what fashion we ourselves have been treated by him. Our valley, as your ancient records amply testify, has always been Guelf, and often has been a secure refuge to those of your citizens who being oppressed by the Ghibellines have sought shelter there. And always our ancestors and we ourselves have revered the name of your renowned Republic as the head and front of the party to which we belong. While the citizens of Lucca were Guelf, we rendered a willing obedience to their authority; but since they came under a tyrant, who has forsaken old friends and joined the Ghibelline faction, we have obeyed him rather on compulsion than of our own free will. God knows how often we have besought Him in our prayers to grant us an opportunity of showing our loyalty to the ancient cause. But how blind are men in their desires! What we longed for as a source of safety has proved our ruin. For no sooner did we hear that your standards were approaching than we went forth, not as against enemies but as welcoming our old Lords, to meet your Commissary, and placed our valley, our fortunes, our very selves in his hands, commending them to his honour in the belief that he had the feelings, if not of a Florentine, at least of a man. Your Lordships will pardon what we are about to say. That we cannot suffer worse than we have suffered makes us bold to speak. This Commissary of yours has nothing of the man but the outward form, nothing of the Florentine but the name. A deadly pestilence, a savage beast, a monster more dreadful than was ever figured by any writer, were fitter words to describe him. For, calling us together in our church

1429. on the pretence that he desired to speak with us, he made us prisoners, then burned and ravaged our whole valley, beat and slew the inhabitants, plundered, sacked, and wasted their possessions, violated their wives, and ravished their daughters, whom he tore from their mothers' arms and gave as a prey to his soldiers. If by any wrong done either to the Florentine people or to him we had merited such treatment, had we even been taken defending ourselves in arms, we should grieve less, nay, might blame ourselves for what our wrongful acts or presumption had brought upon us. But when unarmed we voluntarily gave ourselves up, we cannot but complain that we were dealt with so cruelly and shamefully. And although we might have filled Lombardy with our complaints, and, to the infamy of your city, have spread throughout Italy the tale of our wrongs, we have chosen not to do so, that we might not stain so honourable and compassionate a Republic with the cruelty and dishonour of one wicked citizen, whose ravenous greed, measureless and insatiable though it be, had we known it beforehand we should have striven to appease, and by sacrificing a part of our substance, have saved the rest. But since the time is past for using this remedy, we have decided to appeal to you, beseeching you to relieve the misery of your subjects, so that others may not be turned away by what has befallen us from submitting themselves to your authority. And should our infinite wrongs not move you, let the wrath of God, who has seen His temples plundered and burned, and our people betrayed in His very sanctuary, fill you with fear.' So saying, they threw themselves on the ground, praying and imploring that their country and their

possessions might be given back to them, and, though ^{1429.} their honour could not be restored, that at least wives might return to their husbands and daughters to their sires.

The atrocity of their wrongs already made known, and now confirmed by the lips of those who had endured them, touched the hearts of the Magistrates, who without delay caused Astorre to be recalled. He was afterwards condemned and deprived of civil privileges. Search was made for the property of the people of Seravezza; what could be found was restored; for the rest, as opportunity arose, compensation was made in various ways by the city.

§ 22. Against Messer Rinaldo degli Albizi it was charged that he was conducting the war, not for the advantage of the Florentine people, but for his own; that from the time he had been made Commissary his great anxiety to take Lucca had vanished, he being better pleased to pillage the country round it, and so get cattle to stock his farms, and spoils to fill his palaces; that not content with the booty his followers took for him, he bought from the common soldiers, and so from Commissary had turned huckster. Those calumnies reaching his ears disturbed his clear and lofty spirit more than was becoming in a person of his dignity, and indeed so irritated him, that in his resentment against the Magistracy and his fellow-citizens, without asking or waiting for leave, he returned to Florence, and presenting himself before the Ten, said that he knew how difficult and dangerous it was to serve a fickle people and a divided city, for the one is blown about by every rumour, the other punishes

1429. failure, withholds reward from success, and brings charges where the event is doubtful, so that when you win, none praise ; when you lose, all blame ; when you mistake, all calumniate you ; your own party attacking you out of jealousy, the opposed party from hatred. It was true that the baseness of the present calumnies had overcome his patience and changed his nature. Yet never through fear of unfounded censures had he omitted to do what he saw to be for the good of his city. He therefore prayed the Magistracy that for the future they would be more prompt to defend their fellow-citizens, that they in their turn might be readier to do their best for their country ; and since it was not the usage in Florence to accord a triumph to those who served her faithfully, at least let it be the practice to support them against falsehood and calumny. And they should remember that they too were citizens of this city, and might at any moment be subjected to similar attacks, when they would learn for themselves what offence is given to honourable men by slanderous accusations.

The Ten tried all they could to appease him, and intrusted the further conduct of the enterprise to Neri di Gino, and Alamanno Salviati, who, discontinuing the raids into the surrounding country, moved their camp nearer to Lucca, and as the season was now advanced went into quarters at Capannori. Here the Commissaries saw they were wasting time ; but on their proposing to invest the town more closely, their soldiers by reason of the severity of the weather would not consent, though the Ten were urgent for them to begin the siege, and would listen to no excuse.

§ 23. At this time there lived in Florence a most excellent architect named Filippo, son of Ser Brunellesco, who by his works, of which our city is full, well deserved the marble effigy raised to him after his death in the Cathedral Church of Florence, with an inscription on the base declaring at this day his merit to all who read it. By him it was suggested that from the position of Lucca and the height of the bed of the Serchio, the town might easily be flooded; and so persuasively did he urge this scheme that the Ten gave orders for it to be tried. But the only result was to throw our own camp into disorder, and increase the security of the town. For the Lucchesi, constructing a dyke, raised the bank against which the Florentines were turning the river, and afterwards, by night, broke down the bank of the sluice through which its waters were to be led, so that the stream finding a high barrier in the direction of Lucca, and a new channel opened for it, spread itself over the whole plain; when instead of getting nearer to Lucca our troops were compelled to retire to a greater distance.

§ 24. This attempt having failed, the new Ten on entering office appointed Messer Giovanni Guicciardini to be Commissary, who made all possible haste to invest the city. Finding himself thus straitened, the Lord of Lucca, at the instance of a certain Messer Antonio del Rosso of Siena, then with him on a mission from the Sienese Republic, sent Salvestro Trenta and Lionardo Buonvisi as envoys to the Duke of Milan to ask assistance. Their application on behalf of their master being coldly received by the Duke, they then secretly prayed him to let them have for them-

1430. selves the use of his men-at-arms, promising on the part of the people of Lucca to surrender their Lord to him as a prisoner, and afterwards give him possession of their town; and they warned him that unless he speedily agreed to this, their master would yield the town to the Florentines who were making him large offers to obtain it. The Duke was so afraid that this might happen, that laying all scruples aside, he contrived that Count Francesco Sforza, who was in his pay, should publicly apply for his discharge with leave to proceed to Naples. This granted, Sforza marched off with his whole company to Lucca, although the Florentines, familiar with this device and suspecting what was intended, had sent his friend Boccaccino Alamanni to dissuade him. On Count Francesco's arrival in Lucca, the Florentines shifted their camp to Ripafratta, whereupon the Count marched at once against Pescia. where Pagolo of Diaceto was governor. This last, influenced more by fear than by any better adviser, fled to Pistoia, and Pescia must have been lost had it not been defended by Giovanni Malavolti who commanded the garrison. Failing to carry Pescia by storm, Sforza passed on to Borgo a Buggiano which he took, and thence to the neighbouring stronghold of Stigliano which he burned. On witnessing these disasters, the Florentines resorted to a remedy which had often saved them; for knowing that in contending with mercenary soldiers, where force fails corruption often succeeds, they offered the Count a round sum to move off, and give up Lucca to them. The Count, who saw that no more money was to be got out of Lucca, was ready enough to accept it from those who had it, and agreed with the Florentines, not indeed

to *give* them Lucca, which honour forbade, but to *quit* ^{1430.} it on receipt of fifty thousand ducats. After concluding this agreement, in order that the people of Lucca might excuse him to the Duke, he assisted them to get rid of their Lord.

§ 25. Messer Antonio del Rosso, who, as I have already mentioned, was living at this time in Lucca as envoy from Siena, was commissioned by Count Francesco to treat with the Lucchesi for the overthrow of Paolo Guinigi. The chiefs of the conspiracy were Piero Cennami and Giovanni of Ghivizzano. The Count himself was lodged outside the town on the bank of the Serchio, and had with him Lanzilao, Paolo's son. The conspirators, to the number of forty, went by night to take Paolo, who, hearing the rattle of their armour, came out in great astonishment to meet them, and asked the cause of their coming. Piero Cennami answered that they had been governed by him for a long time, and through the enemies he had brought upon them were like to perish by sword or famine. They were therefore resolved for the future to govern themselves, and desired him to hand over to them the keys and the treasure of the city. Paolo replied that the treasure was spent, but that the keys and he himself were at their disposal, and that he had only this one thing to ask of them, that as his Signory had been begun and maintained without shedding blood, they would be content that without bloodshed it should end. Paolo and his son were carried off by Count Francesco to the Duke, and afterwards died in prison.

The departure of the Count, leaving the Florentines

1430. freed from the fear of his men-at-arms, and the Lucchesi freed from their tyrant, the latter began to make preparations for their defence, while the former resumed their attack, and chose the Count of Urbino for their Captain. The siege was carried on by him with great vigour, and the Lucchesi were once more obliged to appeal for aid to the Duke, who, cloaking his intervention as he had done before in the case of Sforza, now sent Niccolò Piccinino to their assistance. As Niccolò was about to enter Lucca, our forces advanced to the Serchio to meet him, and while crossing the river came to an engagement and were routed, when the Commissary with a remnant of our men fled for refuge to Pisa. All Florence grieved over this defeat, but as the enterprise had been undertaken with universal consent, the popular party, unable to blame those who had promoted it, renewed their calumnies against those who had conducted it, and revived the charges against Messer Rinaldo. But the person most fiercely attacked was Messer Giovanni Guicciardini, against whom it was alleged that having it in his power when Count Francesco left Lucca to bring the war to an end, he had been bribed with a sum of money which he had remitted home, the amount, the names of those who carried it, and of those who received it, all being given. These rumours and accusations went so far that the Captain of the People, moved by public clamour, and urged on by the party hostile to Messer Giovanni, cited him before him. Giovanni appeared, fuming with indignation; whereupon his kinsmen for the honour of their House prevailed on the Captain to abandon the inquiry.

After this success the Lucchesi not only recovered ^{1431;2.} their own towns but seized all those belonging to the territory of Pisa, except Bientina, Calcinaia, Livorno, and Ripafratta; and had it not been that a plot contrived in Pisa was discovered, that city also would have been lost. The Florentines now reorganised their army, and gave the command to Michelotto, who had been trained under Sforza. The Duke, on the other hand, followed up his victory, and with a view to wear out the Florentines by superior numbers, induced the Genoese, the Sienese, and the Lord of Piombino to join in a league for the defence of Lucca, and to take Niccolò Piccinino for their Captain. But as this plainly revealed his hostility, the Venetians and Florentines renewed their league, and open war ensued both in Lombardy and Tuscany, in both of which provinces battles were fought with varying success, until, every one being tired out, a peace was concluded in May of the year 1433, whereby the ^{1433.} Florentines, the Sienese, and the Lucchesi relinquished all towns which in the course of the war they had taken from one another, each resuming possession of their own.

§ 26. While this war went on, all the malignant humours of faction continued to ferment within the city. After the death of his father Giovanni, Cosimo de' Medici took a bolder part in public affairs, and showed greater zeal and liberality on behalf of his friends than his father had done. So that those who had rejoiced over the death of Giovanni were disconcerted on finding what sort of person Cosimo proved himself to be. Cosimo was a man of con-

summate prudence, of a pleasing and dignified presence, and a most gracious and bountiful disposition. He never set himself to attack the Government or its supporters, but sought to render services to all men, and gain by his generosity as many partisans as possible among his fellow-citizens. Thus acting, he increased the unpopularity of those in authority; and it was his belief that pursuing the same course he might continue to live in Florence as powerful and secure as any other citizen; or, should the jealousy of his adversaries prompt them to extreme measures, that he would prove himself more than a match for them in respect both of arms and of public favour. In establishing his authority he was chiefly aided by Averardo de' Medici and Puccio Pucci, the former of whom by his daring, the latter by his sagacity and prudence, ministered to his popularity and advancement. Indeed, the advice and judgment of Puccio were so highly esteemed and so universally recognised, that it was from him, and not from Cosimo himself, that the following of the latter took its name.

It was by this much-divided city that the enterprise against Lucca was undertaken, during the progress of which the spirit of faction, so far from being quenched, grew fiercer than before. Though it had been the partisans of Cosimo who promoted this enterprise, nevertheless many of the contrary faction, as being the most distinguished citizens of the Commonwealth, had been employed in conducting it; and as this could not be remedied by Averardo de' Medici and his friends, they set themselves with all skill and industry to calumniate the men thus employed, so that if, as frequently happened, a reverse was suffered, it

was ascribed not to the good fortune or superior strength of the enemy, but to the scant prudence of the Commissary. It was this that led to the offences of Astorre Gianni being exaggerated, and that kindled the wrath of Rinaldo degli Albizi, and caused him to withdraw from his post without leave. This too it was that moved the Captain of the People to arraign Giovanni Guicciardini. From this likewise originated all those other charges brought against the Magistrates or against the Commissaries; for what was true was magnified, what was untrue was invented, but whether true or false the accusations were believed by the people who regarded the accused with a persistent hatred.

§ 27. These unconstitutional methods and contrivances were thoroughly understood by Niccolò da Uzano and the other chiefs of the party, who had often talked together of a remedy, but had found none. For while they saw the danger of letting things take their course, they also saw the difficulty of opposing them. Niccolò da Uzano was the first to discountenance violent measures. When war was being waged abroad and these troubles prevailed at home, Niccolò Barbadoro, desiring to obtain Uzano's consent to the overthrow of Cosimo, went to visit him in his house, and finding him in his study oppressed with anxiety, exhorted him, using all the strongest arguments he could think of, to join with Messer Rinaldo in bringing about Cosimo's expulsion. To whom Uzano replied in words to this effect: 'It would be well for you, for your House, and for our Commonwealth, that you and others who share your views, had beards of

silver and not, as your name would imply, of gold, for then your counsels, coming from white heads, full of experience, would be wiser and more profitable for every one. It seems to me that they who propose to drive Cosimo from Florence should first of all measure their own strength and his. This party of ours you have christened the party of the nobles, and the adverse party the party of the people. Assuming these names to be rightly given, in any case the victory must be doubtful, and warned by the fate of the old nobles of this city who were overthrown by the people, we should have more reason to fear than to hope. But far more reason have we to fear than hope when we see that our party is split up, while that of our adversaries is entire. For in the first place Neri di Gino, and Nerone di Nigi, two of our foremost citizens, have never so declared themselves that it could be said they were more friends to us than to our adversaries. There are among us many divided houses, nay, many divided households ; for many there are who, through jealousy of brothers or kinsmen, look askance at us and with favour on our opponents. Of some notable instances of this I will remind you ; others, you will yourself recall. Of the sons of Messer Maso degli Albizi, Luca, from jealousy of Messer Rinaldo, has betaken himself to the other camp. Of the sons of Messer Luigi, in the house of the Guicciardini, Piero is on bad terms with Messer Giovanni, and takes part with our enemies. Tommaso and Niccolò Soderini, from the hatred they bear their uncle Francesco, openly oppose us. So that if we consider well who belong to the adverse party and who to ours, I see no reason why our party should be spoken of as noble rather than theirs. If

it be because they are followed by the whole body of the Plebeians, this puts us in a worse position and them in a better; so much better, indeed, that if it came to arms or to votes we should be powerless to resist them. And if we still retain our great place, we owe it to the ancient reputation of this Government, which for the last fifty years has preserved it for us; but were it attacked, and our weakness revealed, we should lose it at once. And should you say that the righteous motive which actuates us must add to our credit and diminish theirs, I answer that this righteousness must be recognised and believed in by others as well as by ourselves, whereas the direct contrary is the case; for what moves us is only the suspicion that Cosimo is trying to make himself Prince of the city. But if we entertain this suspicion, others do not; nay, worse, charge us with the very crime whereof we accuse him. The things done by Cosimo which render him suspected are, that he assists everyone with money, not only private men but the community itself, and not Florentines only but also foreign Condottieri; that he favours this or the other citizen who seeks office; that by the credit he enjoys with the body of the people he advances this or that friend to higher preferment. Are we then to allege as reasons for expelling him, that he is compassionate, generous, helpful to his friends, and beloved by all? I pray you tell me what law there is that forbids, blames, or condemns compassion, generosity, or love. And though all these be methods which carry a man as on wings to sovereignty, yet they are not thought to be so, nor can we make them be so regarded; for our own conduct has deprived us of

credit, and the city, factious by nature, and corrupted from having lived under factions, will not lend an ear to such charges. But assume that you succeed in expelling him, as with a favourable Signory you readily may, how, when so many of his friends will remain among us burning with eagerness for his return, will you be able to prevent his coming back? That were impossible, for, his friends being in such number and enjoying the general good-will, you never could secure yourself against them all. Nay, the more of his greatest and declared friends you might drive out, the more enemies you would make for yourself; so that after a little while he would assuredly return, and all your gain would be this, that you had driven away a good citizen and got back a bad. For his nature would be corrupted by those who recalled him, to whom, being under obligations to them, he could deny nothing. But if it be your design to slay him, that you will never effect through the instrumentality of the Magistrates, for his wealth and your weakness will always save him. But take it that he dies, or being driven away does not return, I see not what advantage our Republic is thereby to gain; for if freed from Cosimo she becomes the slave of Messer Rinaldo. For my part I am of those who would have no citizen surpass his fellows in power or authority; but if of the two, one must prevail, I know no reason why I should love Rinaldo more than Cosimo. All I say is this: may God guard our city against any of her citizens becoming her Lord; but if for our sins she has deserved that fate, may He guard her from having to obey Messer Rinaldo. Wherefore, urge me not to follow a course hurtful in every way, nor

believe that combining with a few you can withstand the will of many, all of whom, some through ignorance, others through spite, are ready to sell our Republic, and whom Fortune so far favours that already they have found a purchaser. Be guided then by my advice; be content to live soberly, and you will learn, so far as liberty is concerned, to distrust those of our own party as much as those of the other. Thus maintaining neutrality, you will, if troubles come, be well regarded by both sides, and benefit yourself without harming your country.'

§28. These words somewhat damped the spirit of Barbadoro, so that things remained quiet while the war with Lucca lasted, but when peace ensued, Uzano dying about the same time, the city, relieved from war, was left without restraint or guidance, so that all its disorderly humours at last had free course. Messer Rinaldo degli Albizi, looking upon himself as now sole chief of his party, never ceased to exhort and importune every citizen who he thought might be made Gonfalonier to take arms and free his city from one who, through the malignity of the few and the ignorance of the many, was leading it into certain slavery. The methods followed both by Messer Rinaldo and by those favouring the party opposed to him kept the city in constant anxiety, so that every time a Magistrate was appointed it was openly discussed how many of the one party and how many of the other were now in office, and when new Priors were drawn all Florence was in an uproar. Every cause, even the most trifling, that came before the Magistrates was made occasion of a contest; secrets

were divulged; suits were decided without regard to their merits merely through favour or dislike; good men and bad were alike ill-treated; no Magistrate did his duty.

1433. While Florence was in this turmoil, Messer Rinaldo, who never slackened his efforts to lower the influence of Cosimo, on learning that Bernardo Guadagni was likely to be chosen Gonfalonier, paid his taxes for him that he might not be disqualified by public debt. When the drawing for the Signory came off, Fortune, to promote our discords, caused Bernardo to be cast as Gonfalonier for the months of September and October. Messer Rinaldo forthwith went to visit him, and told him that the party of the Nobles and all who wished to live happily rejoiced at his obtaining this dignity, in which it behoved him so to act that these rejoicings should be seen not to have been groundless. He then showed him the dangers of division, and that there was no way to secure union but by crushing Cosimo; for it was he alone, supported by his immense wealth, who kept them weak, and who had now reached such eminence that, unless something were done to prevent it, he would become supreme. This remedy it was the duty of a good citizen to provide, by summoning the people to the Piazza, resuming the reins of government, and so restoring liberty to his country. He reminded him how Messer Salvestro de' Medici, though without justice on his side, was able to bridle the greatness of the Guelfs, to whom, in right of the blood shed by their ancestors, the Government belonged; and he declared that what Salvestro could unjustly achieve against so many, Bernardo might in a just cause easily effect against a single man. He exhorted the new Gon-

falonier not to be afraid, since armed friends would be at hand to help him; while of the populace who worshipped Cosimo he need make no account, for from that quarter Cosimo would receive no greater support than had been given to Messer Giorgio Scali. Nor need he be daunted by Cosimo's riches, for so soon as he was in the hands of the Signory these would become theirs. Lastly, he told him that thus acting he would make the Republic safe and united, and himself famous. To all this Bernardo replied in few words, that he saw the need for doing what was proposed; and since the time for action was come Rinaldo should see to having his forces in readiness, and leave it to him to obtain the consent of his colleagues. After assuming office, persuading his colleagues, and arranging matters with Messer Rinaldo, Bernardo cited Cosimo before him, who, contrary to the advice of many of his friends, obeyed the summons, confiding more in his own innocence than in the merciful disposition of the Signory. On reaching the palace he was at once arrested; whereupon Messer Rinaldo, issuing from his house with many armed men, and followed by the entire Guelf Party, advanced to the Piazza. The Signory then had the people called, and created a *Balia* of two hundred citizens to reform the Government of the city, by whom without delay, the proposed reforms and the fate of Cosimo were discussed. Many declared for his exile, many for his death, while many, whether out of pity for him or from fear of others, were silent. Opinions being thus divided, no conclusion was come to.

§ 29. In the tower of the Palace, extending from wall

1433. to wall, is a chamber known by the name of the Al-berghettino. Here Cosimo was confined under the custody of Federigo Malavolti. Listening from his cell to the voices of the people assembled in the Piazza below, to the clash of armour, and to the bell tolling for the meetings of the *Balia*, Cosimo began to fear that his life was in danger, and that he might be perfidiously made away with by his personal enemies. For which reason he abstained from food, and for four days would eat nothing but a little bread. Federigo, noticing this, said to him, 'Cosimo, you are starving yourself to death through fear of being poisoned. You do me little honour in believing that I would take part in such a crime. With so many friends both within the Palace and without, I cannot think your life in peril; but if you are to lose your life, rest assured that some other agent than I must be found to take it. I would not sully my hands with the blood of any man, least of all with yours, who have never in any way offended me. Wherefore be of good cheer. Eat and live for the sake of your friends and country; and that you may take your food with fuller confidence, I myself will eat with you from the same dish. These words greatly comforted Cosimo who, with tears in his eyes, fell on Federigo's neck and kissed him, thanked him warmly for his compassionate kindness, and promised to prove himself most grateful should he ever have the opportunity. Cosimo being thus somewhat cheered, it happened, while the citizens were still discussing his fate, that Federigo to amuse him brought with him to supper a pleasant, humorous man named Farganaccio, an intimate of the Gonfalonier. When supper was nearly over, Cosimo, thinking to profit by

the visit of this gentleman whom he very well knew, 1433. made a sign to Federigo to leave the room, who on the hint went out as for something needed to complete the meal. The others being thus left alone, Cosimo, after a few civil words to his companion, gave him a token, and charged him to go with it to the steward of the hospital of Santa Maria Nuova and ask for eleven hundred ducats. Of these Farganaccio was to take a hundred for himself, and to carry the rest to the Gonfalonier, with the request that under some colourable pretext he would come and speak with him. Farganaccio accepted the mission, the money was paid, Bernardo was softened, and Cosimo, contrary to the desire of Rinaldo who would have had him put to death, was banished to Padua. Averardo and many others of the house of Medici, and with them Giovanni and Puccio Pucci, were likewise sentenced to banishment. And to intimidate any who might be displeased by the expulsion of Cosimo, a *Balia* was given to the Eight of the Guard and the Captain of the People.

All which being settled, Cosimo on the third day of October of the year 1433 was brought before the Signory who made known to him his place of exile, and charged him to be obedient if he did not wish harsher measures to be taken against both his property and person. Cosimo accepted his sentence of exile with a cheerful countenance, declaring his willingness to stay wherever the Signory chose to send him. He prayed them, however, that as his life had been spared, they would see that it should also be protected, for he had heard that there were many in the Piazza who sought his blood. He ended by saying that, in whatsoever place he might be, he and all he had would

1433. always be at the service of the city, the people, and the Signory. The Gonfalonier comforted him and kept him in the Palace till nightfall, when he led him to his own house, and after making him sup with him, caused him to be escorted by many armed men to the frontier. Wherever he came he was splendidly received. The Venetians publicly visited him and did him honour, not treating him as an exile, but as one holding the very highest position in his city.

§ 30. Florence being thus bereft of one so great and so universally beloved, all her citizens were in tribulation, those who had prevailed being no less alarmed than those who had suffered defeat. Wherefore Messer Rinaldo, foreseeing the troubles in store for him, not to be wanting to himself or to his party, called together many of his friends and told them that he saw destruction awaiting them through their having let themselves be beguiled by the prayers, the tears, and the money of their enemies, not reflecting that a little later they themselves would have to pray and weep, when their prayers would not be listened to, and none would compassionate their tears. As for the money they had received, the principal they would have to restore, and the interest to pay off in torture, death, and exile. Better had it been for them never to have stirred at all than let Cosimo live, and suffer his friends to remain in the city. Great men were not to be provoked, or if provoked must be destroyed. He now saw no remedy save by strengthening their party in the city, so that when their enemies came to themselves, as they soon would, they might drive them out with arms since they had failed to get rid of them by constitutional methods.

His remedy was one he had long before suggested, ^{1433.} namely, to gain over the Grandees by restoring and conceding to them all the honours of the city, and with their support to make themselves strong in the same way as their adversaries had already strengthened themselves with the support of the populace. By such means their party would become the more powerful of the two, as possessing greater vigour, valour, spirit, and prestige. Unless, however, this last and only thorough remedy were used he saw no way whereby, among so many enemies, the Government could be maintained, but looked forward to the speedy downfall of their party and the ruin of the city itself.

Rinaldo's counsel was opposed by Mariotto Baldovineti, one of those assembled, who inveighed against the pride and insufferable temper of the Grandees, declaring that to return under their tyranny in order to escape doubtful danger at the hands of the Plebeians was not a course to be commended. Whereupon Messer Rinaldo, finding that his advice was not listened to, deplored his unhappy fortune and that of his party, imputing all to destiny, whereby things had been so decreed, rather than to the ignorance and blindness of men.

While things thus stood without any necessary provision being made, a letter was discovered written by Messer Agnolo Acciaiuoli to Cosimo, setting forth the favourable disposition of the city towards him and suggesting that he should try to bring about a war; for when money began to grow scarce, and no one was found to supply it, his memory would come more vividly to the minds of his fellow citizens, and with it the desire to secure his return. The letter also

1433. exhorted him to court the friendship of Neri di Gino, for if Neri were to separate from Messer Rinaldo, the party would be too much weakened to maintain itself. This letter coming to the hands of the Magistrates led to Messer Agnolo being arrested, put to the torture, and banished.
1434. But even this example no way checked the current now running in Cosimo's favour. At the end of August 1434, when almost a year had passed from the day of his expulsion, Niccolò di Cocco was drawn Gonfalonier for the two months ensuing, and with him eight Priors, all of them partisans of Cosimo. A Signory thus constituted filled Messer Rinaldo and his whole party with dismay; but, as it is the custom for the Priors before they take up office to remain for three days as private citizens, Rinaldo used this opportunity to confer once more with the chiefs of his party, pointing out to them their near and certain danger, and that the remedy lay in a resort to arms, and in getting Donato Velluti, who was then Gonfalonier, to assemble the people in the Piazza, create a fresh *Balia*, remove the new Priors from office, substitute others on whom the Government could rely, and after burning the ballot bags (*borse*), cause new scrutinies (*aquittini*) to be made, in which only the names of friends should be entered. To many this course seemed a safe and necessary one; to many others, violent in itself, and pregnant with future mischief.

Among those whom it displeased was Messer Palla Strozzi, a man of a gentle, peaceful, and kindly disposition, and better qualified for literary pursuits than for controlling a party, or coping with civil discord. He said that crafty and daring projects looked well at

first, but were difficult of execution, and harmful in their consequences. For his own part he believed that fear of new wars abroad (the Duke's forces being now in Romagna close to our frontier) would give the Signory more to think of than dissensions at home; but even should it appear that the new Priors were bent on making changes, which they could not make without it being known, there would always be time enough to resort to arms, and carry out whatever measures might seem requisite for the public safety; and this being done only on a need arising, would cause less alarm on the part of the people, and bring less responsibility on themselves. Eventually it was decided that they should allow the recently created Priors to enter on their office, but should keep strict watch on their proceedings, and if it were heard that anything was being done against their party, all should arm and muster in the Piazza of San Pulinari, near the Palace, whence they might be led wherever they were required.

§ 31. This resolved, they separated, and the new Priors entered on office. To give himself reputation, and intimidate all who might think of opposing him, the Gonfalonier committed his predecessor Donato Velluti to prison on a charge of having embezzled public money. He next sounded his colleagues as to Cosimo's return, and finding them favourable, conferred with those whom he considered the chiefs of the Medicean party, at whose instance he cited before him Messer Rinaldo, Ridolfo Peruzzi, and Niccolò Barbadoro, the leaders of the adverse faction. On receipt of this summons Messer Rinaldo, seeing that

1434. no time was to be lost, came forth from his house attended by a numerous band of armed men, and was presently joined by Ridolfo Peruzzi and Niccolò Barbadoro, attended by many other citizens and by a company of free-lances, who happened to be then in Florence without employment, all of whom, as had been arranged, drew up in the Piazza of San Pulinari. Messer Palla Strozzi, although he had assembled a large number of his followers, remained in his house, as did also Giovanni Guicciardini. Whereupon Messer Rinaldo sent to hasten them and to reprove their delay. Messer Giovanni replied that he could best fight the adverse faction by staying at home and so preventing his brother Piero from going forth to aid the Palace. Messer Palla, after many messages had been sent him, came to San Pulinari on horseback, but unarmed, and with only two attendants on foot. He was met by Messer Rinaldo, who rebuked him fiercely for his slackness, and told him that his not coming with the others arose from bad faith or poor spirit, both of which reproaches a man should shun who cared for his reputation; and that he was mistaken if he supposed that because he had not done his duty against them, his enemies when they gained their victory would exempt him from exile or spare his life. For himself, come what might, he would have this to console him, that as before danger he had not failed to counsel, so in danger he had not feared to act. But to Palla and his like there would come a threefold remorse in remembering that three times they had betrayed their country: once in sparing Cosimo's life, again when they would not follow the counsels he himself had given them, and now when they shrank from supporting their cause in arms. What answer

Palla made to these reproaches none present could ^{1434.} gather, but muttering something to himself, he turned his horse and rode back to his house.

On hearing that Messer Rinaldo and his followers were in arms, and finding themselves left without support, the Signory sitting in their Palace with barred doors, with none to counsel them, knew not what to do. But while Messer Rinaldo, awaiting reinforcements which never arrived, delayed to enter the Piazza, he lost his opportunity of victory, and gave heart to the Signory to provide for their defence, and to many citizens to come forward exhorting them to use every means for effecting an armistice. Accordingly, some among those whom the Signory least distrusted went to Rinaldo and said, that the Signory were ignorant of the causes which had led to these disturbances, and never had any thought of giving Rinaldo offence, for though there had been some talk about Cosimo, there was no intention to recall him; wherefore if it was this that had given rise to the suspicions of Rinaldo and his friends, they might reassure themselves, and consent to come to the Palace, where they would be well received, and all their demands complied with. These words wrought no change in the mind of Rinaldo, who said he must first secure himself by reducing the Signors to be private citizens; after which he would reorganise the city so that all should benefit.

But where authority is equal and opinions are opposed, things are seldom brought to a happy issue. Ridolfo Peruzzi, moved by the persuasions of the citizens sent by the Priors, said that for himself all he asked was that Cosimo should not return. As this had been conceded, he thought it a sufficient victory, and had no desire that to secure a greater,

1434. the city should run with blood. He, therefore, would obey the Signory. Whereupon he went off with his followers to the Palace, where he was joyfully welcomed. The delay in the Piazza of San Pulinari, the timidity of Messer Palla, and the withdrawal of Ridolfo Peruzzi had now made it impossible for Messer Rinaldo to succeed in his attempt, and the courage of the citizens who followed him began to cool down from its first ardour. The authority of the Pope was likewise interposed.

§ 32. Pope Eugenius, who had been driven out of Rome by the Roman people, was at this time in Florence. Hearing of these tumults and thinking it his duty to quiet them, he sent the Patriarch Messer Giovanni Vitelleschi, a good friend of Messer Rinaldo, to beg him to come to him, as he felt certain he had sufficient weight and authority with the Signory to secure him satisfaction and safety without bloodshed or hurt to the citizens. Messer Rinaldo, accordingly, at the persuasion of his friend, went with all his armed followers to the Convent of Santa Maria Novella, where the Pope was lodged. Eugenius gave him to understand that the Signory, reposing confidence in him, had submitted all differences to his arbitration, and that if Rinaldo would lay down his arms everything should be arranged to his content. Having experienced the coldness of Messer Palla, the fickleness of Ridolfo Peruzzi, and not knowing what better course to follow, Messer Rinaldo, in the belief that the Pope's authority would save him, placed himself in his hands. Whereupon word was sent to Niccolò Barbadoro and the others who were waiting without, to disperse and lay aside their weapons, as Messer Rinaldo was

remaining with the Pope to arrange an accord with ^{1434.} the Signory. On receiving this message all separated and disarmed.

§ 33. Seeing their adversaries disarmed, the Signory busied themselves in arranging an accord through the mediation of the Pope, but meanwhile sent privily into the mountains of Pistoia for foot-soldiers, whom, together with all their men-at-arms, they brought into Florence under cover of night, and after securing all the strong positions of the city, called the people into the Piazza, and created a new *Balia*, which at its very first meeting recalled Cosimo and the others who had been exiled with him; banishing at the same time Messer Rinaldo degli Albizi, Ridolfo Peruzzi, Niccolò Barbadoro, Messer Palla Strozzi, and other citizens of the adverse faction in such numbers that there was hardly a town in Italy to which they were not sent, while many towns out of Italy were filled with them. So that in consequence of this unhappy outbreak, Florence deprived herself not only of worthy citizens, but also of her industries and wealth.

On witnessing the ruin brought on those who at his instance had laid down their arms, Pope Eugenius was grievously displeased, and condoled with Messer Rinaldo over the wrong done to him while under his protection, but exhorted him to be patient, and, since Fortune was fickle, to be of good hope. To whom Rinaldo answered: 'Distrust on the part of those who should have trusted me, and the excessive trust I placed in you, have ruined my cause and me. But more than any other I blame myself for having supposed that one who had been driven from

1434. His own country could maintain me in mine. I have seen enough of the caprices of Fortune; as I relied little on them in prosperity, in adversity they offend me less, and I know that if it please her she may again be kind. But though she should not relent, I shall never deem it any great hardship to be banished from a city where laws are less regarded than persons; since that alone is a country to be desired wherein men may in safety enjoy their possessions and retain their friends, not that in which their possessions may readily be taken from them, and where their friends, fearing for themselves, forsake them in their sorest need. For the wise and good it has always been less painful to hear of than to see the misfortunes of their country, and they count an honourable outlaw as nobler than the citizen who is a slave.' Leaving the Pope in wrath, and often cursing in his heart the rejection of his counsels and the slackness of his friends, he went forth into exile.

Cosimo, meanwhile, hearing that he had been reinstated, came back to Florence; and seldom has a warrior returning victorious from battle been welcomed in his country by so great a concourse, or with such display of goodwill, as he on his return from banishment; every one hailing him as the people's friend, and the father of his country.

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